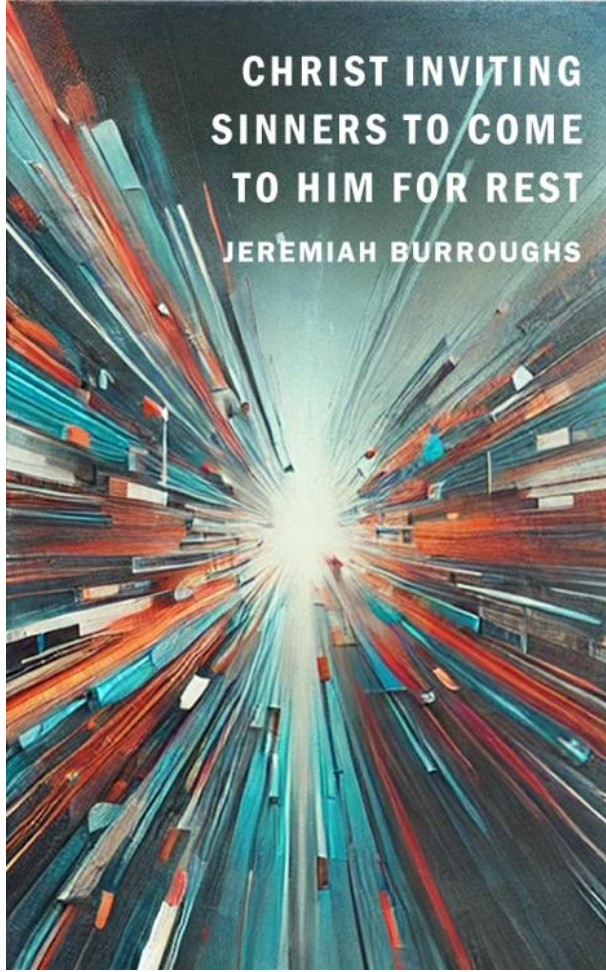
The background of the cover is an abstract, dynamic composition of numerous thin, overlapping lines that radiate from a central point. The lines are primarily in shades of teal, blue, and orange, with some darker tones interspersed. The overall effect is one of intense energy and movement, creating a sense of depth and perspective as if looking down a long, brightly lit tunnel or a starburst of light.

**CHRIST INVITING  
SINNERS TO COME  
TO HIM FOR REST**  
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# Christ Inviting Sinners to Come to Him for Rest

## A Treatise on Matthew 11:28

By JEREMIAH BURROUGHS,

Preacher of the Gospel at Stepney and Cripplegate, London.

Wherein is shown, **FIRST:**

1. The Burden of Sin.
2. The Burden of the Law.
3. The Burden of Legal Performances with the Misery of those that are under them.
4. The Burden of Corruption.
5. The Burden of Outward Affliction.

**SECONDLY**, Christ graciously offers to them that come to Him, REST from all those Burdens. Wherein is shown:

1. What it is to come to Christ.
2. That Christ requires nothing but to come to Him.
3. Several Rules to be observed in rightly coming to Christ.
4. Means to draw Souls to Christ.
5. That in coming to Christ God would have us consider ourselves.
6. That there is no REST for souls outside of Christ; and the reasons thereof; with some conclusions from it.

**THIRDLY**, it is shown:

1. The Rest Believers have from Sin.
2. The Deliverance from the Law by Christ is, (1) Privatively, (2) Positively.
3. The Rest Believers have from the Burden of the Law by coming to Christ.
4. How Christ gives Rest from the Burden of Legal Performances.
5. How Christ gives Rest from the Burden of Corruption; wherein is shown how Sanctification and Holiness come from Christ alone, and encouragements to come to Christ for Holiness.
6. How Christ gives Rest from Outward Afflictions.
7. Some Directions on how to obtain Rest from Christ in Spiritual Desertions.

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*"Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." - MATTHEW 11:28*

## **Chapter 1**

Christ's Invitation to the Weary: The Promise of Rest for Troubled Souls



Wherein there is:

1. The dependence of this verse upon the former, with the scope of the Holy Spirit herein.
2. The meaning of the words.
3. The division thereof into three parts.

Having opened unto you that great doctrine of reconciliation with God in Christ, and of the willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners—sending His messengers to invite, entreat, and beseech in His name—though there was something else following in the chapter that I could willingly have handled, yet because I would press on what has been delivered about our reconciliation with God in Christ, and urge it further with a suitable argument, I have chosen this text. Herein we have set forth the willingness of Christ to be reconciled to sinners and a most gracious invitation of Jesus Christ to poor sinners to come unto Him, that they might have rest for their souls.

This text breathes forth nothing but mercy and goodness to sinners—a heart-melting invitation. In *Jeremiah 31:12* we have a prophecy that sinners shall come and flow together to the goodness, or to the bountifulness, of the Lord (as some of your books have it). Surely, if there is any Scripture that holds forth the goodness and bountifulness of the Lord to sinners, so as to melt their hearts that they may flow unto it, it is this in the text.

This invitation of Christ, "*Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest,*" is that which has been the comfort of many a wounded conscience, of many a troubled sinner. Having fastened upon it, their souls have been stayed, and they have been kept from sinking into the bottomless gulf of despair. This text has been of as great use unto afflicted consciences as any in all the

Book of God. If ever there were a heart-breaking Scripture, certainly here it is: *"Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden,"* etc. It is, in itself, an entire sentence if we take the 28th verse and no more. It is full of abundance of sweetness, filled to the brim with the grace and goodness of the Lord.

But now, if you observe the dependence of these words on the former (the words that go before), then you will see that there is indeed a soul-satisfying fullness of mercy and goodness in the Lord, held forth from this text. And though many of you (I do not question) have often heard this text quoted: *"Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest,"* yet perhaps few of you have observed how these words come in and have a sweet dependence upon the former. If you compare these words with those that go before, you shall see that they are very heart-breaking expressions.

What did Christ say in the very verse before? (I will go no further.) *"All things,"* saith He, *"are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."* And then follows, *"Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* The text seems so full of sweetness on its own that it is seldom observed how this comes in after it. But now, we should look upon them thus and consider that they are the words of Christ, who, after He had said, *"All things are delivered to me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father,"* etc., immediately says, *"Oh! Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

We may observe in this dependence of the words on the former, these two things:

1. Christ says that all things are delivered to Him of the Father, and therefore, "Come to me"; this depends upon the beginning of the 27th verse. "All things are delivered to me of my Father." As if Christ should say: "Be it known unto you, poor troubled, afflicted sinners, that mourn under the weight and burden of your sins, I have all things delivered by the Father to me; that is, all the mercy, all the riches of grace, all the treasures, all the goodness and grace that is in the Father is given to me to dispense to you. And all power is given to me by the Father to do good to poor troubled sinners. And therefore, come to me. Oh! Come to me, ye poor troubled and afflicted sinners."
2. "No man knows the Son but the Father, neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." That is the second thing observable in the dependence of these words on the former. Says Christ: "There is a most infinite communion between me and my Father, and I know fully whatsoever is in the mind of God the Father, what His heart is towards sinners. I know what His thoughts have been from all eternity about doing good unto poor sinners; there is a most near conjunction between me and my Father, and I alone can reveal the Father to poor sinners that are in darkness. They can have God the Father made known to them by no means but by me. There is no way for them to know what is in the heart of God the Father towards them but by me, and therefore, Oh! Sinners, come to me." Here is the dependence of the words upon the former.

Likewise, consider what follows. If the poor should say, "Oh! Blessed Saviour, we are vile, unworthy creatures; we lie under the weight and burden of the guilt of our sins. And shall such as we come to Thee?" Yes, says Christ, notwithstanding that, yet come to me. The word in

the Greek here has an emphasis beyond that which you have in your books; it is not *Venite*, that is usually translated *come*, but *adeste*; it is a word of exhortation, not a mere command, but a word of exhortation, as one friend calls to another in a familiar, sweet way and says, "Come hither." "I come to Thee, Oh! Blessed Saviour," (says the poor sinner), "Thou art the Holy One of the Father; Thou art God, blessed forever, and how should I be able to come to Thee?" Now says Christ, "I am meek, and I am lowly; come to me, and I will lay no further burden upon you, no other yoke upon you. I am meek and lowly, and I will show myself to be meek and gentle, and loving to you; I will not upbraid you. If you come, I will not say to you, as Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, 'You did hate me and cast me out, and why are you come to me in your distress?' But if you come to me, you shall find rest for your souls, and be sure that whatsoever yoke shall be laid upon you, it shall be but an easy yoke, and whatsoever burden shall be laid upon you, it shall be but a light burden."

And thus you have the dependence of the words and the scope of them.

Now further, for the meaning of them: "Come to me, ye that labour." The word translated here [labour] is (I think) in some of your books [weary], *all ye that are weary*. And it signifies a cutting labour. It comes from a word that signifies to cut—any kind of trouble or vexation that is upon one's spirit that is cutting—a cutting trouble. Sometimes it is used for any kind of trouble in the world, as in Revelation 14:13, "*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours*", from all their trouble and affliction. All you that labour and are heavy laden—the word comes from a word that signifies the lading of a ship, such a load that would burden a ship: heavy laden, this is the meaning of the words. You that are

under such afflictions of spirit, as if you are even cut again; you that labour under the trouble, anguish, and sorrow of your hearts. And then you that are under such a burden that would even load a ship; that is ready to sink your souls down into the bottom of despair. You that are in such a condition, come to me. You that can find no rest anywhere else, come to me, and I will give you rest.

So that here in verse 28, you have these three things for the division of it:

1. The description of those whom Christ would invite to Himself; what kind of people they are, or the condition of such as are invited and required to come to Christ—the subject: such as labour, and are heavy laden.
2. The sweet and gracious invitation of Christ to such: "*Come to me*", come to me you that thus labour, and are thus heavy laden.
3. A gracious promise unto such as come unto Christ: that Christ will give rest unto their souls.

These are the three things in verse 28.

For the first, I shall only speak of that at this time, though the other two are the chief that I do intend. And I speak of the first only, as making way unto the other two that follow. For the reason why I chose this Scripture was to draw the soul unto Christ, and to open the riches of this promise of rest, to show what rest the soul shall have in Christ that does come unto Him.

# Chapter 2

## The Burdens of Life and Sin: Christ's Call to the Weary

Containing a description of those whom Christ invites to come unto Him, which is laid down in this doctrine: That those whom Christ calls to come unto Him are such as labour and are heavy laden, whether:

1. Under the burden of the righteousness of the Law, or
2. Under the weight of their sins, or
3. Under the power of any corruption, or
4. Under any outward trouble or affliction.

You that labour and are heavy laden. So, then the point is:

**DOCTRINE:** That those that labour and are heavy laden are called to Christ. Such as Christ calls are those who labour and are heavy laden.

1. Those who labour and are heavy laden under the burden of the righteousness of the Law. Chrysostom interprets the text this way: Those that heretofore have sought righteousness by the Law and find it very burdensome to them; those that are toiling and labouring to obtain peace and rest for their souls by the works of the Law, but find themselves weary; they find that peace and rest do not come that way. They are even toiled and tired, and (as it were) stuck in the mire, but still find no peace or rest that way. Now Christ says to them, "*Come unto me*"; as if He should say: "This is not the right way to get true peace and rest for your souls, to think you can bring it about by the works of the Law; you may toil, labour, and perform duties, not daring

to act against your consciences, being very strict in your lives, striving to do more and more. And yet this will not bring true rest and peace to your souls; you will never have peace and rest through the righteousness of the Law; you must have it through me."

There are many whose consciences God has begun to enlighten, to see that there is evil in sin, that sin will bring death, and that it endangers their souls to eternal damnation. They are convinced of this, and to have peace with God is the thing their souls much desire. Oh! That they might have the pardon of sin and peace with God! Oh! That their consciences might be quieted! God does awaken the consciences of many men and women who yet have no saving grace, and they spend much time in labouring and taking great pains to quiet their consciences. Many have spent years labouring and toiling to get their consciences quiet, and cannot, for their consciences ever and again fly in their faces, troubling them. Yet they dare not commit any known sin, nor neglect any known duty. They are constant in secret prayer, they attend upon the Word, and whenever they hear of a duty they should perform, they labour to set about it with all their might. But alas! They feel little sweetness and comfort in their duty; only conscience compels them to it, telling them they must do it. And if they neglect it, conscience flies in their faces, telling them they must perish eternally. Therefore, they seek to pacify their consciences only by the performance of duties and by their obedience to the Law, thus seeking peace through the righteousness of the Law. This is the only way they attempt to pacify their consciences and find rest for their souls. Alas, all the while, they are labouring and toiling, but cannot achieve it. For while men seek righteousness by the Law, it must needs be a toiling labour that will not bring rest.

## **The First Burden of the Law**

First, the Law gives no strength at all to enable one to perform duties, and therefore the children of it must needs be under bondage. As Pharaoh's taskmasters commanded bricks to be made but would afford no straw or means to do it, so some describe the bondage and servitude of the Law, commanding such things as it gives no strength to perform.

**Question:** But you will say, is this the Law of God? Is God so harsh to His creature as to command what He gives no ability to perform?

**Answer:** We must know that God once gave strength to perform duties, but certainly, now the Law of God commands duties but gives no strength to perform them. There is no strength enabling us to perform duties until the Spirit of Jesus Christ comes into the soul. We may perform the outward part of them, but not in such a spiritual manner that they should be suitable to our hearts or bring ease and quiet to our souls. And though the soul seeks to get rest and ease for itself, it will not come that way.

## **The Second Burden of the Law**

Secondly, the Law requires perfect obedience in everything, and it denounces a curse against anyone who does not continue in everything that is written in the Law to do it. Now, when men and women seek rest for their souls by the works of the Law, they cannot perform duties as they ought, and therefore they find no rest. Instead, they see that the Law condemns them because they do not perform duties in a perfect manner. Yet they think they must go on and do as well as they can. But still, conscience accuses them: *"You have not done enough; you still fall short, and though you do some duties, you neglect others."* So conscience gains the upper hand every day, and they are continually under the bondage of an accusing



and condemning conscience, and so they find no rest for their souls. They perform duties but question with themselves, "*How can I know that the infinite, holy God will accept what I do?*" Although they may find quiet for a little while, yet conscience comes upon them again, disquieting them and casting fears and doubts into their souls. So much so, that many poor creatures have gone seven, or even twice seven, years under trouble of conscience and never had any rest or peace. And yet still, they have continued to be conscientious in their ways, but with their hearts full of fears and doubts, lest all should not be well with them in the end.

### **The Third Burden of the Law**

And besides, while the soul continues to seek quiet and rest by the works of the Law, there is an unsuitableness between the duties performed and the heart of such a man or woman; so much so that the very works they do and the duties they perform become grievous and tedious to them. "Yes," says Christ, "Oh! Come to me, such as these are. Is there anyone among you who has had their conscience troubled and has desired, 'Oh! That there might be peace between God and my soul, that I might have assurance of God's love!' What course have you taken to get it? Have you not sought to bring it about by the works of the Law and thought to gain rest and peace for your souls that way? Indeed, it is better to go on that way than in the ways of sin, but to think to find rest and peace in that way is far more harmful than you are aware of. If men think to quiet themselves that way, and thereby put off the righteousness that comes by faith, they may become hardened before they are aware."

"But is there anyone among you seeking rest and peace for your souls in such a way, by the righteousness of the Law?" says Christ. "Know this: This is not the way for you to find rest for your souls. It's true, you must abstain from sin and perform duties, but if you would have

rest for your souls, you must come to me. It is by the soul's resting upon the perfect righteousness that is in Jesus Christ alone that true rest comes to the soul. Many a poor sinner has been seeking rest for many years and has not found it, but when the Lord has been pleased to come in with one promise of the Gospel, setting it home upon their soul, they have found more rest and quiet in one day, yes, in one hour, than they did before in many years. There is a great deal of art and skill required to find rest and quiet for the troubled soul. The Gospel is a mystery in this matter, and when God acquaints the soul with the mystery of the Gospel, rest comes in a sweet and gracious manner."

"It is true that it is the hardest thing in the world to close with Christ and to gain true ease and rest for the soul. It is hard in itself until God makes known the mystery of faith to the soul. But once that is done, the soul finds abundant ease and rest, and that in a short time. It is like a man who thinks he can complete a task by sheer strength, which indeed can only be done with skill and art. He may toil, labour, and tire himself out, but he cannot do it. Whereas another man, who understands the mystery of it, comes in and, with skill and art, can accomplish easily in a short time what the first man laboured over for a long time without success. As you know, in all trades that have a mystery to them, those of you who are navigators, who understand the mystery of that art—if an unskilled man came and thought he could do some of your work by sheer strength, he might labour and toil his heart out, and still not achieve what you can do with ease in a short time."

"So, too, many poor souls are labouring and toiling, striving to quiet their troubled souls. They labour, they perform duties, they fast, they pray many times a day, going on in a wearisome manner. Yet, when the soul comes to be acquainted with the mystery of the Gospel,

when it hears the voice behind it, as it were, saying, 'Come to me,' and the soul is enabled to answer the call and come to Christ, it still performs its duties as much as before and remains conscientious of them. However, now they are performed in a different manner than before, and they come to be easier than before, bringing rest to their souls despite the imperfections in their duties."

"When you went to prayer, at times, when your hearts were much enlarged in prayer, and your thoughts were entirely taken up with the duties you were performing, then you thought you had some comfort. But when you experienced wandering thoughts and distractions in prayer, you rose up with a deeply troubled spirit, finding no rest all day long. Now, when you come to be acquainted with the mystery of God in Christ, though there may be many imperfections in your duties, yet you shall find rest for your souls despite all your imperfections. But that will be more clearly opened when we come to the part, 'And I will give you rest.' Those who have laboured under the righteousness of the Law and find it toilsome and burdensome to them—Christ calls them to come to Him that they may have rest."

### **The Burden Under Sin**

Secondly, those that labour and are heavy laden under the weight and burden of their sins—the trouble of conscience that is upon them for their sins—this is another thing, besides the righteousness of the Law. The former labour arose from performing duties, but this labour comes from the sense of the weight and burden of sin, and we are to know that this is a great labour and burden. Oh! When the soul is under the burden of sin, it labours earnestly. The thoughts gather together, and conscience, being awakened, causes great disturbance, bringing fears and trembling to the soul. The heart of a man or woman, once sluggish, dull, heavy, and dead, becomes quickened,

enlivened, and active when God makes it aware of the evil of sin. You who labour and are heavy laden—you who feel the weight of sin upon your souls and know not what to do—come to me (says Christ), and I will give you rest.

### **The Burden of Corruption**

Thirdly, you that labour under the power of any corruption—not only under the guilt of your sins, but under the power of corruption, feeling your sins strong within you and longing to overcome them. You who carry such a weight that makes you cry out with St. Paul, "*Oh! Wretched man or woman that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?*" You who would dearly love to conquer those strong corruptions within you, and it is the great burden of your soul that you cannot overcome them. Come to me (says Christ), and I will give you rest from them as well.

First, you that labour under the burden of duties and find them toilsome. Secondly, you that labour under the guilt of sin and find your souls perplexed by it. Thirdly, you that labour under the power of any corruption and cannot overcome it. Come to me, and I will give you rest.

## **Chapter 3:**

*The Burden of Sin, laid open in nine particulars:*

1. When the soul not only apprehends but is also sensitive to the evil of sin in its reality.

2. Finds all the comfort that once accompanied sin to vanish and come to nothing.
3. Looks upon itself as loathsome and is, in some measure, humbled before God.
4. Trembles at the slightest thoughts and temptations to sin.
5. Feels sin heaviest where it is indeed heaviest.
6. Feels the weight of sin to be such that no creature is able to remove it.
7. Would rather be under any burden than the burden of sin.
8. Despite the weight of sin, justifies God.
9. Does not lie sullenly and despair under it, but seeks direction from God for how it may be freed from it.

Now you who are burdened with sin and labour under this burden, you are those whom Christ calls to come to Him, that you may have rest for your souls.

To open this, I shall show you:

First, how the soul is burdened with sin in a right way, such that Jesus Christ looks upon it and invites it to come to Him. How the soul is worked upon, and what it feels in the burden of sin, that is here spoken of, and that Christ calls unto Himself to receive rest.

Secondly, why it is that the Lord will have the soul burdened for sin.

Thirdly, upon what ground it is that Jesus Christ has such a desire for the soul to come to Him, and why He invites the soul. I shall then apply this.

**For the First:** "You who are weary and heavy laden." Christ invites the heavy-laden; [heavy-laden]—what is that?

## **The First Burden of Sin**

First, those notions or truths that previously lay floating in the understanding; those truths of God, and apprehensions of the evil of sin that before seemed to float in a man's understanding, now the Lord causes them to sink down within the heart. He presses the evil of sin upon the soul, making the soul not only apprehend but also be sensitive to sin, to its evil, and to its reality. I say, the soul feels those truths that were but hovering in the understanding before, now settling upon the heart and pressing the heart with a real apprehension of sin. The soul says, "I heard talk of it before, and I could speak of it before, but now I feel it." Now, says the soul, "Those things that were mere notions before are the greatest realities in the world." The Lord presses them down upon the heart so that they weigh heavily upon the soul—so heavy as to crush it under them. Now, all those vain reasonings and hopes, all those attempts the soul had previously made to quiet itself, are now crushed under the real apprehensions of sin. Imagine a millstone lying on the ground with a few light things placed on top of it. If another millstone were to be dropped upon them, it would grind them to powder. So it is with the soul—before, there were vain hopes and reasonings in the heart, but when God causes the truths and their reality to press upon the heart, it crushes all those vain hopes and reasonings to nothing.

## **The Second Burden of Sin**

Secondly, the soul finds that all the comforts that once accompanied sin vanish and come to nothing. There are scarcely any men or women in the world, or very few, so vile as to delight in sin merely because it is sin, without any other consideration. Sin is pleasing to the hearts of men only because it has some comforts that attend it. Perhaps there is some gain or pleasure associated with sin, and that brings contentment. But when the heart is burdened with sin, the soul feels the weight of sin and becomes sensitive to it as a dreadful

evil, despite any comforts that attend it. All the comforts that once attended sin now vanish and come to nothing. The soul can no longer find any contentment in anything that arises from sin, and that is the second point. The soul is so burdened with sin that it can take no pleasure in anything gained through sin. Whatever gain comes through sin, it casts off. Whatever pleasure or other seeming benefits sin brings, the soul looks upon them all with disdain.

### **The Third Burden of Sin**

Thirdly, the soul that is burdened with sin feels the weight of it so much that its back is bowed down and tired, or at least it makes the soul view itself as a vile and loathsome creature, fit to be dealt with as such. It is burdened so that the heart is, to some extent, wearied by it.

### **The Fourth Burden of Sin**

Fourthly, the soul is so burdened with sin that it now trembles at the least thought of sin or temptation to sin, fearing that if it willingly commits any further known sin, it will add to the burden and press the soul down to eternal misery. It is so burdened that it dares not add any more sin, as far as it can help, being afraid that one more sin might sink it into Hell.

### **The Fifth Burden of Sin**

Fifthly, the soul feels sin heaviest where it is indeed heaviest. When it is rightly burdened, it feels heavy because of the wrath of God due to it, but it is heaviest because it is against the infinitely holy God and His rule of righteousness. There lies the true weight—that by sin, I have struck at the infinitely holy God and been an enemy to Him, as has been explained at length before. Now, when the heart is truly burdened with sin, it feels sin most heavily as it is against such an

infinitely blessed and holy God, who is so infinitely worthy of all honour from me.

### **The Sixth Burden of Sin**

Sixthly, when the heart is truly burdened with sin, it feels such a weight that it clearly understands that no creature in heaven or earth is able to remove or take it away. The soul becomes so sensitive to the weight of sin that it feels and perceives itself to lie under a burden that no creature in heaven or earth is able to remove. Unless some power beyond any created being comes, here must I lie and be pressed eternally under this weight. Imagine a poor man lying under a grievous burden in a ditch. Perhaps a child comes to him, or a bird flies over him, or a dog runs by him. But alas, he thinks to himself, "I could lie here forever for all these things! There must come some greater strength to help me, or else I must perish." So the soul lies under the burden of sin and thinks, "Lord, what a burden have I brought upon myself! It is so great that if all the men in the world or all the angels in heaven came to me, they could not help me. They may speak kind words to me, but they cannot help me. It is only the almighty power of God that is able to help me." Now the soul truly feels the weight of sin when it realises that no created or finite power, only the infinite power of the great God, can help it and give it relief.

### **The Seventh Burden of Sin**

Seventhly, the soul that is truly burdened with sin would rather endure any burden than the burden of sin. There was a time when sin was delightful to me, but now I would rather have any burden upon me than this. Before, I thought that those who lacked the comforts of this world and were outwardly poor and lowly were miserable, but now, if I had all the outward miseries in the world upon my back, I would rather bear them all than this burden. I have felt much affliction in my days, but this burden, this weight, is most



grievous and heaviest of all. Oh! If the Lord would only take this weight and burden from me, let Him lay whatever other weight or burden upon me He wills. Thus, the soul that is rightly burdened with sin is affected.

### **The Eighth Burden of Sin**

Eighthly, though the soul feels the heavy weight of sin upon it, yet, in all this, it justifies God and does not think harsh thoughts of God, despite His heavy hand being upon it. It is true, I feel God's heavy hand upon me, pressing me sorely, but still, God's hand is just. He is righteous in all this. Let Him have glory, whatever becomes of me, for the truth is, I have brought this burden upon myself. There was a time when I heaped up one sin after another, as if I could never have enough weight upon me. But now I find it heavy. Oh! The sins of my youth lie heavy now upon my soul—my lying and swearing, the loss of my time, and my Sabbath-breaking. Oh! The Lord is righteous in all His ways. This is how the heart works when it is burdened in such a way that the Lord intends good unto it.

### **The Ninth Burden of Sin**

Ninthly, and lastly, though the soul is under a burden that is almost intolerable, yet it is not sunk down in despair under its burden. It is not like a beast that, after struggling for a little while under a burden, lies down sullenly and dies under it. No, those who are burdened with sin in the way that the Lord uses to prepare the heart for His Son—they feel the weight of sin indeed, but they feel it in such a way that they strive under it. Their hearts remain active, stirring, and working, continually attending to any directions that God gives them through His Word. Their hearts keep active, crying out to God, waiting to know what God's will is towards them, and are willing to do anything that God requires of them. They do not lie sullen and lifeless under the burden of their sins.

Now, if there be any soul in the condition described in the nine particulars mentioned before—know that these are the ones Christ especially calls to Himself and says, "*Come to me, you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"

## Chapter 4:

### *Two Cautions Concerning the Burden of Sin:*

1. That it is not a condition of the Covenant of Grace.
2. That it does not, in itself, give the soul an interest in Christ, nor provide rest in Him.

To which certain consequences are attached.

Now, I must lay down two cautions before I proceed to give the reasons for this point.

**Objection:** You may say, "What is the point of speaking about these burdens, about the necessity of the soul being burdened with the weight of sin so that it may come to Christ for ease and rest? Surely, there is no such thing required."

**Answer:** To that, I respond that this burden of the soul for sin is not a condition of the Covenant of Grace. That must be acknowledged; there is no condition except believing in Christ. It is not viewed as a condition.

Secondly, you must understand that this burden of the soul for sin does not, by itself, give the soul an interest in Christ, nor does it

provide rest in Christ. I may indeed be burdened for sin, but unless I truly believe—unless there is an act of faith beyond this burden—I shall not obtain rest. Thus, we must not ground our faith upon being burdened for sin, thinking that because we are burdened, we shall therefore be pardoned and saved. We must not place the weight of our faith upon the feeling of the weight of our sin. Rather, we must anchor our faith in the troubles that Jesus Christ endured for sin, not in the troubles of our own souls for our sins.

This is a note of great importance, and I beseech you to observe it: you must know this—when your hearts are troubled for sin, do not think that this is the condition of the Covenant of Grace. Nor should you make this the object of your faith, thinking, "Because I am troubled, I may believe that my sin is pardoned." No, you must not base your faith upon your own trouble but upon the troubles that Jesus Christ endured, the troubles His soul suffered in satisfaction for sin.

**First:** From this, it follows that no degree of trouble for sin—no matter how great or how small—gives a person an interest in Christ or not. I say, it is not the measure of the burden that determines this. For certainly, if we could come to Christ without any burden or sense of our sin—if it were possible to come to Christ (I say) without being burdened for sin—we could. But because Jesus Christ works upon the heart in a rational way, as He works upon rational creatures (although He works above reason, imparting supernatural grace that is beyond reason), He still works upon the heart as a rational creature. Therefore, the work of reason must be made subservient to the work of God's grace. Usually, when the Lord works upon a soul, He uses reason to serve the purpose of His grace. Because no one can come to a Saviour without knowing their need for one, I must first

understand what sin is if I am to come to Christ as a Saviour to save my soul from sin. I must be sensible of it.

**Secondly:** If God works upon the soul as a rational creature, He uses this awareness to stop the soul in its course of sin. Before a sinner becomes sensitive to the evil of their sin, they rush headlong into it, and nothing will stop them. But when the soul becomes burdened, it is stopped and no longer runs in the full stream of wickedness as before. This is a means of helping the soul towards Christ—the very stopping of its course of sin.

**Thirdly:** This awareness is a rational means by which the soul becomes attentive to any call of Christ. Before, Christ may have called to sinners through His Word, saying, "*Come to me, and believe in me,*" but they did not feel the burden of their sin and therefore did not come. If a man is under a heavy burden in the dark of night, at the sound of any footsteps nearby, he will cry out for help. So too, the soul, under the heavy burden of sin, rejoices to hear any direction from the Word, calling it to come to Christ.

**Fourthly:** The soul begins to prize mercy, and mercy makes a deep impression upon the heart that is burdened. When the heart is burdened with sin, oh, how dear and sweet and precious are mercies then!

**Fifthly:** Furthermore, when the soul is burdened with sin, it is rationally prepared to take on the yoke of Christ. Before, it cast it off, but now, feeling sin to be a heavier burden than anything else, it is more ready to take upon itself the yoke of Jesus Christ. When the soul is under this burden, Christ calls in love to ease and give rest to those souls that are so burdened.

## Chapter 5:

### *The Reasons for the Former Doctrine:*

1. Christ has all mercy in Him.
2. The purpose for which He came into the world was to give rest to burdened souls.
3. Christ Himself was once under a similar burden.
4. He is to receive the glory for all the ease given to sinners.

The third point is the reasons why Jesus Christ desires and invites souls to come to Him.

#### **REASON I**

First: Because all is given to Christ; Christ has all the mercy of the Father in Him, for the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him, and therefore He must pity such a soul. There is a law in Deuteronomy that if a beast is under a burden and ready to perish, God requires that you should not withhold your help, even if it is the beast of your enemy, but assist it. Now, if God would have us be so merciful (we who have but drops of mercy in us) when we see a beast, and that of our enemies, under a burden, how much more will the Lord Christ, who has the fullness of the mercy of the infinite God in Him, when He sees an immortal soul under such a burden and ready to perish, and it cries to Him for help, certainly Christ will ease and help that soul.

#### **REASON II**

Secondly: We know that Christ came into the world for this very purpose. Christ was anointed and sent for that end—to bind up the

broken-hearted and give them ease. Christ was designated by God the Father for this very work, and therefore He will do it. He is appointed by God the Father to ease burdened souls; it is His work. Therefore, when Christ sees any poor soul burdened by sin, He says, "Here is work for me." He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. This is the very task He came from heaven to accomplish. It is the work His Father sent Him into the world to do.

### **REASON III**

Thirdly: Christ Himself once felt some burden of this kind, and He knows what it is to be burdened with sin. He was made sin for us, as the Scripture says in 2 Corinthians 5:21: "*He was made sin.*" Christ bore the weight of all the sins of the elect upon Him and felt what the weight of sin was. Christ has experienced what it is to be burdened with sin and with the wrath of God the Father for sin. Certainly, when Christ lay grovelling with His face upon the ground and sweated drops of blood, He was under a great burden. Christ bore the great burden of man's sin and the wrath of God that was due to man's sin, and He carried it until He sweated under its weight. Now, Christ Himself, having been under such a burden, certainly cannot but pity poor burdened sinners.

### **REASON IV**

Fourthly: It is Christ who is to receive the glory for the easing of sin. Those souls that are burdened by sin, if they ever find ease, will give the Lord Jesus all the glory. First, Christ has all the mercy of God the Father; second, He was sent into the world to bind up all broken hearts; third, He has experienced the burden of sin; and fourth, knowing that He shall receive all the glory in delivering and easing souls. Christ certainly counts it worth all His sufferings, that He might have the glory of easing troubled souls, just as many surgeons count it their glory to receive the honour of curing desperate cases.

The Lord Jesus will glory in this for all eternity. When all the poor burdened souls that He has ever eased are brought before Him and acknowledged before God and His angels, it will be said: "Oh! Here are those many thousands of souls who were under their burdens and ready to perish, and I have eased them." And there they shall rest from all their labours forever. Christ calls sinners for these reasons.

## Chapter 6

The Application: Exhorting Sinners to Come to Christ, with Answers to Certain Objections.

### **APPLICATION.**

Now, for a word of application: does Christ call for burdened souls to come to Him that they may have rest? Then those who are burdened should listen to what Christ says in this congregation this morning. Is there any poor soul ready to perish under the weight of sin, struggling under its load? Christ calls that soul to come to Him. It would be a grievous thing for Christ to come and call out in such a congregation, and there be no one there. Nay, I cannot help but think there may be many in this congregation who will hear the call of Christ.

Christ often calls where there are none to answer. We may say in this case, as our Saviour Christ said in another: "*The harvest is great, but the labourers are few.*" So we may say: the harvest of sin is great, but the labourers under the burden of sin are very few. Many there are

who would cast the burden of sin upon Christ, but they act as the Pharisees did, casting heavy burdens upon others, but not lifting a finger to help carry them. Likewise, many would cast the burden of sin upon Christ, but they do not feel it themselves.

Oh! Let me speak to you: What chamber or closet can testify that you have been crying out to God under this grievous burden? A beast, if it lies under a burden, will roar and cry out for help. Certainly, if your souls were pressed with the burden of sin, there would be mighty cries to God to ease you of that burden. But to most people in the world, sin is very light.

Well, know this: As Christ Himself felt sin to be a heavy burden, so one way or another, you must feel it too—either here or hereafter. But blessed is the man or woman who feels the weight of sin while there is still time to be delivered from it, lest they be pressed under its weight forever. We read of Pharaoh, when the people of Israel asked for relief, he bid them return to their burdens. What he did unjustly, Christ might do to many righteously hereafter. When you lie on your sickbeds or deathbeds and cry for mercy, Christ may say to you, "Go to your burdens." When anything in God's Word came to press sin upon your souls, you cast it off.

Oh! It is a dangerous condition when men and women not only commit sin abundantly, but also, when any truth of God should confront their sin, they reject it. They think harshly of those truths of God that seek to bind their sins to their consciences and burden them. But it should not be so with us. If those who are burdened with their sins are the ones Christ calls to Him, we should not think harshly of the truths of God that reveal the evil of sin to us. Instead, let us join with those truths of God and labour to burden our own hearts. For you see that those who are burdened are the ones Christ



calls to Him that they might have rest. There are no other burdens we are to bring upon ourselves—rather, we should seek to avoid them—but as for the burden of sin, we must burden our hearts with that. We should labour to lay our sins to heart, to press them there, and to charge them upon our own spirits with all the aggravations we can. Let us join with the work of God's Spirit. When the Spirit of God comes to lay sin upon the soul, let us join with it and say, "Lord, I am beginning to be more aware of my sins than I was before. Lord, humble me through this. Let me remain under Your hand as long as You please, only work Your good work in me."

**Objection.** But you may say, "We may sink under the burden of sin."

**Answer.** Oh, no! Those who cast off the burden of sin are the ones most likely to sink under it. Can you think that the Lord will allow such a soul to sink under the burden that burdens itself so that God might be glorified? But those who are unwilling and forced to be burdened, who never become aware of the burden of sin until all the props and comforts of the creature are taken away—those are the ones who will sink. On their sickbeds and deathbeds, then they are burdened with sin. Why? Because the props are taken away. Before, they had comforts, estates, and such things which acted as props, but now God comes and removes those props, and down they fall upon us. That is the reason why many on their deathbeds lie roaring and crying out so bitterly for their sins. Why? Because the Lord has cut away the props, and now sin lies heavy upon their hearts.

Now Christ calls: "*Come to me, you who are weary and heavy laden; come to me,*" says Christ. Know that you are in a far better condition than when you delighted in sin. You are now on the path that God uses to bring in those He intends to bless. I remember in

the Gospel, the poor blind man cried to Christ: "*Oh, Son of David, have mercy on me,*" and still cried. At length, Christ heard the blind man's cry and asked what it was. Now those around him went to the poor blind man and said to him, "Be of good comfort, He is calling you." He might have said, "Yes, but my eyes are still not opened." Yet, they replied, "Be of good comfort, He is calling you."

So I say to all burdened sinners: Be of good comfort, troubled soul. Christ calls you. He says: "*Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden.*" He does not say, "Come to me, you who are so burdened beyond measure." No, Christ calls you to Him.

**Objection.** "Ah, but," you may say, "I have no ease. If I were sure that my sins were pardoned and that I would be saved, then I would have ease and comfort."

**Answer.** Ah, but, poor soul, be of good comfort, for you are called. Christ does not say to you, "You are a wretched, wicked creature, depart from me, you cursed," as He will say to sinners hereafter. That might have been your condition, but you did not hear that voice from Christ today, saying, "*Depart from me.*" Instead, today you hear this voice from Christ: "*Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden.*" Christ is near to you; the Lord is near to the broken-hearted; He is near to the contrite in spirit.

And know this: the longer you are under the burden of your sin, the greater the comfort that will come afterwards. Now, there is a burden of sin upon you, but there will be a weight of glory hereafter. Scripture speaks of a "weight of glory" as well as a "weight of sin." Be willing to bear the weight of sin patiently. Say with the prophet, "*I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against Him.*" So say you: "*It is fitting that my soul should bear a burden.*" Be content to wait now; do the same thing that Christ did when He

was under His burden. Mark what He did, as it is written in *Hebrews 5:7*: "*In the days of His flesh, He offered up prayers and supplications with strong cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission.*"

Go your way, O soul, and enter into the presence of God. Tell Him of your burdens that you feel; make your complaint to Him with prayers, supplications, and strong cries. Tell Him, "*Lord, I fear lest my soul should be pressed down to eternal death under this burden.*" Tell Him of your fears in this way, and it is very likely that your soul will be heard. According to this invitation, surely there is rest for you as well as for anyone. While you are crying out under your burden, for all you know—or any angel in heaven knows—your pardon may already be sealed in heaven. Therefore, do not make any desperate conclusions against your own soul, for your pardon may be sealed, and then the Lord will send a messenger to tell you of this.

Nay, I say to you that a messenger will indeed come. Behold, here in this text, the Lord Jesus Christ comes. The Angel of the Covenant cries to you, "*Come, oh come, come freely! Though you have no good in you, there is enough in Me to give rest to the soul that labours under the greatest burden of sin that ever was.*"

I will now conclude with the same thought that I began with at the start: remember again the connection of these words with those that came before. The one who calls you to come to Him for rest is the same one who has received all things from the Father. And why has He received them from the Father, if not for such poor souls as these?

## Chapter 7:

### *The Burden Under the Law Laid Open in Eleven Particulars:*

1. The Law requires of us things we are unable to perform.
2. It requires absolute perfection.
3. It accepts none of our efforts or endeavours.
4. Upon breaking any one part of the Law, the sinner loses all ability to keep any part of it afterward.
5. Upon breaking it, the sinner is immediately bound over to eternal death.
6. It requires constant obedience.
7. Once broken, it cannot be satisfied with any subsequent obedience.
8. It accepts no repentance.
9. It only reveals a man's misery and leaves him without showing any remedy.
10. There is no appeal from it, nor any repealing of it.
11. The more it is revealed, the more our corruptions are stirred up.  
(Where some objections are answered, or doubts resolved.)

Having finished discussing the burden of the guilt of sin, the next is the burden of the Law.

*"Come to me,"* says Christ, *"you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* That is, *you who labour under the burden of the Law and legal performances.* I will treat these two together, as they are necessarily dependent on one another, though I intend to handle them distinctly.

First, to those who have come to see the great bondage they are under in the Law and feel the heavy burden upon them in seeking justification by the Law, and have done so for a long time: Christ says, *"Know that you have been deceived in looking for your justification in that way; you have laboured and toiled in vain, for it will not be attained in that manner. Come to me, and you shall have rest for your souls such as you have never yet felt, nor will you ever feel by continuing in that way."* I take this to be fully the scope of Christ's message, as well as the other.

Now, regarding the burden of the Law: that the Law is compared to a burden is clear from Romans 6:14: *"For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace."* He speaks to those who are delivered and says they are no longer under the Law. There was indeed a time when they were under the Law—the Law lay upon them as a heavy burden—but they later came under grace. And though even grace has a yoke (for grace itself brings a kind of yoke), it is not like the yoke of the Law. Christ Himself says, *"Take my yoke upon you."* But His yoke is easy compared to the yoke of the Law.

Now, to explain what the burden of the Law is (which, if a sinner or any soul comes to understand, will inevitably feel like a heavy burden and load upon them), it is essential to understand this, for unless you do, you cannot understand Christ properly. It is not enough to merely understand Christ; you must understand Christ as the great Saviour who delivers us from the Law, the one who comes to give us rest and relief from the Law. If we do not understand the yoke and burden of the Law, we cannot truly appreciate the worth of Christ in providing us ease and rest from it.

1. First, I shall endeavour to show what the yoke and burden of the Law are, and then, what is the burdensome condition of the soul that seeks righteousness through legal performances.

In the first place, the Law requires of us things that we are not able to perform; it requires of us things that we cannot do. You might say, *"That is indeed a grievous burden, to be required to do what we cannot."* The Law does exactly that, but at first, you may not think it is harsh—it does not require of you anything that God did not once enable you to do. For that, you might say, would be unjust. However, it requires things of you that, because of your fall, you are no longer able to do. But you have brought this inability upon yourselves. The Law would not have been a burden to Adam, as God first created him in innocence; under those conditions, the Law would have been no burden at all. But now, since we are fallen, consider what our condition is: it is indeed a grievous burden, for the Law demands of us what we cannot do. Even if we were to exert all our strength to perform the Law, we still could not fulfill it. Yet, we must not think that because we have lost our power, God's Law should no longer apply. The Law continues in its course, whether we have the power to obey it or not, because God gave us the power, and we lost it.

This, I believe, is the meaning of that Scripture in Acts 15:10: *"Now, therefore, why do you tempt God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"* The Law is such a yoke—neither we nor our fathers were able to bear it.

**Objection I:** But it may be said, *"This is meant of the ceremonial law."*

**Answer:** To that I answer: Certainly, if the ceremonial law was a yoke, then take the ceremonial and moral law together, and the

burden is even greater. Simply performing outward ceremonies was not such an intolerable yoke, but we must consider the whole law in its entirety, and it will become clear that this is the meaning. The question here was not only about the ceremonial law but about Moses' law in general and about justification by it. This was the question the church at Antioch sent to the church at Jerusalem to inquire about. For this was the council held in Acts 15, where certain men came from Jerusalem to Antioch and taught that it was necessary to keep Moses' law for justification.

Now, the church at Antioch, troubled by this doctrine, sent some brethren to the church at Jerusalem to gain further insight into the matter. At verse 5, we read that certain believers from the sect of the Pharisees said it was necessary to circumcise the Gentiles and command them to keep the law of Moses as a matter of justification. Then, in the assembly at Jerusalem, Peter rose up and warned the others to be cautious about imposing such a yoke upon the disciples, particularly the yoke of the law, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear. It is clear that this refers not only to the ceremonial law but also to the moral law. This is shown in verse 11: *"We believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."* Now, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is not only opposed to the ceremonial law but also to the moral law when it is taught as a way of justification for life.

So, the law that is described as a yoke is the one opposed to the grace of Christ, which brings salvation. It is the law that reveals sin, the law that is the minister of death, by which the mouths of all are stopped. This is the heavy yoke for those under the law, that is, those who are under the first covenant—the covenant of works—and who seek justification by it. They are under a grievous burden, as they are the children of the bondwoman, for the law requires what is impossible

for them to perform. When a soul comes to realise and understand that it is under such a law, a law that demands the impossible, it burdens the soul. By this, the soul sees its need for Christ, and Christ calls such souls to come to Him. It is as if He says, *"As long as you remain in unbelief, in your natural condition, you are under a covenant for life that requires what you cannot possibly do, and therefore there is no rest in that condition. Come, therefore, to me. Take my yoke, my easy yoke. The other is a heavy yoke, but I will show you a way to ease and rest for your souls."* That is the first point.

But though the law may require difficult and even impossible things, perhaps it allows some leniency in other matters. Therefore:

**2.** The second aspect of the yoke and bondage of the law is this: in everything it commands, the law requires absolute perfection. It accepts nothing less than absolute perfection in all that it commands. It does not merely command difficult things; whatever the law demands, it demands perfect obedience. If there is any failure in any particular point, no matter how small, the law condemns the soul. It not only requires that the deed be done, but that it be done in the right manner, from the right principle, and to the utmost degree of perfection. The law requires that our lives be directed fully by the rule, and that we adhere completely to it.

What a miserable yoke and burden this is for a poor soul—to see that the law requires not only things that are impossible for me to do, but also demands absolute perfection, accepting no imperfection whatsoever. This is a heavy yoke—one that neither we nor our fathers could bear. Those who come to understand this must be under a grievous burden, which shows them their need for Jesus Christ. Christ calls those who understand this. It is true that if this were the



end, and we were left without any help or remedy, it would be a sad condition indeed. Truly, if Christ had not come into the world to put Himself under the law, we would have been left in this condition. And all those who do not understand the Gospel, who have not had Christ preached to them, are still in this condition. They are under a law they cannot fulfill, a law that requires absolute and perfect obedience in everything, or else it condemns them.

**3.** The third burden of the law is this: You may say, *"Though it requires perfect obedience, will it not at least accept our endeavours? Suppose we strive to obey as much as we can?"* There are many who, though they require difficult things, will accept attempts or efforts to fulfill them. But you must understand that the law accepts no endeavours. Even if a man or woman were to strive with all their heart to obey the law and reach the height of perfection, the law does not accept such efforts.

It is true that when the soul comes to Christ in the Gospel, and under the covenant of grace, endeavours are accepted. Therefore, do not think that God will not accept your efforts. If you come to Christ, your endeavours will indeed be accepted, as we will discuss when we come to speak about the rest the soul finds in Christ. But here is an argument to drive poor souls to Christ: consider that while you are outside of Christ, your endeavours are not accepted, and you are not in the way of life. Life and salvation cannot be found in your current condition, for the law demands obedience. It must have the work done. You are either under the covenant of works or the covenant of grace. So long as you remain under the covenant of works, the work is called for, not just endeavours, for that will not suffice.

Therefore, the Apostle says in Romans 10:5, *"For Moses writes about the righteousness that is by the law: 'The person who does these*

*things will live by them."* You must either be righteous by the righteousness of the law or by the righteousness of Christ. If you would be righteous by the law, hear what it says: "*The person who does these things will live by them.*" Moses does not say, "The person who strives to do these things," or "The person who endeavours to do these things," but rather, "*The person who does them will live by them.*" It must be doing, not merely trying, that the law accepts. And that is the third aspect of the bondage of the law.

Christ says, "*Come to me, and you shall have rest.*" It is by believing in Christ that you will find rest. There can be no rest but a grievous burden upon the soul until it comes to Christ. If the soul understands this, and if it does not, it is in an even worse condition. Though it may not feel the burden due to ignorance, most people spend their lives in such ignorance and never become aware of it. But when the soul comes to understand the terms between God and itself, and how it must stand before God—whether under a covenant of works or a covenant of grace—and realises that, by nature, it is under the covenant of works, this law that accepts no mere efforts becomes a great burden upon the soul, and it sees the absolute necessity of coming to Christ for ease and rest.

**Fourthly**, the burden of the law is exceedingly great in this respect: upon any one breach of the law, the soul becomes so broken that it loses the ability to keep any part of the law forever. I have said that this is something unique to the law, in contrast to the Gospel. Under the covenant of works, upon breaking the law in any one instance, the soul becomes so broken that it loses all ability to keep any part of the law again, unless God restores that ability through His grace.

Consider Adam as an example. Adam was the head of the first covenant of works, under the law. Now, Adam broke the law in one

particular—he failed in one thing that God required of him. In breaking the law in that one instance, he and all his posterity were so broken that they lost all ability to keep the law forever, unless God should come and create a new ability within them. They lost the ability given to them at their creation. So, this is a profound mystery: by committing a single act of evil, a person weakens the opposite habit—by doing something wrong, one can completely lose the ability to do good. Not only does one lose the habit that is contrary to the evil committed, but one loses all habits of all good whatsoever—and that by one act.

Now, this is something beyond nature—it occurs by virtue of the covenant of works. God established such a covenant that if Adam sinned in one thing, he must die. That is, his soul as well as his body must die a spiritual death, and he would lose all the habits of grace. This is why, by nature, we are dead in sin.

Moreover, such is the condition of the law that even if God were to restore us to the perfection Adam had in the state of innocence—void of all sin, and having the image of God in its perfection—if God were to place us under the covenant of works again, a single failure in any one thing would still break us. We would lose all our abilities to perform any duty thereafter. This is the nature of the law. But it is not so with the Gospel: though we sin against the Gospel, we do not immediately lose all our habits of grace.

The reason for this difference—why Adam, after sinning against the law, lost all his ability to do good, yet we, even after sinning against the Gospel, do not lose all our habits of grace—I shall explain later when I discuss how the yoke of the Gospel is easier than that of the law. This is the fourth aspect of the burden of the law.

**Fifthly**, another aspect of the burden of the law is this: upon every breach of the law, it immediately takes advantage against the soul. I say, it takes advantage against the soul at once and binds it over to death—to eternal death—instantly. It places the soul under a curse for every breach, immediately. It is true that the law may not be executed as soon as a sinner breaks it, but rest assured, these three things happen to everyone who is outside of Christ as soon as they commit any sin:

**First**, the sinner is bound over by God's justice, by such a bond that has more strength in it than all the power of heaven and earth combined could break. As a man who has committed an evil act, the law may not execute punishment upon him immediately, but he is nevertheless bound over at once.

And not only that, but, in the **second place**, the law passes sentence. The binding over constitutes the guilt, but the law passes the sentence upon the sinner and condemns him. The soul is immediately under the sentence of condemnation.

**Thirdly**, the law places the sinner under a curse, for it is written at the end of Deuteronomy 27: *"Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."* Notice, *"everyone"* who does not continue in *"all things"* is pronounced accursed. This is the fifth particular burden.

**Sixthly**, the sixth burden is that the law demands constant obedience. Such is its rigor that even if you were able to obey it perfectly for most of your life, yet at the last hour you were to fail in even one particular, all your prior obedience would be for nothing. The law would still take advantage of that one failure and condemn you for it. This is the condition of the law. Even if you could keep it perfectly for your whole life, one single failure would cause it to

reject all your previous obedience and condemn you. This is the condition of all who are under the covenant of works. Is this not a heavy load? Would this not burden the soul? If the soul comes to understand it, or even if it does not, it is nevertheless the truth of God.

**Seventhly**, the seventh burden of the law is that once a sinner has broken it, the law cannot be satisfied by any obedience the sinner may offer afterwards. Suppose a person has greatly angered someone and wishes to make amends. A servant might think, "*Though I have offended my master and made many mistakes, I will make amends for all.*" Similarly, many people think, "*Though we have broken God's law and lived in sin for a long time, we will make amends. We will give alms, go to church, and do better.*" These are the thoughts of many poor, ignorant souls who do not understand the terms under which they stand before God. All people stand before God either under the covenant of works or the covenant of grace—one of the two. Those who reason in this way are surely not acquainted with the covenant of grace; they are under the covenant of works. And they should know that the covenant of works admits of no such amends. Once you have broken the law, no amount of good you do can ever satisfy for what is past.

Even if you were to live for a thousand years and be perfectly obedient, or be willing to suffer greatly for God, it would not make up for your previous sins. Many, when they have sinned and their consciences are somewhat awakened, think that by living better and doing otherwise in the future, they can make amends for what has been done. But you must understand that this is a deceit and will never satisfy. You must come to Christ, for only through Him can amends be made. You may say, "*If we cannot make amends, what will become of us?*" It is true that, if there were no Saviour, no Christ,

your condition would be utterly hopeless. Amends must be made, but it is impossible for you to make them yourself.

You must not only think about what you are bound to do for the future, but also how you will make up for the breach of the law in the past. When the sinner contemplates both of these things—*"I have sinned; Lord, what shall I do for the future?"* and *"How can I make up for breaking the law in the past?"*—this will burden the soul. The soul will feel such a heavy weight that nothing in the world can give it rest until it comes to Christ. If we truly understood this, we would see that our condition outside of Christ is a restless one, and Christ's invitation would be most welcome.

Now, I was reluctant to speak of rest before first explaining this burden. Otherwise, you might respond as those Jews did to Christ in another instance, when He said, *"If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."* They replied, *"We have never been in bondage to anyone."* (John 8:33) You might have similarly questioned, *"Why do you speak of rest? What restless condition are we in?"* But now that you see your restless condition, I trust you will be more willing to listen to Christ's invitation: *"Come to me, and I will give you rest."* These things will help you understand what it means to believe and come to Christ, once you comprehend the state you are in when outside of Christ.

**8.** An eighth particular is this: the law accepts no repentance. Just as it will not allow for any amends to be made, neither will it accept repentance. Let the sinner be as sorrowful as they wish for what they have done, and lament their sin as much as they can; even if they were to bewail their sin with tears of blood, the law would not accept it. You may say, *"This is a strange doctrine—that our repentance should not be accepted."* I do not say that God absolutely refuses to

accept repentance, but I do say that the law refuses it. Repentance is the doctrine of the Gospel; the law preaches no such doctrine as repentance. Repentance is an evangelical doctrine. However, there is a kind of repentance that arises merely from a troubled conscience—a natural repentance, not evangelical. This is when a person sees that they are in danger because of their sin, becomes troubled by it, and goes no further. I say, this is a natural repentance, not evangelical.

When you consider repenting of your sins, it is a saving meditation to reflect upon your repentance in this way: *"I am now sorry and repent and am humbled for my sin."* But know that this is only accepted because of the second covenant—the covenant of grace. It is through infinite mercy in God, and that in Christ, purchased by the blood of Christ, that any sorrow for sin is accepted by God. You must thank Christ for this. Therefore, when you come to mourn for your sins, approach it as a work of the Gospel, an evangelical work. Come freely to it, for anything that is a work of the Gospel is a fruit of the blood of Christ. It is a great mercy from God that you are even allowed to come before Him to sorrow for your sins in such a way that you may be saved.

All your tears and trouble for sin, unless they come through the grace of the Gospel, are not accepted. Yet how many thousands of poor souls never consider this when they repent? Perhaps when they lie on their sick or deathbeds, their consciences tell them there is a hell and misery for sinners. There they lie, roaring and crying out, but the truth is they never understood the way of God in the covenant of grace, or how the Lord views the children of men under the covenant of works. They do not realize that God has now entered into a second covenant through His Son, providing a way for salvation that could not be found under the first covenant.

We must understand that the law accepts no repentance. Oh, what a burden it is when, in sorrow for my sins, I think that God will pardon me, yet find myself cursed under a law that accepts no repentance. But when we come to Christ, then godly sorrow is accepted, and it becomes "*sorrow unto life.*" That is the privilege of those under the covenant of grace in Christ. Therefore, consider this point seriously, that you may make a clear distinction between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. There is nothing more important in all theology for you to understand than these two things. People who are not acquainted with these two covenants understand very little of the mysteries of salvation. Indeed, I say that those who do not understand the difference between the first and second covenants—between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace—understand very little, if anything, about true divinity. The right understanding of the difference between these two covenants opens the door to a great deal of knowledge. I dare say that after people come to understand this difference, they will, in just a few months, gain more knowledge in the main principles of religion than they had in many years before. For lack of understanding this one thing, people make gross errors in many points of religion and never come to know Christ in the way He is presented in the Gospel. That is the eighth point.

**9.** Ninthly, the burden of the law also appears in this: it only reveals man's misery and then leaves him there. It is like a surgeon who opens a wound but then leaves it exposed in the open air without healing it. The law tells us of our misery but does not reveal any way of redemption or deliverance; it merely shows us our misery and leaves us. I do not mean the law as found in the Old Testament Scriptures, for there, the Gospel is mingled in. I am not saying that Moses does not tell us of redemption, but I am referring to the law as part of the covenant of works, as far as it is revealed in Moses and



also in much of the New Testament. This law only shows us our misery and then leaves us, but grace, truth, and mercy come through Jesus Christ.

**Tenthly**, A tenth particular in which the grievous bondage under the law appears is this: it is such a law that there can be no appeal from it, nor any repeal of it. Though it is strict and severe, I say there is no appeal from it, nor any repeal of it. Many laws allow for an appeal or may be repealed if found to be too harsh. However, with this law, there is no appealing its authority, nor can it be repealed. You might say, *"This leaves us with no help."* Though human laws may be hard and oppressive, people can often find ways to repeal them. But with God's law, there seems to be no appeal and no repeal.

Can we not appeal from God's justice to His mercy seat? I have indeed mentioned such an expression, but it must be carefully understood. The truth is, there is no proper appeal from God's justice to His mercy. When the sinner comes to Christ, the pardon is sealed in the court of justice as well as in the court of mercy. No soul is saved without both God's justice being satisfied and His mercy being glorified. There is no repeal of this law.

You may ask, *"Must the law stand in force then?"* Yes, the law shall stand in force, and yet thousands of souls will be saved. *"How can that be?"* you may ask. This is the mystery of the Gospel—that the law shall stand in force, and yet people will be saved. There is a way to save souls, despite this. Certainly, if the law were to continue on its course, it would carry all mankind to eternal destruction. And so it would have done, but for the great Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who calls sinners to Him that they might find rest.

Christ comes and puts Himself under the law. He fulfils what the law requires, both in His actions and in His sufferings. The law continues

its course, but where it might have required punishment upon us in person, God is content that it should take its course upon our surety—Christ. When a person owes a debt, the law requires repayment. It's one thing for the law to be repealed, and another for the debtor to be delivered. If a surety steps in to repay the debt, the debtor is delivered, even though they did not pay it themselves. Yet, the law has been satisfied because the surety has discharged what the debtor owed.

In the same way, the path of salvation for any soul is not through appealing from the law or having it repealed, but through acknowledging that the law has its course, though that course is directed toward Christ, our surety. Christ fully satisfies the law. To view Christ this way—as the one made under the law, who endured the law's course upon Himself and satisfied it—is to see Him as the true object of our faith. Unless we understand Christ in this way, we do not see Him rightly as the object of faith. Christ calls upon those who are weary and heavy-laden to come to Him, as if He were saying, *"Poor sinners, you are under such a covenant, and though it has not been repealed, I have come and placed Myself under it. The law has had its course upon Me. Come to Me, and the law will be satisfied—it will have no more to say against you. You shall find true rest in Me. Come, therefore, to Me."*

**Eleventhly:** The eleventh point about the law is this: it is so far from enabling us to perform the obedience it requires that, in our wretched condition, the more it is revealed, the more our corruptions are stirred up. Through our own fault (not any fault in the law), the law stirs up our corruptions all the more. Luther compares it to water poured on lime—it causes a reaction. Similarly, when the law comes into the heart in its natural state (before God overcomes it with the grace of the Gospel), it stirs up even more corruption.

You have a notable example of this in the words of Paul, who experienced it in himself. In Romans 7:5, he says, "*For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*" And again, in verse 8, "*For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.*" It took occasion by the commandment. There are many people who are made worse by hearing the law revealed to them until God, by the grace of the Gospel, pleases to overcome their hearts.

Now, when you put all these points together, and a soul becomes enlightened to understand them, do you not think such a soul will be burdened? Is it not a burden to be in this condition? Is it possible for the soul to have any rest in this state? You may say these things are hard to grasp. But first, if you understood the infinite holiness of God and His infinite justice, with whom you have to deal, and if you understood the perfect condition in which God created man at the beginning, these things would be clearer to you.

Present before your soul the infinite holiness and justice of the great God with whom you must deal. Then, consider the perfect state in which God made man in his innocence. Once you see these things, everything will be clearer. And if these things were preached to you alone, without any further teaching, they would indeed seem harsh. But they are all part of the greater invitation of Christ.

## **Chapter 8**

## Three Conclusions Arising from the Former Doctrine Concerning the Burden Under the Law:

- Namely, 1. That Man by Nature is in an Evil Case.  
2. That It Is a Mighty Work to Save a Soul.  
3. That Those Vain Thoughts by Which Men Think to Pacify Their Consciences Will Stand Them in No Stead.

Now, upon hearing these things, we may rightly draw the following conclusions.

**First**, certainly, man is in an ill case by nature. It is observed of the people of Israel, when Pharaoh increased their bondage, that the Scripture tells us the people saw they were in an ill case. So, when we understand the condition we are in under this bondage, we may conclude that indeed man is in an ill case by nature.

**Secondly**, another conclusion may be drawn: that it is a mighty work to save a soul. It is not a trivial matter for a soul to be saved; great things must be done by God to save a soul. Many people confess that they are sinners and cry to God for mercy, thinking it is all done once they have asked. But if you understood the condition you are in by nature, and the righteousness of God, you would conclude that it is a mighty work of God to save any soul, and you would realise your need to seek after salvation earnestly and in good time.

**Thirdly**, hence follows this conclusion: those vain thoughts that men have to pacify their consciences and quiet their hearts will be of no use. For instance, many reason like this: "*I am not as bad as others.*" What if you are not? If you are under the law, you are condemned a thousand times over. You might say you do some good things, sometimes go to church, and pray to God. But what is that

compared to keeping the entire law? If you are in your natural state, reasoning in this way shows that you are seeking salvation by your own deeds. For someone to say, *"I do what I can, and I am truly sorry that I cannot do better,"* will not enable you to stand with comfort before the infinitely righteous God. You must know the state you are in under the law and how you are condemned by it. These are not arguments that can bring rest to your soul. If they could, Christ would never have called in this manner.

You must know that your condition is such that neither the angels in heaven nor men on earth can give rest to your soul. If you understood this, you would be convinced: *"Well, I see that there is a burden upon me, even though I have not been fully aware of it; it is such a burden that will press me down to eternal misery, and now I see that I need Christ."*

Certainly, if congregations were aware of this burden of the law, how their souls would rejoice in the Gospel and praise the Lord that their ears are blessed to hear such good news: *"Come to me, and I will give you rest."* I appeal to you: is the opening up of the law not useful in bringing you to Christ? There are many frivolous spirits who call those ministers who seek, out of conscience, to do good to souls and draw them out of their natural state, "legal men," "legal preachers," and such names. But I appeal to your consciences—after knowing these things, will you not come to understand the way to Christ better than you did before? If I had mentioned the name of Christ five hundred times over and over again, would you have come to understand the mystery of God in Christ as much as by hearing what the difference is between the first covenant of works and being under the law? And by learning that Christ came into the world to deliver us from this first covenant?

He took on our nature and put Himself under the law so that He might free us from such a heavy yoke and bondage. In this blessed Scripture, He calls all souls who feel this yoke and burden to come to Him, that they may find rest.

So much for this first particular: what is the bondage that the soul is under when it is under the law? Are you now aware of this? Christ is calling you. Perhaps some of you may say, "*We have not been aware of this.*" Do you begin to understand it? Is God starting to shine some light on it for you? Do you feel it pressing somewhat on your hearts? Blessed be God for that—you are now more prepared to hear about the covenant of grace.

When you go home, let the husband say to the wife, "*We have heard today about two covenants, as it says in Galatians 4:22. There are two covenants, and these are set out in the allegory of the bondwoman and the free woman. Now, until we understand what the other covenant is, we are still under the former covenant, the covenant of works.*" This is what you should labour to understand. Let husbands and wives ask one another about the difference between the two covenants. Ask, "*What is the covenant of works, and upon what terms does it run? And what is the covenant of grace, and upon what terms does it run?*" In doing so, you will come to understand the rest of this text with more benefit and advantage to your souls.

## Chapter 9

*Of the Burden of Legal Performances: What It Is, With the Burdensomeness Thereof Laid Open in Twelve Particulars.*

1. There is no inward principle of doing.
2. In men that are only under the Law, there is a principle contrary to the performance thereof.
3. Such are wearied with doing, getting no supply of strength to perform duty.
4. By their performances, they still contract more guilt upon their souls.
5. What they do in obedience to the Law is only out of fear.
6. And with much narrowness of spirit.
7. Nothing comes of such performances.
8. Those who perform duty in a merely legal way never attain their end, which is peace with God.
9. They do not know whether God accepts or rejects them.
10. They are forced into duties instantly, and suddenly, even to the hindrance of other duties of greater importance, which God requires of them at the same time.
11. Though they continue struggling, they do not know whether they will hold out to the end.
12. Their humiliation and trouble for not doing what they ought hinders them from doing what God requires.

Now there is one more thing, an appendix to the burden of the Law, which flows from and is tied to it: the burden of legal performances. Not only is there the burden of the Law in terms of what it requires—the perfect obedience the Law demands—but there is also a burden that many bear, a very heavy and grievous one: the burden of legal performances. This is the subject of this chapter. I intend to go no further than to speak of this burden and to open it up to you. As I mentioned when first explaining the text, this is Chrysostom's

interpretation: *"You that are weary and heavy laden,"* that is, *"you that are burdened with seeking righteousness under the Law. Come unto me, and I will give you rest."*

**First**, I will explain what I mean by the burden of legal performances.

**Secondly**, I will show what a great burden this is, how much evil there is in it, and then apply myself to those who are under this burden, showing how Christ calls them in this text to come to Him for rest.

**First**, what I mean by the burden of legal performances is this: performing duties that are required by the Law merely out of conscience, because conscience compels men and women to do them, and performing these duties in their own strength. They then view these performances as the righteousness they must present to God, as righteousness unto life. This is what I mean by legal performance. To perform duties in a legal way is to do what the Law requires merely out of conscience, because conscience says it must be done. This is done in one's own strength—though it is God who gives that strength, it is still only natural strength. And such a person views these acts as their righteousness and presents them to God as righteousness for life. This is a legal performance.

Those who perform duties this way will find it to be a very great burden to their spirits. It is a burden to those who do this sincerely, to those who are conscientious. We are not now talking about hypocrites who perform duties only to be seen by others, making a show of what they do not have in their hearts. We speak of those who have gone beyond such hypocrisy, who perform duties out of conscience, yet rise no higher than looking at the Law that binds them to these duties, presenting them to God as their righteousness,



and doing them for life. Such people, who are not acquainted with the mystery of the Gospel, go under a most grievous burden all their days.

I do not say that it is a burden to perform duties required by conscience when they are done to the honour of God, in the strength of Christ, as a work of the Spirit's sanctification, and as a fruit of our thankfulness for God's grace and mercy in Christ. That is no burden at all. But to do these duties merely as a matter of compulsion by conscience and as righteousness for life—this is the burden. Though men and women may have no other principle but this, they may still be very conscientious, not daring to commit any known sin in secret. They may be diligent in secret duties and even abundant in performing many duties.

In Micah 6:6-7, the people ask: "*What shall we do? Shall we give rivers of oil and thousands of rams, or the fruit of our bodies for the sin of our souls?*" There you have the expressions of those who are legal. They want to know what they must do, professing that they are willing to do anything to save their souls, offering thousands of rams and rivers of oil as a sacrifice.

Likewise, someone who is merely legal may perform many duties, and they may be conscientious in all they know. There may be a kind of universal obedience in them, striving to obey in all things they are aware of. Outwardly, they may make a point of doing everything they know to be God's will, and yet all this may be done in a legal way. Such performance is a burden rather than a blessing. Unless they come to know more than they currently do—to understand the evangelical way of performing duties—they cannot find true rest for their souls.

Now, this (like the previous point) is of great consequence to many. Some who read this book may not clearly understand what this is; they may not feel any such thing in their own experience. However, I believe I shall speak directly to the hearts of some, revealing their condition to them. They will realise that they have not taken the right course to find rest for their souls, and I speak to this end: that they may listen to the blessed invitation of the gospel, to come to Christ so that they might find rest.

As you now perceive a little of what I mean by legal performances, we will move on to show how burdensome these legal performances are for those who are familiar with nothing but the performance of duties merely from the Law.

## **The First Burden of Legal Performances**

1. They are burdensome because people are tasked with duties for which they have no inward principle. To be assigned a work where there is no inner drive to do it must inevitably be burdensome. Conscience may demand that I perform the duty, which is right, but I have no inward principle to fulfil it. Still, I must do it, conscience insists, whether I have an inward principle or not. Even if I lack the inward motivation to meet the Law's full demands, I might still perform some outward actions. Now, for me to attempt such work, striving to fulfil all that the Law requires—not just the outward actions, but the whole work—without any inward drive, is necessarily burdensome.

All movements in nature that arise from an external principle, rather than an internal one, are forced and therefore tedious, heavy, and troublesome. Similarly, any sense of duty that does not come from an inward principle of the heart, but is merely legal, is a forced

movement. Conscience pushes the soul toward duty but does not provide the soul with the principle to fulfil it. This forced movement is what makes it so tedious, heavy, and burdensome.

Herein lies the burden. Contrary to the vain conceits of some, who believe the duty should not be performed because they lack an inward principle, the real burden is that conscience binds you to do it, even though you lack the inward drive to accomplish it.

## **The Second Burden of Legal Performances**

2. Another burden of legal performances arises because, in all people who are under the Law but have not yet become true believers, sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, there exists a contrary principle—one that opposes these duties. There is an inner conflict, a stream flowing in the opposite direction. It is like a boatman rowing against the wind and tide; he must exert a great deal of effort. So it is until the soul comes to believe in Christ and receives the Spirit of Christ. When a person has only the conviction of conscience, being forced into duties, they are still beset by the corrupt inclinations of their heart, by evil principles within. These act like the wind and tide, pushing against their efforts. Yet conscience tells them they must do these duties, even though their inclinations pull them strongly in the opposite direction.

When God strengthens the conscience, it will compel a man or woman to persist in duty, no matter how contrary it may be to their own nature. You might ask, "*If it is so contrary to their nature, why don't they simply give up?*" They dare not. However, we shall see

later that even godly believers also experience burdens due to their corruptions. They too have conflicting principles, but these are not as powerful as they are in unbelievers who are merely legal.

Casting a stone upward is a tedious task. Even to move a stone in any direction is some effort because it is being moved away from its natural resting place. But to move it in a direction completely contrary to its nature is especially burdensome, for all heavy objects have an inward principle that pulls them downward. When you force them to move in a way that defies this natural principle, the effort creates a burden because they are being kept from their natural resting place. In the same way, conscience may keep a man or woman from following their natural inclination to wickedness. As long as they are kept from the sinful course to which their nature inclines them, it must inevitably feel burdensome until God comes and sanctifies their hearts. Many people whose consciences are convinced may go on performing duties without ever having their hearts sanctified.

## **The Third Burden of Legal Performances**

3. One who performs duties in a merely legal way grows weary and tired of what they do, yet finds no strength coming to them—no greater ability to perform what conscience requires than they had at first, perhaps even less ability. Now, this must inevitably be burdensome. Suppose a man is set to work, and if he has no desire to do it, that is already tedious. But if it goes against the grain—completely contrary to his disposition—that is even more tedious. Yet, he must continue, toiling and wearying himself, only to find the task more grievous the longer he works, for no strength comes to assist him. Rather, his strength fades, and yet

the work remains as demanding as before. This must surely be burdensome.

It is like someone beginning work while cold and numb, but as they continue, they warm up and the work becomes less burdensome. However, if they continue and only become colder, the task becomes very tedious. For those who perform duties in a merely legal way, conscience first spurs them on with some vigour, but soon they grow more weary, and the work becomes more tedious. Yet, conscience demands just as much work as at the beginning. It is like a man who, after working hard and growing tired, desires rest, only for a cruel taskmaster to tell him, "There must be no decrease in your work, nor any increase in your strength." Such labour must be extremely wearisome.

This is the difference between works done in sanctification and legal performances: though sanctified works may seem difficult at first, strength increases as the soul sets about them. The more work there is, the more strength there is. They do not spend all their strength and grow more weary as time goes on. Instead, as they experience the ways of God more, they gain strength, grow warm in their work, and find it easier. But this is not the case with someone who performs duties in a merely legal way. Some may have spent seven years in a profession of religion, conscientiously doing their duties, yet after all that time, their hearts are no more mortified than when they began. They have gained no more strength than at first, their lusts are no more subdued, and their spiritual strength has diminished. Therefore, their work must become all the more grievous.

## **The Fourth Burden of Legal Performances**

4. Those who perform duties in a merely legal way, while striving to fulfil their duties, are continually adding more guilt to their souls. They strive to do what the Law requires, yet in their striving, they break the Law. You might say that even godly men, while striving to do their duty, still sin—there is imperfection in the best. However, the sin of the godly is covered by Christ; it is not held against them. But those who are merely legal sin while striving, and they heap guilt upon themselves. That guilt remains, and they stand charged with it.

You may say, “Wouldn’t it be better, then, if they didn’t strive at all?” No, not so. Conscience demands that they strive; it would be a greater guilt if they did not. Yet even as they strive, they accumulate more guilt than they had before. This is a grievous burden. It is as though a man were rolling a stone up a hill, only for it to roll back down upon him again. It would be an exhausting task. So it is with those who are merely legal: while they perform their duties, their corruptions drag them down again, and they continually add to the guilt upon their souls.

## **The Fifth Burden of Legal Performances**

5. Those who perform duties in a merely legal way do so purely out of fear. They are driven to their duties in a harsh and rigorous manner, by force and constraint. When you force a man to do something against his will, it is very tedious for him. And when that force is applied with harshness, it becomes even more burdensome. Slaves, for example, are not simply urged to do

their duties; they are forced into them with blows and lashes. This makes their lives burdensome. If they were encouraged gently and lovingly, they could do just as much work with far greater ease. But when everything is done through harshness and force, their lives become unbearable.

So it is with those under the Law. They perform their duties, but how? They are driven by the terror of the Law, with flashes of hellfire in their conscience, and the fear of God's judgment bearing down upon them. They fear that unless they fulfil their duties, God's judgment will pursue them. In the night, in the dark, they are filled with terror. When this terror strikes, they must pray, even if they have no desire to do so, for otherwise, their conscience will torment them the next day. They are like the children of Israel in Egypt, forced by their taskmasters to work with such harshness that their lives became unbearable. But those who are sanctified perform their duties out of love, and thus their duties are sweet and delightful to them.

## **The Sixth Burden of Legal Performances**

6. Those who are merely legal in their performances do their duties with much narrowness of spirit. They rarely experience any enlargement of heart in what they do. They perform the duties (if they do them at all) in a dull and lifeless manner—simply getting the task done and no more. Their spirits are exceedingly constrained. They must pray, spend the required time in prayer, but when they rise from prayer, they find their hearts are as restricted as ever. I do not deny that godly men or women may experience this at times, but when duties are performed in a merely legal way, this is the constant condition. What a burden

it is for the soul to think, “I can never enter God's presence without a dead, narrow heart. Others have hearts that are enlarged, but I only go through the motions, feeling my heart completely constrained in the duty.” So, they go through the motions, yet they remain constrained, dead, and dull in the performance of their duties.

## **The Seventh Burden of Legal Performances**

7. Those who perform duties in a purely legal way find nothing fruitful comes from their efforts. They are like a horse going round in a mill or a man trying to split a knotty piece of wood. He strikes at it, but the hardness of the wood causes the axe to rebound, and no progress is made. Even if a man works hard, if he sees his work advancing, there is some comfort. But when he labours and labours, and nothing moves or improves, that is burdensome. If a man is tasked with pulling a log out of a ditch and works from morning until night, pulling and pulling, yet finds the log no further out at night than it was in the morning, and he knows he must resume the next day, this would be very tiresome. So it is with those who are merely legal in their performances. They find little or no result from all their efforts, and this must indeed be burdensome.

You who have been burdened in this way should know that this very text speaks to you. Christ has thoughts of you, and he calls you to himself, saying, “Come to me.” It is as if Christ is saying, “There is another way for you to find ease and rest for your souls. It is true, you must continue to do your duty, but you must come to know me in the Gospel before you can find true ease and rest for your souls.”



## **The Eighth Burden of Legal Performances**

8. Those who perform duties in a purely legal way can never achieve their ultimate goal, no matter how hard they toil. No matter how many duties they perform or how much they increase their efforts, they can never reach their goal. What is their goal, you ask? Their goal is peace with God, eternal life, and to live in fellowship with Him. It's true that base hypocrites seek material gain. Many put on a show of religion, entering homes and talking about good things just to get a meal or some other advantage, driven by a lowly and unworthy spirit. But I speak here of those who are of a higher mind, who perform duties out of conscience yet never achieve their goal, nor will they, until they come to know more of Christ. I speak of those who sincerely desire rest for their souls, yet in this legal way of performing duties, they will never find the rest they seek. Therefore, it must be a great burden to them.

## **The Ninth Burden of Legal Performances**

9. Those who perform duties in a merely legal way continue their duties, but whether God accepts their efforts or not, they cannot tell. They feel compelled to perform these duties, but whether God is their friend or their enemy, they do not know. Every day, they offer up their duties to God, but they do not know whether they are offering them to an enemy or a friend. Sometimes they may have a faint hope that God accepts them, but they never come to a clear understanding of God's acceptance. They constantly live with doubts about God's disposition toward them, fearing that God will take advantage of their failings at the last moment. This must be burdensome indeed.

Many poor souls have gone on for years, one seven-year period after another, all because they have not yet come to Jesus Christ for rest for their souls. When a sinner comes to Christ, then comes rest to the heart. When a sinner can say with confidence, “Though my heart is full of corruption, though my duties are full of imperfections, yet through the covenant of grace, the Lord accepts me and my efforts,” there is true peace. However, those who perform their duties in a merely legal way never come to know whether God accepts them, no matter how well they may perform their duties.

## **The Tenth Burden of Legal Performances**

10. Those who perform duties in a purely legal manner are often hurried on to do what conscience demands, even though their weakness means that performing this particular duty at this time will hinder them from doing other, more important duties that God requires. Yet, they feel compelled to do it. I am not saying that duties should not be done at this time, but such individuals, driven by conscience, are often rushed to perform them immediately. In their weakness, doing one thing now hinders their ability to perform other, more significant duties later. I have seen this in many who are burdened by this issue. When they perceive something good to be done, they think they must do it at once, even though doing so now will prevent them from fulfilling other duties later.

However, those who understand the liberty they have in Christ can discern better. They can appeal to God, knowing that their heart is upright. Even if they refrain from doing something that is good in itself, their conscience is clear, knowing that it is not out of wilful neglect of God's glory, but because their weakness would prevent

them from fulfilling other obligations. They trust that God will accept them in Christ and pardon their infirmities. But those under the burden of legalism feel driven by conscience, regardless of their strength, even when they are least able to perform strong duties. This stems from a lack of understanding of the liberty they have in Christ, where Christ accepts them based on what they are able to do. The Gospel assures this acceptance: as long as they pursue their duty with upright hearts, even if they cannot accomplish everything due to their weakness, God accepts them for Christ's sake. Yet, the legalist lacks this assurance, and conscience presses them to perform the most demanding tasks when they are weakest, resulting in them doing less for God than they otherwise would or should.

## **The Eleventh Burden of Legal Performances**

11. Those who perform duties in a merely legal way toil on without knowing whether they will endure to the end. They may say, "I continue doing my duty, but what will become of me, only God knows." They fear that after all their labour and toil, they might prove to be apostates or backsliders in the end. They are filled with self-doubt, constantly afraid of falling away under the pressure of troubles and afflictions, fearing they will reveal themselves as hypocrites, unsound in their faith. These thoughts make both their lives and their duties burdensome.

But those who are in Christ, enjoying the freedom of the Gospel, can go forward in peace, knowing that even in their weakness, they are sustained by an everlasting strength. They trust in an eternal principle that will carry them through to everlasting life. Oh, what a rest this is! To know that, despite weakness, one is secure in the

strength of Christ, moving towards eternal life. Meanwhile, the legalist is filled with doubts, thinking, "What if I fall away at the last?" This makes their duties heavy and their lives troubled. Still, Christ calls out to such people: "Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

## **The Twelfth Burden of Legal Performances**

12. Those under the burden of legalism are driven by conscience to perform duties, but their humiliation and distress over not doing what they ought to do hinder them from performing what God requires. This is a sad condition—to fail in one's duty and then be so troubled by the failure that it prevents further obedience. Those with true, evangelical humility find that their sorrow for sin makes them more fit to perform their duties, but for the legalist, it only makes them more unfit. Their hearts grow sullen, fretful, and resistant, which further hinders their obedience. First, they fail in their duties due to a hardened heart, and then, when they become troubled over their sin, they fail again, now due to their discontent and vexation.

This is a heavy burden. Some of you may recognise this in your own experience: the distress in your heart over your sin has hindered rather than helped you in your duties. Just as in Exodus, when Moses spoke to the children of Israel, the text says they did not listen because of the anguish of their hearts. In the same way, many people are burdened by legalistic troubles over their sins, and this prevents them from hearing the comforting sound of the Gospel. It makes them unfit to heed Christ's invitation to come to Him. Their distress

over sin becomes so overwhelming that it almost argues away the blessed comfort offered by the Gospel to their souls.

## **Chapter 10**

### **The Sad Condition of Those Under the Burden of Legal Performances Set Forth in Six Particulars.**

1. That which should be accounted their happiness is their misery.
2. It is a means to cause hard thoughts of God.
3. It causes great discouragement.
4. They bring an evil report upon the ways of God.
5. They keep no proportion therein.
6. They are kept away from Christ.

Now, what remains is to show you the sad condition of men and women who are under this legal performance. We shall find that their condition is very sad and insupportable to many. This text will appear to be one of wonderful mercy if we lay before you the sadness and grievousness of those who are under this burden.

### **The First Misery**

First, is it not a sad thing that what should be the chief joy of one's heart in this world—what should be considered one's privilege, happiness, and the beginning of eternal life—is instead accounted as misery? Consider this: the performance of duty, doing what God calls for, should be seen as our privilege, happiness, and the beginning of

eternal life. Indeed, it is so if we do it in the way God requires. But one who is under this burden performs duties in the mere outward act, considering them as necessary evils, and views them as unpleasant things they cannot avoid. This man or woman's condition is very sad, as what others see as their happiness, life, and glory, they perceive as their misery.

## **The Second Misery**

Secondly, there is this evil also in the burden of legal performances: it becomes a means to cause hard thoughts of God. If God goes no further with them than this, that they perform duties in a legal way, it will lead to many hard thoughts about God and His ways. They may often find themselves having such thoughts when their hearts are weighed down by this burden. They will think harshly of God, His law, and His ways. This is very grievous when the soul finds God's commandments to be burdensome, leading to murmuring and complaining against God, as many do who are troubled in conscience.

They continue in their duties, but because they receive no peace, comfort, or mastery over their corruptions, they begin to complain and murmur against God. They say, "I have done this and that, I have performed duties, and nothing comes of it." As a result, they begin to abandon and even hate those duties.

## **The Third Misery**

Thirdly, there is this evil also in the burden of legal performances: it causes a sinking discouragement. Their hearts sink into exceeding discouragement. After a while, they go on performing duties and find

nothing comes of it, and they sink under it in discouragement. They think it is in vain to go any further and desire to cast it off entirely, thinking that is the only way to find ease and rest. Hence, a way is opened for temptation, for the Devil to come and tempt them either to looseness or despair. Many times, this is the end of such poor souls unless God is pleased to come in and reveal Christ to them. One of these two conclusions follows: either they cast off the duties they once conscientiously performed and grow loose and profane, or if conscience continues to pursue them, they grow to despair. Sometimes, on their sickbed or deathbed, they fall into a raving and raging condition. By experience, we find that many, after a long time under a troubled conscience and performing duties in a legal way, have grown very profane. There was a time when they dared not neglect their duties—whether in family or private devotion—but later, they think this was merely legal and cast them off, giving themselves to looseness. Then they have nothing to plead for themselves but this: that they were under legal performances, so they left them off, thinking they have found rest. But, oh, how woeful it is to go to the Devil for rest! Had they come to Christ, they might have had true rest, but instead, they give their souls to the Devil's rest, growing loose and scandalous in their lives. I suppose if you observe carefully, you will not have to go far to find examples of this.

Others, who cannot master their conscience, fall into despair. When they come to their sickbed, their hearts are overwhelmed with despair, and thus they die. Oh, what a pity it is to lose souls that have gone this far in the way of religion. Consider this:

First, they do the same outward acts as God's people, performing the same duties.

Secondly, they are very conscientious in what they do, making their thoughts and secret ways a matter of conscience.

Thirdly, they know they have to do with God in everything. They have their hearts so attuned to this that they set themselves in the presence of God continually.

Fourthly, they have the fear of God—the fear of eternity—upon their hearts constantly, and yet they perish at last, all for lack of knowledge of the Gospel.

It is true that those who accuse certain preachers of putting people under legal duties without showing them the rest found in the Gospel and in Christ are right in their blame. It is a grievous burden to be under the Law and to do duties merely in a legal way. But our work is to invite you to come to Jesus Christ that you might have rest. If there are any who know what it is to be burdened with legal performances, the main thing I shall do is invite them to come to Jesus Christ, and I hope to bring them to their rest, for Christ graciously invites them to come to Him for that rest.

## **The Fourth Misery**

Fourthly, there is this evil in the burden of legal performances: those who perform duties in a legal way bring an evil report upon the ways of God. They go on heavily and dully in God's ways, giving others a poor impression of God's ways. When the heart is sanctified and carried on by a divine principle, such a one makes the ways of God beautiful and lovely to those with whom they interact. But those who perform duties merely in a legal way go on so pensively, sadly, and dully that there is no beauty at all in their conversation, and they make others afraid of those ways, perceiving them as tedious and irksome.

## **The Fifth Misery**



Fifthly, there is this evil in the burden of legal performances: those who perform duties merely in a legal manner do not maintain any proportion in the ways of God and in their duties, but act merely according to the stirring of their conscience. If conscience is awakened and stirred, they are careful to perform their duties, but if conscience does not stir them, they are careless again. Therefore, those who perform duties in this manner display inconsistency in their ways. Sometimes they are very strict, daring not for their lives to omit any duty, but at other times they become lax again. It is all according to the stirring of their conscience, not from the new nature.

For that which works according to a new nature works in a steady and consistent way, keeping proportion between one duty and another. This may be a means to test whether what you do is from a changed nature or from other principles. If there is consistency between one duty and another, and you are not overly zealous in one thing and negligent in another, that is a sign that your actions are from a new nature. But if you make conscience of some things and, at other times, allow yourself more liberty in others, it is a sign that what you do is done merely in a legal way. This must be burdensome: it is like walking on uneven ground, with one leg up and the other down, creating a great deal of weariness. Those who perform duties by the Spirit of God, however, find their way made even for them. Not that God's people are always equally devout, but generally, there is a steady and proportional walk in their actions.

## **The Sixth Misery**

Sixthly, there is this evil in the burden of legal performances: if, through these duties, their consciences come to be quieted, they are

kept away from Jesus Christ. There are no people more kept away from Christ than those who perform duties in a legal manner and find peace in their conscience through such means. Not only are they kept from Christ, but further, they set up their duties in the place of Christ, making them their justification. What is it that many people present before the Lord as their righteousness and hope of Heaven but the performance of such duties as the Law requires?

This is a great mistake. Though we are bound to obey God's Law, to make this our righteousness before God, setting it up as our claim to eternal life, is to remove Jesus Christ from His rightful office and make our own duties our saviours. This is exceedingly dangerous, yet how many people do this! I have taken more time with this point because it is not an argument we encounter every day, and also because I would have many, whose consciences have been enlightened and troubled, understand the root of their trouble and where it truly lies.

There are many people who are so far to be praised, as they are conscientious in duty, abstaining from sins that others indulge in, and performing duties that others neglect. Yet, they go on heavily and sadly for many years, not knowing the true ground of their trouble. They do not understand why they have been weighed down with sadness and heaviness for so long. The truth is, they have been performing their duties in a legal way, without knowing the way of the Gospel.

You may ask, "What is this way? How shall we be freed from this burden?" When I come to that, I shall show in some measure the rest we have in Christ from all these burdens I have described. Christ does not call us to omit duties any more than before, but in Christ, we shall see how these duties can be performed with much more ease

than before—not easier to the flesh, but in the spirit. Whoever you are that are under this burden of legal performances, if your heart tells you, "This is my condition," know that the Lord knows your condition. You may have made conscience of your ways for a long time, but you have done so in the very legal way described here. If this is your condition, take some comfort, knowing that Jesus Christ calls you. Your present condition may be sad, but there is help, hope, and remedy in Christ. Come to Him, and He has promised to give you rest and teach you to honour God in a way that will bring more comfort to your soul than the way you are now in. The way of the Gospel is a safe and speedy path to comfort, and it is a holy way too. The Gospel does not call you to make less of your duties than you did before. No, it is as holy a way as the one you are in now, but much safer and quicker. Christ calls you.

**Question:**

But you may ask, "Does Christ call those to come to Him for rest, as if He approves of their condition? And is it something that should be, that people ought to be burdened by these legal performances?"

**Answer:**

Some of these burdens, it is true, should be, and Christ approves of them. For example, being aware of the guilt of our sins and the remaining corruption in us. Christ calls such people, approving of these burdens in so far as they are good—though not truly good in the sense of justifying them. But there are other burdens upon sinners that Christ calls them to come to Him to be freed from—not because He approves of them, but because He pities them. He has compassion on those who are under these burdens, seeing them as suffering great misery.

Consider this: when a man makes conscience of his ways, Christ sees a soul making every effort to follow Him, with the fear of God and concern for eternal life in his heart, labouring to do what he can. Yet, if he continues in this legal way, thinking it will make him righteous before God and grant him eternal life, Christ knows all his efforts will come to nothing. If such a soul persists in this way, he will lose all the value of his duties, and despite all the conscientious effort, he will perish in the end unless he comes to understand the way of the Gospel—the way sinners are justified before God, despite their duties.

In tender compassion for such a soul, who has done so much and gone so far, the Lord Jesus Christ calls them to come to Him, that they may have rest and peace. Through Him, they can find the righteousness that will allow them to stand before God with comfort and attain eternal life. But for our coming to Christ and resting in Him, that belongs to another point. This, then, concludes the explanation of the burden of legal performances.

## **Chapter 11**

Of the Burden of Corruption, and that there is Corruption in the Saints.

Being a Burden:

1. Of Grief.
2. Of Shame.

3. Of Fear.
4. Of Care.
5. Of Labour and Toil.

The next burden is the burden of the remaining corruption in the saints—those who are godly, have a part in Christ, and have come to Christ already, but yet must come again and again. Though they are believers and have exercised faith to unite them to Christ, there still remains much corruption and sin in them. They must continually come to Christ to be eased of this corruption and exercise faith in Christ all the days of their lives to be relieved of the burden of remaining sin.

That the corruption which remains in the hearts of the saints is a burden, I believe every godly person can testify. There is no godly man or woman in the world who does not understand the meaning of this point. Perhaps the previous point about legal performances was one that many of you scarcely understood, but because I knew it was of great use to others, I could not let them lose their portion. However, none who has even a spark of godliness will fail to understand what I mean, and what I shall now say about the burden of corruption that still remains in the godly—the best who live upon the earth. This is something that everyone acknowledges; it is on the lips of nearly everyone: “We are all sinners.” But here is the difference between the wicked and the godly: the wicked have sin in them, but it is no burden to them. The godly, on the other hand, find that the remaining sin, however small, is a grievous burden. To these, I now speak from this text, and indeed, Christ Himself speaks to them: “Come unto me, you who are laden with the burden of corruption—the burden of sin that still remains in you—come to me, and I will give you rest from that burden.”

To prove that there is remaining corruption in the godly which is a burden to them, I will refer you to just one scripture, which will serve instead of many others. It is found in Romans 7:24, where Paul says, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?” And then he thanks God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Here we have a commentary on this text: “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?” There is the first part—the burden of corruption. Then he turns to Christ: “I thank God through Jesus Christ.” So then, with his mind he serves the law of God, but with his flesh, the law of sin. He finds ease and rest in Christ by running to Him. But note the scripture: “O wretched man that I am!” Paul, though a godly man and eminent in grace, still had a body of death—a body of sin remaining in him. He called his sin a “body of death” because it was deadly to his soul, and it was like a body because it was made up of many members, just as a body is. Many sins remained in him, and all the faculties of his soul and members of his body were defiled with sin, which is why he called it a body of death.

Now, the apostle was so aware of this burden that he let out a grievous cry: “O wretched man that I am!” He considered it his misery, which shows that it was a burden. Just as a man or woman who has a heavy load on their shoulders might give a painful cry when they can no longer bear it, so does the apostle here. Observe further: the apostle Paul had as much of the burden of affliction as anyone ever did. No one suffered more afflictions than he did, as you can read in 2 Corinthians 11. Paul was stoned, shipwrecked, abused by his own countrymen, naked, hungry, and whipped as though he were the most notorious rogue in the land. He bore the burden of disgrace, being considered the off-scouring of the world, and the burden of poverty, having no food or clothing, and being forced to wander from place to place. Yet, despite all these burdens, you never

read that Paul counted himself a wretched man because of them. He never cried out, “O wretched man that I am, because I am hungry” or “because I have no clothes” or “because I am whipped and abused.” You never find him lamenting his afflictions in this way. In fact, he rejoiced in affliction. When he was cast into prison, he sang psalms. When he was whipped, he rejoiced. But when it came to his sin, that was where he felt the weight of his burden, and he cried out: “Who shall deliver me from this?”

It is as if he were saying, “Lord, let me be afflicted as much as You will in this world. If only my soul could be delivered from the burden of my sin, I would consider myself a happy man.” And yet, Paul was delivered from the guilt of his sin. He knew he would never go to hell because of his sin, and he was delivered from the dominion of his sin as well. Yet still, he cried out under the burden of the remaining sin in him: “Who shall deliver me?” I appeal to you: what closet or secret chamber of yours can bear witness that you have ever cried out in this way about your sin? “O wretched man or woman that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of sin, from this wretched heart?” Many of you cry out about your poverty, disgrace, or troubles in your families, but who among you cries out, “Who shall deliver me from this body of death, from the sinfulness of my nature?”

Some of you may not even know whether you are delivered from the guilt of your sin, nor whether any of your sins have been pardoned. You are not delivered at all, and yet you do not cry out. But Paul, though delivered from the guilt of his sin, still cried out because of the remaining sin in his heart. There is much sin in many of your hearts, yet you do not cry out about it. Paul, being delivered, still cried out: “Who shall deliver me from this body of death?”

Now, to open this, I shall show:

**First**, how many ways the remaining part of corruption is a burden to the saints.

**Secondly**, what kind of burden it is.

**Thirdly**, I will open the particulars, showing that sinful nature is a burden, the stirring of corruption is a burden, and the prevailing of corruption is a burden.

**Fourthly**, why it is that God, in His providence, orders things so that His own saints remain under the burden of corruption. Then I will make some application of it.

## **First: In what respect the remaining part of sin and corruption in the hearts of the saints is a burden.**

### **The First Burden of Corruption:**

First, it is a burden of grief to them. You know grief causes heaviness and sadness. Now, the remaining corruption that they find in themselves is like lead, lying heavy upon their spirits with grief. It is the cause of their grief and trouble. Some might say to others, "Such and such people who profess religion go about very sadly and heavily. Once you become so strict in your way, you will lose all your comfort, for those people are always sad and pensive." But do you know the reason for their sadness? You have just as much cause to be sad as they do. The burden is not because they are religious, but because they are not more religious—not because they do more duties than before, but because they cannot find their hearts coming up to the level of their duties as they desire. Do not attribute their



grief to their godliness, but rather say to yourself: "If they, who do so much for God, are yet troubled and grieved because they do not do more for Him, how much more cause do I have for grief, who does nothing at all for God?"

### **The Second Burden of Corruption:**

Secondly, the remaining corruption in the hearts of the saints is a burden of shame. Grief is a burden, and shame is a burden. Many people who can bear great burdens, like poverty, cannot bear the burden of disgrace. For those with the most sensitivity, shame is one of the greatest burdens in the world. Now, the saints are ashamed of the corruption that remains in them. They consider it a shame before the Lord, before His blessed angels, and in regard to themselves—what they know about themselves that the world does not. They regard it as shameful to the point of loathing and abhorring themselves, as Scripture says. Perhaps their lives are such that others honour and think highly of them, but being acquainted with their own hearts and looking into the secret workings of their own spirits, they see so much evil within that they feel much cause to abhor and loathe themselves and to lie down in shame before the Lord, knowing that He sees even more of the evil in their hearts than they do themselves.

I appeal to anyone who knows their own heart: if God were to open up your heart and reveal to your friends and acquaintances the evil in your heart in just one duty—whether in prayer or while hearing a sermon—would you not be ashamed? Now, God knows and sees all the baseness and vileness of your spirit. The godly know this, and so they cannot help but be ashamed and go under the burden of shame with heavy hearts.

### **The Third Burden of Corruption:**

Thirdly, the remaining corruption in the hearts of the godly brings with it a burden of fear. Fear, as you know, is a great burden, just as grief and shame are. Though the evil may not be immediately upon them, if there is any anticipated evil, it causes great burden. Consider those who dare not go out at night because of fear, or who are afraid to be in the dark. When they are delivered from their fear, they acknowledge it as a great burden. Now, the godly live under a great deal of fear, and the truth is, the godly fear more what their own evil hearts might bring upon them than what all the devils in hell and all the creatures in the world could do to them. This is a good fear, but it causes them to walk heavily.

Others fear men, fear those who might come and take away their estates and ruin them, or fear their enemies or the devil. But one who is godly fears more the evil that may come to their soul from their own heart than all the harm that all the devils in hell can do. Devils cannot do more than afflict the body, but the evil of sin breaks the communion between the soul and God. Therefore, the godly fear sin before it comes. They have experienced the evil their hearts have done to them before, so they are afraid of failing again and are wary of the consequences their sin might bring. They do not know what mischief their sin might cause in the future, so they carry this burden of fear for a long time, even though they are truly godly.

### **The Fourth Burden of Corruption**

Fourthly, the remaining part of corruption in the hearts of the saints is a burden of care. For men and women to be always full of care is a great burden, as many of you are well acquainted. When you have a

great deal of business upon you, and much depends on you, your thoughts become full of care. Is this not a great burden? Many who have been full of business, and afterwards have got through it, regard that freedom as a great relief. The saints carry a burden of care because they find so much to do with their own hearts that they need to be watchful over them, day and night. They have experienced what happens when they have not kept a strict watch over their hearts, and so there is no child of God who, if he is in a right state, is not a careful person.

As long as we live in this flesh, our condition is full of fears, and therefore we must necessarily be full of care in this world. However, there is a great difference between the distracting care that wicked people have about their outward estate, and the care of the godly about keeping their peace with God, making peace with Him, avoiding the occasions and temptations to sin, and recovering themselves again when they have been overcome by sin. This must inevitably make them full of care. When a person has a great business to manage, they are full of care. No one in the world has as much business upon them as a godly man or woman. They know they have greater matters to handle than anyone else in the world—the care of their eternal state rests upon them.

Not only do they have important business upon them, but also a multitude of tasks. The life of a Christian is a busy life—a life full of significant tasks. A Christian woman has an abundance of duties to perform, and so it is vile for one who professes to be a Christian to be idle or spend time vainly. Have you nothing to do? You speak of "passing away time." A godly man or woman always has enough to do. They must prepare for eternity and make peace with God. In addition, there are multitudes of duties and many hindrances to overcome.

If you have important work to do, a multitude of tasks, and many hindrances—especially if your failure means you are undone—this will make you very careful. A man might fail in the world, and though that is not a great evil, it is far more serious for a Christian to fail in any duty they perform. When a Christian undertakes a duty, they think: *I must now bring all the faculties of my soul to bear upon this duty that God calls for.* And if they fail in that duty, they regard it as a greater evil than if they had lost their entire estate or health. Since they face many hindrances that may cause them to fail, they must be very careful.

Now, in Christ, there is a great deal of ease in this respect. Those who are acquainted with Christ's way find great relief from the burden of care. Those who perform duties but do not come to Christ will find that, as they are kept away from Him, the burden of care will increase. It is not only those who perform duties in a legalistic way who carry this burden of care, but even the godly.

## **The Fifth Burden of Corruption**

Fifthly, the corruption that remains in us brings a burden of labour and toil. There is no labour as intense as a Christian's struggle against their own corruptions. A Christian does not merely say, as many frivolous and superficial people do, "Lord, have mercy upon me, we are all sinners, and I wish I could do better, I have good intentions." No, a Christian knows that they must engage all the faculties of their soul and bend them against their corruption. If ever they toil, labour, and spend their strength, it must be in this effort to fight against their corruption.

However, there is also ease in Christ for this burden. Why? Because Christ gives power to overcome corruption. The way of rest in Him is

by coming to Him so that we will not need to toil and labour as before. Now, if grief is a burden, if shame is a burden, if fear is a burden, if care is a burden, and if labour and toil are burdens, then those who are godly are indeed under a great burden in regard to their corruption—this five-fold burden.

## **Chapter 12**

The Burden of Corruption Set Forth in Eight Particulars.

1. It is a soul burden.
2. It contains all other burdens.
3. It is a continual burden.
4. It makes all other things a burden.
5. It is a burden to God himself.
6. It makes sins burdensome to others.
7. It makes one burdensome to oneself.
8. However grievous, we cannot be rid of it in this life.

Let us further consider the properties of this burden and the nature of the corruption that weighs upon the people of God.

### **The First Property of the Burden of Corruption**

First, it is a soul burden. Other burdens are mainly physical. It is easier for a man to bear a weight upon his shoulders than to carry a burden upon his conscience, where it torments him. The burden of corruption rests upon our very consciences. In the past, many have

said that people must be content to bear burdens, even if those burdens should not have been imposed. They reasoned that if they carried these burdens as such, it was good enough. For instance, when people encountered false worship in the house of God, they said they would prefer things to be otherwise, but since they endured it as a burden, they believed they had done enough.

It is true that if the burden only affected our estates or outward circumstances, it would be a lesser matter. However, when it becomes a burden upon our consciences, we must learn to distinguish between a burden on our shoulders and one on our conscience. Many Christians could endure burdens on their shoulders as well as others, but they could not bear burdens upon their consciences.

### **The Second Property of the Burden of Corruption**

Secondly, this burden contains almost all other burdens within it. Is poverty a burden? Sin makes us poor. Is dishonour a burden? Sin brings dishonour. Is debt a burden? Sin brings that too. Jesus teaches us to pray, "Forgive us our debts," thus showing that sin is a debt. Sin contains within it all other burdens, making it a heavy and great burden.

### **The Third Property of the Burden of Corruption**

Thirdly, sin is a constant burden, pressing upon the soul of the godly night and day. If people have other burdens, they sometimes find relief. Porters, for instance, may carry heavy loads all day, but they have time for meals and rest at night. Yet sin is an unrelenting burden upon the godly, day and night. They cannot put this burden

down, even for a moment, to find some relief. Sin is such a great burden that it continually weighs upon the saints.

### **The Fourth Property of the Burden of Corruption**

Fourthly, it is a burden that makes all other burdens heavier. As sin contains all other burdens, it also amplifies them. For example, poverty is a great burden. But when sin is added to poverty, it becomes an even greater burden. Sickness, too, is burdensome, but when sin is involved, the burden becomes heavier. Likewise, the loss of one's estate or other hardships—when mixed with sin—become more oppressive.

I would compare sin to lead. If a person carries water in a tankard, it is burdensome enough, but if the tankard itself is made of lead, though the water remains the same, the weight becomes far greater. In the same way, hardships like sickness, poverty, or loss are burdensome to all who bear them. However, the corruption of sin in the heart, like lead, makes these burdens far more oppressive.

Though a man might lose his entire estate in a single night, that loss is a burden. But when sin weighs upon his heart, it turns every burden into a far greater affliction.

### **The Fifth Property of the Burden of Corruption**

Fifthly, sin is a burden to God himself, much more so to the saints. God cries out that he is pressed under sin as a cart is pressed when it is full of sheaves. It is a burden to the Spirit of God, and therefore it is said that the Spirit of God is grieved. It must indeed be a great burden to your soul when you see and know that it is a burden to your Father, to the Spirit of God by whom you are sealed until the

day of redemption. Is it not a burden to the heart of any thoughtful and sensitive spirit when they realise that what they have done is a burden to their father, to the Spirit of grace? Any dutiful child will find it burdensome to know they have done something against their father. In the same way, so long as there is sin in you, you are a burden to God and to the Spirit of God.

### **The Sixth Property of the Burden of Corruption**

Sixthly, as sin is a burden to God, so it makes us burdensome to all those with whom we interact. The more corruption that remains in our hearts, the more burdensome we become to those around us. Some, though truly godly, are still so filled with corruption that they are a burden to everyone they live and work with. In a family, for example, those who are quick-tempered, though godly at heart, become a burden to those around them. Others may have extremely stubborn or sullen hearts, or be frivolous, proud, envious, or covetous. It is only right that they should feel the burden themselves, for others feel it when their corruption manifests. This greatly intensifies the burden of those who are truly godly. When they reflect on their outbursts of temper, for instance, they lament, "Oh, what a wretched heart I have, that I should give way to anger in such and such company. Oh, what a wretch I am to be not only a burden to myself but to those I interact with." I am sure I am speaking to many who have wept over their condition in this regard, realising that they have been burdensome to others. They might say, "Yes, I have been a burden to such and such a person, but the Lord knows that it is an even greater burden to my own heart." Therefore, the remaining corruption is such a burden to the godly because it burdens others, while all God's people should strive to live in such a way that those around them bless God for their presence and thank God for having known them.



## **The Seventh Property of the Burden of Corruption**

Seventhly, this burden is such that it makes those who are godly burdensome to themselves, even to the point of becoming weary of their own lives. Why? Because the corruption within them is far more grievous to them than death itself would be. We often say of something that is deeply grievous, "It is like death to me." The godly can say the same of their sin, which is why Paul calls it "a body of death." "Oh, wretched man that I am," he exclaims, "who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Why? Because the remaining corruption in his heart felt like death to him. So it is with the saints. The corruption that remains in their hearts is like death to them, and they can say to God, "The bitterness of death would not be as grievous to me as the corruption in my heart. Oh, this corruption that still overcomes me after so many resolutions, prayers, sacraments, and commitments—this is what makes me weary of life." Just as Rebekah said she would be weary of life if Jacob married a daughter of Heth, so the godly say, "This remaining corruption in my heart makes me weary of my life. What shall I do, carrying this body of death around with me?"

Many men and women express weariness of life when they are discontented, but this is only a fleeting mood. How often can you say you have looked into your heart and said, "I see so much sin, corruption, worldliness, pride, passion, and the like, and this is what makes me weary of life"? The truth is, the main reason the people of God are willing to die is because they know that in death they will be delivered from this burden. That is why, when death comes, they welcome it, knowing that they will sin no more against God. Some of you, when you have been long in sickness, poverty, or distress, may think, "If death came, I could welcome it, because then I would no longer suffer as I do now." But that is no sign of grace. The true sign

of grace is that the burden of your corruption makes you willing to die.

### **The Eighth Property of the Burden of Corruption**

Eighthly, sin is a grievous burden that makes us weary of life, and yet it is a burden we must carry with us as long as we live. We know that we shall never be completely freed from it in this life. It is true that we may be freed from it to a great extent—Christ says, "Come to me and you shall have rest," meaning some rest for the present and complete rest in the life to come. But we cannot be wholly freed from this burden while we are in this world.

Thus we conclude our examination of the properties of this burden, and of how God's people feel the weight of their corruptions.

## **Chapter 13**

In What Respects Corruption Is a Burden:

1. In that our Nature is opposite to the very Nature of God.
2. It presses down every holy duty.
3. It provides matter for any temptation.
4. It has a root from which all kinds of sin may spring.
5. It dampens all the activity of our graces.

The third point is to show that corruption is a burden to the godly.

## I.

First, the corrupt nature that is within them—aside from the act of sin—must indeed be a burden to the godly. To think, "I have a nature contrary to God" is a grievous thought. It is not just occasional acts of sin against God that weigh upon them, but the knowledge of this: *"Oh, wretched man or woman that I am, I have a nature within me that is opposed to the very nature of God, opposed to the infinite holiness of God himself."* Though God has made me a partaker of the divine nature, I still retain this opposition within me to the very nature of God.

## II.

Secondly, this corruption is a heavy weight that presses them down in every holy duty. As it is written in Hebrews 12:1: *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."* Here, the apostle is speaking of original sin, the sin of our nature, which is particularly a weight. It weighs down our hearts as we seek to perform holy duties, striving to lift our hearts up to God. Yet this corrupt nature within us keeps pulling us down.

I recall a story of a godly man who, while walking, saw a bird fluttering upward. But whenever it rose, it fell back down again. The man observed closely and saw that a stone was tied to the bird's leg. Upon seeing this, the good man began to weep. *"Just so,"* he said, *"it is with me. I long to rise up to God, to have communion with Him. Sometimes I begin to ascend, but immediately I am pulled down by this weight within me."* Do you not experience this too? You who

commune with God, who withdraw at times to seek Him in private duty, and who long to have your hearts lifted up to God, only to find them brought low again by the weight of your corrupt nature? It happens not only in private devotions but even after public duties, such as a day of fasting and humiliation. In the evening, your heart may be uplifted, and you resolve to live above the world and its distractions, seeking more to glorify God. But soon, this corrupt nature brings you down again.

### **III.**

Thirdly, corrupt nature is a burden because it provides matter for any temptation in the world. There is no temptation to any kind of sin for which our nature does not provide the fuel. What a burden this is! Imagine a ship on fire among other ships, and within the ship is a great store of gunpowder. Would not the ship's owner be filled with fear? Would he not work tirelessly, doing all in his power to prevent the fire from reaching the gunpowder? I compare the temptations that surround us to fire. We are surrounded by these temptations, and what lies within our hearts? There is fuel for these temptations—just as the gunpowder is fuel for the fire, so our sinful hearts are ready to ignite at the touch of every temptation. Is this not a great burden? That I should carry within my heart matter ready to kindle any sin in the world—even the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost—were it not for the mighty restraining power of God! Such is the nature of sinful man.

### **IV.**

Fourthly, the sinfulness of our nature is a burden in this respect: not only does it provide matter to entertain temptation, but it also has

within it a root from which (if God does not come in with His grace) all kinds of sin may spring up, even if there were no temptation. Many of us cry out about the devil and temptation when we are overcome by sin, but consider this: there is not only the evil within your heart that makes you ready to entertain all temptations, but also that which could breed all kinds of evils, even if there were no temptation—indeed, even if there were no devil in hell.

Consider this: just as there are seeds of weeds in the ground, which, though they do not immediately flourish, will still sprout in time if not uprooted—so it is with the heart. There is not only the devil's temptation to contend with, but also the rising corruption within us. It is one thing to have something filthy cast upon us and another to have a body so rotten that the stench comes from within. One may become unsavoury by something cast upon him, but how much worse if the unsavoury odour arises from his own rotting body. Similarly, the devil may cast temptation upon us, disturbing our hearts, but there is already something in our hearts that disturbs us even more. The sin in our hearts can cause as much havoc as any temptation the devil brings.

## V.

Lastly, the sinfulness of our nature is a burden because it dampens all the activity of our graces. The saints of God find joy in being active and stirring for God, but this corruption within us dampens everything. Imagine a candle in a coal mine. Though the candle burns, the damp air of the mine causes it to burn dimly. Similarly, the graces of God's Spirit in us are like that candle, and our hearts are like the coal mine. Christ ensures that the dampness of our corruption does not completely extinguish the candle, but it still

dims the flame, reducing the beauty, liveliness, and activity of our graces. Though we may have some life and burning zeal, we burn but dimly before others.

I am not speaking now of the outward acts of sin, but of the inner corruption—the war within our hearts between the flesh and the Spirit, as Scripture tells us. There is a constant battle between the two, and this continual fight against all that is good is a heavy burden. We lament wars and rumours of wars within our gates, but the war within our hearts is far greater.

It is a troubling thing that in our own hearts there are corruptions waging war, not just to enslave us to sin, but to bring our souls to mischief, to make us slaves to the devil. This battle rages in all our hearts, though some may not feel its weight. Why do some not feel this burden of corruption? One reason is that they are spiritually dead. If a whole building were to fall on a dead man, he would not feel it. Likewise, if you do not feel the burden of your corruption, it is an infallible sign that you are dead in your sins and trespasses. I dare declare, in the name of God, that if you do not feel the burden of the sin within your soul, you are spiritually dead.

In nature, a person may lose the sense of sight, smell, or hearing and yet live, but losing the sense of touch signifies death. So it is spiritually: though a person may have weaknesses, if they do not feel the burden of their corruptions at all, they are dead.

To those of you who are weary and heavy-laden, Christ says, "*Come to me, and I will give you rest.*" Know that Christ speaks to you, not only out of pity (as He does to those burdened with legal performances) but out of love. And know that by feeling this burden, you are being prepared for Christ. It delights His heart to give ease and rest to His servants who labour under the burden of corruption.

Christ came into the world specifically to dissolve the works of the devil, and our corruptions are works of the devil, closely tied to us, easily besetting us, as the Scriptures say. It was Christ's purpose to dissolve these works of the devil. When He hears His servants crying out, as Paul did, "*Who shall deliver me?*" He comes to cut this bond and give rest to their spirits.

You do well to struggle and strive against your corruptions with all your strength, but the greatest work you have to do is to renew your faith in Christ. Use those Scriptures where Christ is said to be our sanctification as well as our redemption, and act in faith upon them. That is the way to ease your soul of these burdens.

## Chapter 14

In What Respects the Stirrings and Motions of Corruption Are Very Burdensome:

1. They continually fight against the Spirit of Grace in the heart.
2. They are sudden.
3. They are full of confusion and disorder.
4. They work very maliciously.
5. They watch for opportunities to do mischief.
6. They are very unseasonable.
7. They are very prevalent.

Now, besides the corruption of our nature, the stirring of corruption is very burdensome to the soul. I suppose that if a man or woman

were aware of the corrupt nature within them—even if this corrupt nature did not stir—it would still be burdensome. But we must understand that this corrupt nature does not remain idle; it is always working, stirring, acting, and putting itself forth to do evil. Now, the motions of sin are burdensome.

## I.

First, they are continually fighting against the Spirit of God and the spirit of grace in the heart. *The flesh lusts against the spirit.* Now, to have a continual fight and conflict in the soul—is this not very burdensome? It is like a family where there is constant discord. Imagine visiting a household where every day there is fighting and quarrelling—how burdensome it would be to live in such a place! In the hearts of men and women, there is a continual battle. If one lived in a family where the husband and wife were constantly fighting, with children and servants at each other's throats, that would be unbearable. Similarly, in the heart of man, the flesh and the spirit are constantly fighting against each other. Is not war within a kingdom a burden? Especially when men fight to make themselves slaves, as I mentioned earlier—who would ever have believed that anyone in England could be so foolish as to fight to make themselves and their posterity slaves? A victory in such a fight only brings them into slavery. The fight with corruption is no different.

## II.

Second, the stirring of corruption is sudden. Many times, a man or woman who is godly and in a good spiritual state, working for God, will suddenly feel their corruption stirring within them,



unexpectedly. This causes extreme grief and dampens their spirits, often bringing them great trouble that only they can understand.

### **III.**

Third, the stirring of corruption is violent. The stirrings of corruption in the hearts of the saints are often extremely violent and outrageous. The devil stirs up their corruption, and the corruptions themselves act like devils within them. Just as the devil caused a man possessed to foam at the mouth, so too does the violence of corruption affect the hearts of the saints. It is a lamentable condition, much like the poor child possessed in the Gospel, whose father came to Christ for help because the evil spirit would cast him into the fire and into the water. Similarly, corruption is so violent in the hearts of the godly that it drives them to do things against their own inclinations—against their prayers, resolutions, vows, and covenants. Though they know something is evil, are convinced of it, and have a strong inclination against it—though they have prayed for help, resolved strongly against it, and made vows and covenants—even taken the sacrament and sealed their commitment—yet their corruption is so violent that it pushes them into evil ways, regardless.

### **IV.**

Again, the motions and stirrings of corruption are very burdensome to the saints because of the confused disorder they bring. There is much disorder and confusion in the heart when corruption stirs, causing great disturbance. What causes more disturbance in a state, family, or town than confusion and disorder? Nothing is more disorderly and confused than the corruption in our hearts, which makes it burdensome. It causes much perplexity in the hearts of the

saints, as they find their corruptions working and stirring in such a confused way. Sometimes, during times of prayer or spiritual duty, they experience such strange, confused workings of their hearts, and this becomes an extreme burden upon them.

## V.

Further, the corruption of the heart works very maliciously, and is therefore all the more burdensome. It watches for those times when it may do us the greatest harm, and it is most active during those moments. A malicious enemy will not only trouble his adversary occasionally but will also watch for the best time to do him the most harm, saying, "I will take this opportunity." In the same way, the corruptions of men's hearts wait for the time when they may inflict the greatest mischief on the soul.

Many a Christian may think, "Though I find my corruption stirring often, if only I could be free from it when I get alone to commune with God! O, that it would leave me in peace at such a time!" And so, although they notice it stirring at other times, they wish it would at least not trouble them while they are hearing the word. But it is at that very moment that it becomes especially active. You will experience more evil thoughts during prayer than at any other time, and more distractions during the hearing of the word. Not only that, but if there is one particular truth that concerns the good of your soul more than others, your corruptions will hinder you more than at any other time. Likewise, at the sacrament or during fasting, corruption will stir more actively than it does otherwise.

## VI.

And further, if there comes a time through God's mercy, such as a day of prayer, fasting, or the like, when you manage to get your heart into a comfortable state—broken in spirit, with renewed resolutions to walk more strictly in God's ways than before—it is precisely after such times that your corruptions will stir more maliciously than ever. When corruption can do you the most harm, that is when it is most active. What a burden this is to the soul!

As it is written of Christ at the end of Matthew's Gospel, following the account of His baptism, when He was baptised, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove, and there was a manifestation of God from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But immediately afterward, the text tells us that He was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. God was at work, but the devil maliciously attacked straight after this glorious manifestation of God the Father. Just as it was with Christ your Saviour, so you must expect it to be with you. When you have raised your heart to God on a day of fasting, prayer, or the like, and have felt a sense of God's love, be especially on guard against falling into complacency at that time, more so than at any other.

This is why, if you observe it, you will often find that after a day of fasting—if not that very night, then the next day—your heart's corruptions will strongly stir to bring you down immediately after that time of spiritual elevation. The stirrings of corruption are indeed malicious, watching for those moments when they may do the most harm.

## VII.

Furthermore, the stirrings of the corruptions that remain within us are very burdensome because of their unseasonableness. To speak plainly, the stirrings of our corruptions, if gratified—even for the sake of peace—only grow stronger. Sometimes the heart of a man or woman is so troubled by the workings of corruption that they think they must yield to it just to find peace. But if you yield to them for the sake of quiet, they will return with even greater force than before.

It is like someone who pesters you to give them something, and when you give in because of their persistent trouble, they only become more burdensome, demanding more and more. The stirrings of corruption are like this: if you give in to them in one thing, they will keep pressing more. The only true peace you can find is by being in open defiance of them. This is yet another reason why the corruptions of the hearts of God's people are so burdensome.

## VIII.

Lastly, the corruptions in the hearts of God's people are very burdensome because they are so prevalent. This is an even greater burden: they are burdensome at their root, even more burdensome in their stirrings, but even more burdensome when they prevail.

If a child of God looks into their heart and sees the root of bitterness, it causes them to walk heavily all their days. But when they also find that corruption stirs and works actively within them, it troubles them even more. They may think, "Though I have such a cursed nature, and though I cannot completely suppress the motions and stirrings

of my corruption, if only I could prevent them from working!" They may continue, "Though I cannot keep them from working, if only I could stop them from prevailing!" But alas, their corruptions often overcome them, and this is the greatest burden of all—that corruption prevails in their hearts so frequently.

It is troublesome to fight with an enemy, but it is far more troublesome when the enemy prevails and wins the day. Though it is true that corruption will never fully gain the victory—that is, though it may prevail for a while in some skirmishes, it may win the battle but not the war—just as an enemy may win in some skirmishes but not in the final battle, so too will the saints of God gain victory at last. But as long as they live, their corruptions will often prevail and defeat them, which is grievous and burdensome to them.

## **Chapter 15**

### **The Reasons of the Former Point.**

1. Because corruption (when it prevails) weakens the heart.
2. By it, God is dishonoured.
3. By it, our holy profession is scandalised.
4. By it, those over whom it prevails are made useless in their places.
5. Thereby the means of grace are made unprofitable.
6. Thereby our peace with God is disturbed.
7. Thereby the assurance of our salvation is shaken.

Now, to open this a little in detail, to show how burdensome it is to the hearts of the saints when corruption prevails in any measure. They do not dismiss it as carnal people do, saying, “We are all sinners, and it is by God's grace we are kept. Lord, have mercy on us,” and the like. No, instead, they regard the prevailing of corruption as the greatest burden they can endure in the world, and that in the following respects:

## I

First, because whenever corruption prevails, in whatever degree, it weakens the heart—it weakens the soul. Corruption may stir in the heart, and if the heart resists and gains strength against it, the heart is not weakened as it would be otherwise. But if corruption prevails in any degree, it weakens the heart.

We know that weakness makes us more aware of a burden. A sick person is a burden to themselves, and everything becomes a burden to them. When any corruption prevails, it makes the soul sick, and everything becomes a burden to it. I beseech you to consider this: here lies the reason why you are so weak and unable to bear other burdens. If anyone crosses you—your wife, children, or servants—you cannot bear it. If your neighbours cross you, you cannot handle it. The reason is something you may not consider: you have weakened your heart by some sin or another, breaking your peace with God, and now your heart has become weak. You are like a sick person who cries out at anything. One who is healthy can bear a hundred times more. But because you have brought sickness upon your soul, perhaps due to some sin that has prevailed over you, your heart and spirit are now weakened. When weak, everything seems burdensome to you. Thus, the prevailing of corruption becomes a

burden in this respect because it weakens the heart, making everything burdensome to you.

## **II**

Secondly, the saints and people of God regard the prevailing of corruption as the greatest burden for another reason: they know it dishonours God. Especially if corruption prevails to the extent of outward action, turning into an actual sin, it becomes exceedingly burdensome to a gracious person. This is because the name of the blessed God is dishonoured by the sin that has prevailed. While sin merely stirs within the heart without prevailing, the name of God is not dishonoured to the same degree. But when sin prevails, it dishonours God, and this is why it is a burden to the saints.

## **III**

Thirdly, it is a burden because it may cause scandal to my holy profession. Is this not a burden? Many wretched men and women may say they do not care what others think or say about them. But godly men and women, when they consider this, cry out, “Oh, what will the wicked say about this? How will they blaspheme and dishonour the name of God?” This becomes a burden to them because their holy profession is scandalised by it.

## **IV**

Fourthly, it is a burden because it renders them useless in the places where they live. Though some may have a genuine measure of grace in them and may go to heaven at last, yet, when their corruption

prevails, they become very useless in the places where they live. They may live, but they are burdens upon the earth because they are unlikely to be used to do any great service for God in the world, having so scandalised their profession through the prevailing of corruption.

## V

Fifthly, when corruption prevails over the saints, it not only makes them unprofitable but also renders the means of grace exceedingly unprofitable. It hardens their hearts, so that when they come to prayer, hear the Word, or participate in the sacraments, they find little benefit. Many of you complain that you do not profit by prayer, hearing the Word, or the sacrament. What is the reason? Perhaps there are certain sins that you continue to live in, which have prevailed over you, and thus, it is no wonder that you do not receive the profit you desire.

## VI

Sixthly, the prevailing of corruption is a grievous burden because it greatly disturbs the peace between God and the soul. Though there are many temptations, if the heart can conquer them, it finds greater peace through the victory. The soul never experiences such peace as when there have been strong temptations to sin, and those temptations are overcome. However, if temptation prevails, it disturbs our peace, and this is burdensome to those who understand the meaning of peace with God.

## VII



Seventhly, the prevailing of corruption is a grievous burden because it often shakes the assurance of those who are godly. I do not understand what some people would make of the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our sins," if they think that, regardless of what sin they fall into, they can still maintain their assurance as before. I say, what would they make of that petition, "Lord, forgive us our sins"? At the very least, to pray this is to ask the Lord to clear up the evidence of the forgiveness of our sins. Therefore, it must follow that falling into any sin, and the prevailing of any corruption, must shake our assurance while we live here in this world. Now, is this not a burden to any man or woman who previously had assurance of God's love and could look into God's face with joy, only to have this assurance shaken?

Yes, often it causes God to withdraw His countenance, which made David cry out, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation." As if he were saying, "Lord, I used to find joy in Your presence and in communion with You, but now You have distanced Yourself from my soul. O Lord, restore to me the joy of Your salvation." Now, is this not a burden—to lose the sweetness of your soul in communion with God? Though it may be due to your weakness or whatever else, you cannot look upon God with the comfort you once had. Instead, the thought of God becomes a terror to your spirit. Is this not a burden?

Now then, is there any poor soul who understands what these things mean? Do you know what a burden the remaining corruption of the heart is, whether it is due to the sinfulness of your nature, the stirring of corruption, or the prevailing of corruption, so that you have no rest in your soul, but are laden with such a burden? Do you cry out with the apostle, "Oh, wretched man or woman that I am, who shall deliver me?" Let such a soul know that this text belongs to them: "Come to me," says Christ, "and I will give you rest from this

burden, as well as from the other burdens." Our rest is found only in Christ, from this burden, just as it is from the burden of the guilt of sin, the burden of the law, and the other burdens that have been spoken of.

## Chapter 16

Why the Saints Feel These Things So Burdensome:

1. Because the Life of Grace is a Tender and Delicate Thing.
2. Because Grace Keeps the Soul in Continual Action.

And Why God Suffers Corruption, Despite Its Burdensomeness, to Remain in the Saints:

1. That He May Show Forth His Own Power.
2. That Their Faith Might Be Exercised.
3. That They May Be Driven to Prayer.
4. That They May Be Stirred Up to Repentance.
5. That He May Make Known His Wisdom.
6. To Manifest His Justice by Laying a Stumbling Block Before the Wicked.
7. That the Saints May Be Induced to Long More for Heaven.

With Two Consequences:

1. The Difference Between the Sins of the Godly and the Wicked.
  2. Why the Saints Go on So Sadly in Their Ways.
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It must indeed be that a gracious heart finds these things very burdensome.

**First**, because the life of grace, wherever it is found, is very tender and delicate. Nothing is so delicate and tender as the life of grace, and therefore it must necessarily be sensitive to the burden of corruption, depending on the degree to which it remains in the soul. For example, a man or woman whose body is delicate, either through careful upbringing or naturally delicate spirits, will feel a burden more acutely than others whose spirits are more robust and able to bear burdens with less sensitivity. Grace, in turn, makes the heart's constitution delicate, fine, and pure. It puts the heart into a refined state, making it more sensitive to the presence of sin, however little may remain.

**Secondly**, where grace is present, corruption must also be very burdensome because grace keeps the soul in constant action. Consider a man with a broken leg. If he could lie still and never move, the pain of his broken leg would not be as burdensome. However, if this man must stir, walk, and move about, then his broken leg becomes exceedingly burdensome. Similarly, with the soul—if the soul were allowed to be still, asleep, and inactive, the presence of corruption would not be so grievous. But grace, wherever it is, stirs the soul into action. This is why grace is called the "divine nature"—because it is active and compels the soul to act for God and in the ways of life. Since grace drives the soul to action, and corruption is like the breaking of the bones, it must therefore be a heavy burden. That which hinders the activity of grace must necessarily be burdensome.

Take heed, therefore, when temptation to sin arises. Be careful not to "break your bones" spiritually. Why? Because once they are broken,

you will still need to keep stirring and acting for God. For a poor man, breaking a leg is a far worse plight than for a rich man. A rich man can sit by the fire or lie in bed for a month, but a poor man, if he breaks his leg, does not have that luxury—he must keep working. In the same way, those who have sluggish spirits may not find corruption as grievous, but those with active spirits, and especially those who have much grace, find their corruption much more burdensome. The more grace a man or woman has, the more active they will be for God, and the more burdensome corruption will feel to them.

**Question:**

But you will say, seeing the remaining corruption in the hearts of the saints is so burdensome, why does God, in His providence, order things such that His own dear saints are so troubled with their corruptions while they live in this world? God could deliver them from their corruptions, so why does He make them cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" God could just as easily perfect our sanctification as He has perfected our justification. Why does God order things in such a way that His own dear saints groan under this burden of corruption all their days?

**Answer:**

Briefly, though it is true that God could immediately take away all our corruptions as soon as we come to Jesus Christ, He does not. The Lord has many holy purposes for allowing His own people to be under this burden while they live in the flesh. Consider these:

**First**, that through this, He may show forth His own power. The power of Jesus Christ is exceedingly magnified in that He can uphold little sparks of grace in the midst of an ocean of corruption. He can

uphold poor, weak creatures under such burdens, carrying them on regardless, and ultimately bringing them to eternal life. The power and grace of Jesus Christ, and the power of God, is as much manifested in this as it is in keeping the heavens and the earth in their place, or sustaining them. The Lord does not appear more almighty in preserving heaven and earth than He does in keeping grace alive in the heart, despite all the remaining corruption. In this, God receives glory in a way different from how He is glorified by the angels in heaven.

God's power is evident in upholding the angels, for if He did not, they would fall into evil, just as Adam and the fallen angels did. The glory of God is shown in upholding the angels, but His glorious power is even more evident in upholding the hearts of the saints amid their corruptions. This will be a special point for which the saints will praise God for all eternity—when they look back and see the condition they were in before their conversion, and even during their conversion. Though God granted them some grace, they will marvel at how much corruption remained in their hearts and how much struggle it took to maintain that little grace. They will stand in awe that such grace was kept alive amidst so much sin, like a tiny spark kept alive in the middle of a raging sea. It is one thing for a fire to burn when the sea is calm, but when the sea is tempestuous and yet a spark of fire survives amid all the tossing waves—this indeed is a demonstration of mighty power. The fact that grace is kept alive in your heart, despite so much corruption, shows the mighty power of God.

**Second**, the Lord orders it such that His own people remain under the burden of corruption because it draws out the exercise of faith in His Son, in which His soul takes infinite delight. God takes infinite delight in beholding the glorious working of faith in Jesus Christ.

You might ask, how does this appear so glorious in relation to our corruption? Consider this: for the angels in heaven to believe in God's eternal goodness is not as remarkable as when a poor soul, in the midst of all its corruptions, can still triumph in the free grace of God in Jesus Christ. Despite being vile, filthy, loathsome, and abominable to oneself, and justly deserving to be counted a burden and cast off by God and His saints, such a soul clings to Him. The soul casts itself upon Him, seeing Him as a gracious Father, a merciful God, a God who loves, and a God who delights in doing good. For the soul to exercise faith in God's grace in Christ is a glorious thing. But be careful not to mistake this for presumption.

**Objection:**

You might say, "For men to believe in God's mercy despite all their sin is rather presumption than faith."

**Answer:**

It is true, in many it is presumption; they mistake themselves. But in others, it is true faith, and God delights in it. You can tell the difference by this: true faith draws the heart to God, and the soul finds no better way to overcome the corruptions within than by exercising faith in the grace of God in Christ. I urge you to mark the difference between presumption and faith in Christ. Presumption trusts in God's mercy despite sin, but it only foments sin and makes one secure in it. On the other hand, when the soul truly exercises faith in the free grace of God despite corruption, it finds that there is no means more effective in curing and overcoming that corruption than this trust. If you find it so, you have no cause to fear—trust confidently in God's grace, for this is well-pleasing to Him. The Lord delights in it as much as He delights in the exercise of any grace whatsoever. In fact, since the saints will never exercise such an act of faith in heaven as they do here, God desires it to be in this world.

**3.** This is what drives God's people to Him in prayer. Nothing drives the saints to God with more earnestness than the weight of corruption they feel. Then they cry out to God most earnestly. God never hears such strong cries ascend to heaven in response to any affliction as He does when they feel the weight of their corruption. Let me ask you this: has there not come as strong a cry from your heart to heaven over your corruptions as over any affliction you have ever endured?

**4.** The Lord is glorified in the exercise of repentance and humility. Keeping His people in humility and a contrite spirit is exceedingly pleasing to Him. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and delights in the soul's evangelical repentance. The work of humility, mourning, and sorrow for sin in an evangelical way is a grace that pleases God greatly. This kind of repentance will not happen in heaven, so He allows it to happen here.

**5.** God also exercises His wisdom by bringing light out of darkness. He not only turns His people's afflictions to their good, but He often works good even out of their sins. This is not to make us bold or presumptuous in sin, for we must avoid tempting God. But know this: God often works great good for the saints, even through their sins, by using those circumstances to accomplish His purposes in other ways.

**6.** There is also God's justice in it, as He lays a stumbling block before the wicked. When ungodly men see that even the godly, who have the most grace, still struggle with much corruption, they may rejoice in this and feel justified in their own condition. But they fail to see that God is using this to execute His just judgment upon them, hardening their hearts.

7. God allows corruption to remain so that the saints may long more for heaven. The Lord, in His providence, keeps His people under the burden of corruption in this world so that they will long to be with Him in heaven. When they finally enter heaven, they will fully realize the difference between their state there and their state here on earth.

Though corruption may be a great burden to us while we live here in this world, the Lord has many great purposes in allowing us to remain under it. Therefore, you cannot argue that God does not love you simply because He has not delivered you from this corruption. Even if you have been praying for a long time to be delivered and are still not free, do not conclude that God does not love you. Remember, Paul prayed once and again, and the answer he received was, "My grace is sufficient for you." So, even if you pray repeatedly under the burden of corruption, if God once says to your soul, "My grace is sufficient for you," that should be enough. Your corruption will not crush or destroy you—God will strengthen you, and that is sufficient.

Now from all that has been said, you may, by way of consequence, see:

**First**, a great difference between the sins of the godly and the sins of the wicked. The wicked sin, and the godly sin too. We often say, "We are all sinners," but sin is a burden to the godly, while it is a delight to the wicked.

**Secondly**, you may also see from this one reason why the saints of God sometimes walk so sadly in their ways—you do not know what burdens they are under.

But you may say, "We are better off for not feeling it." No, they do not have as much sin as you do. They have received some grace, while you have none. They have, in some degree, mortified their sins,



while you have not. Yes, their sins are pardoned, while yours are not. Yet, even though they have some assurance that the guilt of their sin is removed, the very remaining corruption in their hearts is still a burden.

**Objection:**

You may ask, “Why should it be so burdensome if they know the guilt of their sin to be forgiven?”

**Answer:**

I urge you to observe this: there is a great difference between a carnal heart and a godly heart. A person with a carnal heart, once eased of the burden on their conscience, is no longer troubled. But a gracious heart, even if first burdened by the guilt of sin, and that guilt removed, still feels the burden of the remaining corruption. The very presence of some sin is a greater burden to them than all your sin is to you, even with its full strength and guilt upon you. But you, being dead in sin, do not feel it. If a whole building collapsed, those buried in the grave would not feel it. But if it fell upon the living, they would certainly feel it. So it is with the wicked—they carry the full weight of their corruption and guilt but feel nothing, for they are dead. The godly, however, though freed from guilt, feel even the slightest remaining sin as a burden. Even though they mortify their sin every day, what remains is still a heavy burden.

From this, you can understand why the saints are so watchful over their spirits—why they spend so much time and rise so early to hear the word. You might ask, “What is the reason?” It is because they know that if they do not labour under the burden of their corruptions to avoid sin, they will have to labour under the greater burden of sin itself afterward. You, on the other hand, do not watch over your sin because you do not understand how grievous a burden it becomes

when you labour under it. But someone who feels the burden of sin says, “The Lord be merciful to me—I thought my back would break under the burden of sin.” This is why David prays for the healing of the bones that were broken. And this is the reason for the saints' watchfulness and carefulness under this burden.

The main point of all I have said about this burden is this: that I might point out those whom Christ calls to Himself, so that you may be prepared to listen to His invitation to come to Him for rest. Though we have not yet come to that part, take notice that there is rest in Christ for all these burdens, and from all these burdens.

And so much for the burden of the remaining corruption in the hearts of the saints.

## **Chapter 17:**

Of the burden of outward afflictions, and the grievousness thereof laid open in three Particulars.

1. In themselves, they are a part of the curse of the Law.
2. They hinder much in doing Service to God.
3. They often help forward many strong temptations.

### **Why God will have his Saints to be under this burden:**

4. Because He will have His servants honour and obey Him, merely out of love.

5. Because He knows that, through this, their corruptions may be best mortified.
  6. To be a stumbling block to the wicked.
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The next burden is the burden of affliction, the burden of outward afflictions: poverty, disgrace, sickness, or any kind of trouble in this world. You shall find these things to be very burdensome to you. Now, Christ calls such as labour under this burden to come to Him, and He promises to give them rest. Christ has a tender affection towards poor creatures under outward burdens—towards all those whom the Father has given to Him—especially when they are burdened with outward affliction. The Gospel contains an abundance of refreshment to help and ease sinners who feel the burden of afflictions in this world. There is no greater way to ease and rest than by the grace of God in Christ, as we shall explore more fully when we come to the promise.

Now, the burden of affliction is very grievous to many. The burden of poverty, disgrace, sickness, or the like—those whom God allows to prosper in their ways little think of the burdens upon their brethren. How many of our brethren, in these days, groan under these burdens, though we do not feel them ourselves? We do not know how soon we may be brought under them, and therefore it is timely to show the rest we have in Christ, even from under these burdens. I have spent some time opening the grievousness of other burdens; now, this burden of outward afflictions is one that people are so keenly aware of that there is little need for much explanation. But it is necessary to tell all who feel these burdens that they may come to this promise and that they are under Christ's invitation. He invites them to come to Him for rest from these burdens.

**First**, outward afflictions are burdens because they are, in themselves, part of the curse of the Law. If they are sanctified to anyone, it is by virtue of this promise in the text. If any affliction upon you is sanctified, it comes from Christ. Before you come to Christ, all outward afflictions—poverty, sickness, or any disturbance you face in your estate—are the fruit of the curse, and they remain so until you come to Christ. Now, to bear something that is, in itself, a fruit of the curse must, of course, be a burden because it is so contrary to nature and most afflictive to nature.

**Secondly**, outward afflictions are burdensome because they hinder us greatly in doing the service that we were born for, the service we were born to do in this world. They hinder us from many opportunities to serve God. For example, sickness of body—what a burden it is! Because it hinders those who are continually sick from doing the service that God requires of them. Indeed, this is what makes it most burdensome to someone who is gracious. It is not simply the pain that makes it a burden, but the fact that my soul is hindered in those operations I would gladly be exercising for God and in doing good in the place I am set in.

Similarly, poverty is a burden—not because I cannot live as comfortably as others, or have fine houses, clothes, and food as others do—but because I must spend all my time merely getting provision for my family. This leaves me little time for God’s service. Others can spend time in God’s service, hearing, praying, and meditating, but I must spend most of my time simply trying to get bread. Now, this is a burden. Additionally, because of poverty, I have little opportunity to do service for God. Those with large estates have more opportunities to serve God; they are called to public services, while I am not in the same position. This is a great burden for one who has any beginnings of grace in their heart.

By the way, it is a good sign of true grace if you, who are under the burden of affliction, can feel the burden where it truly lies. I appeal to those who complain of the burden of affliction, poverty, and the like—what is it that makes your affliction most burdensome? Yes, it is painful to your nature, but the Lord knows this: what makes it truly grievous and burdensome to me is that, because of this affliction, I am forced to spend so much time on lesser tasks that I have little time to do good in my generation. Others who have greater estates, I count them happier in this—that the Lord has given them greater opportunities to serve Him than I have. I do not envy their wealth, but rather their greater opportunities to serve God. But it is God who orders things in this way, and I must be content to bear this burden. If your heart complains in this way about your burden, it is a good sign, and know that in Christ there is an abundance of grace to sanctify these burdens to you.

Many other things could be said about the burden of affliction, but I will add just one more.

**Thirdly**, outward afflictions are a great burden in this respect because they often occasion and further many strong temptations. Outward afflictions strengthen and give rise to powerful temptations, which are very grievous to the soul. For example, when someone is afflicted more than others, the temptation arises: "Surely God does not love me, because of this affliction." Then follows the temptation to envy others, because I am afflicted more than they are. Next comes the temptation of distrust: "I shall perish one day or another." Then comes the temptation to murmur under God's hand; the temptation to take unlawful courses, to shift for oneself by unworthy means. Oh, what temptations many experience who are under severe afflictions—poverty, imprisonment, disgrace, dishonour in the world! What strong temptations they have to stretch their consciences.

This is what makes outward afflictions such a grievous burden, because they occasion great temptations, leading poor souls to stretch out their hands to folly, and often to resort to unlawful means to help themselves. Yes, the very anticipation of these burdens is often so grievous that it leads to temptation to do much evil in order to avoid those burdens. And yet, despite all this, the Lord is pleased to order and dispose of things in this world so that even those to whom He intends everlasting good in Christ must go through such burdens. For most of their lives, they bear the burdens of poverty, sickness, and outward troubles in this world.

Many reasons can be given why the Lord orders things in this way, so that His dear servants, for whom Christ shed His precious blood, must bear these burdens, while others who are wicked and ungodly scarcely know what such burdens are.

1. The Lord does this to show that He will have His servants honour and serve Him purely out of love, and not in a mercenary way to gain outward things in this world. He wants us to serve Him out of love and faith. If we were always to prosper in outward things, our service would become more carnal. But now, though His servants face many afflictions in this world, they still love the Lord, love His ways, love His service, and continue in faithful obedience to Him. This demonstrates the excellency of grace more than if they prospered in this world.
2. The Lord sees this as the best means to mortify our corruptions. You may complain about your afflictions, but who knows what sins you would have fallen into if you had not experienced such afflictions?

3. God also does this to serve as a stumbling block to the wicked, that they might stumble at the afflictions of the saints and perish because of it.

Various other reasons might be given, but all this makes way for what is to come. The Lord calls not only those who labour under the burden of sin, under the burden of the Law, and so forth, but also poor creatures who labour under the burden of affliction, poverty, and the like, to come to Him for ease and rest.

## **Chapter 18**

Christ's Invitation to Sinners, Laid Down in These Words: "Come Unto Me."

Opened in five particulars:

1. It is to look to Christ as an All-sufficient Saviour.
2. It implies an unsettledness in the creature.
3. A stirring of the heart after Christ.
4. A laying of all our burdens upon Christ.
5. A leaving of the soul with Christ for life.

Now we come to the invitation itself: "Come to me," says Christ, "Come to me"; that is, believe in me. For, among many other expressions of believing in Christ, or of accepting the condition of the Covenant of Grace, the Holy Ghost expresses this believing and acceptance of the Covenant of Grace by "coming to Christ." Believing in Christ is very often described as "coming to Christ." In John 5:40:

"You will not come to me that you might have life." They did come to Christ in his outward presence, Christ conversed with them, and they with him; yet Christ says, "You will not come to me that you might have life."

Similarly, in John 6:37: "All that the Father gives to me will come to me, and I will by no means cast them out." All whom the Father has given me from eternity to redeem, they come to me—that is, they believe in me. And in verse 44: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them"; that is, no one believes in me unless my Father draws them. And in verse 45: "Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me"; that is, believes in me. This is also the meaning of Isaiah 55:1: "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, buy wine and milk without money and without price"; that is, believe in me.

All of you who labor under these burdens, come to me, believe in me, and I will give you rest.

But this must be explained more fully. In this invitation, there are five things I wish to open unto you and impress upon your hearts.

**First**, what does Christ want us to do, more specifically, when he bids us to come to him?

**Secondly**, what kind of invitation does Christ give to those the Father gives to him, those who shall indeed come to be saved by him? How does Christ call and invite them to him?

**Thirdly**, all that Christ requires as a condition of the Covenant of Grace for rest unto our souls is to come to him. Nothing else is the condition of the Gospel by which we come to possess Christ but this: to come to him. "Come to me," says Christ. This is the great



condition of the Gospel—only to come to Christ.

**Fourthly**, there are some rules to be proposed and observed for our coming to Christ.

**Fifthly**, the laboring to draw your souls unto Christ.

For the first: "Come to me"—what does that mean? What would Christ have you do?

To open this up in particular: when Christ calls you to come to him, you are to understand that this indicates a movement toward Christ, a turning of your soul toward him in faith and trust.

**First:** It implies beholding, a looking unto Jesus Christ as the All-sufficient Saviour, to save our souls from all the evils that are upon us, and to supply us with all the good we stand in need of. As if Christ were saying, when he says, "Come to me," O! poor, troubled sinners, who are under these burdens: Do you behold me as the great Mediator who has come into the world to stand between the wrath of my Father and your souls, and to bring life and salvation to you?

That is, you must know where you are going, and to whom you must go. So Christ says, "I am the great Redeemer, sent into the world by my Father for that very purpose, that I may ease poor souls of their burdens." Souls like yours are to look unto Christ, therefore, as the great Reconciler of God and man, the great Mediator between God and man, having the fullness of all mercy and goodness in him, the great channel of all the grace and riches of God the Father to sinful souls. This is the first work of believing in Christ: to look to him as the one whom God the Father has offered to us. That is the first step, but yet the soul has not fully come.

**Secondly:** The second point goes further. Coming to Christ implies an unsettledness. When we come to something, there is a terminus a quo (the point from which we come) and a terminus ad quem (the point to which we go). We come from something. So, Christ says, you have settled your hearts upon creature comforts and have looked upon them as the things in which your good and happiness consist. But now, your hearts must be taken off from those things. You must come to me.

That is, there must be a removal from the position you were in, from that state of settlement you were formerly in. I cannot go to another place and stay where I was as well. In the same way, the heart cannot come to Christ and remain in the state it was in before. Therefore, this implies that, whereas you poor creatures have settled your hearts upon creature comforts, and even upon sinful things in the past, now let your hearts be taken off from all those things. Know that your good, your happiness, your peace is not there. If you stay here and settle in this state, you are lost and undone creatures forever.

Let it not grieve your souls to part with the comforts that are here below, in the things of this world, for certainly, you are mistaken if you think your good and happiness lie there. So, when the soul begins to stir after Christ, it is taken off from the creature, from all creature comforts. It looks upon everything as vanity. The soul says, "I am fully convinced that my happiness lies higher than the things here below." These are the reasonings of a heart in motion toward Christ.

And not only must we be unsettled from the creature, but we must also be taken off from ourselves, from all our own righteousness and duties. I must not think to satisfy God by anything I can do. No, I must be convinced that something greater is required to make peace

with God than anything I can accomplish. Therefore, my heart must be taken off from these things. Previously, I rested in duties, thinking I was not as bad as others, but now I see there is another kind of righteousness that I must have in a Mediator. Though these duties are good in themselves, they cannot save my soul. If I am to have peace with God and stand before him on the great day, it must be through another means than what I have experienced. If I had continued thinking that I could make satisfaction with God by my own actions, I would have been a lost creature.

Yes, my heart must be taken off my own foundation, no longer resting in anything that is in me. Instead, I must go out and deny myself, looking for the source of life outside of myself. This is the second point: "Come to me" means first to behold me, to see and believe that I am the great Mediator who has come into the world to save your souls. And secondly, it means that your hearts must be unsettled, taken off from whatever they were previously settled upon, so that you may be removed from that place and take a new course for life and happiness in Christ.

**Thirdly**, "Come unto me," that is, let there be a working and stirring of your hearts after me. Christ calls for the hearts of sinners. After He is revealed to them, their hearts should be in a working, stirring disposition, reaching after the Lord Jesus Christ, seeking union with Him to the utmost of their ability. The thoughts should be working, the conscience working, the will opening itself to receive the grace of God, and the affections should be stirring. The whole soul should be in a working disposition toward Him.

"Incline your ear and come," as if Christ were saying, "Though you are under great burdens, do not sink under them in discouragement and lie down in a dull and heavy way. No, let your hearts be stirring,

working, and acting after me continually. Be careful to keep your hearts in a stirring and working way after Christ, and after the grace that is offered to you in Christ." This is something young believers should observe with particular attention. If God is beginning to work upon your hearts, you must take great care to keep your hearts in a stirring, working, and active frame toward Christ. Above all things, beware of a dull, heavy, dead spirit at this time, when God calls you to come to Christ. As the Apostle says of himself in Philippians 3:14, "I press on toward the goal." So it should be with every poor soul that God is drawing to Christ; they should always be in a coming disposition and press hard toward the goal of the high prize of the calling that is set before them.

Christ is set before you. God sets His Son before you with the treasure of grace, and you should press and follow hard after God (as expressed by David in Psalm 63:8), with a hard following, stirring, and working of the soul after the Lord. As David said to his son Solomon in 1 Chronicles 22:16, "Arise and work, and the Lord will be with you," so I say to all to whom the grace of God is offered: you must not be dull and sullen, but rise and be doing.

As the Apostle speaks in Philippians 1:20, "According to my earnest expectation." The word translated "earnest expectation" in the original signifies to stretch out the neck, to look eagerly after something one desires. This is the proper meaning of the word in the original text. So it should be in coming to Christ—that is, when Christ is presented in the gospel, there should be a stretching out of the soul, eagerly looking after the Lord Jesus, and a stirring of the soul after Jesus Christ, keeping the soul working and stirring after Him.

Many poor souls, whom God is beginning to work His grace upon, lose much time and comfort for lack of this—keeping their hearts in a

working and stirring frame after Christ. They spend their time in afflicting their souls, but they do not keep their hearts actively moving towards Jesus Christ. As Jacob said to his sons when they lacked bread in Canaan, "We have heard that there is corn in Egypt, so why do we stand here looking at one another?" (Genesis 42:1). Had you gone, he said, you might have returned by this time and brought us bread. So I say to many burdened souls: Have you not heard that there is grace and mercy in Jesus Christ? If your soul had been working, stirring, and kept in an active frame toward Jesus Christ, you might have returned and found rest for your soul by now. But you stand, looking at one thing or another, poring over your corruptions. Had you kept your heart continually stirring in a working frame after Christ, the work might have been done by now.

**Fourthly**, "Come to me," says Christ, "and lay all your burdens upon me. Come and roll your hearts upon me. Whatever burden it may be—whether of your soul or of outward afflictions, whatever your fears and troubles—come and cast all your burdens upon me. I am willing to bear them all."

This is a special work of faith: for the soul to roll itself upon Jesus Christ, to cast itself with all its burdens upon the infinite, rich, free grace of God in Christ. As if Christ were saying, "Is it the burden of sin? I have borne the burden of sin already. Is it the wrath of God that is a burden to you? Come, cast this burden upon me, for I have borne the wrath of God. Or is it the burden of the Law? I have borne that burden for you. I was made an offering for you. I was made under the Law to deliver you from it. Is it the burden of affliction? That, too, was upon me." It is true that the burden of corruption was not upon Him, but Christ will deliver us from that as well.

"Come to me," He says, "and whatever burden is upon your souls, cast it upon me. Roll your souls and all your burdens upon me, and I will give you rest.

**Fifthly, and lastly,** "Come to me" means come and leave your souls with me, commit them to me for life, for salvation, for peace, and for whatever good you desire. Be willing to entrust me with your souls, be willing to entrust me with all your comforts, with both your present and eternal estate. In all your transactions with God and dealings with God, trust me with everything—that is coming to Christ. When Christ bids us come to Him, it is as if He says, "Come to me, and leave your souls, leave all your cares, and commit everything you have to me. Commit yourselves wholly to me, to be disposed of by me for all good whatsoever, and I will take charge of you. I will engage myself, and all my faithfulness, to care for you, supply your needs, strengthen you under all your burdens, carry you through all difficulties, and bring you at last to life, salvation, and perfect rest with my Father and myself." This is what Christ means when He says, "Come to me."

So the Apostle says in 1 Timothy 2:12, *"I know in whom I have believed, and that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him."* What is that which he has committed to Christ? His very soul, his life, his peace, his comfort—all his happiness. He had left all with Him.

Now then, take all these things together. When Christ calls the sinner to come to Him, He is saying: *O sinner, first believe this—that I am the great Redeemer who has come into the world to stand between God's wrath and your soul, and to make peace between God and you. Let your heart be unsettled from whatever it rested in before, whether creature comforts, your own righteousness, duties, self-*

*respects, or any other thing. Let your heart be taken off from them all, and now be in a stirring, working disposition toward me. Let your whole soul be stretching out to me. Come, cast all your burdens upon me, and leave your soul with me. I will take care of them. Come to me in this way.*

Now then, when any soul that is thus burdened responds to this call of Christ and says, *Lord, I come*, this is the very voice and answer of faith. When the soul can say, *Oh, Lord, I come! I see you to be the blessed Mediator between God and my soul. Whatever my heart has rested in before, it shall do so no more. My heart begins to stir after you, and I stretch forth my soul to you, O blessed Redeemer. Here, I cast my burdens upon you. None can ease me but you. I leave myself with you, I commit all to you, and entrust my eternal estate to you. Lord, I come,—*this is the soul that truly comes to Christ.

The soul may be said to come to Christ when there is an answer in these five particulars. All of this is contained in the word *come*, though you may not apprehend it until it is unfolded. It is like a piece of needlework: when it is folded up, all the work is within, but we cannot see it until it is laid open and spread before us. Then we can see all that is in it. Likewise, there are many expressions in Scripture that we do not immediately understand, but they are there. This is the work of the ministry—to spread them out, lay them before you, and open them up so that you may see the grace of God more clearly when it is unfolded.

In this way, Christ calls those who are burdened to come to Him.

# Chapter 19

How Christ Calls Sinners unto Him, Set Forth in Two Particulars,  
Namely:

1. By an Outward and General Call.
  2. By a Particular Call to Particular Sinners.
- And How to Know the Voice of Christ.

*You may ask, "How and in what manner does Christ call me? Christ is in Heaven, I cannot hear Christ call to me."*

Regarding the call of Christ, first, there is a general call in the Word. In the Gospel, Christ calls everyone under the sound of it to come to Him. However, this call is more of a command than an invitation, showing everyone their duty rather than directly inviting them. But there is also a more special call to those whom the Father has given to Christ. While they hear the general call in the Word, there is also a special call to them. Christ, by His Spirit, opens the riches of the Gospel and the grace in Him to their souls. By His Spirit, He reveals these things inwardly to them. Others may hear the outward call when a minister of God opens the Gospel and explains how God gave His Son to us, took our nature upon Himself, and died for sin. The general call requires everyone to believe in His Son. But those whom the Father gives to Christ have the Spirit of God working alongside the Word, revealing the beauty and riches of the Gospel to their souls in a way that they have never seen before, drawing them to come to Christ.

Secondly, not only does God call through the general call, but He also gives a particular call to specific souls. Besides the general call to sinners, saying that Christ came to save sinners and those who were



lost, Christ personally calls individual souls in a special and unique way. Ministers of God are bound to give a general invitation in the preaching of the Gospel, but God also speaks in a personal manner. There is a voice of God that speaks directly to the soul that He intends to bring to His Son. That person hears a voice behind them, as Scripture says, saying, *"This is the way to salvation. The way you have been going is not the way to life; you will perish in that way. Christ is the right way."*

To explain this, I will use a comparison between the general and particular call. Imagine a prince whose subjects have committed treason. The prince, in his mercy, issues a general proclamation to all, saying, *"Though you have acted traitorously against me, I am willing to pardon anyone who comes to a certain place on a certain day and submits themselves to me."* This is the general proclamation, giving all an opportunity to receive mercy. But suppose that one poor traitor, feeling deeply his guilt and treachery, sits alone, lamenting his condition and thinking, *"How can I possibly face my prince? Woe to me for the wickedness of my ways."* Now imagine the prince comes by, notices this sorrowful man hiding away, sees him beating his breast and weeping over his actions, and personally calls out to him, *"Oh, poor creature, come to me."*

This is like the work of faith. God not only issues a general call to sinners but, seeing the troubled soul, gives a personal call, saying, *"Oh, you poor creature, you are burdened and troubled by your sins, lamenting the breach between us. Do not remain in this state; come to me."* Until God speaks personally to the soul, the general proclamation alone will not bring the sinner to Christ. Therefore, Christ not only says in general, *"Come to me,"* but He also calls in a specific and personal way.

Thirdly, you may ask, "*How can I know it is the voice of Christ?*" Christ, by His Spirit, secretly persuades the soul that it is indeed His voice and not a voice of deception. This is reflected in Song of Solomon 2:8, "*The voice of my beloved!*" When the soul is estranged from God and then drawn back, the Lord makes the soul recognize His voice. After His resurrection, Christ spoke with Mary, and though she mistook Him for the gardener, when He called her by name, "*Mary,*" she immediately recognized Him and responded, "*Rabboni*" (*Master*). Christ did not need to tell her that He was the Christ—just by calling her name, she knew it was Him. In the same way, when the Spirit of Christ speaks to the soul, there is a secret instinct, a divine persuasion, and manifestation that makes the soul know it is truly the voice of God.

Many times, someone may have attended sermons, heard Christ preached by many good ministers, but one day, they will say, "*I hear the voice of Christ in my soul today, and I know it is Him.*" This is how the soul effectually comes to Christ.

4. Furthermore, the invitation of Christ, when it is truly effectual, comes with an inner recognition that it is indeed Christ's voice. As Christ says, "*I stand at the door and knock,*" this refers to His particular call. "*If anyone will open to me, I will come in to him and dine with him.*" God does not simply proclaim pardon but also knocks at the door of the soul, standing there personally. You who have experienced the work of grace in your hearts can recall that while you lived under the outward means of grace for a long time, God also came and knocked at your door. This is a great condescension, much like a prince who does not only issue a general proclamation but also personally knocks at the door of a poor traitor. In the same way, Christ does this for the soul.

Before the soul fully comes and casts itself upon Christ, committing itself to Him, there are often secret hints and indications that God intends love and mercy for that soul in particular. Even though you have been very sinful and wretched, you may still sense, by the way God deals with you, that He has thoughts of mercy toward you.

**Question:**

You may ask, *"How does it appear that there is any indication of God's goodness to a soul in particular when it is called to come to Christ?"*

**Answer:**

I will give you this foundation: when the soul comes to Christ and casts itself upon Him, it does not do so blindly, unsure of whether it will receive mercy or not. It is true that one might come to Christ thinking, *"There is no other help for me, but I do not know whether there is mercy for me."* This is not the full work of faith. While it may come close to faith, real faith involves more. The soul may say, *"In the way I have been living, there is no mercy for me, but I will try it."* This is not yet the reflective act of faith. Yet, there is some secret persuasion in the soul, however weak, that leads it to believe that there is mercy for it. Faith is not a mere venture; it involves a kind of certainty, even if that certainty is very weak. To say, *"I will cast my soul upon God, but I might perish, for I have no reason to think God will save me,"* is unbelief. True faith, to some degree, carries with it a sense of assurance, even if the soul cannot always clearly discern it.

5. When Christ's invitation becomes effectual, it comes with a prevailing power that accompanies His voice, drawing the heart to Him. Christ does not merely speak to the heart and say, *"Come,"* but with His voice, He releases a power upon the heart, enabling it to come to Him. Consider Christ's time on earth:

when He called His disciples, He said to Matthew, who was sitting at the tax booth, "*Come and follow me.*" Immediately, Matthew left his work, his friends, and all that he had to follow Christ. Likewise, when Christ called Peter and Andrew, who were fishing, saying, "*Come to me,*" they left their father, their nets, their ship, and followed Him. Surely, there was a secret virtue that went out with Christ's word, compelling them to follow.

In the same way, when Christ's invitation is effectual today, it comes with a mighty power. Just as the woman with the issue of blood touched the hem of Christ's garment and felt a secret virtue that healed her, so does an effectual invitation carry a hidden power that works upon the soul.

Many may ask, "*Why does Christ call me? Am I able to come to Him?*" Christ's call, like the call to Matthew, Peter, and others, is not only a command but is infused with divine power. That same power is present today in the ministry of the Word, where Christ speaks and calls sinners to come to Him. Accompanying His call is an unseen force that compels the soul, so that even if a parent or friend tries to dissuade a young person from coming to Christ, the soul must still come. This is as strong a work of God now as when Christ called Matthew and Peter.

Lastly, not only does Christ call, but He reaches out His hand before the soul is united to Him. When Christ sees the soul beginning to move toward Him, He extends His hand to draw it in. You may ask, "*What does it mean for Christ to reach out His hand?*" This refers to the gracious encouragements that Christ gives to every small beginning of the soul's movement toward Him. The Lord does not merely invite but also strengthens and nurtures those early stirrings

of grace. He will not break the bruised reed or quench the smouldering flax. In this way, Christ's invitation comes with more than just words—it comes with strength and assurance to bring the soul fully to Him.

## Chapter 20

That There is Nothing Required of Sinners But to Come to Christ, with Nine Consequences Arising From This, and What Has Been Laid Down in the Two Former Chapters.

1. There is no worthiness required in those who come to Christ.
2. The soul need not be troubled about the time and measure of its humiliation before coming to Christ.
3. Nor about its interest in Christ before coming to Him.
4. The least degree of faith will give the soul an interest in Christ.
5. The work of faith is supernatural.
6. Faith is a humbling grace.
7. Believers, after coming to Christ, should be willing to do and suffer much for Christ.
8. Those who are in Christ will never be cast off.
9. They know not what to do when they lose their sense of interest in Christ.

Now, the third point is this: that there is nothing else required. Christ says, "*Come to me, and I will give you rest.*" Blessed Christ! Is this all that you require? Yes, "*Come to me, and you shall have rest.*" You often see this expressed in Scripture. For example, "*Come, buy*

*wine, milk, and honey without price;*" it is simply a matter of coming, and indeed, the very act of coming is the act of buying. Similarly, in Revelation 22:17, *"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come,' and let him who hears say, 'Come,' and let him who is thirsty come; and whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."* Here, it says "come" three times, and there is nothing else required, nothing you need to bring with you—only come. Remember how I explained this: what it means to "come." And once you understand that, there is nothing else required but to come. This sheds light on several points.

1. There is no unworthiness in any sinner—no matter who they are—that can hinder them from coming. Why? Because Christ does not say, *"You who have been vile and wretched must first do this or that, and then come to me."* No, whatever you have been, the first thing Christ requires to give you ease, rest, and peace is to come to Him. It is true that some things are necessary in the process of coming, but these are not conditions of the Gospel. Rather, they are prerequisites because it is impossible to come without them. I would explain it like this, using the previous metaphor: suppose the King tells a traitor, *"If you come to a certain place at a certain time, you will receive your pardon."* Now, all that is required for his pardon is to be at that place. What if this man is far away from the designated place, facing storms, bad weather, and other obstacles like friends trying to stop him? This implies that he must deeply understand the value of his pardon and the misery of his situation if he is not pardoned. This would stir up in him a strong resolution to overcome all difficulties. However, these resolutions and difficulties are not conditions for the pardon—the only condition is to be in that place at that time. Still, it follows that if he overcomes the difficulties and reaches the place, it was his deep

understanding of the value of pardon that drove him to resolve to face the challenges.

Likewise, with the soul: the thing that brings your soul to pardon, rest, and peace with God is coming to Christ. But because there is a great distance between Christ and us, and many obstacles in the way—such as the wickedness of our hearts, various temptations, and lusts—we cannot come to Christ without becoming aware of the value of the pardon, which will stir strong resolutions to overcome all difficulties. There is no reason God troubles anyone about their sins except to give them such a sense of the value of pardon that they are driven to resolve to reach Christ. However, these resolutions are not conditions of the covenant; the only condition is to come to Christ, not to be afflicted, not to focus on seeing your sins—just to come.

2. It also follows that no man or woman whom God is leading to come to Christ needs to trouble themselves about the degree or duration of their humiliation. Many people criticize preaching that emphasises humility, calling it "legalistic," when it is said that one must be humbled before coming to Christ. I know of no preacher who insists that people must first be under the law for a certain length of time before they can come to Christ. But if you want to know what degree of humility is necessary, it is simply this: as much as will bring you to Christ—enough to stir your heart to resolve to overcome all difficulties to reach Him. Once you have this, you need not be concerned about the time or depth of your humility. Do not worry about whether you have been humbled as long or as deeply as someone else. If you come to Christ, that is enough.

For if I come to Christ, I must know what I am coming for—a pardon. A pardon for what? For my sin, for the sin that condemns me. There

must be a sense of this, and if you come this far, you need not trouble yourself about the degree or length of your humiliation. God will accept your coming. Once you come to Him, God will not ask, "*But friend, how much have you been humbled in your coming?*" God knows the difficulties you have passed through. He knows that you would never have valued Christ unless you had first understood the misery of being without Him. But God will not reproach you for that —He will welcome you when you come. Let the sinner be what he may, Christ will receive him.

**3.** This helps us understand how to come to Christ. You may ask, "Come to Christ, but how shall I know that I have any right to come to Him?" This very point answers the question: nothing is required but coming. The only thing that has ever given any soul, from the beginning of the world, an interest in Christ is simply coming to Him. Your coming to Christ gives you the right to Jesus Christ. If the grace of God leads you to come, that very act of coming gives you an interest and right in Him, even if you had none before. There is no other right or claim to Christ except God's offering of Him to you in the Gospel, and your coming to Him.

But now (for it would be a pity to let this pass), some might think, "Won't this lead to looseness and carelessness, to say that nothing is required but coming to Christ?" I know this truth is often abused in many ways. When we preach the Gospel, if at any time we preach about the miserable condition of men to humble them, some will say it's a contradiction. But I ask you to be careful of these vain-spirited people who do not seek Jesus Christ in the way of the Gospel. Though it may be due to their weakness or the corruption of their hearts that they do not see the way of the Gospel, they will come to young people and weak Christians and claim there is a contradiction. However, things that may seem contradictory are actually very much



in agreement. If we tried to judge the Scriptures with limited understanding, we would think they contradict themselves. But those who are well-versed in Scripture and understand God's mind can reconcile these things, even when others believe them to be at odds.

For example, in Paul's letter to the Romans, he says we are justified by faith without the works of the Law. Yet James says we are justified by works. A stranger might think these statements contradict each other, but those familiar with the way of Scripture can understand how they fit together. Similarly, those who accuse the preaching of God's ministers of contradiction are strangers to the way of the Gospel. If they truly understood the Gospel, they would know how to bring harmony to such things, instead of misleading young and weak believers into thinking there is a contradiction.

Therefore, I affirm, and hope we will always affirm, that the condition of the Gospel is only to come. The weight of our souls and eternal estates lies not in our humbling, but in coming to Jesus Christ. Do not say this leads to looseness, for the soul that sees Christ as the glorious Mediator who comes to save, this very sight of Christ has great power to sanctify the heart. When I see Christ, I understand that I have to deal with God, and that I need a Mediator between God and me, for my sins have made such a breach between God and my soul. This truth does not lead to carelessness.

As explained before, coming implies moving from one condition to another. It also means that my heart must be taken off from the world, from my lusts, and from my corruptions. Coming to Christ implies this. Furthermore, when I consider the purpose of my coming, what my soul seeks, it is to be saved from the power of sin, as well as from the guilt of sin. I come to Christ as the source of all my happiness, for life, grace, and all good. I come to Him that I may

live in Him, and that I may live for God through Him. Certainly, to say that Christ requires only coming to Him does not lead to looseness. I come to Christ to commit my whole soul to Him. Is this not a sanctifying grace? Indeed, to preach that you may come to Christ and no more pleases Libertines, but when we understand the way of the Gospel, we know we must first understand what it means to come, then know that we must leave something behind. We must come to Him for life, for salvation, for union with God the Father, and for everlasting communion with Him. This leaves no room for looseness, but rather establishes the true condition of the Gospel, in the way of the soul's coming to Christ.

**4.** It follows from this that the weakest and smallest degree of faith will give us an interest in Christ, because nothing but coming to Him is required. It is not “run to me,” or “come strongly to me,” but simply *come*. If I can get to Him, even if I am crawling, even if I come in the weakest, poorest way imaginable, that is enough. By coming and closing with Christ, the soul finds rest. If the condition for receiving a pardon is to be at a certain place, then whether one arrives walking, crawling, or on hands and knees due to weakness, they will still receive the promised pardon. Similarly, even if the soul comes to Christ creeping with great weakness, that very act gives it an interest in Christ. It is not the strength or degree of faith and confidence that matters.

Some poor, weak Christians may be troubled by this, thinking they lack the confidence and assurance that others seem to have. They may be filled with doubts and fears. But understand this: it is not the strength or degree of faith that is required in coming to Christ, but simply the act of coming. “*Come to me,*” Christ says, even if you come trembling, shaking, or filled with fear. If you come to Christ, even with all your doubts and uncertainties, you will find rest.

**5.** It follows from this that the work of faith, and the bringing of true rest to the soul, is a supernatural work. It involves coming to Christ, which means looking beyond ourselves, towards a righteousness that is not our own. It is about leaving behind our own righteousness, not resting in it, nor confiding in what we have, are, or can be enabled to do by the power of God. The way in which the soul finds rest in Christ by faith is supernatural because it requires the soul to deny itself—whatever it has, whatever it does, or whatever it can be enabled to do by the power of God. The soul does not rest upon anything within itself, or even upon anything that God’s infinite power enables it to do; instead, it rests in Christ alone. Therefore, this coming to Christ means going out of ourselves, which is a supernatural act. Nothing is more natural to mankind than to rely on oneself, to want control over one’s own situation, to lean upon some sense of worthiness or goodness within oneself. This is the most natural inclination of a rational creature—to rest upon something it does to make peace with God and be counted righteous before Him.

It is a mighty work of God to strip the heart of this self-reliance. The heart might acknowledge that it can do nothing of itself but that it does everything by the grace of God. Yet for the heart not to rest even in this grace-driven righteousness within itself, but instead to go beyond it and rest only in Christ, is the hardest thing in the world. Though people may be convinced intellectually that they should not rest in themselves, actually moving beyond this and looking for rest in Christ alone is extremely difficult. This is what makes the work of faith the hardest thing in the world—it leads the soul out of itself, away from its own foundation and principles. The misunderstanding of this truth has been the undoing of thousands who live under the sound of the Gospel. They reform their lives to some degree and think they are capable of good works, yet they rest in that, failing to look outside themselves for true rest in Christ.

**Question.** You might ask, “What? Should we not rest upon what we do and are enabled to do by God's grace? Isn't faith itself a resting upon Christ?”

**Answer.** No. You must observe this: in your coming to Christ, you must not rest upon your coming but upon Christ Himself. Even here, there can be deceit. Some rest upon works of humiliation, upon mourning for sin or reforming their lives, and they think this is their rest and peace. Others go further and say they must believe in Christ, yet they rest upon their believing and not upon the object of their belief, which is Christ. We must be careful not to rest in our coming to Christ or even in our believing, but rather rest fully and entirely in Christ alone. This is why faith is a supernatural grace—because it takes us away from reliance on ourselves and brings us to rest entirely in Christ.

**6.** From this, it also follows that faith is a humbling grace. It must humble the soul wherever it is, for it is the greatest form of self-denial in the world. For a creature to be willing to rely on free grace and to be so emptied of itself as to acknowledge there is no worthiness or goodness in it at all, and yet to be content to live eternally upon mere alms—this is the ultimate act of self-denial and the ultimate glorification of God. Is there anything harder for any of you than to live as a beggar all your days, dependent on others for everything? For the soul to be emptied of itself and to live eternally upon mere alms, upon nothing but free grace, depending entirely on a source of life outside itself, is a mighty work of humility and self-denial.

This is why, in Romans 10:3, it says of the Jews: *“For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness*

*of God.*” This plainly shows that resting on God’s righteousness by faith requires the heart to submit, to lay itself down and humble itself. This is why the Lord humbles the spirits of men and women when He brings them to Christ, because coming to Christ is an act of the greatest self-denial, where the heart is emptied of its own pride. It is hard for people to live without some sense of their own worth, to live without a "stock" of their own, but in Christ, we must live on what He provides alone.

Indeed, in this humility, man becomes more humble than Adam in his innocence. Adam had a “stock” of grace in his own hand, a principle of life that God gave him to live by. But now, in the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, the situation is different. Our life, our “stock” of grace, is not in our hands but in Christ’s. He holds it all, and because of this, our life is better and safer than Adam’s ever was. We cannot fall from God because the principle of life is no longer within ourselves but within Christ. This is a great mystery, one that we can only glimpse in the Word of God.

7. If nothing is required but to come, then another consequence follows from this, namely, that believers who come to Christ should learn to be willing to do and suffer much for Christ after they come. This is because nothing was required of them for the pardon of their sins but simply to come. I strengthen this inference as follows: if God had said, “I have sent a mediator to pacify my wrath and pardon your sins, but before you come to rest, I require you to suffer for so many hundred years in torment,” and that suffering was a preparation for coming, then after enduring such suffering, you would receive rest. Suppose this had been the condition of the covenant. We would all have reason to fall on our faces and bless His great name, thankful to have peace on any terms. We would have been not only willing to

accept these terms but also to magnify God's grace that we could be saved at last.

But the Lord has not required that we suffer such hardships before coming to Christ. Rather, He calls upon us to come first, requiring nothing before. Therefore, before we can serve the Lord in any way, He first accepts us, pardons us, heals us, makes us His own, takes us as His children, and makes us heirs of heaven and eternal life—all of this before we have ever been able to serve Him. What infinite grace of God is this! How graciously He goes ahead of us! He calls the greatest sinner, burdened by sin, and says, “I require nothing before receiving you in mercy—simply come and cast your soul upon me.”

You may say, “Lord! We who have been guilty of so many sins for so many years—might it not be just that God should require us to live for many years to His honour and service before pardoning us?” No, says God. “I will receive you and accept you upon your coming, before you are able to do me any service.” No, says God, “Come to me, and you shall have my favour first, you shall be accepted and pardoned first. Then, indeed, I expect service from you. Then I expect you to live as the redeemed ones of the Lord, and all that you do afterward will be an act of thankfulness to me for my grace.”

And indeed, this is how believers live in the world. Though they see their actions as duties, they do them in gratitude. The grace of God in His Son is the driving force behind all the duties God now requires of them—much more so than before. God does not call upon you to suffer first and then pardon your sin. No, says God, “I will bestow my favour first upon you, and then I will test whether you will suffer for me and serve me.” He does not behave as men do, who test whether someone will suffer and deserve their favour before bestowing it. No, says God, “I will first bestow my favours upon you, and then I will see

if you will suffer for me and serve me.” Therefore, the less God requires as a condition before we come to Christ, the more willing we should be to do for God after we come to Christ.

It is like a man who receives a poor child into his family and makes him his heir. The less the child did to earn the man’s favour, the more, if the child is truly grateful, he will do in thankfulness. If the child’s friends had bargained with the man, promising him a hundred pounds, the child would not feel so indebted to his master. But if the child was found at the door, with no friend to look after him and not a rag to wear, and the man took him in, taught him his trade, and made him heir to all he possessed—oh! How infinitely indebted the child would be, knowing his master had done all this for him without anything being done to earn his love. Thus, Jesus Christ is gracious to us, saying, “Come to me—only come, and you will have rest.”

**8.** From this, another important lesson arises. Since nothing is required but to come to Christ, we have a strong ground for assurance that those who are once in Christ will never be cast away but will have eternal life. The distance between eternal life and the members of Christ is not as great as the distance between someone in their natural state and being made a member of Christ. Now, God has done more for you in bringing you to Christ than He will do when He brings you to heaven. There is a greater distance between you and Christ than there is between you, as a member of Christ, and a glorified saint in heaven. If God brought you over this great distance, purely by free grace and requiring nothing but your coming, now that you are a member of Christ, surely He will not shut you out of heaven. You now have the right to heaven through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and God has placed a principle of life within you to live for Jesus Christ—an everlasting principle of life,

when before there was none. If God has brought you to Christ purely by free grace, surely He will not cast you out of heaven.

This should be a tremendous encouragement. If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to Christ, how much more shall we be saved by His life? If, when I was in the gall of bitterness and bound by iniquity, God gave me mercy upon coming to His Son, surely He will not cast me out of heaven.

**9.** Another lesson from this is that if believers, through negligence, sluggishness, or failure, lose the assurance of God's love in Christ, lose their rest in Christ, they have here a direction on what to do. Consider how you first found rest in Christ. It was not through your own righteousness, nor through your humiliation (though that may have paved the way). So, now, as a believer, when you have lost the assurance of Christ's love and the comfort of rest in Him, you must return the same way again. Christ calls even those who are already believers to come to Him. If you have lost the assurance of faith, the way to regain rest is to renew the act of coming to Christ, just as you did before. Though God humbled you, what truly brought you rest was coming to Jesus Christ. So, all the more now, as a believer, when you lack the rest in Christ you desire, renew your act of coming to Him. You will regain your rest more quickly and securely this way than by focusing on whether your evidences of grace are valid, or questioning whether your humiliation and sanctification are genuine. Renewing your act of faith in coming to Christ will restore your rest sooner and more safely, and through it, you will also see your sanctification more clearly.

Thus, the renewal of faith brings rest, just as it did in your first conversion.



## Chapter 21:

Nine Rules to be Observed in Coming Rightly to Christ.

1. Do not rest in the outward means that lead to Christ before you actually enjoy Christ Himself.
2. Focus more on Christ Himself than on the good things that come from Him.
3. Come with your whole soul.
4. Keep Christ continually in your sight.
5. Be convinced that anything keeping you from Christ does not come from God.
6. Be wary of all discouragements and hindrances.
7. Keep your heart constantly directed towards Christ.
8. Surrender yourself to God's Spirit.
9. Frequently renew the act of coming to Christ.

Now, two things remain: to set forth some rules for coming to Christ rightly and to outline some means of drawing sinners' hearts to Christ.

First, the rules, so that we may observe them rightly when coming to Christ and come in the proper way. I speak to those whose hearts are already stirred toward Christ and are setting upon all the means of coming to Him.

### **RULE I.**

First, although God requires that you seek Christ through all His ordinances and in the performance of all duties, your great care must

be not to rest in the means that lead to Christ before you actually come to enjoy Christ Himself. This is a great mistake in the world: people rest in the means that lead to Christ, even though they have not yet found Christ.

For instance, when you come to hear the Word, if I ask why you come, you might say that you come to find Christ there. But how many people merely rest in the fact that they hear the Word, listen to sermons, and never ask themselves, "Have I met with Jesus Christ in the Word today? Have I found Jesus Christ there?" Their hearts are not troubled about this. They simply come to hear the Word, thinking it is a good thing in itself. But they rest in the means that lead to Christ without actually reaching Christ.

It is like a man on a journey to a certain place for important business who merely satisfies himself by saying, "I am on my way," without ever asking, "Have I obtained what I am journeying for?" We must remember that prayer, the Word, and the sacraments are merely the means to bring us to Christ. How foolish it is to be content that we are on the journey but to neglect to ask, "Do I have the thing for which I am travelling?" Jesus Christ is the one we seek. Have we found Him?

The wise merchant in the parable bought the field because he saw that there was a pearl of great value in it. He then sold everything he had to obtain that pearl. The field represents the preaching of the Word and other ordinances, but the pearl is Christ. We should look for the pearl in the ordinances and use the field only for the sake of the pearl. Thus, we must pass through the ordinances until we have laid hold of Him whom our soul loves.

Most people in the world are stuck in the ordinances themselves. They engage in duties and ordinances—they pray because God

requires it of them, and they hear the Word because God requires it of them—but they do not consider that there is something beyond prayer and beyond the Word. Have I found Jesus Christ in prayer? Have I found Jesus Christ in the Word? It is a good sign when sinners are not satisfied with ordinances unless they find Jesus Christ in them. Be sure to go through the ordinances until you reach Christ.

## **RULE II.**

Second, in your seeking after Christ, be sure to fix your heart and your gaze more upon the person of Christ Himself than upon the good things that come from Christ. When coming to Christ, it is like being married to Him. When a person marries, they focus more on the person they are marrying than on the portion or wealth that comes with the marriage. They are attracted by the excellency of the person. So too, the soul, when coming to Christ, should look upon Him as the great Mediator of the Covenant, the only Reconciler between God and man, the one in whom all our good, happiness, and glory are found.

Labour to see the excellence of Christ Himself and to seek union with Him. Many souls come to Christ because they think there is no mercy except in Christ, and they fear going to hell. So they cry out to God for mercy in Christ. But they do not see the excellence in Christ Himself. You must come to Christ, not merely for mercy, but because you see in Him a surpassing beauty and glory. Look through the ordinances toward union with Christ, and let your soul be drawn to Him. Be able to say, “I see the glory of the Father in Him, and my soul desires union with Him.”

## **RULE III.**

Thirdly, in your coming to Christ, be sure to come with your whole soul. Do not come to Christ as merely one means of help among many, thinking it is good to make use of every possible means and that Christ seems as likely a means as any other. No, you must come to Christ as the only means, casting your entire soul upon Him, without relying on anything else. Do not hold onto anything else as a backup plan in case Christ fails you.

For example, when we go to a friend for help, we might also make sure we have other friends to rely on if that one lets us down. But when you come to Christ, you must lay the full weight of your soul upon Him alone. It is like being over a deep pit, with two things to rest upon—one sound and secure, and the other rotten. You might be hesitant to trust the strong one, not knowing for certain that it will hold, so you rest part of your weight on the rotten one. As a result, you fall and perish because the full weight was not placed on what was sound.

Likewise, the Lord presents His Son as an all-sufficient Redeemer for us, full of righteousness and salvation, and He requires that those who come to His Son come with their whole souls, laying the entire weight of their salvation, life, and happiness upon Him. If you try to rely on two things—Christ and something else, such as the world or your own ways—there is a great chance you will fail.

There is an excellent example in *Genesis 45:20*, where Joseph sends for his father, Jacob, telling him not to worry about his possessions: “Do not be concerned about your belongings, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.” So, when the Lord calls any poor sinner to come to Him, He says, “Do not be concerned about earthly things; let your heart be completely taken off all creature comforts, for they are mere trifles. Heaven and the riches of Christ are yours.” The soul

truly comes to Christ when it lays everything upon Him and is satisfied with Him alone.

#### **RULE IV.**

Fourthly, when your soul is moving towards Christ, labour to keep Him continually in your sight. Look upon Him in His excellency, glory, and beauty; keep the object of your desire before you as you come to Him.

It is like being on a journey—if I can see the end of my journey, if the steeple of my destination is visible in the distance, or if a mariner can see the harbour he is heading towards, it brings comfort. In the same way, the soul that comes to Christ must resolve to keep Him in its sight, focusing on His splendour and beauty. You must see a greater good in Christ than in anything else, recognising that His goodness surpasses all.

One of the greatest hindrances to coming to Christ is losing sight of Him along the way. The devil may present other things before your eyes as distractions, so you look into the deep pit of your own heart and see nothing but discouragement. Instead, keep your eyes fixed on Christ, the Son of God, who is opening His arms, ready to embrace you. There is a secret power and influence that comes from Christ to draw the soul towards Him. So long as the soul keeps Christ in view, as the woman with the issue of blood said, “If I can just touch the hem of His garment...” You can go even further: if you can but catch a glimpse of Christ, that sight will draw your heart to Him.

Just as some creatures are said to have such deadly poison that merely looking at them brings death, so in the case of Christ, merely seeing His excellency has the virtue to draw the soul to Him. If you are coming to Christ, take note: some who are on their way to Christ

find themselves like the children of Israel when they were nearing Canaan. They had made good progress, but then encountered a little discouragement, and fell into discontent. As a result, they were forced to wander in the wilderness for forty years. Similarly, some souls get close to Christ, only to fall into discontent, discouragement, and fretting, and then wander in the wilderness of discouragement for years.

#### **RULE V.**

Fifthly, thoroughly convince your soul that whatever sorrow for sin, humiliation, or trouble of spirit keeps you from coming to Christ, it is not from God, but from your own corruption. Such sorrow is not from God except in the sense that God allows the devil to try you as an affliction. But if your sorrow for your wretchedness or unworthiness discourages you from coming to Christ, you must understand that it is not a gracious work of God in you but rather the devil troubling you.

Many poor sinners, when troubled by their sins, take a sort of satisfaction in their distress, thinking it is a good thing, and are glad of it. Yes, trouble for sin is a good thing, and it is right to be glad of it. But if your trouble for sin keeps you from coming to Christ, making you believe you are too unworthy to come, then your sorrow is not mixed with godly repentance. Be convinced of this.

#### **RULE VI.**

Sixthly, beware of all kinds of discouragements and hindrances in your coming to Christ. But especially take heed of making determinations against yourself. Do not say things like: "Surely, the Lord will never show mercy to me. The time is past; the Lord has

forsaken me. I have sought Him for so long, and He has not come to me. No, the Lord never intends good for me.”

Be cautious of such determinations, for they are sinful wherever they exist. No matter how vile your heart may seem, there is no just cause for such conclusions. When you give way to such thoughts, you are only ensnaring and fettering your own soul. It is like tying shackles around your own legs and then saying you cannot come to Christ. Christ calls to you, but you are held back by your own thoughts. Just as one can place chains on their own legs and then claim they cannot walk, so too can you hinder your spiritual coming to Christ by your own thoughts.

Do not sit down and say, “I will never receive mercy; I am not one of the elect; I will never come to Christ.” When you are about to come to Jesus Christ, cast off such thoughts.

## **RULE VII.**

Seventhly, at those times when you do not feel your heart as active as you would like in seeking after Christ, still keep your heart directed towards Him. You might say, “Why can’t I go to Christ? Christ calls me, yet I have a dead, heavy heart.” But even so, you are nearer to Christ by being in this position than if you were to neglect His ordinances altogether.

You should present your soul where Jesus Christ is and say, “Perhaps He will impart some virtue into my heart to stir it towards Him.” But resolve this: “I will not turn away from Christ. Even if I cannot go any further, here I will stand, look, and cry to Him. I will say as the Church does: ‘Draw me, and I will run after You.’”

Though you may not be able to believe as you wish, stand where you are, sigh, cry, and call out to God. Say, “Draw my heart, O God, and I will run after You.” Blessed Redeemer, do You call us? Then send forth Your Spirit to draw our hearts, and we will run after You. Keep your heart in such a frame, for this is a great help in coming to Christ.

Take heed also of any temptation that may draw your heart away from coming to Christ. Consider the notable Scripture from *1 Samuel 12:20-21*, where Samuel speaks to the people of Israel after they had sinned against the Lord and were troubled by their sin. He says, “Do not be afraid. Yes, you have done all this wickedness, yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. Do not turn aside after worthless things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are vain.”

In the same way, I say to you: Yes, you have sinned against the Lord, and though Christ calls you to come to Him, you may complain of having a dead, dull heart. But do not turn away from Christ to vain things. Instead, continue to set yourself before God and attend to Him in the ordinances where He reveals Himself.

### **RULE VIII.**

Eighthly, when your heart begins to turn towards Christ, give yourself over to the stream of God’s Spirit. The Spirit of God will stir within you from time to time, though not always in the same way. When you are attending to the ordinances and waiting for the Spirit to draw your heart to Christ, wait for this stirring. If you feel the Spirit beginning to draw your heart to Christ in any measure, then join with the work of the Spirit. Give yourself fully to the stream of God’s Spirit; do not draw back.



Perhaps the Spirit is drawing you towards Christ, but then you pull back due to discouraging thoughts about your vileness or insufficient humility. When you feel the Spirit stirring within you, give yourself over to the strength of God's Spirit.

It is like learning to swim. When a person first learns to swim, they may struggle and thrash about, trying to keep afloat. But to succeed, they must learn to relax and trust the water to support them. Sometimes people who do not know how to swim make more of a fuss trying to stay afloat than those who can swim. They are sinking, confused, and fearful, whereas those who have learned the art of swimming trust the water and stay above the surface.

In the same way, some who come to Christ, not understanding how to give themselves over to Him, experience great confusion of spirit and turmoil. They thrash about, fearing they will sink into destruction. But others, who have come to understand what it means to come to Christ, may have no strength in themselves but have learned to give their souls over to the stream of God's Spirit. They come to Christ in a more peaceful and solid way, finding safety in Him.

You see an example of this in *1 Kings 20:33*, where the servants of Ben-Hadad, seeking mercy from the King of Israel, watched carefully for any word that might offer them hope. When they heard the king refer to Ben-Hadad as his "brother," they quickly took hold of this and pursued mercy. Likewise, when a sinner seeks after Christ, they must diligently watch for any movement of the Spirit of Christ that offers hope.

If the Spirit begins to move within you and draw you towards Christ, take hold of it! By now, you might have been in Christ's arms and

resting in His bosom if you had followed the Spirit's leading when it stirred within you.

### **RULE IX.**

Ninthly, the soul that is in the process of coming to Christ, but does not yet know whether it has truly reached Him, should often renew the act of coming. Certainly, there are many who are already with Christ but are unaware of it. Some souls may say, "I thought I had come to Christ before, but now I see my corruptions prevail, and I fear I have not truly come to Him." Such souls might think they must not come to Christ until they have overcome their corruptions. However, the best way to overcome your corruption is to come to Christ—to renew the act of coming to Him. The longer you delay in renewing this act, the stronger your corruptions will grow.

If you remain in a state of discouragement, telling yourself, "My corruptions are so strong, I am afraid I have never come to Christ," your corruptions will only increase. You must not wait until your corruptions are subdued before coming to Christ; instead, renew the act of coming to Him again. Say to yourself, "I will try again. Perhaps I did not do it correctly the first time, but if I miss the mark the second time, I will try again and again—even a hundred times."

Do not say, "If I had overcome this sin or that sin, I would come to Christ." This is as if you are saying, "If I were already sanctified by Christ, then I would come to Him for justification." Is that the right order? No, you must come to Christ first so that He may subdue your corruptions. It would be strange for a woman to say to a king who offers to marry her, "No, if I were already a queen, I would marry him." But she must first marry him, and that is what makes her a queen.

Likewise, the soul must not say, "If I were sanctified and had overcome my corruptions, I would come to Christ." No, it is by coming to Christ and renewing the act of coming to Him that you are sanctified. This is a rule I would leave with all young believers: spend more time and energy renewing the act of believing, of casting your soul upon the grace of God in Christ, and laying your burdens upon Him than in any other work. There is nothing more profitable to spend your time and strength on than renewing the act of coming to Christ.

Christ says, "Come." The soul responds, "I thought I had come, but I was mistaken." Christ says, "Then come again, and come again and again." This is the only way to overcome any corruption in your heart. So, when Christ calls you to come, remember these rules. Oh, that you would lay them up and use them at all times. When you hear such things from God's word, remember what has been said in this text: what is implied in coming, and how you are to come.

Oh, that the Lord would help poor souls to come to Him. And know, for your encouragement, that if God gives you a heart to answer His call and come to His Son, this is an evident sign of your predestination. For those He calls, He has also elected. Indeed, consider this: what an infinite mercy it is that God calls you to come. You could have been in a condition where God says, "Depart from me, you cursed." Many are cast away from God, and He says to them, "Depart from me, you cursed." You may be as great a sinner as they, yet instead of hearing, "Depart from me, you vile, passionate, unclean soul," you hear the voice of Jesus Christ through the ministry of the word calling you, "Come to me."

He not only calls you, but He has also given you many rules on how you should come to Him. If a prince made a proclamation for a rebel

to come to him for a pardon and then sent messengers with detailed instructions on how to come, directing him to the right place, what a mighty encouragement this would be for the rebel to come. This is what the Lord Christ has done for you. He has not only proclaimed Himself as the mediator between God and you, but He has also sent His Spirit to call you and His messengers to give you instructions on how to come. He has told you to avoid certain paths and given you guidelines to help you. This is what Christ has done for you.

If the Lord gives you a heart to answer Christ's call, know that this calling through His word is a forerunner of the call Christ will make to you on another day. There is a call that says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest," and there will be another call: "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you." This is worth more than ten thousand worlds. When the soul answers His call now, it can go away comforted, knowing that Christ will call again in a different way. He calls the burdened soul now to give you rest, but one day He will call you before all men and angels to receive your inheritance. He will say, "Come, not just to rest, but come to inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world."

## Chapter 22

*Nine means to draw sinners to Christ, namely:*

- 1. He who calls us is the Son of God.*
- 2. He is our near kinsman (in which three strong arguments are included: first, the terror of God's glory is removed; second, He is infinitely inclined to do good to the sons of men; third, in uniting the divine nature with the human, He has done a greater work than saving a soul).*
- 3. He is the mediator.*
- 4. He deserves that we should come to Him.*
- 5. The soul gains infinite good by coming to Christ, illustrated by four particulars.*
- 6. We are miserable in ourselves.*
- 7. Christ will certainly receive those who come to Him, which is explained in three particulars.*
- 8. We stand in great need of Christ.*
- 9. Not coming to Christ will aggravate all other sins.*

*With answers to some objections.*

Now, we come to the second part of the text: the invitation itself, where we focus on drawing the hearts of sinners to come to Christ. The task before us is found in **Luke 14:17**, where He sent His servants at supper time to say to those who had been invited, "*Come, for everything is now ready.*" There, the gospel is presented to us as a great man making a wedding supper. After preparing all the rich foods, he sends his servants to invite the guests, saying that all is ready. This wedding feast represents the excellent things in the Gospel, the excellent things in Christ. The servants are the ministers

of the Gospel, sent out to call sinners, the guests, to come because everything is prepared.

So, in the name of Christ, I call to all burdened sinners to come to Him. And to draw the souls of those burdened sinners, several things must be considered:

### **ARGUMENT I**

*First*, consider who Christ is who calls us. "Come to me," says Christ. What is Jesus Christ like, who calls you to come to Him? The very knowledge of who He is would be a powerful argument to move your heart to come to Him. He who calls you is the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, the brightness of the glory of God, and the exact image of His person, as described in **Hebrews 1:3**. He is equal with the Father and possesses the glory of the Father. He is the glory of heaven and earth, adored by angels, and in Him resides the fullness of all good things.

If a great prince were to call to you in the street and say, "Come to me," wouldn't you quickly make your way towards him? When Christ calls you, it is far greater than if all the angels in heaven were to call you. Once the soul understands who it is that calls—recognising Christ's voice and knowing who He is—this becomes a powerful argument to draw the soul towards Him.

But you might say, "Alas, Christ is so glorious, how can I come to Him? His glory is enough to overwhelm me!" When angels appeared in their glory, even prophets and holy men were unable to stand before them. How, then, can we come to Christ given His glory?

To answer this, know *secondly* that while Christ is indeed glorious—the radiance of heaven—He has taken our nature upon Himself. He has clothed Himself in our humanity, becoming united to us in a

hypostatic union, so that He is the same person as the second person of the Trinity. This is the greatest mystery in the world. It is the greatest work God has ever done—far greater than creating heaven and earth— to unite our human nature with His Son. This is what God has done: Christ, who calls you to come to Him, is not only God, blessed forever, equal with the Father and full of glory, but He is also your kinsman. He is your near kinsman, having taken on your flesh.

Now, if you had a near relative who had become the emperor of all the world, and he called you, saying, "Come to me," would you not immediately rush to him? Jesus Christ has your nature with Him in heaven, united in hypostatic union with the divine nature. The fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily, as we read in **Colossians 2:9**. This is the One who calls you to come to Him. Certainly, there are great things in Him and great things to be received from Him, as we shall soon see.

Now, consider this particular truth: who Christ is that calls you to come to Him. In considering this, there are two or three very strong arguments that should persuade the soul to come to Christ.

Firstly, the terror of God's glory is taken away. Although Christ is full of glory, He has come near to us in His humanity. The majestic and overwhelming glory of God, which would otherwise crush us, has been mediated by Christ's incarnation, making Him approachable.

Secondly, Christ is infinitely inclined to do good to the sons of men. In taking on our nature, He demonstrates His deep love and commitment to our welfare, showing that He is not a distant deity, but a compassionate Saviour, willing and able to bring blessing to those who come to Him.

Thirdly, in uniting the divine and human natures, Christ has performed a greater work than simply saving a soul. His incarnation is the most profound act of God—greater than creation itself—since it brings together the divine and human in one person for the purpose of redeeming and elevating humanity. If God has done this incredible work, how much more is He willing to save the soul that comes to Him?

**First**, in that Christ is the Son of God, and yet also man—God and man united—hence the terror of the glory of God is removed, allowing poor wretched flesh to converse with God, since His divinity is veiled in our own nature, with God being veiled in flesh. It is true, if God in His own glory, as He is in Himself in the highest heavens, were to call us to come to Him, we might fear being overwhelmed by His glory. We cannot stand before Him; we cannot even look upon the glory of the sun, so how could we stand before the glory of God? Could we approach the sun itself? No, it would consume us. So how can we approach the glory of God? Now, because the Lord knows that His glory is so great, He has graciously provided a way to remove the terror of His greatness. Although we are frail flesh, the Lord has done what should encourage us to come to Him: He has veiled His glory with human nature. Through Christ, we are now able to stand before and converse with the infinitely glorious God. This is a profound mystery—the greatest—that God has taken on our flesh and veiled His glory with it, so that His terror might be removed, enabling us to come to Him. One key purpose of Christ becoming man was so that the Lord might deal with us in a more familiar way than would otherwise be possible.

**Secondly**, in that Christ, who is God and man in one person, calls us to come to Him, we can draw this meditation: that certainly, the Lord is infinitely inclined to do good to the children of men. This is a



mighty encouragement for all poor souls to come to Christ. When you hear that Christ, the Son of God, is also man in one person, you can conclude that God is infinitely inclined to do good to the children of men. God would never have performed such a remarkable work—uniting our nature with His Son—if He did not intend to do some infinite good for humankind. The Lord has provided a clear demonstration of this by uniting human nature with His own Son. It is as if a king were to marry his son to one who is your closest relative. You would naturally conclude, and all your family and friends would agree, that the king intends great good for your family and is strongly inclined to favour you. So, when God is pleased to unite His Son with our flesh—taking our nature into an even closer union than that between husband and wife—we can infer that God intends much good for the children of men. Therefore, come to Him.

**Thirdly**, from considering who Christ is—God manifested in the flesh—we can find this encouragement to come to Him: that the Lord, in uniting the divine and human natures in Christ, has already done a greater work for the children of men than the mere saving of their souls. The saving of your soul is a difficult work. You may think, *Alas! For me to come and expect to be saved by Christ—this is too great a thing, too good to be true. It is not possible that such a poor sinner as I should be raised to the glory described in the Word, the glory to which God will raise His saints.* You may think that the salvation of your soul is so great and mighty a thing that it discourages you from coming. But when you hear what Christ is, and how God has united the divine and human natures together in one person, you can take this encouragement: that God has already done a greater work than merely saving your soul. Indeed, it is a greater work for God to unite the divine and human natures in one person than it is to save all the souls in the world.

*It is as if Christ were to say, Oh, come to me. Know who I am. I am the Son of the Father, of the same nature and being, and I am also made man. God the Father has united my divine nature with your flesh, and in doing this, He has accomplished a greater work than the saving of your souls. In this, He has revealed His intentions for the good of mankind, and in this, the terror of the Almighty is removed. Therefore, come to me.*

This is the first argument: come to Christ.

### **ARGUMENT II.**

Secondly, come to Christ. Why? Because Christ has already come to you. Do you come to Him, for He has come to you. In order to come to you, Christ even came from the bosom of the Father, and for a time was willing to have His glory eclipsed by coming into this world, taking the form of a servant, and living in a lowly condition here on earth. Christ has endured more in coming to you than you could ever endure in going to Him. He was content to come from the Father to you—what is it that you must leave behind in order to come to Him? In the Book of the Canticles, Christ is described as "leaping over the mountains," overcoming all obstacles to come to you. If you think there are difficulties in your way to Christ, remember that there were far greater difficulties in His way when He came to you. Yet, whatever stood in the way, He resolved to go through it all, and He did come and live in the world, in the flesh, to save you. Now, He who has come to you calls you to come to Him.

### **ARGUMENT III.**

Thirdly, you must understand that Christ is the great Mediator who stands between God and the children of men. He has undertaken the greatest work ever known in the world—to mediate between the infinitely offended God and your sinful, wretched soul. Your sins

have created such an infinite distance between you and God that it would have been impossible for you to ever come to Him without this Mediator. This is an argument of great importance if rightly understood and thoroughly considered: the vast distance that sin has created between God and sinful creatures means that no one can come to God except through the glorious Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both God and man. He was appointed by God the Father as the Head of the second covenant, and He has undertaken to make up for all the wrongs your sins have caused to God, to pacify His wrath, and to satisfy His justice. He is the One who has undertaken to make peace between the Father and you, and now He calls you to come to Him.

If there were a group of prisoners in danger of death, and someone came to the prince to mediate for them—to make peace between the prince and them—and they knew that this mediator was the prince's only son, the delight of his heart, sent by the prince himself to make peace and plead on their behalf, and if this son came to the prison doors and called to the prisoners lying in their dungeon, saying, *Rise and come to me, listen to what I bring to you, follow my direction, and peace will be made between the prince and you. You shall have pardon, you shall have your lives*, would this not stir them to listen eagerly and come to him at once?

In the same way, Christ has come into the world for this very purpose. God the Father sent Him to be the Mediator between Himself and poor, wretched, sinful creatures like you. Now, He comes to you and calls, *Come to me*. If you truly understood who Christ is and what His work in coming into the world was, it would powerfully draw your heart to Him when He calls.

#### **ARGUMENT IV.**

Fourthly, *Come to me*, says Christ, for if anyone deserves to be listened to and followed when He calls, it is certainly I. For I have not only undertaken to be a Mediator, but it has cost me my blood. I have demonstrated such love for you that I laid down my life for you. I shed my most precious blood and was willing to become a curse—all for the sake of saving your soul. My love for you has been greater than my love for my own life, for I laid down my life for you. Yes, I undertook to mediate between my Father and you, but it has cost me dearly. Yet, out of love for you, I have done this. All my blood is shed, the work is done, the price is paid. *Come to me that you may have life.*

This is the meaning of the parable mentioned before, where the servant is sent to invite guests to the feast, for all things are ready. So here, Christ has completed the work—the greatest work that ever was or ever shall be undertaken in the world. Christ says, *Come to me, for the work is finished.* Our forefathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—did not have this argument to draw them. Christ could not say to them, *Come to me, for I have laid down my life for you, shed my blood for you, and paid the price already for you. I have purchased your souls, and the work is finished.* But now, this argument is yours to draw your heart to Christ, for the work is finished. The greatest work that ever was, or ever will be, is completed. And upon the completion of this work, Christ calls you to Himself, saying, *Come to me.*

#### **ARGUMENT V.**

Fifthly, consider the infinite good that your souls shall receive by coming to Christ. This indeed draws the heart, not only because of who it is that calls you—(as commonly, when we hear someone call, we ask who it is, and if it is someone from whom we expect good, we

are more willing to go)—but also because of the infinite good that your souls shall gain when you come to Him. The very first moment you come to Christ, you will be blessed creatures, and there will be an infinite change in your condition. Consider these points:

**First**, if there is any good to be had in all the mercy that is in God Himself—if there is any good to be had in God the Father, in the divine essence, in the infinite and eternal first-being of all things—it is to be had by coming to Christ. For Christ says in John 14:6, *No man comes to the Father but by me*. You cannot come to God except through Christ. As mentioned before, the distance between God and us due to sin is such that you cannot come to God until you recognise that Christ is the great means of conveying all good from God to His creatures. Christ is the great channel through which all good comes to us. The Apostle says in 1 Corinthians 3:23, *All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's*. Everything belongs to God, but how does it become ours? All things are yours because you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

While others may seek mercy from God by going directly to Him, thinking that if they ever receive any good, it must come straight from God, they fail to recognise the necessary mediator. All things are indeed God's, but they are also yours because you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. In other words, God is the infinite fountain of all good, and Christ is the cistern into which all the mercy and goodness of God is conveyed. Believers, by faith, each have a conduit, so to speak, that connects them to this cistern, allowing them to receive all the fullness of divine grace. They are united with Christ, and through Him, all mercy flows from God to them.

This is a strong argument to draw your heart to Christ because He is the great means by which all good from God is conveyed to your soul.

Is not the mercy of God sweet to a soul burdened by sin? This mercy is found only in Christ, for without Him, you will never taste even a drop of it. Because of our sins, the channel of all God's mercy is blocked, and no amount of crying out for mercy can open it. No, it is Christ alone who can open this conduit of God's infinite grace to pour out upon the children of men.

When we consider God's grace, we must first understand that our sins have blocked the flow of His mercy. Christ is the only One who can unblock this channel. He says, *Come to me, all you who desire mercy*. Do you desire mercy? Yes, it is true that we desire mercy, but we find that our sins have blocked God's mercy. Christ, however, invites us, saying, *Come to me, for through me, all the sluices of God's grace and mercy will be opened to your soul*.

We know that God is a God of mercy, the *God of all consolation* (2 Corinthians 1:3), the *Father of mercies*. He is infinitely merciful, so when we come to God, we come to the God of mercy, the God of all comfort, to Him who is infinite in mercy, whose very nature is mercy. Compared to Him, all the merciful creatures in heaven and earth are nothing. Imagine if all the merciful saints in the world, with their most compassionate dispositions, were combined into one person. You would say, "This is a truly merciful person." Now, if all the mercy in all the hearts of every saint that ever lived were concentrated in one man, would you not think him to be exceedingly merciful? If such a person called you to come to him for mercy, would you not come? Yet, even such a man would be cruel in comparison to the infinite mercy that resides in God.

If we were in great distress and turned to someone renowned for their mercy, we would be relieved to fall into such a compassionate person's hands. But as a poor troubled sinner, if you come to Christ,

you come into the arms, into the very heart of the infinite God, who is far more merciful than all the combined mercies of heaven and earth. Therefore, come to Him.

**Secondly:** Furthermore, not only do you come unto the bowels of mercy, but by coming to Christ, you come to God as a Father. *Come to me*, saith Christ, and not only shall you come to the Father, but the very first moment you come to me, I will present you to God as His child, and God to you as your Father. The infinite God is a deadly enemy to all who are outside of Christ, but by coming to Christ, there is peace with Him. You come to have union with Him, to be made one with God, entering into the nearest union with God—second only to the hypostatic union.

There are various sorts of union with God. The hypostatic union is one, but next to that is the mystical union, which the saints enjoy. The soul, which was formerly an enemy to God and cast out from Him, the very first moment it comes to Christ, enters into this mystical union with God—a union as close as any creature can have, second only to the human nature of Jesus Christ.

**Thirdly:** Yes, not only will you be united to Him, but you will also immediately have His image stamped upon you, His Spirit placed within you, enabling you to live the life of God. You will have communion with Him here and be saved. The very moment you come to Him, you will receive righteousness to stand in the presence of the infinitely holy God.

You may say, *If we come to God by Christ, how can we stand before Him, being sinners and He a righteous God?* This is answered thus: The first moment you come to Christ, He will clothe you in the holy robes of His righteousness, which will make you able to stand before the infinite God. Whatever you are in yourself, it is impossible for

God not to be well pleased with you, and to take delight in you as His own. You may walk freely in the presence of God, for He sees you clothed in the robes of Christ's righteousness.

**Fourthly:** Furthermore, the very moment you come to Christ, you will be safe for eternity. All risk of eternal loss is over the instant you come to Christ. This is the assurance you have in the first moment of coming to Jesus Christ, and it is a great comfort for those who come to Him. More of these particulars shall be discussed when we come to the promise given in the text: *And you shall have rest.*

#### **ARGUMENT VI.**

Sixthly, for a further argument to draw the heart unto Jesus Christ when He calls you to come to Him, consider what a poor wretch you are in yourself: a vile, base, forlorn, deformed, miserable, helpless, and shiftless creature—a beggar. If a prince, as he walks along the streets, were to see a poor beggar lying on the ground in the dirt and were pleased to call to such a creature and say, "Come to me," would it not revive his spirit? If someone were to tell him, *The king, the prince, calls you,* how would he stir himself? Now, you are the poorest creature in the world; never has any poor creature lying in the dirt, full of sores and wounds, been in a worse condition than you. When you see such a one, think that your condition is far worse than his.

If the king, dressed in his robes, were on his way to Parliament and saw such a poor creature lying by the walls, took special notice of him, and called him to come, saying, *Let that poor creature come to me,* it would encourage him exceedingly. This invitation from Christ is just the same, for the Lord Jesus Christ sees you lying in your own gore and blood, as described in Ezekiel 16, where the miserable condition of those in their natural state is so eloquently set forth.



They lay in their blood, and no one pitied them, but then God says, *I came and said unto thee, "Live," and this time was the time of love.* So when you lie in your poor, wretched, miserable condition—in your filth, in your baseness, in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity—this blessed Redeemer, this great Prince of all the world, calls to you and says, *Oh, you poor creature, come to me.*

You might say, "This is the very thing that discourages me. I would be glad to go to Christ; the Lord knows my soul longs to go to Christ, but I am such a poor, vile creature—so wretched and miserable—that it is impossible for me to be accepted." You tell me this is an argument, but it is the greatest discouragement to my heart because I am so vile and wretched. This is what discourages me from coming to Christ.

#### **ARGUMENT VII.**

To that, I answer, seventhly: *Come to me, and I will certainly receive you, whatever you are.* Christ will surely receive all those who come to Him, whatever their condition. For this, consider three things that make it plain.

**First**, the solemn expression of Christ for this purpose, which you find in John 6:37: *All that the Father gives me shall come to me, and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out.* He does not say, *he who has been such a great sinner, such a vile, wretched sinner*, but He speaks indefinitely: *he who comes to me I will in no wise cast out.* Now, what is translated in your Bibles as "in no wise cast out" has even greater force in the Greek. There are two negatives used, and while in English two negatives may form an affirmative, in Greek, they strengthen the affirmation. So, it may be read as: *He who comes to me, I will not, I will not cast out*, as if Christ were saying, *He who comes to me, I will not, I will not cast out.* Just as we, when

expressing the fervency of our spirits, might repeat our words, so Christ, to express the fervency of His spirit, doubles His statement: *He who comes to me, I will not, I will not cast out.*

**Secondly**, whoever you are, upon coming to Him, He will not cast you off, for this was the very purpose for which Christ came into the world: to receive poor, troubled souls and to ease poor, burdened sinners. This was the very reason Christ came into the world; it is the work that God the Father sent His Son into the world to do: to receive such poor, wretched, sinful creatures as you are. If He were not to receive those who come to Him, He would lose the very purpose for which He came into the world. Therefore, He will receive you when you come because, otherwise, Christ would lose the purpose of the greatest work ever done since the beginning of the world or that will ever be done throughout eternity: His work of mediation between God and you. If Christ did not receive poor souls that come to Him, that great work would be in vain—the work in which both the Father and the Son are glorified. Indeed, this is Christ's glory, and He saw so much glory in this that it moved Him to come into the world and take such a course as this to save souls.

Christ knows that He will be magnified for all eternity by angels for saving souls like yours. Furthermore, Christ knows that the Father will love Him even more for it, for He says, *The Father loves me, because I lay down my life for the sheep* (John 10:17). This is what delights the Father; it is this that makes God the Father delight in the Son. It is by this that Jesus Christ achieves the very purpose of His death. Until He laid down His life and made His soul an offering for sin, He was not satisfied. This is what satisfies Him: that He should see His seed, and among them, you are one. You who come to Christ are part of the seed that satisfies Jesus Christ so fully that He gains the very purpose for which He laid down His life for you. Certainly,

Christ will not cast you off but will receive you. Therefore, come to Him.

**Thirdly**, He will receive you, for He has previously received wretches as vile as you are.

You may say, "There was never anyone as vile as we are." It is true that we ought to judge ourselves as vile as the worst. Though we may not have committed such outward sins as others, because we do not know the hearts of other men, nor do we know what means others have had, we should judge ourselves as vile as any. But know that Christ has received others as bad as you. Those who pierced Christ, those who shed His blood—Christ received three thousand of them in one day. He received three thousand of those who had stained their hands with His blood, and the account stands in Scripture as an everlasting monument to encourage poor sinners to come to Christ.

Moreover, though you are a vile sinner and a wretched creature, know that the greater you have been in sin, the more the grace of God in Christ will be magnified. Certainly, there is such grace in Christ that it can swallow up great sins as well as little ones—just as the infinite ocean can swallow up great vessels as easily as small ones. Would it not be a foolish thing, when casting a vessel into the sea, to say it is too great a vessel? God is willing to have His grace magnified in you, even if it means the hardening of many thousands. If there is an infinite ocean in God to swallow up both great and small sins, then, as long as this keeps you from coming to Christ, you dishonour the infinite grace of God in Christ.

If God's mercy were only like His common bounty toward other creatures, this might keep you away. But now, since it is the infinite ocean of mercy in His Son, purchased by Christ, it is an infinite dishonour to the grace of God in Christ to stand on ceremony and

refuse to come. What do you think mercy is worth, when it cost the blood of Christ? You think you are a great sinner, and that it will require extraordinary mercy to save your soul. That is true, and it is good that you think so. But consider further, sinner—what do you think of mercy that is worth as much as the blood of the Son of God? Is it sufficient for Him to be made a curse for sinners? If so, you may come to Him.

How much do you think the mercy of Christ's coming to take man's nature upon Himself is worth? If He will do that, you may come to Christ. Yea, further, know that the Lord Jesus Christ never receives anyone who comes to Him except beggars—none but beggars, none but miserable creatures, none but those who are wretched and vile. Christ has never yet, from the beginning of the world, received any man based on the idea that he was not as vile as another man. Christ does not say, "Here is one who is vile, but here is another who is not so vile, so I will receive him on this ground, because he is not as bad." That has never been the basis. When He receives them, He does so by free grace, and therefore it does not matter how vile you are. For this is the glory of Christ: to save vile creatures. He saves none but those who come as beggars, those who see themselves as vile, wretched, worthless, unworthy, miserable, damned dust and ashes. Only such are the proper objects for the heart of Christ to rest upon. Rather, make your vileness an argument to drive you more to Him, as David did in Psalm 25: *O Lord, have mercy upon me, pardon my sin, for it is great.* Likewise, say, *Lord, I am vile, I am wretched, I am unworthy. Therefore, Lord, receive me; Lord, I come unto Thee.*

Do not say, as Peter once did, *Master, depart from me, for I am a sinful man.* No, rather, you should say, *Master, come to me* or *Master, I come to Thee because I am a sinful man.* So, you should

not say, *O Lord, depart from me because I am a sinful creature, but Lord, come to me, because I am a sinful wretch.*

And know that when you come to Him, you will have a wonderful welcome, far greater than anything your heart can imagine. O, the great embrace that Jesus Christ gives to the souls that come to Him! This is the very reason why poor sinners, at their first conversion, have their hearts so filled with joy—because, at their first coming to Christ, Christ gives them such wonderful embraces until they are strengthened, and then perhaps Christ will have them live more by faith than by sense.

It is in the new birth as it is in the birth of nature: children, when they are first born, grow rapidly. A child that is small when born grows considerably in the first few months—each limb increases in size. But by the time they are ten years old, they do not grow as much as they did in the beginning. The reason is that, upon first leaving the womb, nature hastens to strengthen itself. Likewise, when people first come to Christ, they shoot up and grow quickly in spiritual enlargement, perceiving it sensibly, and others also notice their great growth at the beginning. This is because Christ strengthens them against all discouragements when they first come. Christ uses them tenderly and does not upbraid them for their former sins. He will not say, "What! You, who have lived a profane life, profaned my ordinances, scorned my ways, and scorned my people?" No, Christ will not upbraid the soul. He will be tender with you, pass by your sins, and heal your weaknesses. *He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.*

### **ARG. VIII**

Eighthly: Consider further, the infinite need your soul has of Jesus Christ, and let that drive you to Him if the other arguments do not

draw you. Oh! Let this compel you to Jesus Christ: you are an undone creature forever without Him. All the mercy in Heaven can do you no good without Christ; all the ordinances can do you no good without Christ; all the duties you perform can do you no good without Christ. Before you come to Jesus Christ, none of your prayers, none of your duties, none of the services you offer to God can be accepted. This is a sad condition—that all your duties, your prayers, your services are cast away until you come to Jesus Christ. Certainly, this is true. For you must know that Jesus Christ is not only the great conveyer of all good from God to us, but also that everything that comes to us from God must go through Him. Therefore, there is cause for you to hasten to Christ and never be at peace until you have some comforting evidence that your heart has closed with Jesus Christ! There is an infinite necessity for this because all ordinances, duties, and services will do you no good until you come to Christ.

### **ARGUMENT IX**

Ninthly: Furthermore, Christ is one whom all creatures will one day see a need for. Yes, all who live under the sound of the Gospel will see a need for Him, and they will curse themselves for not coming to Jesus Christ when they had the chance, instead of satisfying themselves in the lusts of their spirits. Christ came from Heaven once in the days of His flesh, but know that Jesus Christ will come again in His glory with all His angels and saints about Him. How happy will those appear who, during their lifetime, when they were called by the ministry of the Gospel, came to Jesus Christ. When Christ comes in His glory, perhaps you will want to go to Him then. No, my friend, if you wait until then, you will hear a different voice from Christ. He will not come to call sinners to Himself at that time; instead, He will come to tell them to depart from Him. For all that the Father gives Him will have come to Him before that time.

## **ARGUMENT X**

Moreover, let me tell you this: while you have heard the Word of God through a poor minister, in the name of Christ calling you to come to Him, if you reject this invitation and others like it from the ministers of the Gospel, know that this will prove to be the greatest of all the sins you have ever committed in your life. This sin will aggravate all your other sins. Perhaps some of you think, "Well, this is an encouragement to sinners. We are called to Christ, and we are told that the vilest may come to Him and that Christ will receive them." That is true, but if you reject this invitation and continue to give your heart to vanities and to the satisfaction of your sinful lusts, this invitation of Jesus Christ will be the greatest aggravation of all your sins, more so than anything you have ever committed. Your fornication, drunkenness, swearing, and all your Sabbath-breaking will not weigh as heavily against you as this one act of rejecting Christ's call to come to Him.

Therefore, take heed not to abuse the grace of Christ in calling you to come to Him. For know this: if there were ever a sign that could indicate who is reprobate and who is not, I would point to this sign—a person who, after the grace of God has been opened to him and he is invited to come to Christ, nevertheless hardens his heart and walks away in sin. I would consider this to be one of the clearest signs of reprobation. There is no sin that hardens the heart of God more than this.

Let me give you one Scripture as evidence. In Luke 14:16-17, when God, as the master of the great feast, sends His servants to invite people to come to the wedding, it is truly the same as what I have been doing all this while—inviting poor sinners to come to Christ. But many make excuses. Some have bought oxen, others have bought farms, and others have married wives. Well, notice what is said in

verse 24 about those who did not come despite the invitation: *Verily, says God, those men that were invited shall never taste of my supper.* What! says God to His servants, have you invited them to come in, and will they not come? No, they have other things on their minds—their farms, their oxen, their profits, and pleasures. What! Will they reject such grace and favour when I invite them to come to the marriage of my Son? *Verily, says God, they shall never have any benefit from Jesus Christ.* Oh! What a dreadful sentence to be passed upon any soul! God forbid it should be passed upon yours. Yet, when we come to preach the grace of God in Jesus Christ, in the ministry of the Word, we cannot speak of it without trembling hearts, fearing that some will be hardened. And so God, provoked by their resistance to His grace, will say: *This man, this woman, sitting there, not moved by the grace of God offered in Jesus Christ, they shall never taste of my supper.*

**Beloved!** Sermons of mercy are quicker to affect the heart than any other sermons whatsoever. Men and women may sit under a minister of the Word, who may preach many wholesome points of divinity and many moral truths against drunkenness, swearing, profaning the Sabbath, deceit, cozening, and cheating. They may sit a long time under such a minister, and God may be patient with them even though they do not obey the voice of the minister. But when the Lord comes to invite men and women to come to His Son, then let them take heed! God expects them to fall down before that infinite grace of His, to admire it, for their hearts to be taken by it, and for them to join with Him and say, *Oh Lord, we come, and our hearts do close with this bountifulness of Thine in Thy Son!* The neglect of not profiting from such sermons, and casting out what they hear, letting it pass from them, does the quickest work to seal up men's hearts to condemnation: *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.*



Therefore, take in what has been spoken to you and labour to work it upon your hearts.

**Question:** You will say, *Here are many things that have been spoken to poor sinners to come to Christ. If these things are so, what is the reason that more do not come to Christ? How is it that the hearts of men and women can stand out against such offers as these?*

**Answer:** Would you know the reason? Christ Himself gives it to you in John 6:43, after He had been inviting some to come to Him and told them that He was the bread of life. Jesus answered and said unto them, *Murmur not among yourselves.* There were some who murmured against Christ, and Christ's words did not prevail with them. It is no wonder, then, that the ministers of Christ do not always prevail when even Christ's own words, His own preaching, did not prevail with many. They murmured at Him, went away from His sermons, and rejected His words. In verse 44, Christ says, *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*

**Question:** You will say then, *Why are you speaking all this time to exhort people to come to Him? We are dead, and you may as well speak to dead men.*

**Answer:** The answer is this: God the Father often draws those souls that belong to His eternal election through the ministry of the Word. Through exhortations like these, God the Father uses the ministry of men to set before poor, miserable souls the excellency of Jesus Christ, and so to draw their souls to Him. Therefore, if you belong to God's election, God will make use of His ministry to draw your heart to come to Christ. Has God begun to draw you by the ministry of His Word? Have you found God, through the ministry of His Word,

beginning to draw your soul? Oh, do not draw back again, as though you were loath to leave your sins, to leave such a sweet pleasure, such a profitable lust. If God has taken hold of your heart to draw you to Him, Oh, do not draw back.

Indeed, the Scripture says, *Many are called, but few are chosen*; few come to Christ. But you are all called to come to Christ. Oh, let not that Scripture prove true in your case: *Many are called, but few are chosen*. If you find God drawing your heart, and your heart is ready to answer unto the Lord, that is an argument that you are not only called, but one of the chosen ones of the Lord.

There are three ways that God the Father draws those to His Son whom He intends shall be saved forever by Him.

Firstly, He draws them by the cord (as I may say) of illumination, by enlightening their minds, by showing them who His Son is.

Secondly, He draws them by the cords of mercy.

Thirdly, He draws them by setting conscience upon them to spur them forward. When the Lord is drawing the soul to Christ, He uses the consciences of men and women to urge them to come to Christ. *Oh, wretched soul, is not what you hear in the Word the truth of God? Is it not the Word of the Lord? Have you not received a gracious offer? Is it not a mercy that you are not in hell this day? Is it not a mercy that you were not drowned at sea, but that you have been brought to land to hear one more offer to come to Christ? Will you yet go on in your sins? Will you still prize your lusts above all the infinite good that is in Jesus Christ? Do you think this will end in peace? How will you be able to look God in the face on the final day? You need mercy, and mercy you must have, or else you are*

*forever miserable. Will you reject this mercy? Oh, that the Lord would stir your conscience to help with this work.*

I hope that through all that has been said, some illumination about Christ has been granted to you, and that some cords of mercy have been fastened upon your hearts. Now, if God would stir your conscience and give it a command to never let you be at peace until you come to His Son, until your heart is taken off from all things that hinder you from coming to His Son, what a happy thing it would be! If God would give this command to your conscience, that many might respond to this invitation of Christ, so that when Christ says, *Come to me, all you who are heavy laden*, the soul responds, *Lord, I come.*

**Question:** *You may say, Suppose God has been calling me, and I have rejected Him. I was once inclined to come to Christ, but my lusts have drawn my heart back again. For you tell us that the Lord is quick to act when sinners reject His grace. Do you have any word of comfort for such as these, if they come after having abused God's grace and mercy?*

**Answer:** I will give you one Scripture for that. Oh, that the Lord would fasten this Scripture upon your heart! In Jeremiah 3:22 it says, *Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.* Here is the response: *Behold, we come unto you, for you are the Lord our God.* In the name of God, I present this Scripture to those of you who have drawn back from the grace of God, who once were in a good spiritual condition and now are backsliders. Once more, in the name of God, I call to you: *Oh, return, you backslider! The Lord Jesus Christ is ready now to heal your backslidings.*

Now, secretly say, *Lord, I come*. And when you go into your closet, in a more solemn manner, when you are alone, resign your soul to Jesus Christ and say, *Lord, you have invited me this day to come to Christ. Now, Lord, I give up myself—all that I have and all that I am—to You. My estate, my body, my honour, and all that I possess, I give to You, to come to You*. Then not only will all these good things be made good, but the promise as well. Christ will give you rest.

These are times of distress, and therefore it is timely to hear of rest. Whatever troubles may arise, if you come to Christ, you shall be safe in Him. Christ has engaged Himself to give rest to your soul.

And so much for the invitation itself.

## Chapter 23

The Doctrine Arising from the Dependence of the Promise upon the Invitation: That God Will Have Us, When We Are Coming to Christ, to Have Respect to Ourselves

Now, the next thing that follows is the promise that Christ makes to poor, burdened sinners who come to Him: He will give them rest.

**And I will give you rest.**

It would be too bold for any creature to make such a statement. Indeed, it would be too much presumption for all the angels in Heaven to claim these words as their own and to say, "*Come to us, all you who labour and are heavy-laden, and we will give you rest.*" Yet here, in this text, it is not only one greater than Solomon

speaking, but one greater than all the angels in Heaven and all men who have ever lived upon the earth. He says, "*Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*" These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, who is equal with the Father, God blessed forever. He says, "*Come to me, you who labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*" This is what we now come to consider—the gracious promise that Christ makes to draw souls to Himself, that He will give them rest. "*And I will give you rest.*"

What more fitting or timely argument could there be in this present moment? We know this is a time of trouble, a time of disturbance, with much perplexity and distress in our nation. What could be more welcome to us than hearing of rest? This is what Christ promises to all who come to Him and believe in Him: He will give them rest.

Before I proceed to open up this gracious promise, which is exceedingly full of richness and nourishment, as we shall see when we come to examine it more closely, I will first draw your attention to one brief note from the connection of these words with the previous ones: "*Come to me, you who labour, and I will give you rest.*" You see that Christ, in order to draw sinners to Himself, makes a gracious promise of what He knows will benefit them deeply—He promises rest. From this, we can take the following general observation:

God would have us, even when we are coming to Christ, to have some concern for ourselves, and Christ encourages us in coming to Him to have some aim for our own good.

This is the clear point we can take from the connection of the words.

Before we open the promise, "*I will give you rest,*" note that Christ propounds that which He knows will touch the hearts of sinners,

presenting it as a great good to draw them to Himself. From this, the point is clear: in our coming to Jesus Christ, it is lawful for us to have some regard for our own good. Indeed, not only is it lawful, but we ought to do so. We are to look upon Christ as He presents Himself to us, and it is not just permissible to look at Him this way—it is our duty to do so.

When Christ presents Himself as an object to draw our hearts to Him, He does so as One from whom our souls will gain abundant good, as One from whom we will receive much. Now, though it is true that we should strive to rise above our self-interest as much as possible, and labour to deny ourselves in a certain sense, this does not mean we are not to seek our own good in coming to Christ.

I could show you this from numerous Scriptures. For instance, in the very first commission that Jesus Christ gave to His apostles after His resurrection, as recorded in Mark 16:15, He says to them: “*Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.*” Clearly, Christ would have us, in our first act of believing, to have an aim at our own good.

We also see this kind of promise in Jeremiah 6:16: “*Thus says the Lord, ‘Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it, and you shall find rest for your souls.’*” Here we see that God propounds duties alongside promises. The Lord knows what is best for us and what will work most upon us. Therefore, if we think we must have no concern for our own good in coming to Christ, and believe it is merely self-love to come to Christ for our own benefit, this is a temptation.

I speak to this point because I know how useful it is to many poor souls whom the Lord is drawing to Jesus Christ. The Lord has taken their hearts away from sinful self—they no longer find joy in the lusts

of the flesh as they once did. The Lord has made them willing to deny their own opinions, their own wills, their own affections, and their former ways. They now deny themselves in the comforts of this world, prizing Christ and His ways, the way of Christ, more than they value their very lives here in this world.

Yet, for all this, they face the temptation that says: *“You seek Christ only to free you from Hell and to save you, and therefore it is merely self-love. It is not true grace, because you are aiming at yourself rather than Christ.”*

The devil cannot prevail with a heart that is drawn to Christ by saying, *“You prize your lusts more than Christ,”* or *“You value your ease more than Christ,”* or *“You prize your estate, liberty, or even your life more than Christ.”* If the devil tempts such a soul in this way, it could, in some measure, answer him and appeal to God, saying: *“Lord, You who know all things, know that it is otherwise. Though my heart once went after my lusts, the world, ease, and liberty, and I followed the common course of the world, making those things my greatest good and comfort, yet, Lord, You know it is otherwise with me now. My heart is set on Christ, and I can say from the depths of my soul, like the blessed martyr Lambert, ‘None but Christ, none but Christ.’”*

When the heart reaches this point, one would think that the soul would be beyond the devil’s reach and might even come to assurance. But the devil will still say: *“Though you have come this far, and you dare not commit any known sin, and though you seek after Christ more than your estate or liberty, there is one thing more—your heart is not fully taken off from seeking your own good. You seek Christ to save you from Hell and to bring you to Heaven. That is why you seek Christ, and therefore your heart is not right after all.”*

This is a temptation that seizes many. Now, I confess, this is a temptation that is beyond many men's understanding; they do not even know what this temptation is. The idea of seeking Christ only to avoid Hell and gain Heaven is a temptation beyond the ordinary course of the world. Even among ordinary professing believers, this temptation is scarcely understood.

But the Spirit in this text answers the temptation: "*Come to me, and I will give you rest.*" Many poor souls come to Christ because they want rest, but then the devil whispers, "*Oh, but you are coming to Christ for your own good.*"

Now, to help against this temptation, know:

1. At the time of conversion, the Lord ordinarily makes use of the creature's self-love, but this is a self-love for eternity, which is a higher degree of self-love than most people in the world attain to. Some people love themselves only in regard to this present life, but when God causes a man or woman to love themselves for eternity, it is a good sign that the hand of God is upon the heart, and that the Lord intends good for that soul. When the Lord begins to make you love yourself truly for eternity, to love what is true and of eternal value, it is a sign that God intends to do good for your soul.
2. When the Lord not only begins to make you love yourself for eternity, loving that immortal soul He has given you, but also shows you where your true good for eternity lies—that it lies in being delivered from the wrath of God, not being cast out of His presence, but instead being brought into union with God, living in His presence to the praise of His grace for all eternity—this is your true good. This, you regard as your happiness: that you may be delivered from being cast out of God's presence and that



God would bring you to Himself, to live with Him and join with the angels and saints in praising His infinite grace in Christ for eternity. When this is revealed to you and your heart is drawn to Christ for this reason, this is faith, and it is true grace. For here, God has intertwined (if I may put it this way) the glory of His own name and the good of His creature together, both joined as one, so that the heart may be drawn to both at the same time.

3. Furthermore, let me tell you, when your heart looks at this as your own good, and when this is the rest you seek—when you see that by your sins you are cut off from God and can have no peace or rest, and when you see that your happiness and the rest of your soul is in having union with God, from whom your sins have cut you off, so that you might live forever to the praise of the infinite and glorious first Being of all things—then, even though you are seeking your own good, before you are fully aware of it, and even though you may reason with yourself, saying, “*I do regard God above any good in myself,*” yet your heart is focused on this end: that you might have union with the Father and live eternally with Him to the praise of His grace in His Son. In this act, even though you may not fully grasp how you are placing God above yourself, God sees it. There is a work of God in your heart that raises Him above yourself.

Therefore, for those poor sinners who are much afflicted under the burden of their sins, let them strive to focus on God, looking to Christ as the Mediator between God and them, to bring God and their souls together. Aim at this, and you need not trouble yourself further with answering the temptation that says, “*I come to Christ only so that I might be saved.*” I do not know anywhere in the entire Word of God (and I give you this one note on the matter before moving on from this point) where it is presented as a mark of a hypocrite that they

love their own salvation too much. Nowhere does the Word of God say that coming to Christ for the purpose of being saved is a sign of hypocrisy. Since Scripture does not present this as the mark of a hypocrite, let us not allow this temptation to hinder us from coming to Christ. If your heart seeks rest in coming to Christ, then come to Him, that you may find rest.

And thus, we conclude this note from the connection of the promise: Come to Christ for rest.

## **Chapter 24**

### **Of the Rest Promised by Christ in General: And That There Is No Rest for a Soul Outside of Jesus Christ**

Now, let us consider the promise itself. We read in Isaiah 61:1, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn," etc. This is a prophecy of Christ, and in this text, we see the prophecy fulfilled. Christ has come here to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to open the prison for those who are bound. All this is encompassed in the promise, "I will give you rest."

Rest is what all creatures in the world desire. The end of all motion is rest, as philosophers say; the end of motion is stillness. This is the end of all movement, whatever it may be. If the creature were where it desired to be, and had what it wished to possess, it would then have rest. Why does the fire ascend upward? Because its proper place is above. Why does the earth, along with all heavy things, fall downward? Because their proper place is below. But once these elements are in their rightful places, they are at rest.

So it is with the rational creature. When the rational creature is in its proper place—where an immortal soul belongs—and when an immortal soul's capacity is filled with what it was made to receive, it then finds rest. This is the rest that Christ promises in the text, "I will give you rest." This means that if you come to Christ, you will, first, be delivered from all your burdens and miseries. Second, you will be where you long to be and will have what you desire. This promise, therefore, contains freedom from all evil and the enjoyment of all good. There can be no rest until there is both a freedom from evil and the enjoyment of good. This, in general, is the meaning of the promise, "I will give you rest."

There is a significant difference between the rest Christ promises and the rest that people seek in the world. We read about the rich fool in Luke 12, who said to himself, "Soul, take your ease." The word translated "ease" in that passage is the same word for "rest" found in our text. He said, "Soul, take your ease," because he had stored up goods for many years. Now, notice the difference between the rest sought by a worldly person and the rest found by a Christian. A worldly person says, "Soul, take your ease, for you have food, drink, and goods stored up." But the rest of a Christian comes from the words of Christ: "Come to me, and I will give you rest." A Christian's rest is in the Son of God, the Mediator of the second covenant, the

one who brings the soul to the Father and delivers all the treasures and riches of the Father's grace to the soul. The worldly person's rest, by contrast, is only in food, drink, and other material things, as we shall explore more later. This is the general sense of the passage.

In this promise of Christ, there are two things to consider: one implied and one expressed.

The implied point is this: There is no rest for the souls of men and women outside of Jesus Christ. This is plainly implied in the words, "Come to me, and I will give you rest." The implication is clear: There is no rest for an immortal soul outside of Jesus Christ.

The expressed point is this: As soon as the soul comes to be united with Jesus Christ, it will find true rest. There is full rest to be found in Christ.

Let us begin with the first point—that outside of Jesus Christ, there is no rest for the soul. We read about the dove that Noah sent out when the ark was floating on the water. In Genesis 8:8-9, when Noah sent out the dove, it flew back and forth, but found no place to rest its feet, so it returned to the ark. This is like the soul that is not in Christ. The ark is a type of Christ. The soul may wander here and there in the world, but there is nothing on which it can rest apart from Christ. When Noah sent out the raven, however, it did not return, because it found rest. The difference between the dove and the raven vividly illustrates the difference between those souls whom God intends to bless in Christ and those He leaves to their portion in the world. The people of this world, whom God intends no higher good than the things of this life, are like the raven, flitting around the world but never returning to the ark, never coming to Christ. On the other hand, those whom God intends to bless, though they may wander for a time, will ultimately find no rest or peace until they

come to Jesus Christ. Nothing in this world will satisfy them. The Lord will make them aware of their emptiness and their lack of the good that their souls were made for, driving them to seek rest in Christ alone.

There is a Scripture or two that is very noteworthy. I could name many, but I will be content with just one or two. The passage in Isaiah will suffice if I name no more. It is found in the 57th chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, in the last two verses. There you will see a description of all men who are outside of Christ, showing that they have no rest. Verse 20 says: "But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Then in verse 21: "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." Or, as we might say, there is no rest for the wicked, says my God.

Those of you who are sailors know what a troubled sea looks like. When the sea is disturbed, it throws up mud and dirt. Likewise, a wicked man's heart is like the troubled sea; it casts up mire and dirt. Just as the sea, when most disturbed, brings forth the most filth, so it is with wicked men. When they are most troubled, they cast forth the greatest wickedness.

Sometimes, as you may have observed, when people are caught in a storm at sea, instead of seeking God and praying, they begin cursing, swearing, and raging, making their hearts more troubled than the sea itself. Their troubled hearts cast out more filth and dirt than the sea ever could. Even if they are not at sea but on land, those without peace in Christ are troubled by everything—whether it be their families or their neighbours—and they respond with nothing but mire and dirt: oaths, swearing, and blasphemy. How often do these things pour out of the mouths of wicked men when they are upset or frustrated?

When you see a husband or wife in a fit of anger, swearing, cursing, railing, or blaspheming, remember this text from Isaiah 57:20: "The wicked are like the troubled sea, casting forth mire and dirt." Oh, that you would remember and apply this to your own hearts! Ask yourself, "Is this the condition of my heart?" I fear that many will find their consciences testifying to them that this verse accurately describes their hearts. Their consciences will tell them that when they are troubled, they cast forth mire and dirt. Oh, how much filth and dirt have many cast out in times of trouble!

Now, may the Lord imprint this Scripture on your hearts, for it is the Lord who says it is the wicked man or woman, when troubled, who casts forth this mire and dirt. But the main point I want to focus on is found in the next verse, Isaiah 57:21: "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." No peace, no rest—this is the truth that applies to all men and women outside of Jesus Christ. There is no peace, no rest for their souls.

As God denies all kinds of rest to such a person, notice the emphasis: "says my God." It is God who says it. It is as if the prophet is saying, "I am preaching to you about the restless condition you are in, remaining in your natural state, unconverted to God. As I speak of this, you may find it to be a sad message. You may think, 'The prophet is telling us that there is no rest, no peace.' But it is not I who say this—it is my God who says it." God declares this about every ungodly man and woman: there is no peace, no rest for such a person. Even if there were no war in the world, even if everything seemed peaceful externally, there would still be no peace for the wicked, no rest for their souls. I will demonstrate this more clearly later, that no matter how peaceful a wicked person's life may seem, there is no true rest or peace for them.

Further, observe the significance of this: "There is no peace," says my God. It is not the prophet speaking, but God Himself. This teaches us that when any minister of God preaches something that is hard for us to hear, we must remember that it is not merely their words, but God's. God speaks through them, and He will fulfil what He says according to His Word. God says, "There is no peace."

Furthermore, the passage says, "There is no peace," says my God. Many may try to flatter you, claiming that there is peace, and accuse the ministers of the gospel of disturbing people's consciences unnecessarily. They might say, "What is all the fuss about? Why make so much of a stir? The prophets only trouble people. Isn't God merciful? Don't we all have our weaknesses? Surely, we are like everyone else, and it will be the same for us in the end as for others. It's just a matter of repenting at the last moment."

But in opposition to these false prophets, Isaiah declares, "There is no peace," says my God. Let the false prophets say what they will, let them claim what they please—my God says that for every wicked and ungodly man or woman, there is no peace for their souls.

Furthermore, it may be that some, in their own hearts, will say "peace, peace," just as many men and women, when they hear dreadful things from the Word of God that come very close to their consciences, realise that this Word of God concerns them. Yet, they are ready to bless themselves in their own thoughts and say, "Nevertheless, there shall be peace for me." This is like what we read in Deuteronomy 29:19-20: "And it shall come to pass, that when he hears the words of this curse, he blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine own heart.'" But the Lord will not spare him; instead, the anger of the Lord and His jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the

curses that are written in this book shall fall upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.

How dreadfully God speaks—and to whom? To that soul that hears from God's Word that there is no peace, no rest for them in their current condition or in the way they are living. Yet, perhaps, says the Lord, when you hear this pronounced today in my Word against them, many in your audience will say, "I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my own heart."

Nowhere in all of Scripture do we find such a dreadful expression against anyone as we do against those who say they shall have peace, though they walk in the imagination of their own heart. The prophet says: some of you may say in your hearts, "I shall have rest, I shall have peace," but the prophet answers, "There is no peace for the wicked," says my God. Though your own hearts say you shall have peace, and though you might dismiss the minister's words, my God says there is no peace for the wicked.

It strikes me that we have here a passage that speaks directly of wicked men, in opposition to what the Church says of herself in Lamentations 3:24: "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." Now, consider that when the Church says this, she was in a very afflicted state and condition. Her enemies may have claimed that the Lord had forsaken and neglected her, but against all the enemies in the world, her faith prevails, and she says, "Let all the devils in hell say what they will, let all the world say what they will, yet my soul shall say, 'The Lord is my portion.'" That is, the faith that God's Spirit has wrought in my soul enables me to say that the Lord is my portion.

In contrast, when wicked men are in prosperity and do not feel God's hand upon them, friends may flatter them, false prophets may flatter



them, and perhaps their own hearts will flatter themselves. But to answer all these, the prophet says: "There is no peace for the wicked," says my God. My God says it.

Moreover, "There is no peace," says my God—no rest for any outside of Christ. This highlights why wicked men can have no peace and why they can find no rest: it is from God. It is God who will not grant it, for God is against them. Many wicked men and women, whose consciences have begun to be enlightened, experience trouble in their spirits. When they awake in the night, they are troubled; when they go about their business in the day, they are troubled; when they come home, they are troubled, so much so that they scarcely know what it is that troubles them.

Perhaps you have not understood what it is that troubles you, but this text in Isaiah 57, particularly the last verse, tells you what it is: it is the Lord who is against you. It is the anger and displeasure of the Almighty that is upon you in the paths you have chosen. This is why the prophet invokes the name of God, to show the source of the unrest in wicked men: it is God's anger that denies them peace.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that he adds, *it is my God*; he does not simply say, "There is no peace," that God says (though that would have been sufficient), but *my God*. This is as if the prophet is saying, "Through the mercy of God, the Lord has revealed this to me, and my soul has found peace and rest in Him. He is my God, and He has made Himself known to me. I am acquainted, in some measure, with His mind. My God says there is no peace for the wicked."

Though others may find it strange to tell ungodly men that they are in a state where they cannot have peace—when they hear of the dreadful wrath of God against all ungodliness revealed in the Word—those who are familiar with God's ways, who know His holiness and

justice, who understand His mind, and who are acquainted with His secrets, know there is truth in what is declared against such wicked men. They can affirm that there is no peace for such people and wonder how it is possible for them to continue quietly in their way. They marvel at how these people can eat in peace or sleep undisturbed. Those who know the breach sin has made between God and the soul, and who understand what a tremendous work it is to repair that breach, are the ones who can truly grasp this reality and wonder at the security of the wicked.

This is the meaning of the prophet's words in Isaiah: *There is no peace for the wicked* (says *my God*). He highlights his personal relationship with God by saying, *my God*, because he knew the ways of God and understood that a wicked person cannot have peace. Others, who do not know God's ways, may think that wicked men can have peace. For example, if you speak to some people about the natural state of man, how we are all children of wrath and sin, and about the severity of God's justice and holiness, a carnal heart—someone who does not know God—will find these things strange and think that people are more troubled than necessary. However, speak to someone who understands God's ways, who knows the way in which God makes peace between Himself and man, to someone to whom God has revealed Himself in Christ, and that person will readily agree with everything revealed about God's wrath, holiness, and righteous judgement. This is what the prophet does: *My God*, the God who has revealed Himself to me, says there is no peace for the wicked.

Furthermore, there is yet another observation: *There is no peace for the wicked*, says *my God*. This teaches us that it is a serious matter when those who are wise, godly, and gracious, who are familiar with God's ways, suspect that someone's spiritual condition is not right. It

is even more serious if they are able to say with certainty what that person's state is. When those who are wise and holy, who walk closely with God, say, "There is no peace for you," you should pay careful attention. Do you have any godly friends—people whom, in your conscience, you believe are truly godly, who walk faithfully with God and enjoy communion with Him? If such a friend even suspects that your spiritual condition is not right, that is a serious matter.

This is the case when the prophet says, "There is no peace for such and such wicked men," says *my God*. Through God's mercy, I have an interest in Him, and in His name, I declare that there is no peace for such wicked men.

## Chapter 25

### *Six Reasons for the Former Doctrine:*

1. The soul out of Christ has departed from God.
2. Every person by nature is an enemy to God.
3. Every person by nature is bound to the justice of God, to answer for what He can charge them with.
4. In a person out of Christ, there is everything to disquiet them.
5. Everyone out of Christ is condemned.
6. Such a person may, at any moment, be plunged into a gulf of wrath.

Because this text has taken some time to open up, and it contains much, I will mention no other than this; for it is indeed sufficient to

prove that all who are out of Christ can have no peace or rest in their souls. Would you like to know why and how it comes to pass that none who are out of Christ can find rest in their souls? I will not spend much time elaborating, but those truths that I am about to present on this point are exceedingly dreadful; they speak dreadfully to those who are out of Christ. Yet, because you have already heard so much about the willingness of Jesus Christ to be reconciled with you, His invitation to come to Him, and since I have much to deliver to you later regarding the true rest that a believing soul has in Jesus Christ, I may take the liberty to show you briefly the restless condition of every soul that is out of Jesus Christ. I will do this through the following points:

**First**, certainly, a soul out of Christ can have no rest because it has departed from God. Know this—and oh, that the Lord would make you aware of it—that every man and woman is naturally separated from God. From birth, we have departed from Him, and there is a great distance between God and each of our souls naturally. All the union we come to have with God is through His Son, through Christ. Therefore, until we come to be in Christ, there is a great chasm, a gulf, a vast distance between God and our souls. This is one of the first things the Lord reveals to a soul He intends to save—the great distance that naturally exists between God and the soul. It is impossible for a soul to have rest if it is separated from God, for God is the proper centre of an immortal soul. As Moses says in *Psalms 90*, "Thou art our habitation." The soul can find no rest but in God, for God is the rightful place of an immortal soul. The true good of an immortal soul is the enjoyment of an infinite good. Now, if the soul is separated from that which is its true good and proper place, it is impossible for it to find any rest.

In *Psalm 12* at the end, it is said of the wicked, "The wicked walk around." The words in the old Latin are "in a circuit," meaning they wander up and down. But a godly person walks in a straight line towards God as the centre, and there they find rest. When in their natural condition, they walk in circles, seeking rest but finding none. As it is said of the unclean spirit in the Gospel, it walks up and down seeking rest, but finds none. So it is with people in the world: they would like to have rest and seek something good, but they find none because they have departed from God, who is the only rest for an immortal soul.

**Secondly**, not only is this true, but every person by nature is an enemy to God. Therefore, they cannot look upon God—the infinite, eternal, first being of all things—without terror if they truly know Him. No man or woman, who understands what God is, can behold Him without terror in their natural state. Hence, it is impossible for them to have rest as long as they remain enemies of God. This is certainly the state of man by nature, and the Scripture is as clear on this point as on any other in divinity: we are all, by nature, enemies of God. Can you truly be at peace when you are an enemy of God? Think of yourself: perhaps you have slept quietly, lived joyfully, and eaten and drunk with a great sense of peace, as you imagine. But this is your condition: you are naturally an enemy to the infinite, eternal first-being of all things.

**Object.** You might say, *If we do not know it, we may have rest.*

**Answer.** Such rest is like that of a man asleep at the top of a mast. True, he may not know the danger while he sleeps, but would you say that such a man truly rests? Would you say a man has gone to rest if he sleeps at the top of a mast? Such has been your rest all the days of your life before conversion.

**Thirdly**, every person by nature is guilty and bound to the infinite justice of God, to answer for all that the Lord charges against them. They must answer it before the Lord and satisfy the strict law of God's divine justice for all the charges. Can this person be in a state of rest? Can they truly rest if they understand this? If a person is found guilty and is bound over to court, they will have little rest until they are freed. For a soul to be bound over by the infinite, eternal God to face eternal justice for all the charges God has against them—can such a soul rest? This is the condition of everyone out of Christ, of every soul before it comes to Christ.

**Fourthly**, not only is a person guilty before the Lord, but anything that might disquiet a person in this world is present in one out of Christ. What disturbs a person? Being in debt can disquiet them. To be in danger of arrest as soon as they step outside—can such a person sleep soundly, eat quietly, or drink peacefully? Let me tell you, that as long as you are out of Christ, you are in debt to the infinite and eternal God. You are bound to give satisfaction for what the Lord has charged against you. And for all you know, the next person you meet could be like a bailiff sent from the eternal God to arrest you and cast you into prison until you have paid the last penny. I remember reading about Augustus Caesar—Plutarch reports that Caesar, knowing of a prominent Roman who was deeply in debt, sent to buy the pillow upon which the man slept. Caesar reasoned that there must be something special about that pillow, for a man in such debt to be able to rest upon it. This illustrates the great trouble and restlessness of someone who is in debt. If that is true, then certainly, every person out of Christ is in a restless condition, for they owe God a debt of punishment because they have not paid the debt of obedience. God must have His debt paid, either in themselves or by a surety, and your only surety is in Christ. Christ undertakes to pay the debt for those who come to Him, whom He invites. If Christ does not

pay your debt, you must pay it yourself, or be cast into prison. This is why the damned lie in hell forever—they lie there paying the debt of obedience they owe to God. The Scriptures call our sins our debts. If you examine the different expressions of the Gospel writers, one speaks of trespasses, and the other of debts, showing that Christ did not intend to bind His people to use those exact words, but to present a pattern of prayer. This shows that we are to pray in that manner and for that purpose. This is an argument no one can dispute, for one Gospel writer gives the Lord's Prayer in one set of words, and the other Gospel writer presents it with different words. One says, *forgive us our trespasses*, and the other says, *forgive us our debts*. They mean the same thing. But I say from this that Christ did not intend to bind us precisely to the words He spoke, but rather to use His prayer as a pattern for ours. So much for that point.

**Fifthly**, regarding the restless condition of all people out of Christ—these individuals are not only debtors and guilty, but each one is already condemned. A prisoner may be bound over, yet hope to escape when they go to trial. But this is certain: every man and woman out of Christ is a condemned creature. The sentence has already been passed upon them. I will give you a clear Scripture for this in *John 3:18: He that does not believe in Christ is condemned already*. Not only will they be condemned on the great day of judgment, but they are condemned now—condemned already. I could give you many other Scriptures, like *Romans 8:1*, which says, *There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. This clearly implies that there is condemnation for those who are not in Christ, who walk after the flesh. Can anyone have peace when they are a condemned creature? Would you think that a man condemned in court, with the sentence of death passed upon him, could rest? If you found such a man asleep, would you not say, *Alas! Can you rest now?* Do you

think the night before the execution is a night of rest for the condemned? Let me say to you that those who have come to Christ know this was their condition before they came to Him. This is a certain truth: until you come to Jesus Christ and believe in Him, you are under a sentence of condemnation. *He that does not believe is condemned already*, and you who walk after the flesh are under condemnation.

You will say, *God forbid, we hope we are not condemned*. Now, Romans 8:1 will reveal the condition you are in: *There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ*. Who are those in Christ and delivered from condemnation? They are those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Shall we examine this now? I challenge every soul to put it to the test, to see if they dare stake their souls and eternal state upon this Scripture. Pay attention—it is the word of God, the word that will stand forever, even when you and I have fallen. *There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit*.

Now, your eternal state depends on this—your soul rests upon it. If you are a man or woman who walks after the flesh, meaning that you follow the pleasures the flesh desires, that the lusts of the flesh are delightful to you, and your heart walks after them, living accordingly—if it is your primary concern to make provision for the flesh, and when you have done so, you give liberty to your spirit to satisfy itself in the lusts of the flesh—you are not in Jesus Christ. Therefore, you are certainly under condemnation. And is this a time to rest now? Is there any rest for a soul in this condition?

So, all of you whose consciences tell you that up until now you have walked after the flesh and not after the Spirit—not after the truths



you find in the Word—perhaps you listen to the Word and say, *It's true what the minister says; if only we could do what he says*, but you cast off thoughts of those truths and dismiss what God speaks in His Word. Yet what He speaks in His Word should be as real to you as if He spoke it from Heaven. Therefore, you are out of Christ. And I speak these things in the name of God to draw men's hearts more effectively to come to Christ for rest.

For I do not intend to leave you here, merely telling you that there is no rest out of Christ. I also intend to tell you how you may find rest in Christ. But first, I must convince you that there is no rest for the soul outside of Christ. If you have had rest all this while without Christ, it has been a cursed, vile, and wretched rest. It has been no better than the rest of a condemned man. Indeed, let me tell you, all who are out of Christ are not merely condemned to die a temporal death, but an eternal death.

But you will say, *They seem to have enough rest; it doesn't trouble them*. I answer, what rest? It is just like a condemned man who goes to bed, falls asleep, and dreams that he is at home in his house, with his wife and children around him, at home with his friends, at his work, or enjoying his meal. Oh, how this poor man rejoices in his dream, thinking he is safe and well! But eventually, the poor man awakens and realises he is in prison, with shackles around his feet and the guard at the door. For all he knows, he may die the next day.

Certainly, this vividly illustrates the condition of natural men in the world. They are all condemned, but they are in a dream. They think they are out of danger, that all will be safe, that no misery will befall them. Oh, but when the Lord awakens them from this dream, they will see themselves in prison, under the sentence of condemnation,

and then they will wonder how they could have been so quiet all this time.

**Sixthly:** Yes, let me say further, if you are out of Christ, you are not only under the sentence of condemnation, but for all you know, at any moment you may be plunged into the gulf of the wrath of the infinite God. It is true, God has spared you for a long time—He has continued your life in His patience, perhaps for twenty, forty, or fifty years. But how do you know that what has never happened in your life before may not happen in a single night, day, or moment? Though you have been spared a long time, you do not know whether, by morning, you may be among the damned in Hell. And is this a condition in which to rest?

For a man or woman to be in such a condition, where, upon examination, they must ask themselves: *How do things stand between God and my soul? How do I stand with God? What relationship do I have with Him? What relationship does He have with me? How do I know that I may not soon be swallowed up in the gulf of the eternal wrath of the infinite God, and lie under it forever?* What do I know to the contrary? And if this proves to be my fate, it would have been ten thousand times better that I had never been born. Is this a condition in which to rest?

Certainly, if God has revealed any truth in His word, these are indeed the truths of God. The condition of one out of Christ is like that of a person who has suffered shipwreck. Perhaps they cling to a piece of wood broken off from the ship, floating up and down on the sea, but they are in such danger that with every wave, they are at risk of drowning. Do you think it possible for such a person to sleep peacefully? It's true, you are not drowned yet, but you can see that with every wave, you are in danger of being swallowed up and sunk

to the bottom. It may be that some of you have suffered shipwreck and been delivered in a lifeboat. I believe that when you were in that situation, you could hardly sleep peacefully. If you tried to settle down in your boat and say, *Well, here I will take my rest*, wouldn't everyone think you mad?

This is exactly the situation of people in their natural state. They try to rest, knowing full well that at any moment, some dreadful wave of God's wrath could come and swallow them up, leaving them undone forever. Certainly, *there is no peace for the wicked*, says my God. If this is true, there is no peace.

There are several other particulars that could further explain the condition of all men who are out of Jesus Christ and why they cannot find rest. All this is to make Jesus Christ precious to you, so that you may seek the blessed condition that is to be found in Him.

Oh, that something which has been spoken today may be impressed upon your hearts, that you might go with that poor wretched sinner described in the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 16, verse 30, and ask, *Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?* The Lord has shown me my restless condition—I now see that the rest I have had has been no true rest at all. Oh, that this may cause you to inquire after Christ, to put your soul into an inquiring state, seeking Jesus Christ, so that you may listen attentively to what will be said about the blessed rest Christ promises in this invitation, when He says, *Come unto me, you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

Do not be afraid to apply to yourselves the things that have been delivered. These truths come from a text that clearly reveals to you the true rest that is in Christ, for this promise of rest is made to those who labour and are heavy laden. If these truths of God weigh upon

your spirit and you leave with a heart burdened by them, do not be discouraged, for you who are burdened by such truths, come to Christ, and He will relieve you of this burden. In Him, you will find the quiet and rest that will last eternally.

Any peace you might find by dismissing these truths will not last, for a storm is coming that will test the quiet of every man and woman, revealing whether their peace is genuine or false, whether their rest is true or a deception. Do not, therefore, cast aside what has been delivered, but apply it to your souls, so that you may be better prepared to hear more about the blessed rest Christ promises to you.

## Chapter 26

But I shall now go a little further in this similitude I have been discussing. The Holy Ghost has another comparison like this in Proverbs 23:34. He compares wicked men who are secure to a man who sleeps upon the top of a mast. Though the Holy Ghost specifically speaks of drunkards and whoremongers, this also applies to all unconverted individuals. The words are thus: "Yea, thou shalt be as he that lies down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lies upon the top of a mast." Here you have both similitudes: the first, as I previously mentioned, is like a man who lies on a plank in the midst of the sea, seeking rest. The other is of a man lying asleep on top of a mast. This is the restless condition of ungodly men. I will briefly name a few reasons and then proceed. Certainly, there is no rest for those who are out of Christ.

1. **They are under the curse.** They are under the curse of the law and the curse of God. Whatever affliction befalls them in this

world, it is part of that curse. For all they know, every sorrow may be but the beginning of eternal sorrow. There is the venom of God's wrath in every affliction for every unconverted person. They are in danger of the execution of all temporal curses upon them, with nothing but God's patience keeping them from this fate. What rest can they have? The saints of God have God's covenant and promise, while others have only God's patience. A criminal in prison may not be executed immediately. Why? Because the judge, out of favour, may grant a reprieve for a time. But is this a condition in which to rest? A wise man finds no rest with a reprieve, but seeks a full pardon before he can find peace. No one in their natural state has any real basis for rest or quiet, only a temporary reprieve. The saints understand the sadness of this condition, and nothing gives them rest until they have their pardon.

2. **All creatures are their enemies.** There is no rest out of Christ because all creatures are their enemies. You sleep in the midst of an army of enemies. Wouldn't it be strange for someone to sleep in such a situation? All ungodly people have no rest except as those who sleep amidst the armies of their enemies, for all the armies and all the creatures in the world are their deadly enemies.
3. **All the ways of God's providence are against them.** Every passage of God's providence works towards their misery and ruin, even if they rejoice in their prosperity. Whatever happens to them, though they may celebrate it, ultimately works towards their destruction. Proverbs 4:32 speaks to this.
4. **Their best services are rejected.** Nothing they do can be accepted by God. All their services, all their religious

performances outside of Christ are cast off. All their prayers, until they come to Christ and until God reveals the mysteries of the Gospel to them, are rejected. Yet they are still bound to perform these duties under the threat of damnation, even though none of them are accepted. What a restless condition this is! To be in such a state where one is bound to pray, to hear the Word, and to perform religious duties under threat of damnation, yet have all their prayers and duties cast back as dung into their faces. This is the condition of all those in their natural state. I speak this so you may see what infinite need you have of Christ.

Much more could be said about the sinful condition of all those outside of Christ, for we must know that in sin there is a conflict with God—a rebellion against the infinite, glorious God. Sin brings nothing but confusion and disorder, and therefore a sinful condition can never be one in which to find rest.

In whatever affliction a person outside of Christ finds themselves, they have nowhere to go for comfort. There can be no support or comfort for a soul out of Christ; they are like a person in the midst of a wilderness, with nothing to protect them, no hedge, no bush. If the storm comes, no matter how dreadful, they have nowhere to go for protection. They are like a mariner in the sea, who has lost his anchor when the storm comes, and is driven towards the shore without any anchor to hold him. This, and much more, could be said to show the restless condition of all people outside of Christ.

Oh! the blindness, security, and hardness of heart that exists in almost all the world, if this is indeed the truth of God! And this truly is the condition of all out of Christ. From this, we may conclude that most in the world live, die, and perish in blindness, and in woeful,

desperate hardness of heart. For where is the man or woman who is truly convinced of this restless condition? Who has ever been aware of this restless state? I dare affirm that every one of you was once in such a condition as I have now described. How you have escaped it is something you must examine, and you must consider what argument you have to rest your soul upon for deliverance from this condition. But know this: everyone is naturally in this condition. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were once in this condition, and therefore everyone must now take heed while this rest is being revealed to you.

Indeed, this is the reason for the restlessness in most people's spirits. What is the reason people hurry up and down, seeking after the things of this world? It is because they are in a restless condition. Their souls have no union with God in Jesus Christ, and so they rush about in this world, seeking comfort in one way and another. But the truth is, as with the unclean spirit in the Gospel, they seek rest, but find none. As I mentioned before, the dove sought rest, but found none until it came to the ark. So, the reason for the disturbance in people's spirits is that they are not acquainted with the true rest that is found in Christ. But let us move on from this point.

One more thing on this subject before proceeding: I want to show the insufficiency of all things in the world to give rest to the soul until we come to Christ. All people out of Christ are in a restless condition, and there is an insufficiency in everything in the world to give rest until we come to Christ.

I will give two or three reasons for this.

**I.** First, because the rest of an immortal soul must necessarily be in its relationship to God. Now, all the transactions between God and us are mediated through Christ. No creature is entrusted with any transaction between God and us for our good, except through Christ.

Therefore, if all our rest must come from our relationship with God, and all our dealings with God must go through Christ, then certainly, there is an insufficiency in everything in the world to give rest to our souls.

**II.** Secondly, there is an insufficiency in everything in the world to give rest to the soul, because the misery we are in is so deep, and the happiness our souls are capable of is so high, that it is impossible for any creature to either deliver us from the one or raise us to the other. Only Jesus Christ, in whom we find rest, can do this. Christ subjected himself to the lowest degree of humiliation that any creature could endure, and Christ is now in the highest degree of glory possible for any creature to attain—indeed, far above all creatures. His subjection to sorrow and trouble was beyond what any creature could endure, and his glory surpasses anything any creature could achieve. Therefore, he, and only he, is able to deliver us from the depth of misery that the children of men are in, and to raise them to the true happiness and glory their natures are capable of.

**III.** Thirdly, there is an insufficiency in all creatures to give rest to the soul because all creatures in this world, except the angels in heaven, are under the curse. Even the angels are only ministering spirits who attend to Christ, sent on Christ's errands. They do nothing except in service to Christ. All other creatures, however, are under the curse because of man's sin. It is impossible for creatures that are under the curse to give rest to our souls. There is no argument in the world more powerful in turning people's hearts away from relying on creature comforts than understanding that all creatures in this world are under the curse because of our sins. The whole world, being under the curse due to our sins, cannot make us happy. Therefore, there is an insufficiency in everything in the world to give rest to our souls.



Consider then what are the things that most people seek rest in, and we will see the vanity of seeking rest outside of Christ.

## Chapter 27

*The insufficiency of everything besides Christ to give rest to the soul is further enlarged, with several choice considerations.*

First, there are some so vile that the chief rest and comfort of their souls is found in the pleasure of sin, in the delight they take in satisfying their sinful lusts. This is the comfort and rest of their souls. If they are troubled at home—whether by wife, children, or servants—how do they ease themselves? They go abroad among company, drink, play, swear, and perhaps commit unclean acts. Others, when they are crossed, ease themselves by venting their passion. The truth is, this is a holy truth I speak of—oh, that it should ever enter into the heart of a creature to find their greatest peace, ease, and rest in sinning against the blessed God! And yet, I appeal to you: do not your consciences tell you, some of you, that this is your condition? And do you not know men for whom the greatest comfort, ease, and quiet of heart in this world is found in satisfying their sinful lusts?

How far this is from seeking rest in Christ, the Son of God, the great Mediator of the covenant! Yet, this is the condition of most people: take away the satisfaction of their souls in sinful lusts, and they have nothing to quiet their hearts with. But when they indulge, now they feel safe, now they are at peace.

Consider this one thing that I now speak of: to find rest and quiet in any way of sin is no different from a man with a burning fever who calls for a pot of water and drinks every drop. While drinking, he has some rest, some ease; he feels relief from the fit of fever while the water goes down his throat. But do you think this is true rest? Just wait a quarter of an hour—or maybe an hour or two—and you will find him in a scalding, burning fit, far worse than before. It may even cost him his life. Though he found temporary relief, his condition worsens because of it. So it is with men who seek rest and ease for their souls in sinful ways. All the pleasure of your life, from youth to the day of your death, put together, is no more than the brief relief of a fevered man drinking water, before the scalding begins again. And, like him, you are likely to burn in God's wrath for eternity for that one draught, for the ease and rest you sought in sin. I am certain that when Christ bore the burden of our sins, he found no rest, and therefore sin cannot bring true peace to your spirit.

Secondly, there are others, though not so vile, who do not find rest in the act of sin itself but in the creature. If they can have good trading, quick voyages, and fare as well as their neighbours, they are like the rich man in the Gospel who said, "Soul, take thine ease, eat and drink, for thou hast goods laid up for many years." This is the rest that most people in the world seek. They think, "If only I had what such and such a person has, I would have enough rest." But know this: if you believe that all the creatures in the world, or even the possession of everything in heaven and earth, could give you rest, you do not understand nor savour the things of God. Those who truly understand God, even those with but one spark of true saving grace, find that grace enlarges their souls so much that no creature in heaven or earth can provide rest. Their souls seek a higher good than all the creatures in the world can offer.

There is a notable scripture in the book of Job, chapter 26, verse 7: "He stretcheth forth the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." Will you seek rest in that which hangs upon nothing? The whole earth rests upon nothing, and therefore nothing in the earth can provide rest for your soul. In Micah 2:10, it says, "Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest." The whole world is like a wheel, constantly in motion. Thus, in James 3:6, the text speaks of the "course of nature" or the "wheel of nature." The whole world is like a wheel spinning up and down, and therefore no rest can be found in the enjoyment of the creature.

Some, however, would still seek rest there. Having acquired good estates, some of you have had successful voyages, and God has prospered you in your younger days. Now that you have great wealth, you seek rest—that is, to live idly, uselessly, staying at home, letting things go whichever way they will. You think it is good to live quietly in your old age, after God has delivered you from many dangers at sea. You believe the only way to rest now is to live quietly at home and meddle with nothing. This is the rest of your soul. This is the rest that many seek after their youth has passed—to live and do nothing. Oh, that God would speak to the hearts of these men!

Consider this: by living idly and uselessly, you allow all your faculties and spirits to corrupt. Just as stagnant water in a pond becomes foul and putrefies, so too do those who live without purpose, failing to act for God and the public good according to the opportunities He provides. Their hearts decay, growing corrupt, and the beauty, excellence, quickness, and liveliness of their faculties are stripped away. The more they refrain from employing their gifts for God, the more they putrefy. Whatever we possess but do not use for God's service becomes corrupted.

Many believe it a great happiness to have wealth and live a life of inactivity. However, for a heart that seeks God's grace, there is no greater misery than to be useless for Him. For God to cast someone aside as unfit for His service is the greatest affliction a godly heart can endure. If God were to take away their wealth, it would not cause as much sorrow as being set aside and left idle in His work. Therefore, no one should think that because they have gained great wealth, they are entitled to do nothing. Oh! What will such a person do when they are called to account for all their time, opportunities, and possessions? It will not be enough to say they caused no harm; no, they should have been active for God.

God is ever active for you, saving your soul. All His attributes work on your behalf, and His providence constantly labours for your salvation. Therefore, it is a wretched state for someone to rest in mere freedom from outward troubles. If your conscience tells you that this is your condition, and if God is speaking to your heart today, showing you that this is the kind of rest you have sought after, know that you are unacquainted with the ways of God. Certainly, the rest of an immortal soul is a far higher thing. Jesus Christ came from the bosom of the Father and laid down His life to purchase rest for the soul. Do you think He did this merely to free you from some outward troubles in this world, so that you might sit idly by? Oh! There is a far greater rest for the children of God than this!

**Objection:** But some will say, "We trust in God's mercy for rest for our souls."

**Answer:** Now, though this is better than the other, one may still be mistaken. You say you trust in God's mercy for rest for your soul, but what has God revealed to your soul about the Mediator of the covenant? This may be difficult to grasp, but it is this: all the mercy

of God in heaven cannot be sufficient for the rest of any soul except through the Mediator, Christ. The soul must be brought to this mercy by the hand of Christ the Mediator. You must first come to Christ before you can have rest, even in the mercy of God itself.

If you know anything of the mystery of the Gospel, you must know this: though God is an infinite source of mercy, man's sin stops the flow of that mercy, and it can only be opened by the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, you must know God in Christ, and you must understand how to come to God through Christ before you can rest upon His mercy. This is where many souls, even those of a better sort, go astray. They think they can rely on God's mercy alone for rest, but they do not understand how sin blocks the flow of that mercy. There is no access to it but by a mediator between God and man.

Others may say they do many good things, perform many good actions, and serve God. They believe they can rest in this because they do not commit gross sins, and they perform their duties of prayer, both in their families and in private. Yet the rest of an immortal soul requires a better foundation than this—better than all their duties, sorrows for sin, or even what God Himself works in them. True rest must come from something beyond themselves. Nothing that is wrought within us, not even the grace of God, can provide rest for our souls. It is only the perfect righteousness of the Mediator, though wrought in us by faith, that can provide this rest.

Therefore, even if you perform duties in a gracious manner, do not rest in them. You must look higher than the best duties you have ever performed. Woe to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob if their rest had come only from their duties. You must look beyond whatever you are or whatever you can be enabled to do for your rest.

You may ask, "What can be higher than what we are enabled to do by God?" There is a righteousness in Jesus Christ by which you must come. There is an insufficiency in all the creatures in the world to give rest, and yet, the truth is, the greatest part of the world finds all their rest in these things. Much could be said about the danger of this, and much about the signs of when our souls have true rest in Christ. However, we shall address this when we discuss the rest we have in Christ. I will therefore pass over the insufficiency of rest in all other things with just one point: know this, that a heart touched by Jesus Christ, as iron is touched by the lodestone, can never be at peace with creature comforts, or in mere hope of mercy, or in any duty or performance. It can never be quiet until it finds union with Jesus Christ.

It is like a needle touched by a lodestone—shake it in any direction you will, but it will never rest until it points North. Once it finds the North, it stands firm. So it is with a heart touched by Jesus Christ. When the Spirit of Christ touches the heart of a believer, the heart trembles with fears and doubts. Offer it one creature comfort after another, but none will suffice. The heart will not find rest. Yet, when Christ is manifested to the soul—when they come to a sermon where some blessed promise of the Gospel is revealed, and Jesus Christ is presented to them—they recognise that this is the rest for their souls. Their hearts immediately embrace this truth, and they are able to rest the weight of their eternity upon the promise of the Gospel, upon the free grace of God in Christ. They can rest their eternal state here, even though others may think that the promise of the Gospel is merely a notion. Here, they can rest the weight of their eternal souls and say, like Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Here is rest for my soul. My heart was once filled with terrors, fears, and doubts. I sought for rest and ease in various creature comforts but could not

find it. But now Christ is made known to me, and here is the rest of my soul.

It is true that godly people may be troubled for a time, but it is like the trembling of a needle in a compass. Other people, too, may be troubled. Some are troubled in conscience for their sins. They come to a sermon, hear about the evil of sin, and God confronts them with a particular sin they continue to live in. They are troubled, and they tremble, just like the godly do. But they are like a faulty needle, not properly touched. Though they shake as the others do, they will settle at any point. Push them this way or that, and they will stand here or there. Would sailors give anything for such a needle, one that would stand at any point? So it is with wicked men when they are troubled. The devil, the world, and their corruptions come and quiet their consciences outside of Christ, and this hinders them from coming to Jesus Christ because they find peace elsewhere.

The saints, however, are troubled, but their trouble and shaking in the world is like a ship in a haven, at anchor. A ship lying at anchor may be tossed by the waves, but it is securely anchored. This is the difference between the troubles of the saints and the troubles of the ungodly. A ship at sea without an anchor is driven by the storm. When a mighty tempest comes, it is tossed up and down, and the sailors do not know if they will strike a rock and be destroyed. They are deeply troubled. But the saints are anchored. They consider themselves at rest, even though they are tossed by the waves, because they are securely anchored.

## Chapter 28:

Of the Rest that a Believer has by Christ from the Guilt of Sin, laid out in Ten Particulars.

1. Christ takes upon Himself all the sin of those that come to Him and stands charged with them before His Father.
2. He satisfies for sin.
3. The wrath of God is appeased.
4. He is continually at the right hand of His Father to intercede for sinners that come to Him.
5. Their souls are sprinkled with the blood of Christ.
6. The soul, upon first coming to Christ, is made perfectly righteous before God.
7. Christ not only undertakes for all past sins but also for sins to come.
8. Guilt shall never return once it is removed.
9. The soul, upon first coming to Christ, is clothed with the righteousness of Christ.
10. Such believers are assured that the day of judgement will be the day of their absolution.

Now, we are only beginning to address the great point of all: the rest of the soul in Christ, what it is. In this, I shall follow the method used when discussing the burdens of sinners who were heavy laden. I spoke of five loads upon sinners that Christ calls to Himself, so that they might come to Him for rest. Now, corresponding to those five, we shall speak of the rest that is to be found in Christ.

The first burden was the sense of the guilt of sin. This was the first load upon sinners that Christ calls to come unto Him, that they might have rest.



Now, concerning the rest that the soul finds in Christ, in its deliverance from the woeful trouble of conscience regarding the guilt of sin, I shall not explain here what those troubles are, for that was covered earlier in discussing those that were weary and heavy laden. If there are any who find their souls laden with the burden of the guilt of their sins, who perceive nothing but the wrath of God pursuing them—if, when asked what they see, they respond, "Oh, I see an angry God above, a guilty conscience within me, nothing but the wrath of God surrounding me, and beneath me, the bottomless gulf ready to swallow me"—to such, Christ says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest from all these fears and troubles, and I will give you ease from the throes of your conscience and the grievous aching of your soul. Come to me."

What relief it is to a believer to be freed from the throbbing of conscience and the trouble of heart that arises from the guilt of sin! This will be the first comfort to every believer who comes to Christ to consider:

### **I.**

First, that the Lord Jesus Christ takes upon Himself all the sins of those who come to Him. He is willing to stand charged with them before the Lord, and to have all their sins counted against Him and laid to His charge. Therefore, the Scripture tells us that Christ was made sin, as in 2 Corinthians 5:21: "He hath made Him to be sin for us." Upon this, Luther boldly says that Christ was the greatest sinner in the world—not that He committed sin Himself, but that He bore the sins of all believers. There is a transaction by which the sins of all who come to Christ are laid upon Him, and this happens immediately when you come to Christ. I say that at the very first moment of your coming to Christ, all your sins are transferred to Him, and He stands charged with them before God.

It is like a poor woman, heavily in debt and fearful of officers coming for her. She is a widow, and she marries a rich man. Oh, what ease she has now! Why? Because all her debt is now charged to her husband. This could still cause anxiety, though, if her husband does not know about the debt. But if she tells him before the marriage, and he says, "This shall not prevent our union; I am content to pay it all," she might still worry until the day of marriage. But when that day comes, oh, what relief she feels! All the debt is now her husband's, and she knows he is able to pay it all. Similarly, Christ says, "I know all your fears, sorrows, and guilt, and what my Father holds against you. I know it all, and it does not stop me from being willing to unite with you. In fact, it is this very thing that makes me willing, and that makes me call to you, 'Come to me.' From the first moment you come to me, there will be a discharge of all your guilt. You will not be held accountable—I will stand charged with everything." Here is ease and rest. This is a different kind of ease and rest than eating, drinking, and enjoying the pleasures and comforts of this world.

## **II.**

Secondly, Christ provides rest from the guilt of sin by offering actual satisfaction. The Lord Christ satisfies the justice of His Father, and this satisfaction is applied to every believer at the very moment they come to Christ. A full satisfaction is made, so that the believer has now satisfied justice. When we come to Christ, our sins are not pardoned as if God had received no satisfaction, but rather, even though we are forgiven by grace, our surety—Christ—offers satisfaction. Christ presents His blood and merit to His Father as full satisfaction for all our debts and sins. In truth, He has already paid it, and upon your coming to Him, it is credited to you. For Jesus Christ has satisfied the justice of God the Father that your soul so fears.

What do you fear in regard to your sins? "Oh, my sins make me liable to God's justice," you may say. But Christ replies, "I have fully satisfied the justice of my Father, and it was for your sins in particular." Oh, the rest and ease that comes to the soul when it sees that all its sins are dealt with! If we had strong faith at the moment of our first coming to Christ, we might actually see all our sins charged to Him.

### **III.**

Thirdly, upon this, the wrath of God now comes to be appeased and satisfied. Before, the Lord looked upon you with an angry countenance, but upon your coming to Jesus Christ, the Lord embraces your soul, welcomes you, and regards you as a friend, as His child. This brings ease to the soul from the trouble caused by the guilt of sin.

### **IV.**

Fourthly, beyond this, Christ not only takes our sins upon Himself and satisfies divine justice and wrath, but He also continually stands at the right hand of the Father to be your advocate. If the devil or anyone else accuses you of anything you have done, or if you fear that any of your sins might come before God to accuse you, Jesus Christ stands at the right hand of the Father to be your advocate. What is the office of an advocate but to answer any accusation brought against a person? Jesus Christ stands at the right hand of His Father to do this for you.

In *John 2:1*, it says: "My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." It is a great comfort to have someone stand and plead for you before the Father, to be your advocate. Christ is as real an advocate at the right hand of God for all

believers as any advocate in this world. This truth is found often in Scripture. If you read the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Holy Spirit speaks of the rest of God—the rest of God's people. Notice the first encouragement He gives and the foundation for the rest they have. In several places, He speaks of the rest of God's people, and the foundation of this rest is: "For we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." For we have a high priest—that is the foundation of the rest of the saints of God.

## V.

Fifthly, Christ says, "Come to me, and I will give you rest from all the trouble that you have from the guilt of sin." How? By sprinkling your consciences with my blood, so that you will be able to answer any temptation that comes to you. Not only will I stand before my Father on your behalf, but your consciences will be sprinkled with my blood, enabling you to respond to any accusation that Satan may bring to disturb your rest or disquiet your soul.

In *Hebrews 10:22*, it says: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Before you came to Christ, you had an evil conscience that was ready to accuse and trouble you. It vexed and tormented you, keeping you from sleeping at night. I appeal to you who understand what it is to know God and what it means for a creature to be in relation to God—has your conscience not kept you awake at night? Perhaps while your wife slept peacefully beside you, your evil conscience lay within you, gnawing at your soul.

Now, to such, the Scripture says: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." That is, the blood of Christ is sprinkled upon your soul and conscience, taking away the torment. Other things might trouble the conscience for a while, but it is the blood of Christ that cleanses you. When you come to Christ, your conscience is empowered to answer whatever may be laid against it.

Perhaps after a believer has come to Christ, the devil will object and attempt to disturb them. Often, after coming to Christ, a sinner's heart experiences as much disturbance as before. But take notice of the text in *1 Peter 3:21*: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Through Christ's resurrection, a believer gains a good conscience, having been sprinkled with His blood, and through this resurrection, they can answer their conscience. That is, whatever accusation the devil brings against the soul, the soul sprinkled with the blood of Christ is able to answer it. This is the comfort believers have: that their conscience is satisfied through the blood of Jesus Christ. Perhaps at the first moment of coming to Christ, you do not fully feel this, but you begin to experience it and are enabled to rest in it.

## **VI.**

Sixthly, the rest that is to be found against the trouble of the guilt of sin is this: upon the first coming of the soul to Christ, it is made as perfectly just before God as ever Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were, as all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs. You are as completely cleared of the guilt of your sin as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were. It is true, your sanctification is not perfected at your first coming to Christ, but I dare affirm that, at the very moment you

come to Jesus Christ, your justification is as perfect as that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What a mighty comfort and rest this is! What? I—a vile, defiled creature, who has had such dreadfulness upon my spirit—am now able to see myself standing as clear before the throne of God as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and as the apostles and prophets did? Oh, what a comfort this is! We ought to strive to become equal to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in sanctification, as we are already equal to them in justification. This is the ease and rest the soul finds in coming to Christ.

## **VII.**

Seventhly, the rest that is to be had in Christ concerning justification, in freedom from the trouble that arises from the guilt of sin, is this: Christ undertakes not only for what you have done, but for whatever sins you will commit throughout your life. O! that only believers might hear me say this! But it is a certain truth.

You may say, "Though I, by coming to Him, might stand justified before my Father, I am a poor creature and will sin again and again, bringing guilt upon my conscience." Yet come to Christ, for here is free grace in Christ, and know that Christ has laid in pardon for you against whatever guilt you might contract again. "There is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared; with thee, there is forgiveness." Christ has prepared forgiveness for the guilt of sin that you will later incur, ensuring that you will never be condemned. Perhaps you will deserve condemnation a hundred times over, but Christ will ensure that you never enter into condemnation. You will never be in a state of condemnation. Oh, the rest that is found here!

## **VIII.**

Eighthly, when the soul comes to Christ, there is no return of guilt. Though Christ undertakes for what is past and what is to come, just

as it is with a malefactor who has been pardoned and received into favour yet may fear an alteration in his state, so too might you. But rest assured, the guilt that was upon you will never return again. While a man who has received a pardon might see his former guilt return if he does not carry himself well, this is not the case for the soul pardoned by Christ. Once pardoned, your former guilt will never return. The Lord will blot out all your sins and remember them no more. Just as when you cast something out of your ship into the depths of the sea and never look for it again, so it is with God: all your sins will be cast into the depths of the sea, and they will be so far removed from you that their guilt will never return once you have come to Christ.

#### **IX.**

Ninthly, there is not only deliverance from guilt; our justification is not only negative (the removal of guilt), but it is also the clothing of the soul with the righteousness of Christ. We are given a perfect righteousness, that of the great Mediator of the New Covenant. Here is a righteousness that not only pardons me but also enables me to stand before the great God with perfect righteousness.

#### **X.**

Yea, tenthly, and lastly, the rest we have in Christ is this: upon our coming to Him, we are assured that the great work of the day of judgement shall be the solemnity of our absolution, the solemnity of our pardon. One of the great works that God intends to accomplish on that day is to make your pardon public, celebrated by both men and angels. You have your pardon now, but the great work of God on that day will be to solemnize the absolution and pardon of the saints. At that time, your sins will be put away anew, as the Scripture says, "In the time of refreshment, your sins shall be done away." They are already done away, but then they shall be done away in the presence

of men and angels. You need not fear that, at the day of judgement, God will come and reproach you for your sins.

When you were under the guilt of sin, what was more terrible to your soul than the thought of the day of judgement? "Oh, how can I stand before the holy God on that great day and have all these sins charged upon me?" But now, Christ says, "Come to me, and you shall never need to fear the great day of judgement anymore." For on that day, the great work will be to make your pardon a matter of celebration. You need not fear the day of judgement any longer but instead long for it. Even if the great day of judgement is not terrifying to you, perhaps the particular judgement that awaits every soul—when God determines the eternal fate of each individual—may still cause fear. But there will also be a great day of judgement when the whole world shall be judged.

Now, consider all these things together:

- Christ undertakes for you.
- Christ satisfies the justice of His Father.
- Christ satisfies the wrath of His Father.
- Christ is your advocate at the right hand of His Father.
- Christ sprinkles your conscience with His own blood, and you stand as perfectly justified as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- The guilt of your sins will never return.
- Christ ensures that you will never come into condemnation.
- You have not only freedom from death but also a perfect righteousness. Christ clothes you with His righteousness, and thus God the Father looks upon you with favour.
- Christ assures you that the great work of the day of judgement will be to solemnize your pardon.



Thus says Christ, "Come to me, all you who lie under the weight of the guilt of your sins, come to me, and you shall have rest. I will make all this good to you." This is the rest that is found in coming to Jesus Christ. All the rest the world offers is worth nothing in comparison to this. Oh, therefore, let us be willing to endure any trouble! It is of little consequence what troubles we endure in this world, so long as we may come to Christ. And this is but one aspect of rest—this is but the easing of the soul from the first burden, and yet even this will be made real to the soul of a believer.

If God grants you a heart to grasp all these truths, you may depart in peace, bless God, and say with the Psalmist in *Psalms 116*, "And now, my soul, return unto thy rest." The original word is "rests"—return unto thy rests. Oh, here are rests, ten distinct rests for a soul burdened under the guilt of sin. Do not think it strange that we, as ministers of the Gospel, speak to you about the restless condition you are in because of sin. Be willing to allow us to trouble you about your sinful state, for we have so much rest to bring you to. Do not think the minister troubles you; do not complain that the Word troubles your conscience.

I appeal to you: if there is anything in God's Word that troubles a person's soul, is there not also much in God's Word to ease that soul and give it rest? This is the rest God offers, purchased by the blood of Christ. Our desire is that you would not cry "Peace, peace" to your souls when there is no peace. And now, having heard the beginning of the excellency that is found in Christ for the soul, you should cry out to God, "Lord, oh that I might be a partaker of this rest!" Continue to desire to hear more and more of this blessed rest that is found in Jesus Christ.

And thus concludes the discussion of the rest that is found in Jesus Christ from the burden of the guilt of sin.

## Chapter 29

The Deliverance from the Law by Christ Set Out: 1. Negatively in Five Particulars. 2. Positively in Five More.

The next burden that weighed upon the laden sinners whom Christ calls to Himself was the burden of the Law. To you who are under the burden of the Law, Christ says, "Come to me, and I will give you rest." I have previously outlined in several particulars the ways in which the burden of the Law weighs upon sinners. Now, I will show how Christ delivers sinners from the burden of the Law, for certainly, He does. We are redeemed from the Law by Christ. This is a significant point, and a proper understanding of it will help us greatly in grasping many truths in religion.

First, I shall explain how far Christ has not delivered us from the Law. Where the Law is not burdensome, Christ has not delivered us from it, but only from the Law insofar as it is a burden. You may ask, in what respect can the Law be said to be a burden? Certainly, in those respects, Christ cannot be said to give us rest, for the Law is good and not burdensome to the saints. The Law, as the Apostle says in *Romans 7*, is good. Even when his soul was deeply troubled by his own corruption and he cried out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?"—as it says at the end of

the chapter—yet, in verse 12, he professes, "The Law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good."

Therefore, that which is holy, just, and good cannot be a burden to those who are also holy. Christ did not come to deliver us from something that is holy, just, and good. As long as it is holy, just, and good, it cannot be a burden to the saints.

**First**, we must understand that the Law (I speak of the moral Law, not the ceremonial Law) is the very mirror of God's holiness. It is a reflection of God's holiness, and in the moral Law, we can see the radiance and glory of God's holiness. Therefore, we are not to be delivered from the Law as the reflection of God's holiness, for in it, we behold the purity of God's nature. The Law of God reveals that He is a holy God, distinct from the heathen nations, whose gods do not have such a holy and righteous Law as ours.

**Second**, the Law is an extract of the very image in which God made man in the beginning. It is a copy of God's image. What was the image in which God made man at first? It was the impression of His Law upon their hearts—the moral Law written in their hearts. This was the very image of God in the soul of man at creation, when he was in innocence. Therefore, we cannot be said to be delivered from the Law as it is a copy and extract of God's image in the heart of man. Rather, Christ renews it in us rather than abolishing it.

**Third**, the Law is a mirror in which we are to see our own faces. It is in the Law that we are to see how far we have fallen from the image in which we were originally created. In this respect, Christ has not delivered us from the Law either. He still wants us to look into the Law as into a mirror, to see how far short we have fallen from what God requires of us and what He originally enabled us to do.

**Fourth**, the Law is a revelation of the will of God. It reveals what is the holy and righteous will of God towards His creatures. In this respect, we are not delivered from it either. We are still to look into the Law to see what God's will is concerning us.

**Lastly**, following from this, the Law remains an authoritative rule for our conduct, guiding our way of life. Scripture is as clear on this point as on any truth in the Book of God. Indeed, this is such a fundamental point that, were it not for a peculiar kind of wantonness that has gripped the spirits of some, there would be no need to spend even a quarter of an hour discussing it. Consider *James 2:8* and onwards: "If you fulfil the royal Law according to the Scripture, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' ye do well."

That command—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"—is the summary of the second table of the Ten Commandments. It is called the royal Law, the Law of the great King. But, *James* continues, "If you have respect to persons, you commit sin, and are convinced of the Law as transgressors." The Law convicts you as transgressors, for "whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all." For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not kill." Now, where are these commandments found but in the Ten Commandments? "Do not commit adultery. Do not kill." If you do not commit adultery but you kill, you are a transgressor of the Law—the Law of the Ten Commandments.

The Deliverance from the Law by Christ Set Out:

1. **Negatively** in Five Particulars.
2. **Positively** in Five More.

It is true, as we shall later hear, the Law now comes to us in a different way than it came to the Jews. However, despite the

revelations of grace in the Gospel—although every commandment may now come to us mixed with a great deal of grace, making it much sweeter and more comforting than it was before—this truth remains: those who transgress the Law and do not live according to its rules are still to be convicted of sin by that same Law.

What does St. John define sin as? He says, "Sin is the transgression of the Law." Therefore, in five respects, Christ has not delivered us from the Law:

1. The Law is the reflection of God's holiness.
2. It is the very copy and extract of the image of God in which He made man.
3. It is the mirror in which we are to see our deformity.
4. It is the revelation of God's will.
5. It remains the authoritative rule for our conduct.

In these five ways, Christ does not deliver us from the Law, but it remains in force. No believer, no godly soul, considers the Law a burden in these respects. Instead, they bless God for the Law, seeing it as their inheritance and the joy of their souls. They bless God for the knowledge of it, their hearts remain under its power, and they are willing to order their lives according to it.

**Question:** But then, what are we delivered from in the Law by Christ?

**Answer:**

**First**, we are delivered from the *rigour* of the Law. Christ frees us from the heavy burden of its rigour—that is, from the requirement of perfect obedience. In this regard, the Law is said to be rigorous because of our weakness, though we once had the power to fulfil it.

Now, the Lord removes the rigour in light of our weakness. The Law was also rigorous in its violent and forceful way of compelling obedience, from which we shall soon hear how Christ delivers us.

**Secondly**, believers are delivered from the *bondage* of the Law.

**Question:** How is the Law a bondage to those who are godly, since it is the Law of God?

**Answer:** The Law is not bondage in itself but in relation to our inability. Given our current condition, the Law requires from us what we are unable to do, and this constitutes a form of bondage. It is like the Israelites under their taskmasters, who demanded more than they could accomplish. Yet, God is righteous in this because it is not more than what He originally enabled us to do in our creation. But in our current fallen state, the Law's requirements—imposing what we cannot fulfil, and that under the penalty of eternal death—become bondage to us.

**Thirdly**, we are delivered from the *binding-over power* of the Law, which binds the soul to face the justice of God upon every breach of the Law. Believers in Christ are no longer bound over to answer God's justice for their sins. It's as if a man bound over to appear at court for judgement later receives a release from his bond, giving him great relief. So too, Christ takes away the bond by which believers were bound to answer for their sins before God's justice.

**Fourthly**, believers are delivered from the *condemning power* of the Law. The Law no longer has the power to bring a believer, who sins out of frailty, into condemnation. Scripture is clear on this point, as I could show from various texts. The Apostle says, "You are not under the Law," and "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ."

**Lastly**, we are delivered from the Law as the *covenant for life*. Initially, the Law was given as the covenant through which God made a contract with humanity, offering life. Since mankind is a rational creature capable of entering into a covenant with God, the Lord dealt with humanity in a covenantal way from the moment of creation. The covenant was essentially this: "Do and live." God told our first parents, Adam and Eve, "Upon your obedience, your life—both present and eternal—shall depend."

Now, through Christ, we are delivered from the Law as the covenant for life. For believers, the Law is no longer the basis of life. Once in Christ, they are brought under a new and better covenant. Thus, in these five respects, we are delivered from the Law by Christ:

1. From the *rigour* of the Law,
2. From the *bondage* of the Law,
3. From the *binding-over power* of the Law,
4. From the *condemning power* of the Law,
5. From the Law as the *covenant for life*.

Surely, this is enough to quiet the soul and give peace, if not for the wild and wanton nature of some. These truths should suffice to bring rest to those troubled by the burden of the Law.

## **Chapter 30**

The Rest That Believers Have From the Burden of the Law by  
Coming to Christ, Laid Out in Ten Particulars.

1. They do not stand or fall for life by the Law.
2. The Law-giver is the Redeemer.
3. The least spark of grace is accepted.
4. Their will shall be accepted as the deed.
5. Obedience is required in a sweet and gentle way.
6. The grace of God in Christ melts the heart.
7. Their sins make them an object of God's pity.
8. They have Christ to undertake for them as a surety.
9. They are delivered, and yet satisfaction is made to the Law.
10. They have assurance that they shall never forfeit the covenant of grace they are under in Christ.

Now then, from all these, we shall lay down several propositions wherein you may see what ease and rest believers have in Christ by being delivered from the Law. Consider the rest that comes from Christ in these particulars, O believer, who art under the load of the Law, and come to Christ.

**First**, know that you do not stand or fall for your eternal estate by the Law. This is the first ease and rest. The Law may indeed threaten you, and dreadful things may be revealed against you by it, but be of good comfort in this: your eternal estate shall not be determined by it. Though the Law is full of severity, you are free from its power in such a way that it no longer has the authority to determine your eternal condition. Before, you depended and relied upon the Law for your eternal state, but now you are beyond its reach—it cannot cast your soul for eternity.

We would not want to be at the mercy of someone who is full of severity and rigor when dealing with matters of great consequence. Instead, we desire to be under the care of those who are full of pity and compassion. Know this, O believer in Christ: you are no longer



subject to the Law, which is full of severity, for your everlasting condition. Instead, you are under the Gospel, the covenant of grace, which is filled with mercy and compassion beyond what even the infinite wisdom of angels or men could have devised or imagined.

If you were under the care of a person with as much mercy as all the mercy of all the people in the world combined, you would feel greatly relieved. You would think yourself fortunate to be at the disposal of such a person rather than at the mercy of someone rigorous and severe. Now, in Christ, this is the rest you have. While your soul once lay at the mercy of the Law, full of rigor and severity, your eternal estate now depends on a covenant that is as full of grace and mercy as your soul could ever desire. Your soul could not ask for a covenant more filled with grace and mercy than the one your eternal life now rests upon. Is there not rest in this for the believer who understands it rightly? This is the first aspect of the rest believers enjoy in Christ by being freed from the Law.

**Secondly**, know that the Law-giver is now your Redeemer. You now receive the Law from the hand of a Mediator, and this is where the principle ease and rest of a gracious heart lies. For the believer, there is great comfort in knowing that they now receive the Law from the hand of a Mediator.

Many speak of deliverance from the Law as it came by Moses. But if we understand this rightly, we have no need to desire such deliverance in one sense. Moses was a type of Christ as a Mediator, as it says in *Galatians 3:19*: "It was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator." God used the ministry of angels to deliver the Law, and He gave it into the hand of a Mediator—Moses—because the people could not bear to receive it directly from God. Moses brought the

Law from God to the people as a Mediator. In this, Moses was a type of Christ.

As Moses was a type of Christ in various respects, so he also typified Christ in this particular: the Law does not come to believers directly from God as a righteous and just Judge but through Christ as their Mediator. There is great comfort in receiving the Law in this way—from the hand of Christ, who is not only their Mediator but also, as Scripture says, their Advocate.

To receive the Law from the hand of Christ, who stands at the right hand of the Father as their Advocate, pleading for them when they break the Law through frailty, is a mighty rest to the soul. Therefore, believers are to view the Law as coming from God, but through Christ, their Mediator. They should see Christ not only as the one who hands the Law to them, as Moses did, but as the Law-giver Himself. Christ, the Mediator, gives the Law to them and receives the Law for them. This understanding brings great ease and rest to the soul.

**Thirdly**, in Christ, your condition is such that, although you may have many imperfections, weaknesses, and even strong corruptions, if there is but the smallest spiritual good in you, the least work of God's grace, the Lord will have a special regard for that small good. All your corruptions and imperfections will not hinder the acceptance of that little spark of good in your soul. This is the freedom we have in Christ.

In explaining the Law earlier, I showed that whatever good a person does while under the Law, unless it is perfect, is rejected. Those who remain in their natural condition, under the first covenant, will find that any imperfection mixed with their works causes them to be entirely unacceptable. However, here is the rest believers have in

Christ: their case is changed. Now, though much corruption remains in them, if the Lord sees but one spark of grace—though it be as small as smoking flax or a bruised reed—they are accepted by God. Even the smallest spark of good in them is accepted.

This is a great relief to those souls who labour under the bondage of the Law. When they previously saw so much corruption in their hearts, they had little hope that anything in them would be accepted. But now, the Lord regards even the smallest good. He will find it out, too, even if it is so small that it is buried beneath heaps of corruption, and you are unable to find it yourself.

The condition of some Christians is like that of a maid searching the hearth for a spark of fire in the morning. She rakes through the ashes but finds none and is ready to think there is none left. Yet perhaps, hidden in a corner, there may be a small spark, though she cannot see it. Likewise, the corruption in the heart is like those ashes, and grace is like the spark hidden in a corner. When poor souls examine their hearts, they see much corruption—like a pile of ashes—and they are ready to conclude the fire has gone out, that there is no spark of grace left. But even if you cannot find the spark yourself, being in Christ, God will find it. There may still be sparks, even in those whose hearts seem so full of corruption that we might wonder where their grace lies. Despite the passion, stubbornness, and other faults, if these people are under the covenant of works, all their corruption would cause them to be rejected. Yet now, if they are under the covenant of grace and the Lord has brought them to Christ, this is their rest and ease: all the corruption in them will not hinder the acceptance of the least spark of God's grace that He has worked in them.

**Fourthly**, not only will the Lord find every spark of good in them, but He will also accept their desires and efforts to do His will, even when they cannot achieve what they would like. Their will shall be accepted as the deed. In the previous point, I explained that even if no visible action is done, yet if there is any habit, disposition, or principle of grace—even if they cannot perceive the beginnings of it—this will be accepted. But this goes further: if they strive to do God's will, if they labour towards perfection, the Lord will accept their will as if it were the deed itself.

Thus, in Scripture, the godly are called perfect. "*As many as are perfect,*" and "*Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.*"

**Question:** Can we be perfect in this world?

**Answer:** No. But this is the grace of God in the Gospel: those who come to Christ will have their will accepted for the deed. Here is blessed ease and rest for the soul in Christ. If you were still under the Law, this could not be. Though people may hope that God will accept their desires and efforts, know this: it is only the privilege of a believer, not of everyone. There is a generation of people under the Law whose desires will not be accepted, as I explained in discussing the burden of the Law. The Law's principle is: "*The man that does these things shall live by them.*" But here is ease for your soul. If you truly understand how the Law works, your heart would sink within you. But this is what brings rest to the soul: you are now in a different condition. Being in Christ, He gives rest and ease to the souls of those who come to Him. Their desires and efforts shall be accepted by God as if they were actual performances. This is a blessed estate.

**Fifthly**, the rest of the soul in Christ, as it relates to deliverance from the burden of the Law, consists in this: that now all the duties God

requires from you are required in a sweet and gentle way. The services that God calls you to perform are now required in a loving and gentle manner. While God still requires the same things from you that the Law demands, He now draws your soul with the cords of love. As the Apostle says in *Romans 12:1*: "We beseech you by the mercies of God that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Notice the plea: "We beseech you by the mercies of God." Those under the bondage of the Law do not have their duties required of them in such a loving way. For them, it is: "If you do these things, you will live; if you sin, you will die." The Law demands obedience with the terror of its consequences—"Do and live, sin and die." However, for believers in Christ, their duties are urged upon them by the mercies of God. The Apostle speaks as an ambassador, saying, "We beseech you." He uses words like, "If there is any love, any consolation." These are the arguments used for those who are drawn by the Gospel.

If we were preaching only to believers, these kinds of arguments would be all that is needed. It is appropriate that those drawn by the Gospel are moved by such loving arguments. It is a sign that your soul is being drawn by the power of the Gospel and has come to Christ when you find that the duties of obedience, which once felt like a burden due to the terror of your conscience (with the fear of hellfire flashing before your eyes if you did not perform them), are now motivated by God's grace in the Gospel, drawing your heart more powerfully. You should always give God obedience, regardless of the circumstances, but when you find that God now draws your soul in this way, it is a sign that you have found rest in Christ.

In the history of the ceremonial Law, we find a type of this rest. The Book of the Law was laid beneath the mercy seat, as you will see in the story. God appointed this place for the Law to be stored—under the mercy seat between the cherubim. This symbolised that, for believers, the Law now comes to them from under the mercy seat. They look upon the Law through the mercy seat, meaning every commandment comes to them in a gracious, alluring way, accompanied by an abundance of mercy, drawing their hearts to obedience.

**Sixthly**, coming to Christ brings rest from the Law in this: the grace of God in Christ melts the heart. When the heart has been melted, the outpouring of it—like milk from a jug—is exceedingly precious and accepted by God. This comes from the grace of God in Christ, and it provides great rest for the soul to know this.

As I have told you before, it is not enough for anyone to say, "Yes, we are all sinners, but God knows I mourn for my sins and am troubled by them." That is not enough. The question is: Have you been delivered from your natural condition, from being under the covenant of works? Have you come to Christ and been brought to Him? Are you now in the state of a believer, a member of Christ? If so, then your repentance and mourning are accepted.

It is like this in many human situations: some people are in a position where, if they do a certain thing, it is accepted, but if another person in a different position does the same thing, it will not be accepted. So it is here. Those who are in the position of being in Christ, whose sorrow for sin is accompanied by the sorrow of Christ presented to the Father, are accepted. When you are sorrowing for your sins, can you, by faith, present the sorrows of Jesus Christ to the Father? If so, then you are accepted. But understand this: no sorrow

for sin is accepted unless it is accompanied by the presentation of Christ's sorrows to the Father.

What an ease this brings to the soul! Previously, the heart was hard, and the sorrow for sin left it unchanged. It was like a marble stone: in wet weather, the marble becomes moist, but it remains as hard as ever—it is still a stone. Likewise, some are troubled for their sins, but this trouble comes from the Law and leaves the heart hardened. Even though they may be troubled, there is still much hardness, stubbornness, and resistance toward God and others.

You can often see this in people with troubled consciences: they may still show a lot of peevishness and resistance toward both God and man. When you see this manifested in people's expressions, actions, and conversations, remember the image of stones on a pavement during wet weather. They may become wet, with water trickling down, but they remain hard.

However, when the Gospel comes, it not only produces sorrow but also melts the heart. This melting is precious before God and is accepted. That is why Scripture speaks so highly of broken hearts and contrite spirits, and of how God esteems them. *"He who dwells on high looks to the one who is humble and contrite in spirit, and who trembles at His word."*

Let me speak a word of comfort to those who are troubled and have come to Christ: the tears that come from your melted heart, through the grace of the Gospel, are among the most precious things in God's eyes, second only to the blood of Christ. Next to Christ's blood, your mourning and lamenting spirit are some of the most precious things before God. He treasures every tear, and this brings rest to the soul. The soul can find abundant rest in Christ when you know that your mourning for your sins is accepted by God.

**Seventhly**, the ease that the soul finds from the burden of the Law is this: whereas before, under the severity of the Law, sin made your soul an object of God's wrath—if taken as it was in itself, and coming from you without any regard to Christ—your sin made you an object of God's wrath, even His hatred. The Scriptures plainly tell us that *"the Lord hates the workers of iniquity."* But now, having come to Christ according to His invitation, *"Come to me, all you who are laden,"* your sins, when seen in Christ, make you an object of God's pity and compassion, rather than His wrath. This is not due to anything virtuous in the sin itself, but because of your condition in Christ.

Consider this: when a tender mother looks upon her sick or wounded child, it is true that she cannot love the sickness or the wound. She would not wish for the illness or the injury, but doesn't the sickness or wound make the child an object of her pity and compassion? Doesn't it stir the tender feelings of a father or mother even more for their child? So too, the Lord now looks upon your sin, being in Christ, as your sickness, as your wound, and therefore He pities you as one suffering affliction rather than one in rebellion.

The truth is, all the saints of God who have come to Christ see their own sins as their greatest affliction. This is the greatest burden they bear, as I explained earlier when speaking of the burden of corruption that remains in their hearts. God, therefore, looks upon your sin as an affliction. And regarding the breach of the Law or other effects of sin, Christ has undertaken to deal with those, delivering you from the wrath and consequences they deserve under God's justice. Though you are delivered from guilt and condemnation, a gracious heart reasons this way: *"Though I am delivered from my sin, from its guilt and from the condemning*



*power of the Law, yet it remains my affliction and my trouble, and I grieve over it."*

Thus, peace and rest come to the soul from what the Law once demanded. And as we continue, we can not only see the benefits we have in Christ but also identify those who are truly delivered. These are the ones who, though they know they are freed from the burden of sin, still regard their sins as the greatest affliction of their souls. Others, who are merely legalists, see their souls as guilty and under condemnation. But if they were delivered from this guilt, they would view their sins as wounds and afflictions. The saints, on the other hand, understand that they have now become objects of God's pity and compassion.

This is also why Christ is so willing, whenever possible, to find any excuse for His poor servants. You do not need to seek out excuses for your sins, for if there is anything that might lessen or alleviate them, Christ Himself will find it and make it known. Recall what Christ said to His disciples when they were sleeping and could not watch with Him for one hour. Although He rebuked them, He also excused them, saying, *"The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

Notice that the disciples did not offer this excuse themselves. When Christ asked, *"Could you not watch with me one hour?"* they did not reply, *"Master, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."* Instead, Christ said this to them. This is the way it should be: leave the excuse to Christ. Your responsibility is to aggravate your sin as much as possible, laying it upon your heart to humble your soul. Christ will take care of making the excuse.

Therefore, those of you who constantly make excuses for your sins, just as your ancestor Adam did—shifting blame to the woman, and the woman to the serpent—beware! You may say, "It is true, I am

naturally passionate," or, "I am naturally stubborn," or a hundred other such excuses. But all your focus should be on humbling your soul for your sins. If there is anything that may lessen your guilt, Christ will do that. The more you excuse yourself, the greater your sin becomes. It is far better to have someone else excuse your sin than to do so yourself.

It is like when a child or servant offends, and a close friend or neighbour comes to excuse them. This is far better than if they were to excuse themselves. Now, those who are under the Law have no one to make excuses for them, but those who come to Christ have Christ to make all their excuses.

Oh, be careful not to abuse the rich grace of God in Christ! I know that this grace is so pure that it does not carry within it any malignant quality that could lead to abuse. Where you see such abuse, know that the person does not truly possess this grace but has something else in its place. It is like two drinks made from different compositions: they may look the same, but one may contain a poison that could kill, while the other is wholesome and could restore health. Although they appear identical in colour and taste, their effects are entirely different. So it is with the free grace of God in Christ. You may hear the same words spoken, the same thing preached to one person as to another, the same doctrine proclaimed. Outwardly, it may seem the same, but to one person it carries a malignant power, while to another it brings healing and life.

When the soul truly finds rest in Christ, this rest does not have the power to make the heart worse. But I will speak more on that later.

**Eighthly**, when you come to Christ, your soul may find rest in Him. This is because in Christ there is the promise of a surety, revealed through the grace of the Gospel. The Law requires perfect obedience

from us personally, demanding that the soul which sins must pay the debt itself—*"The soul that sins shall die."* But the grace of the Gospel brings the message of a surety, and this surety is one whom God Himself declares He is pleased to accept. God is as satisfied with the payment made by this surety as if the debt had been paid by the debtor themselves. What a great relief this is!

Consider the ease it would bring to someone when a creditor comes after them for a debt, threatens to imprison them, but then the debt is paid by another on their behalf. The creditor says, "If this man will be your surety and pay the debt, I am satisfied." What a tremendous relief this would be to the debtor! This is exactly the case with the soul that comes to Christ. When the soul, burdened under the demands of the Law, finds itself unable to pay the debt, Christ steps in as the surety. God the Father accepts Him as such, and the debt is transferred to Christ. This is the relief from the demands of the Law.

**Ninthly**, beyond this, there is yet another source of rest from the Law. In Christ, the sinner is delivered from all the rigor, bondage, and other demands of the Law, but this deliverance comes through satisfaction made to the Law. This provides additional rest for the soul. It is not simply that we are delivered from the Law without consequence, but rather, the Law has been fully satisfied. God, as the Lawgiver, accepts Christ's satisfaction of the Law on our behalf. No matter what we do, we could never achieve this satisfaction on our own. Even if we imagined God to be merciful enough to accept our best efforts, they could never truly satisfy the Law's demands. But in Christ, we are freed in a way that also satisfies the Law. This is where the soul finds true rest—knowing that the Law's demands are met in full, and we are free.

**Tenthly**, whereas the Law required constant obedience—such that even if someone obeyed right to the very end, but the last act was a sin, all their previous obedience would be forgotten, and the soul would still perish—the Law could never assure anyone of perseverance to the end. The Law never had the power to give assurance to those under it. Even if a person had the ability to obey and had done so for many years, they could never be sure that they would not fall at last and perish.

But now, in coming to Christ, there is not only satisfaction for past sins, but also assurance of enduring to the end. There is a promise in the new covenant that you have in Christ, that there will never be any forfeiture of it. This is a mighty comfort and rest. The foundation of many of these truths was already explained when I spoke of how, in Christ, we are freed from the guilt of our sins. But now we see the further implications of those truths. Presenting these additional points shows the consequences of what was previously said and brings further rest to the soul.

Although I mentioned the core principles earlier, not every struggling soul is able to understand and draw out each of these particulars. It is the task of those who are weak in faith to see the various steps of God's grace in Christ—not just to see it as a whole but to behold how it flows in specific, individual ways. When these are clearly presented to the soul, it is a great help to faith and comfort. This final point I have spoken of is not less important than the others—it is, in fact, the completion of all the rest. The soul that comes to Christ has this assurance: it is brought into a covenant with the guarantee that there will never be any forfeiture of that covenant.

One part of the covenant is that God will give grace to the soul in such a way that it will never forfeit the blessings of the covenant.

Though a believer may lose some of the comfort of the covenant for a time, they will never lose the blessing of it. It is part of the purchase of Christ's blood that all who come to Him will never be cast off again. This is a privilege that believers now have, which Adam did not. Adam was under a covenant of works and had the ability to keep it, but Adam never had a promise from God that he would never forfeit the covenant, that he would never break it so badly as to be undone. Adam had no such assurance. But all believers who come to Christ have this promise, grounded on a sure foundation, for it is based on a costly purchase—Christ has laid down His blood for you, not only for your forgiveness but also so that your soul may enter into an everlasting covenant that can never be broken.

Now, if all these particulars are put together, and if these truths are made clear to the soul by the eye of faith—if faith can see the reality of all these things I have presented to you—I ask you, is there not rest for those who come to Christ? Is it not worth great effort to come to Christ? Is there not something in this rest that will make up for all the trouble you may experience at first—the work of humiliation, repentance, and so on? When you come to Christ, there is something that will more than repay all your former struggles.

As I said before in concluding the previous points, so I say again here, as it is written in *Psalms 116*: "And now, my soul, return unto thy rest." All believers may say this confidently. If the things we have now heard are true, then indeed, "my soul, return unto thy rest, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you."

Oh, therefore, be in love with the Gospel. Study it deeply, consider its depths, and prize Jesus Christ, who has purchased such rest for your soul. For those of you who are still coming to Christ, do not rest in your spirits until you have found this rest. It would be tragic if

anything in this world were to meet you on your way to Christ and quiet your heart—if anything other than Christ were to soothe your soul.

And for you who are believers, take this to heart. There is something special here to learn: how you should make use of this truth, what it means for your daily walk, and how this rest in Christ can help you. There is also something to be said for the encouragement of those who doubt whether they are truly believers. But we cannot cover everything at once, so for now, let this suffice—the simple presentation of the rest that is found in Christ, from the heavy burden of the Law, from the load that weighs so many souls down.

## CHAPTER 31

*Containing various Consequences from the Rest Believers have from the Burden of the Law, and Lessons they are taught from it.*

To proceed now, there are several things that follow from the rest we have in Christ, having been delivered from the burden and load of the Law.

I will speak briefly of these, and then move on to discuss the next burden and the rest that comes with it.

The rest believers have from the burden of the Law brings tremendous help against many temptations that can deeply trouble the peace and rest of their souls. If they are truly delivered from the

Law in the various ways that have been explained at length, several important benefits follow:

**1.** First, meditating on this deliverance can give rest and ease from the temptation that arises when believers feel that, because of certain imperfections, weaknesses, heart struggles, and sins they are guilty of, they have no interest in Christ, and therefore no right to believe in Him. The strength of this temptation cannot stand with a proper understanding of Christ as the One who delivers from the Law. If Christ delivers us from the Law, then our interest in Him can remain, even though we are not able to perfectly keep the Law.

Moreover, it is common for believers, when they break the Law in some way, to question their entire standing before God. They may doubt their salvation and wonder if they are still in Christ. But if we truly understand that we deal with God not through the covenant of works but through the covenant of grace, and that the Law does not have the power to condemn us, we would not be so quick to question everything when we are guilty of breaking the Law.

**2.** Furthermore, this understanding would help greatly against another temptation. Many believers, when they look at their own performance of duties and see how many imperfections there are, feel as though they cannot present their efforts to God. They consider God to be infinitely holy and just, and they are ashamed of their incomplete works. They may feel as though God would never accept what they offer. However, a right understanding of our deliverance from the Law will help against this temptation. Remember, O believer, that you are dealing with God in a covenant of grace. You come to Him through Christ, under a better covenant than the covenant of the Law.

**3.** This understanding also helps against another common temptation in the hearts of the saints: they hear of others who seemed to have greater gifts and abilities, who were able to do more for God, yet fell away and perished. A poor Christian may say, "If such eminent people, with so much ability and grace, could fall away, what will become of someone like me?"

But by understanding our deliverance from the Law by Christ, we can find help against this fear. A person may have great abilities and be able to do much work, but such a person can still fall away. Yet, one who is far weaker in ability, possessing only a small measure of true faith—faith that brings them into the covenant of grace—will stand. This weak believer will endure while the other may fall. If your standing depended on your own strength, then you would have cause to fear. Seeing that others who seemed strong have fallen, you might wonder what hope there is for you. But your standing does not depend on your own strength; it depends on Christ, who has undertaken to uphold all who are His members. You are dealing with God through the covenant of grace, and once you are brought into that covenant, it will uphold you—even if you are weak—while many others with greater natural ability and common gifts of God's Spirit may fall.

Yes, even if they had the strength of an angel, they would fall if they were not brought under the covenant of grace made with believers in Christ. However, the weakest believer, dealing with God through Christ and not through the Law, will stand and not fall. Being delivered from the Law through Christ brings great help to believers against these temptations and many others. There is nothing that helps believers more than this understanding of their deliverance from the Law, as explained earlier.



### **The First Lesson.**

First, from this deliverance we are taught how to hear the threats of the Law. I speak to believers, though others may misuse the message of deliverance from the Law, yet they must not lose their portion in it. Believers are taught how to receive the threats of the Law. When you hear these dreadful warnings from God's Word against sin, how should you respond? The way is this: when you hear such threats, know that God is using them to help you understand the mercy He has shown in delivering you from what you deserved. God wants you to grasp the evil of sin in itself and to consider what Christ has done for you. By these threats, God intends to drive you to Christ, to see your need for Him, to bless His name for Christ, and to value Christ who has delivered you from these threats.

A believer, when hearing the threats of the Law, is like a person standing safely on shore during a violent storm. He sees the waves rise high, hears the winds blow and the waves roar, but he stands safe in the harbour. He may have been in the storm once, but God has brought him to the safety of the shore, and he blesses God. He may also see other ships far off, ready to be shattered on the rocks or swallowed by the sea, but he is safe. This is how it should be for believers when they hear the threats of the Law. They should receive them with thanksgiving, remembering that there was a time when their soul was under those same threats, but now the Lord has delivered them and brought them under a new covenant. They have come to Christ, and Christ has satisfied the demands of the Law on their behalf. So, like the man standing on the shore, the believer praises God.

This leads believers to love Christ all the more, to value Christ all the more, and to bless God for the Gospel they have heard. Therefore, it is not tedious or grievous for them to hear the threats of the Law.

They know how to make a holy use of these warnings, and their hearts are drawn closer to God by them, just as much as they are drawn by the promises of the Gospel.

It is a bad sign when men and women cannot endure to hear the threats of the Law—it is a dangerous sign that they are still under those threats. If they were not under them, it would not trouble them to hear them. Those who have been delivered from the threats of the Law know how to use them for their good. Many will say, when they hear the terrors of the Law, "*What good does this do? It only hardens us.*" But if you were truly acquainted with the Gospel, hearing the terrors of the Law would soften your heart, because it would make you value Christ more.

Therefore, believers should not consider the threats of the Law as things that no longer concern them. Even though they are not under the Law's power to condemn them, the threats still have value for believers. God wants these things revealed even to believers, because of the many good and gracious uses they can make of them.

### **The Second Lesson.**

Secondly, from what we have learned about both the burden of the Law and the rest that comes from being delivered from it, this lesson can be drawn: believers are to mix humility with confidence in their lives. They are to learn how to be humble, yet confident; how to rejoice, yet also to tremble.

There is no better way to learn the proper mixture of humility with faith and confidence, or of joy with trembling, than to know the burden of the Law and the rest that is to be had in Christ. This will teach you to be aware of your own wretchedness, your natural condition, and yet to be confident in the grace of God in Christ. It will show you how to fear in light of what you are in yourself, and yet to

rejoice in what you are in Christ, in the rest that your soul has found in Him.

Many people do not know how to balance these two. If they are humbled by their sins, they become dejected and cannot bring themselves to exercise both humility for their sins and faith in God's grace at the same time. They think that focusing on their sin will hinder their faith in God's grace, so they resist anything that might humble them. They say they must only believe in God's grace, fearing that any talk of their sin will lead them into despair.

Certainly, if you cannot see how humility and faith in God's grace can coexist, you do not understand the mystery of godliness. To be deeply humbled for your sins and yet, at the same moment, to be raised by the mercy of God in Christ—this is the mystery of godliness.

It is true that vices are opposed to one another, but graces never are. Those who understand the mystery of godliness know how to blend these two together at the same time. Scripture says that "*godliness is a mystery*"—"Great is the mystery of godliness." Indeed, godliness consists in a Christian's ability to know how to be humbled and yet confident, to believe in the promises of God while still being deeply aware of their own sin. On one side, they know how to rejoice, and on the other, they know how to fear.

Many cannot rejoice without becoming loose and careless, and others cannot fear without their hearts becoming heavy and lifeless. But the heart that understands what it means to be naturally under the Law and what it means to find rest in Christ can rejoice with trembling and believe with humility. There is no better way to create this balance than by understanding both the burden of the Law and the rest we have in Christ.

I confess that these things may not be as impactful for those who do not, in some measure, remember what has already been said about both the burden of the Law and the rest that we have in Christ. Those who are new to these concepts may not fully grasp the value of what I am saying. I wish these things could have been addressed all at once, but we cannot do everything at once.

### **The Third Lesson.**

Thirdly, another thing we learn from the deliverance we have in Christ from the Law is this: it shows plainly that the way of life and salvation is above nature—it is supernatural. What I have explained about the rest we find in Christ from the Law teaches us that believers are not judged for their eternal state based on any work of the Law. If they perform works of the Law, these do not bring them eternal life. If they break the Law, this does not condemn them to death. Therefore, the way of salvation is supernatural. Nature can only teach a person this: that they must serve God, and if they do, God will bless them and love them. But if they sin against God, nature teaches that God will afflict and punish them. Nature knows no other way for a person to be saved except by serving God and keeping the Law. If they fail, nature tells them to expect God's wrath.

But the truth revealed in the Gospel goes far beyond this. It teaches that a soul's eternal state does not depend on whether it keeps or breaks the Law. This is a high mystery, far beyond what nature can teach. I am not saying that disobedience to God's will does not deserve eternal punishment—even in believers. But now, under the covenant of grace in Christ, believers have rest in Christ. Their souls are not cast one way or the other based on what they do or fail to do. Although if they neglect God's will, the Lord may chastise them in this life, their eternal state is secure.

If anyone should say, "Then why should we care what we do?" we need only answer them: "*You have no part or portion in this deliverance from the Law by Christ.*" Shall we sin because grace abounds? God forbid! The Lord forbid that any such thought should enter our hearts. Those who are truly godly have the Spirit of God within them and will not reason this way. However, this remains certain: in Christ, we do not depend for life or death on our works of the Law. The way of the Gospel is a higher, supernatural way—a way beyond what most people imagine. Most people on earth look no further than the works of the Law for their salvation, and they will certainly go astray. From what we have heard, it is clear that the way of salvation is far higher than nature.

#### **The Fourth Lesson.**

Fourthly, we may learn from this: if Christ has given believers rest by delivering them from the rigor and severity of the Law—such that they are no longer judged by it for their eternal state—then they have all the more reason to be faithful to God, doing all they can to serve Him in an evangelical way. You were once under a Law that condemned you if you failed in even one point. If you failed, you were cast off forever. But now you are under a new Law, in which God accepts you in Christ. Shouldn't you be even more faithful and diligent in your efforts, given that you have received so much mercy in being brought under such a covenant?

The truth is, under the old covenant, you might have been discouraged, thinking, "*No matter what I do, my soul may still be lost forever.*" But now, having been brought under the covenant of grace, where Christ has made you know that your rest is in Him, how careful should you be to walk in ways that are pleasing to Him? How should you devote the strength of your soul to walk in His ways?

Let me appeal to you: suppose you were still in that condition where the Lord looked upon you with a strict eye, requiring absolute obedience, and if you failed in anything, none of your previous good works would count. What if the Lord said to you, *"What if I were to deliver you from this Law and bring you under the Law of Christ, where your eternal state would not depend on your obedience to the Law, and where whatever you do—though it may be imperfect—will be accepted?"* How much would you prize this? Wouldn't you immediately enter into a covenant with God, saying, *"Oh Lord, bring my soul under this covenant, and I will forever strive to walk in all that pleases You!"* Such mercy would not make you sluggish, but would instead strengthen your heart.

Consider this: suppose someone were in slavery under a harsh master who beat them no matter how hard they worked, and a prince came to ransom them, taking them into his own house and adopting them as his child. The prince would expect no more than a childlike obedience from them. Wouldn't it be unnatural and vile for the ransomed person to be careless about pleasing this prince, who had delivered them from such slavery and bondage?

So it is with believers. You were once under the dreadful bondage of the Law, but now you have been brought to Christ. He has made you a child of God, and He ensures that your obedience—though it be imperfect—is accepted as filial and childlike. Shouldn't you be more diligent now than before? You now serve God on better terms than ever before, so how could you possibly be more sluggish?

### **The Fifth Lesson.**

Fifthly, from our deliverance from the Law, we learn this: we should not judge our coming to Christ, nor our faith, by the standards of the Law. Since by coming to Christ we are delivered from the Law, we

must not measure our faith or our relationship with Christ by the Law's requirements. This concept might seem a little unclear at first, but it is of great importance and use, especially in helping believers in their walk with God.

Some believers, particularly those who are weak in faith, often judge their faith or their coming to Christ by the standards of the Law. They make the Law a rule for their faith, which is a mistake. If by faith we are delivered from the Law, then the Law cannot be the standard by which we judge our faith.

You might ask, "What does it mean to make the Law a rule for our faith?" It means this: believers think that because their faith is weak, full of doubts and imperfections, they must not have faith at all. What they are doing is treating faith like a legal requirement. If faith were legal, it could not be accepted if there was any mixture of imperfection or doubt. But evangelical faith can be accepted even when there is imperfection.

This idea will come up again, but for now, it directly follows from our deliverance from the Law. I want to suggest it as a great help to believers: do not make your faith legal. Here's how this happens: many believers who are full of doubts and fears will say, "Yes, I know there is rest to be found in Christ, but that rest is only for believers, and I am afraid I am not a believer." When asked why they doubt, they answer, "Because of my sins, because I cannot do as I would like." This is making faith a legal matter.

Of all graces, faith that delivers us from the Law must be evangelical. Our mourning for sin should also be seen as evangelical. Yet, some believers view their mourning for sin as legal. They think God will not accept their mourning because they cannot mourn as deeply as they desire. If you were under the Law, no amount of mourning

would be accepted. But now, under the covenant of grace, you must see your mourning as evangelical, just as your obedience must be viewed as evangelical.

It is a serious mistake for believers to view their mourning, obedience, or even their faith through the lens of the Law. When believers look at their faith and think it is insufficient because it doesn't meet the perfection they desire—or the perfection that the Law requires—they are making their faith legal.

### **The Sixth Lesson.**

Sixthly, another lesson that believers should learn from the rest they have in Christ from the burden of the Law is this: if they find deliverance from the terrors of the Law, they need not be troubled by any terror that can come from men or any creature. If your faith can deliver you from the terror of the Law, and give rest to your soul despite all the terrible things the Law threatens because of your sin, then surely that same faith can deliver you from the terror of men.

Consider this: all the rage and power of every person in the world, and every devil in hell, is not as terrifying as the threats of the Law. If God has given you such grace in your heart that you have found a way to be delivered from the terror of the Law and have found rest for your soul, then you need not be afraid of any earthly threats. Set your faith to work, and exercise it upon the promises that have given you rest from the Law, and that same faith will free you from the terrors of wicked men.

Believers, if you truly understand this, nothing in the world would be able to terrify you. You would have rest in your soul even in the midst of the world's worst terrors. You could reason within yourself: *"Through the grace of faith that God has given me, my soul has found rest even when I have heard the dreadful terrors of the Law. I*



*have that within me which gives me rest from them. And I know that all the terrors of men, and even the devils of hell, cannot be more terrible than the threats of the Law."* Therefore, just as you have used your faith to believe in Christ and find rest from those terrors, use that same faith when you hear the threats of wicked men, and let it deliver your soul from fear. No matter how many rumours or threats fill the world, you can say, "*My soul, return unto thy rest.*"

### **The Seventh Lesson.**

Seventhly, another lesson that believers are to learn from their deliverance from the Law—which is of great benefit to them in their life and conduct—is this: it is utterly unbecoming for a believer to be harsh or rigorous towards their brethren. Christ has delivered you from the rigour of the Law, so will you now be rigorous with others? Christ has given you rest; will you not do what you can to give your brother rest as well?

If Christ has freed you from great troubles, burdens, and bondage, why would you not strive with all your might to free your brother from any burden or trouble that might grieve him? Oh, what an unworthy thing it is for a Christian—who has received so much rest from Christ—to be a source of trouble or burden to their brother or sister! Christ has given you rest so that you might have a gentle and peaceful disposition towards others, that you might show pity and compassion towards them.

To see someone who professes to have been delivered from the Law and found rest in Christ, yet behaves harshly towards those under their authority, whether servants or children, is truly pitiful. Remember the rigour that Christ delivered you from, and strive to be gentle and peaceable towards your brother.

This ties into the next words of the text: *"Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls."* Christ gives you rest for your soul, so that you may be of a meek and quiet spirit towards others. When we come to those words, we will speak more fully about the gentleness and peace of spirit that should characterize Christians.

These lessons naturally follow from the rest that we have in Christ from the Law. Many other points could be drawn, but as these are only consequences of what has already been taught, I have decided not to elaborate further on them.

## Chapter 32

Of the rest from Legal Performances, and the several ways how this rest comes from Christ, namely:

- (1) duties are delightful to the soul, because Christ renders God to the soul in a gracious way;*
- (2) they are not performed as satisfactory, but as testimonies of love and thankfulness;*
- (3) Christ Himself offers up the duties to God;*
- (4) they are performed from the Law in the heart; and*
- (5) they have the promises joined with them.*

Now, let us begin to address the next point, which is closely related to the previous one: the rest that is found in Christ from the trouble of spirit caused by legal performances. Earlier, I spoke extensively about the great burden on many people's consciences—how their consciences push and pull them toward duty, and though they dare not neglect it, they find that performing their duties becomes a burden because they approach them in a legal way. Many of you are familiar with this, and it is impossible to discuss such a topic without some of you understanding what I mean, though others may not. There are those who feel compelled by their consciences to perform their duties, even though those very duties are burdensome to them.

There are others, of course, whose consciences do not hold such sway, and though their conscience tells them to do their duty, they dare to omit it without feeling troubled. But there are some who have not yet experienced the liberating grace of the Gospel. They are so bound by their conscience that they dare not neglect any duty it requires, yet the Lord knows that the duties they perform feel like a heavy burden. They carry out their duties under the compulsion of conscience, as if under a grievous weight.

To these, Christ says, *"Come to me, and I will give you rest."* In believing in Christ and exercising faith in Him, there is deliverance from this burden. Many poor souls have lived for years under this burden, but when the Lord revealed to them the grace of Christ, their hearts were set free. They have since been just as conscientious in performing their duties as before, but now these duties have become the joy and delight of their souls. They approach their duties with rejoicing, and the commandments of God have become their inheritance, the joy of their hearts. These duties are as sweet to them as honey and the honeycomb.

This is our current topic: that in Christ, there is rest from the burden of legal performances. Christ enables believers—those who are His members—to perform their duties with a spirit of freedom. Indeed, evangelical duties are those performed with freedom of spirit, which distinguishes them from legal performances. The latter are done as burdens, while the former are done with liberty of heart. Now, let me show you how Christ grants this freedom. The scripture tells us, *"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."* This freedom of spirit in performing duty comes from Christ in the following ways:

**1. Christ renders God to the soul in a gracious way.**

When the soul comes to Christ, it finds rest because Christ presents God to the soul in a gracious and loving manner. Christ removes the terror that previously filled the heart at the thought of God. The reason why legalists find duties burdensome is that they offer them to God while viewing Him as a terrible judge. They must do what God requires, but when they come into His presence, they see Him as a fearsome judge. However, when the soul comes to Christ, Christ presents God as amiable and lovely to the Christian soul—as a father.

Christ said, *"I go to my Father and your Father."* So believers, when they perform their duties, view God not only as *a* father, but as *their* Father, and the Father of their Redeemer as well. Believers see God in a double relationship: He is their Father because He has begotten them anew to Himself, and He is their Father because He has adopted them as His children. But He is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through Christ, believers have an interest in God's fatherhood. As Christ said, *"I go to my Father and your Father."*

Thus, when believers offer up their service to God, they come to Him as their Father and as the Father of their Redeemer. This brings great ease to the heart of a believer in performing their duties. There is a

vast difference between being called to a father and being called to a strict and severe master or judge. When a child hears that their father is calling them, they run joyfully, loving to be in their father's presence. But when a servant hears that their master is calling them, they fear the possibility of being punished.

**This is the difference between legal performances and evangelical ones.** Those who are in Christ, when called to duty, are called to enter into the presence of their Father and the Father of their blessed Redeemer. When they are called to perform a duty, they do so in Him. For example, when conscience says, "Come, you must pray," they do indeed go, but they go with a heart free from fear and discouragement. Rather than being struck with terror, they approach with confidence, knowing they are entering the presence of their loving Father, not a harsh judge. The Father of their Redeemer is calling them to have communion with Him, and this makes their heart spring with joy. Christ makes God appear lovely to them and thus removes the burden of legal performances.

**Secondly,** in Christ, believers do not perform duties to offer them up as a way to make amends for their past failings, but rather as testimonies of love and thankfulness for what they have already received. This makes duties much easier to perform. It is true, they may reflect on past neglect and use that as motivation to stir themselves to greater diligence. However, they are no longer burdened by the thought of needing to "pay back" God for what they have failed to do. Performing duties in a legal way, as if to satisfy God for past neglect, would be a grievous burden.

Those who are unfamiliar with the Gospel tend to believe that the more they have neglected their duties in the past, the more they must now do to make up for it. Their conscience tells them they must serve

God diligently to compensate for past neglect, and this makes their duties burdensome. It's like a man who has fallen into debt and now must use all his earnings to repay what he owes. This man will go about his work in great heaviness, knowing that no matter how hard he works, all his earnings will go toward satisfying his debt.

But now consider another man, also once in debt, who has a friend or relative come along and pay off all that he owed. This friend gives him a fresh start, saying, "Now you are free. Whatever you earn from this point forward is for yourself." This man will go about his work with much more joy and liveliness. This is the difference between those who perform duties in a legal way and those who perform them in an evangelical way. The one under the Law feels as though he must make up for his past failures, while the one under grace knows Christ has already paid the debt and freed him from that burden.

A believer performs obedience on different terms. Christ has laid down the price for their sins and discharged all arrears. Christ has also given the believer a stock of grace, saying, "Now live and serve God. Use this grace to gain more comfort and more grace, and every good work you do will benefit your soul." This is how the believer approaches duties—with joy and freedom, knowing they are not working to pay off old debts, but rather to grow in grace and enjoy the benefits of their work.

**Thirdly**, another way Christ delivers believers from the burden of performing duties is this: when a believer performs a duty, Christ goes with them to the Father and offers the duty to Him. This makes the duty easy for the believer's heart. Those who perform duties in a legal way go alone into God's presence. They have no one to go with them and must offer up their service to God on their own. This can

weigh heavily on their heart, especially considering how they have offended God in the past.

Imagine a malefactor who has wronged the king and must now go into his presence to petition for mercy, but has no one to accompany him or present his petition on his behalf. He must go alone, with no help, and his heart is heavy with fear and dread. He knows he must go, for it is his only chance to save his life, but he goes without encouragement.

Now, imagine another man who must also go into the king's presence, but the king's dear and only son takes him by the hand and says, "Come, I will go with you. What is it you have—a petition? Give it to me, and I will present it to my father, and I will make sure it is granted." How cheerfully and confidently would this man enter the king's presence!

This is the difference between a legal performer of duties and an evangelical performer. The legal performer goes alone, with no one to help them present their prayers or service to God. But a believer never goes into God's presence alone. Even if they are physically alone, praying in their closet, Christ is with them. He takes them by the hand and leads them into the presence of their Father. Their poor petitions and broken prayers are taken by Christ, who presents them to the Father. This, the believer can see by faith, and it brings great comfort. Duties are no longer burdensome when they are performed in such a manner. The believer can say, "I go to this duty, but Christ stands by me and takes what I have to offer, and He presents it to the Father on my behalf."

**Fourthly**, another way Christ provides rest is that all duties performed by a believer come from the law that is now written in their heart. The believer becomes a law unto themselves because the

Spirit of Christ is within them. They no longer perform duties simply because they are commanded, but because such duties are now aligned with the divine nature that has been imparted to them. As Scripture says, believers are "partakers of the divine nature." With the Spirit of Christ in their hearts and the law of Christ written within, they naturally do what God requires.

For such believers, every duty that God asks of them is already written on their hearts. They don't just obey because conscience tells them to, but because it is now their heart's desire to do God's will. They can say, as Christ did, "It is written in my heart to do Your will, O Lord." When conscience prompts them to perform a duty, their heart responds willingly: "Lord, this is what You require, and it is already written in my heart. I am ready to do it."

This is true rest in the performance of duties: when there is a natural disposition in the heart to obey what God requires. The believer becomes a law unto themselves, and no duty God commands feels burdensome. Even without the motivation of heaven or hell, they would still obey naturally—just as natural as it is for a fish to drink water.

It is said of the wicked that they "drink iniquity like water," because sin is natural to them. In a similar way, though not entirely so, grace becomes natural for the believer. While the heart may still have some opposition to good, there is a principle within that makes it natural for the soul to embrace God's commandments. Just as a fish drinks in water, the believer drinks in God's law.

Take Zacchaeus as an example. When Christ touched his heart, he immediately responded, even though he had been a covetous man before. He declared, "Half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything by false accusation, I restore fourfold."



Restitution, one of the hardest duties, became easy for him once he came to Christ. Many people can find no peace or comfort in their lives until they have made restitution for their wrongs because, until then, they are continuing in their sin.

This is the difference between one who is only under the terror of the law and one who has found rest in Christ. The former is like a ship stuck in the mud, beaten by the waves, with the danger of being broken apart. But once the tide lifts the ship, it floats freely, and the slightest touch can move it in any direction. Likewise, before coming to Christ, the heart is stuck in sin and burdened by the law. Even with some illumination, it is constantly troubled and unable to find peace. But when the heart comes to Christ, it is freed, and the soul moves with ease in obedience to God's will.

When the heart is freed from sin, the world, and the creature, it moves in God's ways with great ease. Even the hardest duties become light. The believer does not see God's commands as burdensome, whereas one who is legal in their obedience may view God's commands as harsh. There is an excellent Scripture for this in 1 John 5:3, where it says, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not grievous."

A believer, when they come to Christ, finds that even the most difficult commandments—like restitution or constant prayer—are not burdensome. It's true that corruption may sometimes make duties feel heavy, but when the heart is full of grace, the commandments of God are not burdensome at all. They become easy to the soul, as Christ Himself says: "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

Many people complain that God's ways are too hard, and the strictness of duty too much. But this is only because they are still under the law. Once the Spirit of Christ enters their heart, those

duties that once seemed hard become a source of comfort and joy. They will find more peace, more ease, and more rest when they are walking in obedience to God.

To the carnal heart, this may seem like a riddle. How could one find more rest and comfort by walking in strict obedience to God's commands? To them, the ways of God seem like bondage. But the truth is that they are mistaking the nature of true liberty. They think that freedom is found in indulging the flesh, but in reality, such liberty only leads to more weariness. Those who understand the mystery of godliness will find that the strictness of God's ways brings true ease and comfort to the soul.

Therefore, do not let the devil deceive you into thinking that strict obedience to God is a burden. The devil is only deluding you. If you had the Spirit of Christ and had truly come to Him, you would find rest in even the most difficult and exacting duties. You would find your soul at peace in the performance of them.

**Fifthly**, duties are not burdensome to those who have come to Christ because, in Christ, every duty comes with a promise. When duties are performed in an evangelical way—when the soul has come to Christ—it sees each duty that God requires as having a promise attached to it. This promise enables the soul to do what God commands, and in this, the soul finds rest.

When God requires something of us, the soul does not only look at the commandment but also at how a promise accompanies it. For instance, consider two passages in Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy 10:12, we read: "And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord and

His statutes which I command you this day for your good." Then, in verse 16, it says, "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked."

Here, we see that God requires great things—fear, love, service, obedience, and heart circumcision. These are heavy demands, especially if approached in a legalistic way. However, when the soul is in Christ, it finds a promise accompanying these commandments. In Deuteronomy 30:6, it says, "The Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live."

Here we see a transformation. God commands the circumcision of the heart, love for Him with all our being, and obedience to His commandments. But, left alone, such demands would be overwhelming. However, in the gospel, God not only commands but also promises: "The Lord your God will circumcise your heart." God promises to do the very thing He commands us to do.

I could give many more examples where the Lord requires something, and it would indeed be hard if we were left to ourselves. But when we find a promise from God that He will do it for us, the duty becomes easier. This is the great difference between the law and the gospel: the law commands, but gives no strength; the gospel, however, never commands without also providing a promise that God will enable the soul to perform the duty.

Is this not rest for the soul? When the soul considers the extent of the duties the law requires—love for God with all our heart, soul, and might, circumcising our hearts, and keeping His commandments—it can be overwhelming. But when the soul can look to Christ and the covenant of grace, seeing that God has promised to enable it to do these very things, it finds rest.

To illustrate this point, consider the human body. Physicians observe that with every vein through which blood flows, there runs an artery alongside it. The artery carries the vital spirits that give life and energy to the body. Similarly, I compare the commandments of the law to veins—these are the duties required of you in life. But if you only have veins and no arteries—no life-giving spirits—then you will be sluggish and weak, even if your veins are full of blood. Just as the spirits in the arteries give life and energy to the veins, so the promises of the gospel give life to the duties required by the law.

Those under the law may know their duties, but without the promises of the gospel to accompany them, they lack the life and energy to perform them. Therefore, Christians, when you hear a duty from God's word that you are to perform, consider: here is the duty (the vein), but where is the promise (the artery) that enables me to perform it? Search the Word to find the promise that accompanies the duty and plead it before God. Say, "Lord, You require this duty, but You have also promised to enable me to do it." By doing this, you will find that your duties are no longer burdensome, and you will experience rest in Christ, even in those services that once seemed grievous and burdensome.

This lack of understanding is what makes the lives of many people disheartened and causes them to perform their duties sluggishly and without joy. But if you would embrace this principle—seeking out the promises of God that empower you to fulfill your duties—you would find that your duties would not weigh you down. Instead, you would say, "My soul has rest in Christ, even in the performance of those duties that were once heavy burdens."

**Objection:** But you will say, "We have many promises in the Gospel to enable us, but the promises are conditional, and I may forfeit the

promise by not performing the condition."

**Answer:** To that, I respond, we have in the Gospel both absolute promises as well as conditional ones. Some promises depend on no condition at all but only on believing. Consider, for example, the promise where the Lord says, "I will take away the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." What condition is attached to that? Does God say, "If you first repent and perform such and such duties that I require of you, then I will take away your heart of stone"? No, that is an absolute promise.

Likewise, the promise where God says, "I will put my fear into your heart, that you shall not depart from me"—this promise does not come with a condition either. You might ask, "Why, then, do some still have stony hearts, since the promise is absolute?" I answer that the promise is absolute in that it requires no prior condition. However, God still desires us to come to the promise, to embrace it, and to cast our souls upon it. He does not say, "If you first do such and such things, then I will fulfil this promise." No, the only requirement is that you cast your soul upon the promise and depend on it.

When your soul struggles with conditional promises, and your heart doubts, telling you that you have not met the condition of a certain promise, and therefore you cannot find comfort in that conditional promise, then turn to the absolute promises. Cast your soul upon them, and they will open the way to the conditional promises. Understand this: all conditional promises in the Gospel are founded upon absolute promises. When you cannot rest in a conditional promise, you may turn to the absolute ones. And when you rely on the absolute promises, you will find strength to meet the conditions of the conditional promises.

Herein lies the difference between the Law and the Gospel: the Law demands, but it does not give strength to fulfil its demands. The Gospel, however, not only requires but also gives the strength to fulfil what it commands.

**Sixthly**, there is rest for those who come to Christ in this: when they perform duties in Christ, they do not perform them in order to obtain life or pardon. They are not striving to earn life or forgiveness through their duties. Rather, they perform them as the fruit of the life they have already received and as the fruit of the pardon that has already been granted. This brings great rest and ease to the heart in the performance of duties.

There are many troubled souls whose consciences drive them to duty. But why do they perform these duties? Because their conscience accuses them of their sins, and they know their great need for God's mercy. They stand guilty before God and, therefore, perform duties to gain a pardon. They are aware that they were made for eternity, and so they make an effort to perform their duties in hopes of securing eternal life. This is the heavy burden of legal performances that I previously described. But when the soul comes to Christ, it finds rest in this: the very first thing done in Christ is the full discharge of all sins, the pardon is granted, and the person is placed in a state of eternal security. The peril of eternal life is now over.

Now, the duties required of the believer are merely the fruit of the pardon of sin and the assurance of the eternal life they have already received. There is a great difference between performing duties in order to earn pardon or eternal life and performing duties as the fruit of pardon and eternal security.

For example, consider a man standing before a judge, with his life in danger. He knows that if he reads well, he will live. But life hangs upon it, and the judge is strict. The pressure causes even a learned scholar, who can read well under normal circumstances, to fail at such a moment, unable to read a word. But suppose this man receives a pardon, and you then ask him to read. Now he can read with delight and freedom. If before he had to read a Psalm of mercy while in danger, he would do so with great difficulty. But after receiving his pardon, if he is given a Psalm of thankfulness for his life, he would read it with joy.

In the same way, those who perform duties in a legal manner stand before God as their judge, and every act feels like a life-or-death matter. The weight of their souls rests upon their ability to perform those duties. This fear and burden straiten their hearts. But when a soul comes to Christ, and the Lord has granted it pardon and peace through the blood of His Son, God says, "Now perform your duties—read, pray, and serve—not as a way to secure life, but as a way of blessing and praising me for the life I have already given you."

Indeed, this is the primary reason God requires anything of those who come to Christ: that they should offer their duties in thankfulness for the pardon of their sins and the acceptance they have received through His Son.

To illustrate further: consider a man among his enemies who is forced to work under the threat of death. He goes about his work with great dread and fear. But if this man comes home to his father's house, and his father asks him to do some work, knowing that his life is not at stake, he would do it with much greater freedom and ease. This is the condition of believers when they come to Christ. They

come into their Father's house, and though they are asked to work, their lives do not depend on it.

As you have heard before in the discussion on being freed from the Law, now apply this understanding to the matter of legal performances. The Lord, though He is strict in observing our actions, is not strict in seeking to take advantage of us. The Lord spared not His own Son, but He will spare you. In **Malachi 3:17**, it says, "The Lord will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." And in **Romans 8:32**, it says, "God did not spare His own Son." Why is this? God did not spare His Son so that He might spare you. This is why He spares you in the performance of your duties: because He did not spare Christ.

When Christ came to perform His duties, the life of the whole world depended on His actions. If Christ had failed in anything, the life of all humanity would have been lost. But even though such great responsibility lay upon Christ, the duties were not grievous to Him, for He was most able to perform them. You, therefore, must rely on Christ's performance in His obedience to give you rest and ease in your own performance of duties. You should think, "I come now to perform duties, and thanks be to God, my eternal estate does not rest on my efforts. But Christ took upon Himself the weight of the world's salvation, and His perfect obedience makes my obedience easy and comforting to me."

In the Law, we read that peace offerings could be made with a female animal, whereas normally a male was required. Peace offerings were offerings of thanksgiving. The entire life of a Christian is nothing less than a peace offering—an offering of thanksgiving for the mercy received through Christ. In such a peace offering, the Lord accepts the "female," meaning that even weaker offerings are accepted. And



this is the sixth way in which the soul finds rest in the performance of holy duties once it has come to Christ.

**Seventhly**, as the soul does not perform duties in order to gain life, it no longer operates in that manner. The performance of duties, when the soul has come to Christ, is itself a part of eternal life, and therefore, there is rest in it. It is so far from earning eternal life by performing duties that, in fact, these duties are more like eternal life itself than merely a path leading to it. For example, one might say, “Though I perform duties, God has taught me that, under the Gospel, we must not think to gain eternal life by them—this would be a form of popery. However, performing these duties is the way to eternal life, *via ad regnum*—the way to the kingdom, though not the cause of reigning.”

But I will show you something deeper. The ways of obedience and holiness in a Christian’s life are not merely the way to eternal life—they are rather part of eternal life itself. They have more excellence in them than simply being a means to life. It is true that great ease and rest come to the spirit when considering holy duties as simply the way to heaven. For instance, if a man were on a journey and knew that the end of the journey would be glorious, perhaps receiving a crown or a kingdom, he would not be troubled by a boisterous day, stormy weather, or difficult paths. He would count it a comfort to know he is in the right way because the destination will make amends for all the troubles along the way.

Indeed, there is enough rest and ease in knowing that the ways of God lead to life and salvation, to the kingdom and glory—especially considering that we were once wandering on the paths of death and destruction, and God, by His Almighty hand, has brought us into the right way. When a man is on a journey of great importance and has

lost his way, there is distraction and disquiet in his heart. But when he is brought back into the right way, how much ease and peace come to his spirit!

However, I tell you something even greater: when you are performing holy duties and exercising the grace of God, you are not just in the way of eternal life, you are in eternal life itself. You are not only on the path to the kingdom, but you are in the kingdom. You are not merely on the way to heaven; you are already experiencing heaven. This is eternal life: to know God, the true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent into the world.

In **1 John 3:15**, it says that whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. The implication, by contrast, is that one who loves his brother and is godly has eternal life abiding in him. The scriptures describe grace as the beginning of glory. Sanctification is glorification begun, and glorification is the perfecting of sanctification. This is why, in **Romans 8:30**, it says, "Whom God predestinated, He also called; and whom He called, He also justified; and whom He justified, He also glorified." Notice, sanctification is not explicitly mentioned. Why? Because sanctification is simply glorification begun, and glorification is the perfection of sanctification.

This is a vital truth for Christians: the best duties we perform are not just duties but are part of the life of heaven itself. In fact, they are the life of God within us. Ungodly men, before coming to Christ, are strangers to the life of God. But when you come to Christ, you receive the life of God within you, the life of heaven and the beginning of glory. When you perform holy duties, you are experiencing eternal life.

Therefore, you must not view any duty you perform merely as an obligation; rather, see it as a privilege—indeed, as part of your reward. It is a certain truth that God’s work is its own reward. If you could grasp this principle, it would transform your Christian life. If you could view every duty you perform for God as wages, you would approach those duties with great sweetness and joy. As **Romans 6:22-23** says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Holiness, then, is the gift of God, the beginning of eternal life in this world.

A Christian who understands evangelical obedience sees duties not as burdens but as mercies. When we turn God’s mercies into duties, it is a sign that we are receiving His mercies from a covenant of grace. Similarly, when we see our duties as mercies, it is a sign of evangelical obedience, and it brings a constancy in the heart in performing them.

Those who perform duties in an evangelical way see them as a golden chain around their neck, an ornament, not as bonds and fetters. The difference between someone who performs duties legally and someone who does so evangelically is this: the legal performer views duties as a chain of bondage around his neck, while the evangelical performer views them as a chain of gold, a graceful ornament to wear with pride. As **Proverbs 3:22** says, "Keep sound wisdom and discretion, and they shall be life to your soul, and grace to your neck." The ways of wisdom—godliness—are life to the godly and grace to their necks.

Even the most seemingly severe laws of God are, for the saints, an inheritance and a joy. In **Deuteronomy 33:2**, the law is described as a "fiery law," but in verse 4, Moses says, "Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob." This shows

that even the most rigorous commandments of God are viewed by the saints as their riches and their happiness. They do not view God's commandments as burdens but as the joy of their hearts. David said that God's commandments were sweeter to him than honey and more precious than gold. He did not say that heaven's glory was better than all these but rather that the ways of wisdom—the commandments of God—were better.

This is the life of a Christian: to perform duties not merely as the way to heaven but as the experience of heaven itself. This is the seventh aspect of the soul's rest in Christ in the performance of holy duties.

**Eighthly**, when a Christian is brought to Christ, Christ gives him rest in the performance of holy duties because Christ elevates and strengthens his spirit, making it in some measure proportionate to what God requires. There is an elevation of spirit, a strengthening of the soul in Christ, so that it becomes more aligned with the demands of God's law.

It is true that if a weak or sick man is tasked with difficult work, the burden will be extremely tiresome. For a sick man to carry a heavy load or undertake strenuous labour is indeed very irksome. However, when that man becomes healthy and strong, with his veins full of blood and his arteries full of life, he is able to go about his work with ease, finding it no burden at all, because he now has the strength to bear it. Similarly, the commandments of God are hard for those who attempt to fulfil them by natural means, from the strength of natural conscience alone. Despite all the effort that natural conscience can muster, the commandments remain burdensome.

But when the Spirit of Christ enters a person, there is strength. As it is written, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (**2 Corinthians 3:17**), and similarly, where the Spirit of Christ is, there

is strength. As the Holy Spirit declares in **Isaiah 11:2**, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." This Spirit of counsel and might rests upon Christ, and in a measure, it rests upon every member of Christ's body. The Spirit gives life, might, and counsel to all believers.

Thus, the Apostle Paul says in **2 Timothy 1:7**, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind." This spirit of power is given to all who come to Christ. They possess the power of godliness. As stated in **Colossians 1:11**, they are "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power." The Apostle Paul prays for this, indicating that such strength is available to us in Christ—a strength that allows us to be "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." This strength comes from God the Father, who has made us "fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Although believers may feel weak in themselves, they are united with one who is infinitely strong, through whom they can be strengthened with all might. Not only do they receive strength according to God's power, but according to His *glorious* power. This power enables them to endure all trials with patience and longsuffering, and not merely with resignation, but with joyfulness. The duties of patience and longsuffering are among the hardest duties, but in Christ, there is the glorious power of God made available to strengthen believers for these very tasks.

## Chapter 33

Two other ways whereby the former point is clarified, with some consequences from the same and the use of the whole. The first way is that while the soul is performing duty, its strength is continually renewed. Secondly, the soul has the love of God shed abroad into the heart. The first consequence is the happiness of a Christian here. Secondly, hence comes the perseverance of believers. The use of all is to exercise much faith in Christ.

**Ninthly**, the rest that the soul has in Christ—that is, to continue in duties with freedom of spirit, without making them burdensome—is this: when the soul comes to Christ, it not only receives strength to do the duty, but while it is performing the duty, its strength is renewed. The soul receives sweetness, goodness, and strength from Christ while it is engaged in the performance of duty, making the duty easy, sweet, and comfortable.

To illustrate: if a man is doing difficult work, such as trying to cut through a knotty piece of timber, and he makes no progress, expending his strength but achieving nothing, he quickly becomes weary. But if a man is engaged in work where, the more strength he uses, the more he gains—where his strength is enlarged and renewed as he works—he will find the task easy. If, while he is working, he experiences sweetness and reward, he can work joyfully. This man labours with ease because he gains more strength than he expends, and he does not only work for future wages but experiences sweetness even in the act of working.

This is how it is with evangelical obedience. When a soul performs duties in this manner, its strength is renewed daily. The more service you do for Christ, the more strength you receive. Just as a man who

is cold and numb finds that his strength returns as he works and warms up, so it is with a Christian. When beginning a duty, they may feel dull and sluggish, but as they persist, strength from Christ comes in. Many can testify to this: you have begun a duty feeling unfit or dull, but as you proceeded, Christ gave you the strength to carry on. This should encourage you not to neglect duties just because you feel unfit for them. Strength comes in the act of doing, not before. So get up and do the duty, and you will find the strength you need. In fact, the more you do, the more strength will come.

This explains why a godly person, though they may feel weary in the performance of duty, never grows weary of duty itself. There is a significant difference between the godly and the carnal in this respect. A godly person, though tired during the duty, is never tired of the duty. In contrast, those who perform duties merely out of a sense of natural conscience quickly become weary of the task. Some tools, for example, wear out with use, while others become better the more they are used. So it is with those who perform duties only from natural conscience—they wear out and eventually give up. But one who performs duties in an evangelical way finds that the more they do, the more they are able to do.

Therefore, Christians, let this be an encouragement to you: the more you do, the more you will be enabled to do. The one who used his five talents well was given even more, while the one who sat idle lost what he had. As strength comes in, you will also experience great sweetness in your heart. As David said, "In keeping your commandments there is great reward" (**Psalm 19:11**). The reward is not just for keeping them, but in the very act of keeping them.

Imagine if a person were paid for every hour they worked—this would encourage them greatly. But if they had to wait for their wages

until the work was complete, it would feel more burdensome. Work that brings immediate sweetness and reward is easy work. This is what is expressed in **Hosea 10:11**: "Ephraim is like a trained heifer that loves to thresh, but I passed over her fair neck; I will make Ephraim to ride, Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods." At first glance, the text seems difficult, but it speaks to this very point. Ephraim, like a heifer, loves easy work—treading out the corn, where the ox is not muzzled and can eat as it works. But God says, "I will make Ephraim to plow"—meaning, Ephraim prefers easy work, where there is immediate reward. But the Gospel does not require difficult work without reward. It is more like the work of treading out the corn, where the labourer can feed while working. In the Gospel, while you are engaged in God's work, you also receive nourishment from it. There is a constant sweetness that comes to the faithful while doing the Lord's work.

Therefore, continue in the work of the Lord, and you will find rest and sweetness in your soul as you labour.

And that is the reason scholars can study for long hours, which would be tedious for others. I challenge those employed in other tasks, who think the work of a scholar is so easy, to get up in the morning, shut yourselves in a room, and spend two or three hours reading, meditating, and writing. Then, do it again for half a day or an entire day, and see if it is not more tedious and exhausting to the flesh than any other work. For scholars, though it is physically tiring, they can continue because they find sweetness in their work. It is not like other work, where men labour solely for wages afterwards. Scholars, while engaged in their studies, have truths and heavenly notions flowing into their minds, making the work easy and delightful. This is the happiness of a Christian: while engaged in holy duties, the "sun of righteousness" shines upon them, and sweetness



fills their hearts. This is where rest and ease in the performance of duties can be found.

**Tenthly and lastly**, when the soul comes to Christ, it finds abundant rest in holy duties because the love of God is shed abroad in its heart. This makes everything delightful. You know how Jacob, because he loved Rachel, endured frosty nights without complaint, considering them nothing because of his love for her. In the same way, when the love of God fills a Christian's heart, everything they do becomes delightful, making all tasks easier. Love never complains about difficulty. If you hear someone grumbling about the difficulty of holy duties, it's a sign they lack the love of God in their heart.

Now you have heard these ten points, which reveal how ease and rest of spirit in the performance of holy duties are found. There is more to be said at the end of this chapter, especially when Christ says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light," which we will discuss if God grants the opportunity.

## **Application**

**I.** From all this, we see the happiness of a Christian. Many think a Christian's happiness lies solely in the future, in heaven, but the truth is, the way to happiness is heaven itself here on earth. Oh, how good is the way of the Gospel, which gives rest as we journey toward heaven. No amount of malice from the world or the devil can disturb the peace and rest of a Christian.

**II.** This also explains why true believers persevere. You've heard the doctrine of perseverance discussed, and perhaps wondered, "Is it certain that a soul with true grace will persevere?" Yes, it is certain. Once someone has truly come to Christ, they will not turn away,

because there is so much rest and joy in holy duties. Those who are drawn to holy duties by force or obligation will not endure. As it is said, “The son abides in the house, but the servant does not remain forever.” Those who perform duties in a legalistic way will fall away, but one who is in Christ, with a heart like a son, will continue. Just as in philosophy, no violent motion is perpetual, so too those performing duties under compulsion will likely become apostates in the end. However, those who perform duties in an evangelical way will persevere to the end.

**III.** The main takeaway is this: stir up your heart, Christian, to understand the Gospel more deeply, and exercise faith in Christ so you can experience comfort in your duties. Do not be satisfied just because you are doing your duty. Rather, say to yourself, “I have heard of a way in which Christians find great rest and ease in the performance of duty—why should I not find that way too?” Don’t rest until you understand it. Then your duties will be more sound, spiritual, supernatural, and acceptable. The Lord loves a cheerful giver, and likewise, He loves a cheerful server. Just as you love to hear your servants sing while they work, if you set a task for your child or servant and they do it grudgingly, complaining that you are a hard master, their work is unsatisfactory. So too, those who perform duties in a legalistic way do little, and that little is not acceptable to God. But when a soul finds rest in duty, the work becomes more spiritual, abundant, and acceptable to the Lord. Such duties are indeed very pleasing to Him.

## **Chapter 34**

## Rest from the Remainder of Corruption: Sanctification as a Great Rest, Explained in Six Particulars

1. **It is the right temper of the heart**
2. **In it, the soul, in great part, attains its end**
3. **In it, the soul lives the life of God**
4. **It raises the soul above the region of all troubles**
5. **It turns everything to good**
6. **It is the beginning of glory**

You may remember when we discussed the burden that is upon sinners, we showed that the remainder of corruption was a great burden. It was such a heavy load that it made the Apostle cry out, "*Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?*" We have already explained how this was a load.

Now we turn to show what rest is to be had in Christ, against this fourth burden. Christ says, "*Come to me, all you who are sensible of the corruption of your heart, and find the remainder of sin within to be a burden, come to me, and I will give you rest.*" We are not now speaking of the rest that comes with deliverance from the trouble of the soul caused by the guilt of sin—that has already been addressed. Now, we focus on the rest given by Christ through sanctification, where He gives power against the remaining corruption in the heart.

This rest is the rest of **Sanctification**. Christ says, "*I will give you rest.*" In this matter, there are many useful and sweet truths that could be discussed at length, but I will try to summarise them within a few points about this rest of sanctification.

There are five main things to be considered here, so that you may follow the flow of thought and walk through this with me:

1. **Sanctification is a great rest to the soul**, or deliverance from corruption is a great rest to the heart of a believer. There is much rest to be found in sanctification.
2. **This rest is in Christ**. All our sanctification and help against corruption comes through Christ.
3. **How Christ becomes this rest to the soul**. We will explore how Christ, specifically, brings about this rest in our sanctification.
4. **Consequences that follow from this**—the results of understanding Christ as the source of rest in sanctification.
5. **An exhortation to come to Christ for this rest**. Lastly, we will conclude by urging you to come to Christ to find this rest.

## **Sanctification: The Rest from Corruption**

### **I. Sanctification as Great Rest for the Soul of a Believer**

The truth is, there is nothing that troubles the heart of a strong believer except the lack of sanctification. It is the only thing that burdens him. For a weak believer, the trouble comes from the lack of assurance of the pardon of sin. He still struggles with the guilt of sin, but a strong believer overcomes that. A weak believer is troubled by the Law because, due to his weak faith, he is unable to fully grasp the covenant of grace that God has brought him into. As a result, he cannot free himself from the troubles of the Law. A strong believer, however, rises above this burden.

A weak believer performs his duties but often with a sense of legality, which makes them burdensome to him. But a strong believer is free

from this weight. However, none in this world—neither weak nor strong believers—completely overcomes the remaining corruption of the heart. In truth, a strong believer has more power over it than a weak believer, but the chief burden of the strongest believers is still the corruption that remains within them. The Apostle Paul, though a strong believer, exclaimed, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" As we have previously discussed, sanctification is a special rest that believers experience—a true rest for the soul.

### **1. Sanctification as the Right Temper of the Heart**

Sanctification brings rest to the soul because it establishes the right temper of the heart. Just as corruption was a burden because it was a "distemper" of the heart, like sickness in the body, sanctification restores the soul to its proper state, offering relief and peace. When your body is sick, you are a burden to yourself. You toss and turn, change beds and postures, seeking relief because you are uncomfortable. But when health returns, so does rest. You sleep peacefully, and your pain is gone. Likewise, sanctification is the health of the soul. When the soul becomes holy, it becomes healthy, and holiness is the proper condition of the heart, bringing true rest.

### **2. Sanctification as the Soul's Attainment of Its End**

Sanctification also brings rest because, through it, the soul in great part attains its end. What is it that the soul desires most if not to reach its intended purpose? Every creature finds rest when it reaches its end. The end is the "proper place" of rest. By sanctification, the soul partially achieves its intended purpose.

- **Firstly**, the soul reaches the end that God intended when He created it. By becoming holy, the soul fulfils the purpose for

which it was born. You were born to be holy, to live in this world for God. Sanctification allows you to fulfil that purpose, the very reason you came into the world.

- **Secondly**, sanctification fulfils the purpose of all of God's providential actions toward you. Every way in which God works in your life—His guidance, His blessings, His discipline—all aim toward making you godly, that you may live to His glory.
- **Thirdly**, it accomplishes the great purpose of Christ's coming into the world. Christ came to purchase a peculiar people, zealous for good works, and to sanctify them unto Himself.
- **Fourthly**, sanctification is the goal of all God's ordinances. Why do you have the privilege of access to the Word, sacraments, and prayer, except that through them God sanctifies your heart?
- **Fifthly**, it is the goal of your desires, if you are truly God's. What does a gracious heart long for more than to be holy before God and freed from the "body of death"?
- **Sixthly**, it is the aim of all your labour. If you are godly, what do you strive for more than to grow in godliness and sanctification?

Thus, that which is the ultimate purpose of your existence, the aim of all God's ways toward you, the goal of His ordinances, the object of your desires, and the focus of your labour must surely be rest. By achieving sanctification, you attain true rest.

## **Sanctification as Rest from Corruption**

### **3. Sanctification as Rest: Living the Life of God**

Sanctification brings rest to the soul because it allows the soul to live not only for God but also in God. Thus, it must experience rest, as it lives in God. In **1 John 2:24**, we find this expression: *"Let that therefore abide in you, which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father."* When the truths of the Gospel work holiness into the heart and abide there, the soul abides in the Son and in the Father. It lives in God, and therefore must experience rest where it lives—in God. Though the saints live in the world, they simultaneously live in God, even here on earth.

#### **4. Sanctification as Rest: Elevating the Soul Above Trouble**

Sanctification brings rest to the heart because it raises the soul above the region of trouble and disturbance. As philosophers tell us, in the lower regions, there are storms, tempests, and constant changes. But in the higher regions, far above the storms, there is nothing but peace and calm. Similarly, as long as a man or woman's heart is grovelling in the world, their spirit is filled with trouble, vexation, and unrest. As Scripture says, *"There is no peace for the wicked,"* for they are like the troubled sea, casting forth mire and dirt. However, when God gives grace and sanctifies the heart, He lifts it above these lower regions of trouble and raises it to a place of peace and rest, where calm reigns in the soul.

#### **5. Sanctification as Rest: Turning All Things to Good**

Sanctification brings rest to the soul because it is a principle that turns everything to good. This must bring peace. When God sanctifies the heart and works grace in the soul, this grace has the power to transform all things into good. If we imagined a precious stone that could turn everything it touched into gold, we would marvel at its value. Grace in the heart is even more precious, as it

turns all experiences into good. Whatever befalls a person—whether afflictions or difficulties—grace can transform it for their benefit.

Even those things that others might fret over or think themselves undone by, a heart filled with grace can turn to advantage. A person with such grace can act on it, transforming every affliction or cross into good. When one possesses such a divine principle, they need not be troubled by anything in this world. Indeed, things may fall just as harshly upon them as on others, but their grace enables them to turn these difficulties into good. We will explore this more when we address the burden of outward afflictions, but for now, it suffices to show how sanctification, by turning all things to good, brings rest.

## **6. Sanctification as Rest: The Beginning of Glory**

Sanctification is rest for the soul because it is the beginning of glory, the foretaste of heaven. In heaven, there is nothing but peace and rest. Sanctification is, in essence, glorification begun, and therefore it brings rest to the soul.

This is the first particular meaning of Christ's promise, "*I will give you rest.*" By coming to Christ, we receive power over our corruptions, grace, and holiness, which is true rest for our souls.



# Chapter 35

## Sanctification is Only in Christ

### Sanctification is in Christ Alone

Secondly, sanctification is found in Christ; all the sanctification of a Christian is in Christ. There are some common gifts that God gives to others—gifts of nature and gifts of common grace, which go beyond mere natural abilities. These are gifts of the Spirit that are given in a general way to those who are strangers to Christ. The heathen possessed many common gifts, and others may have many such gifts today. However, sanctification—the true holiness that is the image of God and the beginning of glory—is the exclusive gift of Christ. It can only be obtained through Him. No amount of natural ability, education, morality, or personal effort can raise the heart to even the smallest degree of true, saving sanctification.

Scripture occasionally refers to a broader sense of sanctification, meaning that some people are set apart for particular purposes. But the sanctification that constitutes true holiness, the image of God in the soul, and the commencement of glory is only found in Christ. Natural strength or talents cannot produce it.

I will offer several scriptures to prove that sanctification is only in Christ, and this truth will become clearer when we address the third point: how sanctification comes from Christ. A key text is **1 Corinthians 1:30**, which states, *“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”* Christ is made to us by God: wisdom, to enlighten our blindness; righteousness, for our

justification; and sanctification, to deliver us from the power of sin and renew the image of God in us. Redemption refers to our complete deliverance from all forms of evil and the ultimate liberty of the sons of God.

In this passage, Christ is not only our sanctification in the sense that He has earned it for us, but He is also the source of our sanctification, actively working it in us and sustaining it. The beginning and progress of our sanctification come from Him, just as He earned it for us through His life and death.

It is important to understand that Christ laid down His life not only to earn our justification and save us from hell but also to secure our sanctification. A special purpose of His sacrifice was to set us free from the bondage of sin, to deliver us from corruption, and to renew God's image within us. Recognising this should lead us to value holiness more than we often do. We must not view holiness merely as a duty or as a necessary means to heaven; rather, we must see it as a precious gift, purchased by Christ's blood.

Therefore, it is impossible for anyone to be truly holy unless they have a part in Christ. Christ is made to us sanctification not only by His merit but also by the power He imparts to us, working holiness in our hearts. We do not receive sanctification directly from God the Father; rather, we receive it through Christ. Those who are sanctified today do not obtain their holiness as Adam did, directly from God as Creator. Instead, their holiness comes from Christ, the second person of the Trinity, who is made to us sanctification.

Further proof of this is found in **Romans 7:24-25**, where the Apostle Paul cries out, "*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?*" referring to the remaining corruption in his heart. The very next words are, "*I thank God*

*through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* Paul acknowledges that his deliverance from the body of death comes from God—but not directly. It comes through Jesus Christ our Lord. While all grace ultimately flows from God, it comes to us through Christ, just as our forgiveness and holiness come through Him.

Another passage that confirms this truth is **Acts 26:18**, where Christ tells Paul that his mission is *“to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”* The sanctification that comes through faith is in Christ. Many scriptures testify to this, but these should suffice to demonstrate that sanctification is found only in Christ.

## Chapter 36

Showeth how our sanctification cometh from Christ in six particulars.

1. It was the end of his coming: to destroy the works of the Devil.
2. He is the great Ordinance appointed by God to sanctify his people.
3. His death is appointed to mortify sin.
4. By him the curse upon the heart is taken away.
5. By his union with believers, being the head of the second Covenant.
6. In Christ are the strongest arguments for holiness that can be.

Thirdly, and especially, we are to inquire how Christ is the rest of sanctification. "Come to me and I will give you rest;" I will give you power against your corruptions, and you shall have sanctification in and by me. For that:

1. We are to know that a special end of why Jesus Christ came into the world was to dissolve the works of the Devil. That was a special end of Christ's coming into the world. In 1 John 3:8, *He that committeth sin is of the Devil, for the Devil sinneth from the beginning; for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.* Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, etc. It is a strange scripture: *whosoever committeth sin is of the Devil.* You say you defy the Devil, but the Holy Ghost saith if you commit sin, that is, walk in any way of sin. For you will say, "Who is there that commits not sin?" Well, but the words are thus: *He that committeth sin is of the Devil.* Therefore it is apparent there is a kind of commission of sin that is an argument they are of the Devil, for they are the words of the Holy Ghost. And for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil. It was the end of why he came into the world. Yes, it is a special thing that Christ is anointed to by God the Father, to deliver souls from the bondage of their corruption and to work holiness in them.

You have that in Isaiah 61 at the beginning, that notable prophecy concerning Christ: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me (that is upon Christ, for it is a prophecy of him), because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to spiritual captives that are under spiritual bondage.* And then in verse 3: *That*

*they might be called Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord.* So, that is the first consideration of Christ's giving the rest of sanctification, that it is the end for which Christ was born, and it is the end for which he was anointed by God the Father, to sanctify the hearts of those that he shall redeem. So that Christ is our sanctification by attaining the end of his own coming into the world, by fulfilling that which God the Father hath anointed him for.

## **Secondly, Christ is our Sanctification**

Christ is our sanctification, as the great ordinance that God has set up for the sanctifying of the hearts of His people. I say, Christ is set up as the great ordinance appointed by God for this end; the Lord has established Him and filled Him full of holiness so that holiness might be conveyed through Him to the souls that belong to Him. Therefore, it is said in that well-known passage in John 1:16, *Of his fullness we receive, grace for grace.* From His fullness, Jesus Christ is filled with holiness, like a cistern filled with precious liquid. Grace must come through Him to the souls of all those who are godly, who are believers.

Faith draws grace from Him—grace for grace—that is, grace corresponding to grace, as a seal makes an impression upon wax, and the impression in the wax matches that of the seal. Just as the seal leaves its print on the wax, so the grace that is in Christ is reflected, to some measure, in the saints. *Of his fullness we receive*—all the believers who have ever lived have received all the grace they have from Him, out of His fullness, and from Him as the great ordinance that God has set up for dispensing the graces of His Spirit, for working sanctification in all those who shall be saved.

Yes, Christ is such an ordinance appointed by God the Father for holiness and sanctification, that indeed there is so much virtue in Him that simply looking upon Christ has the power to sanctify the heart. The very act of looking upon Him has this effect. As you know, the brazen serpent in the wilderness was the great ordinance of God appointed for healing those who were bitten by serpents. Being the ordinance for their healing, those who merely looked up to the brazen serpent received virtue immediately and were healed of their sting, of the deadly disease inflicted upon them by the serpents' bites. Now, this was by virtue of that ordinance.

Therefore, I reason thus: if, when God makes a mere piece of brass an ordinance, there is such virtue in it that simply looking upon it has the power to heal the body, then surely, when God makes His own Son, Jesus Christ—God blessed forever, God and man—an ordinance to heal the souls of His people, those who look up to Him by the eye of faith will receive healing for their souls, just as they received healing by looking upon the brazen serpent. The very beholding of Christ has the power to sanctify the heart.

Therefore, if you desire holiness, you must often look upon Christ. Set Christ before your eyes; do not only pore over your corruptions and look down into the darkness that exists in your spirits. Many Christians labour under the burden of their corruptions for a long time. Why? Because they spend their time and energy merely poring over their corruptions and fixating on them. But oh, Christian, you must look up! Set your eyes upon Christ, the great ordinance, and behold Him as the great ordinance set up by God the Father for the conveyance of grace to the souls of believers and for the healing of all their souls and wounds. Then healing virtue will come from Him.

We read of the poor woman with the issue of blood, who had spent all she had on physicians. She simply came to Christ and touched the hem of His garment, and then she was healed. Surely Christ has a great deal of virtue in Him if merely touching Him could heal her. Therefore, He said, *Who hath touched me?* Virtue went from Him at the very touch of the hem of His garment. Christ is the great ordinance, full of virtue and excellence, and the looking upon Him and the touching of Him brings virtue to the soul, to heal it of its corruption.

### **Thirdly, More Particularly**

Christ brings sanctification to the heart because the death of Christ is appointed by God to have an effectual power to mortify sin and corruption. It is through the application of the death of Christ, filled with virtue and ordained by God for that very purpose, that it has power over the heart to mortify the corruption within. A man may resolve against his sin, vow and covenant to overcome it, strive and struggle, pray, and even fast, using all the means he can think of, and yet find that his sin is not dead within him. Perhaps the means he uses may restrain the sin, keeping it at bay, but they will never mortify it.

It is the application of the death of Christ, which is ordained by God, for Christ Himself is appointed as the great ordinance. More specifically, the way appointed by God for the mortification of corruption is the application of the death of Christ to the soul. The virtue comes from Christ as the dying Christ, the crucified Christ, the dead Christ, to mortify the corruption in the heart. This is clearly taught in Romans 6, at the beginning: *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall*

*we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? (Rom. 6:1-2). Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (Rom. 6:3). Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death (Rom. 6:4). And in verse 5, For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Again in verse 6: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

Our old man is crucified with Him. In His crucifixion, there is virtue in Christ's death to crucify the corruption, *that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.* He does not say that we might have some power against sin, or that a particular sin might be kept down, but that *the body of sin might be destroyed.* The application of the death of Christ does not just deal with one specific sin; it strikes at the entire body of sin. All those principles of sin in the soul, interconnected like the members of a body, come to be destroyed. Though not entirely cast out, nor fully eradicated, their ruling power is taken away. As soon as the soul comes to Christ, the body of sin receives a deadly blow.

Many of you strive against particular sins, sometimes one, sometimes another. God's children may feel more inclined toward certain sins at different times—one may labour under the burden of anger, another unbelief, another pride, another lust. You may find at certain times one corruption stirs, and you strive against that; at another time, another sin arises, and you spend your energy against that. But here is the way to strike at the whole body of corruption at once.

If a man wants to cut down a tree, and he stands chopping at each twig or branch, the tree may stand for a long time. But if he goes to



the root and strikes there, a few blows will bring the tree down. This is the wisdom of a Christian: when he comes to fight against sin, he does not merely focus on this or that particular corruption but strikes at the root—the whole body of corruption. How does he gain strength to do this? By applying the blood of Christ, the death of Christ, by faith. Through this, the body of death comes to be destroyed.

This explains why some Christians, in a short time, gain much strength against their corruptions, while others take a long time to gain any power at all. Those who are unfamiliar with the way of Christ may find a notorious sinner, a wicked person—a swearer, a Sabbath-breaker—experiencing a mighty change in a short time when God brings him to the Word and reveals Christ to his soul. In just a week, there is a great transformation. This man not only leaves behind his drunkenness, lying, swearing, and Sabbath-breaking, but all his sins seem to fall away at once. Why? Because, in one application of the death of Christ, the whole body of sin begins to be destroyed, though not entirely dead and withered. Like a tree that may be dead but still has green leaves, so the sin may not appear completely dead, but it has received a fatal blow. Therefore, the way to kill sin is to continually apply the death of Christ.

Indeed, this should be the focus of a Christian—not merely to avoid sinful actions, but to ensure that the death of Christ is applied to his soul. This is why you will never read about the mortification of corruption in any heathen writings. Mortification of sin is a mystery to all heathen writers. Mortifying sin and the heart is an expression unique to the Gospel and to believers.

Many people, through good upbringing, are restrained, and they appear decent in their conduct. Others, as they mature and move past the folly of youth, avoid some of their former sins. But what is

this compared to the mortification of the body of death within their hearts? This is unique to a Christian and comes only through the application of the death of Christ—the application of Christ dying, crucified, shedding His blood for sin. This has the virtue to mortify sin.

There is a great difference between a mortified lust and a restrained lust, a mortified sin and a restrained sin. The difference lies in this: when a lust is mortified, there is not only a ceasing from its act, but the heart and the sin are no longer aligned. There may still be restraint in some, but the heart still desires the sin, even if they dare not commit it. When sin is mortified, however, the heart is so changed that it no longer finds the sin attractive. This mortification of the body of sin comes only through the death of Christ.

## **Fourthly, Christ is our Sanctification**

Christ is our sanctification, and He alone, because it is by Him that the spiritual curse upon every man's heart by nature is taken away. It is Christ alone who delivers the soul from the spiritual curse that rests naturally upon every man's heart. You know that this is the natural condition of man—he is under the curse of the Law: *Cursed is the man who does not abide by all things written in the Law to do them.*

We often understand this curse as either outward misery or the eternal punishment of hellfire. However, we must understand that one branch of this curse is already upon the souls of men here in this life. There is a spiritual curse upon the souls of men due to the fall of Adam, and this curse consists of God giving them over to themselves—to the lusts of their own hearts and to their own counsel and ways.

Now, I confess that just as outward afflictions in this world vary in degree from one person to another, so too does this spiritual death. It is executed to a greater degree on some and to a lesser degree on others, but all are naturally under it. Every soul, in some degree or other, is given over to the lusts of its own heart. Sometimes, there is a final and complete giving up of the soul to its lusts, but there is always some measure of this curse present in every individual. This explains, to some extent, the prevailing corruption in men's hearts.

It is remarkable to see how, despite the convictions of conscience—despite being warned of the dangers of their ways, being told that there will be no peace in the end, that they will regret it—people still continue in sin. Their consciences may trouble them, and yet they persist. Despite the terror of the Law, the heavy hand of God upon them, their cries against their sins, and their promises to forsake them, they find themselves unable to overcome their sins. Even when their sins destroy their health, deplete their estates, ruin their reputations, and cause them to lose all their friends, they are still powerless to stop. As Scripture says of some, *they have eyes full of adultery, they cannot cease to sin.*

Sometimes people even offer this as an excuse for their sin, claiming that they would like to stop but cannot, and they think this excuses them. But no, this inability may well stem from the spiritual curse upon their souls—because God, in His just judgment, has given their hearts over to the lusts they pursue.

This, I believe, is part of the meaning of 1 Corinthians 15:56, *The strength of sin is the Law.* The primary meaning of the verse is that all the power sin has to condemn, to kill, and to bring death, comes from the Law. But there is also this secondary meaning: the Law of God gives a certain strength to sin. You may ask, *How does the Law*

*give strength to sin?* It is like this: the justice of God, according to His Law, requires that those who forsake God be forsaken by Him. It requires that those who give their hearts over to any way of sin be given up to that sin. In this sense, the strength of sin is the Law—the Law gives sin more power over the person.

How, then, can the soul be delivered from the strength of sin? The Law must be satisfied; the power of the Law must be taken away. And no one can take that power away but Christ. Christ takes away the strength of the Law, though the Law was not executed upon Him in the same way it would be upon a sinner. The Scripture says He was *made sin* for us—He took our sin upon Himself, as closely as was possible, though He was not capable of having the full execution of the Law upon Him. The text says He was *made sin* for us, and this is a great part of the meaning of that passage, though acknowledging and suffering for sin is the primary meaning.

## **Fifthly, Christ is our Sanctification**

Christ is our sanctification by being the head of the second Covenant, and through our mystical union with Him, the virtue of holiness is conveyed from Him. As the head of the second Covenant, and we as members of His body, we draw this virtue of holiness from Him. Just as sin was conveyed to us through Adam by propagation, so grace is conveyed to us through Christ. Romans 5 explains how *by one man, sin came into the world*. Adam was the head of the first Covenant, and through this headship, all humanity is regarded as members of the first Adam. We are not only seen as Adam's children but also as members of his body. Thus, Scripture speaks of two men: the first Adam and the second Adam.

Just as sin is conveyed to us by being members of the first Adam, grace is conveyed to our souls by being members of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, who is the head of the second Covenant. This is how holiness is transmitted—through our union with Christ. As the natural union of the members of a body with the head provides life to the body, so through our mystical union with Christ, our head, holiness and grace are conveyed to strengthen us against our corruptions.

Just as the oil of anointing ran down from Aaron's head to the rest of his body, so Christ, the anointed one, who is filled not only with the oil of gladness but also with holiness, causes that holiness to flow down to all His members through their union with Him. For this reason, Romans 8:2 says, *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* This passage is rich with meaning. The *law of sin and death* refers to the power of sin and the death that results from sin, which reigns in the hearts of unbelievers. Sin has power, and so does death, and they act as a law that compels people, much as a legal command forces compliance. This is no excuse for sin, but it is true that, as far as sin compels people, it also leads to death.

How, then, is the law of sin and death overcome? Look at the words: *The law of the Spirit of life in Christ has made me free from the law of sin and death.* The *law of the Spirit of life* refers to the holiness in Christ, which also operates like a law—just as corruption has strength, so does the holiness of Christ. When grace enters the heart, it compels the heart toward holiness with a kind of necessity. As the apostle says, *We can do nothing against the truth.* Yet this necessity is accompanied by a willing spirit, as there is a law of love and kindness at work. The term *law* here indicates a powerful force that drives the soul toward holiness.

Further, it is *the law of the Spirit of life*. The holiness of Christ is not only life itself but also the *spirit* of life. The *spirit* of life represents a higher degree than mere life—it is the essence that quickens and gives vitality beyond the mere existence of a thing. Just as the essence of an herb, when extracted, has far more potency than the whole herb, so the *spirit* of life expresses the dynamic power of the holiness that comes from Christ. It is life; it is the spirit of life; it is the law of the Spirit of life.

Oh, my brethren, see here that godliness is no dull or burdensome thing. It is not a weak, contemptible thing, but rather it is life itself—the life of Christ, the spirit of life, and the law of the Spirit of life. He speaks of grace in this manner.

In sin, there is the law of sin and death, but in grace, there is life, the spirit of life, and the law of the Spirit of life, and all this is in Jesus Christ. It is not found in our resolutions, purposes, or efforts, but in our union with Jesus Christ. This union is what brings grace to the heart. Though there may have been much corruption before, once the soul is united to Christ and looks to Him as the head of the second Covenant, it draws from Him a mighty strength to help against corruption and to quicken it in the ways of God. Thus, the soul finds rest in sanctification through Christ.

Carnal hearts do not understand how to receive grace. They hear talk of grace and the leaving of sin, but they do not know how to obtain it. They may pray, read, and listen, but they must know that grace comes by a different means than they think. It must come from God, but it comes through Christ in a mystical way. Perhaps some of you understand that, as God is the fountain of all grace, it is conveyed through Christ, as if through a cistern. But you must also understand that you must receive it from God through Christ as the head, and

you as His members. This happens through a mystical union in which your souls are united to Christ. You must be made one with Christ, for just as a member of a body cannot receive life from the head unless it is united to the body, so too must you be united to Christ to receive His life. It is not enough to be externally attached to Christ.

Consider an arm of flesh: if it is merely tied to a man's shoulder, it will never receive life that way. The union must be natural, not artificial. Similarly, those who merely profess the name of Christian, without being spiritually united to Christ, are like artificial limbs. They may be fastened to the body and may have some usefulness, but they do not receive life from the head. In the same way, common Christians may have some knowledge of Christ and may make use of Him, profess Him, and speak of Him, but they do not receive true life or holiness from Him. They lack the true holiness that comes from the law of the Spirit of life in Christ.

## **Sixthly, Christ and the Arguments for Holiness**

Another aspect of Christ's role in sanctification is that in Him are found the greatest arguments for holiness that can be imagined. Christ provides rest in sanctification in this way: when the soul comes to Christ and knows Him rightly, it finds in Him all that is needed to combat sin and promote holiness. Even if the soul had nothing else, it would find enough in Christ to help against sin and further holiness. What is discovered in Christ has immense power to help the soul fight sin and walk in holiness.

To illustrate this, consider the powerful arguments that Christ offers against sin and for holiness...

## Chapter 37

Containing Two Strong Arguments in Christ for Holiness: First, in Him the Soul Sees the Greatest Breach Between It and God Due to Sin. Second, in Him It Sees the Greatest Hatred of Sin in God.

First, in Christ, the soul sees the greatest breach that can be imagined between God and the creature because of sin. It is true that when we preach the Law and tell you of the curse of the Law that sin brings, this gives you some understanding of the separation sin causes between God and you, and it may terrify you. But the full extent of the breach between God and the soul caused by sin is never fully understood until you come to Christ. The soul never truly sees the depth of sin until then. When it comes to Christ, sees Christ truly, and is united with Him, then it perceives the evil of sin in a way it never did before. This is why faith purges the heart from sin more effectively than all the terrors of the Law can. Even if God were to open a window into hell and allow you to see all the torment there, it would not reveal the evil of sin as clearly as when you come to a real sight of Jesus Christ and see how sin made such a breach between God and us that only the Son of God could repair it. This is the greatest revelation of the evil of sin that can possibly be.

**Objection:** You might say, “Others know this as well as believers.”



It is true, they know it in a certain way, but only those who, through faith, have a real sight of Christ can truly understand the evil of sin in Him.

Second, another strong argument for the evil of sin in Christ is this: the infinite hatred of sin in God. The fact that God so infinitely hated sin that He would not spare His own Son shows us the depth of sin's evil. We hear much about hell and the terrors of the Law, but when I consider the extent of God's hatred of sin revealed in the suffering of His Son, it shows me far more about the evil of sin. While the terror of the Law may restrain men from sin, it is when the soul understands the infinite wrath of God against sin—that He would give His Son to satisfy for it—that the true evil of sin becomes clear. This also reveals the infinite holiness of God, that He would send His only Son to purchase holiness.

In this, we see the infinite love of Christ, who died for sin; the infinite value of the soul, for which such a price was paid; and the infinite difficulty in delivering it from sin. Nothing can influence the heart more than this view of Christ. When the soul comes to Christ, it is filled with hatred for sin and love for holiness. A common understanding of Christ may restrain sin to a degree, but the saving knowledge of Christ has infinite power.

The truth is, the special way for a soul to overcome its corruptions is by delving into the knowledge of the Gospel. Look deeply into the Gospel, examine its mysteries, and consider what arguments you may draw from it against your sins. The arguments that common people use against sin are weak and shallow. They may be tempted to sin and think, "Oh, I mustn't do this because my master or mistress will find out, or someone will know, and I'll be punished." These are poor, low arguments.

But the believer says, “Oh, let me not commit this sin, for it is what brought the Son of God down from heaven to be made a curse for man. It is the cause of the greatest disruption the world has ever seen. It is what God’s soul infinitely hates, and it is what made such a breach between my soul and God that only the Son of God could repair it.” These are the arguments that a believer uses against sin. Being well acquainted with these arguments, and exercising faith in Christ, makes them real to the soul. As a result, they wield a mighty power to overcome any corruption.

As we read in the Gospel, when the owner of the vineyard sent his servant to collect fruit, the workers beat the servant and killed another. Finally, he said, “I will send my son; surely they will respect him.” Similarly, there are many arguments against your sin to help you overcome your corruption and move you toward holiness. Perhaps your corruptions have broken other arguments, like Samson’s cords that snapped like flax. But, says God, *I will send my Son*, and reveal the glorious mysteries of the Gospel in Him. I will show their souls what My Son has done, and what the deep counsels for their salvation in My Son are. These will prevail upon them.

This is the reason for their fearfulness of sin and their strictness in walking with God after the Gospel has convinced them. You may wonder why they are so strict and fearful of offending. Do you wonder? Oh, my brethren, they have arguments you may not know of. God has revealed much of His Son to them—the wonderful mysteries of godliness revealed in His Son—and these are the arguments they rely upon. They do not rely on such low and mean arguments as you do. Mean and low arguments may keep men in an orderly course of living peacefully with their neighbours and avoiding obvious sins like theft, drunkenness, or swearing—these are things even the heathen understood. But the saints, the believers

who are familiar with Christ's ways, have higher arguments. They see Christ with the eye of faith and so gain power over their sin and peace for their souls.

Thus says Christ: *Come to me*. You have corruptions prevailing over you, and you may struggle against them with various arguments, but come to me, and I will show you things that will reveal the depth of sin and the beauty of holiness. What I will show you will help you fight against your corruptions and progress in the way of holiness. In this way, you will find rest for your souls.

## Chapter 38

Showing How Sanctification Comes from Christ in Six More Particulars.

1. He reveals the Father to the soul.
2. Through Christ, the love of God is shed abroad in the heart.
3. All the promises are made to us through Him.
4. In Him, all the ordinances are effectual.
5. He sends the Spirit into the heart.
6. Christ rules in the heart.

**Seventhly:** Christ becomes our sanctification, and we find rest in Him for sanctification in the following way: It is Christ who reveals the Father to the soul. *No one knows the Father, says Christ, but the Son, and he to whom the Son reveals Him*. I trust you know the Scripture where Christ says, *If you have seen me, you have seen the*

*Father* (John 14). It is Christ who makes God known to the soul, and there is a mighty power to work holiness in the heart through the knowledge of God. As the apostle John says in 1 John 2:4, *He that says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar.* The knowledge of God cannot coexist with neglect of His commandments.

There is a mighty power in the knowledge of God for the sanctifying of the heart. Simply beholding God's holiness has great power to sanctify the heart. The reason for all the wickedness and profaneness in the world is that people do not know the Lord. They do not realize what an infinite, blessed, and glorious God they must deal with. *They that know your name will trust in you,* says the Psalmist. In the same way, we can say that *those who know your name, O Lord, will fear you, serve you, and walk before you in obedience and holiness.*

Now, the knowledge of God is found in Christ. While there may be some kind of natural knowledge of God outside of Christ—such as through beholding the works of God—there is no saving knowledge of Him apart from Christ. As 1 Corinthians 1:21 says, *After that in the wisdom of God (that is, in the glory of God that shines in creation), the world by wisdom knew not God.* The world, with all its natural understanding and learning, including that of philosophers who saw much of God's glory in creation, still did not know God. Yet, *it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe* (1 Corinthians 1:21). What preaching was this? *We preach Christ crucified* (1 Corinthians 1:23).

Therefore, there is no saving knowledge but only in Christ. When the soul comes to Christ, the Lord Jesus reveals the Father to it. He reveals the counsels of God, even the very heart of God, to the soul. This explains why many poor and ignorant people, who knew little to

nothing of God and had strange thoughts of Him, suddenly gain high and honourable thoughts of God as soon as the Gospel is revealed to them. Those high and honourable thoughts of God powerfully purge sin from their hearts and sanctify them exceedingly. Consider those places where the Gospel has been scarcely preached—there, people have poor thoughts of God and live in all manner of ungodliness. But when the Gospel is preached, and God is made known, the devil is cast out, and the people, filled with the knowledge of God, become sanctified unto His service. This is another reason why Christ reveals the Father to the soul and sanctifies the heart.

**Eighthly:** It is through Christ that the love of God is shed abroad into the heart of a believer, and this has a mighty power to sanctify the heart. The shedding abroad of God's love into the heart can only happen in Christ. Outside of Christ, there may be common fruits of God's bounty, such as general patience and goodness, but the special love of God, which sanctifies the heart, is only found in Christ. When the soul comes to have union with Christ, it experiences the sweet sense of God's love shed abroad in the heart. The heart, filled with the sweetness of God's love, is sanctified by it. The base loves of the creature and the love of sin are consumed, and the heart is drawn toward God in a blessed, sweet, and gracious manner.

The terror of the Law cannot sanctify a person in the same way that the love of God in Christ can. Indeed, the Law's terror may restrain sin, but it cannot sanctify the heart. This is a certain truth: the Law may restrain sin, but it cannot make the heart holy. The terrors of the Law are useful in preaching to restrain sin, but when we preach them, we do not expect them to sanctify the heart. They may hold corruption in check for a while, but the only thing that can truly sanctify the heart is the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Fulgentius compares the love of God in Christ to a fire in a furnace, while God's general love for His creation is like a few sparks that fly out of the furnace. Even if God were to give you possession of the entire world or a thousand worlds, this would be no more than a spark from the furnace. But the love of God in Christ is like the heat of the furnace itself. And just as the heat consumes stubble and any combustible matter thrown into it, so does the love of God, shed abroad in the heart through Christ, consume the lusts of the heart. The soul grows in holiness as a result.

It is with the heart of a believer as it is with the fruits of the earth. You know that frost may suppress some weeds, but it is the sunshine—the warm beams of the sun—that makes the fruit ripen and grow. Fruit that grows in the sun ripens quickly. Grass in the shade, like that in an orchard, is sour, and the animals will not eat it. Similarly, herbs that grow in the shade never mature fully nor are as good as those that grow in the sun. Fruit that grows on a sunlit wall ripens quickly, while that in the shade withers.

In the same way, some live entirely under the legal fears and troubles of conscience. They may bear fruit, but it is sour. It is not as sweet as the fruit of those who live under the sunshine of the Gospel, those who have the love of God shining upon their hearts. Their fruit is sweet, they thrive more abundantly, and they lead more amiable and lovely lives. This is yet another way in which Christ is our sanctification, shedding the love of God into the heart. Scripture is full of examples of how the love of God is shed abroad in Christ.

**Ninthly:** Christ is our sanctification because all the promises of the Gospel are made to us in Him. He is the foundation of all the promises. They are all fulfilled in Him, and they have great sanctifying power. Christ is our sanctification because it is through

Him that the promises, which have a mighty sanctifying effect, are made.

Consider 2 Corinthians 1:20: *For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us.* All the promises of God are affirmed in Christ and fulfilled through Him. This is a profound and noteworthy meditation, revealing the excellence of Jesus Christ. In Him, all the promises are made and made certain to us. They are guaranteed in Him. Some manuscripts even translate the passage as, *Therefore in Him let them be yea and Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*

What does this mean? It means that as God has made all promises certain in Christ, we are to look to Christ, see the promises in Him, believe them, and by faith say "Amen" to these promises, bringing glory to God. The word "Amen" signifies something firm and sure. When we end our prayers with "Amen," we mean, "Let it be, O Lord, according to Your promise." It is an expression of faith after prayer, affirming that the promises in Christ are certain. Therefore, by faith, we make them firm and sure to our souls, bringing glory to God.

**Question:** But how does this help our sanctification?

**Answer:** It helps exceedingly. Nothing aids the sanctification of a believer's soul more than the promises of the Gospel. Those who rely on the promises of the Gospel grow in sanctification far more than others. The promises of the Gospel are channels not only of mercy for our salvation but also of holiness for our sanctification.

For this, consider 2 Corinthians 7:1: *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* This is as full a scripture as any, showing how the Holy Spirit would have us

use the promises of the Gospel. Some may think that because there are promises of mercy, they can indulge the flesh more freely. But that is not the Spirit's reasoning. Rather, the Spirit urges, *Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, for filthiness cannot coexist with faith in the promises.*

Note how the verse calls for cleansing from *all filthiness of the flesh and spirit*. It is not enough to say, "I have a good heart towards God, and my spirit is right." Yes, but you must cleanse yourself from both the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit. The promises, if rightly used, will have a mighty cleansing power.

The verse calls for cleansing from *all filthiness*, not just some gross sins. It is not enough to avoid the more egregious sins that others in the world may commit—such as whoremongering, drunkenness, cheating, or profaning the Sabbath. The promises will cleanse you from all filthiness, so that no sin will cling to you as it does to the wicked. Gradually, you will be cleansed from all filthiness, whether of the flesh or the spirit.

It is not just about avoiding outward sinful actions. The promises will cleanse even your thoughts, your affections, and the inner wickedness of your spirit. Perhaps you would consider it a vile thing to be accused of whoredom (a sin of the flesh). But what about the filthiness of the spirit—pride, malice, distrust, and earthly-mindedness? The promises cleanse from these as well.

Furthermore, the verse calls for *perfecting holiness in the fear of God*. This means that those who are familiar with the promises of the Gospel will not be satisfied with any level of holiness but will continually strive for more, growing higher and higher until they reach perfection. This shows the purifying nature of the promises.



My brethren, be much exercised in the promises of God. Store them up in your hearts if you wish to gain power over your corruptions.

And then one more Scripture on this point: 2 Peter 1:4, "*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.*" The promises of the Gospel are indeed precious, worth more than the entire world. A believer who understands their preciousness values them more than his own estate. What do you consider precious? You may long for your ships to return home laden with precious goods, but to have your heart filled with precious promises is far better than that.

But now, how do these promises show themselves to be so precious? The verse says, "*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.*" By these great and precious promises, you become partakers of the divine nature, which is holiness, or sanctification. This is what is meant by *the divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Through these promises, the soul escapes the corruption of the world caused by lust. And not only does the soul avoid the wickedness that others live in, but it is transformed, made a partaker of the divine nature through these promises.

So, Christ is the rest of sanctification because, in Him, all the promises are made. They have a mighty cleansing power to sanctify the heart. You desire to have a share in the promises and to receive the mercy they offer. As much as you seek to have an interest in the promises and to claim the mercy they promise, you must also strive to feel the power of these promises working in your heart, cleansing it and making you a partaker of the divine nature.

**Tenthly**, Christ is our sanctification because, in Him, all the ordinances are made effectual. The ordinances have power only

through Christ. Christ first gave His ordinances to His Church, and they become effectual through Him. It is not about what you hear in the Word, but how much of Christ you receive through the Word. When you come to the sacrament, it is not merely about what you partake of there, but how much of Christ you gain there. The efficacy of all the ordinances—whether Word, sacrament, or prayer—lies in Christ. The ordinances are like the *vehiculum Christi*, the means by which Christ is conveyed to the soul.

Therefore, when we come to any ordinance, we should ask ourselves, "What have we received of Christ? Have we encountered Christ here?" In the Word, prayer, or sacraments, has our heart been drawn closer to Christ? For it is certain that Christ is the true virtue and essence of all the ordinances.

This is why those who are familiar with Christ and have come to Him find that they profit more in one month by the ordinances than they did in all their previous years. Before, the ordinances were empty and lifeless to them, but now, in Christ, they have become effectual.

**Eleventhly**, Christ is our sanctification by sending the Holy Ghost into our hearts. The Holy Ghost comes from both the Father and the Son, and we can never expect His saving or sanctifying work except through Christ. As Christ says in John 16:14 regarding the Spirit, "*He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine.*" The Holy Ghost receives from Christ when He comes into the heart, and thus, if there is any sanctification by the Holy Ghost, it must come through Christ. The Holy Spirit works from both the Father and the Son.

This is why Scripture uses the phrase "*We are baptized into one Spirit.*" By being baptized into Christ and receiving the inward work of baptism, we are made partakers of that one Spirit—the Holy Ghost. The excellence of sanctification is such that it cannot be

wrought by any natural means but requires the Holy Ghost to be sent into the heart. This is why the saints are said to be "*the temple of the Holy Ghost.*" Whatever work of the Holy Ghost is required for sanctification, it must come in and through Christ and from Christ. The Holy Ghost never comes to sanctify anyone except the members of Jesus Christ, for He is the Spirit of Christ as well as of the Father, and He comes only to the members of Christ in this work of sanctification.

There are some common gifts of God's Spirit that even the heathen may possess, but the gift of true holiness is given only to the members of Christ, to whom the Holy Ghost comes.

**Lastly**, Christ is our sanctification through His kingly power, ruling and reigning in our hearts. He subdues our lusts, as a king subdues rebels, and governs the hearts of His people. Christ exercises this kingly power when any soul believes in Him. When Christ enters a heart, He comes as a king, setting up His throne in a kingly manner, and by this, He sanctifies the heart and gives it rest. Just as in a kingdom there are mutinies and seditions, so too are there mutinies and seditions in the hearts of sinners—rebellion even against God Himself.

But when the King sends forth His power, that very power prevails against all opposition. If it prevails in a way of justice, all things are brought into right and due order again. So it is when Christ enters the heart as the *King of Righteousness* and then as the *King of Peace*. By His kingly power, He brings rest and quiet to the heart. Carnal hearts may think that Christ's kingly rule would be a disturbance to Christians, but in truth, the government of Christ in the heart brings the only true rest and peace to the soul.

There are many other ways that Christ sanctifies the soul, but by combining these points with the previous ones, you can see how Christ is the *rest* of the soul in sanctification. And thus, we conclude this particular topic.

## Chapter 39

### Six Consequences from the Former Doctrine

- I. The difference between believers and the state of Adam.
- II. The difference between mere civility and true holiness.
- III. Why so many vows and covenants to live a holy life come to nothing.
- IV. It is impossible to be a member of Christ without being holy.
- V. Do not be hindered from coming to Christ, even if you do not yet possess the holiness you desire.
- VI. How to understand Christ correctly.

Now, there are various consequences that flow from this doctrine. Let us consider them:

**I.** From this, we can see the difference between the condition of believers now and that of Adam. In fact, believers are in a better condition than Adam was. Why? Because the image of God in which Adam was created may be considered as *natural*—that is, it came from God as Creator, who made Adam as a creature and gave him the perfection suitable to the nature of a rational being. All the holiness that Adam had was only that which was fitting for a rational creature

in his condition. When he possessed it, Adam was, as it were, to trade with the stock of holiness he had received and to live by it. God's providence would go along with him and uphold him in his state as long as he obeyed God. This was Adam's state.

But the holiness and righteousness that believers now possess comes from a different source. It does not come from God merely as Creator, but from God through a Mediator—through His Son, Christ. This holiness is a partaking of the Spirit of Christ, the Father, and the Holy Ghost in Christ. Scripture does not describe Adam's holiness in these terms. The text only says that God made Adam *in His own image*, but it does not say that Adam's holiness came through union with the second person of the Trinity or that the Spirit was sent into Adam by the Father and the Son to make him a temple of the Holy Ghost. Adam had the principle of holiness within himself, but we, as believers, have our principle of holiness in Christ. We are not entrusted with our own holiness; it remains in Christ, from whom it is conveyed to us. Adam, on the other hand, had to maintain his holiness with the general providence of God's support as long as he obeyed, but God never made a covenant with Adam in which holiness was kept in the Son, to be drawn by faith.

I can illustrate the difference between Adam's state and a believer's state with this example: A father gives his son an inheritance and tells him, "*Here is your portion. Go and trade with it as best you can, but you will receive nothing more from me than what you gain from this stock.*" This was Adam's condition. God gave him a stock of holiness and righteousness at the start and told him to trade with it and live by what he earned from it. That was all he had.

But we have all lost that stock and have become bankrupt. Now, God is pleased to set up some of mankind again. Some will perish

eternally and be cast into prison to rot forever, but God gives another stock to others. However, He does not trust them with it fully. He gives them grace and tells them to trade with it, but He gives it to them gradually and keeps the main stock in His Son's hand. He says, *"Go and trade with this, and when you face losses in your trade, come to my Son, and He will make it up for you. You must give an account to my Son every day."*

So, one who is set up again and given a little stock must account to his Father daily. Even if he has losses, his Father will make up the loss, ensuring that he never breaks again because there is a continual supply held in the hands of his Father or a close friend. This is the case for believers. Though we do not have as great a stock of holiness as Adam had, our stock is better because, together with our holiness, we have a supply from Jesus Christ. What we have will be safeguarded by Him, and if any of it is impaired, He will restore it. Our holiness now comes from a different source and is upheld by a different principle than Adam's ever was.

This is the reason why the saints never fall as Adam did—because the holiness they have can never decay. They can never turn bankrupt as Adam did, for their holiness comes from Christ, the water of life that flows into their hearts from Him eternally.

## **II. Another Consequence from Our Rest in Sanctification in Christ**

Another consequence that follows from our rest in sanctification in Christ is this: we see the difference between civility or morality and true holiness, true sanctification. You have likely heard ministers speak of "civil" men or men who are moral and live respectably. I don't doubt that you have sometimes wondered what they meant. What is this morality? We hear ministers say, *"Such a one is a good*

*moral man," or "Such a one is a civil man." You may ask, "What more would they have? Shouldn't men be civil? Do they not live inoffensively, paying what they owe, doing no wrong, attending church, and serving God? What more would they have?" And yet we hear ministers say that being civil is not enough. Simply refraining from scandalous sins is not enough.*

Now, it is true—this is not enough. From what we have discussed in this point, you can discern that more is required. By this, you can also understand the difference between a civil or moral man and one who possesses true holiness and sanctification.

A civil or moral man has *restraining grace*, which holds back his corruption. What he does, he does through the strength of reason. He sees, through reason, that living in wickedness—lying, swearing, drinking, engaging in impurity, cheating, or deceiving—is sinful. Even the heathens, the moral philosophers, by the light of nature, saw the evil of such notorious vices and understood the rules of nature for guiding their behaviour. Similarly, civil men have improved somewhat through the light of nature. They recognize, through the light of nature, that they should not live in such sins as others do and that it is better to live justly and even to be generous to the poor. Many reach this level, but all of this goes no further than the common light of nature, guided by the prudence and reason of a person as a rational being.

**Question:** What more is needed?

**Answer:** There must be sanctification of the heart through the mediation of Jesus Christ. There must be a principle of grace that enters the heart as a fruit of the second covenant that God has made with sinners in Jesus Christ, through the mystical union that the soul has with Him. This is what goes beyond mere civility. When a soul is

moved by God in this manner, it begins to see the breach between itself and God. The soul sees its natural condition as a child of wrath, dead in sins and trespasses. Even if it has not lived as wickedly as others, the soul still sees itself as a child of wrath and an heir of hell and death, despite all that it has done.

The soul realizes that only through the blessed mediation of Jesus Christ can this breach be repaired. Union with God is possible only through Him, and the Spirit of sanctification must come to the soul through the covenant of the Gospel. The heart must be lifted to God in a different way—not merely to live civilly, but to live holily, with the image of God renewed within through the Spirit of Christ. The soul then lives the life of Christ, continually drawing strength from Christ, feeding on the promises of the covenant of grace, and thereby having its heart quickened more and more. Through the promises of the Gospel, the soul grows in holiness, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. This is something far beyond what the civil or merely moral man can achieve.

A *civil man* can be recognized in several ways:

1. What he does is guided purely by common prudence and the light of nature.
2. The chief element of his religion is *negative*: he is not as bad as other men.
3. If he has anything *positive*, it is only in outward actions, like serving God. However, he is not acquainted with the mystery of godliness, the power of holiness, the necessity of a mediator, or the need for a continual supply of grace from Jesus Christ. These things he does not see.

Furthermore, the civil man is not burdened by the corruption that remains within him. He thinks himself in a good condition. Indeed,



he may say, "*I must be saved by Jesus Christ,*" but ask any civil man this: "*What need do you find of Jesus Christ for your sanctification?*" Are you so burdened by your inner corruptions—those that the world cannot see—that you groan under them? Do you realize your need for the mediation of Jesus Christ and the supply of His Spirit to help you against your corruptions and sanctify your heart? This is something with which the civil man is not familiar. It is beyond his understanding.

Thus, we see the difference between civility and true holiness. Godliness and holiness are mysteries. Scripture speaks of "*the mystery of godliness*" and "*the power of godliness,*" and godliness is powerful precisely because it is a mystery. If we must receive our holiness from Christ as Mediator—if Christ is first filled with holiness, and our souls must draw our holiness from Him by faith—then indeed, godliness is a mystery. The godliness that saves souls is a mystery, far beyond what ordinary men of the world understand. Few comprehend the way in which God conveys grace to the souls He intends to bring to eternal life.

The way God conveys grace to the soul is not simply by giving you reason to understand that certain things are wrong, and therefore, for the sake of your own ease and peace in the world, you should live civilly. Rather, God's way is to reveal His Son to you, showing you the necessity of union with Christ, of becoming a member of Him, and of drawing virtue from Him as from a head. You must see a fountain of life flowing continually from Him into your heart, so that you turn to Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity made man for your soul, as the source of all grace, to be conveyed from Him to your soul.

This is the mystery of holiness, which surpasses all the civility and morality in the world. Oh, that you could understand even a little of

this mystery of godliness! And that it might stir some doubt in the hearts of those who have lived only civilly and morally—perhaps for many years, being good neighbours, paying everyone what is due, and having no accusations of wrongdoing against them. But, oh, that they would reflect: *I have lived this way for so long, but has my soul been acquainted with the mystery of the Gospel? Have I drawn virtue from Christ as a Mediator? Do I have a stock of grace from Him to live by, so that all I do is supplied by Him? Have I felt the burden of my inward corruption? Have I found ease and rest through the promises of the Gospel? Have I searched into the covenant of grace and found promises there that convey comfort to my soul? Has my heart been exercised in this way?*

Certainly, if you have not experienced this, you do not know the way of the Gospel, nor do you understand what an evangelical life truly is. A true evangelical life is when the soul is enabled to live upon Christ, when you feel your heart drawing life from Him, drawing virtue from Him for the mortification of your corruptions and the quickening of your heart in holiness. This is what it means to live a truly evangelical life.

Thus, another consequence drawn from this is the realization that godliness is a mystery, beyond mere civility and morality.

### **III. Another Consequence that May Be Drawn**

Hence, we may see the reason why the vows and covenants made by many people—to live better than they have done—often come to nothing. Our sanctification is in Christ, and our ability to overcome corruption is by virtue of Christ. From this, it is clear why the vows

and covenants of many people, who, during times of sickness or danger at sea, promise to live better if God restores them, often fail. They may say, *"If God restores us, we will never live as we did before; we will live better."* And though they may not speak to deceive but genuinely intend to change, their hearts fully resolved to leave sin and live better, yet once restored, they live just as they did before.

Why is this? It is because they are not acquainted with the mystery of godliness. They do not know how to draw strength from Christ to enable them to keep their resolutions. They are unaware of where the stock of grace lies. They depend on their own resolutions and promises and fail to see that strength must come from Christ. Hence, their vows and covenants come to nothing.

As we read about Samson, after his strength was gone, he said he would go forth as before, but the Lord had departed from him. In the same way, you may think that if God restores you, you will live better and overcome your corruptions. But the strength of Christ is not with you; you do not realize that His strength has departed from you.

Adam had grace from God as the Creator, but it is not enough for us to pray to God simply as the Creator of all things. We must seek God in Christ and understand that the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily. In this way, we gain strength against our corruptions.

I remember a German divine writing to a friend. He professed that before he understood the way of the Gospel, he had vowed and covenanted a thousand times against some sins but could never overcome them. However, after the Lord revealed to him the way of the Gospel—that all strength comes by exercising faith in Christ and seeing the Father give His Son to supply all grace—he found strength against his corruptions and was able to walk comfortably with God in

holiness. Similarly, Christians who understand the way of the Gospel will find abundant power against their corruptions, more than they ever did through all their previous striving and efforts. Even though we should strive and take all the effort we can, we must recognize that it will not succeed without exercising faith in Christ to help us against our corruptions.

## **IV. Another Consequence**

It is impossible for anyone to be a member of Christ and not be holy, because Christ is our sanctification. Christ is filled full of holiness so that holiness might be conveyed to His members. Therefore, those who still live in the strength of their lusts, who do not have the rest of sanctification in some measure, surely do not have the Spirit of Christ within them. These two things cannot coexist: being a member of Christ and walking in filthiness.

Christ is the great Prophet who teaches His people and the great King who governs His Church. Whoever is brought to Him must be taught by Him and governed by Him. It is impossible to have communion with the fountain of all holiness and yet live under the power of sin. This simply cannot be.

## **V. Another Consequence**

It is a great temptation for anyone to be hindered from coming to Christ because they do not yet have the measure of holiness they desire. This is a powerful and dangerous temptation of the devil, especially for a soul that sees its lack of grace and sanctification and labours under the burden of corruption. Such a soul may be tempted

to think, *"How can I come to Christ when I do not have the holiness I desire?"* But this is a very irrational temptation.

Many poor souls are troubled by this. When we exhort them to come to Christ, they think, *"Alas, I am so vile, with such a wicked and sinful heart—how can I come to Him? If only I had power over my corruptions as others do, then I would be bold enough to come to Christ."*

But what a temptation this is! Christ says, *"Come to me, and I will give you rest."* Yet you say, *"If I had rest, I would come."* Christ is the fountain of all holiness, so to be kept from Christ because you lack holiness is a great temptation. It is the devil's work to suggest that you should stay away from Christ for lack of holiness when Christ is the one appointed by God the Father to convey holiness to your heart. He is the one who will renew the image of God in you, restoring it more beautifully than it ever was before.

Remember the point you have heard: Christ is our sanctification, and all holiness comes from Him. Therefore, my lack of holiness should not drive me away from Christ but should instead draw me to Him. Do not say, as Peter did, *"Master, depart from me, for I am a sinful man."* Rather, say, *"Master, come to me, for I am a sinful man."* Many poor souls say, *"Lord, I cannot come to Christ because I am so sinful."* But you should come to Him precisely *because* you are sinful.

## **VI. Another Consequence**

From this, we learn how to understand Christ rightly and how to believe in Him rightly. Some people understand Christ only as a Saviour, thinking only of being pardoned by Him, saved by Him, and delivered from hell by Him. But you must also understand Christ to

be your sanctification. You must trust in Christ to sanctify you as well as to save you.

If you understand Christ rightly, you will see Him as both a sanctifier and a Saviour. And if you believe in Christ rightly, you will believe in Him as both a sanctifier and a Saviour.

Thus, these are the consequences that follow from the rest of sanctification in Christ.

## **Chapter 40**

An Exhortation to Come to Christ: Three Hindrances Removed, and Six Encouragements Given

1. The union between Christ and a believer.
2. The great love of Christ.
3. Corruption is a burden both to Christ and to the sinner.
4. Christ healed the bodies of many; He will much more heal the soul.
5. Christ knows what it is to be tempted.
6. It honours the death, resurrection, and life of Christ to give holiness.

Now, for the last point I propose: to exhort and draw believers to come to Christ. In doing this, I shall endeavour to remove many of the hindrances that prevent souls from coming to Christ for sanctification and provide some encouragements to draw the heart to Him.

You now see that the way to gain power over corruption and to receive grace is to come to Christ. You might say, *"Yes, but if I knew I were a member of Christ and had an interest in Him, then I could come to Christ for power over my corruption and for grace. But I fear I have no interest in Him."*

1. In answer to this, which is the main obstacle and hindrance to faith, know this: if you have a heart to come to Him for grace, that is as good a sign of your interest in Christ as any other sign you could hope for. This is as valid an evidence of interest in Him as any you could expect.
2. You must come to Him for grace. And even if you had no interest in Him before, your very act of coming to Him now for grace to help you against corruption may give you interest in Christ. What unites you to Christ? What makes you a member of Christ? What gives you an interest in Christ? It is simply coming to Him, as you have heard before in this teaching.

**Question:** You might say, *"But I need to know if I have a right to Him."*

If you come to Christ now, seeking power over your corruption and seeking grace, I tell you that even if you had no interest in Him before, this very act may give you interest in Christ. Therefore, do not be discouraged—come to Christ.

3. Will you wait until you find power over your corruption before you come to Him? If so, then you will never gain power over your corruption. As you have heard, Christ is the foundation of your sanctification. Without coming to Him, you will not overcome your sin.

Now, let me present some encouragements. There are many excellent reasons for poor sinners to come to Christ:

### **First Encouragement: Union with Christ**

Consider the close union that exists between Christ and us, particularly in regard to His human nature. A powerful scripture for our encouragement is found in Hebrews 2:11, *"For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."* Christ, who sanctifies, and those who are sanctified, are one. What does this mean? It means that Christ shares the same nature as you. He has taken on our human nature, and the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him. This gives you boldness to come to Him. The One who sanctifies you is your brother, and He is not ashamed to call you His brother. Therefore, do not look upon Him as being at an infinite distance, merely as your Judge. Rather, see Him as your brother, one with you. You and Christ together are one body. What greater encouragement is there to expect sanctification from Christ, to overcome corruption, knowing that Christ and you are united as one body?

### **Second Encouragement: Christ's Great Love**

Consider that if Christ loved you so dearly that He laid down His life for you, He will surely never allow you to perish in your corruptions. Could it be possible that Christ, who came down from heaven and laid down His life for poor souls, would allow them to die in their sins? Imagine a man willing to die for a child. If he then saw that child lying in the dirt, about to be suffocated, could he pass by and not help? This is your case. Christ laid down His life for you, and even now, though you feel ready to be suffocated by your corruptions, you cry out to Him for help. Surely Christ will not leave



you in your filthiness to be overcome by your sin when He has already demonstrated such love by laying down His life for you.

### **Third Encouragement: Your Burdens Are Christ's Burdens**

Know that your corruptions are not only your burdens, but also Christ's burdens. Your sins weigh heavily on your soul, and they are also a burden to Jesus Christ. He shares in your suffering and pities you in your weakness. Because your burdens are His, Christ will certainly help you.

### **Fourth Encouragement: Christ's Compassion**

If Christ showed such pity and compassion to heal the physical bodies of those who came to Him in this world, how much more will He care for and heal your soul? During His earthly ministry, there was not a diseased body that came to Him that He did not heal. Surely, then, Christ has even greater regard for immortal souls than for bodies. If He healed physical ailments, how much more will He heal your soul of its spiritual sickness?

### **Fifth Encouragement: Christ Knows Temptation**

Christ knows what it is to be tempted. Although He had no corruption within Him, Christ understands the burden of temptation. He experienced the weight of temptation and knows what it is like to face the allure of sin. And if Christ knows what it is to be tempted to sin, how much more does He understand the burden of actually being overcome by sin? Christ's burden was to resist temptation, but He knows that your burden is greater, for you struggle not only with temptation but also with the power of sin itself. Therefore, Christ knows how to pity you and will extend His help.

## **Sixth Encouragement: Honouring Christ's Death, Resurrection, and Life**

It brings honour to Christ's death, resurrection, and life to help you against your corruptions and to strengthen you in grace. Christ considers His resurrection and life honoured when He sees the power and virtue of it at work in the hearts of believers. Therefore, let this encourage you to go to Christ for help. It honours His sacrifice when you seek His grace to overcome your sins.

Remember this when you come to your duties—whether you are praying, hearing the Word, or taking the sacrament. Carry this rule with you: when you pray against your sins, also act in faith. When you hear the Word, do so with faith in Christ as your Mediator, seeking His help against your corruptions. When you come to the sacrament, come to have communion with Christ, to receive His help in your battle against sin. Act your faith in the promises of the Gospel, through the blessed covenant, and you will find abundant strength to overcome your corruption and find rest for your soul.

## **Chapter 41**

Conclusion of the Doctrine of Sanctification, with Directions on How to Come to Christ for Holiness

- I. Be aware of your need for it.
- II. Do not be satisfied with the ordinances unless you meet Christ in them.

III. Come not primarily for comfort and peace, but for holiness.

IV. Be mindful of new supplies of grace.

V. Engage with Christ in the Gospel.

I shall now add a few concluding thoughts on this matter before moving on to the next rest that is promised.

Come to Christ for the rest of sanctification, for holiness, because, in truth, there is no real holiness apart from what we gain by coming to Christ. The Scripture speaks of *true holiness*. While there may be abstinence from many sins and the performance of many duties, there is no saving holiness except that which is received from God through Christ as Mediator. There is no true holiness until the soul becomes acquainted with Christ and receives holiness in that way—through exercising faith in Christ as the Head of the Covenant. This is the mystery of godliness, the true godliness that the world does not understand. It is a powerful holiness that comes through Christ.

This is why the strength of grace in the hearts of the saints is so great—it comes from Christ, from the Spirit of Jesus Christ who is in them. Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and His Spirit is one of might. The common gifts of morality do not have the same strength as the holiness that comes from Christ. The holiness that comes from Christ is the only *supernatural* holiness—it is of a divine nature. In contrast, the abstaining from sin and performing of duties by civil people, which arises from common gifts, is not of the divine nature. What they have is based on natural reason and argument. But the holiness that comes from the exercise of faith in Christ is supernatural, of a divine nature, and abundant. Abundant indeed is the holiness that the soul acquires by drawing grace from Christ. The heart grows in holiness through the exercise of faith in Christ. In a short time, the heart grows more in holiness by drawing on Christ

than it did in a long time before, even though the person may have been truly godly and a member of Christ before. It is the lack of a proper understanding of how all grace comes from God through Christ that prevents many from thriving in godliness.

The text in Ephesians 3:17-19 is most remarkable in this regard. The Apostle prays, *"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 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, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."*

Here is the fruit of knowing Christ: that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. It is an astounding statement! Had it not been in Scripture, who would dare express such a thought? By coming to know God in Christ, you may come to be filled with the fullness of God in Christ. First, it is something to say that by knowing God in Christ, you may have God. But second, that you may be *filled with God* is even more. Third, that you may be filled with the *fullness* of God is yet greater. But fourth, that you may be filled with *all the fullness* of God is greater still! What a profound progression this is, showing the tremendous value of knowing God in Christ.

Now, those who are merely taught in childhood to serve God, who are restrained from certain sins and who perform duties like praying and attending church, but who are not acquainted with the mystery of the Gospel or the practice of drawing holiness from God through Christ, fall far short of experiencing this text's fulfillment in their hearts—they are far from being filled with all the fullness of God. However, when believers come to understand the mystery of godliness in Christ, they begin to enjoy deeper communion with God than ever before. Where once they were strangers to God, they now

experience communion with Him. They feel God's fullness entering their hearts more fully, and, by degrees, they come closer to what is described in this text—being filled with all the fullness of God.

The reason for all the emptiness, lack, and barrenness in your heart is due to a lack of understanding of how God has filled Christ with all fullness, from whom we are to receive *grace for grace*. By drawing grace from Christ, we acquire permanent and lasting holiness. This is why the grace of the saints endures forever and can never fail, whereas the grace of Adam did fail. Adam's grace did not come from God through a mediator as the saints' grace does, and therefore, it was not permanent.

I spoke of this earlier, but I bring it up again as a further motivation to seek holiness in Jesus Christ—this rest of sanctification.

Here are some brief rules I propose by way of direction to help in seeking grace and sanctification in Christ:

## **1. Be Aware of Your Need for Holiness and Christ**

Labour to get a deep sense of your lack of holiness and your need for Christ to provide it. Recognising your spiritual poverty and insufficiency is the first step toward seeking holiness in Christ.

## **2. Do Not Be Satisfied with the Ordinances Without Christ**

When engaging in the ordinances—whether it be prayer, hearing the Word, or attending church—do not be satisfied with the mere

outward performance of these duties. Ask yourself, *"What have I received of Christ here?"* As we discussed earlier, Christ is the sanctification of the heart, and the blessing of all ordinances comes when Christ is present in them. If you leave the ordinances without having encountered Christ, you leave empty. Seek Christ in them above all else.

### **3. Seek Holiness Over Comfort and Peace**

When you come to Christ, do not seek Him primarily for comfort, peace, or emotional enlargement. Rather, come to Him for holiness. Seek peace not as an end in itself, but as a means to holiness. Many Christians seek Christ because they want peace and comfort, and they make holiness subservient to these. They reason, *"If I am not holy, I will not have peace; therefore, I will seek holiness so that I may have peace."* But a truly gracious heart says, *"The more holiness I have, the more peace I will have; therefore, I will seek peace so that I may become more holy."*

One person labours for holiness to gain peace, while the other labours for peace to grow in holiness. Those who seek peace to increase holiness will thrive more than those who seek holiness only to gain peace. It is certainly a good motivation to seek holiness because it brings peace, but it is a stronger motive to seek peace in order to gain holiness. Therefore, when we come to Christ, we should seek Him for holiness and sanctification, more than for peace or comfort.

You may wonder, *"Why haven't I found sanctification from Christ in a way that increases my holiness?"* The reason may be that you have exercised your faith in Christ mainly to gain peace and comfort, rather than holiness. If you had focused your faith on receiving

holiness from Christ, you might have found more peace as well. Christ says, "*Be it unto you according to your faith.*" If you exercise your faith primarily for peace and comfort, you may receive some peace, but not as much holiness. But if you exercise your faith chiefly for holiness, you will receive more holiness. A true Christian values holiness more than peace. In fact, this is a clear mark of true grace: the hypocrite seeks holiness for the sake of peace, but the true believer seeks peace in order to grow in holiness.

## **4. Continue to Seek New Supplies of Grace**

Though Christ gives grace and increases sanctification and holiness, do not rely on what He has already given you. Keep your heart aware of its constant need for fresh supplies of grace. Many Christians, after having engaged in some duty—having exercised faith in Christ and received some enlargement or quickening of spirit—feel content and think they can now live off this spiritual stock for a long time. But we are called to pray for our *daily bread* and to depend on Christ for new supplies of grace and holiness every day, even every moment.

For each task or work set before us, we must go to Christ for new supplies of grace, as if we had received nothing before. Christ will be pleased with this attitude. Even if we have been given much grace, we should still go to Him to renew our faith, approaching Him with the same eagerness and dependence as if we had none at all. I do not mean we should think we have no grace at all, but that we should exercise faith in Christ for new supplies of holiness just as eagerly as we would if we had none at all. Indeed, those who seem to have little or no grace often exercise their faith in Christ most earnestly.

## Thirdly, For Conclusion

Take this as a rule: those Christians who most frequently converse with Jesus Christ through the blessed way of the Gospel will increase the most in grace, and this increase comes through sanctification. I will give you one Scripture to illustrate this, by way of allusion, from Acts 4:13: *"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."*

Peter and John displayed remarkable boldness and strength of grace, even in the face of great opposition. How did they gain this boldness? They were unlearned, ignorant men, poor and weak in terms of natural ability, yet they had acquired an abundance of grace, enabling them to boldly profess Christ despite the rage of their powerful adversaries. The people marvelled at their strength, and the text tells us the reason: *"they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."* It was their time spent with Christ that raised their spirits, quickened them, and filled their hearts with grace.

Now, in a spiritual sense, just as Peter and John grew in strength and grace through bodily interaction with Christ, so too may Christians grow in the strength and fullness of grace through frequent spiritual interaction with Christ. Converse with Christ by faith, and your heart will be greatly enlarged in grace.

In truth, when you see a Christian whose natural abilities may be weak, yet who grows mightily in grace, with a heart full of love for God, much spirit in prayer, and a life that is holy and convincing, you can be certain that this person has been with Jesus Christ—that they have frequently conversed with Him.



Would you like to know why some Christians, who only recently came to faith, seem to have grown so much in holiness? You may notice that they appear to have acquired much more than you, that they are able to depend on God more, rejoice in tribulation more, and live more spiritual, savoury lives. They find more sweetness in the ways of God than you do. How did this happen? Perhaps they don't have more outward means or natural abilities than you. So, where does their growth come from? The answer is simple: *They have been with Jesus*. They have conversed much with Christ, and you can have this too.

The reason why you, perhaps, have been a professing Christian for twenty or thirty years, are growing old, and yet are still weak in your spiritual life—so much so that the most that can be said of you is that there is some hope of good in you, without the rich seeds and sparks of divine nature that shine in the hearts of others—is that you have not been drawing sanctification from Christ through the exercise of faith.

Thus, this will suffice as the conclusion for this rest—the rest of sanctification, the rest of holiness. As holiness increases, so too does the rest and peace that fills the heart.

## **Chapter 42**

### **A Believer Finds Rest in Christ in All Worldly Troubles**

This rest is laid out in four particulars:

1. All afflictions are under Christ's control.
2. In Him, the curse is removed.
3. Afflictions coexist with God's love.
4. Afflictions are measured by God.

Now we come to the fifth burden: the burden of outward affliction. Christ says, *“Come to me, all you who are burdened with the guilt of your sins, all who are burdened with the legal performances, all who are burdened with the remaining corruption in your heart, and I will give you rest.”* You have already heard about the rest found in Christ from these various burdens. Now, lastly, He says, *“Come to me, all you who are under the burden of afflictions, and you shall find rest.”*

Affliction, whether it be bodily or spiritual, is a yoke and a burden. As we discussed earlier, affliction is a heavy load to bear, but Christ offers rest even in these trials. Spiritual afflictions have already been discussed at length in the previous sections, especially when addressing the burden of sin. More may be said on this subject when we speak about spiritual desertions—those times when Christians feel forsaken by God. Rest for the soul is promised even in those moments. But for now, let us focus on outward afflictions, for Christ also says, *“Come to me, and you shall have rest.”*

Outward afflictions include sickness, poverty, persecution, dishonour, and all the troubles we experience in this world. We must understand that there is rest in Christ even in regard to these things, and not just a little rest, but an abundance of rest. Those who are acquainted with the mystery of godliness and the way of God's grace in Christ may face many troubles in the world, yet they find an abundance of rest for their spirits in Christ, even in the midst of those troubles.

Indeed, Christ does not promise to immediately free you from all your troubles. You cannot expect that. However, He does promise this: if you come to Him, you will find rest for your spirit. Though your outward circumstances may remain as troubling as ever, He guarantees rest for your soul in all conditions. And is this not a blessed rest, especially in times like these—times full of distractions and turmoil, when people are losing their possessions, facing persecution, and living in constant fear of losing all their comforts? Perhaps this message is particularly relevant to some, more so than others.

For those who are unfamiliar with spiritual burdens like the weight of the law or the guilt of sin, these may seem like abstract or unfamiliar concepts. Likewise, they may not fully understand the burden of remaining sin in the heart. But now we turn to something everyone can relate to—outward afflictions. This is something everyone can understand and feel. The hearts of all people will agree: *It is a good thing to be in Christ and have rest from outward afflictions.*

It is God's way to draw people to His Son by showing them the good that is in Christ, especially in the areas they are most sensitive to. Even those who are strangers to Christ may sense this: that if the rest Christ promises in affliction is real, then it is truly a blessed thing to be in Christ.

I will give you one more Scripture to emphasise this point before I open it up further. It is found in John 16:33: *“These things I have spoken to you, that in me you might have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”*

This is a powerful text. Christ foresaw that His disciples would face many afflictions in this world, and He spoke these words to them just before His death, as He was about to leave them. He told them they would experience great affliction in this world. But He also said, *“In me, you will have peace.”* Christ does not promise to free them from trouble, but He does promise peace in their souls amidst their troubles: *“In me, you will have peace, though in the world you will have tribulation.”*

Then He adds, *“Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world.”* Though you may face troubles in the world, Christ has already overcome the world. And because He has overcome, you can find rest in Him. All the troubles you encounter will not rob you of the peace of your spirit or the rest of your soul.

## **In Christ, There is Rest Amidst All Afflictions and Troubles in This World**

Now, we come to the point at hand: that in Christ, there is rest even in the midst of all afflictions and troubles we face in this world. Let us explore this further:

### **1. All Afflictions Are at God's Disposal**

First, when a believer comes to Christ, he must find rest, no matter what afflictions he encounters. Once he has come to Christ, he understands that no affliction can happen to him without the will and ordering of his Father, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is this not a great comfort? To know that whatever troubles befall you, whether through evil instruments or circumstances that threaten your estate, name, or any other aspect of life, all these are under the wise direction of God, who, in Christ, has become your Father?

Imagine being fully assured that no loss, sickness, family trouble, or any other affliction would come to you except as it is disposed by your own wise and loving Father. Would this not bring great rest to your heart? Imagine hearing a voice from heaven that reassures you: *“Be of good comfort, you who are troubled by fear of loss and afflictions. You will never face a single moment of suffering except what your loving Father has allowed, and only according to His wisdom and care.”* Would this not calm and quiet your heart? Surely, such assurance would bring a great deal of peace. If you have faith to know that all comes from your Father in Christ—that nothing befalls you without His loving purpose—how could you not have rest and peace?

## **2. In Christ, the Curse Is Removed**

Second, there is rest in Christ because, through Him, the curse is removed from all afflictions. Christ has taken away the curse of affliction, and this alone brings rest to the soul. Faith in Christ teaches believers to “worm” afflictions, so to speak—to remove the sting from them. The true burden in affliction is the curse that lies within it, for all afflictions, in themselves, are part of the curse that comes upon humanity outside of Christ. The most troubling aspect of any affliction is the hidden curse that comes with it.

But when you come to Christ, although the outward form of affliction may remain as severe as before, the curse is removed. The sting that pierces the heart is taken away. Therefore, there must be rest for your soul.

Consider this: if a snake were to coil around your arm, you would naturally be frightened. But if you knew for certain that the snake’s sting had been removed, you would no longer fear it—at least, not if

you were a wise person. A child or someone weak might still be afraid, but a wise person would know there is no danger. In the same way, O believer, when you come to Christ, the sting of all affliction is removed. While the affliction may still make noise, like a bee buzzing around your ears, if you knew the sting was gone, you would not be afraid. So it is with affliction—the core, the sting, the curse is removed when you come to Christ.

Just as a wound may cause great pain when a malignant core remains in it, but relief comes when that core is removed, so it is with affliction. Christ, like a skilled surgeon, removes the malignant core of affliction, the sting of the curse. You must exercise faith in Christ for this relief. And how can you do so? By looking to Christ, who bore the curse for you.

Christ bore the pain of affliction, the poverty, dishonour, and suffering, all with the curse upon Him. It is as if the law itself came to sting Christ, leaving its sting behind in Him. Therefore, for believers, the curse is removed. One insightful observation from the law of burnt offerings is that the burnt offering was to burn all night. This typifies that, during the "night" of your affliction, you are to exercise faith in Christ as the burnt offering. Even in the darkest, most painful nights of affliction, when you are restless and troubled, you can find rest by exercising faith in Christ, who bore the wrath of God on your behalf. This is where true rest is found.

In times of affliction, such as sickness, loss of estate, or the spoiling of goods, friends may come with comforting words, saying, *"You must be content, it is the hand of God, others are afflicted as well, and this is the portion of God's children."* While these are valid points to quiet the heart, they often provide cold and insufficient consolation. Simply telling someone they must endure affliction

cannot bring true rest to the soul unless they are directed to exercise faith in Jesus Christ. This is the key to comforting others during their troubles. Point them to Christ, who bore affliction and, through His death, took away the curse from all afflictions.

Yes, there may be a night of affliction upon you now, but remember, Christ is the burnt offering who burns all night to remove God's wrath from your afflictions. The most effective way to take the sting out of affliction is to exercise faith in Christ. In Him, the curse is removed, and with that removal comes rest for the soul.

Just as a sick person, writhing in pain and unable to rest, finds relief when a surgeon applies a salve to remove the malignant cause of their suffering, so too does a Christian find rest in affliction when they place their faith in Christ. By faith, they realise that Christ bore the curse of the law, and that curse has been taken away from all their afflictions. Once they have exercised faith in Christ, they can say, *"Now I see the sting of affliction is gone."*

As mentioned earlier, Christ is like the brazen serpent lifted up in the wilderness—the great ordinance of God to heal those who were stung by fiery serpents. All who looked upon the serpent were healed, for it was appointed by God for that purpose. In the same way, Christ is set up as God's appointed ordinance to take away the venomous sting of affliction for all who look to Him by faith.

Just as those who were stung by the fiery serpents felt intolerable pain, so do we feel the sting of affliction. But when they looked upon the brazen serpent, they found rest and healing. Likewise, the curse of God in affliction is the venom. Those who rave and despair in their afflictions, who are overwhelmed with discontent, should examine themselves to see if the curse of God is still upon them.

However, another person may be under the same affliction as you, yet they remain sweet, content, and praising God. You wonder how they can lie joyfully under such heavy burdens. The Lord has taught them how to take away the sting of affliction. He has shown them how to remove the curse, and by exercising faith in Christ, they find comfort and rest even in their troubles.

Thirdly, come to Christ, and you will find rest in your affliction because not only will the curse be removed, but you will also discover that no affliction will befall you except what is consistent with God's love. Indeed, all affliction will come from His love. The root of your affliction will be love, not wrath.

It is a great comfort to know that though afflictions may press hard upon you, they do not indicate a lack of God's love. You might think that only prosperity and deliverance from trouble show God's love, but the truth is, God's love may be just as present—if not more so—when He brings you into affliction. God's afflictions do not come out of revenge, as they do upon the wicked. The same affliction that stems from God's love for you may come from His hatred for another. While the outward afflictions may look the same, they are infinitely different in their source.

What matters is not so much what we see or feel but the principle behind what we experience. A gracious heart is always concerned with the root of its circumstances. If we receive a mercy, we should ask, *"What is the source of this? Does it come from Christ's love?"* Similarly, when affliction comes, we should ask, *"Is the root of this God's displeasure or His love?"* If we believe the affliction comes from His wrath, that is truly dreadful. But when we come to understand that its root is in God's love, that knowledge brings great joy, even in the midst of the affliction.



You may ask, "Doesn't God sometimes chastise His people for their sins? What if the affliction comes to me because of my sin—can I still find rest then?" It's true that if affliction comes as a trial, the root may indeed be love. But when my conscience tells me I have sinned against God, misused my estate, and failed to honour Him, and as a result, God has taken away my possessions—how can I view this as coming from His love?

To this, I answer: While it is certainly true that God chastises His people for their sins and offenses—this remains an unchanging truth, despite the vain and wanton ideas of some—still, even when God chastises for sin, the afflictions are rooted in love. They come from a principle of love, even at the very moment when God is chastising His people for their sins.

But you may ask, "Hasn't Christ already suffered for us? Doesn't this diminish the sufficiency of Christ's sufferings if God chastises us for sin?"

Yes, Christ has indeed suffered and, through His suffering, has absorbed all of God's revenging wrath and the curse of sin. However, this does not mean that God's fatherly discipline, His chastisement, is inconsistent with His love. God's wrath and His chastisements serve different purposes. Though Christ has borne the full wrath of God's justice, God can still chastise His people for their sins without any contradiction to His love. His chastisement is not an act of wrath but of fatherly correction.

Consider the example of Zacharias, as recorded in Luke 1. Because he did not believe, God made him dumb: "*For this cause, thou shalt be dumb.*" Similarly, though God's wrath has been absorbed by Christ, God may still chastise His people for their sin. Cannot a loving father chastise his child out of love? Indeed, not only can chastisement

stand alongside love, but it often flows *because* of love. A father who doesn't love his child might simply let him go his own way without discipline. But a father's chastisement is a sign of his care.

Thus, affliction may come out of love, even when it is a response to sin. For God not to chastise at all would be a sign of hatred, not love. The Scripture affirms this in Hebrews: "*If ye be not chastised, ye are bastards and not sons.*" Chastisement is, therefore, not a sign of rejection but of belonging.

You must learn to look upon God's chastening hand with faith, understanding that even in His displeasure, He loves you. These two things—displeasure and love—can coexist. God may be displeased with your sin, and with you for your sin, yet still love you, even in the very act where He displays His displeasure. He manifests His displeasure precisely because of His love for you.

Therefore, the people of God can find rest in all their afflictions, because those afflictions come from a place of love. When affliction comes, ask yourself, "Where does this come from?" If you can answer, "*It comes from love,*" then you can find rest. If, in your affliction, you can exercise faith in Christ and know that, through Christ, God loves you, you will find rest for your soul. This is the power of Christ's merit—that in all your afflictions, you can still experience the love of God. Nothing else will bring true rest. You can offer every argument to a suffering person in an attempt to quiet them, but it will be in vain unless they exercise faith in Christ. It is only through this faith that they can know, "*Here, even in this affliction, is the love of God.*"

Once you have that knowledge, it no longer matters whether you are in prosperity or adversity. If God gives you wealth, you know His love is in that. If He takes it away, His love is in that as well. If He gives

you health, you see His love. If He casts you into sickness, His love is still there. This, indeed, is the great mystery of godliness—a mystery that the heathens could never grasp.

**Fourthly**, we have rest in all afflictions through Christ because, through His merit, all afflictions are proportioned—both in their timing, duration, measure, and manner—by the infinite wisdom of God for the good of the believer. God arranges everything to be suitable to the condition you are in. Just as a wise physician understands the full condition of their patient at all times, and carefully measures every drop and dram of the prescribed medicine, making sure that no more is given than necessary, so too does God take care that your afflictions are perfectly tailored for your good. He ensures that the affliction comes at the right time, lasts only as long as needed to rid you of corruption, to work out evil, and to bring about your ultimate good. This is a mighty comfort and rest for your spirit.

If a patient knows they are dealing with a physician who is learned, wise, and experienced—someone who fully understands their physical state down to the smallest detail—they would feel at peace. Even if the medicine is bitter, knowing that it comes from such a careful and skilled hand brings rest to the soul. The physician doesn't trust others to prepare the medicine but weighs it out themselves, ensuring every detail is precisely right for the patient's condition. Wouldn't this give you a deep sense of peace and assurance, even if the treatment is difficult?

In the same way, by the eye of faith, you can behold God doing this for you. While God may use people and circumstances as instruments of affliction, He does not trust them blindly but oversees every detail Himself. He measures every trial, weighs every burden,

and observes every circumstance with care. When God afflicts the wicked, He doesn't bother with proportion, nor does He seek to do them good by it. But when He sends affliction to believers in Christ, He is careful to ensure that every drop is measured perfectly—timed exactly as He wills, and lasting no longer than necessary.

That Scripture in 1 Peter 1:6 is enough to quiet the soul in the face of any affliction: *"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations."* Notice the comforting words: "for a season" and "if need be." It's only for a little while, and only if there is a need. This blessed parenthesis, "if need be," is worth gold—it assures us that if there were no need, we would not experience even one moment of heaviness. This is what you must learn from this Scripture.

Wouldn't your soul find rest if, today, you could hear God speak through His Word, saying, *"If I did not see that there was a need, you would never experience even a minute of sickness in your entire life"*? That would surely give rest to your soul. And, even though there is a need, it is only for now, for a little while. The original text doesn't even use the word "season," but simply "a little now," and *if* there is a need. So, you can be assured that you will not experience even a brief period of heaviness unless there is a need for it. Truly, this provides great rest.

## Chapter 43

The Rest believers have from Christ in outward afflictions discovered in four particulars more:

1. They shall be for good ends.
2. They shall be sanctified to the good of believers.
3. God is present with His people in Christ.
4. There is an abundance of present good in affliction.

**Fifthly**, *Come to me*, says Christ, and you shall have rest in your affliction, for your afflictions will serve very good purposes. God will never bring affliction upon you without gracious ends in mind. He has something in view, a purpose, that He aims to accomplish, more than you can imagine. The thought of this should bring great rest to the soul. We cannot always understand what specific ends God has in the trials of His people, but we must rest in the knowledge that He certainly has gracious ends.

Consider the current troubles in the nation, with many godly people suffering loss, being wounded, and enduring great hardship. We might think this is merely the result of the rage of wicked men. Yet, surely, God has gracious purposes in all this, and He is working to bring about something glorious, even if we cannot understand it now. Only those who are acquainted with the mind of Christ can be satisfied in knowing that when God brings trials, He has glorious purposes to accomplish. Why, then, should I not be willing to serve God's ends, even through affliction? For what other reason was I made and brought into this world but to serve God and fulfil His purposes? If God has need of my affliction, so to speak, why should I not be at peace with it? My affliction can serve God's ends. This is what I profess—to be serviceable to God and His purposes. If your heart is right in this, then you must not dictate to God how He should bring about His purposes in your life.

Sometimes God will fulfil His purposes through your prosperity. At other times, He will do so through your affliction. Now, if your heart is truly gracious, you will be as willing for God to be glorified through your affliction as through your prosperity. This is what a gracious heart rejoices in. Therefore, if your heart is right, then when God takes away your estate and brings you into affliction, you can be at peace, knowing that God is being glorified through your lack. Though you may think God can be better served through your prosperity, know that He has glorious ends to accomplish and often uses the sufferings of His people to achieve them. This should bring rest and quiet to your spirit.

**Sixthly**, *Come to me*, says Christ, and you shall have rest in trouble and affliction—not only because you will be serving God's purposes but also because all your afflictions will be sanctified for your own good. God intends that your afflictions will have a sanctified use, and this is even more than the removal of the curse. Sanctification implies a mighty work of God in affliction, drawing good from it for your soul.

This is a vast subject, showing the sanctified use of affliction: the purging of corruption, the quickening of grace. Even if affliction only serves to try your faith, that alone should bring peace to your soul. For the Scripture says that *the trial of faith is more precious than gold* (1 Peter 1:7). The exercise of grace, especially the grace of faith, in affliction is of far greater worth than all the prosperity in the world. If God should give you a kingdom, it would not compare to the value of exercising faith in affliction. You may have lost your land, your house, and your goods, but God is now putting you in a position to exercise faith more than ever. Know that the exercise of one grace is more valuable than a kingdom, more precious than all worldly prosperity.

Friends may offer you comfort in your affliction, but do you feel that your affliction is being sanctified to your soul? Do you find your heart drawn closer to God? Are you seeing your heart more clearly, purging corruption, and being quickened in the ways of God? This will bring true rest to your soul. For as you have heard, sanctification is rest for the soul. Therefore, the sanctification of affliction must also bring rest to the soul.

**Seventhly**, God is with His people in times of affliction through Christ. You have the presence of God in your affliction—His gracious presence comes only through His Son. No one comes to the Father except through Christ, and likewise, the Father comes to no one in a gracious way but through Christ. God's gracious presence will be with His people in His Son. "I will be with you in the fire and in the water," He says, and that is enough for the soul to rest upon. Isaiah 43:2 declares, *"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 burned, nor shall the flame kindle upon you, for I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour."* So, God promises His presence to support His people. As you have heard, all the promises are *"yea and amen"* in Christ. They are all fulfilled in Christ, and thus, rest in affliction comes through Him.

Consider the rest found in Christ in times of sickness, as described in Psalm 41:3: *"The Lord will strengthen him on his bed of illness; you will sustain him on his sickbed."* You may not be able to rest or feel comfortable when sick, but here is a promise that God will make your bed in your sickness, and even if the bed is hard, you can still lie in comfort if God makes it for you. God promises to make the bed of His people in times of sickness and trouble—what an expression of His love and tenderness toward them! If you find no rest, it is

because you have not embraced the promises or exercised faith in them. Such promises can bring rest to the soul when no other means of rest is available.

Likewise, consider the many comforting Scriptures for those suffering poverty. The Lord has special regard for the godly poor. James 2:5 tells us, *"Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith?"* The Gospel is preached to the poor, and Jesus Himself was made poor so that through His poverty, we might become rich. If poverty troubles you, remember that Christ experienced poverty for your sake. Exercise faith in His poverty, for He had no place to lay His head, and by doing so, you can find comfort in your own poverty.

Similarly, the Scripture offers comfort in times of dishonour. Matthew 5:11 says, *"Blessed are you when men shall speak all manner of evil against you falsely, for My name's sake."* Peter echoes this, saying, *"Blessed are you when you suffer reproach, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you."* All these promises, made to us in Christ during affliction, offer rest for the soul. However, carnal hearts do not value the promises of the Gospel and dismiss them as poor comfort, but those who know God understand that the Gospel's promises bring abundant comfort and sweetness.

**Eighthly**, Christ brings an abundance of present good to the hearts of believers, which swallows up all the bitterness of affliction. Consider this: if you had a small amount of vinegar, but a quart of the sweetest liquid were added to it, you would no longer taste the vinegar. In the same way, when a soul comes to Christ and exercises faith in Him, the present good that Christ brings is enough to sweeten all things and satisfy the soul. Christ sets up a light in the heart so that even in the midst of darkness, the soul has light. Though surrounded by darkness, the soul finds such satisfying



contentment in Christ that it overcomes all the bitterness of affliction. As David said, "*My soul, return to your rest.*"

Indeed, for believers who exercise faith, all afflictions become as insignificant as the sound of rain on the roof of a warm, comfortable house. Just as a poor woman married to a great prince, surrounded by wealth and comfort, would not be disturbed by the rain rattling on the roof, so a believer, united with Christ and enjoying communion with Him, finds satisfaction in Christ that overshadows all outward troubles. If you are troubled by the world, it means you are not yet fully acquainted with the blessedness found in Christ. A soul truly acquainted with Christ will say, "I have enough." Regardless of what happens to my estate, my body, or my possessions, I have enough in Christ.

How many of the blessed martyrs have testified to the fullness of rest they found in Christ? I recall a German martyr who, despite enduring great suffering, declared, "I truly believe there is not a merrier heart in this world than mine." Just as Jacob had blessed visions while lying on a stone in the night, so too, God's children often experience more of His presence in times of affliction. Their souls are filled with joy, just as a man full of good food can better endure hardship. When the soul comes to Christ, He fills it with heavenly consolations, which bear up the soul against any trouble or affliction. This is the peace and rest that Christ offers to the soul.

## **Chapter 44**

## Conclusion of the Last Doctrine in the Two Former Chapters, Showing How Unbefitting It Is for a Believer to Be Troubled in Affliction

There might be many other things mentioned, such as the fact that by coming to Christ, the spirit of prayer is given, and so the soul finds rest when it can pour itself out to God in prayer. But to bring this to a conclusion:

You can now see, from all that has been said, how utterly unbefitting it is for a believer—one who professes to have come to Christ—to be troubled in affliction. Christ makes this promise, that if anyone comes to Him, they shall have rest. Surely, if you do not have rest, it is either because you have not truly come to Christ, or you have not exercised faith in Him. Either you must charge yourself with not having come to Christ, or with not having exercised faith in Him, or else you are charging Christ with unfaithfulness through your discontentment. For Christ openly declares to the world that all who come to Him will have rest.

If you do not have rest, and if even a little trouble disquiets you, the fault must lie in one of these areas: either you have not come to Christ, you are not exercising faith, or you are implicitly accusing Christ of being unfaithful. Now, if you lack rest, upon whom or what will you place the blame? Oh, let the blame fall on your unbelieving heart! Let it be due to your failure to renew the act of coming to Christ. This passage is not merely speaking of a one-time coming to Christ, but of a continual, renewed act of coming to Him. This exhortation applies to godly men and women who have already come to Christ by faith. It belongs to them to continue coming to Christ, again and again.

Your disquiet and trouble in times of affliction reveal that you are either not a believer at all or have not renewed the act of faith. My brothers and sisters, the behaviour of many, whom we hope are believers, often suggests that they see no use for faith in times of affliction, or that faith is only useful for saving their souls, not for giving rest to their souls here in this world. They seem to treat faith as something useful only in times of prosperity, like a sundial in a garden that shows the time of day only when the sun is shining. But in stormy, cloudy weather, they see no use for it.

Do you make no more use of your faith than of a sundial, which is only useful when the sun is shining? Faith should be your guide even in the darkest, cloudiest days. It should tell you how things stand between God and your soul, even in the worst times. Therefore, having now learned where rest can be found in the midst of outward afflictions, go and seek it there. You fret and trouble yourself because you do not have what others have—because others have rich tables, fine houses, and all the comforts of this world. But now, the Lord has shown you a way to find rest for your soul in times of poverty. Labor to know Jesus Christ, who was made poor for you. There is as clear a path for you to come to Christ as for the richest person in the world, and Christ will be just as ready to welcome you as He would the richest.

It is possible that all your efforts in this world may never make you wealthy. But nothing else—neither wealth nor any worldly achievement—can give you rest in this life. Only by coming to Christ can you find rest. Above all, let this help you prepare for times of trouble, so that no matter what happens in this world, you may have rest for your soul in Christ.

# Chapter 45

## On Believers' Inward Afflictions and Spiritual Desertions

I shall now speak of the rest that Christ provides to the soul in regard to inward afflictions, particularly spiritual desertions. These desertions occur when the Lord chooses to withdraw Himself from the souls of His people, leaving them in a state of spiritual darkness. Although they are believers and have a rightful interest in Christ, they may be left for a time by God, resulting in extreme sorrow, fear, and trouble in their spirits because of His absence. Indeed, no affliction compares to this; no condition is as restless as being deserted by God.

This type of affliction is something that not everyone understands. Carnal people may dismiss these spiritual desertions as mere imaginations, conceits, or melancholy, but the saints know that they are among the most real and grievous afflictions. For God to withdraw His presence from His people is a profound trial.

We read of such an affliction in the life of a godly man, Heman, who penned the 88th Psalm. As you can see from the title, it was a song or psalm for the sons of Korah, addressed to the chief musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, a maschil of Heman the Ezrahite. Heman was one of the greatest men who experienced these spiritual desertions. If you read through this psalm, you will find that although he was a deeply godly man, he was severely afflicted with spiritual desertions and afflictions. The Lord withdrew the comforts of His Spirit from him.

In verse 1, he cries, *"O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee."* In verse 3, he says, *"My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave."* Verse 4 continues, *"I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength."* And in verse 7, *"Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves."*

What a strange expression this is for a godly man! Moreover, outward afflictions were mingled with his spiritual troubles. Verse 8 says, *"Thou hast put mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth."* His afflictions were so deep that he felt abandoned by his friends and trapped in his sorrow. Verse 13 shows his continued crying to God: *"But unto thee have I cried, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee."* Yet, he still feels deserted, asking in verse 14, *"Lord, why castest thou off my soul? Why hidest thou thy face from me?"*

God had indeed hidden His face from Heman, and in verse 15, he describes his lifelong experience with affliction: *"I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted."* In verse 16, he continues, *"Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off."* These are intense expressions of suffering from a man of God.

When we read this psalm and understand that it is written by a godly man, we are reminded of the scripture that says, *"If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"* (1 Peter 4:18). If a wise and godly man like Heman, one of the wisest men on earth as mentioned in 1 Kings 4:31, could experience such deep spiritual affliction and the hiding of God's face, how can we claim that our condition is worse than anyone else's?

In 1 Kings 4:31, Heman is described as being second only to Solomon in wisdom, yet he was overwhelmed by the terrors of God upon his spirit. So, let none of you say that your condition is worse than anyone else's when God withdraws Himself and afflicts you. When such thoughts arise, remember Psalm 88. When you are burdened with great grief, sorrow, and trouble, and you think that your suffering is greater than that of others, go and read Psalm 88.

As Martin Luther would say, when in trouble, sing the 46th Psalm. Similarly, when you are in sorrow and grief, say, "*Let us go and read Psalm 88,*" and remember that it was penned by Heman, a godly man, who endured deep affliction. In doing so, you will see that your condition is not as sorrowful as his was.

## **Chapter 46**

Containing Seven Directions on how a Believer may find Rest in Christ during Spiritual Desertions.

First, look upon Christ as once in the same condition.

Secondly, look to Christ as full of grace and goodness.

Thirdly, look to Christ as an advocate at the right hand of God.

Fourthly, look to Christ for fulfilling the promise of sending the Comforter.

Fifthly, go to Christ as you did at first in your conversion.

Sixthly, keep good thoughts of God.

Seventhly, resolve never to seek rest in anything else but Christ.

Well, though your condition may be as bad as his, there is still rest in Christ for you, and Christ calls you to come to Him so that He may give you rest. I need not spend time explaining what this rest is in Christ in this particular case, as it is contained in what has been said before—deliverance from the guilt of sin, the burden of the Law, the remainder of corruption, and the like. These things, if they were made good to the soul, might give rest. But now, all I intend to show is what course the burdened sinner must take in this case to find rest in Christ. The soul is delivered from the guilt of sin and the wrath of God, even though it cannot perceive the love of God and the pardon of the guilt of sin, yet it has it already.

Now, to help such a deserted soul in this condition, so that it may begin to benefit from the good that is to be found in Christ, I offer these directions for gaining ease in such a grievous condition.

First, labour to exercise your faith upon Christ, as one who was once in the same condition, in some degree and measure, as you yourself are. This is a good approach for one experiencing spiritual desertions. I say, look upon Christ as one who, for the present, was in this affliction, for Christ was deserted, and this brings a great deal of rest to the soul in outward afflictions. If one who is in poverty exercises faith upon Christ, who was poor—as I told you before, "The foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head"—to exercise faith upon Christ as poor helps to give ease and rest to the soul under the burden of the affliction of poverty. So, when a soul feels the burden and trouble of spiritual desertions, the soul should look up to Christ as one who was under such desertion. When He was in the garden, He professed that His soul was heavy to the point of death, and He began to be amazed at the apprehension of the wrath of God.

Now, when you are in combat and strife in your spirit with temptation, know that Christ was in such combat and strife. He sweat drops of blood. It may be that the soul is in combat and trouble and turns to prayer, and the soul is in a sweat. Remember what sweat Christ was in when God withdrew Himself from Him, and especially when He was upon the cross. There He tells you plainly that He was forsaken: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" You may think that God has withdrawn Himself from you, but He will not withdraw Himself from you so much as from His Son in one regard, for you do not have such a dreadful apprehension of God's withdrawal as Christ had, for Christ would never have cried out otherwise, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

This was a real thing. Christ did not speak uncertainly; He felt a withdrawal of the influence, sweetness, and comfort of the Lord. Though He still had union with Him by nature, and He was His Father as before, the human nature did not feel the influence of the grace, sweetness, and shine of God's favour as at other times. Therefore, He cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Exercise your faith upon Christ as one who was in spiritual desertions. It is true that Christ perhaps did not determine that He was utterly forsaken, as you may do, but Christ was apprehensive of God's withdrawal, and therefore this may bring ease and rest to your soul. And even more so, because His being forsaken was to sanctify your being forsaken, it was to take away the curse of those desertions that you experience. Such desertions, in any afflictions materially, are a curse; they are things which, in their own nature, are a curse. Christ being so forsaken by the Father takes away the curse that is in spiritual desertions. There is no better way for the soul that is in spiritual desertions than to look up to Christ and to consider that Christ was forsaken for your sake, that Christ was forsaken for you, so that you might not be eternally forsaken.



Thus, there are these three things in looking up to Christ as forsaken. First, you see that the Lord, the beloved Son of God, was forsaken by God. Secondly, you may see the merit of this, that it was to sanctify your forsaking, so that your forsaking might not be a curse to you. Thirdly, it was so that you might not be eternally forsaken by God, so that by exercising your faith upon Him, you may find a great deal of rest and ease to your soul. A carnal heart, when it finds this terror of spirit, runs to company, music, good cheer, and the business of the world. But a gracious heart runs to Christ and goes to Him who was thus forsaken by the Lord for him.

Secondly, if you are under the burden of spiritual desertions, then look up to Christ as being such a Mediator who is full of grace and goodness. There is such a fullness of the grace of God in Him as makes Him a sufficient object for the faith of adherence, even when He cannot be, for me, an object of the faith of evidence. I say, we are to exercise faith upon Christ when we are under this burden of spiritual desertions. We are to look upon Christ as being the fullness of the Godhead, full of all the treasures of grace and goodness. He has so much of the grace and mercy of God in Him as to make Him a fit object of the faith of adherence, though He is not now, for me, an object of the faith of evidence.

**Question:** You might ask, "What is the meaning of that?"

By the *Faith of Evidence*, I mean that I am able to say Christ is mine, and I have an argument to persuade my conscience that He is mine. That is the Faith of Evidence. Yet, there is enough in Christ to draw forth the soul to rest upon Him from the *Faith of Adherence*. This is how: Though I cannot draw arguments to rely upon Christ as mine, yet I will cleave to Him and adhere to Him. I know there is no help but here, and therefore here I will cleave and cling. This is the Faith

of Adherence. Now, because there is so much grace in Him, Christ may be a great object of your Faith of Adherence, even when He cannot be an object of the Faith of Evidence. This is a way to help the soul in times of spiritual desertion. Many poor souls, when under spiritual afflictions and desertions, think they can only rest upon Christ by the Faith of Evidence. When they have evidence in their souls that Christ is theirs, from the fruits of grace in them, then they rely upon Him. But learn now that there is such a thing as the Faith of Adherence. Christ may appear to a soul as a fit object for the Faith of Adherence, even when He cannot be for it an object of the Faith of Evidence.

**Thirdly**, another help for the soul under spiritual desertions is this: the soul, in this case, should exercise faith upon Christ as an advocate who is at the right hand of the Father, pleading the cause of His people. That Scripture you have often heard, from 1 John 2:1, says, *If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father.* Christ is at the right hand of the Father as an advocate for you, as we showed when we spoke of the rest of the soul from the guilt of sin. So now, when you do not sense the love of God towards you, exercise your faith upon Christ, knowing that He is at the right hand of the Father, pleading for poor sinners. In Jeremiah 50:34, the text says, *Their Redeemer is strong; the Lord of Hosts is His name. He will thoroughly plead their cause so that He may give rest to the land.* It is true that this refers literally to the outward rest of God's people, delivering them from the captivity of Babylon, and here is a promise: their Redeemer is strong, and the Lord of Hosts shall thoroughly plead their cause. They were carried into Babylon, and they were scorned, contemned, and despised. They said, "Where is their Lord of Hosts?" Now here is the promise: their Redeemer will come and thoroughly plead their cause, give them rest in their land, and trouble the inhabitants of Babylon.

This promise applies to our outward troubles today, in regard to our adversaries. Even though the Lord may allow them to prevail sometimes, yet He has shown Himself at hand to plead His cause, and there is no doubt that He has thoroughly pleaded the cause of His people. When the adversaries began to lift up their hands against them, when they insulted because of the recent defeat that God gave us, the Lord has already begun to strike them back, and I hope we shall hear further of it. But what is true literally is also true spiritually: the Lord will redeem from spiritual captivity, and this Redeemer is the Lord of Hosts. He will give them rest. He is at the right hand of the Father, thoroughly pleading the cause of His poor servants. When accusation comes before the Father against the soul, the Lord Christ stands at the right hand of the Father and thoroughly pleads their cause.

**Fourthly**, in your spiritual desertion, you must look up to Christ to seek the fulfilment of His promise that He made to His disciples, to send them the Comforter. When Christ was about to leave His disciples, He said, "Be of good cheer; I will send the Comforter to you." And so, be of good cheer. Christ comforts His disciples in His absence. He was about to leave them in terms of His bodily presence. Christ was so careful of His poor servants that when He was about to leave them bodily, He assured them that He would send the Comforter to them. That is, the Holy Ghost would come even more fully and manifest Christ to them. Now plead this promise of the Lord Christ in times of spiritual desertion, saying, "Oh, blessed Redeemer, were you careful of your disciples when you were about to leave them bodily, that you would send the Holy Ghost to testify of you and reveal you to them and bring things to their remembrance? Oh, much more will you have compassion on a poor soul, from whom you are absent in a spiritual way. It is a greater affliction to lack you, O blessed Redeemer, in a spiritual way than to lack your bodily

presence. Therefore, there is a much greater need for the Comforter to come now, to supply the lack of your spiritual presence than of your bodily presence."

**Fifthly**, in the time of spiritual desertion, if you cannot find any evidence at all, nothing to satisfy your soul, then go to Christ in the very same way that you went to Him at first. It is better to do this than to lie grovelling and sinking under your burden. If you think that you still have nothing, that all is lost, and the like, then go again to Christ in the same way as you did at the beginning. You are not in a worse condition now than you were then, when you were an enemy, and you found ease and rest in Him at first. Now, renew the work that was in your soul at the very beginning.

There are many people, in times of spiritual afflictions and desertions, who spend so much time looking for old evidences, whereas the truth is, they could gain new ones sooner than they could find the old. Sometimes, a person may spend far more time searching for an old key to a box than it would take to make a new one. He might make a new key with much less trouble, and it would not be so much of a disadvantage to him to have a new key made as to look for the old one. He may search up and down and waste a great deal of time that could be better spent making a new key. So it is with the soul in times of trouble and spiritual desertion. It searches for its old evidence, and for this or that work of grace, but cannot find them, and continues fretting until it can find those former signs and marks it once had. I say, such a person may sooner gain new evidences than recover the old ones. If a man has written documents and cannot find one, he may find it cheaper to have new ones written than to search for the old ones. So, if you lack the evidences of your grace and cannot find them, I say, renew your grace upon Christ once

more, and you may get your evidence written afresh with less effort than it would take to look for the old ones.

**Sixthly**, be sure in the time of desertion to keep good thoughts of God. Even though you find no comfort in them at the present, yet believe that there is comfort in Christ. Whatever becomes of you, acknowledge Christ to be faithful. Christ is to be your Lord and King, so let your heart love Him and strive, at the very least, to do so. It is true, the sense of His love will inflame love again, yet, at that time when you cannot feel the sense of His love, still resolve to love Him and love His ways.

You know Christ, when God seemed to forsake Him, yet at that time, when He was on the cross, when His human nature could not but feel the need for God's presence, He cried out, "My God, my God." And so it is in Psalm 88, with the example of Heman: *O God of my salvation*. He speaks well of God even then and still calls Him the God of his salvation: *O God of my salvation*. So, keep good thoughts of God. And similarly, in the Song of Songs, when Christ had withdrawn Himself from the Church, yet she still called Him her beloved and went about asking for Him: *Where is my beloved?* So, let the soul in times of desertion keep good thoughts of God.

**Seventhly**, and lastly, if you cannot find rest in Christ, resolve that you will never find rest in anything else, that your heart shall remain restless until you find rest in Christ. Perhaps in the time of desertion, someone will come to you and say, "Christ has forsaken you. Go and find comfort elsewhere; look for it elsewhere." Or perhaps the tempter will come to a poor deserted soul, just as he did to Christ in Matthew 4. When Christ was hungry, the tempter came to Him and said, *Command these stones to be made bread*. It was as if the tempter were saying, "Do you not see how your Father has forsaken

you, that He will not even provide you with bread? Take matters into your own hands." So it is for a troubled soul. The soul is troubled, the Lord has withdrawn from it, and now the tempter comes and says, "You see, you cannot find comfort. You have prayed all this time, and yet you cannot find comfort, peace, or rest. Now, therefore, seek rest elsewhere." Oh, take heed of this! A deserted soul should abandon such temptations and resolve to remain in a restless condition for all eternity if it cannot find rest here.

It is like those who carry out evil tasks—if there is any breach between a father and child or between friends, they take advantage of it. They say, "Do you not see how your father cares nothing for you, though you are in such need? He will neither regard you nor help you. Come, then, and take my advice, and I will show you how you can live a better life." Just as those who sow discord take advantage of breaches, so does the devil. When the Lord has withdrawn from the soul, and the soul is in a deserted condition, then the devil comes to draw the soul to unlawful ways. He will be sure to take advantage and do all the evil work he can between God and the soul. Therefore, let those who are in such a condition beware of such temptations.

And these, then, are the helps for those who are under the burden of spiritual desertions. There is enough in Christ to help them, and by observing these, they may come to find rest in Jesus Christ.

## **Chapter 47**

*Shows that believers have not only rest in afflictions, but also rest from afflictions.*

But now further, beyond all the rest you have heard of, there is a time when the Lord will not only give the soul rest *in* afflictions, but shall give the soul rest *from* afflictions; indeed, this may even happen in this world. Scripture speaks as if there were a rest for the people of God, a deliverance from affliction, not only in affliction but from affliction. Consider the passage in Isaiah 54:11: *O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.* You are now afflicted, tossed, tempted, and not comforted, but it shall not always be so.

It is true that the Church, ever since the beginning of the world, has been in an afflicted condition, tossed with tempests and not comforted, not in the manner described here. However, there is a promise of a glorious time when a sure foundation shall be laid, and that foundation will be of precious stones, and there will be rest. If you compare this Scripture with Revelation 21, you will see it points to a glorious time when Christ shall give rest to the soul. In verse 4 it says, *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.* And if you read further, you will find that it seems to allude to Isaiah 54. It describes what those precious stones shall be, which will form the foundation of the happy estate of God's saints. This is not referring to heaven, but to a time before the great and general day of judgement.

This is made plain by the text, which says that *the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour to it* (verse 24). *The nations of*

*them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour to it.* This speaks of a time when the Church shall be in such a state that the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honour to it. After the day of judgement in heaven, the kings of the earth do not bring their glory and honour to the saints in heaven; rather, they bring their glory and honour to the saints here on earth. This prophecy speaks of a blessed condition for the saints, when the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour to them. Therefore, this promise of a glorious time for the saints, when all tears will be wiped away from their eyes, applies to this world. It seems to refer to the same time spoken of in the previous chapter, Revelation 20, concerning the first resurrection. After that time, the Devil will be loosed, and Gog and Magog will gather themselves together against God's people. But before that, there is a rest to be had from all affliction, even here on earth, to be hoped for when the saints of God will be honoured before all the world, and all wicked and ungodly men will be subdued before them.

Beyond this, there is certainly a rest of glory in the world to come, which must be added to all the other forms of rest. This is when the saints will keep an eternal Sabbath before the Lord, continually engaged in praising, magnifying, and blessing the great God.

**Question:** You may ask, "Shall that be a rest while performing holy duties?"

Yes, it shall indeed be a rest, for there will be no weariness of the flesh. The soul will be in a spiritual condition, and the flesh will be subservient to the soul. There will be no weariness in the flesh as it enjoys communion with God, beholds blessed visions of Him, and dwells in the Father's house above all enemies. There will be no more



sin, no more sorrow, no more fear, no more doubt, no more trouble. This is the rest that the soul shall have in Christ. I have no doubt that Christ means this among other things when He says, "Come to me." However, to speak of this glorious rest is a vast subject, and elsewhere I have discussed in detail what the glory of the saints shall be in heaven, so I shall not elaborate further here.

Now then, considering all I have said concerning this rest, may we not conclude that this rest, indeed, deserves the epithet found in Isaiah 11:10: *In that day, there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand as an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and His rest shall be glorious.* Here it speaks of the rest of Christ—*His rest shall be glorious.* We may well apply this to the rest of the saints, for the saints shall have a glorious rest. I have shown you many particulars, wherein this rest has been opened to you, so that you may see it is indeed a glorious rest.

## Chapter 48

### *Five Marks of True Rest in Christ.*

- I. It is only upon the discovery of glorious things the soul did not know before.
- II. It comes when the soul ceases from its own work.
- III. It makes the believer active for God.
- IV. Rest in those things wherein Christ rested.
- V. True rest will withstand the trial of the Word.

You may say, "Oh, that we only knew that this was our rest, that we did not presume, but were sure that the rest we have in Christ is a true rest." Now, I have already told you that there is a faith of adherence that might bring rest, even if there is not a faith of evidence. But you may say, if we could have both—a faith of evidence as well as a faith of adherence—it would add much to our rest.

Now I will help you with some notes by which you may examine whether the rest you have is the glorious rest spoken of here. And I shall do two things, for although many of God's servants in this world experience much trouble of spirit, even with this glorious rest, I shall give you further rules on how to make use of the rest that is to be found in Christ, and also some rules on how to keep the rest when the Lord Christ gives you rest.

**First**, the evidences to know whether your rest is indeed the right rest that is in Christ.

**First**, this rest in Christ can never occur without the great discovery of glorious things that the soul was not acquainted with before. Many people go on quietly in their way and think that their rest is Christ's rest. But how will it be shown that this is truly Christ's rest? It will appear that they have had weak foundations to stand upon, only relying on what they possess naturally. They live quietly among people, and the created world does not trouble them, and they avoid troubling themselves with their own thoughts. But now, I appeal to your soul—what discoveries have you had of the glorious things of the covenant of grace and the covenant of life, in the ways that God has used in His eternal counsels to reconcile God and your soul? What discoveries of God's ways have you experienced that have drawn your heart to Christ? Your rest must come from these. These must be the means to bring your soul to rest. If your rest comes from

blindness, ignorance, and deadness of spirit, it is far from the true rest in Christ.

**Secondly**, the rest that the soul has in Christ is what the Apostle speaks of in Hebrews 4. It comes upon the soul ceasing from its own work, as God ceased from His (verse 10): *For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.* As God rested on the seventh day from all His works, this is the sign of the rest in Christ: *There remains therefore a rest for the people of God, for he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.* He compares the rest that the soul has in Christ to God's rest on the seventh day. Now, he says, as God ceased from His work that He completed on the sixth day and rested on the seventh, so whoever enters into this rest must cease from their own works. What does that mean? The works that a person does for themselves. In their natural state, every person does not work for God at all but works for themselves. Now, he says, just as God ceased from His work and rested, those who enter into this rest must cease from their own works, the works of sin they lived in and performed for their own ends while they were in their natural state.

So examine yourself: have you ceased from your own works? Do you no longer work for yourself in all your ways? Are you no longer living for yourself and all created things? Perhaps you do some work, but materially, it is nothing of God's. You may pray and profess religion, but it is still your own work. But if you have entered into this rest, you must cease from your own works, not only from those works that are sinful in themselves, but you must also not work for yourself in the best things. You must be taken away from yourself in the best things and work for God's purposes, being emptied of yourself. Then

your soul shall have rest. That is both an evidence that your rest is true and a means to bring rest to your soul.

Take heed that your work is not your own work when you are doing anything. Ask yourself, "Is this my own work or God's work?" It is true, there was a time when all the work I did was for myself, and if there was any reason or motivation for it, I could work. If the work promoted my own ends, I would do it. This is the way of people in their natural state. But now, when the soul has entered into the rest of Christ, it has ceased from its own works. Therefore, even if there are no strong reasons or ends to persuade me to do a work, it is enough that it is the work of God, and God shall receive praise through it. I can now work as earnestly and strongly in God's work as I ever did any work for myself.

**Thirdly**, another mark of the true rest of the soul in Christ is this: the more rest you have in Christ, the more active you are for God. The false rest that the soul experiences makes it dull, secure, sluggish, and negligent. But the true rest in Christ makes the soul mightily active and energetic, causing it to do great things for God. It never had such an ability to work for God as it has now, after having found rest in Christ.

Many people are very active and energetic when their conscience is stirred; they will rise early in the morning, hear sermons, read the Bible, and pray fervently. But if they find any quiet and rest in their spirits, they grow lazy, dull, and secure, and are less active in the roles God has set them in than before. However, the soul that has true rest from Christ is more active and lively in God's work than it was before. As Archimedes said, "Give me a place to stand, and I will move the earth." So, when the soul once finds its footing in Christ and rests upon Him, it can do more for God than ever before.

I recall an example that illustrates this: while the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness and had no rest, God commanded Moses to build an altar for sacrifices of a certain size. But when Solomon later built an altar for God, it was twice the size of the one Moses built during the wilderness wanderings. I cannot recall the exact locations of these passages, but you will find that this is true: Solomon's altar was twice as large as Moses'. Why? Because the Israelites were in a restless condition in the wilderness, moving about, but when they came into the land of Canaan, where they had rest, the altar was twice as large, symbolising that they were to offer twice as many sacrifices as before.

Similarly, your soul was once in the wilderness, wandering restlessly. During that time, the altar of your sacrifices was small, but once God brings rest to your soul in Christ, your altar will be twice as large, and you will do much more for God than you did before.

**Fourthly**, another mark of true rest in Christ is this: if you have this rest, then the things that give Christ rest will also give you rest. If you have rest in Christ, whatever Christ finds rest in will also be your rest. What does Christ rest in? Christ finds rest particularly in three things: in His saints, in His ordinances, and in His Sabbaths. Now, if you have found true rest for your soul in Christ, then whatever gives rest to Christ will give rest to you.

First, consider the saints. Your soul will have rest in them and find contentment and peace in their company. In Zephaniah 3:17, the Holy Spirit says, *The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.* Is the company of the saints a rest to you, or is it rather a burden? To many, the company of the saints is

a burden, but when they are with their own worldly companions, then they feel some rest.

Second, consider the ordinances. In Psalm 132:13-14, speaking of Zion, it says, *For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.* In Zion, in ordinances, in duties, and in worship offered to God, there is rest. The Lord says, "Here is my rest forever, and here is my delight." Is your spirit most at rest when you are engaged in God's worship and ordinances? Even if you had peace and enjoyed your estate, could you find rest without God's ordinances? If your soul finds more rest in the ordinances than in anything else, then your rest is Christ's rest.

Third, consider the Sabbath. The Scripture tells us that the Sabbath is a day of rest, and for your soul, is the Sabbath a day of true rest? Many people find the Sabbath troublesome, especially when they are required to engage in holy duties such as prayer, hearing the Word, and similar activities. Suppose you were to pray in your closet, then in your family, ask questions of your children and servants, attend public worship, and then return home to examine your family on what they have learned. Then you would prepare yourself again for the ordinances and spend the entire day in prayer, hearing, and exercise. Would this not be a weariness to many of you? Would you not, like those in Malachi, say, *When will the Sabbath be over?*

Many count the Sabbath a rest simply because they cease from working, put on fine clothes, and walk in the fields. They consider that rest. Surely, such people are not acquainted with the rest that is in Christ. But if your soul is acquainted with this rest, then the Sabbath is but a type of that rest which you will enjoy in the highest

heavens. It is a symbol and a forerunner of the glorious rest you will enjoy hereafter.

**Fifthly**, if your soul has true rest, it is such rest as will stand the examination of the Word of God. Though the Word may pierce deeply, the more it touches your soul, the more rest you will find. In Hebrews 4, after the Holy Spirit speaks of the rest for the people of God, it says in verse 12: *The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

As if to say, if you enter into the rest of God's people, you will have such a rest that can endure the most thorough and penetrating examination of God's Word. The Word will search you through and through, and your rest will be such that it can withstand this search. It is a rest that comes by the Word. The more the Word searches, the more it quickens. It divides between the marrow and bones, and the more a true, gracious heart is searched, the more rest it finds.

## Chapter 49

Eight means to find and keep rest in Christ.

1. Beware of secret sins.
2. Be thankful for the good that God has given you.
3. Do not judge yourself in times of temptation.
4. In trouble, wait upon God while using the means He provides.

5. Meditate much upon the promises.
6. Let your humiliation be in proportion to your comfort.
7. Be thoroughly assured that you are in Christ.
8. Use the rest you have in Christ to do much work for Him.

**Objection:**

But you will say, despite all that you have spoken, many of God's saints, though they have been careful to follow your advice, still do not find this rest in Christ that you speak of.

**Answer:**

It is true. It is not enough just to be a believer, for one may be a believer and yet not have the evidence of the graces in Christ that brings rest to the soul. You may ask, "What should we do then?"

**First**, take care that no secret sin remains in your spirit. You need to examine yourself carefully because that will be a thorn in your flesh, troubling you. If there is any secret sin that you are living in, it will be like a thorn in your flesh, and you will not be able to be at peace.

**Secondly**, another thing that hinders the rest of believers is this: because they do not have all they desire, they fail to notice the good that God has already granted to them. They think they have nothing at all because they do not have everything they want. Now, be cautious of this. Though you do not have everything, take notice of what God has done for you and be thankful for it. We read of the women in the Gospels who went to seek Christ. They found angels and heard news of Him, even though they did not find Him at first. So, even if your soul does not find Christ immediately and you do not experience the full rest you desire, if you have any news of Him or any beginnings of God's work in your soul, take notice of it.



Should the women have said, "What is that to us that we find angels and hear news of Him? It is Christ that we seek"? No, they did not say that. Therefore, I say, bless God for whatever you have. It is more than others have, so bless God for it—that is the way to receive more.

**Thirdly**, never judge yourself based on how you feel during a time of temptation. It may be that you are under temptation or spiritual desertion. Do not judge yourself based on how you feel at such times.

For example, if a man has suffered long from a quartan fever or has been afflicted with a lingering disease like the pox, and then looks at himself and judges the state of his body by his appearance, this would discourage him. He should instead judge his condition when the disease is not upon him. In the same way, many poor Christians judge their condition when they are under the greatest temptation. No, you should rather judge your state as it is when you are most at peace, when God and your soul are together and free from temptation.

If a man were to weigh gold, perhaps the gold is just one grain heavier than it needs to be. But if you weigh it in a strong wind, the wind might blow the scale, making the gold appear too light. You might then think the gold does not weigh enough. Why? Because the wind is tossing the scale. But if you want to see whether the gold weighs correctly, you must weigh it in a place where the wind is still. So, if you want to weigh your spiritual condition accurately, do so when your spirit is most settled and calm—do not do it when temptation is tossing you about.

**Fourthly**, another help for believers to avoid the hindrance of rest is this: because their spirits do not have the rest they desire, they often grow impatient and trouble themselves more than God would have them. Here is a rule: labour to quiet your heart by waiting upon God

during times of discomfort, and labour to use whatever means God gives you to maintain a waiting spirit.

Isaiah 30:7 is notable for this purpose: *The Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, their strength is to sit still.* And again, in verse 15: *Thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: but ye would not.* Also, in Isaiah 52:12: *For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward.* There should not be a tumultuous, hurrying, and hasty spirit.

You may ask, "Can a person hurry too much in seeking the assurance of God's love in Christ?" The truth is, you make the best progress when, in the quiet and calm of your spirit, you wait upon God until He speaks to your soul. We should continue in the use of means until God, by His Spirit, seals assurance to our souls. Many reasons could be given to urge the soul to wait upon God, but I will move on.

**Fifthly**, another rule is this: be much in meditation upon the promises. Swallow down the promises, do not let them simply roll upon your tongue. Wicked men roll the promises upon their tongues, but they do not take them down. Just as when we take bitter pills, the way is to swallow them whole. When we take sweet things, we chew them. If a man were to chew his pills, he would quickly spit them out. In the same way, a godly man should not chew the "pills," that is, by meditating only on the threatenings of the Law. Rather, swallow down the "pills" by meditating upon the Gospel and the Covenant of Grace, and in this way, your soul may find rest in Christ.

When you have done all that you can, the only way is still to depend upon God in His ordinances and to pray for the Spirit. No evidence

that can be given will quiet the heart until that happens. But if the soul has gained this rest, what a serious matter it is to lose it again.

In Isaiah 26:20, it says: *Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment until the indignation is past.* What does it mean to "enter into our chamber"? It means to get into Christ, our hiding place. Then, shut the doors, meaning, take care not to parley with temptation. When the Lord has given you rest, and your rest has come through the Word, by applying the Word to your soul, then shut the door against temptation. Fears and jealousies may arise at that time, so shut the door against all surmises, fears, and jealousies, and rely on the Word. Let the Word be the rule for your fear as well as your comfort. Depend on one Scripture for your comfort, rather than on a thousand jealousies for your fear.

This is how you shut the door against temptation. Resolve: "Here I will stand. Here is the Word of God, which is sure and certain." The Devil will trouble you by knocking and rapping at the door, but let him knock as long as he pleases. You have a promise here, and you will trust your soul to this promise.

Many people, though they have received the promise, still open the door at every temptation. In times of danger, when someone knocks at your door, do you open it immediately? No, you send your servant to ask who it is, and they must give a good account of what they want and where they come from before you open the door. So, when temptation knocks at your soul, inquire what it wants and where it comes from. Does it come from God or from the Devil?

Many people think the Word is a rule for their faith, but they do not think it is a rule for their fear. You must have as good a warrant for rejecting any comfort offered to you as you have for accepting it. If

you follow that rule and never reject comfort unless you have a word to warrant it, you will find peace. If the Lord were to ask why you rejected certain comforts, and you replied, "I was afraid and filled with jealousy," what would you answer if God asked, "What word did you have for it?" This is what God will require of you, for it dishonours God's truth when you allow jealousies and fears to outweigh the Word of God.

**Sixthly**, again, let your humiliation be in proportion to your enlargement. As you find your heart enlarged with joy, at the same time, let your grace work downward in the way of humiliation. Keep a balance between your joy and your humility. Many people are enlarged in joy because of their union with Christ, but they are not humbled, and so their joy vanishes.

**Seventhly**, again, do not be satisfied merely that you are in Christ and a believer. Strive to be thoroughly grounded in Christ, for who knows what troubles and desertions you may encounter. Labour to root your soul and be established in Christ. Be a grounded Christian, and therefore, do not live by sense, but by faith, even when you do have sense.

**Eighthly**, lastly, use your rest for God. Be sure to do much work when the Lord gives you rest. Just as we say that outward peace brings plenty, so it is true that the peace God gives in our consciences, and the rest we have in Christ, should lead us to be plentiful in good works.

By following these rules—keeping the door shut against temptation, maintaining a balance between your joy and humility, not being content merely with being in Christ, but striving to be thoroughly grounded, rooting your soul in Christ, and using your rest for God's work—you will have abiding rest for your soul. You will be in your

chamber of rest, with the door shut, while the indignation passes by. You will have rest in times of evil, and all the troubles in the world will be like the sound of rain pattering on the tiles while you are safely inside the house. Indeed, the rest you have in Christ is but the forerunner of the glory you will have with Christ, which you should long for. When you face fears and troubles, you should pray: "O Lord Jesus Christ, fulfil the things you have promised to your servants, and give rest and peace to my soul."

**FINIS.**

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## **MONERGISM BOOKS**

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