

Monergism

Heaven Opened

The Riches of God's Covenant of Grace

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A brief and plain discovery of the riches of God's covenant of grace

by **Richard Alleine**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Introduction](#)

[1. God in the Covenant](#)

[2. Christ in the Covenant](#)

[3. The Spirit in the Covenant](#)

[4. The Earth in the Covenant](#)

[5. The Angels of Light—The Powers of Darkness—Death—The Kingdom of Heaven—in the Covenant](#)

[6. A New Heart in the Covenant](#)

[7. A Heart to Know the Lord](#)

[8. One Heart](#)

[9. A Heart of Flesh](#)

[10. A Heart to Love the Lord](#)

[11. A Heart to Fear the Lord](#)

[12. An Obedient Heart](#)

[13. An Enduring Covenant](#)

[14. The Riches of the Covenant, or a Short View of the Exceeding Great and Precious Promises](#)

[15. Triumph in the Covenant](#)

[16. To the Unconverted—With a Form of Covenanting With God](#)

[17. To God's Covenant People](#)

[18. Directions for the Right Performance of the Duty of Prayer](#)

INTRODUCTION

Good news from Heaven! the Day-spring from on high has visited this undone world! After a deluge of sin and misery, behold the bow in the cloud. The Lord God has made and established a new covenant, and this it is that has cast the first beam on the dark state of lost and fallen man, and has brought life and immortality to light. This covenant is the hope of sinners, the riches of saints, the Magna Carta of the city of God: the forfeited lease of eternity renewed; God's deed of gift, wherein he has, on fair conditions, granted sinners their lives, and settled upon his saints an everlasting inheritance.

Hear, you forlorn captives, who have sold yourselves to eternal bondage, spoiled yourselves of all your glory, sealed yourselves up under everlasting misery. You are dead in your sins, guilty before

God, under wrath, under a curse, bound over to eternal vengeance. But behold, there is yet hope in Israel concerning this thing; the Lord God has had compassion upon you, has opened a way for you to escape out of all this misery and bondage. Lift up the hands that hang down, strengthen the trembling knees: an ark, an ark has God prepared, in which is salvation from the flood; A COVENANT, A NEW COVENANT has he made and established, which, if you lay hold on it, will recover all you have lost, ransom you from death, redeem you from Hell, and advance you to a more sure and blessed condition than your original state from which you have fallen. This is the hope of sinners; this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.

Glorious tidings, good news indeed! But WHAT IS THIS COVENANT? Or what is there that is given and granted therein? Why, in sum, there is all that Heaven and earth can afford, all that can be needed or desired; and this, by a firm and irrevocable deed, made over, and made sure to all who will sincerely embrace it.

Particularly, God has in his covenant granted and made over Himself; his Son; his Spirit; the earth; the angels of light; the powers of darkness; death; the kingdom—all the means of salvation.

Chapter 1.

God in the Covenant

The Lord God has made over himself in this covenant. This is the great and comprehensive promise: "I will be their God." (Jeremiah 31:33). I am God; and what I am is all theirs: myself, my glorious incomprehensible essence, all my glorious attributes, my omnipotence, my omniscience, my wisdom, my righteousness, my holiness, my all-sufficiency, my faithfulness. I will make over myself

to them to be henceforth and forever theirs: their Friend, their Portion, their Sun, and their Shield.

I. Their FRIEND. I was angry, but mine anger is turned away; I was an adversary, I had a controversy with them, but I am reconciled; I have found a ransom, the contest is settled, my wrath is appeased, I am their friend: "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:34). I will take away their iniquity and receive them graciously; "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from them." (Hosea 14:4). Fury is not now in me; favor and friendship, love and good-will is all they may henceforth expect from me. "Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good-will towards men!"

Sinners, what is there to be feared, what is there dreadful, but an angry God? Thence is sorrow and anguish, thence is famine, and pestilence, and sword; thence is death and Hell: he does not know what the wrath of God means, who does not see in it all the plagues of earth, and all the vengeance of eternal fire. Whatever terrors or torments have seized upon thee—upon your body, upon your soul; whatever losses, crosses, vexations, afflictions, plague you on this earth; whatever horror and anguish, whatever amazing, confounding torments are like to meet you and feed upon you in the lake beneath, you may say of all, This is the wrath of God. When the Lord says to you, Fury is not in me, he says also, Fear shall be no more to you. The hour the Lord says, I am your friend, death and Hell vanish; the day is broken, the shadows flee away. This is one thing included in the promise, "I am their God"—I am their friend.

II. Their PORTION. Fury ceases; fears vanish; friendship, favor, life are granted. But what shall the soul have to live upon? Man was never intended to be self-sufficient; he was created under a necessity of dependence on something without him, not only for the continuance of his being, but for the comfort of his being; he cannot live upon the air, though he has escaped the fire: the soul of man is

too big for all the world; like Noah's dove, it can find no rest below; and where shall it find it, or on what shall it exist? Why, God will not starve his friends; he who has saved their lives will find them a livelihood; he himself will be their portion, their maintenance, and their heritage forever. As their deliverance is from him, so their dependence shall be on him; he is their substance, and on him is their subsistence; he writes himself "the portion of Jacob," (Jeremiah 10:16), and as such his saints accept him, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance," (Psalm 16:5); he is their bread and their water, their stock and their store. The Lord gives portions to his enemies: not only the young ravens, but the old lions and tigers; the worst of men seek their meat from God; they "have their portion in this life, whose belly you fill with your hid treasure." (Psalm 17:14). They have their portion: some of them have their portion in the city, others a portion in the field; to some he gives a portion of gold, to others a portion of worldly glory, to others a portion of pleasures; with all these he deals as the father of the prodigal, he gives them their portion and sends them away. But while he gives portions to these, He is the portion of his saints: he makes over and settles himself upon them, as their inheritance forever: they shall never be in want while there is fullness in him to supply them; they shall never be in straits while there is power in him to relieve them: all their wants are upon him.

The Lord is their portion, and he is a sufficient portion. "With you is the fountain of life." (Psalm 36). "In your presence is fullness of joy." (Psalm 16). The Lord God is all things to them: "In my father's house there is bread enough, and to spare." He that has all things below God, but not God, has nothing; he who has nothing besides God, but has God, has all things; enough and to spare; filling up, and running over: there is still more to be had, if more could be held. The soul has never enough until it has more than enough, is never full until it runs over—never full while it can contain and measure and number all that it has: this is its judgment of all. In God is enough for filling up and running over; enough there is in him to fill up all their faculties.

Their understandings. There are infinitely beautiful perfections on which we may gaze and fill our eyes with unspeakable delight; but when we have looked the furthest into them, when the most searching eye, the most intense thoughts have searched and run their utmost, they come not near the end; they shall look, and look, and see, and see, and when they can reach no further, then they shall wonder at those treasures of light and beauty that are still beyond them. Admiration is the understanding full, and running over: when it is nonplused, and can reach no further, then it wonders at what it perceives still beyond it. The apostle tells us that the gospel, which presents God in flesh, has in it a height, and depth, and length, and breadth, (Ephesians 3:18), and I may tell you from him, it is a height without top, a depth without bottom, a length without limits, a breadth without bounds; in one word, immensity; unmeasurable, and therefore unspeakable, unsearchable glory. While the blind world deride and despise the portion of the saints, looking on God and all the things of God as shallow things that have no depth in them, they will be found by those who search into them, to be deep things that have no bottom, "The deep things of God." (1 Corinthians 2:10). All the raptures and ecstasies of the glorious joy of the saints in the other world break in upon them from their vision of God.

There is enough to fill up their wills and affections: there is infinite goodness, incomprehensible love, marvelous loving-kindness, unspeakable delights, glorious joys. "Oh, how great is your goodness, which you have laid up for them that fear you!" (Psalm 31:19). "Oh, how great is your goodness:" it is the voice of exultation, an admiring word; great beyond expression, great beyond imagination. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love him:" it is the voice of a heart leaping for joy, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God which is laid up for his saints. "Laid up; where?" Why, laid up in himself: that is the fountain, that is the treasury; there is love, there is joy, there is satisfaction; our life is hid with Christ in God. O love the Lord, all you his saints. O bless the Lord, all you his saints. He who is mighty has done for you great things: "Since the beginning of

the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither has the eye seen, O God, besides you, what he has prepared for him that waits for him." (Isaiah 64:4). Or, as it is in the margin, "There has not been heard or seen a God besides you, which does so for him that waits for him." There is enough to fill up our time: there is admiring work, and praising work forever; there is matter for love and joy to live and feed upon forever; endless praises, eternal pleasures, everlasting rejoicings, "everlasting joy," "pleasures for evermore." There is enough to reward all our labors, and repay all our expenses; there is a full reward. "Fear not, Abraham; I am your shield and your exceeding great reward." (Genesis 15:1). Christian, you shall not serve the Lord for naught, he will reward you: and it is little in his eyes that you should serve him for corn and for wine, for sheep and for oxen, yes, for the crowns and kingdoms of this world; these shall not be your hire; the everlasting God will be your reward, your exceeding great reward; exceeding not your work only, but your very thoughts also.

A little is too much for your earnings, but the whole world is too little for his bounty. Less than nothing might satisfy for your labors, but less than himself will not satisfy for his love: the eternal God will be your reward. Oh, the unsearchable riches of the poorest of saints. Poor; what, and yet have a God? In want; what, and yet have all things? Is he God that is your, and are you still in straits? Would a few sheep and oxen, vineyards and olive-yards make you a rich man, and can God leave you a beggar? Is not a pearl more than pebbles; milk and wine better than mud and water? Men use to say, Money is all things—meat, and drink, and clothes, and friends, and land—virtually all things. And is not God more than money? Sure he has said to his gold, "You are my God," who cannot say, Let God be mine, and then go you your way. Have you a God, and yet are you poor? Nay, further, would the fatness of the earth and the fullness of Heaven, if you had both, be enough for you? Would corn, and wine, and houses, and lands, and pleasures here, and eternal life hereafter suffice you? And is not God alone as much as all this? Do you want starlight when you have the sun? Is the ocean more full for the rivers

that run into it? Or would there be any want there, if all these were stopped and dry? Can they contribute to it which have their rise from it? Has the Almighty God a self-sufficiency, and has he not enough to satisfy a poor worm? Is he blessed in himself, and may not you be blessed in him? He who thinks anything less than God will suffice, understands not a soul; and he who wants anything more, understands not God. God alone is as much as God and all the world; and this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, God is their portion.

If enough be not yet said, look awhile, and consider whence you are taken up into this blessedness. What have you left! What an exchange have you made! You were taken with the prodigal from the trough, with the beggar from the dunghill, yes, as a brand out of the burning; there your lot had fallen. Oh, where have you left the rest of the world? Blessing themselves in vanity, pleasing themselves with shadows and apparitions, feeding on ashes, warming themselves at their painted fire, sporting themselves with the wind, rejoicing in a thing of naught: their crackling thorns, their flattering pleasures, their drinkings and dancings and roarings, their horses and their dogs, their hawks and their harlots; making a shift awhile to make merry with these while they are hastening to the pit, to that fire and brimstone which is the portion of their cup.

Consider, what is the chaff to the wheat? What is a comet to the sun? What is the night to the day? What are bubbles and children's toys to the durable riches? What are things that are not, to him whose name is I AM? But Oh, what are death and wrath and the curse, which were once all your heritage, to that life and love and peace and joy and glory, which you now possess in that God who is your portion? What a poor wretch were you once, when you had nothing but sin and shame and misery that you could call your own. These you might call thine—sin was your, woe was your, death and the grave and the curse and the pit were your own; but that was all you had: your good things you lived upon, had they been of ever so great value, were none of your; your house and your lands are none of your; your gold and

your silver and your substance are none of your; they are all but borrowed, or committed to you as a steward, and all to be given up on demand; and what you have spent of them you must be brought to a reckoning for: a poor wretch you were, and had just nothing; for all that you had was none of yours.

But now, God is your own, all that he is, all that he has is your; never could you lay such a claim to anything you possessed; to house, or wife, or child, or body, or soul, as now you may to your God. God is as surely your as you are yourself: as sure as you are a man, you have a God.

Come, Christian, here is now your portion; the light of your eyes, the lifting up of your head, the joy of your heart, the strength of your bones, your stock, your treasure, your life, your health, your peace, your rest, your all: "Whom have I in Heaven, but you? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart fails; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." (Psalm 73:25, 26). Here is your portion, know it for your good, take it for your own; live upon it, and live up to it.

1. Live upon your portion. Here you may feed, herein you may rejoice, herein you may bless yourself forever. "Let him that blesses himself on the earth, bless himself in the God of truth." Let him that rejoices in the earth, rejoice in the God of truth. Let the strong man live upon his strength, let the wise man live upon his wits, let the rich man live upon his lands; but come you, live upon your God; come, enjoy God and your soul; enjoy God in your soul, enjoy your soul in God. You have possession, what should hinder your fruition? In fruition, the schools tell us, there are three things which go to make it up: knowledge, delight, and satisfaction.

KNOWLEDGE. According to the clearness or cloudiness of our apprehensions of any good, we more or less take the pleasure or comfort of it; and therefore the full fruition of God is not until at last, when we shall know as we are known. Here we see as but in a glass,

and darkly; we know but in part, and while we know but in part, we love but in part and joy but in part; the dimness of our sight makes an abatement of our joy. When the veil shall be taken away, when we shall come to see face to face, then we shall fully feel what it is to have a God. Christian, know you the God of your fathers; the more you know, the more you have.

The carnal world enjoy not God at all; God is not known in their tabernacles: in Judah is God known, his name is great in Israel; at Salem is his tabernacle, and his dwelling in Zion. But what of God in Edom, or Ammon, or Amalek, or Egypt; those dark regions wherein neither sun nor star appears? Leave them to their dunghill gods, to the gardens which they have desired and the oaks which they have chosen. The Lord is before you, know it for your good. Study your God, Christian; roll over his sweetness in your mind, as you do the sweet morsel in your mouth; see what he is, and what you have laid up in him; read over daily his glorious names; walk through those chambers of his presence, his glorious attributes. Look into the chamber of his power, and see what you have laid up for you there. Go into the chamber of his wisdom, and see what that will afford you. Look into the chambers of his goodness, mercy, faithfulness, holiness, and behold what treasures are laid up for you in each of these. Enter into your chambers, they are all your; let your eye be there, let your meditation be there, let your soul be there every day; there is your portion, search it out and know it for your good.

DELIGHT. Fruition is taking the pleasure of what we have. We cannot enjoy what we do not love, and love implies delight. We cannot enjoy that wherein we do not joy. "Delight yourself in the Lord." (Psalm 37:4). "I sat down under his shadow with great delight." (Song of Solomon 2:3). If his shadow be so pleasant, what will his sunbeams be? "O taste and see that the Lord is good." (Psalm 34:8). Our senses help our understandings; we cannot by the most rational discourse perceive what the sweetness of honey is; taste it, and you shall perceive it. "His fruit was sweet unto my taste." Dwell in the light of the Lord, and let your soul be always ravished with his

love. Get out the marrow and the fatness that your portion yields you. Let fools learn by beholding your face, how dim their blazes are to the brightness of your day.

Let your delights in God be pure and unmixed delights. Let your spirit be so filled with God, and so raised above carnal joys, that it be no damp upon you to have nothing but God. Live above, in that serene air which is not defiled with earthly exhalations. Sickly bodies, and so sickly souls cannot live in too pure an air. Be so wholly spiritual, that spiritual joys, spiritual delights may be suited to you and sufficient for you. Do not say, I want the joy of the vintage and of the harvest; I want the joy of the bridegroom and of the bride; I want the sound of the millstones and the light of the candle, to make my comfort full. Let the joy of the Lord be your strength and your life; say with the prophet, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." (Habakkuk 3:17, 18).

SATISFACTION. The quiet or resting of the soul in its portion. Therefore the schools say that the last end only is the proper object of fruition. The carnal world, whatever they possess, cannot be said properly to enjoy it, though it be their God that they live upon; as their drag is their God, their gold is their God, their plough and their plenty and their pleasure is their God; they burn incense to them, yet they cannot enjoy them; there is no rest for them in their God. "What man is he who fears the Lord? his soul shall dwell at ease." (Psalm 25:12, 13). In the original it is, "shall lodge in goodness." The soul is never at ease while it is in want, every want wrings it; it can never take up its lodging where it cannot take its rest. His soul shall be at ease; shall lodge, that is, shall take up its rest in the goodness of God: when we find rest in our beds, then we enjoy them. Is your soul lodged in God? O enjoy your lodging. "Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you." As it was said to, so let it be said by the church and every saint, "This is my rest, here will

I dwell forever." Here you may find rest when you have no other rock to lean upon; you may be at rest in your God, in your most restless state, in a weary land, in a barren wilderness, in a tempestuous ocean. However it was in the vision of the prophet, yet you may say, If the wind rise, the Lord is in the wind; if after the wind an earthquake, the Lord is in the earthquake; if after the earthquake a fire, the Lord God is in the fire; and, wherever you find God, you may find rest. If you find God in a wilderness, you will find rest in the wilderness; if you find God in the earthquake, or the tempest, or the fire, even there also your soul shall find rest. When you can not rest in your bed, nor in your house, nor in your land, you may still rest in your God. Say, Christian, say again, "Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you." Though my helps fail me, and my friends fail me, and my flesh and my heart fail me, "God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. This is my rest, here will I dwell forever."

To these I might add a fourth thing wherein fruition consists—the making use of our portion. He enjoys, who uses what he has. We enjoy our portion, when we have a power and heart to make use of it on all occasions. "I am your, soul; come and make use of me as you will, you may freely; I have nothing that is not for you; you may freely come to my store; and the oftener, the better welcome." Have you not a God lying by you to no purpose; let not your God be as others' gods, serving only for a show. Have not a name only that you have a God: since he allows you, having such a Friend, use him daily: "My God shall supply all your wants;" never want while you have a God, never fear or faint while you have a God: go to your treasure, and take whatever you need; there are bread and clothes, and health and life, and all that you need. O, Christian, learn the divine skill to make God your all, to find in your God bread and water and health and friends and ease; he can supply you with all these; or, which is better, he can be, instead of all these, your food, your clothing, your friend, your life. All this he has said to you in this one word, "I am your God;" and hereupon you may say, I have no husband, and yet I am no widow; my Maker is my husband. I have no father nor friend,

and yet I am neither fatherless nor friendless; my God is both my Father and my Friend. I have no child; but is not he better to me than ten children? I have no house, but yet I have a home; I have made the Most High my habitation. I am left alone, but yet I am not alone; my God is good company for me; with him I can walk, with him I can take sweet counsel, find sweet repose; at my lying down, at my rising up, while I am in the house, as I walk by the way, my God is ever with me; with him I travel, I dwell, I lodge, I live, and shall live forever.

2. Live up to your privilege. Live according to your rank and quality, according to your riches laid up for you in God. The rich men of this world live like rich men, they sort themselves with persons of their own quality, attend on the courts of princes, are employed about the palace; you may read their estates in the whole way of their life; they wear them on their hacks, spread their tables with them; they live sumptuously, and fare delicately. Christians, feed not on ashes or husks, you have better meat; you have milk and honey, marrow and fatness, the hidden manna, the bread that comes down from Heaven, the water of life; you have blessed privileges, precious promises, lively hopes, living comforts, glorious joys, the fountain of life to feed your souls upon: come eat, O friends; drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved; out-fare the rich man, who fared sumptuously every day; you have enough to maintain it; let every day be a glad day, a feast-day with you.

Let your clothing be according to your feeding. Be clothed with the sun; put on the Lord Jesus. "The King's daughter is"—and so let all the King's sons be—"all glorious within;" let their clothing be of wrought gold. Be clothed with humility, put on love, affections of compassion, gentleness, meekness; put on the garments of salvation.

Let your company and converse be according to your clothing. Live among the excellent, among the generation of the just. Get you up to the "general assembly and church of the first-born," to that "innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Live in the courts of the great King, behold his face, wait at

his throne, bear his name, show forth his virtues, set forth his praises, advance his honor, uphold his interest: let vile persons and vile ways be contemned in your eyes; be of more raised spirits than to be companions with them. Learn hence a holy elevation of spirit. Regard not their society nor their scorns, their flatteries or their frowns; rejoice not with their joys, fear not their fear, care not for their care, feed not on their dainties; get you up from among them, to your country, to your city, where no unclean thing can enter or annoy. Live by faith, in the power of the Spirit, in the beauty of holiness, in the hope of the gospel, in the joy of your God, in the magnificence, and yet the humility, of the children of the great King.

III. He is their SUN. He will discover and make manifest to them the riches and glory of their portion. He has granted them himself for their portion, and he will reveal and make manifest to them what a portion he is. He will make manifest both the blessedness they shall enjoy in him, and the way to it, and also the dangers that lie in the way. "The Lord God is a sun." (Psalm 84:11). The sun is the light of the world, it discovers itself and all things else. We cannot see the glory of the sun but by its own light; the moon, the planets, the firmament, and all this lower world would disappear, if the sun withdrew its light. Beauty and deformity, safety and danger, the right way and the wrong, are all brought to view by the light of the sun; the sunlight makes the day; night is spread over the world when the sun is set. So God is glorious; but who would be ever the wiser, did not this glory shine? "In your light shall we see light." (Psalm 36:9). Why is the glorious God apprehended, understood, admired, by so few among the sons of men? Because he is out of sight; the sun is not risen upon them, nor shines unto them: they have moonlight or starlight, some dimmer reflections of this glory at second-hand; but they see not the sun.

What is the reason that truth and falsehood, good and evil, substances and shadows, things perishing and things permanent, are no better distinguished? What is the reason that men are so mistaken and misguided in their judgments, in their choice, in their way; that

they are at such a loss, such wanderers from their bliss? What is the reason that men's own sparks, the light of their own fires, their candlelight or torchlight, their fleshly imaginations, their carnal prosperity, their pleasures, their ease, their earthly glory, and their carnal joys that hence flash up to them, are so adored and admired by them? O, they see not the sun. God is out of sight; and thence are all their foolish mistakes and miscarriages. God will be a sun to his saints. "Your sun shall no more go down." They shall have a right to the comfort of this glorious sun; he will show them his face, he will cause his glory to appear, he will lead them into himself by his own beams; he will show them their end, and the means—the goal, and their way to it; he will show them the good part, and the right path; good and evil, duties and sins, realities and delusions, helps and hindrances, dangers and advantages, their snares and their supports, will all be discovered to them by the light of the Lord.

Hearken, you poor and dark soul, that have chosen, but you know not what; that are going, but you know not where; that are wandering and stumbling on, but you care not how; that complain you can not see, you can not value, you can not be affected with all the glory and joy of the invisible world; that find your husks and your trash to be a greater pleasure to you than all the riches of immortality; that would gladly mind and choose and love and relish and seek God and things above, but you can not: you see so little of the beauty of them, that they do not entice your heart after them; and when you are seeking, you are at a loss and in the dark as to the way that you should take. Hearken, soul, your God calls to you: Come unto me, look unto me, and I will be your sun; I will show you all that glory, and the right way that will bring you to it; I promise you I will; trust me, I will be a light unto you.

IV. Their SHIELD. "The Lord God is a sun and a shield." (Psalm 84:11). The gods of the earth are styled, "the shields of the earth," (Psalm 47:9); much more the God of glory. Faith is called a shield: "Above all, taking the shield of faith." (Ephesians 6:16). This signifies the same as "God is a shield." Faith is to the soul whatever God is.

This is the grace that entitles the soul to God, and applies God to the soul. "Fear not, Abraham; I am your shield." (Genesis 15:1). What is promised to the father of the faithful, stands sure to all the seed. (Romans 4:16). The state of Christians in this life is a militant state, a state full of hardships and hazards; by reason whereof, richly as they are provided for, they are subject to fears of being undone and spoiled of all. They are in fears about things eternal; they have spiritual adversaries that lie in wait for their souls, that fight against their souls, that are tempting them, and enticing them from their God; that watch their opportunities to steal away their God, by stealing away their hearts from him; and such dangerous attempts of this kind they meet withal, that they often are in great doubt what the issue may be. They are in fears about things temporal; their names are shot at, their liberties are invaded, their estates, with all the comforts of their lives, are in danger to be made a prey; today they are a praise, tomorrow a scorn; today they are full and abound, tomorrow they may have nothing left; they die daily; they are "killed all the day long." But whatever their dangers and their fears are, here is sufficient provision made against all: God is their shield.

Christian, you have enough, and all that you have is in safety. You are compassed about with a shield, secured on all hands, there is no coming at you to do you harm. Whatever assaults are made, your God is a wall of partition between you and harm. They are not shields of brass and iron you are furnished with; the strong God is your defense. Wherefore do you doubt, O you of little faith? A Christian, and yet afraid; shifting for yourself; taking care for the donkeys and oxen and sheep; vexing and loading and losing yourself, in your cares and fears from day to day? Where is your God, man? Does not God take care for oxen and donkeys and all that you have?

But O, what meanest you by this? To be shifting yourself from danger, by shrinking back from your God; securing yourself from affliction, by taking sanctuary in iniquity! What are you doing but throwing away your shield to save you from harm; making a breach in your wall, to keep you in safety? "Walk before me, and be you

perfect," says God; and then, "Fear not, Abraham; I am your shield." (Genesis 15:1; 17:1). This now is the first and great promise of the covenant, "I am your God."

Chapter 2.

Christ in the Covenant

God has put Christ into the covenant, and made him over to his people: "I will give you for a covenant." (Isaiah 42:6). He, who is promised as the chief matter, the mediator, surety, and scope of the covenant, is called, The Covenant. "I will give you for a covenant;" that is, I covenant to give you to the people.

Do you say, "Whatever glory and blessedness there is in the fruition of God, woe is me, there is a great gulf fixed "between me and it, over which there is no passing; there is a partition-wall raised, over which there is no climbing; there is a handwriting against me, and while that stands, all that is in God is nothing to me. Were this God mine, I had enough. Let me be put to labor or to suffering; let me dig, or beg, or starve and die; whether I be rich or poor, have something or nothing, be a praise or a reproach, it matters not, if God be mine. But O, how may I obtain this? Who shall bring me to God?"

The Lord God has given you his Son to undertake for you, and to be your way unto the Father. (Hebrews 10:19, 20). JESUS CHRIST—who is the Morning-star, the Sun of righteousness, the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, by whom are all things, who is before all things, the head of the body the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, in whom dwells all fullness, even the fullness of the godhead bodily; who has made peace by the blood of his cross, (Colossians 1, 2); whose name is, "Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the

Prince of peace," (Isaiah 9:6)—this Jesus is granted you in the covenant, to bring you to God. To which blessed and glorious purpose he is exhibited as the Light of life; as the Lord our righteousness; as our Lord and King; and as our Head and Husband.

I. As the LIGHT OF LIFE. "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." (Luke 2:32). "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4). "He who follows me shall have the light of life." (John 8:12). There is a light that serves to kill and destroy, to bring death and condemnation to light: the light of the law, that killing letter concerning which the apostle says, "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." (Romans 7:9, 10). But Christ brings life and immortality to light. Heaven, glory, the invisible God, which are lost out of reach and out of ken, are all discovered in the face of Jesus Christ; "To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6). He is the image of the invisible God, the brightness of his Father's glory, the glass in which by reflection we see the sun. "Show us the Father, and it suffices us." Why, says he, have you known me, Philip, and yet say you, Show us the Father? "He that has seen me has seen the Father;" and this is the light of life. (John 14:8, 9). "This is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (John 17:3).

II. As THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. This is his name: "He shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." (Jeremiah 23:6). To this end he is given to us,

1. As our propitiatory sacrifice: "The atoning sacrifice for our sins." (1 John 2:2). "Christ our Passover." (1 Corinthians 5:7). "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8). Our price, our ransom, to satisfy justice, pacify wrath, discharge from the curse; to blot out the handwriting, break down the wall of partition; to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, and

so to bring us to God. Whatever difficulties appear in your way, whatever doubts arise in your heart, from your sins, from your guilt, from your poverty, from your impotence—whatever objections your fears may hence put in, the blood of the Lamb will answer all. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

2. As a merciful and faithful High-priest, (Hebrews 2:17), who has made an atonement for us in the earth, and appears for us in Heaven; who has made reconciliation for us, and makes intercession for us, "to appear in the presence of God for us." (Hebrews 9:24). We read, (Exodus 28:12, 29), that Aaron, as the type of Christ, was to bear the names of the children of Israel engraved in stones upon his shoulders and upon his breastplate, when he went into the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. Our Lord is entered into the heavens, to appear in the presence of God with our names upon his shoulders and upon his heart, for a memorial before the Lord: the least of saints has his name there engraved.

"Here is my ransom, Lord," says Christ, "and behold my ransomed ones. Here is my price and my purchase, my redemption and my redeemed. Whatever accusers there be, whatever charge be laid against them, whatever guilt lies upon them, here are the shoulders that have borne all that was their due, and paid all that they owe; and upon these shoulders and in this heart you may read all their names; and when you read, remember what I have done for them, acquit and absolve them, and let them be accepted before you forever. Remember the tears of these eyes, the stripes on this back, the shame of this face, the groans of this body, the anguish of this soul, the blood of this heart; and when you remember, whatever name you find engraved upon this heart and upon these shoulders, they are the persons whose all these are; and whatever these are, whatever acceptance they have found with you, whatever satisfaction you have found in them, put it upon their account; never let me be accounted your Accepted, if they be rejected; never let me be accounted righteous, if they lie under the imputation of wicked. If they be not righteous in my righteousness, I must be guilty under their guilt.

Whatever I am, whatever my satisfaction is, all is theirs; for them I plead, for them I pray; my tears, stripes, wounds, groans, anguish, soul, blood, all cry and say, Father, forgive them; Father, accept them."

Of all cries there are no such strong cries as the cry of blood, and that whether it be against or for the guilty; its voice shall be heard on high. "Your brother's blood cries unto me from the ground." (Genesis 4). And what followed? Woe to those persons against whom blood cries. But where blood, such blood cries for them, for pardon, for mercy, blessed are those souls.

Christian, this blood is for you: it "speaks better things than that of Abel." (Hebrews 12:24). It pleads, sues, presses for your discharge from all that is upon you. You have many cries against you: Satan cries, your sins cry, your own heart and conscience cry against you, and you are amazed at the dreadful noise they make; but behold, the blood of the Lamb, who is God, cries for you. You have an accuser, but you have an Acquitter; you have adversaries, but you have an Advocate: "An Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the atoning sacrifice for our sins." (1 John 2:1, 2). "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." (Romans 8:33, 34).

Nay, further, you have not only a righteous, but a merciful High-priest, that is provided with a sacrifice, and has a heart to offer it for you; your name is in his heart as well as on his shoulders, in his affections as well as on his back. He has blood for you, precious blood; and he has affections for you, affections of mercy. He can have pity and compassion on the miserable. (Hebrews 5:2). If he can find no other, he can find arguments enough from your woe and your misery to draw forth his soul towards you. He is merciful, and his mercies are tender mercies; he is pitiful, and his compassions are tender compassions: you are not so tender of the wife of your bosom,

of your own child—you are not so tender of your own flesh, of the apple of your eye, of your own soul, as your Lord is of you. His Spirit is moved for you, his soul melts over you, he bleeds in your wounds, he suffers in your sorrows, his eye weeps, his heart breaks over your broken and undone state; fear not his forgetting you.

He is a merciful and a faithful High-priest. No dignity to which he is exalted above you, no distance to which he is removed from you, can make him forget his friends; he is gone into the heavens, and is there exalted far above all principalities and powers, and set down at the right hand of God. He is gone, but he has carried your name with him as a perpetual memorial for you. You are unfaithful; shame to you! you forget your Lord at every turn; every business that comes, every trouble that comes, every pleasure that comes, every companion that comes, makes you forget your Lord, forget his love, forget your duty: O, how small a matter will steal your heart from him; yes, stir up tumults and rebellions against him. Your comforts, your hopes, your needs which you have daily from him, will not all prevail to hold him in remembrance with you. You forget your Lord, but he will not forget you; though you have been unfaithful in many things, yet he is in nothing. "Yet he abides faithful; he cannot deny himself." (2 Timothy 2:13). He would not be true to himself, if he be not faithful to you; his interest lies in you; you are his, his possession, a member of his body, fear not; if he should be unfaithful to your soul, he is therein unfaithful to his own body. If your case be such that he can help you, if there be anything wherein he can stead thee—if all that he has, his blood, his righteousness, his interest with the Father, will be sufficient for your help, he has undertaken to procure it for you and secure it to you. Faithful is he who has called you, and will do it.

This now is that Jesus who is given unto us, as our propitiatory Sacrifice, as our merciful and faithful High-priest, who suffered on the earth, and is gone into the heavens for us; standing in his red robes, garments rolled in blood—with the glorious white inscribed upon the red—pardon, peace, absolution, acceptance; with the names

of his ransomed ones engraved upon his heart and upon his shoulders: this is that Jesus, who is the Lord our righteousness.

3. As OUR LORD AND KING. "A King shall reign in righteousness," and in him shall the Gentiles trust. "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold your King comes." (Zechariah 9:9). "The government shall be on his shoulder." (Isaiah 9:6). God has more care of his saints, than to leave the government of them on their shoulder. Is not her King in her?

He is a King to gather them, a King to govern them, a King to defend and save them: to save them from their temporal enemies, the sons of violence, the men of this evil world; to save them from their spiritual enemies, from their sins. "You shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21). It is a mercy to be under government and under protection. What would become of us were there no King in Israel? Where there is no king, all are kings; more kings than men: Satan will be a king, every lust will be a lord—as many kings as there are devils and sins. Where would our unruly hearts carry us? How easily would our wily and potent enemies ruin us. What tyranny would sin exercise within; what cruelty should we suffer from without. Where should we wander; where should we fix? What peace, what order, what stability? Whence should counsel and protection and salvation come, were there no Lord over us? It is a mercy to be under government; but to be under such a government, under a King, and such a King; such a wise and potent King, such a meek and merciful King, such a holy and righteous King! Oh, what a wonder of mercy! "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, your King comes unto you: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass's colt." He is just, having salvation; as a Priest he has purchased, as a King he bestows his salvation. He comes not to get, but to give—not to give laws only, but to give gifts unto men; and he gives like a king, palms, crowns, and thrones—salvation to his people by the remission of their sins. Oh, how unthankful; O, how foolish is this rebellious world! Impatient of subjection, they shake off the

yoke, groan under duty, under discipline: "We will not have this man to rule over us." Who then shall save you? Hard to be a Christian; strict laws, severe discipline, no liberty! Is this your complaint, Christian? Nay, rather, There is no liberty left me to be miserable: if I will be his, I must be happy.

Let fools inherit their own folly, but let Israel rejoice in him that made him, let the children of Zion be joyful in their King; for the Lord takes pleasure in his people, he will beautify the meek with salvation. Lift up your heads, O you gates; and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, yes, the Lord our righteousness, he is the King of glory. The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us. Praise you the Lord. Come all you Nimrods, you mighty hunters on the earth; come all you sons of Anak, you seed of the giants; come all you sons of Belial, you seed of the adulterer; come all you Ishmaelites and Ammonites, you Moabites and Hagarenes, associate, confederate, take counsel together, smite with the tongue, bite with the teeth, push with the horn, kick with the heel; come all you gates of Hell, and powers of darkness; you dragon with all your armies, with all your fiery darts and instruments of death; come you king of terrors with your fatal dart: the virgin the daughter of Zion has despised you all, she has laughed you to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head at you; her King is in the midst of her; the Lord is her King, he will save her.

4. As our Head and Husband. He who is given to be Head over all things to the church is given to be the Head of the church, (Ephesians 1:22, 23), and of every member in particular. (1 Corinthians 11:3). Believers are all joined to the Lord. (1 Corinthians 6:17). United in Christ as fellow-members; united unto Christ as their common Head, "from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases with the increase of God." (Colossians 2:19). They are married to Christ: "I have espoused you to one Husband." (2 Corinthians 11:2). From this

union follows a communication of influences, and a combination of interests.

1. A communication of influences. "Having nourishment ministered." Christ our Head is our Fountain of life. Our Head is our Heart also, out of it are the issues of life; from him we live, and are nourished and maintained in life. He is our Joseph, all the treasures of the holy land are with him. "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:3). "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." (Colossians 1:19). He is the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.

Here observe what grace there is in Christ. The schools tell us, that in him there is a threefold grace. 1. The grace of union. The human nature of Christ, has received the high grace or favor to be personally united to the second person in the godhead; by virtue of which union the fullness of the godhead is said to dwell in him bodily—bodily, that is, personally, or substantially, in opposition to the types and shadows of the Old Testament, in which God is said to dwell in a figure. God was said to dwell in the tabernacle, in the Ark of the Covenant, in the temple; but in these he dwelt only as figures and shadows of the human nature of Christ. In Christ he dwells not in a figure, but personally and substantially. As Christ, (Colossians 2:17), is called the body, in opposition to the types of old, which were but the shadow; so bodily here denotes not a figurative, but a personal inhabitation. Christ is the body, not a shadow; and God dwells in him bodily, that is, substantially, and not in a shadow. 2. Habitual grace. All those moral perfections wherein stands the holiness of his nature: the love and fear of God; his humility, meekness, patience; in sum, his perfect conformity to the image and whole will of God. "Such a High-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Hebrews 7:26). 3. The honor which is given to him to be Head of the church.

Also observe how Christ is said to be full of grace. There is a twofold fullness of grace. In respect to grace itself: thus he is said to be full of

grace, that has all grace, and has it in the greatest excellency and perfection. Also, in respect to the person that has it; and thus a person is said to be full of grace, that has as much grace as he is capable of. Christ is full of grace in both respects: the grace which is in him, is grace in the highest perfection of it, and in infinite fullness.

Observe also, that this fullness of Christ is ours, and for us: "Of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." (John 1:16). "Your life is hid with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:3). Your life: that is, both your spiritual life, grace; and your eternal life, glory. "This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son." (1 John 5:11). Our life is said to be in Christ in three respects. 1. It is hid in Christ as the effect in the cause: as the life of the branches is hid in the root, so is the life of a Christian in Christ; he is our root. 2. It is deposited with Christ: it is laid up with him, committed to his trust and custody; with him it is secured and put into safe hands. 3. The dispensation of it is committed to him: from him it is at his pleasure to be imparted to us; of his fullness we receive. The Son has life in himself, and he gives it to whom, when, and in what measure he pleases.

Christian, are you nothing in yourself? You have enough in your Jesus. Are you dark? he is a fountain of light. Are you dead? he is a fountain of life. Are you poor and low, weak in knowledge, in faith, in love, in patience? he is a treasure of all grace; and what he is, he is for you. Is he wise? he is wise for you. Is he holy? he is holy for you. Is he meek, merciful, humble, patient? he is so for you. Is he strong; is he rich; is he full? it is for your sake. As he was empty for you, weak for you, poor for you; so for you he is mighty, he is rich and full. While you bewail your own poverty and weakness, bless yourself in your Lord, in his riches, righteousness, and strength.

2. A combination of interests. As the head and body, as the husband and wife, so Christ and his saints are mutually concerned—are rich or poor, must stand and fall, live and die together. As the husband conveys to the wife a title to what he has; as the wife holds of the

husband; so is it between Christ and his church: they have nothing but through him; their whole tenure is in the Head; and whatever is his, is theirs. His God is their God, his Father is their Father; his blood, his merits, his Spirit, his victories, all the spoils he has gotten, all the revenue and income of his life and death, all is theirs. For them he obeyed, suffered, lived, died, rose, ascended, is set down in glory at the right hand of God. He obeyed as their Head; died as their Head; rose, ascended, reigns as their Head; and has in their name taken possession of that inheritance which he purchased for them. This is that Jesus who is given to us, and thus is he granted and made over to all his saints in this covenant of God.

Chapter 3.

The Spirit in the Covenant

God has put his Spirit into the covenant: the Almighty, the eternal Spirit; the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of glory and of God.

This holy and eternal Spirit is first poured forth on our Head the Lord Jesus, to anoint him our Redeemer, to furnish and qualify him for that great undertaking. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek." (Isaiah 61:1). "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and of the fear of the Lord." (Isaiah 11:2).

And he is promised to each member of Christ: "I will put my Spirit within you." (Ezekiel 36:27). To all these he is granted, as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation; as a Spirit of holiness and sanctification; as a Spirit of truth and direction; and as a Spirit of comfort and consolation.

I. As a "Spirit of WISDOM AND REVELATION." (Ephesians 1:17, 18). To enlighten them, to open their blind eyes, and to shine into their hearts; to give them the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; to counter work the spirit of this world, whose work is to blind men's eyes, lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine unto them. (2 Corinthians 4:4-6).

This is he by whom the Father has called us "out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Peter. 2:9). The light that the Spirit brings in is a marvelous light, and that in three respects:

1. It is a marvelous thing that ever light should come into such dark souls. That those who were born blind, and upon whom the God of this world had, for many years together, been trying his skill to thicken their darkness, to increase and seal them up under it—that ever such eyes should be opened, and the light of life shine in upon such hearts, this is a marvelous thing. When our Lord Jesus in the days of his flesh opened the eyes of those who had been born blind, the people ran together and wondered at the sight. If you should see stones live, if you should see dead stocks or dry bones walk up and down the streets, if you should see trees, or houses, or mountains full of eyes, this were not more full of wonder, than to behold blind sinners receiving their sight. You were once darkness; are you now light in the Lord? Stand and wonder at your cure.

2. They are marvelous things which this light discovers. It is a wonder that such eyes should ever see at all; and lo, they see wonders. The gospel is a mystery full of wonders: there are heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths. "We have seen strange things today:" strange love, strange grace, wonderful wisdom, wonderful pity, patience, mercy; wonderful providences, wonderful deliverances, incomprehensible excellencies, unspeakable joy and glory. It is a wonder there should be such things every day before our eyes, and yet we could not see them until now; and it is a wonder,

that when we did not see them before, we should ever see them now—that those things which we despised, derided, mocked at, stumbled at, as mere foolishness and fancy, we should now see and admire, even to astonishment—that that Jesus who was to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness, should be to the same men when called, the wisdom of God and the power of God. Oh the deep things of God! Oh the unsearchable riches of Christ, which he who searches all things reveals unto the saints! Oh the hidden treasures they now discover in this deep mine! To you that believe, he is precious, a praise, an honor; all fair, all glorious; and you have seen his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.

Again, there are marvelous evils, as well as good things, which by this light are brought to light. Sin, with all the hidden things of darkness that lie below in those chambers of death—the secrets of the evil heart of man. Sin appears a wonder to the savingly enlightened soul: exceeding sinful, a world of wickedness. There is death, and Hell, and the devil in every sin; unkindness, unthankfulness, folly, enmity, rebellion, spite, and the blackness of darkness. What once appeared as a pleasure, a delight, a beauty—or at least, if an evil, yet but a trifle, a matter of nothing—is become a plague, a terror, a burden, a bondage, bitterness, shame, sorrow; and such a high provocation, that whereas once he swelled and murmured, and cried out of rigor, severity, cruelty in the least punishment of it; now he wonders at the clemency, and patience, and forbearance of God, that such an affront and provocation had not long since turned the whole earth into a Hell.

Christian, you complain you can not see, you can not feel, you can not mourn, you can not break under all the guilt that lies upon you; your heart is hard, your eyes are dry; not a tear, not a groan, scarce a sigh will all this evil fetch out from you. "Oh this blind and sottish mind! Oh this dead and senseless heart! what shall I do? what would I not do to get me a melting, mourning, broken spirit? but I cannot, I cannot; I cannot see, I cannot bleed, nor break." O beg the light of

this Holy Spirit; and if the sight he will present you with, of this wonderful evil, do not rend your heart, and turn you, and open all your sluices, and let out your soul in sighs and groans, in shame and sorrow, you may then well be a wonder to yourself. But be not discouraged, be not dismayed; do not say, This rock will never break, this iron will never melt; I may go sighing for sighs, mourning after tears, groaning after groans, but all in vain, it will never be; I am past feeling; sorrow flies from me, repentance is hid from mine eyes. Do not thus discourage yourself; wait for this Spirit, open to it and you shall see flowing in such streams of self-shaming, self-confounding light, as shall flow forth in self-abasing, self-abhorring streams of tears.

3. These marvelous things are revealed to them with marvelous clearness; that is, in comparison with what they are to the blind world, and in comparison with what they themselves once saw. They come to see the glory, and the beauty, and the reality of the wonderful things of God. "We have seen his glory," says the apostle. (John 1:14). "The kindness of God our Savior appeared;" "but we all, with open face, behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord." (2 Corinthians 3:18). Out of Zion has he appeared in perfect beauty.

It is prophesied of the unbelieving world, that when they should see Christ, they should see no beauty in him. (Isaiah 53:2). Strange! though he is all beauty, yet they should see him, and yet see no beauty; that is, they shall see him, and yet not see him. "What is your beloved more than any other beloved? What is Christ more than an ordinary man? What is the gospel more than an ordinary story? What is the Spirit? What is truth? What is there in this faith and love, in this holiness and righteousness, in this peace of conscience, and joy of the Holy Spirit? What substance is there in them? Where is the glory, and wherein is the excellency of them? Which way came the Spirit of the Lord from me to you?" You shall know in that day, when you shall call to the mountains to fall on you, and the rocks to hide you from the face of God and the Lamb. We know whom we have believed. We know that we know him. We speak that which we know,

and testify what we have seen. We have an unction from the Holy One, we know all things. God has revealed them to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. We have a clear and certain sight. We do not see men as trees walking, with our eyes half open: we see men as men, Christ as Christ, truth as truth, in its full luster and evidence. This we have seen and do testify, neither deceiving nor being deceived. We thank you, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes.

And as they see truth and holiness and goodness in their wonderful glory and beauty, so also folly and falsehood and sin in their wonderful ugliness and deformity. Sin appears to them to be sin, folly to be folly, falsehood to be falsehood; they see men as men, Christ as Christ, truth as truth, holiness as holiness; and they see beasts as beasts, fools as fools, sin as sin, devils as devils, Hell as Hell. They see all things as they are, temptations as they are, delusions as they are; they see what is under them, the hook under the bait, the sting in the locust's tail, the war in the devil's heart carried on under his fawning face; they are not ignorant of his devices.

Sinners, cease your wondering at the saints, let them be no longer for signs and for wonders in Israel; cease your wondering at the saints, and come and wonder with them. Wonder not that they speak not as you, live not as you, run not with you after the same follies and vanities. Oh, if you once come to see what they see, you will be a wonder to yourselves. Mock not at their blessedness: blessed are their eyes, for they see. The blind envy, but do not disdain the seeing. Say not, These men are in a dream, or drunk, or mad; take heed, blaspheme not the Holy Spirit, call not his light darkness, put not your darkness for light. Would you know, when these men testify what they have seen and heard, whether they are sober or beside

themselves? Come and see: I say not, stand and see; you cannot see at the distance you stand: come near, come in, and you shall see—see your blindness first, if ever you will see the light. Oh, bewail your darkness and seek light; seek, and you shall see it. "Son of David, have mercy on me." Why, what will you, man? "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Shall that be your cry? O pity your blind soul. O pray for eyes. They that see, pity the blind. O be eyes to your blind, be a light to your dark soul; let them that dwell in darkness see your great light. Sinners, those whom you persecute do thus pity, do thus pray for you: "Lord, that their eyes might be opened." Will you say, Amen, to their prayers; or will you say, Lord, regard not their word, we desire not the knowledge of your ways?

Christians, be marvels. You that have seen marvelous things, be marvelous persons. Let your light shine, let the light which has shined into your hearts shine forth in all your paths: let the Spirit of light within you, be a Spirit of glory resting upon you. Once you were darkness, but now are you light in the Lord; walk as children of the light. Be you holy, harmless, the children of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

Beclouded Christian, you go on bemoaning and bewailing yourself, complaining that you are still blind; that the light has shined into your darkness, but your darkness comprehend it not; your eye is yet but tender, at least, and you can see but little—but little of Christ, the sun is but as a spark to thee—but little of sin, that mountain looks yet but as a molehill; it is "neither clear nor dark," neither night nor perfect day. You did hope that long before this your scales would have fallen off, that the veil would have been removed, but they abide upon you; you wait for light, but behold obscurity—for brightness, but you walk in darkness; you go on, adding darkness to darkness, the darkness of sorrow to the dimness of sight. You fear that the gospel is hid from you, that it is still night, because it is not yet noon with you. But hearken: As little as you see of Christ, do you see so much that you prize and love and cleave to him above all? As little as

you see of sin, do you see so much that you loath and shun it above all things? Do you walk in that little light you have; do you love, long, wait, cry for the light? "Send forth your light and your truth, lift up the light of your countenance; Sun of righteousness, shine upon me; why are the wheels of your chariot so long in coming? when, Lord? Make haste, my beloved; O might I once see your face, as the sun, looking over the mountains." Is this your voice; are these the breathings of your soul? Be of good comfort, these are the glimmerings and groanings of that Holy Spirit within you, who has already delivered you from darkness, and will bring you forth into his marvelous light; you shall know, if you follow on to know the Lord. "Arise, shine; your light is come, the glory of the Lord is risen upon you." Though yet, as to your sense, it be neither clear nor dark, neither night nor perfect day, "at evening time it shall be light."

II. As a Spirit of HOLINESS AND SANCTIFICATION. He is given as a holy Spirit, and as a sanctifying Spirit; therefore sanctification is called the "sanctification of the Spirit." (2 Thessalonians 2:13). He comes to change us into his own nature, to make us partakers of his holiness; he is a refiner's fire, and fuller's soap, (Malachi 3:2), to purge and work and wash off the filth and corruption of our nature. It is said, he shall be to the church "a Spirit of judgment and a Spirit of burning," to wash away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and to purge the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof. (Isaiah 4:4). "A Spirit of judgment," that is, in the rulers of Israel—stirring them up to do justice and execute judgment, that so the guilt of blood may be taken away; and "a Spirit of burning," that is, in the hearts of the people of Israel, to consume and destroy the inward lusts of their hearts, that no more such wickedness be committed among them.

What he is to the church, this he is to every saint, a Spirit of judgment, to give sentence against their lusts, to condemn them to the fire: these must be cast out. "To the fire with them; away with them; get you hence, you sons of the bond-woman; you may not be heirs with the sons of the free woman." The Spirit of the Lord first

discovers and convinces of sin, judges between light and darkness, grace and sin, and then gives sentence: "Away with these lusts, they may not be suffered to live." It is a Spirit of burning, to execute the sentence, to consume them in the fire. The Spirit of sanctification is a Spirit of mortification. "If you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live." (Romans 8:13). It is the Spirit that kills sin, the flesh profits nothing.

The Spirit implants the soul into Christ, gives it an interest in his death, brings it under the influence of his death. It is the death of Christ that is the death of sin; these thieves are crucified with him: "Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should no longer serve sin." (Romans 6:6). Hell knew not what they did when they crucified Christ; death and all its armies were put to death with him.

The Spirit raises up another party in the soul, a party against a party, an army against an army; brings grace in to take up arms against sin. Grace does not only fight against sin, but is in the very nature of it the death of sin. Humility is pride dead; meekness is sinful passion and frowardness dead; patience is impatience slain.

The Spirit excites and stirs up the soul against sin; sets it a praying against it: the Spirit of grace is a Spirit of supplication, it fetches down hailstones and thunderbolts from Heaven to destroy these Amorites, sets a watch against sin, presses the soul to deal wisely with it, to keep it low by cutting off all provision from the flesh, restraining and keeping it short of all those fleshly objects which would keep it in heart, and so it is starved to death. It is true, our own greatest wisdom, watchfulness, abstinence, self-denial, and all external means alone, will fall short of killing one lust; it is the Spirit who kills, without him the flesh profits nothing. All external attempts for the mortification of the flesh, are but a fleshly mortification. But if you, through the Spirit, do mortify the flesh, praying in the Spirit, watching in the Spirit, curbing and keeping under this body, seeking always the assistance of the Spirit, then it shall die.

Christian, you live in a weary land, and you have but a weary life of it; briers and thorns are with you, the Canaanite is yet in the land, you sojourn in Meshech, and have your habitation in the tents of Kedar; and you have a Meshech and Kedar within thee—you have armies within you of fleshly lusts which fight against your soul. You go mourning daily, because of the oppressor—those spiritual wickednesses which lie in your heart, and war in your members. You often groan and cry out to your God, "Liberty, liberty; redemption, redemption. Oh, this proud heart! Oh, this vain heart! Oh, this earthliness! Oh, this fleshliness, this slothfulness, this enmity and rebellion against the law of my mind, and my God! When I would do good, evil is present with me. I cannot, I cannot do the things that I would. I can with no peace serve or enjoy my God and my soul: my duties are either prevented or polluted, my comforts are either wasted or made quite to vanish and disappear. When I would serve my God, I must away to serving my appetites, or my pride, or my friends; when my soul is a little got upon the wing, and soaring in the upper region, it is presently checked, pulled down again to the earth. Oh, my pinioned, imprisoned soul! Woe is me, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Yet comfort your heart; the enemy flies upon you as a flood, but the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. You complain your gold is become dross; yet he will turn his hand upon you, and purely purge away your dross, and take away all your tin. Though these briers and thorns be set in battle against you, yes, and against him also, yet he will go through them, he will burn them together. (Isaiah 27:4).

You complain that your garments are defiled, your glory is stained, your beauty is marred, the image of your God is so defaced that there is but here and there a spot of it left upon you. While your Lord says, "You are all fair, O my love," you cry out, "I am all foul, O my Lord:" you would be holiness to your Lord, but you are an offence to him; holiness is still your love and your desire and your longing, but it flies from you; it is rather your wish than your hope; you can weep over, but you can not weep out your deformity; your iniquity is still marked before the Lord. If there be a little grace in you, yet there is

such a weakness in its sinews, such a paleness in its face, that it is not like to live; or if it live, O how little hope that ever it should thrive or flourish.

Thus you complain, thus you go mourning and sighing and sinking and fainting in your mind, and now and then venture out a desponding prayer: "Lord, pity; Lord, look upon my sorrow and my sin; Lord, wash me; Lord, help me." Why, the Lord God has sent you his help out of his sanctuary, and his strength out of Zion. The eternal Spirit is come down on purpose to give battle to the flesh, to subdue your iniquities, and bring all those that rise up within you under your feet. You mistake yourself and your enemies, if you think they will be conquered by one blow of your arm; this kind goes not out so; "not by might nor by power," much less by weakness and by flesh, by any weak attempts of your own, "but by my Spirit, says the Lord." It is work for a God, to relieve and cleanse such a heart, to turn such a Hell into a Heaven. What you can not do, being weak through the flesh, behold, he comes down to do for you; you have proved your own weakness, now try everlasting strength. He stands at the door and knocks, hear his voice at the door: "Will you be made clean? Will you be made whole? Will you be delivered?" Open to him, and with him deliverance comes in. He stands at the pool, stirring the waters for you; put in your cripple-soul, and be healed of all your diseases; say to him, "Lord, if you will you can make me clean," and you shall soon have this answer, "I will; be you clean."

III. As a Spirit of TRUTH AND DIRECTION. (John 16:13). He shall guide them by his counsel, he shall lead them in the way that they should go. They shall hear a word behind them, saying, This is the way, walk you in it, when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left. (Isaiah 30:21). He shall lead them into all truth, to prevent mistakes; and into all righteousness, to prevent miscarriages. Nay, more, he shall not be only their star, but their strength too; he shall guide them on, and help them on; they shall be led by the Spirit, bound in the Spirit, pressed in Spirit; they shall be excited, assisted, carried on in the power of the Spirit, in the way that

they should go; he will cause them to walk in the statutes of the Lord. Whatever your waywardness and your wanderings have been, whatever your feebleness and fickleness be, whatever false lights and false ways are before you, whatever temptations you meet with to turn you aside out of the right way, whatever doubts hence arise in your heart, "I shall one day or other perish from the way, and be a lost sheep at last;" yet his guidance shall be prosperous, and the event shall be sure; he shall so guide you by his counsel, that he shall bring you to glory. He shall gather his lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

IV. As a Spirit of COMFORT AND CONSOLATION. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John 16:7). He shall come unto them, and abide with them, to supply the absence of their Redeemer, to support them under their affliction, to witness their adoption, to seal them up unto the day of redemption, and to be the earnest of their inheritance. (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

"He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." (John 16:14). "He shall receive of mine," that is, not only of the truths, those treasures of wisdom that are in me, though that be specially intended, but of my love, my righteousness, my holiness, and all those treasures of grace and mercy that are laid up in me: whatever there is in me that may stand you in any stead, yield you any relief or support, the Comforter whom I will send you shall bring it down to you; he shall take my blood and the pardons it has purchased for you, my compassions that are working in me towards you, my prayers and intercessions I am offering up for you; he shall take of all those treasures of grace and everlasting consolations which are laid up for you with me; he shall take of mine, and show it unto you. As much as you have in the world to afflict and amaze you, as little as you have of your own to comfort you, either in your hearts or in your houses, or among your friends, he shall show what I have for you to refresh you.

O Christians, a sight of Christ in our sorrows, in our fears, in our thickest darkness, what daylight would it bring in! When you look into your heart, and are astonished and confounded at what you find there—at the blindness and the hardness, the poverty and the emptiness, the guilt and the deceit, the pride and the peevishness, the evil thoughts, the vile affections, the filthy lusts, that are swarming and working in you; when you look into the world, and tremble at what you behold there—the malice, the craft, the power, that is engaged against you; the furious spirits, the fiery tongues, the fierce looks, the violent hands, that are flying upon you, and the little relief the earth will afford you; when your heart faints and dies within you at the sense of this your woeful and forlorn state, a sight of what you have in your Lord is presented to you by his Spirit. Look you here, soul, what your Jesus has sent you down—a glance from his eye, a drop from his heart, food from his table; and all to tell you, Yet do I not forget you; behold the care I take of you, the treasures I have for you, to encourage your love and reward your faithfulness. Oh, how will this make aft your darkness depart, and turn the shadow of death into the morning!

Thus is the Holy Spirit given to the saints, to be the light of their eyes, the death of their sins, the guide of their ways, the stay of their hearts; to uphold their grace, and to maintain their peace; to subdue their enemies and their fears; to secure them from temptations, or support them when tempted; to wipe off their reproach, or make it their crown; to heal their diseases, or make them their cure; to help their infirmities, to work their works, to make their yoke easy and their burdens light; to turn their sighs into songs, to form their groans into prayers, send them up to their Lord, and bring down returns; to comfort their hearts, to establish, strengthen, settle them, that they be neither offended at the rod nor moved from the hope of the gospel.

Chapter 4.

The Earth in the Covenant

God has put the earth into the covenant. Though the saints have not their portion in this life, yet this world also is theirs: "The meek shall inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5). "Things present, and things to come, all are yours." (1 Corinthians 3:22). 1. The good things present. 2. The evil things present.

I. The GOOD THINGS present. "Houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, now in this time." (Mark 10:30). "Length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor." (Proverbs 3:16). "Houses and lands," you say, "and riches and honors! where are they? Who are the poor of this world, the houseless, harborless, and friendless? Who have woe, and want, and shame, and sorrow? Who are strangers and pilgrims, dwelling in tents, driven into corners, into dens, and caves, hunted up and down upon the mountains of the earth? To whom is hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, but to the meek of the earth? Is this to inherit the earth? All theirs, when nothing is theirs?" Yet they do inherit the earth. For,

1. They shall ever have as much as will suffice them, and that is as much as all. They shall not want anything but what they may well want: "Your Father knows that you have need of these things;" and he knows how much you need. More than is needful, is more than enough; and more than enough is a prejudice. Many men have too much; too much money, too much esteem, too many friends; more than they can bear; so much as to sink them, and drown them in perdition.

Christians shall have enough; they shall never be in such a needy state but whatever is necessary for them in all the earth they shall have. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof;" and he has

said, that those that seek him shall not want anything that is good. (Psalm 34:10). If the whole world can supply them out of all its store, they shall be supplied.

2. What they have, they have a better and further title to, than any others in the world. What they have descends upon them not barely by providence, but by promise. (Hebrews 1:2). Christ is heir of all things, and they are fellow-heirs with Christ. A little coming from the promise has more in it than the greatest abundance that is only handed down by common providence. That which comes in from the promise, comes in with a blessing: if you have but a handful, you have a blessing in your hand; if you have but a corner, you have a blessing in your corner. A little from love is a great blessing. You have God in every morsel you eat, and in every drop you drink; a drop from Heaven will turn your bran into the finest flour, and your water into wine.

O what serene and quiet lives, how void of care, distracting care, might the saints live in the world! What are the burdens that gall our backs, what the briers that tear our flesh, what the thorns that pierce our hearts ordinarily, but the cares of this life? What shall I eat? what shall I drink? with which shall I be clothed? where shall I dwell? how little have I for today, what for tomorrow, what for hereafter? how shall I secure what I have? when this is gone, whence shall I be supplied? Thus do we go on piercing ourselves through with many sorrows. Our cares for supply eat up what we have; our thoughts cut deeper than our wants; we cannot at so cheap a rate fear, as we often actually bear, the want of all things.

And why take you thought? "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof;" and he has said, "All this is yours; you shall want nothing." You have not only providence to live upon; you have also the promise before you, and this has all things in it; all is yours. "What have I for tomorrow? what for hereafter?" Why, what says the promise? "You shall want nothing, neither you nor your. Never saw I the righteous forsaken, nor their seed begging their bread."

Have you two worlds made sure to you, and can you want? You may as well make a pitiful cry at a full table, O where shall I have my next morsel? as under such a full promise, O where shall I have my next meal? O how much beneath the spirit of Christianity are the carking, anxious lives of too many Christians. You do not believe, you do not believe; you talk of your covenant-right, of your part in the promise, of living by faith; but where is any such thing? Can you trust God for your souls, and can you not trust him for your bodies, for your children? Believe, and you will make as much, and be satisfied as well, with a penny in the promise, with a meal in the promise, with a house in the promise, as with a penny in your purse, or a meal in your cupboard.

What do you get by all your anxiety? "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature"—one farthing to his store? Tears and trouble are all it will add to you. Be quiet, and nothing will ail you; let not any straits sting you before they come; want not before you lack; let not the winter's frost nip you while it is yet summer.

Know when you are well, and be content. All is your; if you inherit your God, you inherit the earth; nothing of all its store shall be kept back from you that is necessary for you; only you must not look to be your own carver, your God will carve out what you need. Let enough suffice you, and you shall never have too little. You shall never have so little, but you may say, This little is enough.

What if that which you lack in water, be made up in wine; if you have but little in bran, but the more in flour? A short meal with a smile from Heaven you may count no fast, but a feast; a little oil in the cruse, how far will it go with a smile, the blessing of the covenant! If the upper spring run freely, you may abate a nether spring.

Let my Beloved comfort me with his apples, and stay me with his flagons; and let the rest be as little and as coarse as it will. Let the promise be my portion, let the pipes be kept open to my soul, and then the least pittance for this body shall suffice me. O, my Lord, let

me feed with you, and I will not complain whatever my fare be. Let my portion be from your table, and then be it much or little—let me hear your voice, "I am your, and with me all things," and I am content to be at your allowance. Let your deed of gift stand sure to me, and put in my children's names there, and I ask no more for myself or them. Hold your peace, keep silence, O my anxious soul; know when you are well; be in nothing careful, the Lord is at hand.

II. The EVIL THINGS of this earth are theirs. The cross is in the covenant. "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes." (Psalm 89:30-32).

The covenant has its cross. The doctrine of the gospel is the doctrine of the cross, the preaching of the gospel is the preaching of the cross. (1 Corinthians 1). The mysteries of a crucified Jesus and of his crucified saints fill up the whole New Testament. The cross is not only imposed upon the saints as their burden, but bequeathed unto them as a legacy. It is given unto them as an honor and a privilege. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." (Philippians 1:29). It is joined with the most glorious gift, the gift of faith. Yes, and it is a greater gift than this: to suffer in faith is more than barely to believe.

But by virtue of the covenant, the cross is a blessing. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." (Matthew 5:10, 11). Where then is the blessedness; or wherein stands it? It stands in these things: In the separation of the cross from the curse; in the sanctification of the cross to its ends; in the proportioning of the cross to your needs and strength; and in the special comforts of the cross.

1. The cross is separated from the curse. There is something in this. To be able to say under the sorest afflictions, This scourge is no scorpion; this is no curse, it is but a cross. Our Lord bore both the cross and the curse together, and that made his cup so bitter; but now he has divided them: the curse he has left upon sinners, and laid only the naked cross on his saints. The crosses of reprobate sinners are all curses. Every affliction is a curse; there is wrath in all their sufferings; there is vengeance in every dart; every rod is a serpent to them. You who are of the number of Christ's implacable enemies, when he comes to fall upon you and to grind you under his hand, you would have a word of comfort to be spoken to you in your sorrow: no, no, there is no comfort can be spoken; you may say of every dart he smites you with, This is sent of God to avenge himself upon me. The crosses of the impenitent are all curses; but the saints' curses are all come to be but crosses. Though men curse, the Lord will not curse; whatever troubles come upon you, though there be vinegar in them, yet there is no vengeance in them; though there be anguish in them, yet there is no wrath in them; though they be ill-looking, yet there is no ill-will in them; they come upon no ill intent, nor shall have any evil issue. The smitings of the wicked are to you as the smitings of the righteous were to the psalmist, a precious balm. "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness—it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." (Psalm 141:5). And you may say, Let the wicked smite me with the tongue, with the fist of wickedness, or what they will; it shall not break my head, much less my heart; it shall be a kindness to me, an excellent oil.

2. The cross is sanctified to its ends. It has many holy and excellent ends, and it shall prosper, it shall accomplish its ends. The cross is laid on the saints sometimes to prove them, sometimes to reprove them, to humble them, to purge them; and whatever it is sent to them for, it shall not return in vain. As the word, so the rod shall accomplish that which he pleases that sent it. By this the iniquity of Jacob shall be purged.

3. The cross is proportioned to their needs and strength. "I will correct you in measure, and will not leave you altogether unpunished." (Jeremiah 30:11). Just so much as will serve shall suffice; the wise physician has respect both to the need and to the strength of the patient. "I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth; lest the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." (Isaiah 57:16). The apostle tells the saints that they have need of patience, (Hebrews 10:36); and their experience tells them they have need of something to exercise their patience. And their needs are different: some are knotty pieces, and need more; others are tender, and upon them less will serve. The stubborn child must have more stripes; the shaking of the rod will do more on some spirits than the smart of it on others, but all need something. Let him only that is without sin say, I have no need of shame and sorrow. The Lord will neither over, nor under do; every one shall have his load, and no more—no more than they can bear, and no less than their need requires. The Lord delights not in his children's tears, he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; but yet he would rather have them cry than perish.

Wonder not, Christians, that your tender Lord puts you to pain, and that your pains are so sharp and so many; your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. It is a mercy that he will chastise; you may put your corrections among your mercies. His breakings of you are his blessings, his woundings are your cures; and by your own, as by your Lord's stripes, you are healed. And when you shall review and read over all his darker providences, and behold the wisdom and tenderness which is mingled with his severities, evinced in his laying on so much, and yet no more than was needful, you will then acknowledge with the psalmist, "You in very faithfulness have afflicted me."

O, my Lord, let me not want your staff nor your rod, neither a friend nor an enemy; neither a calm nor a storm; neither food nor medicine: if my disease be too strong for my physic, let me have yet a stronger potion; if my wanton heart will not yet be tamed, put on

more fetters, a heavier load—load upon load, weight upon weight. Let me never be sick of my remedy until I be cured of my disease. Let me rather suffer by the hand of a devil, than perish by the hand of a lust. Spare not, Lord, cease not, Lord, to smite your servant, until you have thereby smitten down all mine enemies. Peace, plenty, ease! what, that I may have to spend upon my lusts; to wax wanton against my God? Such peace I will not have. Pain, trouble, want, anything rather than peace upon such terms. Correct me, O Lord, yet in judgment, but not in your fury, lest I be consumed and brought to nothing.

4. The cross has its special comforts. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation: and our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall you be also of the consolation." (2 Corinthians 1:3-7).

The comforts of the cross are often the sweetest and the fullest that the saints ever taste on this side of the crown. The first draught is often bitter; the green cross is heavy, and it is necessary it should be so. It must be a heavy yoke that will tame an unruly neck: if it gall not, it will not heal; it is the smart of the rod that stills the child. Think not your burdens will lie easy when first laid on; and think it not much if they do not. The first conflict with temptations may put you to a harder brunt than you are aware. It must be so, that it may be for your good afterwards. "Tribulation works patience;" but this it cannot do unless it pains you. It is observable that it is not said that the cross works patience, but the tribulation, the pinching of the cross, or the pain the cross puts us to; this is patience, a quiet bearing

that pain which the flesh when touched puts us to. When we feel the thorns and the nails, when the iron enters into our souls, when it pricks and smarts, then it will work. The green cross is heavy, a prison or a wilderness will be appalling at the first; but when your Lord comes in and visits you, then the sweet, the pleasure comes; and the more frowns at the threshold, the more kisses you may expect afterwards. Christ does not always meet his saints in the porch: the devil's parlor, the inner prison is his banqueting house, the dungeon his pavilion; there they drink and are satisfied. The stocks and the rack are the organs that make them the sweetest music. Many a saint has been sadly disappointed at the first, hoping to meet with Christ at the door; but behold, a dreadful sight—behold, sin lies at the door—all his sins, all that ever he did against Christ, all his unthankfulness, unfaithfulness, unkindness, rebellion against his Lord, stand forth and stare him in the face.

Christians, beware of sin now; it will meet you in the day of adversity, the cross will tell you all that ever you did. "I remember my faults this day: now I remember all my pleasant things—my Sabbaths, my ordinances, my liberty, the dear society I once enjoyed but trifled and wasted away. Oh, my pride and my wantonness, my idleness, my earthliness, my hypocrisy, wherefore are you come thus to affright and torment me? Lord, where am I come? O how dreadful is this place! Is this my prison-entertainment? Are these my prison-comforts? O what a hard lodging am I like to have with such companions! O the wormwood and the gall; a dark habitation, a bitter cup indeed, is now given unto me. Is this the comfort of the cross? Are these the sweets so much talked of?" Yet be not dismayed, however roughly you are handled at the door; it is better within; the devil is going out in this storm; your sins meet you now, but it is only to shake hands and part; after this agony, expect the angels to come and minister to you. Complain not if you yet find no sweet, you have not drank deep enough; in the next room you may meet your Lord, and then tell me if it come short of all that has been told you.

But shall I give you a more particular view of some of the special comforts of the cross, or our sufferings for Christ? I shall only first premise a word to let you understand what I mean by the sufferings of Christ. We then suffer for Christ, when we suffer for Christ's cause; when we suffer because we will be Christians, will be holy and righteous; when we suffer because we will not sin; and when we suffer upon Christ's call, when he cuts out a cross for us and lays it upon us. Then Christ calls us to suffering when he puts us to this choice, either to suffer or to sin; when either our backs or our consciences must suffer; when we must suffer, or he must suffer by us. "If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross." Christ is not, and Christians must not be prodigal of their blood: their blood is his; their estates, their names, their liberties are all his, and to him they must be accountable how they part with them. It is not every cross that you can call "your" cross; we must not leave our way to seek a cross: when Christ has laid a cross athwart a Christian's way that he should go, and he must either make a stand or turn aside, or submit his neck to it, then he says, There is your cross; take it up, and get you gone. Whatever cross be before you, if you have a way open to avoid it without sin, that is none of your cross; you may not take it up, or if you do, you will have no thanks for your pains.

Christians should be wary here. Though it be an evidence of a gracious spirit to be always of a ready and forward mind to suffer for Christ; and when he demands, Who will go with me—who will bear my cross? cheerfully to answer, I will go, Lord, let me bear it; yet should we take heed that, as we hang not back when he says Go, so we run not before he send us. Though it be a high honor to suffer for the gospel, yet no man takes this honor upon himself, but he who is called of God. I would not go to a prison without a warrant from Heaven, lest, if my suffering be of myself, I be there left to shift for myself. If Christ should meet me in prison or in banishment, and demand of me, "What do you here, Elijah? friend, how came you in hither?" what should I say if I could not say this, You, Lord, have brought me hither; my conscience, my duty has brought me here?

But understand me here with this caution: that when the cause for the main is Christ's, though the call seems doubtful, yet when the sufferer has carefully inquired the mind of God, truly follows the dictates of an enlightened conscience, and sincerely designs the honor of Christ and his gospel, although he should err in some circumstances of his case, and for fear of iniquity should choose affliction when possibly he might have avoided both, God will surely own his sufferings, and accept his readiness of mind.

Yet still take heed of careless or willful errors; take heed of preparing nails for your own cross, thorns, scourges, spears for your own head or heart. Take heed both how you shun, and how you espouse a suffering state. Go not into it upon heedless mistakes; go not into it for good company, much less upon any carnal designs; let not your pride or ostentation, or the bias of any fleshly considerations, lead you into the house of correction, lest you find them the rods to lash you when you are there.

Christians, consider if there be not sometimes some uncomfortable miscarriages in this matter; and whether it has not been the lot of some of Christ's—with how much justice or charity let the Lord be judge—to be censured and reproached as unfaithful or as fearful, on no other account but for walking by this rule: not to go to prison without a warrant, that is, not to cast themselves into a suffering state, while God has left a way open to escape without sin. I confess, the more dangerous and the more ordinary error is on the other hand: we are more apt—especially when afflictions are more sharp, and bite in earnest, and then will be the great trial—rather sinfully to shift ourselves of them, than unwarrantably to run ourselves upon them; but yet let it be considered whether there be not an error on this hand also.

It is true, where the cause is the same as to the main, different circumstances may make that to be one man's sin, which is another man's duty; yes, that may be a duty to the same man at one time, which, supposing him in different circumstances, might have been

his sin at another. And it is not seldom, through the unavoidable difference of our apprehensions, and the difficulty of discerning our cases, that Christians equally careful to know and do the will of God, when the case and the circumstances also are mostly the same, do judge differently about their call to suffering. Here let no man be so tyrannical to others, as to expect that they should go cross to their own, to comply with their brethren's judgments and consciences. Let us not put one another on this unmerciful necessity, either to break our peace with God or our friends. Let it be sufficient to us faithfully to follow our own light, without judging or quarreling with those who are otherwise minded. Beware of bitterness. Be not cruel to consciences; smite not with the tongue, nor let an evil thought arise in your heart, upon any such account as this. Your arrows will recoil and fly back in your own face. Blemish not your own sufferings by blasting your brother's liberty. Let not the wariness of some be condemned for cowardice, nor the forwardness of others for pride or hypocrisy; but let us be clothed with humility, let us put on a spirit of self-suspicion, and of charity to our brethren; and let this Christian frame be the more studiously maintained, the more our practices, differing according to the variety of our apprehensions, seem to condemn each other and so provoke to uncomfortable schisms and contentions, and the more pernicious such schisms are likely to prove in the issue.

These things premised, I shall now show you **what the special comforts of the cross are**. You may expect your suffering state to be sweetened with,

- 1.** A more plentiful diffusion of special grace. Grace is a comfort; it is never better with the saints than when that flourishes. The joy of the harvest is nothing to the joy of grace; he is not a Christian that cannot say, "It is summer," when these flowers appear in their beauty. Flourishing faith and love have their glorious joys. (1 Peter 1:8). The springs of grace are a resurrection from the dead; and there is no such spring as after a shower. Oh, how green do the herbs then look. The withering flowers do then lift up the head. Never so many

stars appear, nor with such luster, as in a frosty night. Grind the spices, and their fragrantcy flows out. Saints are never more saints than in the house of bondage, or the land of their pilgrimage; our winter weather makes us warm at heart. As our outward man perishes, our inward man is renewed day by day. (2 Corinthians 4:16). Persecution is the time of life. We are delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our mortal flesh. (2 Corinthians 4:11). Decayed soul, comfort your heart, the cross is coming; now you shall live, now you shall recover. This weakness will strengthen the things that remain and are ready to die. Now, faith and love and patience and courage, that have so long hung the wing, lift up the head, the day of your redemption draws near; this night is your day of hope.

2. The cross will also bring a more clear revelation of special love. Love you me, Lord? If so, it is enough. Let me hear your voice, let me see your face. Kiss me with the kisses of your mouth. Your loving-kindness is better than life; send forth your light and your truth, let these tell me you love me. Your poor spouse is sick for love; O when will you say, "You know that I love you?" Why, come up with me on the cross; that withered tree bears more blossoms of love, than all the green trees of the field. The whole gospel is hung upon the cross. Where our Lord hung, there is sin nailed, the curse vacated, death vanquished; pardon, peace, joy, glory, showed forth in open sight. There is love with all its tokens; go up and take. Fear not to be baptized with your Lord's baptism, nor to drink of his cup; this cup also is the communion of the blood of Christ. Come with me into the wilderness, there will I speak comfortably to you. When you most lack it, where you will most value it, there will I show you my love.

Our Lord loves not to have love slighted: the full soul loathes the honeycomb; you have yet too many lovers to bid your Lord welcome: he keeps his best wine until all your own be soured; then it will relish, and then you shall have it. His oil is for your wounds. The child never knows so much of the parent's heart and compassion as when it is sick or in distress; then every look is love, every word is

pity and compassion. O the compassion of Christ's heart towards his afflicted children! When you know hatred, then look to know love; when you are persecuted, when you are cast out and trodden under foot of men, then will he take you in and cherish you.

3. You shall have also a more full manifestation of glory. There is not a prison into which the saints are cast, but has a window in the palace. Calvary becomes a Tabor, where they have a sight of their Lord in his glory. Golgotha becomes a Pisgah, where they may look over Jordan into the land of promise. Have you known little of Heaven? you have not yet been in the deep.

Of Stephen the first gospel-martyr it is said, "He looked up steadfastly into Heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7:55). "And all that sat in the council saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." (Acts 6:15). Such an admirable splendor and serenity shone in his countenance, as spoke him rather an angel than a man. Oh, what a Heaven was there within, that cast out such a divine luster on his face! his joy was too big for his heart, his face must have its share; yes, his very adversaries, at second-hand, behold the glory of God.

He looked up and saw Heaven opened. Looking down, he might see Hell opened, all his tormentors about him, the jaws of death ready to devour and swallow him up; but looking up, he saw Heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Oh, there he is, for whose sake is all this. My Beloved, my Beloved is yonder. Behold the region of light, where this dark tempest is wafting me." His Hell and his Heaven meet, but the light swallows up the dark. Hell ceases to be Hell, where Heaven appears to be Heaven. This is the portion of suffering saints. When you read what is written of those armies of martyrs that have gone before; of their unspeakable joys, their undaunted courage, their admirable boldness; of their cheering their friends, confounding their foes, their rejoicing in their stripes, singing in their stocks, leaping in their chains, boasting of their bonds, kissing their stakes, embracing the flames, riding up in

triumph in their chariots of fire, not repenting of their faith, nor accepting of deliverance—what does this speak, but that their eyes, as well as their anchor, are within the veil, where Christ their forerunner is gone before them? Oh, who would not be with them? Who would fear sufferings?

Soul, what are you afraid of? Where are you running; from what are you hiding yourself? What is your ease, or your liberty, or your quiet? Why so loath to loose from this shore? Launch forth into the deep. Fear not transportation into your house of bondage; when you are once there, it is but look up and you are in Paradise.

Such are the sufferings of Christ, this is the cross of the covenant. But it includes also,

4. That which comprehends all the rest, a more manifest exhibition of Christ's special presence: "I am with you to save you." (Jeremiah 30:11). "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon you." (Isaiah 43:2). Through fire and water you must go—"we went through fire and water into a wealthy place"—but wherever you go, he will go with you. When the bush was on fire, the Lord was in the bush; when the three children were in the furnace, the Son of God was there with them. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." (Isaiah 63:9). Though all men forsook me, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me. (2 Timothy, 4:16, 17). The saints shall never have this to charge upon the Lord, "I was in prison, and you visited me not."

He is ever with them, to bear their burdens and ease their shoulders; to plead their cause and maintain their innocence; to wash their stripes, to wipe off their tears, to heal their wounds, to bind up their broken bones, to revive their weary spirits, to perfume their prisons,

to lighten their dungeons, to lead them in their wanderings, to converse with them in their solitudes; to give down from above, in divine smiles and spiritual joys, assurances of dearest love, tenderest care, melting sympathy, gracious acceptance; to give down from above whatever is wanting beneath: in fine, to preserve them from falling by the presence of his grace, until he present them faultless before the presence of his glory. Oh, it is good being with Christ anywhere.

"Tell me, O you whom my soul loves, where you feed and make your flock to rest at noon." "Where you feed?" yes, where you are, whether feeding or fasting, whether rejoicing or mourning. "Where you make your flock to rest at noon?" yes, and where you suffer your flocks to be scattered in the night. Where your flocks are, you are not far away; tell me where you feed, tell me where you are. My Beloved that feeds among the lilies, feeds sometimes among the thorns. When his love is a lily among thorns, there he feeds. He feeds among thorns; he feeds with his sheep, he feeds with his lambs wherever they feed; when darkness and desolation and devils and death feed upon them, even then he feeds them, and takes his feeding with them.

Oh, wherever my Lord is, there let my lot fall. Let me dwell among the thorns, if so my dwelling be with my Lord among the lilies. Let me wander among the mountains while he is with me telling all my wanderings. Let me be scourged, so he will wash my stripes; let me weep, so he will wipe off my tears: I would not fear wounds while I have such oil to pour in. Come, all you thieves and robbers, I fear you not, my dear Samaritan comes by; come, you bulls of Bashan, you boars of the forest, let my Beloved kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, and I regard it not though you kick me with the heel. O my Lord, bring me where you feed, let me live in your face, let me feel your smiles upon my heart, let me love you, tell me you love me, remember, pitied, accept, take care for me, and then choose my condition, my dwelling, and entertainment for me.

Fainting Christian, lift up your eyes, comfort your heart; here is that you fear and tormented yourself with. Here is the inside of that formidable cross, the light side of those dark clouds, the sunny side of that shady thorn hedge that so wounds and afflicts your heart. Fear not, be strong and of a good courage. You still say, "Woe is me, I can find no such thing. Ah, Lord God, does he not speak parables? O that I were assured it might be thus with me." Why, are you not in covenant? Believe, and all is your. I believe, and therefore have I spoken; believe, and you shall see the salvation of God; as sure as the cross is your, all the comforts of the cross are settled upon you. Read over all the gracious words you have before your eyes; review all the instances of suffering saints that have gone before you, to whom these good words have been made good, in conspicuous increases of divine grace, in the signal discoveries of divine love, in the clearest and fullest revelation of divine glory, in the intimate sense of the divine presence, quickening, enlarging, encouraging, supporting their spirits in the darkest dens, in the sharpest conflict with reproaches, mockings, bonds, banishments, torments, and deaths; and know that all these things are written for your learning, that you through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

Read over Isaiah 51: "Hearken to me, you that follow after righteousness, you that seek the Lord; look unto the rock whence you are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence you are dug." "For the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places; he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody." "Lift up your eyes to the heavens," etc. "Hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear you not the reproach of men, neither be you afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation." "I, even I, am he who comforts you: who are you, that you should be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forget the Lord your Maker, that has stretched forth the heavens,

and laid the foundations of the earth; and have feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? And where is the fury of the oppressor?" "Where is the fury of the oppressor?" say you; "where is it not, rather? Is it not in the house, and in the field? Is it not in the city and in the villages? Is it not upon my cattle, upon my purse, upon my body, upon my children, upon my friends? Where is not the fury of the oppressor?" But when you remember the Lord your Maker, the oath, the promise, and covenant of God, the presence, protection, and comfort of your God—when you remember this, then, "Where is the fury of the oppressor?"

Chapter 5.

The Angels of Light are in the Covenant

The Powers of Darkness are in the Covenant

Death is in the Covenant

The Kingdom of Heaven is in the Covenant

I. THE ANGELS OF LIGHT are in the covenant. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14). While our Lord himself was sent down to minister, behold his servants are to be ministered unto; the angels are made their ministers: "He shall give his angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways." (Psalm 91:11). They have received

a charge, and they have great advantages for keeping the charge of the Lord.

1. They are mighty. "Bless the Lord, you his angels that excel in strength." (Psalm 103:20). An angel is more than an army; what slaughters have the angels made in the armies of the aliens! A hundred fourscore and five thousand Assyrians are slain by one angel of the Lord, when encamped against Judah. (Isaiah 37:36). It is hard service indeed that is too hard for an angel.

2. They are numerous. There are great multitudes of them. "Thousands of angels." (Psalm 67:17). "A multitude of the heavenly host." (Luke 2:13). An angel is more than an army; but what then are an army of angels?

3. They are faithful. They can do much for the saints, but will they do it? Yes, they are faithful; they do the commandments of God. (Psalm 103:20). God bids them keep, and they are faithful, and will keep, his sheep: we are taught to pray that "the will of God may be done on earth, as it is in Heaven;" that men may be faithful as the angels of God.

4. They are favorites; they behold the face of God, they dwell in his presence, they are admitted to stand before his throne, they can be heard: they have favor in Heaven, and therefore have they such power on earth. "Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven." (Matthew 18:10). Touch not mine anointed, let alone my little ones, take heed how you offend them; their angels are before my Father, and are mighty with him, to engage his power for their aid and deliverance.

O the great security of the least of saints! These mighty ones, these multitudes, these faithful ones, these favorites of Heaven, the holy angels of God, have all received a charge from the Lord, to preserve and defend them: "Lord, open his eyes, that he may see; and behold,

the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." (2 Kings 6:17).

Should a mighty prince commit any subject of his to a potent and faithful life-guard, with this charge: "Look to this man, keep him in safety, see that he come to no harm; whoever offends, do you defend him; wherever he goes, go you with him; wherever he lodges, stand you as a guard about the house; while he sleeps, do you watch; see that he want for nothing, let no hurt come to him:" if this were your case, in what great security would you count yourself. But O, what is a life-guard of men to a guard of mighty angels? "Fear not, little flock;" in Heaven your angels behold the face of God, and in earth they have pitched their tents round about you.

II. THE POWERS OF DARKNESS are delivered over in the covenant: Satan and all his instruments. We are naturally in bondage to Satan, held "captive by him at his will," (2 Timothy 2:26); his prisoners, his slaves, his vassals. By the blood of the covenant, the Lord has brought forth his prisoners and redeemed his captives, (Zechariah 9:11), and also has spoiled principalities and powers, and led captivity captive. In this covenant there is deliverance of the prisoners, and a delivery over of them by whom they were held—a jail-delivery, and a delivery of the jailers into their hands; and they are delivered over bound, the God of this world in chains, limited, spoiled, banished, and cast out. "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18). The gates of cities were anciently their special strength, and in them were their great councils held for the contriving and managing of all their concerns. By "Hell," understand all that belong to that dark region, Satan and all his instruments, the dragon with his armies, the serpent and all his seed. By "the gates of Hell," understand the power and policy, the combination and counsels of Satan and his whole party. These gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, that is, against the church; neither against the Head nor any member of it: they "shall not prevail;" that involves two things.

1. They shall fight against it; they are all combined and listed against the church, making a war upon it. "Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof. Down with it, root and branch; let it not have a being, let it not have so much as a name under Heaven." Particular quarrels there may be between devil and devil; Herod against Pilate, and Pilate against Herod; yet the tails of these smoking firebrands are united against the Lord and his anointed ones—against their profession, against their religion, against the soul of every saint. Whatever veils or specious pretenses they varnish their quarrel with, this it is that lies at the bottom of all their counsels and machinations; in this all their aims are concentrated—to root out godliness, and the professors of it, from the earth; to deceive and destroy souls for ever.

2. Though they shall fight against the church, yet they shall not overcome. They shall not prevail against it; that is, not finally: in the end the victory shall be the saints'. Jerusalem shall be "a burdensome stone for all people," (Zechariah 12:3); such a stone that they shall not be able to lift, or move it out of its place; it shall stand as a rock, against which the impetuous waves may dash themselves, but they cannot move it. Neither shall they be able to bear it. It shall crush those who burden themselves with it. Those who shake the church are pulling a house about their ears, a rock upon their loins; it shall break the backs of all those who contend against it; they shall be cut in pieces that burden themselves with it, though all the earth, yes, and Hell too, be gathered together against it. It is a vain design that Satan and his partakers are driving on. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" (Psalm 2:1). It is a vain design, and it is a fatal design to themselves: "You shall break them with a rod of iron, you shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

In the first dawning of this glorious daylight, it was promised that the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head. "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15). "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the

prince of this world be cast out." (John 12:31). Cast out; whence? Why, cast out of his kingdom, out of his hold, cast down from his throne and dominion. His prison is broken, and now the prey is taken from the strong, the captives of the mighty are taken away.

But you say, "Was this indeed done at the death of Christ, to which these words refer? Does not Satan still reign? Is he not still the God of this world, and the prince of the power of the air? Yes, what a hold has he yet of the saints that are in the earth! What a tyrant is he to them; how does he entangle and ensnare them; what havoc does he make in their consciences; lording it over them, leading them captives by lusts and temptations; what a strong party has he still within them, bearing arms against their Lord, fighting against their souls. What sad inroads does he make upon their grace, upon their peace; they cannot rest for him day nor night, abroad nor at home, alone nor in company; he is ever following them; wherever they go, the devil is at their backs; they cannot pray, nor read, nor spend a thought, nor cast a look, nor dispatch a sigh towards the Lord, but Satan stands by to resist and hinder them. What a yoke has he still upon their neck; what clogs and weights has he still upon their loins; how do they mourn in their souls while he vexes them from day to day; how do they groan, and travail in pain, sighing in themselves and waiting for their redemption. How is it then said, Now is he cast out?" Because now he has received his judgment: "The prince of this world is judged." (John 16:11). Now is the fatal blow given, now is the serpent's head broken, though he still may bruise and hang on the saints. The blow he leveled at our Lord has rebounded on his own head. Though he be as Gad, a serpent in the way, yet you may now tread upon this serpent and it shall not hurt you. The strong man is now bound; if he be a God still, he is a God in chains, a prince in fetters; he must ask leave of your Father, before he can touch one hair of your heads. He cannot tempt you, nor cast a bank against you, nor shoot an arrow at you, without a commission from Heaven. The devils are subject to you. He is cast out, and in your Lord's name you may cast him out; you may be instruments to bring many a soul to repentance, that they may recover themselves out of the snares of the

devil, who are held captive by him at his will. Every sinner that is converted by you, you have cast out a devil from that soul.

Though he be an adversary still, yet is he such an adversary as may be resisted: "Whom resist, steadfast in the faith." (1 Peter 5:9). And if you will resist, he shall flee from you. (James 4:7). Stand, and your enemy runs.

Nay, more, he is not only a conquered enemy, but is made your servant. This viper shall yield you medicine against his own poison. His smittings shall be an excellent oil; the messengers he sends to buffet you, the thorns he sticks in your flesh, shall be a prevention of greater evils. The very destruction he intends to bring upon you shall promote your salvation. His winds shall blow off your chaff, his floods shall wash away your filth, his earthquakes shall open your prison-doors, his tempests shall drive you to harbor. Some men need a tempest to save them from a wreck.

Nay, once more, he is not low enough yet; he shall be brought yet lower. You have assurance of his total and final overthrow. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Romans 16:20). "The devil shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." (Revelation 20:10). It is but a little while, and when he has done his work he shall be sent to his place, where he shall be shut up, and a seal set upon him; whence he shall come out no more forever. He shall tempt no more, vex no more, deceive no more, destroy no more, torment you no more; he shall be thrust out, he shall be chained up; the tormentor shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Stand, Christians, stand your ground a little while; follow your work, hold up your holy profession, hold on your holy course; keep your hearts, keep your garments, keep on your armor, keep corruption under, resist temptation, bear your affliction; hold out faith and patience, fight again your adversaries, watch with your Lord this one hour, and behold, he who shall come, will come; he comes quickly, and he who is in the world shall be consumed with the breath of his

mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his appearing. He shall be cast out, he shall be cast down, and rise no more forever.

III. God has put DEATH into the covenant. "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, all are yours." (1 Corinthians 3:21). Death! there is a great purchase, you will say; what advantage is that? Yes, death is an advantage. To die is gain. For,

1. The commission of death is changed. It was once, Take him, jailer; away with him, carry him to prison, there to be reserved to the judgment of the great day. It is now, Take him, janitor; take him, porter; take him in, give him an entrance into his Master's joy. Death does but take the bride when she is ready, and lodges her in the chamber of the bridegroom; this made death the apostle's desire: "I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." (Philippians 1:23).

2. Death is conquered. What does this mean? Your enemy is yours; your enemy is subjected to you; a conquered enemy is made a tributary; death is disarmed, it has lost its sting. When a serpent has lost its sting, you may take it into your bosom. He that can say, "Death, where is your sting?" may go on and add, "Thanks be to God, which has given me the victory." A signet sent from Heaven with a death's head, is a precious token. Come, Christians, be of good courage; set your feet on the neck of this king of terrors.

3. Death is at once the destruction of all their enemies. When once death has done its office upon them, then farewell Edom, and Ammon, and Amalek, and Egypt—farewell the pricking brier and the grieving thorn; then farewell sin and sorrow forever: the Egyptians they have seen and feared and felt today, they shall never see again forever. It destroys itself, the saints' last enemy, by destroying them; it has its welcome and farewell the same moment; it is but "Welcome death!" and "Farewell death forever!" Death dies with the saints; once dead, they die no more forever; mortality is swallowed up of

life; death is cast into the lake of fire; that is its region; there, there souls die, and die, and die again, over and over, forever and ever: but for the saints, it does but set them on the banks of that good land, where it cannot follow them. Our Lord by death, by ours as well as his own, has delivered those who "through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Christians, you may now not only with patience, but with desire, expect the assault of this king of terrors. "What, shall tribulation, and persecution, and famine, and nakedness, and peril, and sword; shall sorrows and fears and mortality die with me? Yes, shall sin die with me? then welcome death. Lord, strengthen me this once, let me die with the Philistines." Would it be good for you to be with your Father; in the bosom of your Bridegroom; the presence-chamber of your Lord and Love? Would it be a mercy to you to weep no more, fear no more, suffer no more, be tempted no more, sin no more; to be unclothed of corruption, and be clothed upon with immortality and incorruption? Then bid death welcome.

Blessed souls, when you come ashore, and see the light, the love, the joy, the rest, the glory, that is on the other side, you will then more fully understand what this means, "Death is yours." He knew something, who said, "I cannot tell you what sweet pain and delightsome torments are in Christ's love; I often challenge time, that holds us asunder; I have for the present a sick life, much pain, and much lovesickness for Christ; O what would I give to have a bed made for my wearied soul in his bosom! O when shall we meet? O how long is it to the dawning of the marriage-day? O sweet Lord Jesus, take wide steps: come over the mountains at one stride. O my Beloved, flee as a roe, or a young deer upon the mountains of separation. O if he would fold the heavens together like an old cloak, and shovel time and days out of the way, and come quickly."

IV. God has put THE KINGDOM into this covenant: "Theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 5:3). "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32). Glorious things are

spoken of you, O you city of God. I might here enlarge in describing the glory of this kingdom; but when I have said all, I must at last leave it within the veil; and therefore shall only tell you from the apostle, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him," etc. (1 Corinthians 2:9). When by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, the eyes of your understandings are opened, you shall know "what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." (Ephesians 1:18).

Chapter 6.

A New Heart in the Covenant

GOD has put into the covenant ALL THE MEANS OF SALVATION—all things necessary to our obtaining the everlasting kingdom.

All the **outward** means of salvation. Ordinances—the word, sacraments, and prayer; officers—prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. (Ephesians 4:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 3:22).

All the **inward** means of salvation. Every grace, every duty; our obtaining the one, and performing the other; these are all comprehended in the second part of that great promise, "THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE." Two things are hereby signified:

The first is, I will account you and reckon you for mine. You shall have the privilege and the blessings of my people. I will set you apart, and separate you to myself, out of all the tribes and kindreds of the earth; and will avouch you for my portion and peculiar possession. I

will set you as the apple of mine eye, as a seal upon my heart, and upon mine arm. I will mark you out for the people of my love; of you will I take care, for you will I provide, with you are my delights, over you will I rejoice, with you will I dwell, and you shall dwell with me forever.

The other is, I will not only reckon you for my people, but I will undertake for you, that you shall consent to me, accept of me, own me, follow me, and cleave to me as my people. I will not only separate you to myself, but I will fashion you for myself; I will sanctify you, and guide you, and teach you, and help you. I will fulfill in you all the good pleasure of my will; I will work all your works in you; I will avouch you for my people, and you shall avouch me for your God. You shall love me, fear me, obey me; I will keep you from falling, and preserve you to my heavenly kingdom.

Particularly, the Lord has promised to give them,

1. A new heart;
2. A heart to know the Lord;
3. One heart;
4. A heart of flesh;
5. A heart to love the Lord;
6. A heart to fear the Lord;
7. A heart to obey the Lord;
8. A heart to endure to the end.

A New Heart

"A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." (Ezekiel 36:26). This new heart is the genus comprising all the graces

noticed in the chapters which follow; and therefore the less shall suffice to be spoken of it here. A new heart, that is, not physically new in regard to substance, but morally only in regard to qualities.

This new heart signifies both another heart, and a more excellent heart. It is said of Caleb, (Numbers 14:24), that he had another heart. And this other heart is declared to be a more excellent heart than was in the rest of the people. While they either followed not the Lord, or did so but haltingly, he followed the Lord fully. "A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit." (Proverbs 17:27).

There is another heart that is not a new heart. Nebuchadnezzar had another, but no new heart—the heart of a beast for the heart of a man: an evil heart grown worse is not a new heart, but the old heart grown older. We read that when Saul was anointed king, God gave him another heart, (1 Samuel 10:9); this was a more excellent heart than he had before, and yet not the heart here promised. He gave to him another heart, that is, the spirit of government; the heart of a king instead of the heart of a private person; a more public, enlarged, heroic heart; the heart of a king, fitted to the station and office of a king.

The excellencies of this new heart are not natural, but spiritual excellencies, as will appear more in the handling of the particular graces promised; and are such as fit Christians for their new state, work, and reward.

For their new state. Christians are made the children of God, vessels of honor, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; and God gives them a heart answering to the dignity of their high calling.

For their new work. A Christian has better work to do than other men: while their business lies all here below, in this earth, in their fields and vineyards, etc, Christians' work lies above, with their God and their Jesus, and within, about their nobler and immortal part; their work is spiritual, and such is the heart that is given to them.

For their new reward. God intends better things for them; a better portion, a better hope, better comforts, joys, and delights here, and a better inheritance hereafter; and he prepares them better hearts to receive these better things; he will not put his new wine into old bottles.

The excellencies of this new heart may be reduced to these three:

1. A new light, discovering the dignity of their state, the spirituality of their work, the glory of their reward.

2. A new law, or frame, or bent of spirit, inclining, disposing, and fitting them to all that which they are made for. And this is the meaning of God's writing his law in the heart. The law written in the heart signifies not only the law made known in the heart, but the heart made suitable to the law, and adapted to the obedience of it. There is a kind of naturalness between the new heart and all that the law requires.

3. A new power, strengthening them for their new work. We have all these mentioned in one Scripture: "God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7). A sound mind, there is the new light; a spirit of love, there is the new law, or frame, and with these a spirit of power.

In sum, this new heart is the divine nature, the image of God renewed, the life of God begotten, Christ formed in them. A heart after God's own heart, containing in it all those graces of the Spirit, wherein stand their likeness to God and their capacity of serving and enjoying him. This is the heart the Lord will give: "A new heart will I give unto you."

Against all these glorious things promised, it would be objected, "A kingdom promised! glory and honor and everlasting blessedness granted! Alas, what is all this to me? To whom is it promised; or upon what terms? When I consider what is required, it is all one to me as if there had been nothing promised. The way to this

blessedness is too narrow, the gate is too strait for me ever to hope to enter. Whatever the crown be, the strictness and severities of a Christian course, the very foresight of them does amaze and confound me. Live a new life! deny myself, take up my cross, follow Christ, spend my days in fasting and praying and mourning; live by rule, look to every step, to every word, to every thought—all these things are against me. A new life, a new course: if this be it, I shall never bear it. It is all one to me as if there had been no Christ, no gospel, no kingdom promised, if it cannot be obtained upon other terms than these. I may even as well sit down as I am, and run the venture of what follows, as to feed myself with hopes of that which I see I can never obtain. If I do but move heavenwards, the stream carries me down; if I do but take up a thought, make an essay, set a foot forward towards this new course, I find my old things hang upon my heels. My old customs, my old companions, my old pleasures and ease and liberties quickly pull me back. O what shall I do? I must be undone, I must be a lost and condemned wretch. Gladly I would be happy, but I cannot be holy. I dread, I often tremble to think of losing Christ, and the blessings of his gospel; but this wretched heart is too hard for me, and will not come. I am ashamed, I am plagued to think what I am likely to lose, and for how little; but I cannot help it; the way is such that this foolish heart will never endure it."

Why, hearken, soul; the Lord who has called you to this new course, will give you a new heart. And there is not anything required in a holy life so irksome and so contrary to you, but this new heart is so fitted and suited to it that it will become easy to you. Its pain will be pleasant, its severity will be liberty, its very drudgery, as you count it, will be a great delight. "I delight to do your will, O my God; yes, your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8). And of the renewed soul it is said, "His delight is in the law of the Lord:" in the original, his will, his heart, is in the law. (Psalm 1:2). The law is in the heart, and his heart is in the law. God's will and his are the same. Whatever God bids him do, his heart bids him do, and his hand will never say his heart nay. He who delights in the law because it is a law commanding such things, will never grudge to do what it commands.

Where it is a pleasure to be commanded, it is no pain to obey. Whatever work the law cuts him out, this work he loves. Bid him pray, bid him watch, bid him walk humbly with his God; it is work he loves; it is in his heart to do it. Bid a saint draw near to God in any duty; it is as if you bade the hungry to eat, or the thirsty to drink, the naked to be clothed, the beggar to come for alms, or the poor laborer for a day's work. Bid a Christian deny himself, or crucify his flesh; it is the same as if you bade him deny his enemy, revenge himself on his enemy: such revenge is sweet. But O how pleasant is it to him to be called to a life of praise; to live above in the light, in the love, in the joy of the Lord; to be searching and studying and looking into, and admiring those everlasting treasures of spiritual and heavenly delights laid up in God; to behold his face, to live in his presence, and to dwell in the light of his countenance! It is true, there is some remaining difficulty and irksomeness in the sweetest works of religion, as far forth as the heart is unrenewed and is yet carnal. "Deny myself; mortify lust; forsake my companions; withdraw from iniquity! why, what is this but to cut off my hand; to pluck out my eyes; to tear my flesh? Walk with God; seek his face; dwell in his presence! it is all one as to bid me feed on the air, wander on the mountains, dwell in the wilderness; and as much pleasure can I find in the one as in the other." It is so indeed, as far as you remain carnal; the Lord God and all his ways are a wilderness, a land of darkness to you; but as much as you have of this new heart, so much ease and pleasure you will find herein.

Desponding soul, you say you are yet ignorant, and have little knowledge of the way of the Lord; but behold a new light to lead you. You are yet carnal, and your heart is contrary, and ever contending with God; but the new nature will end the strife. You are weak and impotent, the work is too hard for you, if you loved it ever so well; but how will this be when you are endued with power from on high?

O friend, would you indeed live this new life? then get this new heart. "But O, there lies the difficulty; how or where shall I get it?" Why, have recourse to the covenant; there it lies for you. "But how shall I

get it thence?" Why, has not the Lord promised to give it you? take the word from his mouth, and put it into your own; turn the word of promise into a prayer. Does he say, "I will give?" let your soul answer, "Give, Lord, give me this new heart. I am weary, Lord, and you are weary also of this wicked heart: at once ease yourself and me; take away this, and give me a better heart." Turn the word of promise into a prayer, and then turn the word of prayer into a word of faith. He says, "I will give;" let your faith say, "You will give, I shall have it; since you have said, your servant may also boldly say, you will do it. You will give me a better heart. Farewell, my old sins, lusts, and companions; farewell, my old pleasures and ways; now for Heaven in earnest, now welcome the strait gate, the new and living way. Old things are passed away, all things shall become new." Turn the word of promise into a prayer, turn your prayer into a word of faith, and God will turn the word of faith into a word of command. "Be it according to your word. Let there be a new light, let there be a new law, let there be a new power, let there no more be a spirit of fear in this heart, but a spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind." And as when he said in the creation of the great world, "Let there be light," let there be a firmament, let there be a sun and moon, it was so; so when he shall say, in the new creation of your little world, Let there be light, let there be love, let there be power—let us again make man in our image, after our own likeness, it shall be so. The Lord has said, I will; let your prayer say, Do it, Lord; let your faith say, You will do it; and God will say, Amen. So be it.

Chapter 7.

A Heart to Know the Lord

"I will give them a heart to know me." (Jeremiah 24:7). The knowledge of God is the first excellency of the new heart. As in the old, so in the new creation, as was said before, the first word is, "Let there be light." There is not so glorious a pre-eminence of day above night, as of the knowledge above the ignorance of God. As the firmament without a sun, as the body without an eye, so is the soul without knowledge. What this knowledge of God here promised is, will appear, if we consider its object and its act.

The object of this knowledge is God: not only the nature or being of God, manifested in his essential perfections, his glorious attributes, his infiniteness, eternity, omnipotence, in his personal relations, the subsistences in the godhead; but God in Christ God in covenant; yes, the whole mind and will of God, all that which God has revealed to us as our duty or happiness. God known in the heart, is the whole Bible opened: the law opened, the gospel opened; duties, comforts, privileges made manifest. Christ opened in his sufferings, in his satisfaction, in his Spirit, in all the riches of his glory: the whole mystery of godliness revealed. The heart opened, man made known to himself, all the depths of the heart, all the deceits of the heart, all the faculties and powers of the heart, with their motions, operations, inclinations, the rectitude or obliquities of them. Heaven opened, the crown, the kingdom known; everlasting rest, glory, honor, immortality brought to light. Hell opened, sin known, the devil known, wrath, temptation, the curse, eternal fire known. All this, even all that God is, and all that he has revealed in his word and works, are the object of this knowledge of God.

The act. To know, is to apprehend, or understand God, and the things of God: "Let him that glories, glory in this, that he understands and knows me." (Jeremiah 9:24). "That you may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ." (Ephesians 3:18, 19). This apprehension of God does not barely denote our having received some intellectual or metaphysical notions of God, and the truths that are in him; but further, it denotes:

An APPROBATION of him; an approving or liking the things that are excellent: "That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that you may approve things that are excellent." (Philippians 1:9, 10).

APPROPRIATION. The knowing of God as a reconciled God; a God, and a God to me; good, and good to me; wise, and wise for me; my Lord and my God. To know God in Christ, reconciled through Christ, propitious through Christ, this is saving knowledge. To know and not possess, to see and not eat, to know an angry God, a wrathful God, a God lost—to know goodness, mercy, loving-kindness, compassion, all-sufficiency, and to have the heart recur, "What is this to you? this is none of thine"—the damned thus know, and die.

AFFECTION. As "they that know your name will put their trust in you," (Psalm 9:10), so those that know your name will love you, and fear you, and rejoice in you, and bless your name. To know and hate God, to know and despise God, to know and fly from God, to know and blaspheme and curse God, the devils thus know and tremble.

But especially that which distinguishes this saving from common knowledge is, its power and its savor.

I. ITS POWER. The knowledge of God is mighty—my preaching was not weak, but mighty in you, (2 Corinthians 13:3). It has,

1. A TRANSFORMING power. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." (2 Corinthians 3:18). "Be you not conformed to this present world, but be you transformed by the renewing of your minds." (Romans 12:2). The renovation of the mind both is this change, and works it further upon the whole soul; this new light is the new creature; old things pass away, all things become new, where the mind is savingly enlightened. God known in the soul, is God united with the soul; Christ revealed in the heart, is Christ formed upon the heart; there is life in this light, it is no other than the light of life. The knowledge of

God comprehends, is involved in, and inspirits and animates every grace and duty. As the same soul in the eye sees, in the ear hears, in the palate tastes—as the same juice is in the olive fatness, in the fig-tree sweetness, in the oak strength, in the rose fragrancy, in the lily beauty; so the same grace, which in the mind is light, in the heart is love, holy desire, holy fear, holy joy. Thus one says, that as feeling is inseparable from all the organs of sense—as the eye feels and sees, the ear feels and hears, the palate feels and tastes, the nostrils feel and smell; so knowledge is involved in every grace. Faith knows and believes, charity knows and loves, temperance knows and abstains, patience knows and suffers, humility knows and stoops, repentance knows and mourns, obedience knows and does, compassion knows and pities, hope knows and expects, confidence knows and rejoices; and therefore we believe, and love, and obey, and hope, and rejoice, because we know.

God gives us this knowledge as the eye of our souls, and by that eye he enters with all his power and glory; that you may know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, and be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:19). Daylight is not that light we receive by reflection from the moon and stars, at second-hand: when the sun is risen and come in among us, then it is day; when the Sun of righteousness is risen in the heart, there is the light of life; God is and God dwells in this light, and where God dwells every unclean thing vanishes. Can darkness dwell with the sun; can death dwell with life? According to the measure of the manifestation of God in us, so far forth is sin necessarily vanished. You are but the carcass of a Christian, the light that is in you is darkness, the life that is in you is death, if you be not in the whole man renewed after the image of him that created you. If Christ be not formed in your heart, if the love, the humility, the meekness, the patience, the compassion, the holiness of the Lord Jesus be not begotten in you, whatever you know, you know nothing as you ought to know; if you have all knowledge and have not charity, and so if you have all knowledge and have not humility, meekness, holiness, you are but as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

Doubting Christian, that complain of and bewail your ignorance, and fear that you know not God, look upwards where his glory dwells; lift up your eyes and see. Or if you can not see, lift up your heart for eyes: "Lord, where dwell you? let me see your face, show me your glory, pity the blind, let my blind eyes be opened, and my tongue shall be loosed and speak forth your praise." Look upward, and if yet you see not your God, look inward: can you see his face in your soul? can you see his image on your heart? can you behold in this glass the glory of the Lord, and find yourself changed into his image? then comfort your heart, how short-sighted soever you seems to be, how dim soever your candle burns, how weak soever in the knowledge of God you complain you are, you have seen God, you have seen his face in peace. God that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined into your heart, and given you the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

2. A FRUCTIFYING power. This sunshine makes a fruitful soil. My desire for you, says the apostle, is "that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." (Colossians 1:9-11). "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God," (Philippians 1:11); full of light and full of love, of faith, of patience, of humility, and fruitful in every good work. "A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, brings forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, brings forth evil things." (Matthew 12:35). A good man has a good treasure within him, a treasure of heavenly wisdom, of divine truth, a treasure of light; God has shined into his heart; he is filled with all the fullness of God; and what is laid up within, he brings forth without. An evil man has an evil treasure, Satan has been filling his heart. "Why has Satan filled your heart?" (Acts 5:3). The treasures of darkness are there, a treasure of lust and lies; falsehood and folly are found with him: these treasures of darkness within bring forth

darkness; dark souls lead dark lives; their way is dark, their deeds are darkness. Oh, how fruitful are sinners in their unfruitful works! "filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity." (Romans 1:29, 30). Their hearts are full, and thereupon their mouths full, their eyes full, their hands full; mouths full of cursings, eyes full of adultery, hands full of violence, filled with all unrighteousness. "O generation of vipers, how can you, being evil," having such hearts, "speak good things?" All is evil that comes from you; and how can it be otherwise? Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. And in like manner, O generation of believers, how can you, being good, but bring forth good things? Or how can you say or think there is a treasure of grace, a fountain of light within, when no streams spring forth? Poverty in the life speaks no great plenty in the heart; the truths of God within you are the seed of God, the good seed that he sows in his fields: where there is good seed sown in good ground, you will expect a fruitful harvest; a barren crop speaks a barren soil, or no good seed sown there.

"Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." (1 John 2:3). We know God. "But are you sure of it? Are you not mistaken?" No, we are not mistaken; we know that we know him. "But how do you know it?" Why, how are trees known? By their fruits you shall know them. "How do you know that this is indeed the tree of knowledge?" Why, see what fruits are hanging upon it: we keep the commandments; here is obedience growing, here is holiness and righteousness and mercy. Doubtless this is the right tree, for behold all the commandments, the two tables hanging upon the boughs of it, and not broken, but kept and observed. We may as well say obedience is no obedience, duty is no duty, faith and love and humility and patience are not what they are, as that the tree that brings forth this fruit is not the tree of knowledge. "We know that we know him, because we keep his commandments." Yes, and this tree of knowledge is the tree of life too, both in one: "A tree of life to them that lay hold upon her." (Proverbs 3:18). Where these fruits are not found, where there are nothing but shows and painted fruits

—where there are nothing but the fruits of unrighteousness, contention, strife covetousness, sensuality, and the like—he is very ignorant indeed that is not able to say, Whatever I am ignorant of, this one thing I know, that I know not God. Christian, boast not of what you have, but consider what you do; try your head by your heart, and your heart by your hand; judge of your light by your love, and your love by your life; say not that God has shined into your heart, unless your light shine, your works shine before men: "The path of the just shines." (Proverbs 4:18). It is but a form of knowledge that brings forth but a form of godliness; he that holds the truth in unrighteousness, has not the truth in him. You say you know the Lord, but what say your ways? Do these speak the same things? Action is the best interpreter of the inner man: feel the pulses of your heart; what watchfulness, what holiness has your knowledge brought forth? Have you received the Spirit, who yet walk in the flesh? What, Heaven in your heart, and naught but earth in your hand; truth in your heart, and lies in your mouth; holiness in your heart, glory in your heart, and in your tongue nothing but filth or froth? What, a heart so full, and a life so empty; how can these things be? Has the light in your heart given laws only to your heart? or does your heart submit, while your tongue rebels and you kick with the heel?

Woe to us Christians, that sinners should be so full, and saints so empty; that they should speak what they have seen with their father, and we should speak no more what we have seen with our Father; that oaths, and lies, and blasphemies, and scoffs, and cursing should be so rife in their mouths, and that truth and goodness and holiness, blessings and praises, should be no more in ours; that there should be so much deceit in their lips, and so little grace in ours; that the shade should be more fruitful than the sun; that the good ground should be the only barren ground; that their habitations should be so full of violence and oppression and wantonness, and no more mercy and righteousness and sobriety in ours.

Woe to us, that we know so much to so little purpose; that we should be bushels to hide, and not rather candlesticks to hold forth the

candle of the Lord he has lighted up in us. O how many dark souls might our candle lead on to the sun: the light that is in Israel might do much towards turning Egypt into a Goshen. Speak, Christians, speak what you have seen, and testify what you have believed: bring forth out of your treasure; pity the blind world, or at least be more helpful one to another. Instruct as you have been instructed; convince as you have been convinced; comfort as you have been comforted of God. Outvie sinners; let not their mouths be so full of cursing as yours of blessing; while theirs are so full of blasphemies, let it be said of you as of your Lord, Full of grace are their lips, Good words are not wind; you may reckon them not among the leaves, but the fruit. While you are speaking of the things of God, you are therein doing the will of God. I confess the proverb is true, The greatest talkers are not always the greatest doers. But it is true also, he is seldom a great doer that has nothing to say. There is a speaking which is our doing. There is a speaking in a way of boasting, to magnify and set up ourselves; beware of that: and there is a speaking to the use of edifying, to build up our brethren. When we are speaking to instruct, to convince, to awaken, and whet on our own and other spirits to our work, we are then doing our work. Speak, Christians, and speak often the things that you know; but let me add, let your lives speak also, and not your lips only. If you would not be vain talkers, nor all tongue, let your lips speak, and your hands speak, and your feet speak; let your works and your ways speak the wonderful things of God. Bring forth what you have received: he that is all inside, and he who is all outside, are equally nothing. The one is a shadow without substance, the other's substance is but a shadow; the one is a deceiver, the other a deceived soul; the one boasts himself, the other thinks himself something; but neither is anything.

Christians, be full of good fruits, and you will make full proof that your wisdom is from above. "If you know these things, happy are you if you do them."

Feeble Christian, that know but little of God and call that little nothing, while you doubt whether the light has shined into you, do

you walk in the little light you have; do you shine as a light in the world; do you know how to be holy and humble and harmless and honest; do you live under the power of those truths you know; do you fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his servants? If so, trust in the Lord, and stay yourself on your God; you are a child of light, though, through your trembling heart, you walk in darkness. Having not seen, you love; and believing, you shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

II. ITS SAVOR. "And makes manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place." (2 Corinthians 2:14). The knowledge of God is sweet-scented; it casts forth a fragranciness wherever it comes. It has a gratefulness to the heart, and leaves sweet impressions on the senses of the saints. They taste that the Lord is gracious. As their breathings go up as sweet incense, so his beams come down with like sweetness to them. The name of the Lord is "as ointment poured forth." (Song of Solomon 1:3). Why, what is his name? This is his name: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." (Exodus 34:6, 7). Oh, what a bundle of myrrh, what a garden of spices is here inclosed. What a sweet-smelling savor does it send forth to those who have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

The name of the Lord is a precious ointment, and the knowledge of God is this ointment poured forth. Where God is known in the soul, there his sweet savor is shed abroad. The thoughts of God are precious, the ways of God are pleasant to them that understand them. His fruit was sweet unto my taste. Oh, the ineffable pleasures of religion! The carnal world count it an insipid thing; they cannot taste; and no wonder, for they do not see the things of God, nor can they, because they are spiritually discerned. Let God be savingly known, and then you will find what the savor of his knowledge is. This light is sweet, it is a pleasant thing to behold the sun. O my soul, let your walks, let your dwellings be in this garden of the Lord; let the sun shine, and the smell of his spices shall flow forth unto you. O my

Lord, shed abroad your sweet ointment, let the smell of your garments refresh my soul. Let me taste and see; let me see, and I shall taste that the Lord is gracious.

Vanish, all you carnal pleasures and sensual delights; these rosebuds rot, the flowers of your gardens wither, dead flies are in all your ointments, the light of the Lord has shined all your glories into darkness. The waters of the sanctuary have made all your waters brackish; there remains no pleasure in them.

He who has known the Lord, has more or less, according to the measure of his knowledge, received in the relish and sweetness of it; and what he has received in, he sends forth before men; he has received, and he is a sweet savor. As the preachers, so the practitioners of piety are a sweet savor of Christ unto God, and hand down the sweetness of God unto men. They are of savory lips, and of savory lives; the savor of their graces is shed abroad in the churches of Christ. Carnal hearts send forth a stench instead of a sweet smell; they are all rottenness, the savor of a sepulcher is all they have; their ways, their words, their very breath smell of a rotten heart; yes, the very best they have, their pleasures, their garments, their gallantry, their powders and perfumes and sweet odors savor of their proud and vain and sensual hearts. But Oh, what a scent do their oaths and their curses and their scoffs and their lies send forth! Sinners, learn to know the Lord, and this will quickly change your savor. And you that know anything of God, think not that your knowledge is saving, until your souls have received in, and your ways do send forth the savor of his knowledge.

This second mark of a heart to know the Lord, namely, the sweet savor of this knowledge; the pleasure that it brings into the soul, might be of uncertain significance if it stood alone: there may some pleasure and joy arise from the common knowledge of God; and sometimes there is but little joy where there is true religion. But where it is found in conjunction with the former mark, the evidence of its soundness will be more full. Find all together, this

transforming, this fructifying, this savory knowledge, and you may rest satisfied that this is the saving knowledge of God. And of this is the promise, "I will give them a heart to know me."

Oh, how much need have we still to wait, and beg for the accomplishment of this promise; how little sound knowledge is there found among us! Some are weak in knowledge who have been long taught of God, and yet are not taught of God. God has been teaching them, but they have not learned of him; they have had a good master, but have been poor scholars—weak men, as we call men of low understanding. Oh, how many weak souls are there, even among professing Christians, who, though they might have been teachers of others, yet need to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God. Some men have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to their shame. (1 Corinthians 15:34).

Others are men of knowledge, but of weak knowledge, who know much, but to little purpose; their great knowledge has little power in them; their lusts are too strong for their light. I spoke unto you with a strong hand, and instructed you. (Isaiah 8:11). If God have spoken to these men, yet his hand has not instructed them; the nail has not been struck deep enough, it dwells in the head only, it has not reached their heart; they have an eye, but are far enough from having a heart to know the Lord. Their knowledge does not lead them on to religion, but must serve them instead of religion; it is made to serve, and not suffered to guide and govern—to serve their turns, to serve their interest, to serve their pride and their covetousness. Their knowledge of God makes them devils; it helps them to play the hypocrite, to be deceivers of others, yes, and of their own souls. It will seek them out acceptable words, put prayers into their mouths, praises into their lips, spiritualize their language, furnish them with savory discourse, carry them plausibly through duties, which in name are for God's glory and the good of souls, but are in truth only sacrifices to their lusts. The knowledge of God humbles, but this knowledge puffs up, and lifts up—puffs them up in their own, and lifts them up in others' thoughts; and when it has done this, it has

done them all the service they have for it to do, unless it may be they have some worse work for it—to make rents and divisions in the church of Christ, to maintain disputes, to cavil and quarrel, to divide and make parties, to make twenty religions out of one, until at length they make that one to be none. While the apostle says, "Some men have not the knowledge of God, I speak this to your shame;" I may say also, Some men have the knowledge of God, I speak this to their shame. What, the knowledge of God, and no more humility? the knowledge of God, and no more charity? I speak this to your shame. Have the faith of Christ in respect of persons? have the knowledge of God in respect of parties? know God, and yet divide and scatter and confound them that are of God? yes, and contend and quarrel about small differences, and protest, "Here is God, and not there; with us, and not with you?" when, it may be, a little charity would tell you, for the main, he may be with both; and so much uncharitableness makes it a question whether he be with either. The more such men pretend to the knowledge of God, the greater their shame.

Friends, beware you be not undone, either by your ignorance or your knowledge. Love not darkness, and call not darkness light; call not that the knowledge of God which is not; misuse not that which is. Have you no knowledge? What, and such a promise before you? "I will give them a heart to know me, they shall all know me." What, and such a gospel before you, the work whereof is to open blind eyes, and to turn from darkness to light? Open your mouth, sinner, and God will open your eyes; "Ask, and you shall have; seek, and you shall find;" see, wink not at the light that shines round about you; love not darkness, if you love not death. "This is eternal life, to know you." What then is ignorance? there's death in your heart, if there be no light in your eye.

Have you knowledge? be thankful, and be humble; be not high-minded, but fear; prize it, but do not abuse it. Have you received the knowledge of the truth? Live under the power of the truth you know; resign up yourself to it—to its transforming power; give it leave to work, and to change you into its own image; let this new light make

you a new man—to its governing power; let it teach you and rule you; let it teach as one that has authority; let it rule until it has put all your enemies under your feet; until every thought, every imagination, and every high thing he made low, and brought into captivity to Christ. Let not the light of the Lord help you to do the devil's work; let it not be fodder for your flesh, lest it be fuel for your flames; let it not repent your God nor you, that ever you had such a talent committed to you; let it neither be loss to God, nor the eternal loss of your own soul. He who has appeared on earth in beams of light will be revealed from Heaven, in flames of fire rendering vengeance to all that know God but obey not the gospel of Christ. Woe to those that neither know nor obey; but Oh, what to those that obey not, though they know?

Christian, know the Lord, but know and fear; know and serve, know and honor your God; know God, and know yourself, your sin and your misery, your dangers and your temptations; know and mourn; know and be ashamed; know, and fear, and watch, and fight, and overcome. Know God, and know his will, your duty and your way, your privileges and opportunities, your race and your crown. Know, and do, and run, and suffer, and wait, and hope, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Know God, but God in Christ, God reconciled, pardoning, absolving, accepting through him. Know, and believe, accept, adventure upon, resign, commit yourself to him. Know your God, and behold him; look upon your God in his power, in his wisdom, in his holiness, in his goodness, in his loving-kindness, in his mercy. Behold him in his word, in his works, in his providence, in his saints, in your soul, in his Son; set him before your eyes, look upon your God, and never leave looking until you are changed into his image and satisfied with his likeness; and when you are brought to this, then he has done for you what he has said: "I will give them a heart to know me."

Chapter 8.

One Heart

"I will give them one heart." (Ezekiel 11:19). We read, "Ephraim is like a silly dove, without heart," (Hosea 7:11); he has no heart at all, that is, none for his God, as good as none; and in Psalm 12:2, we read that Israel had a double heart, a heart and a heart—more hearts than one; but says the Lord, I will give them a heart, and it shall be but one, and no more.

Not to dwell on the signification of this text as it respects Christians collectively, let us consider it as it respects each particular Christian. This "one heart" may be taken as opposed to a wavering, a divided, and a double heart.

It is opposed to a wavering, unstable heart. (James 1:6, 8). Wavering-minded men have almost as many hearts as they live days, or meet with cases; a heart that changes with the weather, and tacks about with every wind, that resolves and repents, that chooses and changes, that, like a wave of the sea, is tossed about with every wind. This you may call either many hearts, or no heart, as you will. But the believer's one heart is a fixed, established, resolved heart: "It is good that the heart be established with grace." (Hebrews 13:9). Grace fixes, establishes, and brings to a consistency with itself the heart which before was anything or nothing.

It is opposed to a divided heart, (Hosea 10:2); a heart cut in two as it were; a cloven heart, one half for God, the other half for sin; one half for Christ, the other half for this present world; God having a corner in it, and the rest for sin and the devil. This "one heart" is an entire heart; all the powers of it are united within itself, and go the same way; God has the whole heart. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name." (Psalm 103:1). All its springs are in him, and thither do all its streams bend their course.

It is opposed to a double heart or a hypocritical heart, properly so called, (Psalm 12:2, 3); "a heart and a heart," a heart in the breast and another in the tongue. Our outside is presumed to be an expression of our inside; what we speak, we pretend to be in our very hearts. It is the very heart in the tongue that speaks, the heart in the eye that weeps, the heart in the hand that works, the heart in the foot that walks. It is not so with the hypocrite; he shows another heart in his tongue, in his ways, than that which is within him. He has a heart, and a heart; one in his tongue or life, and quite another in his breast. His course speaks him another man than he is. Thus "one heart" signifies a single or a plain heart.

To sum up all together, this one heart is such as fixes upon one end; has but one thing to do; and does what it does.

I. IT FIXES UPON ONE END. God is its end. There it wholly "bestows itself: "I am your." (Psalm 119:94). And there only it takes up its rest. "And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in you." (Psalm 39:7). God is both its work and its wages. To please God, this is its whole business; and to enjoy God, this is its happiness. This is the mark it has in its eye, this is the scope of all its motions, to honor and enjoy God. This it wills, this it loves, this it desires, designs, hopes, labors for, that the Lord may possess, and be the possession of it. Particularly, it gives God both the place and the power of its chief end.

1. The place of its chief end. God is its first and last. He is first in the eye, and it looks no further. It makes him not only its chief, but in a sense its only aim. It will have no other God, and therefore no other end but the Lord. It makes all things else not only to stoop and stand by, but to serve him. Get you hence, stand off, is its language to all that stands up in his room or stands in his way. Evil men, whatever regard they pretend to have for the Lord, do but make him a servant to their other gods. Religion they will take up, but it is only to serve their own turns, to bring about their carnal ends: "They serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies," says the apostle, (Romans

16:18; Philippians 3:19). Nay, they make the Lord their fellow-servant; they serve, and their religion must serve their sensual appetites. He who will have so much religion only as he may live upon, which is the measure of most men, makes the Lord no longer his God, but his servant. A sincere Christian will set God upon the throne, and make all things else his servants or his footstool. Whatever will not be serviceable must be trodden in the dust. Nothing will be loved and embraced but what will set God higher, or bring God nearer to his heart.

2. The power of the end. The end has a fourfold power: it draws; it directs; it governs: and it rewards.

(1.) It draws the heart to it; God, who is a Christian's end, is also his beginning. Our first step heavenward we owe to the influence of Heaven upon us: "Draw me, we will run after you." (Song of Solomon 1:4). "No man can come unto me, unless the Father, which has sent me, draw him." Nothing but God will so do it that nothing will draw the soul another way. The pleasures of sin, the wages of unrighteousness, are poor and low baits to entice a soul away from God, that is, so far as it is renewed; so it is nothing but God that draws the soul away from these to him, and he will do it. God draws the soul not by an act of power only, but by the proper attractive influence of the end. Not by efficiency only, but by sympathy; as by the water the thirsty soul is drawn to the water-brooks.

It is God who draws hearts after him: there are instruments, as his Word and ministers; and there are arguments by which God draws; but whatever the instruments or arguments are, it is God who does it. What is the work of either Word or ministers, but to set God before men? and this draws. Instruments can do nothing, unless God be the preacher by them; arguments can do nothing unless he be in and with them: as it was said concerning the people's following Saul, so much more concerning those who follow the Lord, those only follow him "whose hearts God has touched." (1 Samuel 10:26). It is not man's touching, but God's touching the heart, that draws it

heavenward. The tongue of man may touch the ear, it is God only that touches the heart. And when he touches, then the heart will follow; as you know the needle when it is touched with a loadstone, then turns after it. The loadstone is not more naturally attractive of the needle, than God is of that heart which he has touched. "My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my affections were moved in me." (Song of Solomon 5:4). He did but touch the door, and her heart felt him and moved towards him.

O Christians, when you have been waiting upon God in prayer, hearing the gospel, or any other spiritual duty or ordinance, consider, "Has my heart been touched this day? My tongue has been touched, mine ear has been touched, my heart has been treated with; but has the Lord touched it? Has there virtue come forth from him, which has enticed and drawn my soul after him?" Sometimes by a message or visit from Heaven, the Lord has drawn a good word from the lip, a tear from the eye; but O, for touches upon souls, for the flowing out of hearts after the Lord, he is the only loadstone that prevails on gracious souls.

Others who have many hearts, have many attractives; every heart has its peculiar God; twenty gods, it may be, in one man, because so many hearts. Their pleasures are their gods, their profits their gods, their belly their God; their wives or their children their gods; and so many gods, so many ends. And every end is a loadstone to draw them after it. Every heart will go after its God. A Christian that has but one heart, has but one God, and this is he who draws it on its way. You say the Lord is your God, you acknowledge, you own, you have chosen him for your; but what does your God, whom you have chosen, do upon your heart? What will the sight of God, or your love to God, or your hope in God, do upon you? How far will it carry you? Which way runs your heart? Which way do you bend your course? Do you feel your God drawing you, and is your heart running after him? Running denotes motion, and a swift or violent motion.

The Scripture uses divers expressions to note the running of those hearts after God whom he has drawn.

The desiring of the soul after God. "The desire of our soul is to your name. With my soul have I desired you in the night; yes, with my spirit within me will I seek you early." (Isaiah 26:8, 9). Desire is the soul in motion God-wards. Towards him are their desires, and they come from the bottom of the heart. "With my soul have I desired you, with my spirit within me will I seek you." "Lord, all my desire is before you." (Psalm 38:9). It is not, all my desires, but "my desire;" you see all, and it is all but one desire. He desires pardon, he desires peace, he desires help, and the healing of his wounds; but all this is but one desire, God is all. "One thing have I desired." (Psalm 27:4).

The thirsting of the soul. "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." (Psalm 42:2). Thirsting is the extremity of desire; hunger and thirst are the appetite of desire heightened—violent and painful appetites: my soul thirsts, and is in pain until it be satisfied.

The longing of the soul. "O God, you are my God; early will I seek you: my flesh longs for you in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." (Psalm 63:1). Longing causes languishing and pain, if it be not satisfied. "My soul breaks for the longing that it has unto your judgments." (Psalm 119:20). "My heart pants, my strength fails; as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me." (Psalm 38:10).

Calling after God. "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness." (Psalm 4:1). Calling upon God, is the voice of desire. The desiring soul will not keep silence; the tongue, the eyes, the ears, the hands, the knees, must all be orators, when the flame is once kindled within.

Crying after the Lord. This is an expression answering the thirsting of the soul. Crying is a passionate and importunate praying. "I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord." (Psalm 119:145).

Crying out after God. This is the manner of the longing soul. Crying out denotes more than bare crying—loud cries, strong cries, forced

out by a paroxysm of love, or an agony the soul is in: "My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cries out for the living God." (Psalm 84:2).

Following hard after the Lord. "My soul follows hard after you." (Psalm 63:8). This expression is more comprehensive; it denotes both all the workings and breakings and breathings of the soul within, and its diligent use of all outward means, and pressing on after the Lord; all those laborings and watchings and runnings, all that holy violence, with which a saint presses into the kingdom of God.

Put all this together, and you will see the power and influence the Lord has on holy souls, to draw them after him; they are in motion heavenward, desiring, thirsting, longing, calling, crying, crying out, following hard after him. What ails these souls; what is the matter with them; what would they have? "What ails you?" said the Danites once to Micah, "that you come thus after us?" What ails you? Why, you have taken away my gods, and "what have I more?" (Judges 18:23). What ails these crying, longing, running souls? Why, it is after their God they cry, it is after their God they run. Go back, Elisha, said once the prophet to him, when he had cast his mantle on him: "Go back again; for what have I done to you?" (1 Kings, 19:20). What have you done? Enough to hold me from going back. There went virtue with the mantle; the mantle fell on his heart as well as his back, and drew it after the prophet. Should you say thus to the believer, Go back, soul, go back from following your God; for what has he done unto you? O, he has gotten my heart, he replies; no, no, I cannot go back, he is my God, and what have I more?

(2.) The end guides and directs to means. "Where shall I go from you? you have the words of eternal life."

(3.) The end governs. I shall put both these together. What is it that governs sinners but their ultimate end? this points them out their work, and their way; this holds them to their work, and keeps them

in their way: whatever fetters and chains their lusts are to them, it is their carnal ends to which they are in bondage. These are they that lord it over them, and therefore it is impossible to persuade a sinner to make a thorough change of his way, until he has changed his ends. Herein consists the conversion of a sinner, in the changing of his ends. When he ceases to be any longer to himself, to his flesh, to the world, and for a worldly happiness, and is brought about to fix upon God as his portion and happiness, to whom he devotes and dedicates himself, there is conversion. Sin is our turning away, and conversion is turning back to our God. Beloved, consider not barely how, but to what you live; not only what you do, but what you would have; and never count yourselves truly godly, whatever of God be in your way, until God be in your heart and eye. He who has first chosen God, and therefore a godly life, whose godliness of life springs forth as the fruit of his choice of the Lord, that is a godly man.

God governs as our king, and as our end; as our king, by his sovereignty; as our end, by his excellence, worthiness, and goodness: as our king, by laws; as our end, by love. Love will find out our way, will tell all our wanderings, will check us for our sins, sweeten our labors, quicken us on our course, cut our way through dangers and difficulties, and keep us in our way until we come to the fruition of our end. Therefore it is said by the apostle, "The law is not made for a righteous man." (1 Timothy 1:9). Love will save the law a labor. "The law is not made for a righteous man;" not so much, at least, as for sinners; not as to the coercion of it, though still as to its obligation: the constraint of love will much supersede the coercion of laws.

(4.) The end rewards. "They have their reward," (Matthew 6); that is, they have their end. The reputation of being devout and charitable men was the end of their devotion and charity: they prayed, and fasted, and gave alms for no other end; and the obtaining that reputation was their reward. "Truly I say unto you, They have their reward."

God is the reward of his saints: "I am your exceeding great reward." (Genesis 15:1). "My judgment is with the Lord, and my reward with my God." (Isaiah 49:4). God is the reward they shall receive, and the reward they look to receive. Moses "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." (Hebrews 11:26).

And therefore the argument was weighty which Christ used to dissuade his disciples from being in their devotions and alms-deeds as the Pharisees and hypocrites were, who disfigured their countenances in their fasts, and sounded a trumpet to proclaim their alms: "Be you not like them, for they have their reward." The argument was strong to the disciples, who being men of another spirit, could not be satisfied with such a reward.

In these two things saints greatly differ from the men of this world. They are not willing to defer their duties until hereafter; and they dread to have their reward here: they would dispatch their work, and are willing to go upon trust for their wages. Sinners would have their wages in hand, and be trusted for their work until hereafter; they would be happy here, and can be content to stay for holiness until hereafter: "It is soon enough to be saints in Heaven." But Oh, it would be a dreadful word to saints, "Here are your good things, take them, these are your reward." These are not their end, and therefore they cannot take them for their reward.

Poor foolish worldlings, how are you disjointed; how are your weary hearts scattered through the ends of the earth; how many masters do you serve; how many matters have you to mind: you weary yourselves in the greatness of your way, and what is your reward? What the fields can give, you have; what your sheep or your oxen can give, you have; what your beds, or your tables, or your houses, or your clothes can give, you have; here a little and there a little: your beds give you ease, your houses shelter, your sports and companions pleasure, your parasites honor, and the little you can pick up here and there, this is your reward. Truly I say unto you, you have your reward: unhappy souls, you are troubled and careful about many

things for nothing; one thing is needful; and if yet you will be wise, choose that good part which shall not be taken from you.

II. This one heart has BUT ONE THING TO DO. "This one thing I do." (Philippians 3:13). There are all things in that one thing; all things needful. How many things soever his hand finds to do, all is but one. He intends in all, God. A renewed heart designs God, and is making God-wards in all he does. Whatever journey he goes, God is his home; whatever race he runs, God is his mark and prize; whatever battle he fights against flesh and blood, against principalities and powers, it is that he may cut his way through all to his God: whatever he does, he does for God; whatever he suffers, he suffers for God. When he hears, or fasts, or prays, it is all for God. When you fasted, did you at all fast to me? "Yes, to you," a Christian is able to say: he has many things to pray for and fast for; he has bread, and clothes, and friends, and health, and safety, and liberty to pray for; but in all, he prays for God: he entitles God to all he has and marks it for him, and he sees and enjoys God in all he has. He will not own that for a mercy which has not God in it, and which is not a foot or wing to carry him on towards him. And therefore whatever he begs for himself, it is that he may have it for God. What he gives, he gives to God; whom he forgives, it is for the Lord's sake; whether he eats, or drinks, or works, or buys, or sells, or whatever else he does, he does it all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31). For him he prays, for him he waits, for him he labors, for him he suffers, for him he lives, to him he dies. "To me to live is Christ." (Philippians 1:21). "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ may be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." This is the one thing he intends, this is the one thing he seeks in all, take his whole course together; he can say with the apostle, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

III. This one heart DOES WHAT IT DOES; and that not insincerely, but really—not faintly, but heartily.

1. Really. It pursues this end in a plain and honest way. He that has this one heart, has but one way. Heart and life go hand in hand; he makes straight steps for his heart, and his heart makes straight steps for his feet. As he looks straight on, so he walks straight on to his mark. He does not look one way and row another. He is like Jacob, a plain man, a plain-dealing man; a Nathanael, in whom is no deceit; he turns his inside outward; his life is not a cloak, but a commentary on his heart, the expositor of his inward man. His end is in his heart, and his heart is in his face, in his tongue, in his duties, and all his ways. He is no politic dealer in fleshly wisdom, (2 Corinthians 1:12); his religion is not a blind or a device to delude the simple; he is downright and in earnest in all he does. He does the same thing he seems to do; his praying is praying indeed; his fasting and alms are such indeed; his very profession is practice; he would not believe, nor make others believe, but that he is what he is. He seeks not commendation from men, but approbation with God. His design is not inordinately to commend himself to the good opinion of others, though he would be made manifest in their consciences. He would not be a lie or a cheat. He abhors all lying, but most of all a religious lie. He would not lie for God, much less against him; such a lie is as blasphemy to him. He loves not images; he would have a soul in all his practices. A prayer without a soul, a sacrifice without a heart, a religious carcass, is an abomination to him. He would not make such a noble medium as religion serve so base an end as the serving of the flesh.

He has other work to do than to serve times or tables, to please himself or men, to serve wills, or humours, or lusts; he has a soul, a conscience, a God to look after; he has but one business to do, but one Master to serve. If he be a magistrate, he rules for God; if he be a minister, he preaches for God; if he be a parent, he educates for God; if he be a master, he governs for God; to him he dedicates himself and his house; he writes on his doors, This is Bethel, this is none

other but the house of God. If he be a child or a servant, he obeys in the Lord and for the Lord. He knows he has to do with God in all he does: when he is dealing with men, with his friends, with his family, in his calling, in his recreations, in all his doings, he has to do with God; and he can take comfort in nothing but what God will take pleasure in. "You have no pleasure in iniquity. You love truth in the inward parts." And there is no truth in the inward parts, but when there is truth also in the outward parts, when the heart and tongue and ways agree. It is in vain to say, "My heart is good," when the ways are evil. A false tongue, deceitful ways, will give the lie to the heart. He cannot exist longer than he has smiles from Heaven. Communion with God is his life, his all is in God. His heart dies when that fountain is stopped. If he cannot have clearness and boldness in the presence of God, he can no longer look himself in the face, but blushes and hangs his head with shame. He values neither the applause nor the scorn of men, so that he may have a witness of his acceptance with God. O Lord, do you regard, will you accept of me? It is enough. Let all the world call me, "You fool, you Pharisee, you hypocrite," if the Lord will say, "My child," it is well. "It is falsely spoken, it is foolishly, it is weakly done; it is pride, it is singularity, it is scrupulosity:" thus the world cry. Let them alone, O my soul, I will hearken what the Lord God, what conscience will say: if he says, "You have been faithful," if conscience says, "Well done," let all else say what they please; this is my rejoicing, my only rejoicing, the testimony of my conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, I had my conversation in the world.

2. Heartily. Whatever he does for God, he does it with a good-will. He has cast all his business into one, and he is intent upon it. He works righteousness, as sinners work wickedness, "with both hands earnestly." (Micah 7:3). He is religious in good earnest, he prays in good earnest, he hears in good earnest, he runs in good earnest: the powers of his soul being all united in one channel, run more strongly; his many springs falling all into one stream, make a river that bears down all before it. The psalmist prays, "Unite my heart to fear your

name." (Psalm 86:11). Unite my heart to you, and unite my heart in itself, that it may all run towards you. Unite my heart to fear, and so unite my heart to love your name; unite my heart to serve and follow and live to you. As if he had said, "O my God, my heart is divided and discomposed, scattered up and down I know not where; my pleasures have a part, my estate has a part, my friends have a part, my family has a part, there is little or none left for God. I have too many things to fear, too many things to love and care for, too many things to serve and follow, to follow the Lord with any strength or intention of mind. Call in all, Lord, all my parts, all my powers; command their joint and united attendance upon you." "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end," in the original, hope perfectly, "for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ: as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation." (1 Peter 1:13-15). Gird up the loins of your minds. Gird and be sober, gird and hope perfectly, gird and be obedient, gird and be holy. Here it is true, ungirt and unblest, ungirt and unholy; the girding is the gathering in the strength of the heart to its work. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt." (Ephesians 6:14). Stand, do not gird and ungird, stand always girt; call in your hearts and hold them in; be always in a readiness to every duty, in a readiness against every temptation.

Oh, how loose are we. What loose praying, and loose hearing, and loose meditation, and loose walkings do we satisfy ourselves with. Our hearts are to seek, our thoughts and affections are gadding abroad, we know not where to find them, and our work is not done. We excuse our non-proficiency in religion by our many hindrances, by the difficulties of our work; but the great hindrance lies here, our loins are ungirded, our hearts are not united in our work nor intent upon it. When God and the things of eternity get so deep into the heart; when there is such a deep sense of the weight and importance of the things that are eternal abiding upon us, as overpowers carnal objects and loosens the heart from them; when we feel the evidence

and the consequence of these things commanding our whole souls after them, then there is religion in earnest; then we go on and prosper. And thus it is with this "one heart;" there are not some light touches only upon it, God is deep in it, eternity is deep in it. This is all, it says, this is all I have to mind or do. My hope, my comforts, my life, my soul, all hang upon this one thing; if I speed well here, I am made forever. What have I to do in the way of Egypt, or to drink of the waters of Sihor; what have I to do in the way of Assyria; what have I to do in the way of pleasure; what have I to do in the way of the world? To build tabernacles for myself here below, or to drink the waters of my broken cisterns? How little am I concerned in the interest of this flesh. What matters it what becomes of it, or which way it goes? My God, my God, my soul, my soul, there lies my concern; of these let my only care be. Get you behind me, Satan; hold your peace, sinful flesh; keep silence, worldly cares; hinder me not, speak no more to me of hearkening to you: away from me, you evil-doers. I will keep the commandments of my God. Let others do what they will, run where they please, choose whom they will serve, what they will follow after; come, my soul, follow you the Lord, gird up your loins and come away; for the other world, for the other world; make haste, linger not; let others loiter as they will, escape for your life, look not behind you, get you up to the mountain and live.

OBJECTION. One heart! why, it is evermore two; two men, a new man and an old; two nations, two selves; there are twins in the womb of every saint; the ungodly seem more one than they, all for sin and for Hell; all dark, all hard, all but one stone.

ANSWER. Yet it is true, the saints, and they only, have this one heart; for the old heart that cleaves to them is not the heart, the old self is not the self; this old man is not the man, this is not he: that is the heart which has got the dominion and the rule in the man. The new heart has the dominion; though sin, as Esau, be the first-born, yet the elder must now serve the younger; the old man is but a dead man. (Colossians 3:3). "You are dead," that is, your old man is dead,

your sin is slain and crucified with Christ, and when it is dead, you may say it exists not.

The meaning plainly is, I will give them one heart; that is, a single, sincere, upright heart; they shall be no longer a hypocritical people. If there be something of hypocrisy in them, yet hypocrites they shall no longer be; their hearts shall be upright before me. Sincerity consists in choosing, and giving up our hearts to God, as our chief good and final end. When God is our all, there is perfection; and when God is our chief, there is sincerity. I say, when God is our all, when the world has nothing left in us to entice or draw out our souls after it, but God carries them wholly, without any liking or lusting after sinful objects, there is perfection. This is not attainable here; the heart cannot be thus perfectly one, until corruption has put on incorruption. But though it be not perfectly one, it may be sincerely one; and it is so, when, however the flesh has too great an interest in it and influence upon it, and often pulls it aside and puts it back, yet it still bends its course heavenwards. And the way the stream and strength of the soul is running, the flesh will be putting in for a part—it would have all, it would not take its turns with God. God will not take his turns with the flesh; he will have all, or none. And the flesh would not take its turns with him; it is not contented with now and then, it would not be served in the fields, or in the shop, or at the table, or in the bed only, but in the church, in the chamber, in the closet; it would carry away all from God: but if it cannot have all, it will divide with God; wherever God is served, the flesh will be putting in for its share. The best of Christians feel too great a truth in this; their frequent humblings, and mournings, and breakings, and self-shamings before the Lord, are mostly upon this account. This is the voice of their deepest groanings and bitterest tears, the burden of their most mournful groans: "I cannot do the things that I would: when I would do good, evil is present with me; with my mind I serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin. Woe is me, my soul, how am I straitened, how am I divided! Where am I hurried? Wherewithal do I come before the Lord? Oh, with what halting and heartless and distracted duties do I serve my God. This 'flesh' eats up

the fat, and the best; and only the lame and the lean and the sick are left for a sacrifice to the Lord. Woe is me, my leanness, my leanness! my God, my God, how are you served; how are you robbed of your due! These strangers are gotten into your sanctuary, and eat up all your pleasant things; and what have they left for you?"

Such are their complaints; and their very complaints are their comfort and the witness of their sincerity, while they can with openness of heart make their approach and appeal to God: "Yet you are my Lord, you are my God, and I will serve you. I have chosen you as my heritage forever, and I will wait for your salvation. Hear the sighing of your prisoner, deliver your captive: my heart is with you; let not this flesh entrench upon your right, let sin no longer reign in my mortal body; let me have no more to do with the throne of iniquity, untie the cords, loose the fetters, bring my soul out of prison. Search me, O Lord, and know my heart; prove me, and know my thoughts. Is there any way of wickedness in me? Do I willingly go after sin's commandments? Do I regard iniquity in my heart? Here it lies, it is true; it wars, and raises tumults and insurrections against you; but do I resign up myself to it? Is it a pleasure to me? Am I at peace with it? O Lord, you know. I cannot get rid of it, I cannot do the things that I would, I cannot pray as I would, nor hear as I would, nor think, nor speak, nor live as I would: where I go, sin goes with me; where I lodge, it lodges; if I sit still, it abides with me; if I run from it, it follows me; I can neither rest nor work, I can do nothing, so sorely does it beset me; and yet, blessed be your name, this one thing I do—what I cannot attain, I follow after; I cannot conquer, yet I fight against it; I wrestle with it, though it so often give me the fall. I trust it not, though it flatter me; I love it not, though it feed me: my heart is with you, Lord, my foot is making after you; I groan, I travail in pain, waiting for your redemption: until I die, I will not give over. I will die fighting, I will die hoping, I will die praying. Save me, O Lord; make no long tarrying, O my God."

And thus you have the description of this "one heart." It fixes upon one end, and God is that end. It gives him the place of the end; he is

its first and last. It gives him the power of the end: this one thing, the obtaining of God to be theirs, draws them on, guides, governs them in their whole course, and is accepted by them as their only and exceeding great reward. This instructs them, this rules and encourages them, calls them off from sin, calls them on to duty, carries them out in suffering; all their powers are united in this one business, all their arguments are resolved into this one argument, all their rewards are summed up in this one reward: "God shall be glorified, and therein my soul shall be satisfied; God shall be mine, and glory shall be his."

In all this we see what this "one heart" means; but Oh, how little of this grace have we received! How many hearts have we; how many gods have we, to divide these hearts between them. How small a corner, how low a place, must the Lord take up with us, if he will have any at all. How often is he made to stand aside, or to stoop to a lust. God made to give place to the devil! Is God our all indeed? Have we none else to please, have we none else to serve? Have we no portion, no inheritance, no other God but the Lord? Is he our alpha and omega, our first and our last, our spring and our ocean, our sum and our scope, the rise and the rest of all our motions? Whatever our tongues speak, do our hearts also and our lives say, "To me, to live is Christ: none but God, none but Christ, nothing but Heaven and glory?" When we are driving so hard for our flesh, for our pride, for our ease, for our gain; when we are so busy this way, and so hearty and so zealous that way; when these must have so great a share in our religion, is this still our voice, "To me, to live is Christ?" O, how little power has the Lord with us! How far is it that the single interest of God will carry our souls? How little is done purely for God! We have often many strings to our bow. There are some services wherein there is something coming to the flesh, as well as to the name of God—some credit or honor, some outward advantage to be got by religion; but when all the other strings crack but this one, when there is nothing to move us but God, O how weak do our motions grow. The flesh often goes partner with God: there is a double trade driving in the same actions—a trade for Heaven and a trade for earth

together. There is something to be got by our religion besides what is coming to God: there are fields and vineyards and olive-yards, friends and honors and preferments. Thus it sometimes falls out, when godliness is in the rising side; and when it is thus, we go smoothly and vigorously on: "Come, see the zeal that I have for the Lord of hosts." But when the interests of God and the flesh divide and part asunder; when the flesh is likely to be a loser by our religion; when God puts us on such duties as will spend upon the flesh, and eat out and devour its interest; when our hearts tell us, as Deborah did Barak, "This shall not be for your honor," (Judges 4:9); or this will not be for your ease, or your safety; then what becomes of our zeal? Oh, how heavily do we then drive on! How seldom is it that this word, "Yet God shall he glorified," will balance all the prejudices, and confute all the cross reasonings of the flesh, and carry us on our way without and against it.

How little has the Lord of the government of us! If he does govern as a king, yet how little does he as our end. How little does goodness govern us; how little can love do with us! We must have rigor and severity; we must have spurs, and goads, and rods, and stripes, and scorpions too; and all little enough to drive us back from those other gods which we have chosen, and to bring us on after the Lord. If the law be not made for the righteous, if they need not a law, then what are we, for whom the law will not suffice? If commands, threatenings, terrors, penalties, judgments, can do no more upon us; if we are yet so loose, and so carnal, and so earthly, and so froward, and so false, and so formal, under the severest discipline; if we will not be whipped into more humility, spirituality, self-denial, watchfulness, care, activity, zeal; but are such drones and such sleepers, such earthworms and such sensualists still, under all the corrections and compulsions of the law—O what should we be without a law, were there nothing but love to restrain us from sin and constrain and quicken us to duty?

Christians, have we but one thing to do in all we do? Sometimes we are busy in doing nothing. Though there be a prayer in our mouths,

the praises of God in our mouths, Christ, Heaven, holiness, glory, a new heart, a new life upon our tongues, there is nothing within: no prayer, no praise, no Christ, nor Heaven. What have we been doing in the closet, in the family, in the congregation, many times, when we seemed to have been praying? Nothing, nothing, but sowing wind and good words. Sometimes we have too many things in our hearts; what a world of carnal devices and fleshly projects have we wrapped up in the garment of our religion! Peter's sheet had not a more heterogeneous miscellany of creatures, "four-footed beasts, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air," than our religious duties have of designs and ends. We have men to please; our pride, our appetites, to offer sacrifice to; we bring our farms and our oxen and our trades before the Lord. Are not our hearts, which should be the houses of prayer, the houses of merchandise? Are we not taking, or pursuing, or in a journey, or asleep, or driving bargains? O Christians, if we were privy to one another's hearts as God is privy to them, what abominations should we see brought into the holy places! What monsters would our most sacred services appear, which, while the outside only is viewed, are applauded and admired. Is this our singleness of heart? O for shame and blushing and confusion of face. O for a veil to hide such hearts from the jealous eye of the holy God: a varnish, a fair outside, hides all from men; but nothing but a dark veil of shame and sorrow and tears and repentance—a veil dipped in blood, in the blood of Christ, will hide them from the eyes of the Lord.

Oh, how little plainness and singleness of heart is there in our ordinary course, in our dealings and conversings in the world! How little faith or truth is there in us! How little trust is to be put in us! What doubling, what deceitful dealing, defrauding, overreaching, undermining, are we guilty of! How false are we in our promises; how insignificant are our words; what an uncertain sound do they give! Our yes may often stand for nay, and our nay for yes. "They speak vanity every one with his neighbor; with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak." (Psalm 12:2). Trust you not in a friend, put not confidence in a guide.

Blessed be God, the Lord has a generation on whom this cannot be charged, children that will not lie nor deceive. Though Satan and this evil world bind up all in a bundle, "They are all naught; they are all false, vain boasters, and deceitful workers; there is none upright, no, not one;" yet, thanks be to God, Satan is a liar—the accuser of the brethren is a false accuser. God has his children that will not lie. But woe be to those professors, by reason of whom the offence comes.

Christians, has God promised to give you "one heart?" Let it be once said, "This day is the Scripture fulfilled." O may you be the accomplishment of this good word. Has God promised to give you one heart? Do not say, But I will not take it; two are better than one: I have found so much the sweet of deceit, that there is no life like it. Has God said, "I will give one heart?" let not any one among you say, But I fear he will not. Make not the promise of God of none effect, either by your impiety or unbelief. Does God promise to give this one heart? he who promised it, does also require it. Be yourself, Christian. Let it be said you are what you are; be true, be but one, have but one heart, and let your one heart have but one tongue, but one face, and but one thing to do. Beware of hypocrisy, beware of carnal policy; make not your God to serve your flesh; call not the serving of your flesh a serving of God, and make not your serving of God to be a serving of the flesh. Be not divided between God and the world. Oh, how easy would our lives be, did we find our whole souls running one way; taking up with God as the adequate object of all our powers, the mark of all our motions, and the reward of all our labors; did all our streams empty themselves into this ocean, and all our lines meet in this one center; did God alone draw and allure our hearts, and the sincerity of our hearts give motion to all our wheels, guide our eyes, govern our tongues, order our steps, animate our duties, direct and quicken us in all our goings. Oh, how sweet, Oh, how beautiful, were such a life! in sympathy between our hearts and our end, there is sweetness; in the harmony of our hearts and ways, there is beauty. Oh, how sweet are the drawings of love. The free and full closing of our spirits with God, dissolving themselves into his will, acquiescing and resting satisfied in his goodness, is a sweetness

which no man knows but he who tastes it; the harmony of the powers of the soul within itself, of its motions and actions in the life, has a beauty which will eclipse the glory of the world. Christian, be it thus with you, and you have the blessing—that covenant blessing which the Lord has promised, in saying, "I will give them one heart."

Chapter 9.

A Heart of Flesh

"I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:26). The old heart is a stone, cold as a stone, dead as a stone, hard as a stone; but I will take away the stone, and give a heart of flesh.

A heart of flesh is a soft and tender heart; flesh can feel; anything that is contrary to it puts it to pain. Sin makes it smart; it cannot kick but it is against the pricks; by its rebellion and resistance against the Lord, it receives a wound; it cannot hit but it hurts itself. A soft hand gets nothing by striking a hedge of thorns. A soft heart, when it has been meddling with sin, is sure to smart for it. It can neither escape the pain, nor yet endure it; and what it cannot bear, it will take warning to avoid.

Flesh will bleed. A soft heart will mourn and melt and grieve when hard hearts are moved at nothing. Flesh will yield. It is apt to receive impressions. The power of God will awe it; his justice alarm it; his mercy melt it; his holiness humble it, and leave his stamp and image upon it. And as the attributes, so the Word and works of God will make sign upon it. Who sets a seal upon a stone; or what print will it receive? Upon the wax, the print will abide. God speaks once and twice, but man, hardened man will not regard it. Neither his Word nor his rod, neither his speaking nor his smiting will make any

impression on such hearts. It is the heart of flesh that hears and yields. And with such hearts the Lord delights to be dealing. "The heart of this people is waxed gross," (Acts 28:27); they will not hear, they will not understand; and the next word is, Away to the Gentiles, they will hear. He will no more write his law on tables of stone: he will write in flesh; there the impression will take, and go the deeper; and therefore, wherever he intends to write, he prepares his tablet—makes this stone flesh, and then engraves upon it. Particularly this tenderness admits of a double distinction.

I. Respecting THE OBJECT of it. There is a tenderness as to sin, duty, and suffering.

1. As to sin. And this discovers itself both before the commission, and after the commission of it.

Before the commission. While it is under a temptation, or feels the first impulse to sin. A tender heart startles, starts back at the sight of a sin, as at the sight of a devil: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9). This manner of speech presents Joseph as a man in a fright, startled at the ugliness of the sin. So David when he had an opportunity and a temptation to slay Saul, rejects it with a "God forbid." "The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed." (1 Samuel 26:11). And the tender conscience not only shrinks at the higher and greater sins, but it resists the little ones, the smallest of sins. Is it not a little one? is no plea with it. Little or great, it is a sin, and that is enough.

There is also a tenderness as to sin after its commission; if it has been brought on by an act of sin, yet it cannot cease with it. The skirt of Saul's garment was too heavy for David's heart to bear. His heart smote him at once. (1 Samuel 24:5). Sin in the review looks dreadful. Its pleasant flowers quickly turn to thorns; it pricks the heart, how much soever it pleased the eye. It ordinarily enters by the eye, and often runs out the same way it came in—runs out in tears. "When he thought thereon, he wept." At least, it warns one and makes him

more watchful afterwards. You see what it is, take heed; take it for a warning, and do so no more. The pain of sin, if it do not force a tear, will set a watch.

2. As to duty. A tender heart will neither slight a sin, nor neglect a duty. It is loath to grieve and offend, and careful to serve and please the Lord. It would not that he should suffer by it, nor so much as lose his due. It watches against sin, and unto duty. It cares how to please the Lord, and its care is tender. It would not displease by its neglects or performances; all must be done that ought, and as it ought to be done. It will neither withhold its offering, nor will it offer an unclean thing. It considers not only what, but how. Both matter and manner, substance and circumstance, all must be right, or it is not at ease. It is not satisfied that it prays sometimes; it would never lose a praying time, God will not, and it cannot lose a duty. It would neither lose by non-performance, nor lose what is performed. It would neither leave undone, nor do amiss; any failing, not only in the matter, but in the principle, end, affection, tender affection—any failing pains it.

There is a tenderness in point of suffering. A tender heart will not be careful what or how much, but why and upon what account he suffers; will neither sinfully shun the cross, nor run upon it unwarrantably. He waits for a call, and then follows. He is patient under the hand of the Lord, but not insensible; can be touched with an affliction, though not offended at it: "The hand of the Lord has touched me." He suffers more than his own sufferings. His brethren's burdens all lie on his shoulders. He weeps in their sorrows, bleeds in their wounds, his heart is bound in their chains. As the care, so the trouble of all the churches comes daily upon him: "Who is weak, and I am not weak; who is offended, and I burn not?" he espouses all the sufferings of Christ as his own. In all His afflictions, he is afflicted.

II. Tenderness may be distinguished in respect to THE SUBJECT of it. There is a tenderness of the conscience, the will, the affections.

1. Tenderness of conscience consists in these three things: clearness of judgment, quickness of sight, and uprightness or faithfulness.

Clearness of judgment, when it is well-instructed, and understands the rule, and can thence discern between good and evil. (Hebrews 5:14). There is a tenderness that proceeds from cloudiness; a scrupulosity that fears everything, stumbles at straws, starts at shadows; makes sins; picks quarrels at duties; and so sometimes dares not please God, for fear of offending him. This is the sickness or soreness of conscience, not its soundness. It is the sound conscience that is truly tender.

Such a conscience has quickness of sight and watchfulness. "I sleep, but my heart wakes." It can espy the least sins and smallest duties. It can see sin in the very temptation; it can discover the least sin under the fairest face, and the least duty under the foulest mask. Call it singularity, nicety, cloud it with reproaches, yet conscience can discover light shining through all the clouds; and sees duty within, with whatever unhandsome face it be presented. Clearness of judgment consists in conscience's understanding the rule; quickness of sight in applying the rule to cases and distinguishing them. The truly tender has his eyes in his head, and his eyes open to discover and discern all that comes, be it good or evil, little or great. If but a thought comes in, What comes there? says conscience; what are you, a friend or an enemy? whence are you; from God or from beneath? It will examine whatever knocks, before any free admission. O, what a crowd of evils do thrust themselves into loose and careless hearts; the devil comes in in the crowd, and is never discovered. If the eye be either dim or asleep, there is entrance for anything. Little do we think often who has been with us, and what losses and mischiefs we have sustained while our hearts have been asleep, which, had they been wakeful and watchful, might have been prevented.

A tender conscience is also marked by uprightness and faithfulness, which discovers itself,

In giving charge concerning duty. Look to it, soul, there is a duty before you which God calls you to; do not say, It is no great hurt to let it alone, it is no great hurt to do it, it is questionable whether it be a duty or not; many wiser than I think otherwise. Do not say, It is a nicety, it is but a punctilio, it is mere folly and preciseness, and there will be no end of standing upon such small matters. See to it, it is your duty, beware you neglect it not; the baulking of the least duty is the neglecting of the great God of glory.

In giving warning of sin. Take heed to yourself, sin lies at the door, you are under a temptation, the devil is entering upon you. Do not say, It is but a little sin: little as it is, there is death and Hell in it; look to it, it is sin, have you nothing to do with it, keep yourself pure, and though it run upon you, shake it off.

After the commission of sin, it gives a rebuke for it; reproving, judging, and lashing the soul for it. "Where have you been, Gehazi? say not you have been nowhere. Went not this heart with you, and saw you running after your covetousness, gadding after your pleasures, feeding your pride, dandling your lusts, playing the hypocrite, playing the harlot from your God, pampering your flesh, pleasing your appetite? and where have you been? What have you done, soul? think not to excuse or mince the matter, it cannot be excused; you have sinned against your God, and now bear your shame." This is our heart smiting us, (2 Samuel 24:10); our heart condemning us: "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things." (1 John 3:20).

2. Tenderness of the will consists in its flexibleness and pliability to the will of God. And this is that tenderness wherein chiefly lies the blessing of a soft heart: a hard heart is stubborn and obstinate. Your neck is as an iron sinew, and your brow brass. You will not be ruled, there is no bending you or turning you out of your course, your iron is too hard for the fire, it will not be melted; and for the hammer, it will not be broken; there is no dealing with you, you are an intractable piece, you will neither be led nor driven; your heart is set

in you to do evil, your will is set upon sin, and you are set upon your own will. You say, "The word that you have spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not do; but we will do whatever thing goes forth out of our own mouth." (Jeremiah 44:16, 17). "Who is lord over us?" (Psalm 12:4; Jeremiah 2:25). You say, "There is no hope; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them I will go, come what will of it, say what you will against it; be silent, Scriptures; hold your peace, conscience; it is to no purpose to speak more, there is no hope of prevailing; we are resolved, we will take our own course." These are hard hearts, stubborn, obstinate hearts.

When the iron sinew is broken, when the rebellion and stubbornness of the spirit is subdued and tamed, and made gentle and pliable, then it becomes a tender heart.

There may be some tenderness in the conscience, and yet the will be a very stone; and as long as the will stands out, there is no broken heart. Conscience may be scared and frightened. Conscience may fly upon the sinner with, "What do you mean, soul; where are your rebellions carrying you? look to yourself, hearken, or you will be lost before you are aware." But however God has conscience on his side, yet the devil still rides the will; and there sin takes up its rest. There is a twofold resting of sin in the soul: in peace and in power.

In peace: when it dwells and rules in the soul without disturbance or contradiction; when it carries all smoothly before it. When God lets it alone, and conscience speaks not a word against it; when notwithstanding those armies of lusts fighting against the soul, there is not so much as one weapon lifted up against them; not a prayer, not a tear, nor a wish for freedom, nor the least fear concerning the issue: this is the most dreadful hardness.

In power: when, though it can have no peace, yet it has still a place in the heart. Though it can have no quiet, but conscience is ever quarreling with it and warning it away, yet it still holds its power over the will; the master of the house is content to be its servant. Oh,

how many persons are there, even among the professors of religion, who cannot sin in quiet: they are proud, or passionate, or intemperate, or covetous, or false in their words and dealings; they are formal and hypocritical, and slight in their duties, but they cannot go on thus with any quiet. Conscience smites them for it, they feel many a pang and deadly twinge in their heart, insomuch that sometimes they cry and groan and roar in their spirits, O for redemption, O for deliverance from this false, this proud, this covetous and wicked heart. And yet, after all this the will remains a captive still, sin holds its power there, though it cannot reign in peace; though it cannot be proud, or play the hypocrite, or be covetous, or an oppressor, without some galls and gripes in the soul, yet on it goes, the same trade is kept up, the same course is held on. God commands, "Cast you out, cast you out, come off from all your wickedness and evil ways, and I will receive you." But no, though conscience would, the will cannot come; whatever rendings and tearings, whatever terrors and torments and worryings such souls are at any time under; whatever stings and plagues and fires they find their sins to be in their souls and bones; whatever wishings they wring forth that they were well-rid of these plagues, while the will is still wrong there is a hard heart, desperately hard; there is none of this heart of flesh. But when the will is once broken loose from sin, when it will be content to let all go, and give up itself to the dominion of the Lord, there is a broken heart. "Now speak, Lord, and I will hear. Now call, Lord, and I will answer. Now command me, impose on me what you will, I will submit. None but the Lord, none but Christ, no other Lord nor lover. I am your, Lord, your own; do with your own, demand of your own, whatever you please. What God will have me be, what God will have me do, that will I do and be. No longer what I will, but the will of the Lord be done." When it is come to this, there is a tender heart, there is the blessing of a broken spirit; the stone he has taken away, he has given a heart of flesh.

Christians, never trust to tears, never talk of terrors, of trouble of conscience, of the passionate workings and meltings which at any time you feel within your spirits: though there be something in these,

as you shall see more by and by, yet those are not the things you are to look at. A subdued, tractable, willing, obedient heart, that is the tender heart. "If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it." (Isaiah 1:19).

3. Tenderness of the affections. Of these I shall instance only three—love, fear, sorrow.

(1.) The tenderness of love is seen in its benevolence and in its jealousy.

In its benevolence. Our goodness extends not to the Lord, but our good-will does. Our love can add nothing to him: "Can a man be profitable unto God?" (Job 22:2). "If you be righteous, what give you to him?" (Job 35:7). Yet though it can add nothing, it would not that anything be detracted from him; while he can have no more, it would that he should have his own, all that is due, his due praise, his due honor and homage and worship and subjection, from every creature; it would have no abatement, not the least spot or stain upon all his glory. What is an affront to God, is an offence to love. "Love bears all things," says the apostle, (1 Corinthians 13:7)—all things from God, all things from men. And yet there are two things which love to God cannot bear—his dishonor and his displeasure.

The benevolent heart cannot bear God's dishonor. Love would have God to be God, to live in the glory of his majesty, in the hearts and eyes of all the world. His reproach is grievous to him that loves, for this is the cloud that takes God out of sight. He loves and honors, and would that God should be loved and honored of all; he fears, and would that the whole world should fear him. He would receive in his own breast every arrow that is shot against his Maker; he would that his own name and soul might stand between his God and all reproach and dishonor. He would be vile, if so the Lord may be glorious: that God may increase, he is content to decrease. He is not so tender of his own heart and life, as of the holiness of his God. He

would suffer and die, and be nothing, rather than that God should not be all in all. He would rather never think, nor speak, nor be, than not be, in word and thought and life, holiness to the Lord. But O what or where would he not be, rather than his own hand should be lifted up against Jehovah!

To see the Lord robbed of his holiness, wronged in his wisdom, or his truth, or his sovereignty; to see sin, to see the world, set up in the throne, and the God of glory made to stand aside as insignificant; to hear that blasphemy, "God is not worth this lust, or not worthy this labor"—and what less is said in every sin?—is a sword in his breast. "The reproaches of them that reproached you are fallen upon me." Love has tasted of God, it has fed on his fullness, it has its nourishment from his sweetness, it has been warmed in his bosom, all his goodness has passed before it; upon this it lives and feeds; and having found and felt what the Lord is, it is impatient that his goodness should be clouded or belied. Love kindled from Heaven is keen, and the keen edge is a tender edge—the least touch of what offends will turn it. "I am in distress, my affections are troubled, my heart is turned within me, for I have grievously rebelled." (Lamentations 1:20). "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is your God?" (Psalm 42:3). Where is that care, that help, and that salvation of your God you trust in? Your God is not such a one as you boast him to be. When I remember, when I hear such things, my soul is poured out within me. Love is large; he who loves has a large heart, he can never receive or do too much; he would have all he can, and he would give all he has to the Lord. He is tender how anything be withheld that is due, how anything be wasted elsewhere that might be useful to the Lord.

Nor can love bear his displeasure. The displeasure of men it bears, and rejoices; the wrath and rage of Satan it bears, and triumphs; though all the world be displeased and provoked, if God smiles, it is well enough, Lord, lift you up the light of your countenance upon me, and my heart shall be glad. (Psalm 4). "You did hide your face, and I

was troubled." (Psalm 30:7). Let him correct me, but Oh, not in fury; let him smite, but not frown; let him kill me, so he will but love me. And though he smite, though he kill me, yet will I love and trust in him. O my God, let me rather die in your love, than live in your displeasure: there is life in that death, this life, is death to me. Let me not be dead while alive; turn away your anger which kills my heart.

It is impatient of divine displeasure, and thence it is grievous to it that it does itself displease him; thence it opposes sin, and condemns itself for it. Is this your kindness to your friend? Love you God, soul? What, and yet provoke him thus daily; love, and yet neglect to seek and follow your God; love, and yet so lame and so slow, and so heavy and so sparing in your services to him? Is this all your love will do? Not deny your ease, or your pleasure, or your liberty, or your appetite, or your companion, for the sake of the Lord; choose rather to please your friend, or your flesh, than to please God? Is this your love? Is this your kindness to your friend? O false heart, unworthy, unworthy spirit, how can you look your God in the face? How can you say, "I love you," when your heart is no more with him?

The tenderness of love is also seen in its jealousy. He who loves the Lord is jealous, and jealousy has a tender edge; he is jealous, not of, but for the Lord—not of his God, but of himself, lest anything should steal away his heart from God. Love would be chaste, would not bestow itself elsewhere; and yet is in great jealousy lest it be enticed and drawn away. He who loves the Lord, has not anything, whether wife, or child, or friend, or estate, or esteem, that gets near his heart, but he is jealous of them, lest they steal it away. "Get you down," he says, "keep you lower; this heart is neither yours nor mine: O my God, it is your; it is your, Lord, take it wholly to you, keep it to yourself, let no other lovers be sharers with you."

(2.) There is a tenderness of fear. The tender heart is a trembling heart, and manifests the tenderness of fear in its suspicion and its caution.

In its suspicion. The fearful are suspicious; they look further than they see; he who is in dread, will be in doubt what may befall him, he suspects a surprisal; every bush is a thief, every bait he fears may have a hook under it. There is a foolish and causeless fear; and there is a prudent and holy fear: this fear is a principle of wisdom. (Psalm 111:10). "A prudent man foresees the evil," (Proverbs 22:3), but fools go on; the snare is never nearer than to the secure; bold, venturous sinners never want for woe, the devil may spare his cunning when he has to do with such. Nothing that looks like sin offers itself to a tender heart, but he presently suspects it; every pleasant morsel, every pleasant cup, every pleasant companion that comes, anything that tickles and gratifies the flesh, he looks through it before he will touch it, lest it betray his soul from God. "There may be a snare in the dish, a snare in my cup, a snare in my company; and what if there should!" He feeds himself with fear, dwells, walks, converses, works, recreates himself with a trembling heart and jealous eye.

His fear also appears in his caution. Fear is wary: some commanders have set their scout-watches unarmed, that fear might make them watchful. A fearful Christian will take heed what and whom he trusts; he dares not trust himself in such company as may be a snare unto him. He dares not trust his heart among temptations, he will keep the devil at a distance, he will not come near where his nets do lie. Blessed is he who thus fears always. O the unspeakable mischief, O the multitudes of sins, that we run upon through our secure hearts! "I never thought of it, I never dreamed of any such danger. Oh, I am undermined, I am overreached, I am surprised; my foot is in the snare, the gin has taken me by the heel, my soul is among lions, sin has gotten hold on me, my heart is gone before I was aware, the enemy has come in and carried it away, has given it to lust, to the world, to pleasure, to divide it among themselves; my faith has failed, my conscience is denied, my love is grown cold, my grace withered, my comforts wasted, my peace broken; and my God, Oh, where is he gone? Woe is me, the evil that I feared not is come upon me; had I feared, I had not fallen. O that I had been wise, had kept my watch, had stood upon my guard; had I thought, had I thought, I had

escaped all this danger." O Christians, be wise in season, and take heed of the fool's too late, "Had I known it"

(3.) There is a tenderness of sorrow. Sorrow is the melting of the heart, the stone dissolved; sorrow is the wound of the heart: a wound is tender, love is tender, and therefore so is godly sorrow, which is the sorrow of love; you may call it a love-sickness. Love is both the pain and pleasure of a mourning heart, it is love that wounds, and love that heals; it is both the weapon and the oil; this sorrow has its joy, the melted is the most joyful heart; it is love that makes it sad; it weeps because it loves: and it is love that makes it glad too; it therefore joys because in its sorrows it sees that it loves. It is love that makes the wound, the occasion of this sorrow being love abused. What have you done, soul? Whom have you despised? Against whom have you lifted up yourself? You have sinned, you have sinned, and have thereby smitten and grieved your God that loves you, and whom you love. You have but one friend in Heaven and earth, and him you have abused; to please your lust, you have pierced your Lord, you have transgressed his commandments, trampled upon his compassions, and broken his bonds: his greatness and his goodness, his law and his very love have been despised by you; him who loved you have you smitten. Is this your kindness to your friend? O vile, ungracious, unkind, unthankful, unnatural heart, what have you done?

Put all this now together, and you have the heart of flesh which the covenant promises, a tender heart, a heart that is tender of sin and duty, that carefully shuns sin, or is sure to smart for it; that neither slightsin nor duty, that says not of the one or the other, It is but a little one; that can feel sufferings, but not fret at them: a tender conscience, that will neither wink at sin nor excuse the sinner, that will not hold the sinner guiltless nor say unto the wicked, You are righteous; that will not be smitten but it will smite again, that will give due warning and due correction: a flexible, tractable heart, that will not resist and rebel; that says unto the Lord, What will you have me to do? and will not say of anything God wills, Anything but this: a

willing, ductile heart, stiff against nothing but sin, that a word from Heaven will lead to anything: a heart of love, that bears good-will to the Lord and all that he does or requires, in which good-will lies radically every good work; that says not of any duties or sufferings, This is too great, or of any sin, This is nothing; that would be anything or nothing, so God may be all; that would rather be displeased than displease; that is not displeased when God is pleased: a trembling heart, that fears more than it sees, and flies from what it fears; whom fear makes to beware: a melting heart, a mourning heart, that wounds itself in the wounds it has given to the Lord and his name; that can grieve in love, and can love and grieve where it cannot weep. In sum, it is a heart that can feel, that can bleed, that can weep; or at least that can yield and stoop where it cannot weep, nor feel but little; that will easily be commanded where it is not sensibly melted: this is a soft heart, this is the heart of flesh: "I will take away the stone, and give them a heart of flesh."

Oh, what a blessing is such a heart; what a plague is a hard heart! Oh, what prisoners are the men of this world: in prison under Satan, in prison under sin, bound under a curse, shut up under unbelief and impenitence: the hard heart is the iron gate that shuts them in that they cannot go out. (Romans 2:5). Oh, what a hospital is this world become of blind and lame and sick and crippled and wounded creatures. Whence are all the calamities and distresses that befall them, but from the hardness of their hearts? The stone in their hearts breeds all their diseases, brings all their calamities; has blinded their eyes, and broken their bones, and wasted their estates: there is not one misery that befalls them, but they may write over it, This is the hardness of my heart. Oh, what a Sodom is this world become, for wickedness as well as for wrath; what drunkenness, what adulteries, what oaths, what blasphemies, and all sorts of monstrous sins do everywhere abound: whence is all this, but from the hardness of men's hearts? If you say, "It is from other causes; it is from unbelief, from ignorance, from impotence, from temptations," let it be granted; yet still it is from hardness of heart. They are willfully ignorant, willfully weak, willfully run into temptations; they shut

their eyes and stop their ears, they will not see, they will not believe. Oh, what losses do they sustain: how many Sabbaths are lost; how many sermons are lost; how many reproofs, counsels, corrections, are lost; a gospel lost, and souls thereby likely to be lost forever. Oh, what prodigies are they become, under all this sin and misery! and yet merry, jolly, laughing, and singing and sporting and feasting and braving it out, as if nothing ailed them. Feeling nothing of all that is come upon them, and fearing nothing of all that is coming. Warn them, reprove them, beseech them, it is all but preaching to a stone. It may be you have sometimes wondered to see a company of thieves in prison, drinking and carousing and making merry, when they know that in a few days they must be brought out and hanged. When you wonder at these, wonder at yourself. What bitter complaints do we sometimes hear, even from the best of saints. "O this hard heart; O this stubborn spirit. I cannot mourn, I cannot stoop, I cannot submit. 'Why have you hardened our heart from your fear?' (Isaiah 63:17). Or why have you left us, or given us up to a hard heart? Why have you not softened and humbled and broken us? You have humbled us, and we are not humbled—broken us, and we are not broken; you have broken our land, broken our peace, broken our backs, but the stone is not yet broken. O for one breach more, Lord; our hearts, our hearts, let these be once broken; our streets mourn, the cities of our solemnities mourn, the ways of Zion mourn. Oh, when will you give us a mourning spirit?"

O what sorrow-bitten souls are the saints for their want of sorrow. "I mourn, Lord, I lament, I weep; but it is because I cannot mourn or lament as I should: if I could mourn as I ought, I could be comforted; if I could weep, I could rejoice; if I could sigh, I could sing; if I could lament, I could live; I die, I die, my heart dies within me, because I cannot cry; I cry, Lord, but not for sin, but for tears for sin; I cry, Lord, my calamities cry, my bones cry, my soul cries, my sins cry, 'Lord, for a broken heart,' and behold, yet I am not broken. The rocks rend, the earth quakes, the heavens drop, the clouds weep, the sun will blush, the moon be ashamed, the foundations of the earth will tremble at the presence of the Lord, but this heart will neither break

nor tremble. O for a broken heart! If this were once done, might my soul have this wish, thenceforth my God might have his will: what would be hard, if my heart were tender? Labor would be easy, pains would be a pleasure, burdens would be light. Neither the command nor the cross would be any longer grievous, nothing would be hard but sin. Fear, where are you? come and plough up this rock. Love, where are you? come and thaw this ice, come and warm this dead lump, come and enlarge this straitened spirit, then shall I run the way of his commandments."

O brethren, how little, how very little of this tenderness is there to be found in most Christians! The sacrifice of God is a broken heart; Oh, how far must the Lord go to find himself such a sacrifice! We do but cast stones up to Heaven when we lift up our hearts: it is a wonder that such hearts as we carry do not break, that our marble weeps not; that if nothing else will do it, our hardness does not make us relent; that we should so labor under, and complain of, and yet not be sick of the stone.

Broken hearts, yielding and relenting spirits, tender consciences, Oh, where are they? afraid of sin, tender of transgressing, or mourning under it? when shall it once be? Our lusts no more broken; our pride, our passion, our envy, our earthliness, no more broken; so venturesome on temptation, so bold on sin, such liberty taken to transgress, such mincing and palliating, and excusing of sin as we find—is this our brokenness? We are tender, it is true; but of what? Of dishonoring God, of abusing grace, of neglecting duty, of defiling conscience, of wounding our souls? No, it is of our flesh that we are so tender—tender of labor, tender of trouble, tender of our credit, of our name and reputation: a tender shoulder we have, a tender hand, a tender foot; they can bear nothing, and do nothing; nothing can touch our flesh, nothing can touch our idols, our ease, or our estates, but we shrink and smart, and are put to pain. God may be smitten, and we feel it not; the gospel may be smitten, the church may be smitten, conscience may be smitten, and it moves us not. We can fear an affliction, fear a reproach; O that we so much feared a temptation or

a sin! We cannot lack bread but we feel the want; we cannot want clothes, or a house, or a friend, but we feel it; we cannot want our sleep, our quiet, our pleasure, our respect from men, but we feel it; anything that pinches our flesh pierces our heart. We cannot pine, or languish in our bodies, but we feel it; a fever or an ague, a consumption, dropsy, or any bodily sickness, O, it makes us sick at heart; a froward yoke-fellow, an unthrifty servant, an ill neighbor, a scoff, a slight cannot be borne; but O, how much sin can be borne! While our flesh will bear nothing, how much can conscience bear, and never complain!

Christians, consider. When our flesh must be thus caressed, whatever come of it—must be tenderly fed, must have soft clothing, soft lodging, soft usage—be dealt gently with, though to maintain it conscience must be racked, and racked, and wasted; when our wills cannot be crossed, our appetites cannot be denied, but a tumult follows, the soul is in an uproar, and conscience meanwhile must be denied, and sent away in silence; when the Word works no more, when the prints of it are not received, the power of it is resisted; when the rod works no more, when our stripes make no sign, when the lashes on our backs touch not our hearts; when we remain so vain and so wanton, so willful, carnal, and earthly, after the Lord has been preaching and chastising us into a better frame; when we stand upon our terms, keep our distances, our animosities, our heats and heights of spirit, our censurings, our quarrelings one with another, Christian with Christian, professor with professor, after the Lord has been beating us together to make us friends, and all to teach us more humility and charity—is this our brokenness? Is this our tenderness, when upon any of the Lord's rougher dealings with us, smiting our faces, throwing us on our backs, trampling us in the dirt, we are yet no more brought on our knees? Is this our brokenness, when the Lord has been awakening us out of sleep, putting his spurs and goads in our sides to quicken us on our way; calling to us, "Arise, sleepers, stir up your spirits, sluggards, mend your pace: I will not be put off as I have been; no more such loitering and idling and trifling and halting as has been; I must have another manner of service, of

praying and hearing and walking and working, than has been: be zealous and amend; more labor, more care, more watchfulness, more activity, more of the spirit and soul of what you profess?" When the Lord has been thus goading and spurring us on, and though our flesh feels, yet our hearts will not feel, nor answer the goad or spur, is this an evidence of tenderness?

When great duties are little, and lesser are none; when great sins are infirmities, and little ones are nothing; when lying and defrauding, when false weights, false wares, and false dealings, when defaming, backbiting, tale-bearing, railing, reviling, do stand for little more than ciphers; when fellowship and familiarity with evil men in their sins, and compliance with or connivance at their wickedness; when sinful courtings and complimentings of such, to the hardening them in their ways, do pass for virtues and civilities; when frothy, wanton discourse and communication, when scoffing and making a sport at the sins or infirmities of others, when sinful, vain jesting, wherein rather conscience than wit must be denied—when all these pass for our ornaments rather than our evils, where is our tenderness?

When upon auditing our accounts, examining our books, and reckoning up our scores, where a talent is owing, we bid conscience, "Take your bill, and write down a shekel;" where twenty or a hundred sins are to be reckoned for, "Take your bill, and write down ten, or but one, and that a little one:" when we are so free in multiplying and so false in numbering our iniquities, where is our tenderness?

Well, Christians, the Lord has promised a tender heart, to make these stones flesh; and something possibly is done already upon you towards it. O let this sad sight now laid before you, this view of what is wanting, have some influence upon you. Let sorrow that no more is done, work what is yet undone; let your unbrokenness break your hearts; let the stone that yet remains make your flesh bleed. If you yet feel no more, may you at least feel this—that you feel not.

Chapter 10.

A Heart to Love the Lord

"THE Lord your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul." (Deuteronomy 30:6). Love is the soul of the new creature; the closing of the soul with God. He who has most of God, is most a Christian; and he who has most of love, has most of God. God is love.

In treating of this love to God, we shall consider its object, and its act.

I. ITS OBJECT. The object of divine love is God. God is good, and good is amiable. God is all good: there is none good but one, that is God. God is essentially good, goodness in the abstract; he is infinitely excellent, he is all perfection. In this one attribute all the rest of the attributes of God are included, and this in each of them. However the Scriptures, speaking to our capacities, describe God and his glorious attributes in several and distinct notions, yet in each one all are included; each one is infinite, and infinite perfection is essentially all perfection. God is originally good, the fountain and pattern of all that moral good which is in his creatures; he is bountiful and gracious, ready to do them good; and he is the felicitating end, or the final blessedness of the soul. The goodness of God to his creatures has its different and various appellations. As it is freely bestowed, it is grace; as it respects them as needy, it is bounty; as in misery, it is mercy and compassion; as provoking, it is patience; as it intends their good, it is love; as it answers both their necessities and capacities, it is all-sufficiency. All these, his bounty, mercy, compassion, patience, love, all-sufficiency, all these are in one word his goodness, and goodness calls for love. The object of this love is God: particularly, 1. God in himself; 2. God in Christ; 3. God in all the things of God.

1. God in himself, as he is infinitely excellent, and so worthy of all love. God is to be loved in himself, and for himself, for his own worthiness; God is good in himself, and therefore to be loved for himself.

2. God in Christ. In whom alone, considering us as sinners, he can be said to be good to us. There is a fourfold incentive of love—perception, proportion, propriety, possession.

PERCEPTION, the apprehension or understanding of the object to be loved. We must know before we can love: now God cannot be seen by mortals; he dwells in light, but that light is to us invisible. Christ is the glass, in which this glory may be seen. We cannot see God but through a veil of flesh, in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6). "No man has seen God at any time;" but "the Only Begotten of the Father," who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him. (John 1:18).

PROPORTION. And there is a double proportion requisite; in respect to quantity, there must be sufficiency; and in respect to quality, there must be suitableness. God himself is proportioned to us, considered as rational creatures, and in our state of innocency—he is both a sufficient and a suitable good; but God in Christ only is suited to us, considered as lapsed creatures in a state of sin. God in Christ is a God of pity and compassion to us; a God of patience, a God of mercy, with whom is plenteous redemption. A God pardoning iniquity, and passing by transgression; loving us in our low estate, loving us and pitying us, loving us and pardoning us, loving us and washing us, loving us and saving us from our sins and from the wrath to come. And such love is the great flame that kindles love; love breaking forth out of a cloud of wrath and fury and displeasure; abused love, provoked love, and yet forgiving love: to whom much is forgiven, they will love much.

PROPRIETY, or interest. What is good, good for us, and our own good, that carries our hearts. We must love our own good, because

we must love ourselves. Our love to God is heightened by our due self-love. There is a sinful self-love, when either we love that for a self which is not ourselves, when we love our flesh and fleshly interest, or when we love ourselves inordinately, more than God, and God only for ourselves; and there is a lawful self-love, when we love ourselves in the Lord and for the Lord. And the more we thus love ourselves, the more is the Lord loved by us; and the more he is our own, the more love he has from us. Now in Christ the Lord is our God; our own God, even our own God. "You are my God, and I will praise you. You are my God, I will exalt you." (Psalm 118:28). The Lord is God, and we therefore love him; the Lord is good, gracious, merciful, and we therefore love him, yes, and ought to love him, whether he be ours or not; but when both meet, he is God, and our God; he is good and our good, gracious, merciful, all-sufficient—and all this to us: hence is our love made perfect in us.

POSSESSION. We can love a distant, an absent good, a good that is only possible; there is love in hope, but the nearer any good is to us that is really good, the more attractive and acceptable it is. It is most in our hearts when it is most in our hands. Indeed, those things which are only imagined and finite good, being overrated and judged to be better than they are, are loved most at a distance, because when they come to hand we see our mistakes. But that which is what it seemed; much more, that which is above our thoughts, beyond our expectations, infinite good, is ever the dearer to us the nearer it comes. All worldly good is most valued, at least by carnal hearts, at a distance; they promise themselves more enjoyment in it than it has to give them; their possession is their disappointment. While they lusted, they idolized, they adored; but when they have tasted and eaten, it comes out at their nostrils. Or else they sit down with the shame of the disappointed; they are either surfeited, or hungry still. "Is this all—all you can do for me; all the pleasure and comfort I shall have of you? Is all my expectation of delight and satisfaction come to no more than this? Miserable comforters are you all." Possession and fruition are the proof of all things. And vanity once tried is the less loved. But God being an all-sufficient, incomprehensible good, the

nearer to us he is, and the more he is ours, the more we prize and love him; because now we find that the half had not been told us.

Now in Christ, we have not only a propriety in God, but in some degree a present possession. "He who has the Son, has the Father also." We see his light, we feel his love, we taste his goodness, we enjoy his presence, we have God with us, we have God in us, we have fellowship with him, he dwells in us and we in him; and hence we love, and herein we rejoice.

3. In all the things of God: in his word, ordinances, Sabbaths, saints, in graces, duties, in all his ways; the saints love God, and love his word; it is God in the Word they love; they love God, and they love ordinances, and Sabbaths, and saints: it is God in all these they love; they love the ways, and works, and all the dispensations of God, and it is God in them all they love; they see God in everything, and they love God wherever they see him. They look on all these things with another eye, and therefore embrace them with another heart than other men. The saints' love to the things of God, is their love to God; for it is God in them that they love; their love to them is founded either on their participation of God, or relation to God. They love the things of God, because they are the offspring, the images, and the chariots of God.

The things of God are the offspring of God; as the saints are born from above, so all the things of God come down from above, and therefore may also be called, as the apostle styles them, things above: "If you be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, set your affection on things above." (Colossians 3:1, 2). Whatever is from God, and belongs to his heavenly kingdom, is divine and heavenly; and he who loves him that begets, therefore loves those which are begotten, and whatever proceeds from him.

The Word and the saints are the images of God, the character and impress of God are upon them; the grace in the saints, and the holy

truths in the word, are the very face of Christ, who is full of grace and truth; and this is their rule, Love God, and love his image.

The things of God are the chariots of God. He who makes the clouds his chariots, makes also his word, and his ordinances, and his ministers his chariots, wherein he rides down into those lower parts to give the world a meeting. When ministers come, and the Word comes down, God comes down in them to visit his people: as it was said of Paul, so it is true of Apollos, and Cephas, and all the dispensers of the gospel, they are chosen vessels to bear his name before the sons of men; and as they are the chariots in which God comes down, so are they also the wagons which he has sent them, to fetch them up to himself. In their duties, in their prayers, in their praises, the saints send up their hearts unto God. Israel's heart leaped when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent. O, what love does the psalmist express to the house and courts of the Lord! "How amiable are your tabernacles! I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." He was glad to go thither, because thence he hoped to be carried higher, from the mountain to the mansion—from mount Zion here below, to Jerusalem which is above.

It is the duty and the delight of the saints to be ascending heavenwards: they are dead with Christ, they are risen with Christ; and it is not as they would with them, but when they are ascending up with Christ: they are dead with Christ by repentance and humiliation; they are risen with Christ by faith and sanctification; and they ascend with Christ by love and holy affection: this is their chariot of fire, a chariot within a chariot, that through duties and ordinances rides up in its own flames to the God of love.

Or, if you will, the ordinances of God are our Jacob's ladder reaching from Heaven to earth, by which angels descend and souls ascend. God comes down and hearts go up, praises go up and blessings come down. You have not proved what an ordinance is, what prayer means, or preaching means, or sacraments mean, who have not seen God coming down, nor felt your heart ascending by them: he who

has felt this will say, Here let me dwell; let others be where they will, among their flocks, among their herds, upon their beds, at their cups, at their pleasures, or in their houses; it is good for me to be here.

No wonder, Christians, that carnal hearts are such strangers to the word, can so well be absent from divine Worship and ordinances; preaching and praying and Sabbaths they can spare, and not feel their want; what wonder? What is Heaven to earth? What is God to flesh? These chariots would carry them away from their gods, carry them out of their own country into a strange Land, where they have neither possession nor acquaintance. But O, what a sad wonder is it, that saints should go up so often into the chariots, and yet get no nearer home; that they should still be so much on the earth, that have been so often mounted for Heaven; that their hearts should still be on the dunghills, whose feet are so often on the mountain of the Lord; that the wagons should be so often sent down, and go up empty, scarce a heart sent up in them; yes, that they should be so far from God, when God is among them. Where is your love, Christians? How is it that it is still below? What have you here? Your city is above, your home is above, your God, your Jesus, your treasure is above. Oh, how is it, that where your treasure is, your hearts are not also? Hear from God, and God not with the messenger! send up to Heaven your eyes, your hands, your prayers, your complaints, your promises, and still leave your hearts below! send up your hearts to Heaven, and let them return again down to this earth; remain earth, and flesh, and filth, and vanity, after so much converse or pretense to it, with the holy God of spirits! Love you God, when you can so often go where he is, and not care to see him; or if you meet him, can let him go without a blessing; or if he bless you, can go presently and exchange your Father's blessing for a mess of pottage; can lose a duty in a dinner, the comforts and revivings of a sermon, of a sacrament, of a Sabbath, in an hour's carnal converse with the world? Did we love our God more, certainly we should be more with him, and to better purpose. His meetings would be more precious, and the fruits of them more lasting. We should neither go away without his

blessing, nor throw it away when we had got it. Thus much for the object of love.

II. ITS ACT. Love is a natural affection. The love of God is the soul's clasping or closing with the Lord. It is the expansion, or going out of the heart in its strength after God—the uniting or knitting of the soul with God, with a delight and acquiescence in him. There are three things included in this love.

1. The strength of the heart making out after God. This is that which is commonly called our love of desire, the breathing, or thirsting, or panting of the heart after God, (Psalm 42:1); the heart's working God-wards with its whole might; loving him above all things, desiring him above all things, with the greatest vigor and intentness, and as its complete and adequate object. God is its all. "Whom have I in Heaven but you, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides you,"

2. The uniting of the soul with God. Our cleaving to him. By love heart cleaves to heart, soul cleaves to soul. It is said of Shechem, (Genesis 34:3), that his heart cleave unto Dinah. He loved her with his heart, she was gotten into his heart, and there his heart holds her. Barnabas exhorts the church, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. (Acts 11:23). It is the knitting of the soul with God. It is said, (1 Samuel 18:1), that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And of Jacob, (Genesis 44:30), to express his tender love to Benjamin, it is said, his life was bound up in the lad's life. Of the multitude of believers we read, (Acts 4:32), that they were all of one heart and of one soul. Their love had knit them into one. By love we are one with God, and he with us. It is the soul's willing of God, if I may so speak—willing of God to itself, and willing itself and all to God. All praises, all honor, all blessedness to him. "Be you mine, Lord; nothing less, nothing else. Be you mine, I need no less, I desire no more. Let me be your, be to you, be for you, your servant, your sacrifice, or what you will; and let all mine be thine—my heart, and my hand, and my

tongue, and my time, and my interest. Let all your be to you; your heavens and your earth, with every person and every creature in them. Let every heart, every mouth, every limb, every creature, be a praise to the Lord. Let the Lord live, and blessed be my rock; let the God of my salvation be exalted. Let every knee bow, let every tongue confess unto God." This is our love of union, as it is called. And it is the very essence of saving love, wherein are included both our accepting God, with the surrender or resignation of ourselves unto him, and our wishing and willing all glory, dominion, and blessedness to him. And so here also is our love of benevolence. All these may be included in that opening of the heart mentioned (Acts 16:14). It is there said that the Lord opened Lydia's heart. The heart is then savingly opened, when it freely lets out itself upon God, all its streams run in to the Lord, and when it takes God into the depth of the soul. The heart thus opened to the Lord, when God is come in, will close upon him. "Abide with me; you have entered into your habitation. O let this be your dwelling forever." Only this must be further added, that with God it takes in all things of God—his word, his ordinances, his ways, and all his dispensations. With his love, his laws; with his comforts, his counsels; with his counsels, his corrections. "With you," it says, "I accept of all that is your, both your yoke and your cross; yourself, Lord, your love, Lord, and whatever you will with you."

3. The soul's taking pleasure, and taking up its rest in him. This is called our love of delight. Where we love, there will be a delightful stay of the mind upon God. The object dwells in the eye; we are still looking where we love. "When I awake, I am still with you;" there our thoughts are, of him is our meditation all the day long.

My meditation of him shall be sweet. He who loves, dwells in God: "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." And why there? Because there our God dwells, and therefore there the soul takes up its dwelling. There is also an acquiescence of the heart in him. "Return unto your rest, O my soul." But this is not felt until love has obtained its object; until the soul feels itself to love, and to have what it loves;

to love, and to be beloved; to accept, and to be accepted of God. When it comes to this, then I have enough. "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." And here is the sweetness of religion, the marrow and fatness of godliness, the pleasure of love. When I love, I can rest; when I can rest, I can rejoice; when I feel myself to love, I know I am beloved; and then what is there wanting? Where love is a stranger, joy is not known; we can never take comfort in anything but in that which we love. When take we pleasure in eating but when we have food that we love? What is a friend, or a wife, or a child, when we love them not? What is society or communion, where love has not first made a union? Can two walk together except they be agreed? with little comfort surely; they would be better pleased, were they parted asunder. It is love that is the pleasure of our lives. It is love that makes Heaven sweet; there we shall have our fill of joy, because there we have our fill of love. Heaven would be no Heaven, God himself could not be the joy, if he were not the love of his saints. What bitter draughts will love sweeten! Sin and lusts and all the filth of the flesh are sweet morsels to carnal hearts; it is the meat they love; God is nothing, Christ is nothing to them. What is your Beloved more than another? Religion is a bondage to them, holiness a weariness; to them not the labors only, but the joys of the saints are empty and unsavory. There are no true feasts but love-feasts. Love will make anything relish. When it puts such a sweetness into sin that even death and Hell will go down with carnal hearts for its sake, O what a feast will love make of holiness and glory! Get love to Christ, love to religion, and you will never demand, Where is the blessedness, where is the sweetness of religion?

Love will sweeten both the comforts and the exercises of religion; it will make duties sweet, yes, and sufferings sweet: there are two things that are naturally sweet to it—to please, and to praise.

(1.) He who loves, will please the one whom he loves. How careful are such to watch themselves, that they grieve not their friend; what study does love put them upon to find out what is grateful and acceptable—acceptable looks, acceptable language, acceptable

entertainment. "What will you, Lord? what will you have me to be? a servant, a doorkeeper, a servant of servants for you? I will be nothing but what you will, anything that you will have me. What will you have me to do, Lord? let me know your will, appoint me my work. O that my ways were so directed that I might keep your statutes. What will you have of me? Will you have mine idols, mine ease, or my honor, or my pleasure, or my house, or my estate? Will you have mine Isaacs? Is there any one thing dearer to me than another, that might be an offering to the Lord? Will you have my liberty or my life? Behold, all is at your feet: I can keep back nothing you call for."

Hence, love is said to be the fulfilling of the law; there is in this goodwill radically every good work. It would walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work. Love is generous, it would do great things, noble things: What shall I do for him whom my soul honors? O for a gift that might be worthy of him! but I have nothing, my goodness extends not to you. It would give more than it owes; but where it cannot do so, where it cannot be generous, yet it would be just; it would level all accounts, and pay all debts; love would have nothing but love owing. It would give to all their due; it would not die in the debt of a servant, of a stranger; much less would it take from the God of glory. This is the daily charge of love, Pay what you owe. Its receipts and returns are a pleasure to it; anything that comes down from Heaven, and every present it has to send thither, is a joy to love. This is the message that both speak, Happy soul, you love and are beloved. It catches at all opportunities to send up messages of love, and knows no fitter messenger to send by, than the hand of duty; every duty is dispatched with this superscription, The tribute of love.

Love is the spring that sets all our wheels a going, the mold in which all our works are formed, the fire in the heart that vents itself in our words and ways. "The fire burned; then spoke I with my tongue." Love is to a saint what malice is to Satan, that which gives force to all his actings. Satan's temptations are called fiery darts; and this, not only because they are headed and barbed with fire—like poisoned

arrows, they burn where they hit; they set sin on fire, they set the soul on fire, burning with lust and wickedness—but because they are winged with fire, and forced with fire. The bullet is fired out of the gun, and therefore it flies so fiercely. It is the malice of Satan's heart that fires out all his darts. What malice does with Satan, that does love with saints. It sets the heart in a flame of holy zeal and activity for God: "His word was in my heart as a burning fire; I was weary with forbearing." (Jeremiah 20:9). A heart of love is weary, not of action, but of idleness; weary with forbearing, not with doing; never weary of doing much, ever weary of doing nothing. "O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed," says the psalmist; "I will sing, and give thanks." Love will add, O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed; there is a flame kindled; my heart burns in holy desires and zeal for you. And where love has set the heart a burning, the heart will set the hand a working and the feet a running.

(2.) He who loves, will praise him whom he loves. Praise is lovely, and praise is a pleasure to the upright in heart. It is the delight of love to be speaking of the perfections, of the virtues, of the beauties, of the excellencies of its beloved. The spouse in the book of Songs, whose language is all love, has her heart so full that her lips overflow with the mention of the excellencies of Christ: My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand. His head is fine gold, his eyes dove's eyes, his cheeks a bed of spices, his lips are lilies, his hands are gold rings, his legs pillars of marble, his countenance excellent, his mouth sweet; yes, he is altogether lovely: this is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. (Song of Solomon 5). "Who is a God like unto you, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God. Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, your faithfulness reaches into the clouds. Your righteousness is like the great mountains, your judgments are a great deep. How excellent is your loving-kindness, O Lord! therefore the sons of men put their trust under the shadow of your wings. I will speak of the glorious honor of your majesty, and of your wondrous works. The Lord is gracious, full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy. The

Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. Let all your works praise you, O Lord; let the saints bless you; let them speak of the glory of your kingdom, and talk of your power; let them abundantly utter the memory of your goodness, and sing of your righteousness." O my God, you are all love, all goodness, all grace, all glory. O let your servant be all praise! Let this heart be an altar, and every service a sacrifice; let this mouth be a trumpet, and every word a psalm; let my breath be as incense, and every member a censer. Let all that is within me, my soul, with all its powers—let all that is without me, my body, with all its members, shout for joy, and sing forth the high praises of God. This is the voice of love.

And thus you have another excellence of the new heart laid open to your view, love—a heart to love.

Christians, prize this precious grace, prize it, and you will write down this word also among the great and precious promises; and if you would prize it aright, take your estimate of it from its worth and its want, as we prize jewels according to their excellence and their rarity.

(1.) Prize it according to its worth and excellence. Why, what is the worth? "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be contemned." The whole world is not of sufficient value to be a price for love; no, it must come by gift, it is not to be bought for money; love is worth as much as a soul, and that is more than all the world. "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Love is as much worth as all religion; it is the soul and the substance of all religion; all our graces, duties, and exercises are only valued according to the love that is in them. What is knowledge, faith, hope, or patience, without love? What is prayer, fasting, or alms, without charity? They are worth nothing, shall I say? nay, they are nothing; if I had all knowledge and all faith, and were all prayer and all labor and all suffering, and had not charity, I were nothing. Love is worth as much as Heaven is worth, as Christ and God are worth to us. God is love, and God is not in us, if love be not. Do you prize your substance? Is your house, or your money, or your land,

anything to you? Do you value your soul? Is religion, is Heaven, is Christ, is God himself of any account to you? Then prize the love of God. Without love, God is no God to you, Christ is no Christ to you, Heaven is no Heaven for you; better you had no soul, no being, than no love. O prize the love of God, prize and seek, prize and pray; pray as for your life, as for your soul, as for your everlasting kingdom, "Lord, let me love you." Get love, and get all: love, and you will be holy; love, and you will be humble; love, and you will be fruitful; love, and you will please, praise, and enjoy your God; love, and you will fear, serve, suffer, and die for him; love, and you shall live. Prize love, prize it according to its worth.

(2.) Prize it also according to its rarity. Things excellent are rated something the more for their scarcity; scarcity raises the market: "The word of the Lord was precious in those days," (1 Samuel 3:1), that is, when there was a famine of the word, when there was no open vision. O were the love of God as precious as it is rare! What a spiritless carcass is the religion of many professors! what has become of the soul of it? Oh, we freeze in our duties, we freeze in our devotions, we are almost frozen out of them all; we have a sacrifice left, what fire is there to offer it up? "The God that answers by fire, let him be God," says Elijah; the heart that asks by fire, that ascends in fire, let that be the heart for God: "Behold the wood and the fire; but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?" We may say, "Behold the wood and the sacrifice; but where is the fire to offer it up?" Our spirits have taken a cold, the chill of them appears in all our duties. Love, where dwell you? Zeal of God, where is your abode? How many houses must we search, how many hearts must we walk through, before we find your habitation? The apostle tells the Romans, that they have "a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." (Romans 10:2). We have the knowledge of God, but O, where is the zeal? "The zeal of your house," says the psalmist, "has eaten me up;" but is not that eater eaten? The house has burned up the fire, or if there be any fire left, is it not strange fire? Not the fire of love, but of lust, of pride, or covetousness, or that wild-fire of envy and contention that heats our spirits? Jehu was also on fire against the house of Ahab: "Come, see

my zeal for the Lord of hosts." That fire was fury, not love; or if it was love, it was self-love, not the love of God, that made all that flame: such hearts are like the evil tongue, "set on fire of Hell." (James 3:6). Such heats are not from above, but are earthly, sensual, devilish; we freeze still, while we thus fry; our preternatural heats have extinguished the supernatural.

O how little kindly warmth do we find in our spirits! Do we feel our hearts working upwards, ascending in our flames? We all pretend to love; but consider, are our hearts going out in their strength after God? We wish well to his name and interest, we wish he were ours, we wish ourselves his: O, if wishing were loving, what Christians should we be! But does the kingdom of God suffer violence? Who are they that so run, as if they would take God by force, take Heaven by force? The kingdom of Heaven may offer violence if it will, and take us by force; but how little violence does it suffer. We say we love God; but is there not something else we love more? We desire to be holy; but is there not something else we desire more?

O how few hearty friends has Christ in the world, and how little love from these few; so little that we ourselves cannot tell whether it be anything or nothing: how hard are we put to it. What a narrow search must we make, how many arguments must we consult, how many marks must we consider before we can prove we love him, and yet at last are still in doubt whether we love him or not.

When we love our friends, our wives, our children, we can feel that we love them; when we love our ease, or our estates, or our liberties, we can feel that we love them; but our God, we cannot tell whether we love him or not. How few of us can boldly make our appeal to him, "Lord, you know that I love you!"

O, how many wounds does Christ receive in the house of his friends; how many slights must he put up with; how often when he has sat down in his own place in the highest room, have we said to him,

"Give this man place, give this friend or this business place," and so made him take the lower room!

How has he, when he has come to our doors—his love has often brought him thither— how often has he stood, and knocked, and called, "Open to me, my love, my sister;" and there been made to stand and wait, when strangers have been brought in, and taken up all the rooms! The world can never come out of season, but Christ must wait his seasons when he can find us at leisure; if there be any other guest with us, our Lord must wait: "Go your way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for you." How often have we agreed and appointed to meet the Lord at such an hour, in our chamber, in our closet, to have converse and communion with him in duty, and if anything come in to carry us another way, then we cry, "I pray you, have me excused;" or, if we do keep our time, and shut in ourselves with the Lord, and sit down to duty, what a multitude of thoughts presently fall a knocking at our doors! and away our hearts go presently with them to the ends of the earth, and leave nothing but our bodies behind with the Lord. O were our love stronger, our cries would be louder, and would drown the noise of these knockings, that they would not be heard nor heeded; it would command silence to every impertinent thought: "I charge you, O daughters, that you stir not, that you disturb not my Beloved and my soul." More love would command our attendance upon the work of the Lord, would gird up the loins of the mind, and gather in all its scattered messengers, saying, "Come, all you powers of my soul, come and do your homage, come and help in the service of my God."

O, at what distance are we content to live from the Lord, sometimes for many days together! Our souls and our God are grown strange, and yet we can be merry and quiet; we can be without the presence of God, and yet never miss it; not a smile from his face, nor a look of love from us to him, and yet no trouble follows. The sun may be eclipsed, or under a cloud, and yet no darkness upon our spirits; we do not walk in darkness when we have no light; sorrow and sadness is as far from us, as God is from us; we can warm ourselves at our

own fires, and rejoice in the light of our own sparks, as if these were the sun. We can do as well in a mist, as in the sunshine; day and night are both alike to us. The children of the bride-chamber do not fast, but can feast and make merry when the bridegroom is taken from them; their carnal contentments they can make a shift with to supply the room of their Lord. Can we not sometimes go where our Lord feeds, and never find him—go to pray, or go to hear, or go to a sacrament, and the Lord never meet us there, and yet can return well enough satisfied? When we thus want communion with God, and can want it, where is our love? what love is that which can so well bear the absence of its beloved? "Call me no more Naomi, pleasant, but call me Marah, bitter; 'I went out full, but I return empty'—full of grace, full of joy, because full of the Lord; but behold, all is gone, my husband is lost, my God is departed from me. Call me no more Naomi, but call me Marah, for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me, has hid his face from me: for these things I weep; mine eyes, mine eyes run down with tears, because the Comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me:" such are the tears of love for her absent Lord.

O, how little conscience is there made of bestowing that on the Lord which we have bestowed on him! We give, and take back; we pretend to have given all to God, but are we not often taking away what we have given, and bestowing it elsewhere? Love would have all running unto God; but O, what waste is there made of our time and other talents, which, were they well-husbanded, would come to much, and be given to the Lord! When so many days and hours run away, and no account is taken of them on what or on whom they are consumed; when our eyes and our ears and hands and tongues, which were made for God, permit the devil and lust so often to have the using of them; when dress and appetite and friends and companions must carry away what should be spent on God and souls; when what should be allowed for religion and charity must be at the disposal of pride, prodigality, and gluttony; when our prayers, our fasting, our preaching, hearing, and all our duties, must become sacrifices to our lust; when our idols are suffered to devour the sacrifices of the Lord;

when our pride and fleshly ends must have the offering and eating of our sacrifices, must make our prayers, and preach our sermons, and keep our fasts, and give our alms, and wear the credit and honor of them as its own crown—when God is thus robbed, and we let the thief run away with all, and he is never pursued or questioned, O where is our love?

O, how little pleasure do we take in the Lord! What a weariness is it to us to wait upon him; how glad are we when we come back from the house of the Lord! When we rise from our knees, and come out of our closets; when the Sabbaths are gone, and the new moons are over, and we make our returns from Heaven to earth, how much work have we to keep our hearts near the Lord, how do they slink away before we are aware. And while we are in his presence, how seldom do we rejoice in his presence! What hungry meals, what meager feasts do we make before the Lord! We relish not his dainties; his wine is but lees, his marrow and his fat things are but leanness to our souls. A little love would sweeten every drop, would season every morsel that comes from his table—would make our very fasts to be pleasant bread. We feed upon the dish or the trencher, and not the meat; on the bone, and not the marrow: ordinances, and the external exercises of religion, are but the bone, or the shell, or the dish—it is God that is the kernel, the marrow, and fatness. How little communion have we with the Lord, in our approaches to him; and how little sweetness do we find in the little we have! Communion is the pleasure of love, and love is the sweetness of communion. "Now I am where I would be. O, how amiable are your tabernacles! Very pleasant are you to me, O Lord;" this is the voice of love. Had we more love, we should be more spiritual; and spiritual things would be more grateful to spiritual hearts. Divine love is like the fire, it rarifies and changes hearts into its own likeness, and then there is happiness. O, we are carnal, and that is enough to evidence that there is little of the love of God abiding in us.

Consider these things, and you will see that love is a rarity—there is but little true love in the world. O prize the love of God; let its want

make it prized: shall it be so rare, and yet so cheap? O prize it, and press on after it.

What do these hearts below? are they not still below? so cold, such clods of clay, and yet above! so carnal, so sensual, and yet in Heaven! so hungry, and so greedy in sucking the juice of this earth, in taking its pleasures; so busy in digging out the wealth of the earth, and searching for its treasures, and yet not here! How can you say I am walking with the God of glory, when you are still worshiping the gods of the earth? How can you say, This heart is risen, it is not here; when it may be said to you, "Behold the place where it lies?" it is still in the field, in the ridges and furrows thereof; it is still in the mines, in the heart of the earth: see the place where it lies. We sow our hearts with our seed; we send them down to dig in the heart of the earth.

But what do these hearts below? Get you up, get you up; leave nothing but the mantle here, your bodies— earth to earth, dust to dust. Come, heave these souls heavenward; let them take wing and be gone. O that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly up, and be at rest; be lower than ever by humility, but in love be on high.

Behold those cords of love that are let down in every ordinance, in every providence; there is a cord let down to gather up hearts; hearken to those calls of love, Come up hither, come up hither. We come, Lord, you bid us come: O lend us your hand, and lift us up.

Come, Christians; come, let us be happy; if we love, we are happy: come, let us rejoice; if we love, we joy: come, let us live; we die, we die, while we linger on this earth: if we love, we live; let us live, and let our life be love; let our works be labors of love, our sufferings seals of love, our sorrows the sorrows of love, our wounds love's scars, our prayers the cries of love, our praises love songs to our Lord and God. Let every duty, every exercise, let every member, every power, let our bodies, let our souls be love's sacrifices; let the Lord see love in all our ways, as we see it in all his.

Can you not love? look until you can; look up to your God, send up your thoughts thither; let your meditations be of him; these will not be long before the throne before they fetch up your heart. Look on your Jesus, behold his hands and his feet, come and put your finger into the print of the nails, and thrust your heart into his side, and there let it lie until you feel it warm. Look up to your Jesus; lift up a prayer: "Lord, let me love you: if you love, let me love you: I will seek, until I can see; let me see, until I can love. What have I here, Lord? My all is with you, my help, my hope, my treasure, my life is hid with Christ in God. And yet behold, this all is nothing to me, while my heart is no more with you; take it, Lord, take it up; where my treasure is, there let my heart be also."

Doubting Christian, who, because you love so little, fear you love not at all, cry for more, but be thankful for what you have; be ashamed you love no more, but be not dismayed. You complain you can not love God; but do you love his image, his saints, his word, his works, his ways? While you say you love not God, do you love godliness? If you can not love, can you grieve, can you lament after him? Have you chosen, do you hang upon, and trust in the Lord? If you can not love, can you fear and follow the Lord? If he be not sensibly in your affection, is he in your thoughts, in your mouth, in your eye? Is he your aim and your scope? Does your course bend towards him? If so, comfort your heart in these things; you may see, though you can not feel, that you love.

Chapter 11.

A Heart to Fear the Lord

"I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." (Jeremiah 32:40). In unfolding this topic, I shall proceed by these steps: I shall show, 1. That the Lord God is a dreadful God; 2.

That the Lord has put the dread of himself upon the hearts of all the earth; 3. That yet by sin the heart of man is much hardened from the fear of the Lord; 4. That God will recover his honor, and again put his fear into the hearts of his people; and, 5. What this fear of the Lord is that he will put into them.

I. THE LORD GOD IS A DREADFUL GOD: he is dreadful in the excellency and glory of his majesty. "Shall not his excellency make you afraid, and his dread fall upon you?" (Job 13:11). His power is dreadful: "Fear you not me? says the Lord. Will you not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?" Fear you not me? says the Lord. He who did this, what can he not do? His wrath is a dreadful wrath: "At his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation." (Jeremiah 10:10). Yes, his holiness is dreadful, his truth, his righteousness, and all his name. "That you may fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord your God." (Deuteronomy 28:58). The Lord God is a dreadful God.

II. The Lord God has put THE DREAD OF HIMSELF UPON THE HEARTS OF ALL THE EARTH. Not the best only, but the worst of the sons of men. "I am a great King, says the Lord; and my name is dreadful among the heathen." This dread of the Lord breaks forth upon them.

1. From the impress of God upon the natures of all men. As the law, so the being of God is written in their hearts; he has his witness in their consciences. If the atheists of the earth could answer all the arguments from without proving that there is a God; yet they can never confute their own consciences. If the works of God do not, their reins shall instruct them; if they will not see, whether they will or not they shall feel, that there is a God; and wherever God is felt, he is feared: even when their mouth speaks proud things, their heart

shall meditate terror; and when nothing else alarms them, they shall be a terror to themselves.

2. It is increased by the great works of God, his wonders that he does in the world—his thunder and his hail, his wind and his waves; his earthquakes make many an earthquake in hearts.

3. It is further heightened by his judgments, which he executes on the earth. The judgments of God, are God revealing himself from Heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, and strike most terror, 1. When he smites suddenly, and makes quick work with sinners: as when Herod was smitten by an angel of God, Nadab and Abihu consumed by fire from God, immediately upon their sin. Sudden strokes shake secure hearts. 2. When he executes strange judgments, and makes a new thing: as in the case of Korah and his company, he made the earth to open her mouth upon them, and swallow them up; as he made the flies, and the frogs, and the lice, to be the executioners of his wrath on Pharaoh. 3. When he executes great wrath for little sins, as men account them; as in the case of Uzzah, whom he struck dead for but touching the ark when it shook.

When he exercises great severity on his own people, on those that are near him. If he spares not his sons, what will he do with his enemies? "If these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

4. Yet further, men's dread is increased by their consciousness of guilt, and of their being bound over to the judgment to come. The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, with the point of a diamond it is graven upon the tables of their heart. The sin of Judah is written; yes, and the sin of the Gentiles also: "Their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing." (Romans 2:15). And where their sin is written, there their judgment is written, which even nature itself will teach does inevitably follow upon sin; and this is the great dread that is come upon them. The very mention of

judgment to come, made Felix tremble at the face of a poor prisoner. This is the terror of the Lord mentioned by the apostle: "We must all appear before the judgment-seat. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." (2 Corinthians 5:10, 11). Death is said to be the king of terrors; and this is the terror of death, "After that the judgment." All these, the impress of God upon their hearts, the wonders of God in the world, the vengeance of God executed on sin, the sense of guilt and of a judgment to come, do preach to the consciences of sinners that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

III. Yet by sin the heart of man is MUCH HARDENED from the fear of the Lord. Sin blinds the eye and hardens the heart, brings into danger and puts out of fear. Who in such danger, and yet who so bold as the blind sinner? When the understanding is darkened, the next word we read is, "Past feeling." (Ephesians 4:19). There is included in the very nature of sin a slighting of God; and by once slighting we learn to slight him more. Slight the command, and you will quickly slight the curse. Laugh at duty, and it will not be long before you laugh at fear. And when sin has thus hardened, God will also harden; he lets the sinner alone, suspends his judgments, smites the sinner with judicial blindness, and gives him up to a reprobate mind. (Romans 1:28). And when once they come to this, then Hell is broke loose: for what follows? "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness," and what not. (Romans 1:29). "The transgression of the wicked says within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes." (Psalm 36:1). When Abraham had such a thought, "Surely the fear of God is not in this place," (Genesis 20:11), what did he think was there? Murder, adultery, and all manner of villainy. "What saw you among us, that you have done this thing?" What hurt, what evil did you see among us? What evil! Evil enough to make me afraid: I thought the fear of God was not here, and there needs no more to make me afraid. Say of any person, The fear of God is not in this man, and you therein say, The devil is in him; here dwells sin, and all manner of wickedness. Say of any place, The fear of God is not in this place; and if you find it

an Egypt or Sodom for abominations, you will not wonder. "The fear of the Lord is clean," (Psalm 19:9), that is, it cleanses. Where this is not, every unclean thing may dwell. The reason why this world is such a world as it is, such a wicked world, such a treacherous, deceitful, ungodly world—why there is so little faith, or truth, or mercy, or charity, or sobriety, is, because there is so little of the fear of God. Sin has cast out fear, and this has brought forth sin in abundance. The law is nothing, threatenings are nothing, conscience is nothing, God is nothing to men, because he is not their fear. Wickedness is as righteousness; villainy, as honesty; prodigality, debauchery, as temperance and sobriety; yes, wickedness faces the sun, it lifts up the head, it wears the garland; it paints itself virtue, generosity, gallantry, the beauty and ornament of the world, wherever the fear of God is departed.

God may promise, threaten, command: "Hearken to my voice, turn at my reproofs, cast away your transgressions. Awake from your wine, be chaste, sober, humble; let your merriment be turned into mourning, your jollity into heaviness. Remember your Creator, remember your souls; why will you die? turn and live." God may speak thus once, and twice, and ten times, but is not regarded; his words have no weight, his counsels have no credit, his warnings are of no value with hardened, fearless hearts. If the devil speak but once, he is heard; if lust speak but once, it is obeyed; if a proud companion speak but once, he is followed; while the word of the God of glory is made a reproach and a scorn. O, the intolerable contempt that is poured out upon the Most High by men that fear not God! "Make your promises, and give your gifts to whom you will; give grace, and give glory where you please: the world for me; my pleasures, my honors, my liberty for me; this world for me, look after the other who will: let the Lord threaten, let the day of the Lord come; let it hasten that we may see it; let the Almighty do his worst, I will not hearken nor turn." This is the blasphemy of hardened, fearless hearts.

IV. God will recover HIS HONOR in the hearts of his people. He will put his fear in their hearts: while others are hardened, they shall tremble; while others kick, they shall stoop; whoever despise him, of these will he be had in honor.

V. WHAT THIS FEAR OF THE LORD IS, that he will put into their hearts. The fear of God is sometimes taken in Scripture as comprehending all religion. Job was said, (Job 1), to be a man fearing God, that is, a godly man; but in this sense I shall not here speak of it. Sometimes it is presented more strictly as a distinct grace, distinguished from faith, love, hope, and other graces of the Spirit. And being taken in this sense, there are these two things included in it: A reverence of God, and an abhorrence of evil for God's sake.

1. A reverence of God. To fear God, is to have the awe of God abiding upon the heart—to be under a sense of the majesty and glory of the Lord, shining forth in all his attributes, especially in his holiness and omniscience: the glory of his holiness, and the sense of such a holy eye upon the soul strikes it with dread and consternation. This is expressed in Scripture by sanctifying the Lord in the heart. "I will be sanctified in them that come near me." (Leviticus 10:3). "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." (Isaiah 8:13). There is mention in Scripture of a sanctifying of God and a justifying of God. As God does justify and sanctify his people, so they are to justify and sanctify God. These two, the justifying and sanctifying of God, though they be much the same, yet have some difference between them. To sanctify God, is to reverence him in our hearts, and to represent him in the glory of his holiness before men. To justify God, supposes a sinful judging and foolish charging of God in the hearts of men, and is our vindicating him from such charges. "Is God righteous?" say they; "how is it then that he is so partial in his dealings with the righteous and unrighteous; that he deals worse with those who fear him than with those who fear him not? Is God good? How is it then that he is so hard in imposing and inflicting such hard things upon his own? Is God true? How is it

then that he fails his people so often, when he has said, I will never leave them nor forsake them? Our flesh has failed, yes, and our heart has failed, yes, and our God has often failed us too; we have often called, and have had no answer; we have often trusted, and have had no deliverer." Not so, we reply; yet God is righteous, yet God is good, yet God is true; he has not been unrighteous, he has not been a hard master, he has not failed nor forsaken. This is to justify God.

Our justifying God has some points of resemblance with God's justifying us. God's justification of us consists in his not imputing sin to us, but accepting us as righteous; and our justifying of God, consists in our not imputing evil to him, but acknowledging him to be true, just, and good. God has justified me from my sins, and that is enough to proclaim him good and faithful, whatever his other dealings be. Let him afflict me, let him chastise me, since he will not judge me nor condemn me with the world. God has justified himself in my conscience. I have found that the Lord is gracious, I have found that God is faithful; he has said he will not, and I must say he does not, forsake me. He has not failed, when he has most failed me; when he has been farthest from me, he has even then been a present help in trouble. He has answered, when he has been most silent; he has been most good, when he has been most hard. I have never found more sweet, than in his bitter cup. I must judge myself, not my God: I have sinned, I have sinned against him, and therefore I must justify him when he speaks, and clear him when he judges. Hold your peace, querulous heart, be silent all the earth before the Lord, for truly God is good to Israel, even to them that are of a clean heart. There are few among the worst of sinners, but, if conscience might be suffered to speak, would justify God. It is lust that quarrels, not conscience. "It is vain," says lust, "to serve the Lord, and what profit is there to keep his ordinances? His ways are unequal and hard; his promise fails, take one time with another, oftener than it is made good. Who is it that plagues and disappoints and crosses and vexes us? This evil is of the Lord: why should I wait on the Lord any longer? Nay, whom does he punish more than those that are nearest him? Who have sorrow, who have trouble in the flesh, who are

reproached, scorned, hunted up and down the world, but these? This they may thank God for, and their following him. It is better being the servant of sin, than the servant of Christ." Thus lust blasphemeth. But speak, conscience. Is God unrighteous? Is God false to his word? Are the pleasures of sin better than the gain of godliness? Have the children of this world made a wiser choice than the children of light? Speak, sinner, let your conscience speak, whether it be thus or not. God has not left himself without witness in the hearts of sinners, much less in the hearts of his saints; when they do speak, their hearts speak good of his name. But this by the way.

To return to the matter in hand. To sanctify God, is especially to reverence him in the heart—to have such a high and holy and honorable esteem of him as commands an awe upon the heart; and that,

(1.) At all times. "My son, be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long." "My son:" it is not only for slaves, but for sons to fear. "Be you in the fear of the Lord:" it is not only, Let the fear of the Lord be in you, habitually in your heart, but actuate and stir up this holy fear, keep up a holy awe, a deep sense of God always upon you; let the fear of the Lord be before your eyes; be possessed and swallowed up of this fear "all the day long;" wherever you are, with whoever you have to do, remember you have still to do with God. A Christian should stand always as before the tribunal; every day should be as the last day, the Day of Judgment to him. "So speak you, and so do as those that shall be judged." (James 2:12). The Judge stands at the door, yes, and you may see him through every window, yes, through every wall—every wall is a window through which God may see and be seen. A Christian, when he is as he should be, cannot wink God out of sight; can look nowhere but he sees that eye which strikes an awe upon his spirit.

This abiding reverence of God, what an influence will it have upon the whole course! We shall then serve God acceptably; when we fear him, we shall please him: "That we may serve God acceptably, with

reverence and godly fear." We shall then serve God universally, in everything. When we fear, we shall watch unto every duty, against every sin. "This do and live, for I fear God," (Genesis 42:18), said Joseph to his brethren; as if he had said, Do not you fear to find falsehood or any evil-dealing from me, for I fear God; I dare not be false to you; you may trust me, you may take my word, for I fear God. We shall then walk before the Lord steadily. When we fear, we shall be firm, and hold fast in an even frame and course. Fear will be our ballast; while love fills our sails, fear will ballast our vessel. How are slight and frothy spirits tossed up and down—where do they not wander! How many hearts and faces and frames have they every day! What contradictions are they to themselves! The reverence of God upon them would fix them and hold them in a more even and equal poise. We should then serve the Lord more honorably. When we fear, we shall show forth the character of God before the world; the more we have of the reverence of God, the more have we of his holiness. The presence of a Christian walking in the fear of the Lord, is as the presence of God; the reverence of God upon his heart casts a beam of divine majesty into his face, and oftentimes begets an awe and reverence of him in the hearts of the worst of sinners; they reverence, even while they revile and persecute him.

Of John the Baptist, who was a man of a just, holy, and austere life, it is said that Herod feared him and observed him. (Mark 6:20). The austerity and holiness of his life commanded respect from a Herod's heart. Such Christians' ways are a conviction, and their very countenances are a rebuke to the wanton world; they speak with authority, they exhort with authority, they reprove with authority; and sin often hides itself from them, even as from the face of God.

(2.) Especially is this awe seen in our drawing near to God: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." (Psalm 89:7). "I will be sanctified in them that come near me." (Leviticus 10:3). He who fears God, trembles at the Word of God; and God loves he should. "To this man will I look, even to him that trembles at my word." (Isaiah 66:2).

That which makes him tremble is, that he sees the word carrying upon it the holiness and the authority of God.

He reads the Word as the epistle of God sent down to the world—his epistle commendatory, that sets forth the excellence, and the glory of God, and his letters mandatory, that charge subjection and obedience upon him: he takes every word as coming from the mouth of the Holy One of Israel; he lies prostrate before the Lord; his soul bows the knee, his heart falls down at the feet of the Almighty. The more the Word is considered as the Word of God, the more awe it works upon him. Every look he casts upon his Bible, is a looking into Heaven. He who fears God, fears when he comes to worship, reverences his sanctuary: "In your fear will I worship." (Psalm 5:7). That which works this fear is, that he looks upon the duties and ordinances of worship as the institutions of God and his application unto God.

"This," he says, "is that which the Lord has sanctified: behold his image and superscription; here he has directed me to wait for him; here he has appointed to meet my soul; now I am going up to the mount of God; the mount of God is everywhere where the worship of God is. My soul, where are you? I am before the Lord of the whole earth. Put off your shoes from your feet, the place whereon you stand is holy ground. I am before the high and holy One, the God of all the earth; and upon transactions of eternal consequence, to do my homage to the everlasting King, to kneel before the Lord my Maker, to kiss the golden scepter, to beg my life at his hands, to behold his goings in his sanctuary; his wisdom, and his mercy, and his goodness are all passing before me. How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God and the gate of Heaven. How dreadful is this word! This is none other but the Word of God. How dreadful is this ordinance! This is none other but the door of glory. Tremble, you heart, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob."

2. Abhorrence of evil for the Lord's sake, is the other part of the fear of God. Here we shall consider its object and its ground.

(1.) The object of this abhorrence in general is evil: "Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good." (Romans 12:9). Good is the object of love, evil of fear. Evil is twofold, present, or to come. The former is the object of grief, the latter of fear. Particularly, the objects of this abhorrence are, the wrong to God, the loss of God.

First, the wrong to God. The great and only wrong to God is sin. Sin is the turning away of the heart from God. The great thing in all the world which God respects and requires as his own, is the heart: "My son, give me your heart. Keep your heart with all diligence." (Proverbs 4:23). Keep your heart; that is, keep it for me—keep it clean for God, and keep it safe for God; see that it be not defiled nor carried away. When the heart is gone, all is gone with it. If the world has got men's hearts, if Satan has got their hearts, let them take all else, says God; let me have their heart or nothing: they are sure to have all, that have the heart. The heart, wherever it goes, carries all with it. Where we bestow our hearts, we bestow all that we have. Sin is the turning away of the heart. This is the very nature of sin, the heart's departing from the living God. (Hebrews 3:12). And therefore this is the great wrong to God. There is but one thing in the world that God regards; and this sin steals away.

Sin is the insurrection and rebellion of the heart against God; it turns from him, and turns against him; it runs over to the camp of the enemy, and there takes up arms against God. Sin is a running from God, and a fighting against God; it would spoil the Lord of all the jewels of his crown. It opposes the sovereignty of God. A sinful heart would set up itself in God's throne, it would be king in his stead, and have the command of all. Sinners would be their own gods: "Our lips are our own, who is Lord over us?" God shall not be God where sin is risen up as lord. It assaults the wisdom of God. Vain man would be wise, wiser than his Maker. It charges the Lord with folly, and proclaims itself the only wise. Sinners pretend to know how to

choose for themselves, and order things to their advantage, better than God. "If God would let me alone to myself, to be at my own ordering, it should quickly be better with me. If everything might be with me as I would have it, my case would be well-mended from what it is, now that everything must go as God will have it." All our complainings at Providence, all our murmurings and discontents at our lot, are our heart charging the Lord with folly. It casts reproach on the holiness of God, it disparages the goodness of God; it abuses his mercy, violates his justice, despises his power. In sum, it disgraces the throne of his glory, lays his honor in the dust, and sets the Almighty below the lowest of his creatures.

Every companion shall be respected more than God; every pleasure shall be loved more than God; the devil shall be feared more than God. Where is his love? Where is his fear? Where is his honor? Nay, where were the Lord himself, might sin have its way? Sin alone wrongs God, and this wrong is the especial object of the saints' abhorrence. A gracious heart would do no wrong, he would not wrong his neighbor, he would not wrong his servant, his enemy, no, not his beast that he possesses. "But O, should I wrong my God? Has he ever done me any wrong? Has he not been just to me; yes, has he not been ever good to me? Kind, pitiful, patient, bountiful? Who has fed me, clothed me, kept me, succored me, comforted me? What friend have I in all the world, what father, what portion, what hope, but the Lord? What were I, what had I, but vanity, woe, and misery, had I not a God? I cannot wrong my God but I wrong myself. 'He who sins against me wrongs his own soul.' (Proverbs 8:36). But if I did not, if my arrows would not recoil, could I go on with all this injury and suffer nothing by it: yet, he is GOD whom I wrong; he is holy, he is righteous, he is good, he is glorious, he is excellent; he only is God, and shall I be injurious to him? He is worthy of all that I have, of all the service I can do, of all the respect I can give, of all the praise I can offer up. If I had a thousand tongues, if I had a thousand hands, if I had a thousand lives, if I had a thousand souls, if I had all the earth for an offering to the Lord, all would be nothing to show forth the praise that is due unto his name, as he is God, and I his

creature. And when I owe so much, and have nothing to pay, shall I steal from him? shall I rise up against him? Were you not afraid to lift up your hand against the Lord's anointed? (2 Samuel 1:14). Shall I not be afraid to lift up my hand against the Lord himself? to kick against God? O, the Lord forbid! What are you, O my soul? What serve you for, if you can not tremble, if you do not turn within me, if you do not start back at the very thought of such great wickedness!"

Secondly, the loss of God. As was said before, "He who sins against God wrongs his own soul." His loss is your loss, and more your than his; though, no thanks to you, the Lord will be no loser at last: when sinners have done their worst, he can bring his honor out of dishonor, he can recover his spoils out of the ashes; if he had lost all the world, he had lost nothing; he is all things in himself. When earth and Hell have spent all their malice, God will be God, holy, wise, glorious, blessed forever. Though such be the malignity of sin, that it would not give over until God cease to be God, yet God is above, too high for sin to reach; its darts fall short of their mark. God cannot, God will not be a loser by all that sin can do.

But what do you suffer, what do you lose, who sin against God! The carnal world understand it not, nor would make much reckoning of it, did they understand it. The loss of two pence often troubles them more than the loss of God. But now a Christian knows no other fear, fears no other loss—let God be secure, and all is well. Sin will be a wrong to God, and the loss of God; it may be a total and eternal loss, for anything he knows: God lost, the soul is lost, the kingdom lost; this is Hell, the loss of God. Better have no being—better be a dog or toad, than a man without a God. Or if he be not utterly lost, yet to his present sense it will be all one as if he had no God; his peace is lost, his comfort is lost, and his soul is often given up for lost, from whom God is departed, though but for a season; he can take pleasure in nothing, he can find rest nowhere, whose God is out of sight. He knows not what a God means, who can do without him until death or judgment. A Christian cannot live a day without him; it is night, it is all dark, he knows no day, while the Sun is set upon him. How

grievous do they find this loss, who have proved what it is! "What will you do for me, while I go childless?" What can be done for me, while I go fatherless? Here is my house, here are my friends and my lands; but where is my God? "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" "Now I see what this earth is without a Heaven; now I see what ease, pleasure, and carnal friends are, and how little they can do for me. Yes, what is prayer, what are Sabbaths, what are sermons, ordinances, promises, while God looks not down? O I was accustomed to meet with God here; these glasses were my windows into Heaven; and then how pleasant were they to me! Sabbaths were a delight, the Word was a treasure, sacraments were the clusters of Canaan. But now, now all is dark and dry; ordinances are wells without water; promises are breasts without milk; ministers are stars without light: O the stars are but clods, while the sun is a cloud to me; woe is me, I am pained, I am pained, my head is sick, my heart is faint, my affections are turned, my liver is poured out, the light of mine eyes is gone from me; I am weary of my groanings, I am full of tossings and turnings, there is no soundness in my flesh, no rest in my bones, while my soul says daily to me, Where is your God?" And if the sense of this loss works such grief, what wonder if the hazard of it works fear? Now sin divides, breaks the peace, makes God and the soul two—sin alienates, produces a distance and estrangement between God and the soul. That soul can either not see him at all, or not as a friend, whom sin has drawn away. Sin will either cloud the face of God, or clothe him with fury; will cause him either to turn his back upon the soul, or set his face against it. He who knows what it is to enjoy God will dread his loss; he who has seen his face will fear to see his back; he loves, and therefore would not lose.

(2.) The ground and reason of this abhorrence is twofold—God's jealousy, and his people's ingenuousness.

First, God's JEALOUSY. "The Lord your God is a jealous God." (Exodus 20:5). The same arguments which the Lord uses to keep up and enforce his authority upon the consciences of his people, the same arguments they do and ought to make use of, to press it upon

themselves. "I am a jealous God," says the Lord. It is true, says conscience, the Lord is jealous; and therefore take heed to yourself, soul, how you fall into his hands. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

The jealousy of the Lord includes in it his tenderness of his honor, and terribleness in case of dishonor.

His tenderness of his honor. The honor of God is very tender to him, he will not lose a tittle of it: "My glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." (Isaiah 42:8). I will not, and look you to it that you do not, give away my glory. What was the reason that God dealt so severely with Eli and with Herod? What was Eli's sin? Why, that he gave away the honor of God to his sons. "You honor your sons above me." (1 Samuel 2:29). He was so tender to his sons that, though they were become sons of Belial, and dealt so wickedly before the Lord, yet they must be dealt gently with: "Nay, my sons, it is no good thing that I hear of you." Such a slight reproof must serve in so dreadful a case; he was afraid to displease his sons by a sharper reproof; this the Lord interprets as an honoring of his sons above him. Indulgent parents, stand and tremble, you that can see your children sin, and let them go with a "Nay, my sons, it is not good," a slight or cold reproof; this is no other but your honoring your sons above your God. What was Herod's sin? (Acts 12:22, 23). That he gave not God the glory. He made an eloquent oration, and the people thereupon made him a God: "The voice of a God, and not of a man;" and he accepted the applause; and thereupon the angel of the Lord smote him, that he died. Eli sinned in giving the honor of God to his sons, and Herod in taking it to himself; but God taught them both how dear his glory is to him.

The jealousy of the Lord also includes his terribleness in case of his dishonor. The above-mentioned instances speak him both tender and terrible: "The Lord your God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." (Deuteronomy 4:24). The jealousy of a man is the rage of a man, (Proverbs 6:34); and the jealousy of God is the rage and fury of

a God. "Our God is a consuming fire," that is, the fire of his jealousy. The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion; when the lion roars, the beasts of the field tremble; what then are the terrors of the Lord? The threatenings of the Lord are terrible: "Consider this, you that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." (Psalm 50:22). "I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury." (Isaiah 63:3). His judgments are terrible, and he does terrible things in righteousness. Go to Jerusalem and mount Zion, and behold the monuments of his fury there. "Go to Shiloh," says God, "and see what I did to it." (Jeremiah 7:12). But if you go down to Sodom, or look down to Tophet, and behold the terrors of the Lord there; or if you look on particular persons, let Nadab and Abihu, Korah, Dathan and Abiram, Uzzah, Uzziah, Herod, Ananias and Sapphira, be instances of his dreadfulness and severity. This jealous God, this terrible God, is the God whom his people fear; and they fear him because he is such a jealous God. Who would not fear you, you King of nations? Who can stand before you when you are angry? My flesh trembles for fear of you, and I am afraid of your judgments.

Christians, let none say, "This fear is not the fear of his children; this be to his enemies and slaves, not his children; fear you not their fear." But are not all these things written for our learning? Is this written only for their sakes? Or says he it not also for our sakes? For our sakes no doubt this is written, says the apostle in another case. Consider this Scripture full to this purpose: "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted; neither be you idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur you, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for examples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." (1 Corinthians 10:6-12).

Mark, these things are our examples. Are they examples to us, and not warnings too? Are they warnings to us, and must we not by them learn to fear and beware? "Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." My soul stands in a sure place, my mountain is so strong that I shall never be moved; I am safe enough; I am in Christ, and shall not come into condemnation. But whatever you think, as sure as you think you stand, take heed, take heed lest you fall; that is, not only into the same sins, but into the same condemnation; that is the sense of the place. "Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear." (Romans 11:20).

No need of fear! No need of threatenings! What, may we burn half our Bible? Can we spare so great a part of what is written? Have we outgrown the use of judgment, as soon as ever we are partakers of mercy? Have we outgrown the use of the scourge, as soon as ever we are entered into Christ's school? Do we find all too little, mercies, threatenings, judgments, to keep our hearts in order? And yet, is it more than is needful? There are two parties in us: we are flesh, as well as spirit; and must not the flesh be frightened? Will love prevail with lust? Surely this slave, this son of the bondwoman, must be kept in awe. Has God no disobedient children, no rebellious children; and must these have no other discipline but strokings and dandlings?

Believe it, Christians, God will not have his terrors lost, nor lost to you; God will sometimes make his children feel that he is a terrible God. He is terrible out of his holy place. Beware you be not presumptuous children. There is a threefold presumption:

1. A presumption upon temptation, in confidence of strength. Some unwary souls, not knowing what spirit they are of, supposing themselves too hard for the devil, will be venturing within his reach, as if they would dare him to try his skill and power; who, having forgotten this prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," put themselves into the tempter's hand: the falls of such will teach them to understand their folly.

2. Presumption on sin, in confidence of mercy. And that either in confidence of mercy already obtained—"I am in Christ, and my sin shall not separate me from him; whatever I do, I have a pardon in my hand:" or in hope of mercy at last—"I have to do with a merciful God, and therefore may venture on a little further; hereafter I will repent, and then I need not doubt of remission."

3. Presumption on sin, in contempt of mercy and justice: "I will have my sin, though I never find mercy; I will have my will and my way, and run the hazard of what follows; I will take my course, come on me what will."

This last sort presume to sin in contempt of mercy and judgment; they are so drunken with their sensual delights, and so given over to the hardness of their hearts, that they neither value mercy nor fear wrath. "What do you talk to me of mercy and judgment to come? Give me my pleasures, and my liberties, and my mirth, and my money: think not to make me such a fool, to let go the pleasure and comfort of my life for I know not what uncertain fears or hopes." Such as these have one foot already in Hell. If it be not yet thus with you, you dare not despise either mercy or judgment; also beware you be not presumptuous in the former sense. Be not bold upon temptations; think not that you are strong to overcome a temptation, when you are so weak as not to fear it; he who fears not a temptation, understands not it, or himself. But especially beware you presume not upon sin, in consequence of mercy. Grow not overbold upon love or patience. Say not, "God loves me, therefore I may be bold to take the more liberty, the less care, the less watchfulness, the less fear, because so much love." Spit in your Father's face, because he weeps over your neck! Smite him on the face, because you hope he will not strike again! Tear his affections, because they are so tender towards you! Be froward, stubborn, wanton, and idle, because you have found him so indulgent!

Christians, consider whether such wickedness has not sometimes been found in some of our hearts. But take heed; you will find,

though he be a tender, yet he will not be a weak, fond father; where he loves, he will be feared. Some as bold and as confident as you, have felt to their cost what it is to abuse patience and kindness; his arrows in their hearts, his terrors in their souls, have made them know that the God of love is a terrible God. And look to it; if you yet will adventure, will be a wanton still, froward, or idle, or heedless still, he will either lash you into a better frame, or cast you out as no child of his, but a bastard and rebel. If you will not take warning by others, take heed lest he make you a warning to them which shall come after.

Christians know, that though God be tender of his saints, yet he is jealous for his name; he regards them as the apple of his eye, but not above the least tittle of his honor. As God will have us love our neighbor, so he will love his child but as himself: first himself, and then his child. He will not abate an iota of his glory to save a world. As little offences done to his little ones, so little sins allowed by them, are as millstones about the neck. If they allow it in themselves, yet Heaven and earth shall pass away and fall to nothing, before he allow it in them. God will not, and therefore his children dare not indulge themselves in little sins. They therefore fear, because he whom they serve is a jealous God.

The other ground of Christians' abhorrence of evil is their own ingenuousness. This fear is from love, and is most properly the fear of children. Children may fear because God is jealous, and so do slaves; but only children because God is good. Children fear because they love; slaves fear, although they hate. Children fear to be unworthy; slaves, only to be unhappy and miserable. There is nothing more contrary to an sincere nature, than to abuse goodness and kindness; to abuse goodness has as black an aspect with such a nature, as to provoke wrath. They "shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." (Hosea 3:5). But how can goodness be the object of fear? We fear evil, and not good. The meaning is, they shall fear to wrong or abuse goodness. They shall fear to wrong the Lord, because he is good, "in the latter days." These latter days that

this promise refers to, shall be days of more grace; wherein there shall be not only a more clear revelation of the goodness of God—they shall know the Lord and his goodness—but a more plentiful communication and diffusion of the goodness of God: they shall love the Lord and his goodness. They shall both see themselves more obliged by goodness, and shall feel themselves more seasoned with goodness. Religion does not make morose, but more generous, free, and sincere. There is nothing more abhorrent to an sincere spirit, than to be base and unworthy. Abuse of goodness is an unworthiness, which an sincere nature abhors as death to be guilty of; it is its destruction, it is disingenuousness. The abuse of the goodness of God is great unthankfulness; and unthankfulness is great disingenuousness.

Call me unthankful, and you call me all that is bad. Call me anything else but unthankful. Indeed, were I all thanks, I should still be unthankful; I should still be behindhand with the goodness of the Lord: my debt is greater than I can pay, yes, greater than I can acknowledge; but shall I return evil for good? If I cannot pay, should I deny my debt? He who is unthankful, whatever God requires of him, says wickedly, This is more than I owe to you; God, I owe you nothing, I care not for you. Oh, this is dreadful to a gracious heart.

If this be in sin—for all sin is unthankfulness—if this be sin, if this be the signification of all my neglects of God and my duty to him, then the Lord forbid, whatever I suffer, that I should yield to sin. How shall I do this wickedness? How shall I neglect this duty, and sin against God? How shall I look my God or my own soul in the face, should I be so unworthy? For your sake, Lord, let me not sin against you; you are good, you are kind, you are gracious, you are holy; O let me not be a devil: what heart, where a devil is not, but such goodness will charm it into love? Shall I sin? Shall I rebel? For your sake, Lord, I will not do it; I will not for my own sake; for where then shall I appear? In sinning against God, I sin against my own soul; I dare not for my life; sin and death, sin and Hell are linked together; but were it not so, might I sin and escape, sin and not die, yet for your sake,

Lord, I will not do it. You are good, good in yourself, good to me: you are my God, you are my Father; love, care, tenderness, compassion, kindness, is all that is in your heart towards me: what I am, what I have, what I hope for, that I breathe, that I live, all is your goodness, your bounty to me. O let me not rise up against the womb that bare me, and the breasts that gave me suck. I would not to my child, to my servant, to my friend—but O, let me never to my Father, to my God—return "evil for good, and hatred for his good-will." Let not this evil which I fear, ever come upon me; put your fear into my heart, O Lord, that I may not sin against you.

Chapter 12.

An Obedient Heart

"I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and you shall keep my judgments and do them." (Ezekiel 36:27). Obedience is of the heart or of the life. In this Scripture, God undertakes for both.

I. For THE OBEDIENCE OF THE HEART, he undertakes in the former words, I will put my Spirit in your heart. Where Satan dwells, he rules; and where the Spirit of the Lord dwells, there God rules. The Spirit in the heart is the law of the heart. Those two promises, "I will put my Spirit in your hearts," and "I will write my law in your hearts," signify the same thing. The law in the heart, is the will of man melted into the will of God. The law of God may be in the mouth, and the heart a rebel; its reception into the heart denotes the heart's subjection to it. This obedience of the heart includes,

The opening of the heart to the word. What will you have me to do, Lord? That is the voice of an obedient heart. Speak, Lord, command, Lord; what will you? And when he speaks, whatever it be, the Word

is embraced and accepted by the heart. "Let my counsel be acceptable to you." (Daniel 4:27). The acceptance of the Word in the heart is signified by its hearkening to it. To hearken is more than to hear; though they sometimes denote the same thing, yet ordinarily, hearing is of the ear, hearkening of the heart. "My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me." (Psalm 81:11). They heard what the Lord spoke, but they would not hearken; that is, as it is there interpreted, they would none of the Lord. They rejected the Word of the Lord which he spoke unto them. When the Word is suffered to come in with authority, to rule in the soul—when the heart gives up itself unto it, then it is accepted; there is its hearkening to it.

This obedience likewise includes the resolution of the heart for the work of the Lord. "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep your righteous judgments." (Psalm 119:106). I have vowed, and I will perform; I have covenanted, and I am determined to keep your statutes. "The word which you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not do;" that is the rebellious heart: "Whatever the Lord shall speak, we will do;" that is the obedient heart.

Where the heart is thus resolved to obey, this is that obedience which shall be accepted unto salvation. Where this resolution is, as there is opportunity there will be practice; and where there is not opportunity, in God's account this obedient heart will be accepted. This is praying, this is hearing, this is giving and feeding and clothing and visiting; this is walking circumspectly, working righteousness, showing mercy, exercising faith and patience and repentance; this is keeping the commandments of God, and walking in his statutes. A heart to obey, is our obeying; a heart to do, is our doing; a heart to suffer on God's account, is our suffering for his name.

But here it must be carefully noted, that though sincere resolution for obedience be obedience, yet every resolution is not that resolution. Resolution for obedience is sincere where it flows from an inward and rooted inclination; is founded on a firm belief of

Scripture revelation; is built on the highest and weightiest reasons; and is the result of the most mature and deep deliberation.

1. A sincere resolution flows from an inward rooted inclination: "I have inclined my heart to perform your statutes always." (Psalm 119:112). Our new purpose is from our new nature; it is not produced by some sudden fright, or sense of danger; or merely by a present force of argument; but by a divine power working the heart to the will and ways of God, and a habitual inclination thereto. Resolution for holiness, without a holy inclination, is a blade without a root; fresh and green as it looks, it will wither and come to nothing—no root, no fruit, nor lasting. The heart is the root of action, and grace is the life of the root. When our resolutions are the blade sprouting forth of this living root, then they will abide, and bring forth the ear and a harvest.

2. A sincere resolution is founded on a firm assent to the truth of Scripture revelation. A Christian resolves for godliness because he believes God, that he is as he has said, the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. He is built on the Scriptures; as his hopes, so his purposes have the foundation of the prophets and apostles, on which they stand. Whatever resolution has not this foundation is but as a house upon the sands.

3. A sincere resolution is founded on the highest reason. Where we resolve without reason, we quickly find a reason to change. Where we resolve we know not why, we shall change we know not how soon. To resolve we know not why, and to resolve on we know not what, will be alike unstable. Though there be reason for religion, yet religion may be taken up without reason. Whatever reason there be for it, yet if it be not understood or considered, it is all one as if there were no reason at all. And if there seem some reason for it, yet if it be not the highest reason, when a stronger than it comes we quickly change our purpose.

The reasons we have for serving and following God are the highest of all reasons, and that whether we respect it as our duty or our happiness; for:

There is none can lay such claims to us as God. Whose am I? Who has made me? Who has bought me? "Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:20). "Serve the Lord with gladness. Don't you know that the Lord he is God; it is he who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." (Psalm 100:2, 3). What reason have you to serve men, or to serve sin, or the world? Men think they have reason for it; but what reason? Are any of these God? Are men your God? Is sin or the world God? Do you owe yourselves to them? It is he who has made us, and his we are. As the apostle says concerning obedience to parents, much more may it be said here, Children, obey your God; for this is right; this is his due, and your duty: if anyone can lay as good a claim to you, let him carry you away for servants.

There is none can be better to us than God. None can requite, none can reward our obedience as he. Where can you be better than with God? He will require no more than that you serve him until you can find a better master. He who says, It is best to serve sin and the world, is a fool, and has said in his heart, There is no God. If God be God, he is the chief, yes, the only good. If anything in the world, upon what account soever, be thought better than the Lord, that is set up for a God in his room.

Whoever we serve, it is God must pay us our wages at last. God is judge; he is the rewarder both of the evil and the good—both of those who serve him and those who serve him not. If you serve the Lord, he will be your reward; if you serve him not, he will reward you: but what reward have you? "Those, mine enemies, which would not have me reign over them, bring them, and slay them before me;" there is their reward. Sin has its rewards; but what are they but vanity and vexation? Or if they were better, how long will they last? But when sin has paid the most it can, O what a reward is there behind, that

God has to pay you! "This shall you have of my hand, you shall lie down in sorrow."

The wages which God will give shall certainly be blessed or dreadful, according to our obedience or disobedience. The reward that God has to give is an eternal reward: eternal salvation to them that obey him; everlasting destruction to him that serves him not. "I have a soul; this body is the least part of me; there is another world, a world to come; a few years is the most I have to spend in this; I must abide eternally, eternally in the other world. Of how little consequence is it what I have here, whether little or more, better or worse; in a short time that will come all to one. But O, my eternity! what is that likely to be? Why, it is God that must determine it, and he will certainly reward every man according to his works. 'Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, tribulation and anguish.' (Romans 2:6-9). There is glory and shame, mercy and wrath, life and death, set before me; there is no third state; one of the two must be my lot; and this it is that determines which—if I obey I live, if I disobey I die—forever."

Now then, my resolution is founded on such reasons as these, than which none can be imagined higher and more weighty, until eternity become of less regard than time, and an immortal soul be set below a perishing body. The question being put, Shall I follow God or not? God or the world? God or my lust? speak, soul, give in your answer; this is the answer it gives: "Why, there is none can lay such claim to me as God; there is none can be good to me as God: whoever I serve, it is God must be my rewarder; my everlasting blessedness, or eternal ruin, depends on him, and must be infallibly determined according to my obedience or disobedience. This is the plain case—obey, and live; obey, or die forever. And therefore what can I say, less or more, but that I am the Lord's, and will be his servant. Let others choose whom they will serve; as for me, O my soul, serve you the Lord." This resolution, thus founded, is likely to stand.

4. A sincere resolution is the fruit of mature deliberation. Deliberation gives reason its full weight, makes the strength of it appear; it lays all things in the balance; it is the comparing of reasons for and against, the weighing of arguments and objections, encouragements and discouragements; counting the cost, as well as the gain, particularly. In this deliberation there must be a considering, 1. What there is in this obedience; 2. What it is attended with, that may encourage.

There must be a considering WHAT THERE IS in this obedience; or otherwise we resolve upon we know not what. Now there are five things in this obedience:

1. Subjection
2. Activity and industry
3. Integrity
4. Circumspection
5. Spirituality

(1.) SUBJECTION. Servants must be subject, must not be at their own wills, but at the will of another. The heart of man naturally affects dominion; that is the great controversy of sinners with God. Who shall be Lord? "We are lords"—at least we would be—"we will come no more unto you." (Jeremiah 2:31). Obedience yields that God should be Lord; yes, and all others also whom he has made lords over us. The servants of Christ must not be, and yet must be, the servants of men; they must not serve the lusts of rulers, but must be subject to their righteous laws and commands. God must be obeyed, and magistrates, ministers, masters, parents must be obeyed in the Lord, and for the Lord; yes, and they must be, when God will have it so, the servant of servants.

While they must not serve the humours of the greatest, they must serve the necessities of the meanest, must stoop to the lowest of offices, even to the washing of the feet of the least disciple. All this the Lord expects of them, and they must be subject. They must not

dispute, but do his will; only it must be considered that there is a double questioning as to the will of God. There is a questioning whether that which is pretended to be the will of God, be so or not; this ought to be done. And there is a questioning as to that which is granted to be the will of God, whether it be fit to be done, or safe to be done. "Is it not better to let it alone? What advantage is there in it? What reason is there for it?" No, they must not thus dispute; this is reason enough, "God will have it so." God's will is ever reason, and it must be our reason. It is enough for you to say, This is that which the Lord has commanded, and I must be subject. This is one thing that must be considered, I will obey, and must be subject to God.

(2.) **ACTIVITY** and **INDUSTRY**. The servants of the Lord must be active and industrious. Whom he sends into the vineyard he sends to work, and not to sleep. The life of a Christian is laborious: while others are in their beds, he must be on his knees; while others take their pleasure, he must take pains; while others take their times, now a little and then a little, he must be ever about his Master's business. An active spirit is an excellent spirit, and necessary in a Christian; sluggards are the refuse of the earth.

But here it must be considered that there is a double activity, gracious and natural. Natural activity arises from an innate vigor and vivacity of some men's spirits. There needs not industry in such to bring forth action; it is but leaving nature to its course, and that will fly high enough of itself. It requires more industry to regulate, and sometimes to restrain them, than to put them forth into action. It is more labor for them to rest than to be doing. Gracious activity is either natural activity managed and improved for God, turned into a right course, running in a right channel; or a naturally inactive spirit, raised and quickened by grace and religious industry. This gracious, this holy activity, this is the excellency; it is the extract of the spirits and life of all our gifts and graces; and will go further, and do more high honor, and more abundant service to God and his gospel, than is done by a thousand others.

An active sinner is the worst of men; how much service for the devil will he dispatch in a little time! An active sinner is life and death met together. He is all life, and yet dead; and he has more of death, because so much of life: like poison in wine, he destroys the more effectually. Yet the evil is not in his activity, but in the matter wherein he is employed: the good metal, as giving keenness to a weapon, is its excellency; but in a madman's hand, better a wooden than a steel sword. An active spirit is so excellent, that it is a pity that ever sin should have the using of it; it were well for religion if the devil were a drone, and had no other servants but the sluggards of the earth. But activity, when set right, is of great price in the sight of God, because it sets a great price upon God. Slothfulness puts a slight upon God—when the Scriptures have set forth the great things, and the deep things of God; when the Lord Jesus is evidently set forth as crucified before our eyes, as the atoning sacrifice for sin; when the preciousness of his blood, the tenderness of his compassion, the riches of his grace, the sufficiency of his righteousness, his satisfaction and pardon, are all held forth in open sight; when the beauties of holiness, the joys of the Spirit, that peace which passes all understanding, are laid forth to view; when the most glorious things are spoken of the city of God, Jerusalem which is above; when God in his Word calls to us, Awake, sleepers, arise, sluggards, see what is before you—all this may be yours if you will: slothfulness puts this slight upon all. Tush! all this is not worth breaking my sleep for; it is not all worth my labor to seek after; my ease is better to me than God and all his glory.

We may best understand the value we put on things, by the pains and the cost we are content to be at to purchase them. When sinners bestow themselves so upon the world, will bear such labor and travail, are so constantly, so indefatigably industrious in the pursuit of it, and withal run such hazards and dangers for it, they make it evident enough what estimate they put upon it. He whose time and strength, whose days and nights, yes, whose soul and hopes, must all be laid out in a purchase, must all go for a piece of land, or a little money or pleasure, need give us no other proof what a bargain he

thinks this world to be. "I care not much for this world: it is a vanity, a shadow, the fashion of it passes away; I hope it is far enough off my heart, however I am charged with greediness after it." But what then mean all the expenses of your time, of your strength, of your spirits, that you daily lay out upon it? What means so much hunting after, and heaping it up for yourself? What, have you been hunting all this while after shadows, heaping up vanities? No, no, you mistake yourself, these shadows are your substance—these vanities are the God whom you adore; if you did not prize, you would not venture so deeply for them.

And so on the other side, when so little is done for God—when anything must suffice to be spent on souls or eternity, what cheap things do we count them! "I love God above all, with all my heart, with all my soul; he is all my hope, and all my desire. What a miserable creature were I, if it were not for my hope in God! What would all the world be to me, should I lose my soul?" But do you speak in earnest? Do you think what you speak? What, and such a very drone in seeking God? What, and so indifferent, so cold, and so spiritless in your inquiries after him, in your motions towards him; so sparing of your labor, so negligent of duty, so seldom at it, so soon weary, so many delays, so many excuses? How many times has God called you after him, and all your answer has been an excuse: an excuse instead of an ordinance, an excuse instead of a prayer, an excuse instead of action, an excuse instead of alms, an excuse instead of an admonition or a reproof; if he will be served with excuses, he shall have service enough, but little besides. "I am weary," or "it is too late," or "it is cold;" and so a short and hasty prayer must serve, or none at all. "I have much business upon me, a family, a farm, and the cares and troubles of it, that I cannot have so much time nor freedom to attend upon God as others have;" and so a sermon lost, an ordinance lost. "I live among ill neighbors; if I should be so forward and so active for God, so zealous, and so spiritual in my discourse, in my way, I should be but a scoff and a reproach, and it may be a prey to evil men. I want ability to speak to the edification of others, I have not the boldness others have, to reprove or admonish;

I pray you have me excused." Wise men indeed! an excuse instead of a duty! It is all one, as if when the Lord calls to you, Come to me and be saved, your answer should be, I pray you excuse me, I must to the devil and be damned.

But is this your love, is this your zeal, is this your valuing of God above all? Tremble, sluggard; whatever excuses you find to substitute in the room of duty, this is that you can never excuse nor acquit yourself of—a slighting of God. Your very excuses will accuse you as a slothful servant, and your sloth as a slighter of God. While the apostle says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed," you say, But I reckon that all the glory to come is not worthy to be compared with the present labor.

But now activity and industry put a great value upon God; this is written upon all our labors, He is worthy for whom I do all this. Some of the most humble, watchful, laborious Christians do sometimes complain, "Oh, I fear I love not God; his favor, his honor, is little set by of me." But whence then is your care to please God? Whence are all your labors of love? Do you watch and pray and work and run? Can you spend and be spent for God, and yet not love him? Do you live to God, can you die for God, and yet not prize him? What greater proof can you give of love, than such labor?

Activity is also necessary. It is vain to think of making anything of religion without it; the work of it is too great to be done by lying still—the comforts of it lie too deep to be got out by a wish. There is many a poor man in this world, that would be the richest man in the country if riches might be gotten by a wish: he may as soon wish himself into wealth, as you into grace and comfort. This one thing, men's not being able to bear the labor of religion, is a rock on which many a soul has split and suffered an eternal wreck.

He who has some love to holiness, and yet not so much as to carry him through the work of holiness, is short of sincerity; and short of

sincerity, short of salvation. He who sticks not at labor, will not stick at suffering: he who shrinks from doing, will shrink from suffering. Say not, There is a lion in the streets. Overcome the lion, and you will not fear the bear. Pass the first, and you will be the more bold to venture the latter. Holy activity will be a witness to your sincerity; carry this witness in your heart, and then whatever way the world may go, and storms whatever may fall, you will have this to uphold thee—Integrity and uprightness shall preserve me, and eternity reward me. Where sincerity is the root, and holy activity the blossom, an eternal weight of glory shall be the fruit. Lie idle, and all will be lost. Take heed of, "Soul, take your ease," lest the next word you hear be, "This night shall your soul be required of you." This is the second thing included in obedience, which must be considered. I will obey; but can I labor?

(3.) INTEGRITY. The obedience which God expects must be entire obedience; not only the obedience of the whole man, but to the whole will of God. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all your commandments." (Psalm 119:6). "As obedient children, be you holy in all manner of conversation." (1 Peter 1:14, 15). "Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:20). But of this having spoken more largely elsewhere, it shall suffice to give some short hints of one comprehensive duty, wherein all the rest are included, and on which they depend; and that is, the holding up and maintaining God's authority in the soul. As God has set up his authority over the soul, that is, his word, which is to have the government of it; so has he set up an authority in the soul, the understanding, and the conscience. As these powers are under the authority of the word, so they are set in authority over the subordinate and inferior faculties, the will, and the passions or affections. But sin now has made a mutiny and insurrection: the will rises against reason, and will not be guided; the passions rebel against conscience, and will not be governed; nay, they do not only resist, but take upon them to command and impose upon conscience. What the will would have, conscience must say it is reason it should have—must be put to work to find out arguments to prove will to be

reason, and to determine that what the will would have done, ought to be done. We easily bring our opinion to our affection—bring ourselves to believe that to be right, which we are unreasonably willing to have to be right. But if it cannot prevail so far as to gain conscience to say that is right which it would have to be right, then it will strive hard to carry it, whether it be right or wrong. And this rebellion of the will and the passions against conscience, is the great cause of the soul's rebellion against God.

When conscience has lost its authority, God's authority is gone. While the understanding and the conscience are maintained in their due authority, where the will and affections are held in their due subjection, there the Lord reigns. While conscience rightly informed has its due, God shall have his due; where the will and the passions have no more than their due, He shall have his own. God shall be willed the more, where nothing else is willed too much. God shall be loved the more and feared the more, where nothing else is loved and feared too much. The more anger, the more hatred, the more grief will be spent upon sin, if it be not inordinately spent elsewhere. O how much service might be done, and how much quiet would be enjoyed in the heart, were this authority and subjection maintained and held up!

We may say of our affections, as men say of fire and water, They are the worst masters, but the best servants. How much would the Lord have of us, were these only the executioners of his will! If conscience be commanded by the word, and the will and affections would be commanded by conscience, what would there then be wanting? We should then not only be abundantly serviceable, but all would be serene and sweet and comfortable within us. If nothing were willed but what should be willed, we should ever have our will. If nothing were desired but what should be desired, and no more than it should be loved or desired, we should ever have what we love. If we were not angry, or grieved, or afraid, but where we ought, and no more than we ought, what a calm would there be upon our spirits, even in cases wherein the spirits of others are like a troubled sea, that cannot rest,

whose waters cast up mire and dirt. But where there is such disorder, such rebellion of the inferior against the superior faculties, there we are at a perpetual loss, both in point of duty and comfort. This therefore is necessary, if we will be obedient; and those who have made trial what there is in it, do understand that this is hard work.

I shall instance some few particular duties that are harder than others. He who will be entirely obedient, must stick at nothing that God will have. There is scarcely anything that God requires, but lust will be quarreling at it as too hard; but there are some duties harder than others. It shall suffice only to name them: The denial of ourselves; disobliging our nearest friends; loving our enemies; disobeying all the world in their unrighteous commands; obeying God rather than men; returning good for evil; reproofing men for sin, especially if they be superiors, or men on whom we have some dependence; and the sacrificing our Isaac, yes, parting with all that we have. This then must be considered. You will obey; but are you for anything, for everything the Lord requires?

(4.) CIRCUMSPECTION and CARE: "See that you walk circumspectly." (Ephesians 5:15). A little labor will go far with care, but will be nothing without it. It is not he who is hot and busy and active at all adventures, but he who keeps to his line and his rule, who is the obedient Christian. It is not so much action as regular action, wherein the life of Christianity lies. He that lives by rule, peace be on him, and mercy. Activity without discretion is extravagance; it is watchfulness that keeps within compass. He who is all action, has the more need of caution. A Christian must have his eyes in his head, as well as a soul in his body. He who resolves well in generals, and comes not off well in particulars, does but build castles in the air. What we ordinarily are in particulars will best prove what we are. He who is for anything but this, any time but now, is for nothing.

Circumspection includes two things—taking notice, and taking heed. He who will be circumspect, must eye and observe what is before

him; must have his eye upon his end, his rule, and his goings; must eye duty and sin, opportunities and temptations, his times and seasons: he must take heed, as well as take notice; must keep a strict eye on himself, and hold a strict hand on himself, that he leap not over a duty, nor turn aside to iniquity; must set a guard upon himself, upon his tongue, upon his eyes, upon his appetite, upon his company, upon his habits, upon his thoughts, upon his passions, upon all the motions of his soul and the actions of his body.

This will require something. "What, not a word but must be weighed? Not a look but must be attended to? Not a thought but must be examined? Not a sin to be allowed? Not a duty to be abated? Not a circumstance to be neglected? Must all be in weight and in measure, by line and by rule, and this always too? If something might serve, if sometimes might suffice, it might be borne; but to keep the engagement in every point, and that every day, this is a hard saying indeed." But thus it must be: to live as a Christian, and to walk exactly, accurately, precisely, is the same thing. Though duty and sin be as far distant as Heaven and Hell, yet there is but a hair between them. The least latitude is a transgression; either all this—that is, as to the purpose of the heart—either all this or nothing. This also must be considered. You will be obedient, but will you be circumspect?

(5.) SPIRITUALLY. This must be the obedience of faith. (Romans 16:26). It is the very life of Jesus made manifest in our mortal flesh: "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Christians' obedience is their walking in Christ, (Colossians 2:6); all the acts of it are exercised and performed in the strength of Christ. I will go in the strength of the Lord: without him they can do nothing, but can do all things through Christ, which strengthens them. "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me." I work, I wrestle, I run, yet not I, but Christ in me; as the apostle speaks of his sins, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me." It is sin that sins; so may it be said of duty. It is no more I that do it, but Christ that dwells in me. Though both be the act of the person, both the sin and the duty, yet the principle of

the one is lust, the power of the other is of Christ. Christians cannot go through a duty, and they dare not enter upon one, without looking up to Christ and leaning upon him for assistance. They cannot go through, and therefore they will not set forth, but in the strength of the Lord. All their acts of obedience are exhibited, and offered up in the name of Christ. Their services are their sacrifices to God, and Christ is their altar. What is a sacrifice without an altar? Christ is our altar, which sanctifies our gift; God looks on all, and so do they, as nothing worth without Christ; God will not accept, and therefore they will not offer other than the Lamb for their sacrifice. All their acts of obedience are acknowledged to the praise of Christ. It is no more I that do it, but the grace of God which is with me. Grace does the work, and grace shall carry away the praise. Christ is all in the race, and therefore on his head the crown is set: "Not unto us, not unto us, but to your name be the praise." Not of us, and therefore not unto us; of him, and therefore unto him. If I am anything that others are not, if I have done anything more than others, no thanks to me, and therefore no praise. To Him be all, who is all in all to me. Thus the obedience of Christians is their walking in Christ.

The obedience of Christians is their walking in the Spirit. They have received the Spirit, and they walk in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:16). They have not received the spirit of this world, their spirit is not flesh, but the Spirit which is of God. (1 Corinthians 2:12). They are dead to things carnal, the spirit of the world is departed, they have given up this: it is the Spirit of the living God who lives in them, and in this they live and walk. They walk in the light of the Spirit, in the power of the Spirit; the Spirit of the Lord steers their course and fills their sails—is their pilot and their star, and their wind that carries them on. When they pray, they pray in the Spirit; when they hear, they hear in the Spirit: through the Spirit they mortify the flesh, are crucified to the world; they obey, they suffer, they fight, they overcome, through the Spirit of the living God that is in them. They live in fellowship with the Spirit, and by him with the Father and the Son. They dwell in the invisible world, their acquaintance and converse is in Heaven; thither they have access, and there they have

acceptance—thither they have their recourse, and thence they have their returns. Duties and comforts are the tokens that are passing between Heaven and earth. Their life is love and joy and praise; these are the most noble acts of their obedience, and these give wings to their hearts, carry them on more swiftly and more sweetly through all their course.

O how heavily do we drive on, how slowly do our wheels move, when the Spirit of the living God is not in the wheels! O how dead are our duties, how lame are our walkings; what low and poor-spirited creatures are we! How weak are our hearts, how unripe our fruits; we but half do what we do, there is no heart in our life, we are as bodies without souls, while our soul is without the Spirit. O how sad it is with many of us upon this account! By our estrangement from God we have even lost ourselves; we are not what we are, because no more where he is. By our distance from Heaven we are even choked with the damps of the earth. We are fit for little, we prosper in nothing; God takes no pleasure and we take no comfort in anything we do; our spirits are so chilled and benumbed within us that we make neither speed in our work, nor progress in our way. And what are we in society? To how little profit do we meet! How little heat do we get; yes, how much do we lose at our brethren's fires. We serve often but to damp and cool each other's spirits: as if it might be no longer said, Woe to him that is alone; but, Woe be to him that is in company: alone he is more warm.

Christians, I solemnly profess I am ashamed of myself, and my heart is pained within me, to observe how insipid, how spiritless, how carnal our converse is. How often may we meet, how long may we sit, Christian with Christian, before anything that savors of the spirit of a Christian comes from us! O how hard must we labor for a few gracious words; how few such do come; how heartless when they come! How very few of us are there, whose ordinary converse speaks us to be men of another world, whose business and whose delight lies above, and who are in good earnest pressing on towards Heaven! How seldom and how short-breathed are our spiritual discourses;

how little must suffice; how quickly are we diverted to things carnal and sensual! Sure it is our little communion with God, that has thus debased the communion of saints.

O let us live more in the fellowship of the Spirit, and we shall have fellowship one with another to better purpose. Let us warm ourselves at the Sun, let us dwell more in his beams, and we shall get and give more light and heat. Thus must it be considered before we resolve what there is in this obedience.

Further, it must be considered what obedience is likely to be attended with from without: what suffering it may cost us, what scorn and contempt and reproaches and persecutions of all sorts. It is likely to set earth and Hell upon our backs. If carnal counsels and fleshly policies, if all the powers of darkness, if might and malice can do it, this way will be made too hot and too hard for you; tribulation, great tribulation you must expect, and can not escape; and the more strict and circumspect, the hotter must you expect your assaults will be.

Professors of religion who are not so strict to their rule but that they can dispense with duty, nor so forward in point of zeal and activity but that they can remit and abate as occasion serves, escape this persecuting world the better; but he who will be faithful, whoever escape, is sure to be made a prey. This also must be well-considered. I will follow Christ; but can I drink of the cup that he drank of? Can I be baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with?

There are persons who sometimes take up the profession of religion, and resolve all of a sudden that they will follow Christ, not understanding what there is in it, or what Christianity may do for them, who, by the time they have looked a little further, and find it another manner of difficulty than at first they imagined; and withal, when they find the armies of the aliens begin to fall on them, the dogs to tear, the wolves to worry, the eagles and the vultures and all the birds of prey to pitch upon them, and begin in earnest to feel the

smart of religion in those persecutions that are raised against them for it, presently make their retreat and go back. "Where am I? What have I chosen? Is this to be a Christian? Does Christ look for all this from his followers, and will he leave them to such violence and rapine, as the reward of their faithfulness to his name? I never thought it had been such hot service; and if I cannot be a saint at a cheaper rate than this, follow Christ who will for all me: let those who have nothing to lose, or can bear so much labor and pain and violence, take it up if they please; for my part, I must look to myself, I must not be undone."

"Master, I will follow you wherever you go," said the scribe. (Matthew 8:19). "Man," says Christ, "you understand not what you say. Do you know where I am going, where my dwelling, where my lodging is? The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has not where to lay his head." And behold, there is an end of the scribe's Christianity, we hear not one word more about it.

Not so he who knows what it is to be a disciple, who has looked through religion, through the length and breadth of it, has duly weighed all that can be said for or against his taking it up, has examined the grounds and reasons he has for it, what weight there is in them, has considered the objections, has cast up the cost and charges of it, and as the issue and result of the most serious debate, stands settled in his judgment, that, all things considered, it is indisputably the best and wisest and safest course he can take: "It is, beyond all controversy, incomparably better for me to hearken to the Lord in all that he shall require, and to run all hazards with him, and that presently, from this day forward to the end of my life." He who stands thus settled in his judgment, thereupon feels his soul fixing itself in this peremptory resolution: "Well, through the grace of God, I will be his servant; I give up myself to the government of his will, to follow him in righteousness and holiness all my days. I am sensible it is no light thing to be a Christian; I see I must be subject, I see I must be circumspect, I see I must be active, I must hold back nothing that

God will have. I see this flesh will be pained, and will flinch and groan under so severe a yoke. I see the devil and this evil world will be upon me, laying on more load, to make my bargain as dear as they can. But be there in it what there will, let it cost me ever so dear, I am resolved, I will venture all upon it; the Lord is my God, and him will I follow in all things that he shall speak; I put myself into the everlasting arms, I trust upon everlasting strength, I will go forth in the name of the Lord: and now speak, Lord, for I will hear."

This sincere resolution, this will hold out: when our holy inclinations are so rooted and strong, that they bear down all fleshly inclinations; when our assent to Scripture is so firm that it overbalances all objections against it; when our reasons for religion are so high and weighty that they weigh down the highest pretenses against it; when we have thoroughly considered what there is in it, and compared all that can be said for or against our following the Lord, and upon the whole matter we judge it our best course, and accordingly resolve for it—this is sincere resolution, this is the obedience of the heart.

II. OBEDIENCE OF THE LIFE. This is the inclination and resolution springing up into action, and is a necessary proof of the soundness of the resolution.

Though sincere resolution be obedience on God's account, yet that resolution which, supposing there be time and opportunity, does not break forth into act, is undoubtedly unsound and deceitful. There are two things infallibly included in spiritual life—a will, and a power. Grace is the disposing and enabling the heart for a holy life; and where there is both a will and a power, performance will certainly follow. This sincerity of actual obedience is that which the prayer of the psalmist looks to: "Let my heart be sound in your statutes, that I be not ashamed." (Psalm 119:80).

There is a soundness in the faith, and a soundness in the statutes of the Lord. Faith denotes in Scripture either the doctrine of faith, or the grace of faith. And accordingly, soundness in the faith signifies

both the receiving and entertaining sound doctrine, and the sound or sincere embracing that doctrine. Soundness in the statutes of the Lord denotes especially the practice, the living or walking uprightly under the power of that doctrine, under the government and obedience of the statutes of the Lord. What this obedience of life is, it is easy to gather out of what has been spoken touching the obedience of the heart; I shall only add, that this obedience is sound and sincere:

1. In general, when the whole course of life is the issue of the mentioned sincere resolution—when the life is the birth of the purpose, the fruit growing up out of that holy root. There may be actions materially good, that yet are not gracious actions because they arise not from a right spring. When the soul has devoted itself to God in Christ, and believingly, understandingly, and deliberately determined in his strength to keep his word, and this determination goes into the performances of the life, and is the root and soul of that holy course we walk in, there is sincerity.

Some persons may be found who have taken up the profession and go far in the practice of godliness, abstaining from gross sins, yes, and making attempts upon the mortification of inward lusts—applying themselves to the duties of religion, praying, hearing, reading, meditating, discoursing of God and the things of God, exercising themselves in the works of righteousness and mercy, being meek, temperate, patient; and if all this arise only from the advantages of a good nature, good education, good society or acquaintance, a powerful ministry, or the workings of natural conscience, as possibly it may, and does not spring forth from such a fixed, well-founded resolution, it is short of sincerity. Whatever the blades be, they have no root, and will certainly wither away.

2. In particular actions, when they are done in simplicity and singleness of heart unto the Lord—when, whatever sinful mixtures there may sometimes be of carnal motives, that may have an influence to bring them about, yet the great poise that moves the

wheels, the swaying motive that brings us on, is God, and our respect to his will and honor.

Now for this also the Lord undertakes, promising not only assistance, but success—sufficient grace, and efficacious grace: "I will cause them to walk in my statutes, and they shall keep my judgments and do them." I will not only teach them my statutes; I will not only incline their hearts to my testimonies; I will not only strengthen them for my work; but I will cause them to walk in my statutes. The event shall be sure, they shall keep my judgments and do them; my word shall fail, my promises be of none effect, let me be accounted unfaithful, if I do not make them faithful to me.

Chapter 13.

An Enduring Covenant

"I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." (Jeremiah 32:40).

The promise of eternal life is made to those who endure to the end: "He who endures unto the end shall be saved." Overcome, and reign. "Be you faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life." (Revelation 2:10). "If you forsake him, he will cast you off forever." (1 Chronicles 28:9). "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." (Hebrews 10:38). Christians, beware of apostasy, beware of presumption; pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. Let it not be said of you, You did run well. He runs well, that does not give up, that sits not down on this side the goal. "So run that you may obtain." There are also promises of enduring. The covenant of God is an everlasting covenant. "He has commanded his covenant forever." (Psalm 111:9).

There are two things in the aforementioned Scripture, (Jeremiah 32:40), secured to believers:

God will not depart from them. "I will not turn away from them." God is with me, but I fear I shall provoke him away: I shall weary him out by my sins, and drive him from me. No, says the Lord, I will not turn away from them, to do them good; I will never leave you, nor forsake you.

They shall not depart from him. It is true, the Lord will be with me; but it is only while I am with him: if I depart, he will depart; if I forsake him, he will cast me off forever. Here is my great fear, that I shall turn away from him; there is in me an evil heart of unbelief, that is ever departing from the living God. O this false and fickle heart, I dare not trust it for an hour. My corruptions are strong, my temptations are many, every day brings its temptations; and I am in great fear, that by one means or other, one day or other, I shall fall before them, and depart from the living God. No, says God, fear not, you shall not depart: "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." They shall be kept by my almighty power, "through faith unto salvation." My grace shall be with them, and my grace shall be sufficient for them, and shall preserve them to my heavenly kingdom.

As there is that within and without an impenitent sinner to keep him from Christ, so there is that within and without a true Christian to lead him to Christ.

Impenitent sinners have that within them which draws them away. Corrupt nature, the power of unmortified lust, this it is that bears the sway in their hearts; and however, for the time, the stream may be somewhat turned out of its course, or bayed up—however, by the impetus of some external motives or arguments, or the impulses of an awakened conscience, or some sudden heat of affection, they are carried on after and in some fair compliance with the Lord Jesus; yet, when the barrier is removed, when the external force is spent,

conscience laid to sleep, the heat of affection allayed, which is often almost as soon out as in, their very natures will bring them back to their old course. What is it that pulls a stone or a lump of clay down again, that is thrown into the air? Why, when the power by which they were forced up is spent, their nature, their inherent gravity, will bring them down to their place. Sinners need no other weights to pull them down to this earth than their earthly hearts.

And there is one without them that will draw them back. Satan the God of this world, whose they are and whom they serve, may indulge them with so much liberty for their religion as is consistent with their captive state, and as may secure them the more under his dominion—for hypocrites are often the faster to Satan for being so near to Christ—and the very religion they have is but the devil's snare, by which he holds them back from religion; yet, lest by venturing them too far, they should be lost to him at last, he who first tempted them so near to Christ—hypocrites are often indebted to the devil for the religion they have—will quickly tempt them back again.

And so on the other side, there are the like reasons why saints stay not away from Christ. There is that within them which will bring them back. The grace of God within them will bring them home. The grace of God is now their nature. Sinners while walking with Christ, and saints while wandering from Christ, are both under a force—they are carried against the stream; when the winds go down that carried them on, they will return to their course. The grace of God is the seed of God: "He who is born of God sins not," that is, not unto death; "the seed of God remains in him." The seed of God is immortal seed; it may languish and be ready to die, but it shall not die, it shall recover.

There is also One above them who will bring them back, though he suffer them for a time to wander from the way. "Of those whom you have given me, I have lost none." He has lost none, and he will lose none. He sends a word of commandment after them: "Return, O backsliding children; for I am married unto you." (Jeremiah 3:14).

Where are you running? Whom are you following after? Come back from your lovers, return to your husband. I am married to you, and we may not part.

After the word of command, he sends a word of promise: "I will heal your backslidings." (Jeremiah 3:22). Return from your backslidings, and I will heal them. I will forgive your backslidings, and I will cure you of your backsliding heart. All the breaches they have made shall be made up; I will pass by all that you have done, and be reconciled to you. If you will turn, return and I will receive you. And this word of promise is a word of power. I will bring you to Zion: "Then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband." (Hosea 2:7). "Behold, we come unto you, for you are the Lord our God." (Jeremiah 3:22). He who would not leave his Israel after the flesh with their idols, will much less leave his Israel after the Spirit: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6).

A good work may be said to be begun in two senses. One is when there is some good thing doing towards it: when the Lord has been ploughing up the fallow-ground, making his batteries against the strong-hold, shaking secure hearts, breaking false hopes, awakening consciences, convincing sinners, spreading sin and death and Hell before them, entering upon a treaty with them, and persuading them over to Christ, to make an escape—there may be hopes in this; but sinners, awakened sinners, beware you make not a stand at the threshold. Beware that your ploughed ground be not left to lie fallow. Beware that the womb prove not the grave of all your hopes. Mistake not conviction for conversion; make on, let not your God nor your souls lose the things which have been wrought. The other sense is when there is some good thing done: when the rubbish is removed, and the first stone is laid; when the plough has been going, and the good seed is sown; when the new creature has passed the birth; when Christ is formed, and the light of life is newly sprung up in the soul. If there be but a grain of mustard-seed, the least and lowest degree of saving grace broken forth in the heart, the question is not whether it

be much or little; if it be grace, there is the immortal seed, there is the good work begun, which shall be carried on until the day of Jesus Christ. Grace is a security for glory. Yet beware, Christians, let not this security make you secure; though there be a harvest in the seed, yet the seed must be cherished, watched, and well looked to, that it may grow up to the harvest. He who lets it die for want of looking to, proves that it was dead while alive. Let not your falling short of glory prove that your grace was not grace.

Christians, lay hold on the promise and lift up your heads: you are under fears; however it be with you for the present, you are in doubt how it may be; your way is long and dangerous, your hearts are deceitful and unstable; you are going on at present, but doubt how you shall hold out: "I may meet with lions in the way, which may fright me back; I may lose my way, and never recover it; I may be weary, and faint in the way, and lie down and give up. My Lord and my soul have been often upon the parting point; I have been almost gone, and I tremble to think what may yet become of me." Yet remember who it is that has said, "I will not turn from you, to do you good; I will put my fear in your hearts, and you shall not depart from me." Rise, soul, take care for today, and take no thought for tomorrow. Mind the present duty, go on your way, though weeping and trembling and hard laboring: go on your way, and then commit your way and yourself to Him, by whose mighty power you shall be kept through faith unto salvation. Faithful is He who has called you, and will do it.

And now you have all. Let us hear the **CONCLUSION** of the whole matter. God has made a covenant with his people, has given himself for their portion, his Son for their price, his Spirit for their guide in the way, his earth for their accommodation by the way, his angels for their guard, the powers of darkness and death for their spoils, everlasting glory for their crown. And because their way is difficult and their work is contrary to them, he has given them all that grace which is necessary to bring them to glory. In general, a new heart, in all things suited to their way, and thoroughly furnished for every

good work. In particular, knowledge to guide, oneness to fix and intend, tenderness to submit to and yield, love to constrain and bring on, fear to fence and hold in, obedience to perform and bring forth, and perseverance to go through and hold out to the end; and there grace and glory meet. This is the covenant of grace, this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Will it be said, "But if God has undertaken all this for us, what is there then left us to do? Here is a doctrine according to sinners' hearts: if this be gospel, then, soul, take your ease, take your liberty, cast away care, make much of your body; God will take care of the rest?"

But is there nothing required of us? Let the Scriptures speak: "Yet for all this will I be inquired of," or sought unto, "by the house of Israel," (Ezekiel 36:37); otherwise let them look for no such things. He who will not ask in faith, "let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord." (James 1:7). And can he think to receive anything who neither believes nor prays; who neither prays in faith, nor prays at all? "It is God which works in you both to will and to do." (Philippians 2:12, 13). What then? Therefore sit you still and do nothing? No such thing: therefore "work out your salvation with fear and trembling," says the apostle. The promise of God was never intended to make the command of God of none effect. God, in promising grace, promises a power for duty; and as he does not give, so we must not receive that power or grace of God, in vain. While he gives what he requires, he still requires what he gives. That promise of God, "You shall be my people," though he undertake to make it good, yet is also the matter of our stipulation. And in this promise, wherein the Lord assures us what we shall be, is included a precept, wherein we may understand what we ought to be.

In undertaking to give us a new heart, a tender and obedient, a persevering heart, the Lord promises both to make us what we should be and to help us in what we are bound to do, and gives us at once a clear hint both of our mercy and duty. This is the sense and

sum of that promise: The Lord will work all that in us, and will help and cause us to perform all that which is required unto salvation; and so the promise on God's part does not make void, but establish the obligation on ours. Do we then make void the law through faith? Nay, we establish the law.

Though it be certain as to the event, that all which is necessary to salvation shall be accomplished in us, since God has undertaken that, yet it is altogether as certain, that God has made our loving him, fearing him, obeying his whole will, and our sincerity and perseverance herein, so necessary that we cannot otherwise be saved.

Christians, mistake not, nor abuse the grace of the gospel. The Lord never meant your mercy should make void your obligation to duty. Redemption from sin was never intended as a toleration of sin. He gives not his Spirit in favor of the flesh. What he undertakes to work for you was never with a mind to maintain you in idleness. The grace of God that brings salvation teaches us, "that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." (Titus 2:11, 12).

Though you are saved by grace, yet you are still, in a sense, debtors to the whole law. Perfect obedience to the whole law, even to the utmost iota, is still due from you; and if it be not in your hearts to pay all that you owe—that is, if there be any duty commanded in the whole book of God, that you dispense with, that you will not set your hearts to observe and obey; if there be any one sin that you must be excused in, and will not part with; if there be any, the highest pitch of holy care, activity, industry, zeal for God and holiness, that you will not be persuaded to press hard after—this is an evidence of such an unsound heart as has no part in the gospel or its salvation. Perfection is still due, though sincerity will be accepted. Sincerity shall be accepted; but what is sincerity less than a hearty willingness to be perfect, attested by a striving and pressing on to that mark which is set before us?

O admire and bless the Lord for his grace, but do not turn the grace of God into licentiousness. Shall we continue in sin, because grace has abounded? Will you thus requite the Lord? Will you thus deceive yourselves, O foolish people and unwise? Will you slight him, because he has loved you; kick at him, because he has cared for you; shake off his yoke, because he has secured you the crown? Will you serve his enemies, because he has saved you from them? Will you nourish your diseases, because he has said he will cure you? Will you live, and not eat; reap, and not plough? Will you not eat, because he has given you meat? Will you not run, because he has given you legs; nor work, because he has given you hands; nor watch, because he has given you eyes? Or will you tempt the Lord, and call it your trust in him? Awake from such madness.

Christians, say not, If God will, I shall; whether I take care or not, believe or not, repent or not, be obedient or rebellious, whether I wake or sleep, work or be idle, my unbelief, my disobedience, my negligence shall not make the faith of God of none effect. But rather, since God has said, You shall, let your heart answer, I will walk in his statutes; arise, O my soul, up and be doing; work out your salvation, because it is God that works in you to will and to do. Shake off your sloth, set about your work, run your race, since God has said, You shall not run nor labor in vain. And look to it, for however your idleness or greatest unfaithfulness will not make void the covenant of God, yet will it make manifest that you have no part nor lot in it.

But to all these glorious things that have been spoken, possibly some will reply, "O, if all this be so, then happy saints indeed! 'Happy are the people that are in such a case; yes, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.' But will the Lord indeed do all these things for mortals? Will he take notice of worms? Shall such dry bones live? Will he set such vile dust as the apple of his eye? Is not this too good to be true, too great to be believed? O that I were sure the one half were as it has been told me!" Too great to be believed! As if it must be questioned whether the sun be light because it dazzles our eyes. But what certainty would you have? Is all this too great for the great

and Almighty God to do, who has said, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9). Can he not do it, who can do all things? Will he not do it, when he has said he will? Will the Lord mock? Can God deceive? Shall his word, yes, and his oath too, those two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, can these fail? If you should hear the Lord himself speaking to you from Heaven with audible voice, My covenant I make with you, and it is my intent and purpose to perform every word that is written in it, according to the plain import and meaning thereof; there shall not a tittle fail, neither will I alter the thing that is gone forth of my lips. Heaven and earth shall fail, but my word shall not fail; trust to it, trust everlasting truth, trust to everlasting strength. Fear not, for there shall not fail one word of all that I have spoken by all my servants the prophets.

If you should hear the Lord speaking thus to you from Heaven, what would you say? would not this satisfy you? Why, search the Scriptures, that "more sure word of prophecy." (2 Peter 1:19). Read them diligently, understand what you read, and then say if you do not there find the Lord speaking fully to you the words of the two following chapters.

Chapter 14.

The Riches of the Covenant,

or a Short View of the Exceeding Great and Precious Promises

(By Joseph Alleine, author of "An Alarm to Unconverted Sinners")

The Voice of the Herald

O all you inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, come, see and hear; gather yourselves together unto the proclamation of the great King. Hear, you that are far off, and you that are near. He who has an ear to hear, let him hear. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare you the way of the Lord. Let every valley be exalted, and every mountain made low, for the glory of the Lord is to be revealed. Go through, go through the gates, prepare the way. Cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones, lift up the standard for the people; for the Lord proclaims salvation to the ends of the earth. Tidings, tidings, O you captives! Hear, all you that look for salvation in Israel; behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. Blessed news! prepare your ears and hearts. The Lord has commanded me, saying, Go unto the people and sanctify them; let them wash and be ready, for the Lord is coming down upon mount Zion, in the sight of all the nations. Not in earthquakes and fire, not in clouds and darkness, not in thunderings and turnings, rending the mountains and breaking the rocks in pieces. He speaks not to you out of the blackness and darkness and tempest; you shall say no more, Let not God speak to us, lest we die;

he comes peaceably, the law of kindness is in his mouth, he preaches Peace; peace, to him that is far off, and to him that is near.

Behold how he comes, leaping upon the mountains; he has passed mount Ebal—no more wrath or cursing; he is come to Mount Gerizim, where he stands to bless the people: as did Mordecai to his nation, he writes the words of truth and peace, seeking the welfare of his people and speaking peace to all his seed.

Behold how he comes, clothed with flames of love, with affections of compassion, plenteous redemption, and multiplied pardons. O how full is his love! O the tenderness of his compassions! O how full is his heart, even aching until it is eased by supplying his hungry children!

Hearken therefore, O you children, hearken to me. To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time you hear the joyful sound, the trumpet of jubilee, the tidings of peace in the voice of the everlasting gospel, you fall down before the throne, and worship Him that lives forever and ever.

Arise, and come away; prepare, prepare you; hear not with an uncircumcised ear; you are not upon a common thing. Behold, the throne is set, the throne of grace, where majesty and mercy dwell together; from thence will the Lord meet you, from thence will he commune with you, from the mercy-seat, from between the cherubim, upon the ark of the testimony. Lo, the Lord comes out of his pavilion, the mighty God from Zion. Selah. His glory covers the heavens, the earth is full of his praise. A fire of love goes before him, mercy and truth are round about him, righteousness and peace are the habitation of his throne; he rides on his horses and chariots of salvation, the covenant of life and peace is in his mouth.

Rejoice, you heavens, make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Let the sea roar, the floods clap their hands, and the multitudes of the isles rejoice. Stand forth, the host of Heaven, prepare your harps, cast down your crowns, be ready with your trumps, bring forth your

golden vials full of odors; for our voices will jar, our strings will break, we cannot reach the note of our Maker's praise.

Yet let them that dwell in the dust arise and sing. Bear your part in this glorious service, but consider and attend. Call out your souls, and all that is within you. Lift up your voices, fix your eyes, enlarge your hearts, exert all their powers; there is work for them all. Be intent and serious, you cannot raise too high a strain.

Come forth, you graces, beset the way, be all in readiness. Stand forth, faith and hope; flame, O love; come, you warm desires, and break with longing. Let fear with all veneration do its obeisance. Joy, prepare your songs, call up all the daughters of music to salute the Lord as he passes by. Let the generations of the saints appear, and spread the way with boughs and garments of salvation, and songs of deliverance. You stand this day all of you before the Lord your God, your captains, your elders, your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is within your camp, from the hewer of wood to the drawer of water—that you should enter into covenant with the Lord your God, and into his oath which the Lord your God makes with you this day: that he may establish you today for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto you a God, as he has said unto you, and as he has sworn. (Deuteronomy 29:10-13).

I have done my errand. The messenger of the morning disappears; when the orient Sun comes forth out of his chambers, I vanish. I put my mouth in the dust. The voice of the Lord! The soft and still voice! O my soul, wrap your face in your mantle, and bow yourself to the ground, and put you in the cleft of the rock, while Jehovah proclaims his name, and makes all his goodness to pass before you.

The Voice of the Lord

Hear, O you ends of the earth, the mighty God, the Lord has spoken: Gather my saints unto me, those that have made a covenant with me

by sacrifice. Behold, I establish my covenant between me and you. By my holiness have I sworn, that I will be your covenant friend. I lift up my hand to Heaven, and swear that I live forever; and because I live, you shall live also. I will be yours—yours to all intents and purposes: your refuge and your rest; your patron and your portion; your heritage and your hope; your God and your guide. While I have, you shall never want; and what I am to myself, I will be to you. And you shall be my people, a chosen generation, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. I call Heaven and earth to witness this day, that I take you for mine forever. My name shall be upon you, and you shall be pillars in the temple of your God, and shall go no more out.

My livery shall you wear, and the stamp of my own face shall you carry; and I will make you my witnesses, and the epistles of Christ unto the world, and you shall be chosen vessels to bear my name before the sons of men. And that you may see that I am in earnest with you, lo, I make with you an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; and do here solemnly deliver it to you as my act and deed, sealed with sacred blood, and ratified with the oath of God, a God that cannot lie, that knows no place for repentance. Come, you blessed, receive the instrument of your salvation; take the writings, behold the seals; here are the conveyances of the kingdom. Fear not, the donation is free and full. See, it is written in blood, founded on the all-sufficient merits of your Surety, in whom I am well pleased; whose death makes this testament unchangeable for ever; so that your names can never be put out, nor your inheritance alienated, nor your legacies diminished; nothing may "be altered, nothing added, nothing subtracted, no, not for ever. Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like unto you, O people? Only believe, and know your own blessedness. Attend, O my children, unto the blessings of your Father; and hear and know,

I. THE GLORIOUS IMMUNITIES and THE ROYAL PREROGATIVES that I here confirm upon you.

1. THE GLORIOUS IMMUNITIES. Here I seal you your pardon. Though your sins be as many as the sands, and as mighty as the mountains, I will drown them in the deeps of my bottomless mercies. I will be merciful to your unrighteousness; I will multiply to pardon; where your sins have abounded, my grace shall super-abound; though they be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Behold, I declare myself satisfied, and pronounce you absolved. The price is paid, your debts are cleared, your bonds are cancelled.

Whatever the law, or conscience, or the accuser has to charge upon you, here I exonerate you, I discharge you. I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for my name's sake. Who shall lay anything to your charge, when I acquit you? Who shall impeach you, when I proclaim you guiltless? Sons, daughters, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you. I will sprinkle your consciences, and put the voice of peace into their mouths, and they shall be your registers, in which I will record your pardon, and the voice of guilt and wrath and terror shall cease.

Here I sign your release from the house of bondage. Come forth, you captives, come forth, you prisoners of hope, for I have found a ransom, I proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Behold, I have broken your bonds, and shaken the foundations of your prisons, and opened the iron gates. By the blood of the covenant have I sent forth the prisoners out of the pit wherein there is no water. Arise, O redeemed of the Lord, put off the clothing of your captivities, arise and come away.

The dark and noisome prison of sin shall no longer detain you. I will loose your fetters, and knock off your bolts. Sin shall not have dominion over you. I will heal your backslidings, I will subdue your iniquities, I will sanctify you wholly, and will put my fear in your hearts, that you shall not depart from me. Though your corruptions be strong and many, yet the aids of my Spirit, the cleansing virtue of my Word and of my corrections, shall so work together with your

prayers and endeavors, that they shall not finally prevail against you, but shall surely fall before you.

From the strong and loathsome jail of the grave do I deliver you. O death, I will be your plague; O grave, I will be your destruction; my beloved shall never see corruption. I will change your rottenness into glory, and make your dust arise and praise me. What is sown in weakness, I will raise in power; what is sown in corruption, I will raise in incorruption; what is sown a natural body, I will raise a spiritual body. This very flesh of yours, this corruptible flesh, shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Death shall be swallowed up in victory, and mortality of life. Fear not, O my children. Come, and I will show you the enemy that you dreaded. See, here lies the king of terrors, like Sisera in the tent, fastened to the ground with the nail struck through his temples. Behold the grateful present, the head of your enemy in a charger: I bequeath you your conquered adversary, and make over death as your legacy. O death, where is your sting? where now is your armor wherein you trust? Come, my people, enter into your chambers; come to your beds of dust, and lay you down in peace, and let your flesh rest in hope; for even in this flesh shall you see God. O you slain of death, your carcasses, now as loathsome as the carrion in the ditch, will I redeem from the power of the grave, and fashion those vile bodies like unto the glorious body of your exalted Redeemer. Look, if you can, on the sun when shining in his strength: with such dazzling glory will I clothe you, O you of little faith.

From the terrible dungeon of eternal darkness do I hereby free you. Fear not, you shall not be hurt of the second death; you are delivered from the wrath to come, and shall never come into condemnation. The flames of Tophet shall not be able to singe the hair of your heads, no, nor the smell of fire pass upon you. Stand upon the brink, and look down into the horrible pit, the infernal prison from whence I have freed you. See you how the smoke of their torments ascends forever? Hear you the cursings and ravings, the roarings and blasphemies? What think you of those hellish fiends? would you have

been willing to have them for your companions and tormentors? What think you of those chains of darkness, of the river of brimstone, of the instruments of torment for soul and body, of those weepings and wailings and gnashing of teeth? Can you think of an everlasting banishment, of a sentence, "Go, you cursed?" Could you dwell with everlasting burnings, could you abide with devouring fire? This is the inheritance you were born to. But I have cut off the entail, and wrought for you a great salvation. I have not ordained you to wrath, but my thoughts towards you are thoughts of peace.

Here I deliver you your protection. From all your enemies will I save you. I grant you a protection from the arrests of the law: your Surety has fully answered it; my justice is satisfied, my wrath is pacified, my honor is repaired. Behold, I am near that justify you; who is he who shall condemn you?

From the usurped dominion of the powers of darkness. I will tread Satan shortly under you, and will set your feet in triumph upon the necks of your enemies. Let not your hearts be troubled, though you are to wrestle with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world; for stronger is He who is in you, than he who is in the world. He may bruise your heel, but you shall bruise his head. Behold your Redeemer leading captivity captive, spoiling principalities and powers, and triumphing over them openly in his cross. See how Satan falls like lightning from Heaven, and the Samson of your salvation bears away the gates of Hell, posts and all, upon his shoulders, and sets them up as trophies of his victory: how he pulls out the throat of the lion, and lifts up the heart of the traitor upon the top of his spear, and washes his hands, and dyes his robes in the blood of those your enemies.

From the victory of the world. Neither its frowns nor its flatteries shall be too hard for your victorious faith. Though it raise up Egypt and Amalek and Moab, and all its armies against you, yet it shall never keep you out of Canaan. Be of good comfort, your Lord has overcome the world. Though its temptations be very powerful, yet

this, upon my faithfulness, will I promise you, that no such shall come upon you, but what you shall be able to bear. But if I see such trials as would be too hard for your graces, and overthrow your souls, I will never suffer them to come upon you; nay, I will make your enemy to serve you, and do bequeath the world as part of your dowry to you.

From the curse of the cross. Affliction shall prove a wholesome cup to you; your Lord has drunk the venom into his own body, and what remains for you is but a healthful potion, which I will promise you shall work for your good. Be not afraid to drink, nor desire the cup should pass from you: I bless the cup before I give it unto you. Drink you all of it, and be thankful; you shall find my blessing at the bottom of the cup, to sweeten the sharpest afflictions to you. I will stand by you in all conditions, and be a fast friend to you in every change. In the wilderness I will speak comfortably to you, and in the fire and in the water I will be with you. I will be a strength to the poor, and a strength to the needy in his distress; a refuge from the storm, and a shadow from the heat, when the blast of terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. Your sufferings shall not be a cup of wrath, but a grace cup; not a curse, but a cure; not a cup of trembling, but a cup of blessing to you. They shall not hurt you, but heal you. My blessing shall attend you in every condition. I say not only, Blessed shall you be in your basket, and blessed in your store; but blessed shall you be in your poverty, and blessed shall you be in your straits: not only blessed shall you be in your cities, and blessed shall you be in your fields; but blessed shall you be in your bonds, and blessed shall you be in your banishment. Blessed shall you be when you are persecuted, and when you are reviled, and your name is cast out as evil; yes, then doubly blessed. My choicest blessings, greatest good, and richest sweets, will I put into your evil things. These happy immunities, these glorious liberties of the sons of God, by this immutable charter I do forever settle upon you; and do in, and with my covenant, unalterably, irrevocably, everlastingly convey unto you, and confirm upon you.

2. Yes, I will not only free you from your miseries, but will confer upon you ROYAL PRIVILEGES AND PREROGATIVES, and instate you into higher and greater happiness than ever you have fallen from. Lo, I give myself to you, and all things with myself.

Behold, O you sons of men; behold, and wonder. Be astonished, O heavens; be moved, you strong foundations of the earth; for you shall be my witnesses. This day do I by covenant bestow myself upon my servants. I will be your God forever and ever—your own God. Nothing in the world is so much your own as I. The houses that you have built, that you have bought, are not so much yours as I am. Here you are tenants at will; but I am your eternal inheritance. These are loans for a season, but I am your dwelling-place in all generations. You have nowhere so great a proprietorship, so sure and unalterable a claim, as you have here. What do you count your own? Do you count your bodies your own, your souls your own? Nay, these are not your own; they are bought with a price. But you may boldly make your claim to me; you may freely challenge an interest in me. Come near, and fear not; where should you be free, if not with your own? where should you be bold, if not at home? You are never in all the world so much at home as when you are with me. You may freely make use of me, or of any of my attributes, whenever you need. I will be all to you that you can wish.

I will be a FRIEND to you. My secrets shall be with you, and you shall have all freedom of access to me, and liberty to pour out all your hearts into my bosom.

I will be a PHYSICIAN to you. I will heal your backslidings, and cure all your diseases. Fear not; never did soul miscarry that left itself in my hands, and would but follow my prescriptions.

I will be a SHEPHERD to you. Be not afraid of evil tidings, for I am with you; my rod and my staff shall comfort you. You shall not want, for I will feed you; you shall not wander, to be lost, for I will restore

you. I will cause you to lie down in green pastures, and lead you beside the still waters. I will gather you with my arm, and carry you in my bosom, and will lead on softly, as the flock and the children are able to endure. If officers be careless, I will do the work myself. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and will feed them with judgment. I will watch over my flock by night. Behold, I have appointed my ministers as your watchmen, and overseers that watch for your souls. Yes, mine angels shall be your watchers, and shall keep a constant guard upon my flock. And if perhaps the servants should sleep, mine own eyes shall keep a perpetual watch over you, by night and by day. The Keeper of Israel never slumbers, nor sleeps, nor withdraws his eyes from the righteous. I will guide you with mine eye; I will never trust you out of my own sight.

I will be a SOVEREIGN to you. The Lord is your judge, the Lord is your lawgiver, the Lord is your king. Fear not the unrighteousness of men, I will judge your cause, I will defend your rights. You shall not stand at man's bar; you shall not be cast at their vote: let them curse, I will bless; let them condemn, I will justify. When you come upon trial for your lives, to have your eternal state decided, you shall see your Friend, your Father, upon the bench. Into my hands shall your cause be cast, and you shall surely stand in judgment, and be found at the right hand among the sheep, and hear the King say, Come you blessed, inherit the kingdom.

I will be a HUSBAND to you. In loving-kindness, and in mercies, will I betroth you unto me forever. I will espouse your interest, and will be as one with you, and you with me. You shall be for me, and not for another; and I also will be for you. Though I found you as a helpless infant exposed in its blood, all your unworthiness does not discourage me. Lo, I have looked upon you, and put my loveliness upon you. Moreover, I swear unto you, and enter into covenant with you, and you shall be mine. Behold, I do, as it were, put myself out of my own power, and do here solemnly, in this my marriage-covenant,

make away myself to you, and with myself all things. I will be an everlasting portion to you. Lift up now your eyes eastward and westward and northward and southward. Have you not a worthy portion, a goodly heritage? Can you cast up your riches, or count your own happiness? Can you fathom immensity, or reach omnipotency, or comprehend eternity? All this is yours. I will set open all my treasures to you, I will keep back nothing from you.

II. All the attributes in the Godhead, and all the persons in the Godhead, do I hereby make over to you. I will be yours in all my ESSENTIAL PERFECTIONS, and in all my PERSONAL RELATIONS.

1. In all my ESSENTIAL PERFECTIONS. My eternity shall be the date of your happiness. I am the eternal God, and while I am, I will be life and blessedness to you. I will be a never-failing fountain of joy and peace and bliss unto you. I am the first and the last, that was, and is, and is to come, and my eternal power and godhead shall be bound to you. I will be your God, your Father, your Friend, while I have any being. I have made my everlasting choice in choosing you. Fear not, for the eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. My durable riches and righteousness shall be yours. Though all should forsake you, yet will I not forsake you. When the world and all that is therein shall be burnt up, I will be a standing portion for you. When you are forgotten among the dead, with everlasting loving-kindness will I remember you.

My unchangeableness shall be the rock of your rest. When all the world is like the tumbling ocean round about you, here you may fix and settle. I am your resting-place. The immutability of my nature, and of my counsel, and of my covenant, are sure footing for your faith, and a firm foundation for your strong and everlasting consolation. When you are afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, take refuge in me: I am a haven of hope, I am a harbor of rest for you; here cast your anchors, and you shall never be moved.

My omnipotence shall be your guard. I am God Almighty, your almighty Protector, your almighty Benefactor. What though your enemies are many? more are they that are with you, than they that are against you; for I am with you. What though they are mighty, they are not almighty. Your Father is greater than all, and none shall pluck you out of my hands. Who can hinder my power, or obstruct my salvation? Who is like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rides on the Heaven for your help, and in his excellency on the sky? I am the sword of your strength, and the shield of your excellency. I am your rock and your fortress, your deliverer, your strength, the horn of your salvation, and your high tower. I will maintain you against all the power of the enemy. You shall never sink, if omnipotence can support you. The gates of Hell shall not prevail against you. Your enemies shall find hard work of it. They shall overcome victory, or enervate omnipotence, or corrupt fidelity, or change immutability, or else they cannot finally prevail against you; either they shall bow or break. Though they should exalt themselves as the eagle, though they should set their nest among the stars, even thence will I bring them down, says the Lord.

My faithfulness shall be your security; my truth, yes, my oath shall fail if ever you come off losers by me. I will make you to confess, when you see the issue and upshot of all my providences, that I was a God worthy to be trusted, worthy to be believed, worthy to be rested in and relied upon. If you walk not in my judgments, you must look for my threats and frowns, yes, and blows too; and you shall see that I am not in jest with you, nor will indulge you in your sins. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I never take from you, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

My mercies shall be your store. I am the Father of mercies, and such a Father I will be to you. I am the fountain of mercies, and this fountain shall be ever open to you. My mercies are very many, and they shall be multiplied towards you; very great, and they shall be magnified upon you; very sure, and they shall be forever sure to you;

very tender, and they shall be infinitely tender of you. Though the fig-tree do not blossom, nor the vine bear, nor the flock bring forth, fear not, for my compassions fail not. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your lives. Even to your old age I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry and deliver you: I will make an everlasting covenant with you, that I will not turn away from you to do you good—that I will show you the kindness of God. I can as soon forget to be God, as forget to be gracious. While my name is Jehovah, merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, I will never forget to show mercy to you. All my ways towards you shall be mercy and truth. I have sworn that I would not be wroth with you, nor rebuke you; for the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, says the Lord that has mercy on you.

My omniscience shall be your overseer; mine eyes shall be ever open, observing your wants to relieve them, and your wrongs to avenge them. Mine ears shall be ever open to hear the prayers of my poor, the cries of mine oppressed, the clamors, calumnies, and reproaches of your enemies. Surely I have seen your affliction, and know your sorrows. And shall not God avenge his own elect? I will avenge them speedily. I see the secret plots and designs of your enemies against you, and will disannul their counsels. I see your secret integrity, and the uprightness of your hearts towards me, while the carnal and censorious world condemn you as hypocrites. Your secret prayers, fasts, and tears, which the world knows not of, I observe them, and record them. Your secret care to please me, your secret pains with your own hearts, your secret self-searchings and self-denial, I see them all; your Father which sees in secret shall reward them openly.

My wisdom shall be your counselor. If any lack wisdom, let him ask of me, and it shall be given him. I will be your deliverer. When you are in darkness, I will be a light to you. I will make your way plain before you. You are but short-sighted, but I will be eyes to you. I will

watch over you, to bring upon you all the good I have promised, and to keep off all the evil you fear, or to turn it into good. You shall have your food in its season, and your medicine in its season—mercies, afflictions, all suitable, and in their season. I will outwit your enemies, and make their oracles to speak but folly. The old serpent shall not deceive you I will acquaint you with his devices. The deceitful hearts you fear shall not undo you; I will discover their wiles. I know how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust to the Day of Judgment to be punished. Trust in me with all your hearts, and lean not to your own understanding, I am God that performs all things for you. I will forfeit the reputation of my wisdom, if I make you not to acknowledge, when you see the end of the Lord—though at present you wonder, and reach not the meaning of my proceedings—that all my works are in weight and in number and in time and in order; if I cause you not to cry out, Manifold are your works, in wisdom have you made them all.

My justice shall be your avenger and rewarder. Fear not to approach; fury is not in me. My justice is not only appeased towards you, but engaged for you. I am so fully satisfied in the sacrifice of my Beloved, that justice itself, which was as a flaming sword drawn against you, does now greatly befriend you; and that which was an amazing, confounding terror, shall now become your relief and consolation. Under all your oppressions, here shall your refuge be. Let me know your grievances; my justice shall right your wrongs, and reward your services. You may conclude upon your pardons, conclude upon your crowns, conclude upon reparation for all your injuries, and all from the sweet consideration of my justice, the thought of which to others is as the horror of the shadow of death. If you sin, despair not; remember, I am just to forgive you. If you are at any pains or cost for me, do not count it lost; for I am not unrighteous to forget you. I am the righteous Judge, that have laid up for you, and will set on you the crown of righteousness. Are you reviled, persecuted, defamed? Forget not that I am righteous to render tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you that are troubled, rest with me. Though all your services and sufferings deserve not the least good at my hands,

yet as I have freely passed my promise to reward them, so I will as justly keep it.

My omnipresence shall be company for you. Surely I will be with you, to bless you. No bolts, nor bars, nor bonds, nor banishment shall remove you from me, nor keep my presence and the influences of Heaven from you. I am always with you: in your darkest nights, in your deepest dangers, I am at hand with you, a very present help in the time of trouble. I am not a God afar off, or asleep, or in a journey, when you need my counsel, mine ear, or mine aid: I am always near unto them that fear me. No Patmos, no prison shall hinder the presence of my grace from you. My presence shall perfume the most noisome cell, and lighten the darkest dungeon where you can be thrust.

My holiness shall be a fountain of grace to you. I am the God of hope, the God of love, the God of patience, the author and finisher of faith, the God of all grace, and I will give grace to you. My design is to make you partakers of my holiness. I will be a constant spring of spiritual life to you. The water that I shall give you, shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The seed of life that I shall put into you, shall be so fed and cherished and maintained by my power, that it shall be immortal. The unction that you shall receive from the Holy One shall abide in you, and teach you all things necessary for you; and as it has taught you, you shall abide in him. You shall flourish in the courts of your God. Yes, I will satisfy your souls in drought, and make fat your bones, and you shall be like a watered garden. Lo, I will be as the dew unto you, and you shall grow as the lily, and cast forth your roots as Lebanon; and your branches shall spread, and your beauty shall be as the olive-tree. You shall still bring forth fruit in old age, you shall be fat and flourishing.

My sovereignty shall be commanded by you. You shall be my favorites, men of power, to prevail with me. All my attributes shall be at the command of your prayers.

In SUM, my all-sufficiency shall be the lot of your inheritance. My fullness is your treasure. My house is your home. You may come as freely to my store, as to your own cupboard. You may have your hand as freely in my treasures, as in your own purses. You cannot ask too much, you cannot look for too much from me. I will give you, or be myself to you instead of, all comforts. You shall have children, or I will be better to you than ten children. You shall have riches, or I will be more to you than all riches.

You shall have friends, if best for you, or else I will be your comforter in your solitude, your counselor in your distress. If you leave father or mother, or houses or lands, for my sake, you shall have a hundred-fold in me, even in this time. When your enemies shall remove your comforts, it shall be but as the letting the cistern run and opening the fountain, or putting out the candles and letting in the sun. The swelling of the waters shall raise higher the ark of your comfort. I will be the staff of bread to you, your life, and the strength of your days. I will be the house and home to you, you shall dwell with me; yes, dwell in me, and I in you. I will stand and fall with you. I will repair your losses, and relieve your needs. Can you burn out the lamp of Heaven, or lave out the boundless ocean with your hands? Why, the sun shall be dark and the sea be dry, before the Father of lights; the fountain of mercies shall be exhausted. Behold, though the world has been spending upon the stock of my mercy ever since I created man upon earth, yet it runs with full stream still. My sun does diffuse its rays and disburse its light, and yet shines as bright as ever: much more can I dispense of my goodness, and fill my creatures brimful and running over, and yet have never the less in myself: and until this all-sufficiency be spent, you shall never be undone. I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, and whatever I was to them, I will be to you.

Are you in want? you know where to go. I am ever at home; you shall not go away empty from my door. Never distract yourselves with cares and fears, but make known your requests by prayer and supplication unto me. I will help when all things else fail. When

friends fail and hearts fail, when your eye-strings crack and your heartstrings crack, when your acquaintance leave you and your souls leave you, my bosom shall be open to you. I will lock up your dust, I will receive your souls.

And my infiniteness shall be the extent of your inheritance. Can you by searching find out God; can you find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as Heaven, what can you do? deeper than Hell, what can you know? This height incomprehensible, this depth unfathomable, shall be all yours, forever yours. I am your inheritance which no line can measure, no arithmetic can value, no surveyor can describe. Lift up now your eyes to the ancient mountains, and to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills: all that you can see is yours; but your short sight cannot ken the moiety of what I give you; and when you see and know most, you are no less than infinitely short of the discovery of your own riches. (Job 26:14).

2. Yes, further, I will be yours in all my PERSONAL RELATIONS.

I am the everlasting Father, and I will be a Father to you. I take you for my sons and daughters. Behold, I receive you not as servants, but as sons to abide in my house forever. Whatever love or care children may look for from their father, that may you expect from me; and so much more as I am wiser and greater and better than any earthly parents. If earthly fathers will give good things to their children, much more will I give to you. If such cannot forget their children, much less will I forget you. What would my children have? Your Father's heart, and your Father's house; your Father's care, and your Father's ear; your Father's bread, and your Father's rod: these shall be all yours.

You shall have my fatherly affection; my heart I share among you, my tenderest love I bestow upon you.

My fatherly compassion. As a father pities his children, so will I pity you. I will consider your frame, and not be extreme to mark what is done amiss by you, but cover all with the mantle of my excusing love.

My fatherly INSTRUCTION. I will cause you to hear the sweet voice behind you saying, This is the way. I will be tender of your weakness, and inculcate mine admonitions, line upon line, and feed you with milk when you cannot digest stronger meat. I will instruct you, and guide you with mine eye.

My fatherly PROTECTION. In my fear is strong confidence, and my children shall have a place of refuge. My name shall be your strong tower, to which you may at all times fly and be safe. To your stronghold, you prisoners of hope. I am an open refuge, a near and inviolable refuge for you.

My fatherly PROVISION. Be not afraid of want; in your Father's house there is bread enough. I will care for your bodies. Be not anxious what you shall eat, drink, or put on. Let it suffice you that your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all things. I will provide for your souls, meat for them, and mansions for them, and portions for them. Behold, I have spread the table of my gospel for you, with privileges and comforts that no man takes from you. I have set before you the bread of life, and the tree of life, and the water of life. Eat, O friends; drink abundantly, O beloved. But all this is but a taste of what I have prepared. You must have but smiles and hints now, and be contented with glimpses and glances here; but you shall be shortly taken up into your Father's bosom, and live for ever in the fullest views of his glory.

My fatherly PROBATION. I will chasten you because I love you, that you may not be condemned with the world.

My Son I give unto you, in a marriage-covenant forever. I make him over to you as wisdom, for your illumination; righteousness, for your justification; sanctification, for the curing of your corruptions;

redemption, for your deliverance from your enemies. I bestow him upon you with all his fullness, all his merits, and all his graces. He shall be yours in all his offices. I have anointed him for a Prophet. Are you ignorant, he shall teach you; he shall be eye-salve to you. I have sent him to preach the gospel to the poor, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised. I have established him by oath, as a Priest forever. If any sin, he shall be your Advocate; he shall expiate your guilt, and make the atonement. Have you any sacrifice, any service to offer, bring it unto him, and you shall receive an answer of peace.

Present your petitions by his hand, him will I accept. Having such a High-priest over the house of God, you may come and welcome; come with boldness. Him have I set up as King upon my holy hill of Zion. He shall rule you, he shall defend you. He is the King of righteousness, King of peace; and such a King shall he be to you. I will set up his standard for you; I will set up his throne in you. He shall reign in righteousness, and rule in judgment; and he shall be a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. He shall hear your causes and judge your enemies, and reign until he has put all under his feet; yes, and under your feet; for they shall be as ashes under you, and you shall tread them, says the Lord of hosts. Yes, I will undo them that afflict you, and all they that despised you shall bow themselves down at the soles of your feet. And you shall go forth and behold the carcasses of the men that have trespassed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh. (Isaiah 66:24).

My Spirit do I give unto you for your Counselor and your Comforter. He shall be a constant inmate with you, and shall dwell in you and abide with you forever. I consecrate you as temples to his holiness. He shall be your guide, he shall lead you into all truth. He shall be your advocate to indite your prayers, and make intercession for you, and shall fill your mouths with the arguments that he knows will prevail with me. He shall be oil to your wheels, and strength to your

ankles, wine to your hearts, and marrow to your bones, and wind to your sails. He shall witness your adoption. He shall seal you to the day of redemption, and be to you the earnest of your inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.

III. And as I give you myself, so much more all things with myself. Earth and Heaven, life and death, THINGS PRESENT and THINGS TO COME.

1. THINGS PRESENT are yours! Lo, I give you Caleb's blessing, the upper springs and the nether springs. I will bless you with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. To you pertains the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the service of God, and the promises. To you will I give the white stone and the new name, access into my presence, the acceptance of your persons, the audience of your prayers. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. I will keep you to the end, and then crown my own gift with eternal life. I have made you heirs of God, and co-heirs with your Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall inherit all things.

I have granted you my ANGELS for your guardians. The courtiers of Heaven shall attend upon you; they shall be all ministering spirits for your good. Behold, I have given them charge over you, upon their fidelity to look after you, and, as tender nurses, to bear you in their arms, and to keep you from coming to any hurt. These shall be as the careful shepherds, to watch over my flock by night, and to encamp round about my fold.

My MINISTERS I give for your guides. Paul, Apollos, Cephas, all are yours. I am always with them, and they shall be always with you to the end of the world. You shall have pastors after my own heart, and this shall be my covenant with you, that my Spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put into your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor the mouth of your seed, nor of your seed's seed, from henceforth and for ever. In short, all my officers shall be for profiting and perfecting you. All my ordinances shall be for edifying

and saving you. The very severities of my house, admonitions, censures, and the whole discipline of my family, shall be for preventing your infection, curing your corruption, procuring your salvation.

My WORD have I ordained for converting your souls, enlightening your eyes, rejoicing your hearts, cautioning you of dangers, cleansing your defilements, and conforming you to my image. To you I commit the oracles of God. Here you shall be furnished against temptations, hence you shall be comforted under distresses and afflictions. Here you shall find my whole counsel. This shall instruct you in your way, correct you in your wanderings, direct you into the truths to be believed, detect to you the errors to be rejected.

My ORDINANCES I give you as the pledges of my love. You shall freely claim them, they are children's bread. Lo, I have given them to certify to you all that I have here promised you; and when these sacred signs are delivered unto you, then know, and remember, and consider in your hearts, that I therein plight you my truth, and set to my hand, and do thereby ratify and confirm every article of these indentures, and do actually deliver into your own hands this glorious charter, with all its immunities and privileges, as your own forever.

And having sowed to you so largely in spiritual blessings, shall you not much more reap the temporal? Be you not of doubtful mind; all these things shall be added unto you. My creatures I grant for your servants and supplies. Heaven and earth shall minister to you. All the stars in their courses shall serve you, and, if need be, shall fight for you. And I will make my covenant for you with the beasts of the field, and with the birds of Heaven; and you shall be in league with the stones of the field, and all shall be at peace with you. I will undertake for all your necessities. Do I feed the birds, and clothe the grass, and do you think I will neglect my children? I hear the young ravens when they cry; shall I not much more fulfill the desires of them that fear me? Fear not, you shall be sure to want no good thing; and you would not yourselves desire riches, pleasures, or preferment, to your

hurt. I will give meat to them that fear me: I will be ever mindful of my covenant. My providences shall cooperate to your good. The cross winds shall blow you the sooner and swifter into your harbor. You shall be preferred, when you seem most debased; shall be greatest gainers, when you seem to be deepest losers, and shall most effectually promote your good, when you seem most to deny it.

2. THINGS TO COME are yours! The perfecting of your souls, the redemption of your bodies, the consummation of your bliss. When you have glorified me for a while on earth, and finished the work I have given you to do, you shall be caught up into paradise, and rest from your labors, and your works shall follow you. I will send of my own life-guard to conduct home your departing souls, and receive you among the spirits of just men made perfect. And you shall look back upon Pharaoh, and all his host, and see your enemies dead upon the shore. Then shall be your redemption from all your afflictions, and all your corruptions. The thorn in the flesh shall be pulled out, and your hour of temptation shall be over forever.

The sweat shall be wiped from your brows, and the day of refreshing shall come, and you shall sit down forever under my shadow. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and lead you to living fountains of water.

The tears shall be wiped away from your eyes, and there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away, and behold I make all things new. I will change Marah into Naomi, the cup of sorrow into the cup of salvation, and the bread and water of affliction into the wine of eternal consolation. You shall take down your harps from the willows, and I will turn your tears into pearls, and your penitential psalms into songs of deliverance. You shall change your Ichabods into hosannas, and your ejaculations of sorrow into hallelujahs of joy.

The cross shall be taken off from your backs, and you shall come out of your great tribulations, and wash your robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb; and you shall be before the throne of God, and serve him night and day in his temple; and he who sits on the throne shall dwell among you, and you shall hunger no more, and thirst no more, neither shall the sun light upon you, nor any heat.

The load shall be taken off from your consciences. Sins and doubts shall no more defile you or distress you. I will make an end of sin, and knock off the fetters of your corruptions, and you shall be a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but you shall be holy and without blemish.

Thus shall you be brought to the King all glorious, in clothing of needle-work, and clothing of gold; with gladness and rejoicing shall you be brought, and enter into the king's palace. So shall the beloved of the Lord dwell safely by him, and you shall stand continually before him, and behold the beauty of the Lord, and hear his wisdom. Then will I open in you an everlasting spring of joy, and you shall break forth into singing, and never cease more, nor rest day or night, saying, Holy, holy, holy.

Thus shall the grand enemy expire with your dying breath, and the body of death be put off with your mortal body; and the day of your death shall be the birthday of your glories. Have faith in God. "Wait but a little, and sorrow shall cease, and sin be no more.

And then a little longer, and death shall be no more; but your last enemy shall be destroyed, and your victory completed. Yet a little while, and He who shall come, will come, and you also shall appear with him in glory. This same Jesus which is taken from you into Heaven, shall so come as he went up into Heaven; and when he comes, he will receive you to himself, that where he is, there you may be also. Behold his sign: he comes in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory; and every eye shall see him, and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of him; but you shall lift up your

heads, because the day of your redemption draws near. Then shall he sound his trumpet, and make you hear his voice in your dust, and shall send his mighty angels to gather you from the four winds of Heaven, who shall carry you in the triumphant chariot of the clouds, to meet your Lord; and you shall be prepared for him, and presented to him, as a bride adorned for her husband. And as you have borne the image of the earthly, so shall you bear the image of the heavenly; and you shall be fully conformed both in body and spirit to your glorious Head. Then shall he confess you before his angels, and you shall receive your open absolution before all flesh, and be owned, approved, and applauded in the public audience of the general assembly. And you shall be with all royal solemnities espoused unto the King of glory, in the presence of all his shining courtiers, to the envy and terror of your adversaries.

So shall your Lord with his own hand crown you, and set you on thrones; and you shall judge men and angels, and you shall have power over the nations, and you shall set your feet upon the necks of your enemies. Lo, I have set the very day for your instalment, I have provided your crowns, I have prepared the kingdom. Wherefore do you doubt, O you of little faith? these are the true sayings of God. Are you sure that you are now on earth? so surely shall you be shortly with me in Heaven. Are you sure that you shall die? so surely shall you rise again in glory. Lo, I have said it, and who shall reverse it? You shall see me face to face, and be with me where I am, and behold my glory. For I will be glorified in my saints, and admired in all them that believe; and all flesh shall know that I have loved you. For I will make you the trophies of my grace, in whom the whole world shall see how unutterably the Almighty God can advance the poor worm's meat and dust of the ground. And the despisers shall behold and wonder and perish; for they shall be witnesses to the riches of my magnificence and the exceeding greatness of my power. They shall go away into everlasting punishment, but you into life eternal; for no sooner shall their sentence be passed, but the court shall rise, and the Judge shall return with all his glorious train; with sound of trumpet and shouts incredible shall he ascend, and shall lead you to

your Father's house. Then shall the triumphal arches lift up their heads, and the everlasting gates stand open, and the heavens shall receive you all, and so shall you be ever with the Lord.

And now will I rejoice over you with singing, and rest in my love; and Heaven shall ring with joys and acclamations, because I have received you safe and sound. And in that day you shall know that I am a rewarder of them that diligently seek me; and that I did record your words, and bottle your tears, and tell your wanderings, and keep an account, even to a cup of cold water, of whatever you said or did for my name. You shall surely find that nothing is lost; but you shall have full measure, pressed down and running over, thousands of years in paradise, for the least good thought, and thousand thousands for the least good word; and then the reckoning shall begin again, until all arithmetic be nonplused. For you shall be swallowed up in a blessed eternity, and the doors of Heaven shall be shut upon you, and there shall be no more going out.

The glorious choir of my holy angels, the goodly fellowship of my blessed prophets, the happy society of triumphant apostles, the royal hosts of victorious martyrs, these shall be your companions forever. And you shall come in white robes, with palms in your hands, everyone having the harps of God, and golden vials full of odors, and shall cast your crowns before me, and strike in with the multitude of the heavenly hosts, glorifying God, and saying, Hallelujah! the Lord God omnipotent reigns. Blessing, honor, glory, power be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. In short, I will make you equal to the angels of God, and you shall be the everlasting trumpets of my praise. You shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of my house, and I will make you drink of the rivers of my pleasures. You shall be an eternal excellency; and if God can die, and eternity run out, then, and not else, shall your joys expire. For you shall see me as I am, and know me as you are known; and shall behold my face in righteousness, and be satisfied with my likeness. And you shall be the vessels of my glory, whose blessed use shall be to receive the overflowings of my goodness, and to have

mine infinite love and glory poured out into you brimful, and running over for evermore. Blessed is he who has believed, for there shall be a performance of the things that have been told him. I the Lord have spoken it; you shall see my face, and my name shall be written in your foreheads; and you shall no more need the sun, nor the moon, for the Lord God shall give you light, and you shall reign forever and ever.

And as I give myself to you for your God, and all things with myself, so I take you for my covenant people, and you shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare you as a man spares his own son that serves him. The Lord shall count when he writes up the people, Surely they are my children. I do not only require you to be mine, if you would have me to be for you, but I do promise to make you mine, and to work in you the conditions which I require of you. I will circumcise your hearts to love me. I will take out the heart of stone. My laws will I write within you. Yet you must know that I will be sought unto for these things; and as ever you expect to partake of the mercies, I charge you to lie at the pool, and wait for my Spirit, and be diligent in the use of the means.

I am content to abate the rigor of the old terms; I shall not stand upon satisfaction. I have received a ransom, and do only expect your acceptance. I shall not insist upon perfection. Walk before me, and be upright, and sincerity shall carry the crown. Yes, both the faith and obedience that I require of you are my own gifts. I require you to accept my Son by believing; but I will give you a hand to take him, and to submit to, and obey him; and I must and will guide your hand to write after him, and cause you to walk in my statutes. I will take you by the arms, and teach you to go; I will order your steps. Yes, those things will I accept of you as the conditions of life, which, viewed in the strictness of my justice, would deserve eternal death. Grace! Grace!

The Voice of the Redeemed

Amen, hallelujah. Be it to your servants according to your word. But who are we, and what is our Father's house, that you have brought us hitherto? And now, O Lord God, what shall your servants say unto you? for we are silenced with wonder, and must sit down in astonishment, for we cannot utter the least tittle of your praises. What means the height of this strange love? And whence is this unto us, that the Lord of Heaven and earth should condescend to enter into covenant with his dust, and take into his bosom the viperous brood that have so often spit their venom in his face? We are not worthy to be as the handmaids, to wash the feet of the servants of our Lord; how much less to be your sons and heirs, and to be made partakers of all these blessed liberties and privileges which you have settled upon us! But for your goodness' sake, and according to your own heart, have you done all these great things. Even so, Father, because so it seemed good in your sight.

Wherefore you are great, O God, for there is none like you, neither is there any God besides you. And what nation on earth is like your people, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for them great things and terrible? For you have confirmed them to yourself, to be a people unto you forever, and you, Lord, are become their God, even unto the end.

Wonder, O heavens, and be moved, O earth, at this great thing! For behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Be astonished and ravished with wonder, for the infinite breach is made up; the offender is received, God and man reconciled, and a covenant of peace entered, and Heaven and earth are all agreed upon the terms, and have struck their hands and sealed the indentures. O happy conclusion! O blessed conjunction! Shall the stars dwell with the dust, or the wide distant poles be brought to mutual embraces? But here the distance of the terms is infinitely greater. Rejoice, O angels; shout, O seraphim; O, all you friends of the Bridegroom, be ready with the marriage-song. Lo, here is the wonder of wonders; for Jehovah has betrothed himself forever

to his hopeless captives, and owns the marriage before all the world, and is become one with us and we with him. He has bequeathed to us the precious things of Heaven above, and the precious things of the earth beneath, with the fullness thereof, and has kept back nothing from us.

And now, O Lord, you are that God, and your words are true, and you have promised this goodness unto your servants, and have left us nothing to ask at your hands but what you have already freely granted. Only the word which you have spoken concerning your servants, establish it forever, and do as you have said, and let your name be magnified forever, saying, The Lord of hosts, he is the God of Israel. Amen. Hallelujah.

Chapter 15.

Triumph in the Covenant

(by Joseph Alleine)

The Various Conflicts and Glorious Conquests of Faith over Unbelief

Yes, has God said, I will be a God unto you? Is it true indeed? Will the Lord be mine? Will he lay aside the controversy, and conclude a peace? Will he receive the rebel to mercy, and open his doors to his prodigal? I will surely go unto my Father; I will take unto me words, and bow myself before his footstool, and say, O Lord, I have heard your words, and do here lay hold on your covenant. I accept the kindness of God, and will adventure myself upon your fidelity, and trust my whole happiness here and hereafter upon these your promises.

Farewell, deceitful world, get you under my feet. Too long have I feared your vain threats; too long have I been deluded with your flattering promises. Can you promise me, or deny me such things as God has covenanted to give me? I know you can not, and therefore I renounce you forever from being the object of my faith, or fear. No longer will I lean to this rotten reed, no longer will I trust to this broken idol. Away, Satan, with your tempting baits. In vain do you dress the harlot in her paint and bravery; and tell me, All this will I give you. Can you show me such a crown, such a kingdom as God has promised to settle upon me; or that which will balance the loss of an infinite God, who here gives himself unto me? Away, deceitful lusts and pleasures, get you hence; I have enough in Christ and his promise to give my soul full content; these have I lodged in my heart, and there is no longer room for such guests as you. Never shall you have quiet entertainment more within these doors.

O God of truth, I here take you at your word; you require but my acceptance and consent, and here you have it. Good is the word of the Lord which he has spoken, and as my Lord has said, so will your servant do. My soul catches hold of your promises. These have I taken as my heritage forever. Let others gain the preferments and possessions of this world, it shall be enough for me to be an heir of your promises.

O happy soul, how rich are you! What a booty have I gotten! It is all mine own. I have the promises of this life and of that which is to come. O what can I wish more? How full a charter is here! Now my doubting soul may boldly and believingly say with Thomas, My Lord, and my God. What need we any further witness? We have heard his words. He has sworn by his holiness that his decree may not be changed, and has signed it with his own signet.

Rejoice, you heavens; strike up, you celestial choirs. Help, Heaven and earth. Sing unto the Lord, O you saints of his. Bless the Lord, O my soul. O had I the tongues of men and angels, all were too little for

me. Had I ten thousand tongues, the whole were not sufficient to utter my Creator's praises.

My Beloved is mine, and I am his. The grant is clear, and my claim is firm. Who dared deny it, when God himself does own it? Is it a hard adventure to speak after Christ himself? Why, this is the message that he has sent me: I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God. He has put words into my mouth, and bid me say, Our Father.

I believe; Lord, help my unbelief. O my God, and my Father, I accept you with all humble thankfulness, and am bold to take hold of you. O my King and my God, I subject my soul and all its powers to you. O my glory, in you will I boast all the day. O my rock, on you will I build all my confidence and my hopes. O staff of my life, and strength of my heart, the life of my joys and joy of my life, I will sit and sing under your shadow, and glory in your holy name.

O my soul, arise and take possession. Inherit your blessedness, and cast up your riches. Your is the kingdom, your is the glory, and your is the victory. The whole Trinity is your. All the persons in the Godhead, all the attributes in the Godhead are your. And behold, here is the evidence, and these are the writings, by which all is made sure to you forever.

And now, Return to your rest, O my soul; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. Say if your lines be not fallen to you in a pleasant place, and if this be not a goodly heritage. O blasphemous discontent, how absurd and unreasonable an evil are you, whom all the fullness of the Godhead cannot satisfy, because you are denied in a petty comfort, or crossed in your vain expectations from the world! O my unthankful soul, shall not a Trinity content you; shall not all-sufficiency suffice you? Silence, you murmuring thoughts, forever. I have enough, I abound, and am full. Infiniteness and eternity are mine, and what more can I ask?

But methinks I feel some secret damp upon my joy, and when I would soar aloft and triumph in the riches of my portion, a secret diffidence plucks me back, as the string does the bird, and UNBELIEF whispers in my ear,

1. "Surely this is too good to be true." But who are you that dispute against God? The Lord has spoken it, and shall not I believe him? Will he be angry if I give my assent, and speak it confidently upon the credit of his words? O my Lord, suffer me to spread the writing before you. Have you not said, Your Maker is your husband, (Isaiah 54:5); I will betroth you unto me, (Hosea 2:19); You shall call me, my Father? (Jeremiah 3:19). I pray you, O Lord, was not this your saying: I am God, even your God, (Psalm 50:7); I will be a Father unto you, and you my sons and daughters? (2 Corinthians 6:18). Why then should I doubt? Is not the truth of the living God sure footing for my faith?

Silence then, O quarreling unbelief. I know in whom I have believed. Not in friends, though numerous and potent; for they are men, and not God. Not in riches; for they make themselves wings. Not in princes; for their breath is in their nostrils. But let God be true, and every man a liar. In God have I put my trust, in his Word do I hope. O sure word! Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of this: I have not built upon the sand of mortality. Let the rain descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow, nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure. His everlasting counsel and everlasting covenant are my stay. I am built upon his promises, and let Hell and earth do their worst to blow up this foundation.

Now shall my faith triumph, and my heart be glad, and my glory rejoice. I will shout with the exulting multitude. The Lord he is the God, and he is not ashamed to be called my God. He is not ashamed of my rags or poverty, of my parentage or pedigree; and since his infinite condescension will own me, will he take it ill if I own him? Though I have nothing of my own to glory in, unless I should glory in my shame, yet I will glory in the Lord, and bless myself in him.

For who is like unto the God of Jeshurun? Bring forth your gods, O you nations. Lift up your eyes, and behold who has created all these things. Can any do for their friends as the Lord can? Or if he be angry, who is the God that shall deliver out of his hands? Will you set Dagon before the ark? Or shall mammon contend with the holy One? O ambitious Haman, where is now your idol honor? O rich glutton, that made a God of pleasure, where is now the God whom you have served? O sensual worldling, that knew not where or how to bestow your goods, do riches profit you? Could mammon save you? Deceived souls, go now to the gods that you have chosen. Alas, they cannot administer a drop of water to cool your tongues.

But the Portion of Jacob is not like them. From everlasting to everlasting he is God. His power is my confidence, his goodness is my maintenance, his truth is my shield and my buckler. But,

2. "My clamorous unbelief has many wiles, and afresh assaults me with the difficulty of the things promised, and labors to nonplus and confound me with their amazing greatness." But why should I stagger at the promise through unbelief, robbing at once my Master of his glory, and my soul of her comfort? It is my great sin to doubt and dispute, and shall I be afraid to believe? O my soul, it is the highest honor you can put upon your Lord, to believe against difficulties, and to look for and reckon upon great things and wonderful, passing all created power and human faith.

Let not the greatness nor the strangeness of the benefits bequeathed unto you, put you to a stand. It is with a God you have to do, and therefore you must not look for little things; that were to darken the glory of his munificence, and the infiniteness of his power and goodness. Know you not that it is his design to make his name glorious; and to make you know he is able to do for you above all you can ask or think? Surely they cannot be any small or ordinary things that shall be done for you, when the Lord shall show in you what a God can do, and shall carry you in triumph before the world, and make proclamation before you, Thus shall it be done to the man

whom the Lord delights to honor. What wonder if you can not comprehend these things—if they exceed all your apprehensions and conceptions? This is a good argument for your faith; for this is that which the Lord has said, that it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive what things he has prepared for them that love him. Now if you could conceive and comprehend them, how should his Word be made good? It is enough for you that the Lord has spoken it. Is not the Word near you? Has God said, I will receive you; you shall be kings and priests unto God, and inherit all things; and shall sit on thrones, and judge angels, and be ever with the Lord: and shall I dare to say him nay? Unreasonable unbelief! What, never satisfied; still contradicting and blaspheming? False whisperer, no more of your tales. I believe God, that it shall be as he has told me.

And now, thanks be to God, who always causes us to triumph in Christ; therefore my lips shall praise you, and my soul which you have redeemed. For you have made me glad through your word, and I will triumph in the works of your hands. I will praise the Lord while I live. I will sing praises to my God while I have any being. O my soul, if you could wear out your fingers upon the harp, and wear your tongue to the roots, you could yet never sufficiently praise your Redeemer.

O my enemies, where is now your confidence, and where is your armor wherein you trusted? I will set Christ alone against all your multitudes, and all the power and malice and policy with which they are armed. The field is already won, and the Captain of our salvation returned with the spoils of his enemies, having made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross. And thanks be to God who has given us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Of whom, then, should I be afraid? Behold he is near that justifies me; who shall plead with me?

O you powers of Hell, you are but chained captives, and we have a sure word, that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against us. Though

the world be in arms against us, and the devil at the head of them as their champion, yet who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? Behold, I am come out to you, as the stripling against Goliath; not with sword, and with spear, but in the name of the Lord of hosts, in whose strength I am more than a conqueror.

O grave, where is now your victory? Christ is risen, and has broken up your prison, and rolled away the stone, so that all your prisoners have made an escape. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; though I fall, I shall rise again; though I lie in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. Enlarge not your desires, O Tophet, but shut up your flaming mouth; for there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

O deceitful world, you are already overcome, and the conquered enemy is become my servant, and I am fed with the honey taken out of the carcass of the slain lion. I fear not your threats, nor the enchantments of your siren songs, being kept by the power of God, through a victorious faith unto salvation.

O my sins, you are already buried, never to have any resurrection, and the remembrance of you shall be no more. I see my sins nailed to the cross, and their dominion is taken away, though their lives be prolonged yet for a little season. Awake, therefore, O my glory; awake, psaltery and harp, and meet the Deliverer with triumph; for his right hand and his holy arm have gotten us the victory, and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

3. "Yet methinks my unworthiness flies in my face, and I hear my caviling unbelief thus upbraiding me, and crying out, 'O proud presumption, that you who are conscious to yourself of your great unworthiness, should pretend a claim to God and glory! Shall daring dust think to share with the Almighty, and say of his endless perfections, They are my right? Bold sinner, stand off, and tremble at your presumptuous arrogance.'"

O my God, I lay my hand upon my mouth. I confess the charge of mine unworthiness. My guilt and shame is such as I cannot cover, but you can, and do. You have cast a mantle upon my nakedness, and have promised my transgressions shall not be mentioned, and that you will multiply pardons. And shall I take up what you have buried, and then affright myself with the ghosts that unbelief has raised? Is it presumption to take the pardon that you do offer, or to receive and claim you as mine, when it is but what you have promised? I dared not have approached you, but upon your call; nor have claimed a title, but upon your grant. I should have thought it diabolical pride, to have pleaded an interest in you, and claimed kindred to you, but that you have showed me the way.

And you, my soul, are you ignorant of God's great design? Know you not that it is his purpose to glorify free grace? And how should grace appear to be grace indeed, were there any worthiness in the subject? Your unworthiness is but a foil to set off the beauty and riches of free grace and mercy.

4. "But I cannot shake off this brier: alas, what a caviling sophistry is unbelief, and will never be answered. Now is it ready to tell me, what if the promise should be a sure foundation, yet you may not build upon another man's ground. What though the grace and mercies of God are infinite, yet dogs may not catch at the children's bread. You have no right nor title to the promise, therefore cease your pretended claim."

But, O my soul, wherefore should you doubt? Whose image and superscription is this? Do you not bear upon you the marks of the Lord Jesus? I have given up my name to him, and taken hold of his covenant, and therefore may claim an interest. I have accepted the matter, and closed with the Mediator, and subscribed to the conditions of the covenant, and therefore cannot question but it is mine. The Lord has offered to be my God, and I have taken hold of his offer. I have taken him as God, and given him the supremacy. O my soul, look round about you, in Heaven and in earth; is there any

you do esteem or value in comparison with God? Is there any you do love like him, or take that content or felicity in, that you do in him? Are not your chief desires and designs to glorify and enjoy him? You can not deny but it is truly thus. I am sure nothing but God will content me. I am never so well in all the world as in his company. My soul seeks him above all, and rests in him alone as my satisfactory portion. He offers to take me as one of his people, and I have resigned myself accordingly to him as his, and have put both my inward and outward man under his government, and given up all to his disposal, and am resolved to be content with him, as my all-sufficient happiness.

Besides, I have taken him in his own way through Christ, whom he has offered to me as my head and husband, and I have accordingly solemnly and deliberately taken him. O my soul, do not you remember your many debates? Have you not put Christ and all the world into the balance? Have you not cast up the cost, and reckoned upon the cross, and willingly put your neck under Christ's yoke, and ventured your salvation upon Christ alone, and trusted him with all your happiness and all your hopes? Have you not over and over resolved to take him with what comes, and that he shall be enough, though in the loss of all things? You can not but know that these have been the transactions between Christ and you; and therefore he is your, and all the promises are yes and amen to you through him.

And for the terms of the covenant, I love and like them; my soul embraces them; neither do I desire to be saved in any other way, than by repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and sincere obedience to his gospel. I am willing to go out of my flesh, and do look unto Jesus for righteousness and strength, and trust my salvation wholly on this foundation. I am content to deal upon trust, and venture all in the hope of what is to come, and to tarry until the next world for my preferment. I am willing to wait until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and have laid up my happiness on the other side the grave.

And though my sins be many, yet I should belie my own knowledge if I should say they were not my constant trouble and burden, and the enemies against which I daily watch, and with whom my soul has no peace. My own heart knows that I hate them, and desire and endeavor their utter destruction, and do resolve against them all, and am willing to use all God's means to mortify them. It is too true that I often fall and fail; yet my conscience bears me witness that I confess and bewail it, and do not ordinarily and deliberately allow myself in any sin whatever against my knowledge. And though my obedience be miserably lame, yet, O Lord, you know that I have respect unto all your commandments, and do strive to come up to what you require. The Holy Spirit is witness, and my conscience also, that I first seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, and that it is my chief care to please God, and keep from sin. Speak, O my soul, is not holiness your design? Do you not thirst for it, and follow after it? Do you not in your settled choice prefer the holy ways of God before all the pleasures and delights of sin? You know it is thus, and therefore no more disputing; you have sincerely taken hold of God's covenant, and without controversy it must be your.

O my God, I see you have been at work with my soul. I find the prints, I see the footsteps. Surely this is the finger of God. I am your servant, O Lord, truly I am your servant, and my soul has said unto the Lord, You are my Lord. It must be so. Would you ever set your mark upon another's goods? Or shall God disown his own workmanship? My name is written in Heaven. You have written your name upon my heart, and therefore I cannot question but you have my name on your heart. I have chosen you, O Lord, as my happiness and heritage, and therefore I am sure you have chosen me; for I could not have loved you, except you had loved me first. O my Lord, discern, I pray you, whose are these, the signet, the bracelets, and the staff. I know you will acknowledge them.

And now blessed be God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his abundant mercy has begotten me again to a living hope.

And you, my soul, believe and wait, look through the window, and cry through the lattice, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. The vision is for an appointed time; wait for it. It will come in the end, and will not tarry. (Habakkuk 2:3). Behold, the gardener waits for the precious fruits of the earth. Be you also patient. He has long patience, and will not you have a little patience? He, for the fruits of the earth; but you, for the joys of Heaven. He, upon mere probabilities; but you, upon infallible certainties. He, for a crop of corn; but you, for a crown of glory. Were he but sure that every corn would bear a crown, how plentifully would he sow, how joyfully would he wait! Why, such is your harvest. As sure as the summer's delights do follow the winter's severities—as sure as the wished-for harvest does follow the toilsome and costly seed-time, so sure shall your Lord return, and bring your reward with him. Therefore, my soul, love and long for the approaching jubilee, and wait all the days of my appointed time, until my change shall come.

O blessed state that my Lord has translated me into; O happy change that he has made! I was a stranger, and he took me in and made me an heir, and preferred me from the dunghill to the throne, and from a hewer of wood and drawer of water to attend his court, and know his counsels, and do his pleasure. Happy am I that ever I was born to partake of this endless dignity.

O my Lord, it is no little thing you have given me in hand. I am already come to mount Zion, and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to God the Judge of all, and unto the spirits of just men made perfect, and unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and unto the blood of sprinkling. My heart revives as Jacob's, when I behold the tokens which you have sent me, the spirit of adoption, the pardon of my sins, my patent for Heaven, the chain of your graces, the Son of your bosom, the new testament in his blood, and the letters of his love. My Lord has said that he will love me, and manifest himself unto me; and that the Father will love me, and both will come unto me, and

make their abode in me. But is it true indeed? Will the Lord dwell on earth? Or if he will, shall so foul a stable, so unclean a place as my heart has been, shall this be the place that the Lord of life will take up his lodging and keep his court in? Will he indeed come with all his train of graces, and live and walk in me? How can these things be? But he has said it, and I do, and I will believe it.

Yet all this is but the earnest of what is to come. O how great is your goodness laid up for them that fear you! Yet a little, and my warfare shall be accomplished, and the heavens must receive me until the time of the restitution of all things. It is but for a short term that I shall dwell in this flesh, in an earthen tabernacle. My Lord has showed me, that where he is, there shall his servant be. Now the living is tied to the dead, and my soul is a stage of strife and a field of war. Yet, it is but a little moment, and that which is perfect shall come: perfect holiness and perfect peace, eternal serenity and a serene eternity.

O my sins, I am going where you cannot come—where no unclean thing shall enter, nor anything that defiles. Methinks I see all my afflictions and temptations, all my infirmities and corruptions, falling off me, as Elijah's mantle at his translation.

O my soul, do you not see the chariots of fire, and the horses of fire, come to take you up? Be you as poor as Lazarus, yet God will not disdain to send a party of angels to conduct you home. How can you doubt of a ready reception, that have such a Friend in court, who will lead you with boldness into his Father's presence? If there was joy in Pharaoh's court when it was said, Joseph's brethren are come, surely it will be welcome news in Heaven, when it is told, Jesus' brethren are come.

My soul, fear not to enter, though the Lord be clothed with terror and majesty; for your Redeemer will procure you favor, and plead your right. I am sure of welcome, for the Father himself loves me. I have tasted and tried his love; and when I had played the wicked prodigal,

yet he despised not my rags, but fell on my neck and kissed me, and Heaven itself rejoiced over me. Much more will he receive me gladly, and let out his love upon me, when presented to him by his Son, in his perfect likeness, as a fit object for his everlasting delight. Fear not, O my soul, as if you were going to a strange place. Why, Heaven is your country and your home: will you doubt of admission, or fear of welcome, when it is your own home? Why, my soul, you were born from above, and here is your kindred and your Father's house, and therefore you shall surely be admitted. And then shall I see the glorious preparations of eternal love, and the blissful mansions of the heavenly inhabitants.

Doubtless it will be thus. These are not sick men's dreams, nor children's hopes. The living God cannot deceive me: and may not I certainly promise myself what the Lord has promised me? I will sooner think that all my senses are deluded, and what I see and feel and taste is but a fancy, than think that the living God will deceive me, or that his unchangeable covenant will fail. Now I am a son of God, and it does not yet appear what I shall be; but this I know, I shall be like him, and see him as he is.

I know it shall be thus. Why, what security should I ask of God? He has given me all assurance in his word. And though the Word of God be enough, yet he, willing to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, I might have strong consolation. O unreasonable unbelief! What, shall not the oath of God put an end to your strife? O my God, I am satisfied; it is enough. Now I may be bold without presumption, and boast without pride; and will no more call my duty arrogance, nor my faith a fancy.

O my soul, there is but a short life between you and glory, where holy angels and glorified saints shall be my associates, and love and praise my only employment. Methinks I hear already how the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy. O that I could

come in! But it was said unto me, that I should rest yet for a little season, and I shall stand in my lot at the end of the days. It is well; Lord, your Word is enough; your bond is as good as ready payment. The Holy Spirit tells me, that life and glory abide me; that what day I loose from the body, the same day I shall be landed in paradise. Amen. It is as I would have it.

But this is not all. When my body has slept a short nap in the dust, Christ will call to it, Come up hither. Ah, true yoke-fellow, it will be a hard parting, but a welcome meeting. I could not leave you, but to live with Christ. But he will raise you a glorious temple; and when he shall appear, will bring me with himself in glory; and then I shall re-enter you as a royal mansion, wherein I shall abide with the Lord forever. For as we have served our Redeemer together, so we must be glorified together with him. And when the Lord has married us together again, then will he marry us both unto himself. For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the last day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me. My Lord has already told me how it shall be. He has set down the time, and showed me the robes of immortality, and the crown of life, that I must put on; and the throne of glory, and the seat of judgment that I must sit in. He has told me the manner in which I shall be presented to him, and espoused by him. He has told me where he will set me, and what he will say to me, and how he will acknowledge my mean vices, and remember what I have forgotten; how he will praise the works that I have been ashamed of, and reward me openly for what I have buried in secrecy, and not forget the poorest alms that I have given for his name. Then will he confess me before his Father, and before the angels of God. Thus says the true and faithful Witness, and we know that his testimony is true.

Ah, my soul, see that you make not God a liar. (1 John 5:10). O my God, I have believed your report, and do look for all these things, according to your promise. I know you intend me but for a very little

while in this lower region. This world is but the house of my pilgrimage, and my soul now is but like a bird in the shell; but when the shell is cracked, then shall she take wings like a dove, and soar aloft to you, and fly away and be at rest. Yet I doubt not your care for my despicable dust. I know that nothing will be lost: I know not where they will lay me; but your wakeful eye observes, and will not have to seek at what door to knock, nor at what grave to call for me. I believe, and am sure that I shall come a glorious work out of your hands, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, crowned with honor and glory. And when my absolution is read, and sentence passed upon the world, then must I be taken up to dwell with you.

Let not my Lord be angry, that your dust and ashes speaks thus unto you. You, Lord, have raised my expectations, and have made me look for all these great things from you. In vain have you written all these things unto me, if I should not believe them; and a distrustful diffidence would put a high dishonor upon your truth.

O Lord, it repents me—it repents me of my jealousies, and my doubtful thoughts about you. I know you love a humble confidence, and delight in nothing more than to see your children trust you. I know the building of my hopes reaches not a hair's breadth beyond the foundation of your promises; yes, it is sure, my expectations are infinitely short of what I shall find. O my God, my heart trusts safely in you, and I here set to my seal that you are true. Christ is the corner-stone on which I build, and therefore my building will challenge the winds and floods.

And now, O Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in you. O my Blessedness, let me enjoy you. O my Life, let me possess you. O Desire of mine eyes, let me see your face and hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your countenance is lovely. I ask but what you have promised; for you have told me that I shall see God, and you will speak to me mouth to mouth, even apparently and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of God shall I behold. So shall my knowledge be perfected, and I shall see the inaccessible light, and my

tender eye shall not water, nor my sight dazzle; but I shall with open face look steadfastly on the Sun of righteousness, and behold his glory. Then shall faith be turned into fruition, and hope into possession, and love shall arise like the full moon in her brightness, and never wax nor wane more.

O you God of my hopes, I look for a new body, and a new soul—for new heavens, and for a new earth, according to your promise, when my whole soul shall be wholly taken up with you, and all my affections strained to the highest pitch, and all the wheels of my raised powers set in most vigorous and perpetual motion towards you, still letting in, and still laying out; and thus shall there be an everlasting communication of joy and glory from you, and of love and praise from me.

O my soul, you are rich indeed, and increased in goods. You have no reason to envy the glory or grandeur of the mightiest on earth; for their glory shall not descend after them: like sheep shall they be laid in their graves, and death shall feed upon them, and there is an eternal end of all their pomp and excellency. But my kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. My robes shall never wear, my crown shall never totter, my throne shall never be vacant, my bread shall never decay, my garland shall never wither, my house shall never moulder, my wine shall never sour, but everlasting joy shall be upon my head, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away.

O my God, how happy have you made me! It is better than I could have wished. You have done all things well. You have settled them forever. The whole earth cannot show any such heritage or tenure. The world can deed out her possessions only for years, nor can she make a good title for that; but my inheritance is forever, and none can put me out of possession. The thing is established in Heaven, and in the volume of the book it is written of me. My evidence cannot be lost; it is recorded in the court above, and enrolled in the sacred leaves of the word, and entered upon the book of my conscience, and herein I do and will rejoice.

Now, my soul, wipe your eyes, and go away like Hannah, and be no more sad. What though my house be not so with God; so happy, so prosperous as I could wish? What though they be increased that trouble me, and my temptations and afflictions are like the rolling billows, riding on one another's backs for haste, yet shall my soul be as a rock unmoved, and sit down satisfied in the security and amplitude of my portion. For God has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; and herein is all my salvation, and all my desire.

And now, what remains, O Lord, but that I should spend the remainder of my days in loving, praising, and admiring you? But wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, or bow myself before the most high God? What shall I give you, to express my thankfulness, though not to requite your bounty? Alas, my poor little soul; alas that you are so little! How narrow are your capacities; how disproportionate are your powers! Alas that my voice can reach to no higher a note! But shall I do nothing, because I cannot do all?

Lord, I resign my all to you. With the poor widow, I cast my two mites, my soul and body, into your treasury. All my powers shall love and serve you. All my members shall be weapons of righteousness for you. Here is my good-will. Behold, my substance is your stock, mine interest is for your service. I lay all at your feet: there, you have them, they are your. My children I enter as your servants. My possessions I resign as your right. I will call nothing mine but you. All mine are your. I can say, My Lord and my God, and that is enough; I thankfully quit my claim to all things else. I will no more say, My house is mine, or my estate mine; I myself am not mine own. Yet it is infinitely better for me to be your, than if I were mine own. This is my happiness, that I can say, My own God, my own Father. And O what a blessed exchange have you made with me: to give me yourself, who are an infinite sum, for myself, who am but an insignificant cipher!

And now, Lord, do you accept and own my claim. I am not worthy of anything of your, much less of you. But since I have a deed to show, I bring your Word in my hand, and am bold to take possession.

Do you not know this hand? will you not own this name? will you not confirm your own grant? It were infidelity to doubt it. I will not disparage the faithfulness of my Lord, nor be afraid to aver and stand to what he has said and sworn. Have you said you are my God, and shall I fear you are my enemy? Have you told me you are my Father, and shall I stand aloof, as if I were a stranger? I will believe. Lord, silence my fears; and as you have given me the claim and title of a child, so give me the confidence of a child. Let my heart be daily kept alive by your promises, and with this staff let me pass over Jordan. May these be my undivided companions and comforters. When I go, let them lead me; when I sleep, let them keep me; when I awake, let them talk with me. And do you keep these things forever upon the imaginations of the thoughts of the hearts of your people, and prepare their hearts unto you. And let the heart of your servant be the ark of your testament, wherein the sacred records of what has passed between you and my soul may for ever be preserved. Amen.

Thus far my friend. So may it be.

Chapter 16.

To the Unconverted, With a Form of Covenanting With God

O earth, earth, earth, hear the Word of the Lord. You men of this world, you spirits that are in prison, held captive to iniquity, under the prince of this world; in a covenant with death, at an agreement with Hell, without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, without

God in the world; who have said, we will not have this man to rule over us, let us break his bonds asunder and cast his cords from us; who are joined to idols, have chosen you other gods, are following after other lovers; who walk after the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience; having your conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and being still, as you were by nature, the children of wrath, in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.

O you sons of death, you children of the night and of darkness, hear, and your souls shall live; to you also is the word of this salvation sent; even the strangers, and those who are afar off, that will lay hold on the covenant, and choose the thing that pleases God, these also shall have a name in his house, even the glorious name of sons and daughters. The Lord has sent a word into Jacob, and it shall light upon Edom, and Amalek, and the uncircumcised Philistines, even as many of them as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2:39).

Hearken, O people, you that are polluted in your blood, written in the earth, free among the dead; come in, let your covenant with death be made void, and your agreement with Hell be disannulled; strike a league with the Almighty, and your names also shall be written among the living in Jerusalem. Stand you before the Lord; come, let us reason together. Where are you? What is your portion and inheritance? You are cursed with a curse. Fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest, this shall be the portion of your cup. (Psalm 11:6). What are you seeking? Where are you traveling? After a few years of your vanity are over, where must your dwelling be? Who can dwell with the devouring fire? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings? Look before you, behold that smoking furnace, that burning lake, that bottomless pit which is gaping for you, and which at your next step may swallow you up. Escape for your lives—why will you die? Turn and live.

Do you believe the resurrection from the dead, the judgment to come, and the invisible world? Is it to the spirit of a man as to the spirit of a beast? Does it perish with his body? Dies a man as a dog dies? Dies a wise man as a fool dies? Fall all things alike to all, just and unjust, good and bad, after this life, as well as in it?

Do you believe the Scriptures? Are they but a fable? If you hope they are, are you sure they are? Dare you venture your souls upon it? While the saints venture on the truth, dare you venture your souls on the falsehood of it? Dare you stand forth and say, If this word be not a lie, let me be damned forever; I am content that the everlasting worm shall gnaw my heart, that the infernal fire shall burn my flesh and bones and soul forever and ever, if it prove not at last a mere forgery and imposture!

Do you believe the Scriptures to be true indeed? If you do, what do they preach to you? Do they speak anything, if not this: That there is another life and death, besides that which is within the ken of mortal eyes; that the other life and the other death are eternal; that upon your being found within or without the covenant of God, hangs your eternal judgment, either for life or death; that while you are in a covenant with death, and in a course of iniquity, you are without the covenant of God, and can have no benefit by it; that under sin, you are out of covenant; out of covenant, you are out of Christ; and out of Christ, you are under condemnation?

Are there any things which that Word—which you profess to believe to be true, and to stand as sure as Heaven and earth—are there any things which this speaks more plainly than these things and such as these? What, and yet secure in a state of sin? Aliens from God, enemies of all righteousness, and yet in quiet? Are you resolved to sell eternity for time, life for death, a soul for the pleasures of sin? Is this the choice you have made, and are you resolved to stand to it? "Let me have this world, my portion here, my good things here, and then let me be damned in the other world; let me sin here, and suffer hereafter; let me laugh here, and lament hereafter; let me flourish

and prosper and live at ease and in honor and in pleasure and at liberty here, and let my prison and my pain and my anguish and my plagues be beneath; there let me be torn, let me burn, let me roar, let me die, so I may be rich and be merry, and rejoice a while here; let time be my Heaven, and eternity be my Hell!" Speak in earnest, is this your choice? Or that you may not be urged to make a new choice, will you take upon you to make a new gospel? And dividing what God has joined together, will you join what he has divided? Will you write this for gospel: "Holiness and Hell, sin and glory, Christ and the curse, the devil and the crown: let the wicked hold on his way, and the unrighteous his thoughts; let him still run away from the Lord, and he shall have mercy, and from his God, and he will abundantly pardon! Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads unto death, and few there be that find it; but broad is the gate, and wide is the way, that leads unto life, and the whole world are going in thereat! Blessed are the proud in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven! Blessed are they that laugh now; blessed are the froward, the merciless, the impatient in heart, the persecutors for righteousness' sake; for great is their reward in Heaven! Within shall be the dogs, the whoremongers, the sorcerers, the drunkards, the ruffians, the blasphemers, the idolaters, and whoever loves and makes a lie; and without shall be the lambs, the holy, and the humble, and the meek, and the merciful, and the upright in heart, and the poor in spirit, and peacemakers, the persecuted for righteousness' sake, and whoever loves truth and makes God his trust: these shall go into everlasting fire, but the ungodly into life eternal!"

Are these the articles of your creed? Is this your gospel? If it be, O what is your Heaven? If it be not, if the old gospel must stand, where are your souls? Are your souls lost, and are they not worth the recovery? Why will you die? Turn and live; O when shall it be?

As an ambassador for Christ, to whom is committed the word of reconciliation, having hinted to you what is law, so in the name of the eternal God, I publish to you *the everlasting gospel*.

The Lord God having entered into a covenant of life with the first Adam, for himself and all mankind in him, this covenant has been broken, whereby sin has entered, and death by sin; and all the world being now become guilty before God, bound over to the vengeance of eternal fire, and under an utter impossibility of recovery by anything which that covenant can do, God has out of his abundant grace made a new covenant, on which whoever shall lay hold, shall be delivered out of the state of death and wrath into a state of life and blessedness. What the law could not do, being weak through the flesh, God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to accomplish; and with him this gracious grant, that whoever believes in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16). And this is the covenant which has been declared unto you.

This new covenant is a marriage covenant: I will betroth you unto me forever, yes, I will betroth you to me in righteousness, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. (Hosea 2:20). In it the Lord makes offer, and invites you to accept of a husband and a dower: the husband is the King's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and with him the lost kingdom, and all that belongs to the kingdom of God, for a dower. Liberty for the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound; riches to the poor, eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, healing to the diseased, and life to the dead.

And whoever among you all, who are persons under the law, held by the cords of your sins, whose souls are fast bound in fetters of iron, who are willing that your covenant with death be made void and your agreement with Hell be disannulled, and will join yourselves to the Lord and be brought within the bonds of this covenant, all the blessings of this covenant are made over and stand sure unto you. The grant is made, the deed is drawn and sealed; the Lord has set to his seal—come you in and seal the counterpart; set to it your seal, and the match is made up. Christ, and with him all things, are yours, and you are his. Accept, and live; refuse, and die forever.

Come then, sinner; what say you? Do you consent? Do you accept? Or, as Laban to Rebekah, Will you go with this man? Let me espouse you to this one Husband; only let me first tell you, the matter is solemn, and you must be serious. It is for life, it is for eternity. Consider therefore, and let your heart, lying prostrate before the Almighty, come in and make answer to these demands, which from him, and in his great and dreadful name, I make unto you.

I. Will you have Jesus for YOUR HUSBAND? Understand before you answer. The taking of Christ for your Husband implies,

- 1.** Intimate union—by choosing and accepting him for your, and resigning and giving up yourself to him for his own; to live with him in the dearest conjugal affections forever.
- 2.** Sincere subjection—by a free and cheerful putting yourself under him, as your Lord whom you will obey and be subject to, in all things. The wife must be subject to her husband; yet not as a slave, by constraint, but freely and by consent.
- 3.** Total dependence—holding him as your Head, expecting nothing, owning nothing but what descends upon you from him; depending upon him for all things, the bearing of your debts, your discharge from your bonds, and your whole provision for a livelihood and maintenance.

Consider, then; what say you? Does your heart choose and accept, and resign up itself unto Christ? Do you choose him as a Husband? You can choose him as a Refuge, to hide you from danger—you can choose him as a Friend, to help you in your need; but do you choose him for your Husband? Will you cleave to him; love, honor, and obey him? Do you understand his manner, the law of his house, his family order and discipline? Do you know his commands and expectations; how holy, how spiritual, how strict and self-denying, how humble and submissive he expects your whole carriage should be? Will you be at his finding? "Will you look unto him, and lean upon him for all

you need? Shall all your desire be to him, and your dependence on him? You are a bondman; who shall be your redemption? You are a malefactor; who shall be your satisfaction? You are a leper; whence do you look for cleansing? You are a beggar; whence do you expect an inheritance? Will you lean upon your Beloved for all? Shall he be your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, and inheritance? Will you do him this honor, to trust him for all this; to cast all your burdens, your care, your fears, your sins, your guilt, your hopes upon him? Can you say, "O my God, I have sinned, I have sinned; your law have I broken, your love have I slighted, I have fallen from you, and run over to your enemies; I have fallen under your displeasure; wrath is provoked, justice has taken hold of me, my soul is undone. How dreadful is your controversy with me! And I have nothing to answer but this, 'My Jesus shall answer for me.'

"O my Jesus, you have wooed and invited sinners unto you; you have sent forth your messengers and your word into the highways and hedges, into the jails and hospitals of the world; among the poor, the blind, and the bound, and the diseased, and those who are in debt and distress, to take from among them a wife for your bosom. Behold, your Word has found among the captives this wretched adulteress, my poor harlot soul, which has dealt treacherously with you, and has followed after other lovers, has fallen among thieves and robbers, is bruised, wounded, and undone, having prodigally spent and wasted all that I had.

"But behold, I come at your word; if you say, 'I have no pleasure in thee'—if you spurn me with your foot, and trample me in the dirt, or send me back to my prison, and leave me to bear the shame of my sins, I must be silent and speechless.

"But will you receive me? Will you take me into your house? Shall I be called by your name? Will you love me, and be joined unto me? Will you be surety for your servant? Will you that my debts be upon you, my bonds be upon you, my wants, my sins, my sorrows, my fears, my plagues, my help, my soul be upon you? Will you, Lord, and

can I say you nay? Will you take them, and can I refuse to lay them upon you? I consent, Lord, I consent to you; be you my husband and my helper; love me, discharge me of this guilt, loose me from these fetters, cleanse me from this filthiness, and then ask what you will, impose upon me whatever you please. Love you, honor you, obey you! what is my love, what is my obedience, that you should accept, or I should deny it to you? It is but little that I can do; this heart is so false and so feeble that I am afraid how I undertake for it; but such as it is, take it to you; I bestow it wholly upon you, with this promise, that if you will help me, I will love you; if you will help me, I will be subject to you, and lay up all my hopes and expectations with you." Now, soul, now that you know what it means, now say, will you have Christ for your Husband?

II. Will you take him FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE, for richer, for poorer? Though your Lord be a King, yet his kingdom is not of this world. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; he came to serve and to suffer, and all those that will follow him must suffer with him. He came not to divide lands and spoils and crowns and temporal dignities and honors among his disciples, but crosses and prisons and scourges and wants. You will join yourself to the Lord, but will you take up your lot with him? You will live with him, and abide with him; but do you know where he dwells, and what his entertainment is? Sometimes he has bread, and sometimes he is hungry; sometimes he has clothes, and sometimes is naked; sometimes he has a house, and sometimes he has none; sometimes he has friends, and sometimes he has none; he is sometimes used kindly, and sometimes as coarsely; sometimes it is Hosanna, and sometimes Crucify; sometimes he is cried up as a king, sometimes cried out against as a devil: and as it is with the master, so will it be with the scholar; as with the Lord, so with the disciple; where he is, you must be also. Can you say, Where you go, I will go with you; where you feed, I will feed with you; where my Lord dwells, if in a tent, if in a cave, if in a dungeon, if in a wilderness, wherever my Lord dwells, let me dwell with him? Consider what you say, and be not overhasty.

Maybe you do not yet know what hunger and thirst and nakedness mean, what the wrath of man, what their reproachings and spittings and stripes and bonds mean: it may be you have thought, This may be far enough off, and may never come upon me; or have taken up a resolution through thoughtlessness, not weighing how sharp and how pinching they may be to you. But suppose you were now just come to it, and that you saw that your first foot Christ-ward would be the parting-point between you and all that is dear unto you in the world—that your first step heavenward would be into the fire, or the water, or into the camp of the Philistines, whose faces were all filled with fury against thee—have you yet such a far deeper sense of the eternal sufferings you are in danger of; such a settled belief of your absolute necessity of Christ to your escaping these; such a high value of the love of Christ, and the everlasting salvation you expect by him, as overbalances and swallows up the sharpest and the quickest sense you have or can have of the greatest things you shall suffer by him? Have you counted up all afflictions imaginable, and then put your soul to decide: "Now resolve what to do: either this, or no Christ; either this, or no crown; either this cross, or the curse; either the wrath of man, or the wrath of God, shrieking and howling and gnashing of teeth forever and ever. Confess Christ, and be confessed by him; suffer with Christ, and reign with him; weep with Christ, and rejoice with him; die with Christ, and live for ever: deny Christ, forsake Christ, and perish forever." Have you thus put yourself to it? And after the most solemn debate you have had, what is the result? Now tell me, Christ, or no Christ? Will you have Christ for better, for worse, however dear he costs you?

III. Will you FORSAKE ALL OTHERS? You have three husbands that lay claim to you: sin, the world, and the devil. Will you renounce, and be divorced from all these? There is no compounding between Christ and them; he or they must go.

1. The renouncing of sin consists in the disengaging or loosening of the heart from sin. It is a hearty willingness to let it go: a willingness to part is our parting with sin—a breaking the

peace, the cutting off the league between sin and the soul; when a sinner, clearly convinced of the worth of Christ, of the value of the soul, of the enmity of sin against Christ and the soul, of the unworthiness of sin with all its pleasures and advantages to be laid in the balance with Christ, is willing to be rid of it: "What is there in it? what can it do for me? how long will it last me? Where will it lead me? O the tail of these locusts—the sting, the sting that I see there! Can I live without Christ; or can I hope that he will dwell with such neighbors? Can I bear the loss of my soul; or can it escape if these escape? I see it is vain to think of keeping both Christ and lusts, it is vain to think of saving both my sins and my soul; it is all one as to be saved and to be damned; I may as well bring Heaven and Hell together. Well, let them go; henceforth hold your peace, sin, plead no more with me for entertainment, be a stranger for ever to me, henceforth I know you no more."

In the engaging of the heart against sin. When the heart is not only content to let it depart, but gives it a bill of divorce, and sends it away. When it can live without it, and cannot bear it. When it deals with it as the Egyptians with Israel: at first they only gave them leave to be gone, but at length they thrust them out. They were urgent upon them, "that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, we be all but dead men."

"Begone, sin," it says, "I am but a dead man if you abide with me;" and so it will no longer court it as a friend, but curse it as an enemy—fears it, hates it, and is resolved to be its mortal enemy; and to this end is determined to use all God's means to discover and to destroy it.

(1.) To use all God's means to discover it; to bring to light the hidden things of darkness. Sin goes under a disguise; it is hard to know friends from enemies; they need have their senses about them, and well exercised too, that are to discern between good and evil. (Hebrews 5:14). Who can understand his errors? (Psalm 19:12). Sin lies in the dark. "The heart of man is desperately wicked; who can

know it?" There is too much wickedness, and it lies too deep to be discerned by every eye; he who means in earnest to cast out, must first search out his iniquities. "Let us search and try our ways." (Lamentations 3:40). He must search the Scriptures which describe these enemies, and mark them out, what they are, and how many, and how you may know them wherever you find them, and under what disguise soever they appear; must search the heart, where, if they walk no more openly, they will hide themselves, that they be not discovered or suspected.

You are a self-deceived sinner, who call yourself an adversary to sin, and take no care to find it out; much more, who willingly hide it out of sight. He takes part with sin who will not take pains to know it. "I hate the devil and all his works, I repent, I forsake all my sins; and though I have done iniquity, by the grace of God I will do so no more." Thus vain men talk; but do you know what you say? What is sin? Do you know a friend from an enemy, good from evil? What are your sins? what have you done? wherein have you transgressed? who are those that have done you mischief? what are their names? It may be you will say their name is Legion, for they are many.

"In many things I have transgressed, in many things I have offended." But in what things? Do you know your enemy when you see him; or would you know him if you could? Do you make any search or inquiry after him? When you read of a proud heart in the Scriptures, are you able to say, There is one of them that have done me mischief; or of a covetous heart, There is another of them; or of an envious, malicious, froward heart, There are more of them; or of a hard and hypocritical, ignorant, unbelieving heart, This is he, this is my great enemy? Or if you can not tell, do you ask, Is not this he; are not these they? O that I could understand mine errors; Lord, make me to know my transgressions.

Sinners, never make yourselves believe you are enemies to sin until you make narrow and particular inquiry after it—after all sin, the several kinds of it, whether of omission or commission, whether

outward or spiritual, open or secret, greater or smaller, sins of ignorance or knowledge, of infirmities or presumption; your beloved, your most pleasing sins, your most gainful lusts, whatever they be, you can never renounce until you resolve to make a diligent search after them.

(2.) To use all God's means to overcome and destroy them. He that hides his enemy, and he who will spare him when he has found him, is not an enemy, but a friend. He who says, I will destroy, and will not use his weapons, either knows not what he says, or says what he never means. You say you will renounce and resist all your sins; but are you in earnest? What course do you mean to take? Will you take God's way? He bids you hear, believe, pray, fast, mourn, strive, watch; and will you hearken to his counsels? You will he healed of your diseases; but will you take the counsel of the Physician? Will you use his medicines? You will overcome your enemy; but will you take heed of him? Will you fight against him? Will you take in all the help that is offered you? Will you not only believe and lean upon God for his help, but will you pray and lift up your heart for his help? Will you not only pray against your sins, but watch against them—against the occasions, temptations, and beginnings of sin? Will you use all God's means, and against all your sins? Shall not your eyes spare any of them? Will you make thorough work with them, root and branch, old and young? Shall there be neither the lowing of the oxen nor the bleating of the sheep heard with you?

Will you avenge yourself of your enemies, and will you never again agree with your adversaries? If your sins say to you, Is it peace, soul? will you answer, What have you to do with peace? get you behind me. Will you neither make a truce with sin, nor embrace a parley, nor entertain a treaty for peace with it? Will you not draw back your hand, nor put up your weapons, nor give over your watch, nor go off your guard, until all your enemies become your footstool? All this is included in the renouncing of sin.

Beware you be not mistaken here; this is the damnation of the world, their mistakes about repentance. They easily say, I repent of my sins, I forsake the devil and all his works. And they as easily persuade themselves that they do as they say. But did they understand what there is in this repentance—a searching out their sins, dividing their souls from them, a painful and watchful shunning and resisting them in their whole course; did they know what their particular sins are, how near they are to their hearts, how they have been nursed in their bosoms, and how hard it will be now to part: even this covetousness must go, even this sensuality must go; these dear pleasures, these beloved gains, these pleasant companions must all be sent away, not one to be spared, not so much as once more—did they understand this, they would then see what wind all their good words be. They as much mean to pluck their eyes out of their heads, to tear their flesh off their bones, as to repent, if this be repentance. Well, now say, will you repent—will you now renounce sin?

2. Will you renounce the world also? By the world, understand all the substance of the world, houses, lands, money, and whatever worldly possessions; all the shadows of the world, its honors, pleasures, pomps, with all its glory; the men of this world, the friendship of the world, all fleshly relations, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, children, all sinful companions and societies; whatever is in and of the world.

These are then renounced, when we are resolved that they shall neither be our gods nor our tempters 1. Not our gods. We make the world a God to us, when we make it our happiness or end; when we bless ourselves in it, and count that our very life consists in the abundance of the things which we possess; when we devote ourselves to it, making it both the blessedness and the great business of our life. He who can lack the world, and yet be blessed—he who can have the world, and yet not serve it—he has renounced it, even while he has it; though it is his still, yet it is not his God. 2. Not our tempters. The world tempts in a double way—by objects and instruments. As objects: which by something that is apprehended desirable in them,

entice and invite out the heart after them; or by something apprehended as formidable, affright us out of our way: thus, pleasant meats tempt the glutton, and wine the drunkard, and a lion in the streets the coward. Also by instruments: as the devil's instruments or agitators, by which he betrays and beguiles unstable souls. In the former sense the things of the world, in the latter, the men of the world, are temptations and tempters to us. He renounces the world, that will not be tempted by the world—that takes up with Christ, and will not be bribed off by worldly advantages, nor proselyted by worldly companions.

He who is resolved for Christ, though with the loss of all, and with the displeasure of all the world—he who can be poor for Christ, that can be vile for Christ, that can go hungry and naked with Christ, that can go alone with Christ, and this even when it is but to turn away from Christ, and he may be rich, honorable, clothed and filled, and have company enough, as much as he desires—he forsakes the world.

He who can renounce the world, whenever it comes to be the case that either Christ must be forsaken, or all things for Christ—he who can do this, whose heart is brought to it, he has renounced the world. What say you now, soul?

You will have Christ; but what if you must leave all behind you? What if he say to you, Sell all that you have, and follow me? Can you be poor? Can you be naked? Can you be hungry for Christ? You will have Christ; but how will you leave your companions? Can you hear all your carnal friends say of you, "He is a fool, he is mad, he is beside himself?" How will you look your father, or your mother, or your wife in the face, who are all against it; who will be persuading, beseeching you, weeping over you, hanging upon your neck, or it may be, scoffing and reviling, to discourage and hold you back? What say you now? Are you yet for Christ? Will you forsake them all, cast off all that stands in your way?

3. Will you forsake the devil also? But I need not now ask you that; that is done already: farewell, devil, when once sin and the world are cast out. If you will not be tempted to sin, if the world ceases to be a temptation, the devil might as well cease to be a tempter. There be many that say, "I defy the devil," and yet defy not sin and the world. Wise men! They like not the devil, but yet will follow his will; they hate the devil, and yet are never well longer than they are dancing in his chains. Defy the devil, and yet love sin! Such defiance is his delight. Let sin be defied, let the world be despised, and the devil is conquered.

IV. Will you cleave unto Christ FROM HENCEFORTH UNTO DEATH? You will have Christ; but when? Shall this be the marriage-day? Will you from henceforth be the Lord's; or when shall it be? Must it be tomorrow, or next month, or next year, or some time or other, you know not when? Must we take your promise as they did the prophecy, "The vision that he sees is for many days to come, and he prophesies of the times that are far off?" (Ezekiel 12:27). Tomorrow you will, hereafter you will: as well you had said nothing; as good you had said, "Never," as, "Not yet." Speak, soul; will you give yourself to the Lord, will you presently? If you will, how long will you abide with him? Will you not endorse on your deed of gift a power of revocation? Will you not repent, not return again from Heaven to earth? Will you be chaste, and play the harlot no more? Will you be faithful to the death, obedient to the death? Is this your voice: "I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back. As the Lord lives, nothing but death, no, not death itself, shall part you and me: I am persuaded, I am resolved that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall separate me from the love of God, or withdraw me from Jesus Christ my Lord?"

Now, soul, gather up all this together; stand you before the Lord, the God of all the earth, and this once more answer: Will you have Jesus Christ for your Husband? Do you choose him for your Lord? Will you

cleave to him in love? Will you lean upon him for righteousness and strength—for righteousness, to pay your debts, and for strength, to pay your vows? Will you be subject to him? You know the commandments, how holy, how strict they are; will you obey them in all things? Will you exercise yourself to godliness in the strictness of it? Will you be a thorough disciple? Will you not content yourself with such a cold or lukewarm indifference in religion, as your lazy flesh will bear; as your credit, your safety, or the temper of the times will bear? Will you follow your Lord fully? Will you take up your lot with Christ, be it better or worse? Shall his Father be your Father, his inheritance be your inheritance; yes, and his sufferings your sufferings; his stripes, his bonds, his poverty be your? Will you espouse not his crown only, but his cross too? Wherever he goes, will you go; where he dwells, will you dwell? Will you say, Wherever my Lord is, there let his servant be? Will you forsake all others; all your sins? Will you be made clean? Will you give up your fleshly lusts to be purged out? Does your heart stand disengaged from every sin? Is there not any one iniquity, concerning which your heart says, Let this stay with me? Will you search out your sins? Will you accomplish a diligent search, sweep every corner, search every chamber of your heart and life? Will you go down to the bottom of your great deep to find out what lodges there? Will you faithfully endeavor no more to allow yourself in any known iniquity? Will you use all God's means for conquering and casting out all sin? Will you forsake the world? Will you cast away your idols? Shall your mammon be no more a God nor a demigod to you? Shall it neither carry away your heart from him, nor so much as share with him in it? Will you not bow down to this golden image, nor serve it? Will you no longer serve your greedy appetite? Shall your heart no longer go after your covetousness? Will you abandon your estate, your pleasures, your honors, your friends and companions, so far as any of these divide or entice, or steal away your heart from your Lord? Whenever they say, Come away, will you say, Get you hence? Will you forsake the devil? Will you fear, and fly from, and no longer hearken to his temptations? Will you no longer regard his promises nor his threatenings; his flatteries nor his frowns? Coming off from the tents of all these, will you cleave unto

your Lord from henceforth, from this day forward, and not depart from him for ever? Will you hold on your course? Will you run out your race? Will you be faithful to the death? Will you hope to the end for the grace that shall be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ?

What say you? If you say, No, as the Lord lives, you speak this word against your own life. If you refuse to enter into this covenant, you say, "I will not be the Lord's, I will none of him, I will not live; let death and wrath and chains and plagues be my portion forever. I will not be the Lord's, I will not leave my sins and my pleasures and my companions for his love; I will die, and will not see life." Mistake not yourself, be not deceived, it is a matter of life and death that is before you. It is whether Heaven or Hell, a God or no God, a Christ or no Christ, a soul or a lost soul, everlasting life or everlasting fire shall be your portion, that stands now to be determined, by your consent or refusal; look to it, be wise, this once for eternity. Consent, and you are blessed; consent, and he is your, and with him the kingdom. Your Lord has given his consent already; view the handwriting, the whole New Testament, which is written in blood, and sealed as it is written. There you have his "I will" in every line almost, visible before you; put to your hand, and it is done. What say you? Do you consent? Shall your heart come in and put to your hand, and subscribe for you, "I will?" Let that be done, and then say after me:

A Form of Words Expressing Man's Covenanting with God.

O most dreadful God, for the sake of your Son, I beseech you, accept of your poor prodigal now prostrating himself at your door. I have fallen from you by mine iniquity, and am by nature a son of death, and a thousand-fold more the child of Hell by my wicked practice; but of your infinite grace you have promised mercy to me in Christ, if I will but turn to you with all my heart; therefore, upon the call of your gospel, I am now come in; and throwing down my weapons, submit myself to your mercy.

And because you require as the condition of my peace with you, that I should put away mine idols, and be at defiance with all your enemies, which I acknowledge I have wickedly sided with against you, I here from the bottom of my heart renounce them all, firmly covenanting with you not to allow myself in any known sin, but conscientiously to use all means that I know you have prescribed for the death and utter destruction of all my corruptions. And whereas I have formerly inordinately and idolatrously let out my affections upon the world, I do here resign my heart to you who made it; humbly protesting before your glorious Majesty, that it is the firm resolution of my heart, and that I do sincerely desire grace from you, that when you shall call me hereunto, I may practice this my resolution, through your assistance, to forsake all that is dear unto me in this world, rather than to turn from you to the ways of sin; and that I will watch against all its temptations, whether of prosperity or adversity, lest they should withdraw my heart from you; beseeching you also to help me against the temptations of Satan, to whose wicked suggestions, I resolve, by your grace, never to yield myself a servant. And because my own righteousness is but filthy rags, I renounce all confidence therein, and acknowledge that I am of myself a hopeless, helpless, undone creature, without righteousness or strength.

And forasmuch as you have of your boundless mercy offered most graciously to me a wretched sinner to be again my God through Christ, if I would accept of you, I call Heaven and earth to record this day, that I do here solemnly avouch you to be the Lord my God, and with all possible veneration, bowing the neck of my soul under the feet of your most sacred Majesty, I do here take you the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for my portion and chief good, and do give up myself, body and soul, for your servant, promising and vowing to serve you in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

And since you have appointed the Lord Jesus Christ the only means of coming unto you, I do here upon the bended knees of my soul

accept of him as the only new and living way by which sinners may have access to you, and do here solemnly join myself in the marriage-covenant to him.

O blessed Jesus, I come to you hungry and poor, and wretched and miserable, and blind and naked, a most loathsome, polluted wretch, a guilty, condemned malefactor, unworthy to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord, much more to be solemnly married to the King of glory. But since such is your unparalleled love, I do here with all my power accept you, and do take you for my Head and Husband, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, for all times and conditions, to love, honor, and obey you before all others, and this to the death. I embrace you in all your offices: I renounce mine own unworthiness, and do here avow you to be the Lord my righteousness. I renounce mine own wisdom, and do here take you for mine only guide. I renounce mine own will and take your will for my law.

And since you have told me that I must suffer if I will reign, I do here covenant with you to take my lot as it falls with you, and by your grace assisting, to run all hazards with you, truly supposing that neither life nor death shall part between you and me.

And because you have been pleased to give me your holy laws as the rule of my life, and the way in which I should walk to your kingdom, I do here willingly put my neck under your yoke, and set my shoulder to your burden, and subscribe to all your laws, as holy, just, and good. I solemnly take them as the rule of my words, thoughts, and actions; promising that though my flesh contradict and rebel, yet I will endeavor to order and govern my whole life according to your direction, and will not allow myself in the neglect of anything that I know to be my duty.

Only, because through the frailty of my flesh I am subject to many failings, I am bold humbly to protest that unallowed miscarriages, contrary to the settled bent and resolution of my heart, shall not make void this covenant; for so you have said.

Now, Almighty God, searcher of hearts, you know that I make this covenant with you this day, without any known deceit or reservation; beseeching you, that if you see any flaw or falsehood therein, you would discover it to me, and help me to do it aright.

And now, glory be to you, O God the Father, whom I shall be bold from this day forward to look upon as my God and Father, that ever you should find out such a way for the recovery of undone sinners. Glory be to you, O God the Son, who have loved me, and washed me from my sins in your own blood, and are now become my Savior and Redeemer. Glory be to you, O God the Holy Spirit, who by your almighty power have turned my heart from sin to God.

O dreadful Jehovah, the Lord God omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you are now become my covenant Friend, and I through your infinite grace am become your covenant servant. Amen. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in Heaven.

Chapter 17.

To God's Covenant People

Come, you people beloved, you that are highly favored: the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among men. The lines are fallen to you in a pleasant place, yes, you have a goodly heritage. Come and enter upon your lot; let your hearts be glad, let your glory rejoice. But that your joy may be full, hearken to these following counsels.

I. MAKE SURE YOUR INTEREST in the covenant. Rejoice not in that which is none of your. Make sure; all lies upon this; your life and all the comforts and concerns of it, both your eternal safety hereafter and your success in all the parts of your Christian course

here, depend on your interest in the covenant. What have you, if Christ be not yours; and what have you in Christ, if you be not in covenant? Whence are your hopes, either of mercy at last, or of prospering in anything at present, but from the covenant of promise? And what have you thence, if your name be not in it? O give not rest to yourselves, until this be put out of doubt; whatever duties you perform, whatever ease or hope you find hereupon, whatever transport of affection you feel in your hearts, in the midst of all inquire, "But am I in covenant?" How shall I know that? you will say. Why, make a strict and narrow inquiry whether those special graces already mentioned be wrought within you. Common mercies, though even these are covenant mercies to the saints, yet will not prove themselves so to be; but special graces will be their own evidence. Things outward fall alike to all: No man knows love or hatred by anything that befalls him. (Ecclesiastes 9:1). You may be a son or an alien, notwithstanding all that you enjoy or suffer here; but there is not one of the aforementioned graces but is a child's portion, God's mark upon the heart, to distinguish children from strangers. Prove that you truly know the Lord, have one heart, a tender heart, etc, and you therein prove yourself to be a child of promise. Read over the descriptions that have been given of these graces; observe diligently where the main difference lies between common and special grace; compare your heart with it, and thereby you may give a judgment of your state. If it be yet questionable whether such evidence be found or not, sit not down until you have obtained it; but having obtained,

II. KEEP YOUR EVIDENCES CLEAR. Have you peace? maintain it carefully. The hidden manna will never breed worms by long keeping. Content not yourselves that you once had peace; it will be but a poor livelihood you will get out of what is wasted and lost. Get you good evidences that God is yours, and keep them by you until you need them no more. Grace is your best evidence; cherish and preserve it. Get a seeing eye, and keep your eye open; get a single heart, and let it not be again divided; get a tender heart, and keep it tender: let the love and fear of God be acted in holy obedience. An obedient, gracious, watchful, active life will keep grace in heart; and

flourishing grace will speak for itself and you. Look not that the Lord should so far countenance your declinings to a more fleshly, careless state, as to smile upon you in such a state; God will not be an abettor to sin. Count upon it, that your grace and peace, your duty and comfort will rise and fall together; suspect those comforts that accompany you into the tents of wickedness, and forsake you not when you forsake your God. Keep up your spirits, and then lift up your heads, keep needfully on your way, and your joy shall no man take from you. Particularly,

1. Keep close to God. Keep yourself under his eye and influences. As both your grace and your comforts had their birth, so must they have their nourishment from Heaven. Lose the sight of the sun, and darkness follows. Let your eyes be towards the hills. Let divine love be the pleasure of your life. Let it be your Lord's cord upon your heart, let it bind you to him; he loves captives, let your ear be bored to the threshold; be familiar in Heaven, keep your acquaintance there, and be at peace; chide back your gadding heart: "Soul, where are you going? who has the words of eternal life?" Let the interviews of love between your Lord and you be constant; let them not be limited to some few holy days of your life. Count not you have lived that day, in which you have not lived with God.

Keep close to God by keeping close to duty. Keep close to duty, and keep close to God in duty. Call not that a duty which you can not call communion with God. Make not duty to do the work of sin, by taking God out of sight. Let not prayer, or hearing, or ordinances be instead of God to you. Such praying and hearing there is among many; but know not you anything for religion, wherein you meet not with God.

Behold the face of God, but behold his face in righteousness. (Psalm 17:15). It is ill-looking on God with a bloodshot eye. Guilt upon the heart will be a cloud that will make the sun as darkness to you. Walk in the light of the Lord. Walk in the light, as he is in the light. In your light—the holiness of your life—you shall see his light. The light of his holiness in you, will be attended with the light of his countenance

upon you. By the light of his countenance, you will both see yourself in the way to your hopes, and learn your way more perfectly. "Make your face to shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes." (Psalm 119:135). God has many ways of teaching: he teaches by book, he teaches by his finger, he teaches by his rod; but his most comfortable and effectual teaching is by the light of his eye. Send forth your light and your truth, let them lead me, let them bring me to your holy hill.

2. Keep hold on Christ. He is your peace. Appear not before God, but in the blood of the Lamb; let him carry up your duties; and own not that for a comfort which is not brought you by his hand. Let him be your way to the Father, and your Father's way to you. Keep fresh upon your heart the memory of his death and satisfaction, and let that be your life and your hope. Have you cast anchor on this rock? loose not your hold; hang upon the horns of the altar. You can not live, but there; if you must die, say, But I will die here. Put forth fresh acts of faith every day and hour. Believe, believe, believe, and you shall be established. Fall not into unbelief; then you are gone; you depart from the living God. (Hebrews 3:12).

3. Quench not the Spirit. Observe and obey his motions: when he excites, get you on; when he checks, get you back; know the holy from the evil spirit, by its according or differing with the Scriptures; reject that spirit in the heart that is not the same with the Spirit in the word. Try the wind, what and whence it is, by the card and compass: to the law and to the testimony. And when you perceive it is from above, hoist up your sails, and get you on. Quench not the Spirit: grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption.

4. Keep in with conscience. Make not your witness your enemy. Deal friendly with it; you will need its good word, which you can not have if it receive blows from you. It will not learn this lesson, to speak good for evil: or if you should compel it to do so, you are

undone; if an abused conscience speak peace, it becomes your traitor.

Give due respect to conscience. Let it abide with you in peace and in power. Keep up its authority as God's viceregent. Next under God, commit the keeping of your soul to conscience; as the Lord has made, so do you make it superintendent in your soul; the judge and overseer of all your motions and actions. Let conscience counsel you, and tell you your way; let conscience quicken you, and put you on in your way; let conscience watch you, that you turn not out of your way; let conscience check you, and restore you into your way. Wherever you go, carry conscience along with you; carry conscience into your closet, let it watch how you behave yourself there; carry conscience into your shop, let it eye what you do there; carry conscience into your fields, into the market, among your friends, among your enemies, let it observe how you behave yourself among them; carry conscience with you to your recreation, to your bed, to your table: wherever you go, there is like to be but sad work, if conscience be not with you.

Commit the keeping of your covenant to conscience: let it be the ark in which the tables of the testimony are kept and preserved; let it be the executor of your testament. Conscience is bound from sin by the covenant; the covenant lays hold upon it, let it lay hold on you. Is your conscience bound, seek not to be loosed; is your conscience bound, give it leave to bind your whole man. Let it bind your thoughts, and bind your will, and bind your affections, and bind your tongue, and your whole practice; you never live as a man in covenant, longer than you live as a man of conscience. What becomes of the covenant, when a breach is made upon conscience? O what is there worth having where conscience is not? What faith, or truth, or peace is there left alive? What are vows and covenants and promises? What are our duties to the Lord, our dealings with men, when there is no conscience towards God? Keep your conscience, and you keeps your soul; keep your conscience, and you keeps your covenant; keep your covenant, and you keeps your peace; let that go, and all is lost.

Let conscience govern what God has put under its power, and let it resist all adverse power. Let it resist temptations. Whenever Satan and your flesh fall upon you, and tempt you, saying, Pity yourself, spare yourself, take your liberty, take your ease, take your pleasure, provide for your safety; what need is there of so much ado? why can you not take the same liberty, and allow yourself the same latitude as others do? they have souls as well as you, and they have dangers as well as you, and they have hopes as well as you, and they have reasons and understandings to know what they do as well as you; and why can you not be content to do as they? Why, let this be your answer: "But what conscience is there for it? With what conscience can I be idle, when I have said I will be doing? With what conscience can I take mine ease, when I have said I will take pains? With what conscience can I serve my flesh, when I have said I will crucify it? With what conscience can I love this world, when I have said I will renounce it? With what conscience can I walk at liberty, when I have said I will walk circumspectly? If all this were more than needs—far be it from me to have such a thought, until the serving my God, and the saving my soul, be more than needs—but if it were more than needs, yet is it any more than I am bound to? Are there any such liberties put into my indentures? Was there any exception made of this duty, or that duty? Was there any limitation made to this measure or that measure—'hitherto will I go, and no further; this little I will do, and no more?' Was there any such proviso put in as this, 'I will serve the Lord, provided I may with ease or with safety?' Have I not solemnly engaged to the Lord, to obey him in all things, to follow him fully, to love him and serve him with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my strength, and this to the death? And O, shall I lie unto God? Is it more than needful to be righteous, and to keep my faith? Come, O my soul, come on; you have opened your mouth to the Lord, and you must not go back." Be true, be honest; be honest, though you must suffer for it. Remember what your mouth has spoken, and see that you fulfill it with your hand.

Keep conscience pure. It is the book in which all your records are written; let no blot be upon your book. Beware of sinning against

conscience. Every sin against conscience is a blot upon conscience; and blots upon conscience are blots upon your covenant evidence: you will not be able to read whether there be anything written there for you or not. Ah, foolish soul, what are you doing? Dashing out all your hopes with your own hand. Beware you content not yourself with blotted evidences.

Christians, forget not this counsel; keep your evidences clear. He who has his whole estate in bonds or writings, how carefully will he keep them! If these be torn, or lost, or so blurred that they cannot be read, he is undone. Whatever else be lost, if his money be gone, if his goods be lost, if house be burnt, yet if his writings be safe, he is well enough. O take heed, and keep your writings safe and fair; keep your title to your God clear, and you can never be poor and miserable. Whatever earth or Hell can do against you, until they can tear the covenant of your God, or make you blot out your own names, they have left you abundantly enough, even when they have left you nothing.

O how highly are we concerned to be tender of conscience, and yet how little care is there taken of it! What is become of the authority of conscience, when your thoughts and your passions, when your eyes and your ears, your appetite and your tongue are left unbridled and unconquered? When every servant is set up to be master, and bears rule in you, where is your conscience—what is become of its authority? When your soul has been no better kept, what poverty and leanness is there grown upon it, what a starveling is it become both in grace and peace, eaten out with lust, evaporated into vanity, sunk into sensuality, your spirit even transubstantiated into flesh, ready to perish and die away, for want of good looking to! When your soul has been no better kept, where is your conscience? When your covenant has been no better kept; when your duties you have vowed to perform are so hastily and heedlessly shuffled over, if not totally thrust aside; when your hours of prayer are such short hours, your Sabbaths such winter days, so short and so cold too; when your God is so shamefully neglected, can never hear of you but when you have

nothing else to do, and perhaps not even then; when your spare hours are hardly spared for God; when this earth, your corn and your cattle and your pleasures and your friends, which you have vowed to renounce, are let in again upon your heart, and have stolen it away from Heaven, where is your conscience? When you sleep so, and have let the enemy come in and sow his tares in your field; when you are such a busybody in other men's matters, and your own vineyard you have not kept, but have let it lie fallow, like the field of the sluggard, all overgrown with thorns and nettles; when both your heart and your house are so much out of order; when your wife and your children and your servants are left at random, to do all that is right in their own eyes; when more care is taken for your cattle, than for your sons and daughters; when your house is a very hospital of blind and lame and sick souls, ready to die for want of instruction and good discipline, where is your conscience? And if conscience be not, O where is your covenant; and if your covenant be not, where is your God and your peace?

Ah, conscience, where are you? What is become of that good thing committed to you, yes, what is become of you? Ah, soul, where is your peace? How is the keeper of your peace laid low, and the covenant of your peace broken! What, peace while no conscience? And what have you left, while no peace? Ah, Lord, your treacherous dealers, how treacherously have they dealt with you; your children have forgotten you, your servants are runaways from you. You are our Father, but where is your honor? You are our Master, but where is your fear? We are your servants; but where is our faith? Ah, Lord, we have dealt falsely in your covenant. Return, O Lord, return; replace your watchmen, recover your honors, reclaim your wanderers, restore conscience, revive our peace, cause us to return, and renew our covenant; and remember, break not you your covenant with us.

Christians, let us bewail lost conscience, and let it be recovered; let us weep over our dead, and let their souls return into them. Let those of us that have obtained grace to be faithful and watchful and tender,

rejoice and take heed: let him that stands, take heed lest he fall. Go on in the name of the Lord: remember his counsels; keep close by God, keep hold on Christ, quench not the Spirit, keep in with conscience; keep your heart, keep your garments, keep up your watch, keep on your way, finish your course, keep the faith; and then let the devil do his worst, your peace shall be extended to you as a river, and established as a rock; and you shall be able to say, in the words and in the faith of the apostle, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

III. Add to your covenant YOUR SACRIFICE. "Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Psalm 50:5). God has made with you, and he expects that you make with him a covenant by sacrifice. Sacrifices were seals of the covenant. As God's part of the covenant was sealed, so our part also must be sealed, and sealed with blood: his with the blood of his Son; ours, with the blood of our sins. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." (Romans 12:1). The sacrificing of ourselves to the Lord comprehends in it three things—alienation, dedication, oblation.

1. ALIENATION, or the passing away of ourselves from ourselves: "You are not your own, you are bought with a price." Thus he has said, and he expects that we should say also, True, Lord; I am not mine own.

2. DEDICATION, or the passing over ourselves to the Lord: "You have consecrated yourselves to the Lord." (2 Chronicles 29:31). His we are by purchase, but he expects that we be his also by donation: his we are by conquest, but he expects we should be his by consent also. Though he may challenge us as his right, yet the most acceptable claim is, when he has us by gift. When our hearts say, I am your, Lord; then his heart will answer, Soul, you are mine.

3. OBLATION, or the actual surrender or offering up ourselves to him. In the offering of this sacrifice is included the immolation or slaying of it. We must slay ourselves, in a spiritual sense—be mortified, be crucified with Christ, and so offered up a sacrifice to him. You will say, How is it then required that we offer up ourselves a living sacrifice? I reply, we are never truly alive until we are dead. "You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:3). When our flesh is dead, our spirit is life. (Romans 8:10). As the apostle, "That which you sow," so that which you sacrifice, "is not quickened, except it die." (1 Corinthians 15:36). It is only the mortified Christian that is a living sacrifice.

Christians, come and sacrifice yourselves to the Lord, come and slay your sacrifices, and so offer them up. Your sacrifice is slain, when your carnal self, your "old" man, is crucified with Christ, and the body of sin destroyed, (Romans 6:6); when the wisdom of the flesh is crucified, and made to vanish before the wisdom of God; when the will of the flesh is subdued, and swallowed up of the will of God; when the lusts of the flesh are vanquished, and made captives by the law of God.

Christians, it may be you are willing to make your claim to the covenant of God, but have you made covenant with him? You have entered into covenant with God, but will you confirm your covenant by sacrifice? You will give yourselves a sacrifice to the Lord, but is your sacrifice slain? Is the wisdom of the flesh made foolishness? How is it with your carnal wills? Is the will of the flesh broken and brought into subjection, yielding itself up to the Lord? O for an emptying of wills into the will of God! What will you do; what will you have? Can you reply, "Nothing but what God will: what the Lord will have me do, or avoid, or suffer, I can no longer say him nay. Is this the will of God, my sanctification? so it is mine. Is this the will of God, my humiliation? so it is mine. Is this the will of God, my tribulation? so it is mine. Is God for holiness? through grace, so am I. Is God for his own will? so am I. This is all the will I have, that the

Lord may have his will of me—may be all to me, have all from me, rule all in me, and dispose of all that concerns me."

How is it with your carnal affections, and fleshly lusts; are these slain? Are your covetousness, your sensuality, your pride and envy, your carnal joys and fears and worldly sorrows, destroyed; those wildfires of passion and fury and rage, are these quenched? Come, put the knife to the throat of all these, and then there is a sacrifice for God. Go and offer it up, and let it be a freewill-offering, and a thank-offering.

A freewill-offering. Offer yourselves willingly to the Lord. "Your people shall be willing in the day of your power." (Psalm 110:3). O may that glorious day dawn upon us! God loves a cheerful giver; offer up your hearts with all your heart; grudge not what the law requires, but bless God that he will accept of an offering: this has a comfortable signification—If the Lord had meant to destroy us, he would not have accepted an offering at our hands. (Judges 13:23).

A thank-offering. Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay your vows unto the Most High. Offer up yourselves in token of your thankfulness to the Lord. Be you both the priests, and the lambs for the sacrifice. Present yourselves to the Lord as the accomplishment of his covenant, as the fruits of the death of your Redeemer, as the trophies of his victory, as the spoils which he has recovered from death and Hell, making a show of them openly, that it may be seen that the promise of God is not of none effect, and that Christ did not die in vain. Let your Lord Jesus, when he comes down into his garden, where he left his blood, reap his pleasant fruits, and carry up your purified souls as the signals of his glorious achievement. Offer up your sins to the Lord; these unclean beasts will be an acceptable sacrifice. There is more real honor growing up to the Lord from one mortified saint, than from ten thousand anthems from the most seraphic tongues. Offer up your duties to the Lord; your obedience for a sacrifice. To obey is better than sacrifice, than thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil. Let your whole life be this

sacrifice. Let every day be a Sabbath, every duty an Eucharist, every member a cymbal, sounding out the praises of God. Offer up the calves of your lips unto the Lord. O let your souls be filled with wonder, and your mouths with praise.

"Whence is this to me," said Elizabeth, "that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:43). O whence is this to us, that the Lord our Father should come, and come so near to us? O whence is it that the mighty God should indenture, and come into bonds with sinful man? That he who was free from all men should make himself debtor to any? That the high and lofty One, who inhabits eternity, should dwell in houses of clay, and pitch his tabernacle in the dust? That he who humbles himself to behold the heavens, should come down into the earth; and after what is he come down, but after so degraded a creature as man? That he should make a league with stones of the ground, with beasts of the field, and creeping things; should espouse dust and ashes, and gather up vile worms into his bosom; should set his heart upon shadows, and adopt the refuse of the earth for sons and daughters to himself; should raise the poor out of the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill; should do such great things, and should choose the foolish and the weak and the base and the contemptible, and bestow on them among all the world these high honors; should make them the head and the honorable, whom the world has made the off-scouring of all things; should give himself to be the portion, his Son to be the ransom, his kingdom to be the heritage of bankrupts, prisoners, and captives? Lord, what is man, that you are thus mindful of him? Soul, what is God, that you should be yet unmindful of him? How is it that the tongue of the dumb is not yet loosened, that the feet of the lame do not leap as a deer?

O what is that love whence this strange thing has broken forth? This is the womb that bare you; hence has your righteousness sprung forth; hence have your dignities, your astonishing hope and joys arisen to you; this is it that yearned upon you in your misery, that reprieved you from death, redeemed you from darkness, rescued you as a brand out of the burning; that pitied you in your blood, washed

you from your blood, spared you, pardoned you, reconciled you, and brought you, an enemy, a rebel, a traitor, into a covenant of peace with the God of glory. Ah, contemptible dust; that ever there should be such compassionate contrivances, and such astonishing condescensions of the eternal Deity, towards so vile a thing! O love the Lord, all you his saints. O bless the Lord, you beloved, you people near unto the Lord. Alas, that our hearts should be so narrow, that the waters should be so shallow with us. Where are our eyes, if we be not yet filled with wonders? What hearts have we, if we have not yet filled our lips with praise? Open all your springs, O my soul; let them flow forth in streams of love and joy; let every faculty be tuned and strained to the height; let heart and hands and tongue and eyes lift up their voice: be astonished, O heavens; be moved, you strong foundations of the earth; fall down, you elders; strike up, you heavenly choir; lend, poor mortals, your notes, to sing forth the high praises of God, who rides on the heavens, and has caused us to ride on the high places of the earth, and made us sit together in heavenly places, showing forth the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Awake up, my glory, awake, psaltery and harp; I myself will awake right early: my soul does magnify the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior; for he who is mighty has done for me great things, and holy is his name. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has visited and redeemed his people, who has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, who has laid help on one who is mighty, and exalted one chosen among the people, and has given him for a covenant to them. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name, who has redeemed your life from destruction, and crowned you with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Salvation to our God that sits on the throne, and to the Lamb. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and glory and honor and blessing; for you live, and were dead, and are alive for evermore. You have redeemed us to God by your blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and

nation; and have made us kings and priests unto our God forever. Hallelujah, hallelujah!

Chapter 18.

Directions for the Right Performance of the Duty of Prayer

I. BRING yourselves, and hold yourselves to a frequent and constant performance of this duty. There must be performance, or there cannot be a right performance. As to those that pray not, or pray but seldom, it is a plain sign that the root of the matter is not in them; they that can live without prayer, are dead while they are alive. Prayer is the first-fruits of Christianity: it was said of Saul, as a token that he was a convert, "Behold, he prays." The living child comes crying into the world; and as it is a token of life, so it is a means by which this new life is nourished. Prayer is a Christian's key to unlock the storehouses and the treasuries of souls: to him that can pray, God has given a key to all his treasuries. Prayer will not only unlock the clouds, as Elijah's prayer did, and bring down rain to refresh the dry and parched earth, but it will unlock Heaven too. It will unlock the ark and the mercy-seat, and bring down spiritual blessings on the soul. Praying is a Christian's knocking at the gate of Heaven, that knocking to which the promise is made, "Knock, and it shall be opened." (Matthew 7:7). The word which the Lord speaks to us is God's knocking at our doors: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." (Revelation 3:20). And praying is our knocking at the Lord's door, at the gate of Heaven, that this may be opened. By the way, learn that if you will not hear God's knock, it is just in him not to hear yours. If God's voice may not be heard on earth, your voice will not be heard in Heaven. Yet fear not, you shall be heard if you will

hear; hear him that speaks to you from Heaven, and your cry shall enter into Heaven.

Our souls will never thrive or flourish, unless the rain and the showers of heavenly grace descend and fall upon them; and we cannot look that those showers should come down, unless we look up. Persons that pray not, may be classed among the heathen: "Pour out your fury upon the heathen, that know you not, and upon the families that call not on your name," (Jeremiah 10:25); and among the profane ones of the earth, who are described by this character: They are all together become filthy and abominable, there is none that does good; they call not upon the Lord. (Psalm 14:3, 4).

"Be you sober, and watch unto prayer." (1 Peter 4:7). Be you instant as well as constant in prayer; set up your resolutions, and set your time; set your time, and keep your time. Do not put off this duty by pretending you pray always, every day and every hour: as the pretense of an every-day's Sabbath comes just to no Sabbath, so it is usually in the case of prayer; some carnal wretches' "praying always," is not praying at all. "Get you into your closet," says Christ; get you a place, set you a time, wherein you may make it your business to seek the Lord.

II. Come to pray with an actual and great EXPECTATION OF OBTAINING HELP and grace from God. Do not barely impose this duty upon yourself, as your task, but excite and encourage yourself to it, by looking for a return; think what it is that you would have, and look to receive it. The reason why we obtain no more in prayer, is because we expect no more. God usually answers us according to our own hearts: narrow hearts and low expectations receive usually as little as they look for or desire: large expectations are ordinarily answered with large returns. Expectation will put life into action: you will pray with most enlarged hearts, when you are most full of hopes; the reward that is looked for in the evening, will much encourage and quicken the labor of the day: fear not to expect too much from Heaven. Be not straitened in your own heart, and you

shall not be straitened in the God of compassion: open your mouth wide, and he will fill it. God will never upbraid his beggars for looking for too great an alms; he has enough to supply them, and he has a heart to bestow it. God will never say to you, You are too bold, you ask too much—too much grace, too much holiness; why cannot less content you? God has given you commission to ask what you will, not to the one half, but the whole of his kingdom; the kingdom you shall have, if no less will serve your turn.

Christians, be thankful for every little you receive, but look for much: be thankful for every little, every little received from God is much. A drop from that fountain is worth the world, yet content not yourselves with some drops, when, if you will, the fountain may be yours. The King of glory loves to give like a king, and will never say, This is too much either for a king to give, or a beggar to receive; since he has given you leave, spare not to speak in full your desires. God has promised you, and therefore you may promise yourselves; whatever you ask, that is good for you, you shall not ask in vain. O if we had so much in our eye when we come before the throne of grace, we should be oftener there, and yet still return with our load. Well, Christians, remember this whenever you come to beg—look to receive, come not to prayer as to an empty cistern that will yield no water.

III. Learn the skill to PLEAD WITH GOD in prayer. Though the Lord be willing to give to those that ask, yet he will have them first prove they are in earnest. Great store of arguments he has furnished us with to press him withal, but he will have us use them: we must strive with God if we will prevail, and the best striving is with his own weapons. The counsel I give you in this is, Plead hard with God, but plead with him upon his own arguments: there are, among many others, these four grounds on which to found your plea—on God himself; on Christ; on the promises; on experiences.

1. On God himself. And there are two special things from which you may plead here.

(1.) His gracious nature. Draw your arguments by which you plead with God for mercy, from the same source whence he originally drew his arguments for showing mercy—from his own compassion, from his gracious nature, from his natural goodness, and gracious inclination to mercy: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." (John 3:16). "Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he has purposed in himself." (Ephesians 1:5-9). Here we have heaped up in a few words the riches of mercy which God has bestowed on his people. Christ his beloved, redemption through Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, the adoption of children, acceptance in his sight, the revelation of the mystery of his will, or the discovering or making known these glorious mercies to us.

But whence is all this? Who is it, or what was it, that persuaded the Lord to this abundant kindness? Why, all this arose from himself. He purposed it in himself. He consulted no other argument but what he found in his own heart. It was from his love, the good pleasure of his will, his grace, the riches of his grace, wherein he has abounded towards us. (Hosea 11:8, 9). "How shall I give you up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver you up, Israel? I cannot do it, I will not do it. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not destroy Ephraim." But why will you not be angry, Lord; why will you not destroy Ephraim? "O," says the Lord, "my heart is turned within me; my heart says, Spare him; my compassion says, Destroy him not. I am God, and not man. I love him, and my love is the love of a God. I have compassion on him, and my compassion is the pity of a God: I will bear with him, I am a God of patience: love is my nature; pity and mercy and compassion are my nature: I cannot destroy Ephraim, but by denying mine own nature." Love and pity and mercy

and goodness are essential to God. He can as soon cease to be God, as to be gracious, and this is the fountain of all our mercy; hence Christ sprung, hence the gospel came, and all the unsearchable riches of mercy prepared for poor lost and undone creatures.

When you come to pray, draw your arguments hence. Plead with the Lord upon his own nature, his natural love, grace, and goodness. Thus we find the apostle Peter praying for the Christians to whom he wrote: "The God of all grace make you perfect; establish, strengthen, settle you." (1 Peter 5:10). Plead with the Lord in your prayers, as the psalmist pleads with himself in his affliction: "'Will the Lord cast off forever, and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever; does his promise fail for evermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious; has he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" (Psalm 77:7-9). That men should be merciless, that men should forget their friends in their low estate, is no such wonder. But has God, who is all grace, all mercy, all pity, has God forgotten? Does mercy cease to be merciful, grace cease to be gracious? Do compassions cease to be pitiful? Has God not only forgotten his servant, but forgotten himself? Remember yourself, Lord; your own heart, your own soul, and according to it, remember me.

(2.) Plead his glorious name. The Lord's nature is to be gracious, and according to his nature, such is his name: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." (Exodus 34:6). This is an argument which the Lord puts into the mouths of his people, telling them, "I had pity for my holy name; I do not this for your sakes, but for my holy name's sake." (Ezekiel 36:21, 22). And upon this argument we find them frequently pleading with him: "For your name's sake, lead me and guide me." (Psalm 31:3). "Do not abhor us; for your name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of your glory: remember, break not your covenant with us." (Jeremiah 14:21). Go you and do likewise.

2. Found your plea on Christ. And there are four things from which you may plead with God upon this account.

The Lord's giving Christ to you as your Lord and your Savior. Upon which gift, you may call him your own.

The purchase of Christ, who has bought from the hands of the Father all that you stand in need of. He has bought your lives: "You are bought with a price." (1 Corinthians 6:20). He has bought you a livelihood, has purchased an inheritance and possession for you. (1 Peter 1).

The interest that Christ has in the Father, being the Son of God, the Son of his love, the Servant of God, in whom his soul delights: "Behold my servant whom I have chosen, mine elect, in whom my soul delights," (Isaiah 42:1), whose name is so precious and powerful with the Father, that it will carry any suit, obtain any request: "Whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." (John 16:23).

The interest that you have in Christ. As he is precious to his Father, so you are precious to him; as the Father can deny him nothing, so he can deny his people nothing: "Whatever you shall ask in my name, that will I do." (John 14:13). He gives you commission to put his name upon all your requests, and whatever prayer comes up with this name upon it, he will procure it an answer.

Now when you are praying for any mercy, especially for any soul-mercy, make use of all these arguments: "Lord, have you given Christ unto me, and will you not with him give me all things I stand in need of? Have you given me the fountain, and will you deny me the stream? When I beg pardon of sin, when I beg power against sin, when I beg holiness, is not all this granted me in your gift of Christ to me? Is Christ mine, and is not his blood mine to procure my pardon, his Spirit mine to subdue my iniquities? Are these mine, and will you withhold them from me? O, shall this guilt lie upon me, these sins live in me, these lusts rule over me, when by giving me in hand that whereof you have already given me a grant, all this would be removed from me? Look upon Christ, Lord; you have said to me,

'Look unto Jesus,' and give your servant leave to say the same to you. Look you upon Jesus, and give out to me what you have given me in giving him to me. Look upon the purchase of Christ: do I want anything, or desire anything but what my Lord has bought and paid for, and you have accepted of the price? Look upon the name of Christ, which you may behold written upon every prayer I make; though you may say, 'For your own sake you shall have nothing, not a drop, not a crumb,' yet will you say, 'Nor for his name's sake neither?' Is not that name still a mighty name, a precious name before the Lord?" By these hints you may learn how to plead with God from any other arguments drawn from his promises, your experience, etc.

QUESTION. These arguments the saints may use in prayer; but is there no plea for poor unrenewed men, that are yet in their sins, to make use of? What may they say for themselves, when they come before the Lord? Have you never a word to put in their mouths? they have more need of arguments than any. What shall they say?

ANSWER. I shall premise that it is the duty of mere natural men to pray: for, 1. Prayer is a part of God's natural worship. If there were no positive law requiring it, yet the law of nature enjoins it, and no man is exempted from the obligation of the law of nature. 2. Otherwise it were none of their sin to neglect and restrain prayer; where no law is, there is no transgression. Now we find in Scripture, that neglect of prayer is reckoned up among wicked men's sins: "They are all together become filthy, they call not upon the Lord." (Psalm 14:3, 4). Sin, though it does disable, yet does not release from duty.

When a sinner, being struck with a sense of his sin, and of his necessity of changing his way, and of his utter inability to turn of himself, under the fears and troubles of his heart goes to God and cries out, "Lord, what shall I do? I see I am in an evil case, my soul is running on in sin, and your curse and wrath I behold running on upon me: Lord, save me; Lord, help me; Lord, pardon, Lord, convert me, break me off from my sins, break me off from my sinful

companions; I cannot get loose, my heart is too hard, my lusts are too strong, my temptations are too many for me to overcome myself: Lord, help me; turn me and I shall be turned; pluck my foot out of the snare, that I be not utterly destroyed; forgive mine iniquity, make me a clean heart, make me your child, make me your servant, that I may never again yield up myself a servant to sin." To such a prayer as this, if it be hearty and in earnest, if there be no promise of audience, yet at least there is a half promise. Who can tell? It may be the Lord will hear.

Consider that sinners, if they have but a heart to it, have also a price in their hands; God has put arguments into their mouths also, to plead with him for mercy, as,

1. The grace of God, or his gracious nature—his readiness to show mercy; this even strangers may lay hold upon.

2. God's call or gracious invitation, "He, every one that thirsts, come you to the waters, and he who has no money; come you, buy and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." (Isaiah 55:1). "Look unto me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth." "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Rise, sinner, he calls you: go to the Lord, and when you go tell him, "Lord, you have bid me come, and behold here I am; I come, Lord, at your word, I come for a little water, I come for your wine and your milk; I have brought no price in my hand, but you have bid me come and buy without money and without price. Though I have no grace, yet behold, at your word I come for grace; though I have no Christ, yet I come for Christ; though I cannot call you Father, yet being called, I come to you as fatherless; with you the fatherless shall find mercy. If I am not your child, may I not be made your child? Have you not a child's blessing left yet to bestow upon me? You have bid me come, and come for a blessing. Bless me, even me also, O Lord. Wherefore have you sent for me? Shall I be sent away as I came? I come at your word; do not say, Begone, out of my sight. I cannot go at your word; I will not go; for where shall I go

from you; you have the words of eternal life? Since you will have me speak, Lord, answer; though I dare not say, 'Be just to me, a saint,' yet I do say, I will say, I must say, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.'"

3. Plead Christ. And there are two things in Christ which sinners may plead with God.

His SUFFICIENCY. There is enough in Christ, in his obedience and death, to save the worst of sinners, to save the whole world of sinners. There is a fullness in Christ, "It pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell." (Colossians 1:19). There is a fullness of merit to obtain pardon, to make reconciliation for whoever comes; a fullness of the Spirit to sanctify and cleanse them from their sins. "He is able to save to the uttermost all those that come unto God by him." From this, sinners may reason thus with the Lord: O Lord, I do not come to beg that of you which cannot be had; you have enough by you; look upon Jesus that sits at your right hand: is there not righteousness enough in him to answer for all my unrighteousness; are there not riches enough in him to supply my poverty? Hear, Lord; send me not away without an alms, when you have it by you.

His OFFICE—which is to bring sinners to God, to make reconciliation for sinners, to make intercession for transgressors. (Isaiah. 53:12). "You have received gifts for men, yes, for the rebellious also." (Psalm 68:18). What a strange and mighty plea is here for poor sinners! "O, it is true, Lord, I am a transgressor, and have been from the womb; I have played the traitor, and been a rebel against you all my days; but is there none in Heaven that will intercede for a transgressor? Has the Lord Jesus received no gift for this poor rebel, that falls down before you? Though I am a rebel, Lord, yet I am a returning rebel: though I am a rebel, yet let me receive a rebel's gift—not a rebel's terrible reward, but some of those gifts which Christ received for the rebellious. Does Christ make intercession for transgressors, and shall not he be heard? If you will not hear me who am a sinner, yet will you not hear Him that speaks

for sinners, whose blood speaks, whose mercy speaks, whose Spirit speaks? Does he speak for sinners, and yet not for me?"

4. Plead your own necessity. Sinners are necessitous, they have nothing of value left them; in the fullness of their sufficiency they are in straits. As a sinner of a hundred years is but a child, so a sinner of thousands by the year is but a beggar—poor, miserable, blind, and naked: he may feel the want of nothing, and yet lack everything that is good. Sin has stripped him to the skin, stabbed him to the heart; the iron has entered into his soul, it has left him nothing but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. It is your case, sinner, and have you nothing to say? Spread your wants and necessities before the Lord, and let these speak for you.

Open your wounds and your sores, tell him how desperately sad your case is, tell him of the guilt that is upon your head, the curse that is on your back, the plague that is in your heart, and let this be your plea: "God of compassion, look hither; behold what a poor, blind, dead, hardened, unclean, guilty creature, what a naked, empty, helpless, creature I am: look upon my sin and my misery, and let your eye affect your heart. One deep calls to another; a deep of misery cries out to a deep of mercy. O, my very sins, which cry so loud against me, speak also for me. My misery speaks; my curses, the woe and the wrath that lie upon me speak; my bones speak, my perishing soul speaks, and all cry in your ears, Help, Lord God of pity, help, help and heal me, help and save me; come unto me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord: I dare not say as once it was said, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man: come, Lord, for I am a sinful man. You could never come where there is more need: who have need of the physician but the sick? Come, Lord; I have too often said, 'Depart from me,' but if you will not say, 'Depart,' to me, I hope I shall never again say, Depart, to you. My misery says, Come; my wants say, Come; my guilt and my sins say, Come; and my soul says, Come. Come, then, find pardon, come and convert, come and teach, come and sanctify, come and save me; even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Thus you have the sinner's plea. Poor sinner, are you willing to return from your sins? fear not to go to your God. Go, and the Lord help you, give you your heart's desire, and fulfill all your mind; and for your encouragement take along with you this Scripture: "Seek you the Lord while he may be found, call you upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." (Isaiah 55:6, 7).

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