



Monergism

**CAPTIVES BOUND  
IN CHAINS MADE  
FREE BY CHRIST  
THEIR SURETY**

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OR, The Misery of Graceless Sinners, AND Their Recovery by Christ  
their Saviour.

By THOMAS DOOLITTLE

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## **To the Congregation to whom these Sermons do belong,**

whether Bond or Free. Beloved and longed-for, my Joy and Crown;

The serious consideration of the immortality of your Souls; the captivity of many among you to Satan and to sin; the eternity you are approaching to; the necessity of being made free from spiritual bondage; the shortness and uncertainty of your abode upon earth; your capacity of being set at liberty by Christ (while you are on this side of the grave); the impossibility of redemption and deliverance from sinful and hellish servitude after death; moved me at first to preach these Sermons on this Subject to your congregation, and now to present them to your eyes; hoping that as having them in your hands to view what has been said unto you will be a help to your memories, so also a means to continue, further, and increase that sense of the evil of Soul-captivity, that sorrow that you had been Captives to Satan for so long, and those desires to change your Master, and have your fetters knocked off, and be brought into the

liberty of the Sons of God, by Christ the Son of God; all of which many of you (through the grace of God, for it was His work, and the glory thereof is due solely to Him) did manifest and declare; not only in your earnest desires for God's sake and for Christ's sake, that the congregation, if they had any love for, or pity for miserable enthralled Souls, would earnestly and fervently pray to God that the chains of sin, with which you had been held, might now be cut, and the bonds broken; but also in your private conversations with me: This is related here not that I may be accounted anything (for I know that I am nothing), or that I put any great esteem upon anything that I can do; for I judge myself, as to gifts or grace, or both, to be the meanest servant employed in the work of the Lord and service of immortal Souls: But that if God is pleased to work through a weak and simple man, the Glory might be ascribed unto Him.

Man at first was made the most noble and most excellent creature of all God's visible works; endowed with such powers that he was capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying God his maker as his happiness, felicity, and end; created free from sin and corruption, and free from sorrow and affliction; though not free from temptation, nor from a possibility of losing his freedom, yet he had a power and a liberty to have continued in that condition, without any necessity of coercion to depart from it.

But this free and noble creature, assaulted and set upon by the crafty and malicious Serpent, and left to the freedom of his own will, was prevailed upon, and overcome by Satan, to transgress the law of his maker, and violate his Covenant, proved an Apostate, and turned rebel against God that gave him his being, and that good condition in which he was created, who by the abusing of his liberty lost his freedom, and brought himself and all his posterity into a state of

slavery and bondage, out of which he was no way able to help himself.

Man lying in this pitiful plight, in this forlorn, miserable, and deplorable condition, the God of grace and mercy (of his mere grace and mercy) did commiserate, seek after him, find him out, and made known a way of Redemption for him, even by the Incarnation, Passion, and Crucifixion of his own Son; which he did more and more clearly in several ages disclose to the captive children of enthralled Adam; whereas he provided no Redeemer for fallen Angels, but where they fell, there they lie, bound in chains of darkness, without hope of help, or possibility of recovery to all eternity. Behold, you Captive Sons of men, a remedy for you, but not for Devils; for God sent not his Son to take upon him the nature of Angels, but the seed of Abraham; and that when the Apostatizing Angels sinned, and were falling down to hell, Christ did not take hold of them; but of man (when by reason of sin he was tumbling and sinking into everlasting misery) he did take hold, and snatched him from the flames of eternal burnings, from the curse of the Law, and from the intolerable wrath of an angry and provoked God.

This God and Saviour that did foresee your thralldom and bondage, did from all eternity agree and covenant between themselves in this way of Redemption to afford you succour and relief; that Christ should become your Surety, and be bound for you, that were bound, and died for you that should eternally have died, and set you at liberty by paying down a valuable ransom for you; of which you should be partakers if you turn from sin to God, from Satan to his Son, heartily consenting to take him for your Lord-Redeemer, for your Prophet, Priest, and King, to rule, instruct, sanctify and save you; resigning up yourselves and all you have and are to him, preferring him before all, loving him above all, believing in him, and

obeying him sincerely, constantly, and universally, without partiality, and sinful, secret reservations; and if you dislike him and do not accept deliverance from your bonds and fetters upon these conditions, you must lie and perish in your chains of sin and guilt forever.

This is that Redeemer that is preached, published, and offered to you: This is He, and He alone who can set you free, and if He does, you will be truly free; accept Him as He is offered, and deliverance and salvation have come to you; refuse Him, underestimate Him, or ultimately neglect Him, and you are captives without ransom, irrecoverably so. All of you by nature were in this state of spiritual captivity, and all of you now are either bound or free. For as there are but two destinations in the afterlife appointed by God to receive people's souls, namely, Heaven and Hell; so in this world, there are only two kinds of people (distinguished by their spiritual state): captives or free. Those who remain captives will be plunged into hell; the others will possess heaven. You can determine under which category you fall if you read, contemplate, search, and pray. If you find yourselves still captives, learn about your misery, the chains that bind you, and how to remove them by reading the first part of this small book. If you are free, kindle your hearts with love for your Redeemer and Surety, who paid the ransom for you, and learn how you are bound to heartfelt and everlasting gratitude for His mercy towards you, and to express it through a holy life as long as you live, consult the latter part of this Treatise. In all of this, I have attempted to use plain language, avoiding difficult words and technical terms, as well as controversies that could have been introduced into this subject—controversies about the power and will of man, about the Satisfaction of Christ, and similar matters. I have contented myself with what suits the purpose I had in preaching these sermons: awakening the conscience of captive sinners who are fast asleep in



their chains of iniquity and leading the less informed to recognize their need for deliverance through Christ. (As for those more knowledgeable, let them read the works of more learned men.) For if I can, in any way, help the weak and ignorant who cannot understand the elaborate works of the more judicious, I will consider it a great blessing. For even if I could, I dare not, when speaking in the name of God to immortal souls, ascend above the understanding of the simplest. The strong may humble themselves to the simplicity of plain words when the weak and ignorant cannot comprehend what is more profound. While crude and unpolished material is not suitable for anyone speaking to people about matters of eternal significance as they prepare to enter another world, I believe that he will have little comfort on the day when he stands and speaks one word for Christ and two or ten for himself, a little to exalt Christ and much to promote his own abilities. If anyone expects such things here, they may be disappointed, so I suggest setting aside such expectations. But my desire and prayer for this, in its straightforward form and style, devoid of all pompous words, when read by you or anyone else, is that it may be of benefit to you or them. This is the desire and shall be the prayer of the one who is

Yours for the Service of Your Souls, THO. DOOLITTEL.

March 18, 1674.

## **CHAPTER I**

## Containing the Explanation of the Text.

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 them that are bound. — to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.

These words, though true of the Prophet Isaiah, yet have a primary reference to Christ; who, going into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day, chose these words for His text and preached upon them, to the admiration of His hearers (Luke 4:18). He applied these words to Himself as chiefly intended (v. 21). Other holy men of God had the Spirit of the Lord upon them and it was imparted to them, by which they spoke (1 Peter 1:11; 2 Peter 1:21). But Christ had it in a more eminent manner and measure (Isaiah 11:2), "And 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 of the fear of the Lord." (Isaiah 42:1), "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." In fact, Christ had the Spirit more abundantly than all others (John 3:34), "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him."

All believers are anointed by God and have received a spiritual and holy anointing to some extent of sanctifying grace (2 Corinthians 1:21), "Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God." (1 John 2:20), "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." (1 John 2:27), "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that

any man should teach you [the grounds of Religion which ye have already learned, or any new Doctrines which ye have not already received], but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things (needful to be known in order to salvation or to preserve you from being deceived or drawn away by false Teachers) and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

Besides this anointing common to all God's people, there is a more special unction, whereby certain persons chosen and called by God for holy employment, are equipped and qualified with gifts and graces for the better discharge of their office, as typified in former times by material anointings (Leviticus 8:12), "And he poured the anointing oil upon Aaron's head and anointed him to sanctify him." But Christ was anointed in a more abundant manner and to a fuller measure than any other, being chosen, called, and appointed by God to the office of Mediator between God and man, which no other was capable of or suited for (Psalms 45:7), "Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Christ had a fullness of abundance (Colossians 2:3), "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:9), "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." And Christ had a fullness that overflows to His people, like the ointment upon the head of Aaron that ran down to the skirts of his garments (Psalms 133:2). So, there is a conveyance of grace and spiritual gifts from Christ to His members. He is like a fountain, overflowing yet never empty; sending forth its streams, yet always remaining full (Colossians 1:19), "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell." (John 1:16), "And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." Just as from the fullness of sin in the first Adam, we have all received sin for sin; likewise, from the fullness of grace in Christ, the second Adam, all God's people receive grace upon grace.

Christ was thus anointed "[to preach good tidings to the meek]." When man had sinned, sorrowful tidings were brought to him - cursed is the ground for your sake, tidings of toil and labor, tidings of death, and of the evils contained in the threatening, tidings of wrath and sore displeasure from a provoked God. Yet God Himself preached the first tidings of a Saviour to lost man (Genesis 3:15). When the Lord sent a message to Israel through Moses, that because they were a stiff-necked people, He would come into their midst and consume them, these were bad tidings, causing mourning (Exodus 33:4). The Prophet was sent to the wife of Jeroboam with heavy tidings (1 Kings 14:6). However, when man was in a lost condition, the revelation of a Saviour was the best and happiest tidings that could be brought to him. If God had said to man, "I will make you rich, but I will not forgive your sins; you shall live long in the world, but not eternally with me in heaven; you shall live on earth all your days in ease and pleasure, but after death in pain and torment," these would have been heavy tidings. But for God to say and send this news to lost man, "You have undone yourself, but I will help you; you have lost your soul, your God, your happiness, but I will restore you; I will give and send my Son to seek and save lost sinners," was this not joyful tidings? God sent His Prophets to proclaim these tidings to the world (Isaiah 52:7). Apostles came with these glad tidings (Acts 13:32). Angels also brought these tidings (Luke 2:10). The Angel said, "Fear not, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people." Not only were these tidings brought by Prophets, Apostles, and Angels, but by Christ Himself (Luke 8:1). He went through every village and city, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. David said of Ahimaaz, "He is a good man and brings good tidings" (2 Samuel 18:27). But we may say of Christ, "He is a good Saviour and brings the best tidings ever reported to the children of men." When Christ returned to heaven, He commissioned His ministers to preach and publish the same

tidings. Just as Cushite said, running in haste, "Tidings, my Lord the King" (2 Samuel 18:31), so we come to poor sinners, saying, "Tidings for you, poor perishing sinners, tidings; tidings from God, tidings from heaven." What? What are they? Are they glad tidings? Can sinners expect any glad tidings? Tell us, oh tell us, what are these tidings that you bring? What are they? Christ is a Saviour for lost sinners. Christ is a Physician for sick and wounded sinners. Pardon is available for guilty sinners. Peace is offered to troubled sinners; Life is given to condemned sinners; Heaven is opened for sinners deserving of hell. These, these are tidings that are brought to you! Oh, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things (Romans 10:15). But do you bring these tidings to great sinners of a scarlet die? Yes, if you repent, turn to God, and accept Christ on Gospel terms as Lord and Saviour, here are tidings in the Gospel brought by Christ Himself of pardon and salvation (John 3:16). But what if we do not? Has Christ brought any sad and heavy tidings? Yes, indeed, as you may read (Mark 16:16), "He that believeth not shall be damned." It was sad tidings when news was brought that the Ark was lost (1 Samuel 4:19). But oh, what heavy tidings it will be to the rejecters of mercy, to those who despise Christ and His grace when they are told, "Now your souls are forever lost, and God and Christ are forever lost, and the happiness of heaven is forever lost." In a word, Christ came primarily to preach good tidings to poor sinners. Yet He also brings terrible tidings to the unrepentant and unbelieving.

"He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted". When man, through sin, broke his covenant with God, he shattered his peace with God. All of humanity broke in Adam and became bankrupt. Although everyone is broken by sin, few are broken for sin. We all offer broken efforts in our duties, but few of us have broken hearts. Many people have broken finances due to poverty, and many bodies

are broken by age and illness, yet their hearts remain unbroken by their sins. The comforting news for broken-hearted sinners is that Christ Himself was sent to bind you up, to tend to and heal your wounded and broken hearts. Surgeons can set and bind broken and dislocated bones, but only Christ can mend and soothe broken hearts. When you break God's commandments through sin, He is deeply offended and provoked (Numbers 15:30), 'But the soul that doth ought presumptuously... the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall be utterly cut off, his iniquity shall be upon him.' However, when your heart is broken due to sorrow and repentance for breaking God's command, He is pleased with you (Psalms 51:17), 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' When you broke God's command, you despised God (2 Samuel 12:9). But when your heart is broken because of your sin, God will not despise your broken heart. Instead, He will come and bind and heal you (Psalms 147:3). He will come and revive your contrite spirit (Isaiah 57:15). He will come near to you and save you (Psalms 34:18). In summary, if you are broken by your sins, you will not perish from the wounds inflicted on your soul by sin.

To proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound]. This may partly refer to the temporal deliverance by Cyrus from the Babylonian Captivity. However, it chiefly signifies spiritual freedom from the bondage and enslavement of Satan and sin by Christ."

"In these words, you may observe:

1. A choice and precious privilege. Bondage and thralldom are severe evils, while liberty is a great good. However, spiritual bondage and slavery of the soul to Satan and sin are far worse than physical bondage, even Turkish slavery. Therefore, spiritual liberty through Christ far surpasses any outward deliverance from physical bondage in terms of excellence and desirability.
2. The individuals for whom this privilege is intended. It is for those who are Captives. The blessings and privileges that sinners receive through Christ are appropriate to their needs. Restoring sight to the blind, mobility to the lame, health to the sick, relief to the pained, and liberty to the Captive are all timely and fitting mercies.
3. The proclamation, declaration, and dissemination of this privilege through proclamation. Although God could have kept sinners in bondage forever and imprisoned them eternally, He instead enacted a grace-based decree. He sent His own Son into the world to proclaim liberty to spiritual bondmen. Christ Himself made this proclamation, offering the release of prisoners and the removal of chains for those who had been taken Captive by the Devil, the common enemy of humanity's salvation. Ministers of the Gospel are appointed by Christ as the Heralds of the great King of Heaven and Earth, tasked with proclaiming pardon to the penitent, healing to the wounded, relief to the burdened, and liberty to the captives. Christ did this in person during His earthly days (John 7:37). Now, Christ's Ministers proclaim the same things on His behalf (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19, 20). King Cyrus of Persia issued a proclamation throughout his kingdom, granting free liberty to the captive Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the House of the Lord.

He said, 'Who is there among you of all his people, the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up' (2 Chronicles 36:22, 23). Similarly, the Lord, the King of Nations, has issued a proclamation and recorded it in writing. He commands His Servants to proclaim, 'Return, ye sinners unto me, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, saith the Lord God, and I will not keep anger forever' (Jeremiah 3:12). He could be angry with you as long as He is God, but if you repent and turn, He will not. He could pour out His wrath upon you forever, but if you forsake your wicked ways, iniquity shall not be your ruin (Ezekiel 18:30, 31). Isaiah 55:1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 asks, 'Who is there among you that is weary of the service of sin? You might be received into better service and have a better reward. Who is there among you that is weary of your Chains and Fetters? If you are willing, you can be freed from them. Who is there among you that has long lain in the Gaol of Satan, in the filthy darksome dungeon of an unconverted state? Behold, Christ has come to open the prison doors. Go forth, come away, sinners, come away, not just one by one, which would still be a cause for joy, but now that the prison doors are open, and Christ has come to remove your fetters, come away in groups. Come away in numbers. Who will be the first to step out of this prison? Who would not? I envision someone hesitating to leave, while another remains indifferent. What is the matter with you, sirs? Do you find the prison delightful? Are the bonds pleasant? Is the dungeon so delightful that you hesitate to leave it? What is the matter with you, sinner? Are you in your right mind? You are worse than mad if you will not exchange Chains of Iron for Chains of Gold, if you will not leave a Prison for a Palace, thick darkness for marvellous, glorious, shining light. Do you think that if all the prison doors in the Land were opened, and a proclamation was made that whoever wished could have free



liberty to leave, anyone would choose to remain within? Why then do the Devils' prisoners, along with those captive to their lusts, remain content with their bondage? They could have deliverance but choose not to. But if you take the time to hear what will be said about the miserable condition of these Captives, I hope you will be wiser for your own sake, for the sake of your soul, than to reject spiritual freedom and choose Chains and Fetters."

## CHAPTER II.

The Doctrine. Showing also wherein unconverted men are resembled unto Captives.

**1. Doct.** Unconverted men are the Devil's Captives, being securely bound with the chains and bonds of their own iniquity and sin.

Soon after the Creation of man, there was a spiritual war, conflict, and combat between man and the Devil. The place where this war began was Paradise, in which the Devil prevailed, not only against our first Parents but also their descendants. This marked the first instance of man being taken captive and imprisoned by the Devil, a condition that persists until they are rescued, redeemed, and delivered by Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation. In this way, wicked men are described as being taken captive by the Devil at his will (2 Tim. 2. 26). The Devil keeps them in a peaceful and submissive state (Luke 11. 21) and dwells, works, and rules in their hearts (Eph. 2. 2). The heart of an unregenerate sinner is the Devil's

stronghold, where he sits, acts, and commands like an usurping tyrant, while the poor sinner yields obedience to him without resistance. They are also said to be firmly bound in the chains of iniquity and sin (Acts 8. 23) and serve as slaves to their own corruption and lusts (Rom. 6. 16). They serve various lusts (Tit. 3. 3) and are the servants of corruption, having been overcome by Satan and sin, and subsequently brought into bondage by them (2 Pet. 2. 19).

In these particulars following, it will appear that unconverted, graceless men are captives and bondmen to Satan and to sin.

**1.** Captives and bondmen are disarmed; their weapons and armor of defence are taken from them, so that they are unable to make any resistance against those by whom they are taken as captives and prisoners. Gentlemen, the enemies of your souls are,

1. Powerful adversaries. Referred to as Principalities and Powers (Eph. 6. 12) and compared to a lion for their formidable strength (1 Pet. 5. 8). What can a naked and unarmed person do against such powerful foes?
2. Skilled not only in power but also in strategy. A combination of strength and cunning makes an enemy highly formidable. Hence, Satan is likened to a serpent due to his subtlety and craft (Gen. 3. 1), even being referred to as the "old serpent" (Rev. 12. 9). If he could beguile our first parents through his subtlety when they possessed perfect wisdom and knowledge (2 Cor. 11. 3), consider the danger a sinner's soul faces when they are not only weak but also foolish (Tit. 3. 3). The Devil employs numerous methods, stratagems, and devices to ensnare and trap your souls, as mentioned in 2 Cor. 2. 11.

3. Your soul's adversaries are numerous and plentiful. It's not just one sin, temptation, or devil that seeks to lead your souls to damnation; it's many devils and many lusts against a single, unarmed sinner. As evidenced in Luke 8. 30, a whole legion of devils entered a single man. So, not just one devil but many could work relentlessly to ruin your soul.
4. The enemies of your souls are not only numerous but also malicious. When the Devil lost his first estate, he envied man's happiness and maliciously set out to ensure that man would not enjoy what he and his angels had lost forever. The Devil is often referred to as "the wicked one" (Mat. 13. 19, Eph. 6. 16, 1 Joh. 2. 13, & 5. 18). The original word implies more than just wickedness; it signifies a troublesome and malicious character. Due to his malice, the Devil becomes a troublemaker, actively seeking to harm individuals, especially concerning their souls and eternal well-being.
5. The enemies of your souls are invisible since they are spiritual wickednesses (Eph. 6. 12). An unseen and undetectable enemy is even more dangerous, as they often tempt and wound you without your knowledge. They attack secretly because they are invisible, catching you off guard.
6. They are relentless or tireless adversaries. Satan has been engaged in the work of tempting and destroying souls for thousands of years, yet he remains unwearied and does not desist even today. He began this work shortly after the world's creation and will tirelessly continue until the world's end. As long as there are men on earth, he will not cease his efforts to destroy souls. Once he has tempted them into hell, he will torment them endlessly. Like a restless spirit, he constantly

moves about the earth, seeking whom he might devour, as described in Job 1. 7 and 2. 2. He roams around, seeking not just to destroy individual souls but, if possible, entire families, parishes, and even whole kingdoms and nations. Indeed, he has succeeded in many parts of the world where the Gospel and a Saviour have not been heard of (1 Pet. 5. 8).

Thus, graceless sinners are akin to a group of unarmed prisoners surrounded by numerous, malicious, powerful, cunning, and relentless enemies. These enemies desire nothing less than the damnation of your soul, the eternal loss of the blessed, glorious, and eternal God, and nothing less than leading you to a place of torment, fiery furnace, lake of brimstone, utter darkness, weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, and eternal lamentation. How pitiable it is to witness these unarmed, captive sinners encircled by such mighty foes, being led to a place of eternal separation from God, Christ, angels, and all the saints of God, bound for the slaughterhouse of hell and a place of dreadful execution.

Poor captive souls! You are in the hands of your enemies, with no spiritual armour to protect yourselves. Captives are at the mercy of their captors, but Satan possesses no mercy or pity for men's souls. He has malice aplenty but no mercy and cruelty aplenty but no compassion. If God were to show you no mercy, neither will the Devil. Unless the God of mercy, pity, and patience had restrained your soul's adversaries, they would have dragged you down to the bottomless pit long ago. There is no effective defence against those who have taken you captive except for the armour of God. Yet, here lies your misery: you lack even a single piece of this armour, not the belt of truth, nor the breastplate of righteousness, nor the helmet of salvation. And while you may possess the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, you do not know how to use it against the attacks of

your spiritual adversaries. Consider, then, that captives are unarmed and defenseless men.

**2.** Captives lose the riches they had when taken captive. Even though they were wealthy before, they become poor and are stripped of everything. If a prosperous merchant at sea had many valuable goods in a ship, including costly jewels and precious pearls, and he was captured and made a prisoner, he would be plundered of everything and lose it all. Initially, man was exceedingly rich—in the knowledge of God, in love and likeness to God. Man's holiness was his wealth, as was his communion with God. The spiritual blessings bestowed upon man at first were beyond the value of gold from Ophir, precious onyx, or sapphire. Gold and crystal couldn't compare, and even the finest gold and topaz of Ethiopia couldn't equal them. They were worth more than pure gold, and coral or pearls were not to be mentioned in the same breath, for their worth exceeded rubies, as Job expressed the excellence of wisdom in Job 28:15–20. But when man was overcome by the Devil and taken captive, he lost everything. Everything was taken away, and he became wretchedly poor, losing his knowledge of God, God's image, God's favour, communion with God, and his place in Paradise. Though he once ruled over all and had dominion over all creatures, he lost his right to all when he was captured by the Devil and was cast out. The same applies to all unregenerate men, no matter their material wealth and worldly possessions. In spiritual matters, they are wretchedly poor, true beggars indeed (Revelation 3:17). They lack true riches, riches suitable for their souls, and enduring riches. No one is truly rich until they are genuinely good and free. God is the free person's wealth, Christ is the free person's wealth, and the graces of the Spirit, the privileges purchased by Christ, and the promises of God are their riches. These treasures stored in heaven, these are the riches of redeemed individuals. However, those who remain captives and

slaves to Satan and sin have no share in them, no claim to them. If you, the reader, are one of them, no matter your outward plenty and abundance, you are wretchedly poor. People may say of a poor individual that they are worthless, but we could genuinely say of these individuals that they are worthless, or even worse.

**3.** Captives are not governed by the same laws as free men. Laws are made in favour of free citizens, but laws for slaves and bondmen are more severe, designed to make their yoke heavier. Souls in spiritual bondage and captivity are not governed by God's law, which is holy, just, and good, created for the benefit of the Lord's redeemed ones. Instead, they are governed by the laws of sin and lust, which are unjust, oppressive, tyrannical, and often contradictory. Covetousness imposes one thing on the sinner, while prodigality suggests the complete opposite. The Lord's spiritual freemen are under God's laws, but the Devil's captives are under the law of sin.

**4.** Captives and bondmen are assigned base tasks—labouring and toiling, digging in mines, working at oars, and bearing heavy burdens. This was the plight of Israel in the house of bondage; the Egyptian taskmasters denied them straw but demanded the full quota of bricks, imposing hard labour upon them. However, there is no work as vile, sordid, and debased as the work of sin. Yet it constitutes the sole occupation of spiritual bondslaves—pleasing the flesh and the Devil, gratifying their filthy lusts. What is a baser form of slavery than leading a sensual, pleasure-seeking life? What is a more sordid drudgery than being a servant of Satan and sin? Than being under the dominating power of one's vile affections? Of going to great lengths to dishonour the God who created them? Of labouring and toiling to undo themselves, to damn and ruin their immortal souls? On the contrary, the work and occupation of those redeemed from their spiritual captivity is the noblest, most rational,

highest, and most honourable, as well as the most delightful and profitable work to be engaged in on this side of eternal perfection, alongside the saints in glory. This work includes loving God, communing with the blessed, glorious God, believing in Christ, applying promises, living by faith, hoping, anticipating, and longing for heaven, waiting for the glory to be revealed, and awaiting the glorious appearance of our desired and longed-for Lord and Saviour, as well as obtaining assurance of His love, comforting and delighting our souls with that assurance once we have it. This involves putting forth every effort to escape the damnation of hell and the everlasting torment reserved for the Devil's captives in the other eternal world, and to safely reach heaven when we die, pleasing God as we live. In fact, even the least pleasing acts to flesh and blood, such as mourning for sin, weeping bitterly for sin, mortifying sin, praying against sin, and waging spiritual warfare against sin and Satan, have sweetness within them. They bring peace of conscience surpassing the choicest pleasures of the Devil's bondslaves.

**5.** Captives and bond-slaves often endure harsh treatment in their difficult and base labour. Many times they are fed meagre rations of bread and water and receive scant allowances. They are whipped and beaten even after exerting their utmost efforts, receiving stripes and blows instead of rewards for their work. Similarly, the Israelites in Egyptian bondage were beaten when forced to gather stubble instead of straw and were unable to produce the full quota of bricks (Exodus 5:15, 16). Likewise, the Devil's captives who exert themselves most in the Devil's service shall receive their wages, but what are these wages? Plagues and punishments, both in this world and the hereafter, lashes, stripes, and wounds.

1. Sometimes these punishments come from God in this world. They experience judgment and affliction from a just and

righteous, angry God who often chastises them in this life for their sins and punishes them for their iniquity. Those who are slaves to their lusts may be afflicted with loathsome diseases in their bodies (Proverbs 7:22). They may follow after sinful desires like an ox going to the slaughter or a fool to the correction of stocks. Until a dart strikes through their liver, like a bird hastening to a snare, unaware that it is for their life. She has caused many to be wounded; indeed, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, leading down to the chambers of death. You can often see and observe this in the weekly reports of mortality, where these foolish, sinful slaves are rewarded with loss of life. Those who are slaves to their sensual appetites and indulge excessively in eating and drinking may be brought to poverty (Proverbs 23:21) and death, digging their graves with their own teeth. Even if they escape outward bodily judgments, they are under spiritual judgments in their souls—blindness of mind, hardness of heart, loss of God's favour, and the dominant power of sin, which are a thousand times worse than any bodily plagues, though they are less lamented.

2. At times, they receive lashes from their own consciences, suffering from internal pangs, horror, and amazement that they cannot bear. They cry out and roar, wishing for death rather than enduring these inner scourges of their own consciences. Cain and Judas, two slaves of sin and captives of the Devil, experienced such inner terrors. After committing the Devil's work—one in murdering his brother and the other in selling and betraying his Lord—they were filled with inward terrors of the soul. One cried out, "My punishment is greater than I can bear" (Genesis 4:13), and would have preferred being killed by anyone he encountered than living to feel the terrors of his conscience. The other, in the anguish of his heart, confessed, "I have sinned



by betraying innocent blood" and chose to hang himself, becoming his own executioner, rather than endure the torment he felt in the accusations of his conscience (Matthew 27:3, 4, 5). Thus, these wretched slaves of Satan and sin are sometimes consumed by hellish sorrows even before they reach Hell. Are these not hard wages for the works of sin?

3. Ultimately, after death, these captives will undoubtedly face harder wages and greater misery from God, from devils, and from their own consciences for all eternity.
1. God shall pour out His wrath upon them; He shall sustain them in their existence by His power so that they do not perish under His heavy hand. He will afflict and punish them with His justice. With one hand, He will prevent them from sinking into nothingness, and with the other, He will inflict such wrath upon them that they would prefer death to enduring the suffering.
2. The Devil shall be the executor of God's wrath. He who tempts them now shall torment them then. He who sets them to work now shall later pay them their wages. The mere presence of the Devils shall terrify them, and the existence of so many Devils shall be a considerable source of torment.
3. Their own Consciences shall forever vex and gnaw at them when they arrive in Hell. If your Conscience is presently dormant, and neither mercies nor judgments awaken it, and Ministers cannot arouse it, but you continue to sin and Conscience remains silent, know that although nothing awakens your Conscience now, the fires of Hell will undoubtedly rouse it. The pains and torments there will certainly stir it. Your Conscience shall no longer be at peace, allowing you to rest and enjoy peace. This dormant lion shall then awaken, crying out and roaring hideously. You will be

unable to attend to your drinking bouts, bowls, sports, and amusements without hearing the clamours and outcries of your Conscience. Should you attempt to silence it by saying, "Peace, be still, and leave me alone," Conscience will respond, "Peace? Oh, I cannot, I cannot. Though I would, I cannot. God is angry, I see His anger, I feel His anger, and the painful pangs of His indignation. I cannot find peace. I was blinded, but now I see. I was calloused, but now I feel. I feel such severe strokes of avenging justice that I must cry out against you for your foolishness and madness, for serving your lusts, flesh, and devil, which have brought you to this place of torment. God is lost, Christ is lost, and Heaven is forever lost. Be silent now? I cannot, I cannot. These are unbearable pains. This fire burns, it burns, oh, it burns! These flames are intensely hot, and you are tumbling into a lake of brimstone. Can I remain silent amidst such flames, in a burning fiery furnace? I cannot, I must not be silent. Do not plead with me, for I cannot be silent now."

But what is worse than all the rest is that this misery is eternal, eternally woeful. Had this fire burned for only a thousand thousand years and this pain been endured for a million years, I would still have to accuse you of your madness and folly for serving these Devils and heeding their temptations against the counsels and commands of God Himself. You were a great fool to purchase short-lived and fleeting pleasures at such a high cost—enduring lasting pains. But when I consider that these torments are not for a definite number of years but for eternity, then I find myself in flames, in unceasing, scorching flames. Even worse, I must remain here forever—there is no end, no end! Woe is me, there is no end! If I weep, my tears cannot extinguish these flames. Do not attempt to quench this fire, for my tears are like the water the blacksmith casts upon his fire, only making it burn even more fiercely. I weep, but the fire burns on.

Oh, let me call to all this damned crew, to all these accursed captives, to weep, weep abundantly! Come and try. You did not weep for your sins; come and let us try if we can weep out these flames. Weep! So we have, so we have for a thousand years, and yet our tears do not extinguish these flames. Oh, then there is no hope. There is no hope! Oh, to think of it! There is no hope! Conscience tells me that there is no hope, and this makes me cry out against your foolishness and madness—for being a servant to the Devil and your flesh, which has led you to this place of torment. You toiled hard to bring yourself here. You swore hard to attain these torments. How you laboured to undo yourself! How diligently you worked in the service of the Devil and your lusts! And now, you are rewarded for your efforts with such lasting pains. You now experience what Ministers often warned you about, and what God declared—that the wages of sin is death. Sin was your occupation, Hell is your reward. This is the fruit of your actions. This is the place of misery that the Devil and your Sin have led you captive to. While you and I live (says Conscience), I must continually remind you that your sin and your own actions have brought you to this place. Thus, you see the hard wages these Captives will receive for all their service, remaining slaves to the Devil, as they do here.

6. Captives and bond-slaves do not have the privileges and immunities that rightfully belong to free men. Many great and precious privileges are granted to God's redeemed people, acquired through the blood of Christ. However, those who are still in spiritual bondage, serving Sin, do not partake in them. If God ever grants spiritual privileges, such as the pardon of Sin, peace with God, and a well-grounded peace of conscience, He will first make you free from the house of bondage before bestowing upon you the possession of Canaan. Free citizens enjoy certain advantages that those who are not free lack. To

experience these, they must purchase their freedom. Spiritual freedom is indeed purchased by Christ but freely granted to those who become free. Only then are the privileges of redeemed individuals conferred upon them.

7. Captives and bond-slaves cannot satisfy the insatiable desires of their cruel taskmasters. Even though they work diligently and toil extensively, their masters never believe they are doing enough. These masters are always ready to impose additional tasks upon them. When the Children of Israel were in Egyptian bondage, and their workload increased, they complained to Pharaoh. In response, Pharaoh accused them of idleness and forced them to work harder (Exodus 5:17-18). In their spiritual bondage, captives put in considerable effort in the service of Satan and Sin. However, these taskmasters never think that they sin enough or dishonour God enough. Despite their already excessive sins, the Devil desires them to be even more depraved, to swear more, to hate God, His people, and His ways even more. While it is true that the Redeemed of the Lord can always love God more and more, delight in Him more, and desire Him more, there is a significant difference. Their work is good, and the more they do, the better it is. In contrast, the works of the Devil's bondmen are evil, and the more they do, the worse it becomes. This hellish taskmaster will not be satisfied with all the wickedness you commit but will continually provoke and tempt you to sink lower and suffer greater hellish torments in the life to come.

8. Captives and bond-slaves are fettered and bound in chains at the discretion of those who have taken them captive. When Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, captured Zedekiah, the King of Judah, he bound him in chains and imprisoned him

until the day of his death (Jeremiah 52:11). When the Philistines took Samson captive, they bound him with bronze fetters (Judges 16:21). Similarly, Simon Magus was bound with the bond of iniquity (Acts 8:23). While there are cords of love (Hosea 11:4) and cords of duty, the commandments of God, they do not draw these captives to God and Christ. They easily break and snap asunder the cords of duty, just as Samson did with the withes and ropes used to bind him. However, they are firmly held by the cords of sin (Proverbs 5:22). Their own iniquities ensnare them, and they are held fast by the cords of their sins.

## **CHAPTER III.**

Containing Ten several Chains, or several links in the same chain; with which the captives and bond-slaves of Satan are bound.

Of the first. 1. The captives and bond-slaves of Satan are bound with the Chain of Ignorance. Just as the Syrians were struck with blindness, thinking they were following their leader to Dothan, but he led them into the midst of Samaria, and only then did their eyes open, realizing they were in Samaria, surrounded by their enemies (2 Kings 6:18-20). You can lead a blind man in any direction you choose; these captives are blind, and unless God opens their eyes, they will not see their misery until they find themselves in the midst of Hell. They believe they are on the path to Heaven while alive, but after death, when their physical eyes close, the eyes of their souls will open, and they will behold themselves in Hell, among devils and damned spirits. When the King of Babylon took Zedekiah captive, he

blinded him (Jeremiah 52:11). Similarly, when the Philistines captured Samson, they blinded him with bronze fetters (Judges 16:21). When Satan tempted our first parents and overcame them, their understanding was blinded, causing them to lose their knowledge of God and the way to eternal happiness. All his descendants are born spiritually blind, with darkened understanding, estranged from the life of God due to the ignorance within them caused by the blindness of their hearts (Ephesians 4:18). The god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, preventing the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, from shining upon them (2 Corinthians 4:4). This is one of the first chains that God removes when setting a captive free (Acts 26:18). However, this chain or cord binding them is fourfold and not easily broken, if at all, except by Almighty power.

1. These captives are bound with the chain of ignorance of sin. The Devil keeps his bond-slaves from seeing the true nature of sin, its inherent ugliness, and evil character. Sin is such a monstrous thing that if people saw it as it truly is, they would detest it, for evil in its true form is not desirable. Satan disguises it as pleasure or profit, thus ensnaring sinners more firmly. This is how he first enslaved mankind, capturing them in Genesis 3:4-6, and he continues to hold them in slavery through this deception.
2. They are bound with the chain of ignorance concerning their misery and danger due to sin. These captive souls are in danger of God's eternal wrath and curse, but they do not fear it because they do not see it. They face eternal torment but do not tremble because it is concealed from their eyes. They fail to perceive the evil of sin and do not consider the consequences of their actions. They believe themselves to be safe, even though only a fragile thread of life separates them from the torments of the damned.

When sinners' eyes are opened to the perilous condition they are in, their consciences are awakened, and they cry out as in Acts 2:37: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They recognize they are lost and implore for guidance to escape the impending torment of the damned. They seek answers on how to avoid the Hell they rightfully deserve. So did the jailer in Acts 16:30-31. Yet, while sinners remain ignorant of their misery and danger, Satan keeps them bound.

3. They are bound with the chain of ignorance regarding the remedy to escape this misery and danger their souls are in. Christ is the sole Savior of lost sinners (Acts 4:12), and ignorance of Christ is a powerful shackle that keeps people in bondage. Some are profoundly ignorant of Christ, lacking knowledge of who He was, what He did, and what He endured. They are ignorant of His natures, His offices, His satisfaction, and His intercession. How can such captives break free when they are unable to believe in the only Redeemer due to their ignorance? How can they believe in someone they know nothing about? Others may possess some intellectual knowledge of Christ, the sole Redeemer, enabling them to discuss His person, sufferings, and mission for sinners. Yet, they lack a saving knowledge of Him and do not experientially understand the power of His death and resurrection. This is akin to knowing about a person by reputation but having no personal acquaintance with them. If you see your sin and your misery caused by sin but do not see the Redeemer or have any knowledge of Him, you remain captive and tightly bound by the Devil's fetters.
4. They are ensnared in the chains of ignorance concerning the Covenant of Grace, specifically designed for the relief of captive

sinners. They are unaware of the terms and conditions of the New Covenant, as well as how Christ and His benefits, purchased by His death, are to be applied to them. Faith in Christ remains a mystery to them, and as long as they are ignorant of the way, means, and conditions outlined in the Gospel for participating in the redemption secured by Christ, they will remain in a state of bondage and captivity. To loosen this cord, consider (1) the indispensability of spiritual knowledge – there is no salvation without it (Isaiah 27:11, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8), (2) the excellence of such knowledge (Philippians 3:7-8), and (3) its utility in avoiding sin, resisting temptation, fulfilling duty, escaping misery, and attaining glory.

The means to acquire this knowledge are as follows: 1. Read the Scriptures. 2. Learn from a catechism. You should not be ashamed to learn, for despite your age, you lack understanding. Even if you were a hundred years old, there is no shame in learning. 3. Attend regular preaching of the Word, where God often opens the eyes of the blind. 4. Associate with God's people; they will discuss matters essential for salvation with you. "The lips of the righteous feed many." 5. Pray to God to open your eyes so that you may behold things you have not seen before (Matthew 20:30-33).

## **CHAPTER IV.**

The Second Chain is Prejudice.



2. The captives and bond-slaves of Satan are bound with the chain of prejudice against the ways of God and sincere religion. They hold misconceptions about godliness, harbour harsh thoughts about God and His people, and make judgments before giving it a fair chance. Prejudice against a person prevents individuals from heeding their advice or associating with them. "I knew that you were a hard, austere man, and therefore I hid your talent in a napkin. Here is what belongs to you," said the prejudiced and lazy servant (Matthew 25:24). Prejudice against a particular profession, trade, or lifestyle keeps people from pursuing that career or way of living. Prejudice against godly living keeps sinners entrenched in wickedness. Slaves in Turkey often hold positive views about the status of those who are free and live in their own country, desiring to attain that freedom. However, Satan's slaves have preconceived notions about the condition of God's freemen and are not interested in joining their ranks. There are several links in this chain, and we will examine them to discover how they can be broken, freeing sinners from their enslavement.

3. They hold a prejudice that the ways of God are melancholic. They believe that if they become serious about religion, they will be forced to mourn and be sorrowful, forsaking their pleasures and never experiencing joy again. This is a clear misunderstanding and an unfounded prejudice. Firstly, although there must be sorrow, mourning, and repentance, they are necessary steps towards joy. Have you not sinned? If you have sinned, should you not sorrow? Is it not reasonable to grieve when you have dishonoured God, provoked Him, and harmed your own souls? If your child has rebelled against you, would you prefer that he continues in rebellion and disobedience, simply because if he returns to his duties and is

welcomed back into your favour, he should be humbled, express his sorrow and repentance for having rebelled against you? Do you expect this from your stubborn and disobedient child? Should God expect any less from you? Would you not consider it an aggravation of his disobedience to persist in it without sorrow and repentance, believing it would be far better for him to grieve and return? If you judge impartially, you would deem it equally reasonable between you and God.

2. Isn't it better to go to Heaven with mourning and repentance than to go to Hell with joy and merriment? Wouldn't it be preferable to have a heavy heart on Earth due to sin and later experience the joys of Heaven, rather than having a light heart on Earth burdened by sin and later filled with the sorrows of Hell? Wouldn't it be better to have short-lived sorrows now and eternal joys later, rather than having fleeting pleasures now and eternal sorrow and torment later? Whether you sin and sorrow on Earth or in Hell, among men or among devils and the cursed crew of damned souls, you will experience sorrow. If you believe you can avoid all sorrow after sin, then go on and continue your current course if you think you can have as merry and lighthearted a life in Hell, amidst scorching fiery flames, as you do now in the ways of sin. However, you cannot, and if you could speak with a damned soul who was once your acquaintance but has been in Hell for only a month or two, they would tell you that you cannot. They would tell you that among us damned wretches, there is no singing, feasting, merrymaking, or joyous gatherings. There are no sports or pleasures here; everyone is filled with sadness and sorrow, lamenting their woeful state. One cries out, "Woe is me, I am undone," while another in a different place laments, "Woe is me, I am undone! I am undone! Woe is me, I am undone! My amusements are spent, my

pleasures are all gone, but my pain remains. My joys have fled away, but my sorrow fills my heart." Those who mourned on Earth are now rejoicing in Heaven, but I, who indulged in sensual joy and earthly delights, am sorrowing here in Hell. Everything I think of only adds to my sorrow. If I think about losing God, the glorious, gracious, blessed God, it increases my sorrow and the heaviness of my heart. If I think that I had time but it's gone, or that I had means of grace, ministers preaching to me in God's name, urging me to avoid this place and directing me on how to escape these tormenting flames, and I disregarded them all, it adds to my sorrow. I cannot expect one more sermon, one more offer of Christ, one more tender of mercy forever. I had many, but now not one, not one. Woe is me, that I was ever born. Woe is me, that I had opportunities and ignored them all. Woe is me, that I will never hear another tender of a Saviour for all eternity. This, all this, adds to my sorrow. Or if I think about how reluctant I was to sorrow on Earth, how I refused to have a heavy heart because of my sin, nothing pleased me except my own pleasure. I sought mirth and joy, but the more joy I had on Earth, the more sadness and sorrow I have now in Hell. I had a short and merry life on Earth, but now I have a long and heavy, sorrowful life in the flames of Hell. On Earth, I pursued joy and avoided sorrow, and now in Hell, I have sorrow and no joy. I would have been much better off if I had repented on Earth and been rejoicing in Heaven now, rather than rejoicing on Earth like a fool and weeping, howling, and lamenting fruitlessly in Hell. These would be the lamentations of a damned soul, and they are much sadder and heavier than this. They would tell you that if you go through Hell, there is not one cheerful heart among them all. Think about this and judge whether you should be prejudiced against the condition of God's freemen or the ways of holiness because there must be sorrow

and repentance for sin. I hope, poor captive, that you will no longer be bound by the Devil's chain. To break this fetter and sever this chain, let us strike another blow. Therefore, I say,

3. The ways of God and holiness are not heavy, sad, and melancholic. Holiness is the foundation of joy. Did Adam ever experience a more joyful and comforting life than when he was perfectly holy? Who is more joyful, glad, and filled with pleasure and delight than the saints above who are perfectly holy? On Earth, there are no people who have more reason to rejoice and experience true delight than those who are truly, albeit imperfectly, holy. Who has more reason to rejoice than those who have made peace with God and enjoy His favour and gracious presence? Who has cause to lead a more cheerful and comfortable life than those who have received pardon for their sins and are children of the ever-living God? Who has more reason to spend their earthly days in joy and gladness than those who have escaped the danger of damnation and have the assurance or lively hope of being eternally happy in the full and perfect enjoyment of the blessed God in Heaven? Examine the reasons for your rejoicing and compare them to the reasons for a righteous person's joy, and then decide which is more weighty and rational. Are you merry because you enjoy the world? Shouldn't a godly person be even more joyful, having the enjoyment of God Himself? Are you so content because you possess the world's pleasures? Shouldn't a godly person be much happier, having heavenly delights? It seems that thoughts of what you lack should diminish the joy you find in what you have. You may have riches, but you lack grace. You may have the favour of your friends, but you lack the favour of the great eternal God. You may have no debts to pay, or only those you can discharge, but you lack the pardon of your sin. This debt

remains uncrossed in God's ledger, and you are unable to discharge it. The thoughts and fears of what you will experience in the future should temper your joy and, in your greatest moments of merriment, check your folly, alter your mood, and fill your heart with sorrow and sadness. Can you really be merry when you are so close to Hell? When you are on the brink and edge of the bottomless pit? When it is uncertain whether you will be out of Hell in an hour, a day, a month, or a year? Is this the person who is so merry? Is this the person who advocates pleasure and delight? Is this really the person who wants to spend their time in joy and gladness? If this person were to die today, how quickly their tune would change!

What do you all think, you who hear me today and understand the dreadful danger of a graceless, Christless, unconverted sinner? Can you see such a person sporting with delight on the brink of Hell and not fear and tremble, lest you see them fall into it? Can you see them so carefree when they are so close to a place of utter darkness and not be amazed at their audacity and blindness? Don't your hearts feel pity for such a person, even though they have no pity for themselves? Come, sinner, judge yourself, if you have any reason, more than anyone else in the world, to plead for such a joyful life. Wouldn't it be wiser, safer, and more certain for you to leave the service of the Devil and your lusts, to break the cords and chains that have held you captive for so many years?

Furthermore, what are these pleasures that you find in creatures? What are these joys and comforts that you derive from anything other than God, or beneath God? Aren't they sensual and brutish? Are they not only found in the sensory part of your soul and not in the more noble and rational part? Do you find your pleasure and delight in eating and drinking and satisfying your sensory appetite?

Even your very beasts, your horse, your dog, share this delight with you, and some creatures even more than humans. I can tell you about a man who tried more than what these pleasures are, who had a larger estate and a greater variety of everything to delight himself. He searched everything under the sun to find what could delight the human heart, a search that no one who comes after him can surpass. Yet, from his own experience, he left it on record that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and that man is Solomon. Read his words in the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 2. Take your book and read it. His conclusion is that the delights and pleasures derived from things above the sun far surpass and exceed all pleasures and delights obtained from everything under the sun. The same man who tells you that everything under the sun is vanity also tells you that the ways of wisdom are pleasant and all her paths are peaceful (Proverbs 3:17).

So, come, poor captive sinners, come and try the comforts and delights found in the ways and service of our God. Don't judge before you try. How can you know what God's ways are before you have experienced them? How can you know there are no comforts and joys that the saints encounter when you have never been qualified for those comforts and joys? I'm not persuading you to abandon a comfortable life but to exchange it for a better one. I'm not urging you to forsake delights and pleasures but to swap them for nobler, more rational, more spiritual, and more enduring delights. Come and have a genuine taste and appreciation of the sweet delights in communion with God, in the sense of His love, in a proper application of His promises, and in the hope of His Kingdom. If you do not find them better and sweeter, then return to your current comforts and obtain them again from the same objects you now turn to. But make sure your heart is changed so that you can truly taste the sweetness of delights and comforts in God, in Christ, in the

promises and privileges of the Gospel. I dare say you will then declare that these are better, greater, and sweeter than any you found in Satan's service or in the way of sin. Therefore, come and try.

Objection: What's the need for that? Although we haven't tried it ourselves, we see how it is for those who have. Don't we see that those who have abandoned their former ways and have become more devout and strict spend their days in sorrow? They are always mourning and complaining; their tears and countenances reveal the heaviness, sadness, and sorrow of their hearts.

Answer:

1. All of them, always? It's not like that. There are believers who are at times filled with unspeakable joy (1 Peter 4:8). They are so delighted with God's love for their souls and their hope of glory that they can and do rejoice even in the midst of the most severe tribulations (Romans 5:3). They have such faith-based views of future glory and such present tastes of the sweetness of Gospel privileges that fill their souls with indescribable admiration and divine comfort, which cannot be expressed in words (1 John 3:1).
2. Those whom you see mourning and weeping for their sins have a cause, a foundation, and a reason to rejoice. Do you not have cause and reason to rejoice, whereas you are still captive to the Devil? Are they not in a better condition, having cause and reason to rejoice, even if they do not, compared to you who rejoice when you have no cause or reason to do so? I would prefer to have my soul in their condition rather than yours.

You do not know how sweet, pleasant, and delightful these bitter tears of repentance are to those who shed them most. It is

exceedingly comforting to have a heart that mourns and grieves genuinely for their sins. You see their tears, but you take no notice of the inner peace and comfort that often follows.

How do you know the true cause and reason for their sorrow? You are quick to attribute it to the path they walk. Has any truly godly soul, who leads the saddest and most sorrowful life, ever told you that their sorrow is because they have now become holy people? Has anyone told you it's because they have left their former wicked ways and become new creations, giving up their names, their wills, their hearts, and everything to God and Christ? If this, or nothing like it, is the cause of their sadness, is there any reason for you to be prejudiced against the state of the Lord's redeemed ones and find more satisfaction in your present bonds than to desire to be released from them? But what if the tears you see them shed and the sorrow you perceive in them are due to the following reasons:

Because they were captives to the Devil for so long, serving sin and lust for so long, bound in chains and fetters for so long when a Redeemer was offered to them so often, and they did not have the hearts to accept Him sooner than they did. They served the Devil, a harsh and cruel master for so long, and they came to Christ, who they now experience to be so good and gracious, and His work and wages so sweet, that they came to Him so late. If this is the true reason, is their sorrow any real reason for your prejudice against godliness? Certainly not. It actually commend godliness even more.

What if the reason for their sorrow is that they have not made more progress in holiness since they entered the ways of holiness? They have not grown closer to God, increased in faith and love, or developed more humility and heavenly-mindedness. They weep and mourn, as you see, not because they have entered the ways of God, as



you might think, but because they have not progressed further in them. They are sorrowful because they are not more fruitful, not better. Ask them if this is not the reason. If it is, is there any reason for their sorrow to prejudice your hearts against godliness? Certainly not. It actually commends godliness even more when those who have a genuine taste of its sweetness sorrow because they have not attained more degrees of it.

3. What if the reason for their sorrow is that they can't do more for God and Christ in gratitude for what He has done for them, making them free from bond-slavery? God gave His only Son, and Christ gave Himself, His life, His soul, and His blood as a ransom to release them from captivity, to deliver them from hell and future wrath, and to transform those who were recently in bondage and liable to damnation into individuals fit to partake in the inheritance of the saints in light. Could this be the reason for their sorrow?
4. What if their sorrow stems from seeing so many people still in chains, so many still serving the Devil and sin, and refusing to serve and live for the blessed, holy, and glorious God? Is it not a genuine cause for sorrow to witness the Devil leading precious and immortal souls captive to hell? That people are so eager to follow the Devil, their destroyer, into eternal torment, and so reluctant to follow Christ, the only Savior leading to eternal joy? They mourn not because they have been set free, but because you and so many others remain captives to the Devil.
5. Even if the reason for their sorrow is the sins they committed when they were slaves to the Devil, does this discredit holiness, to lament wickedness? Is this a credit to and commendation of your sinful way of life when those who are serious and have their

eyes open see so much evil in it that they feel they can never lament it enough? Certainly, it discredits the way of sin.

6. Another aspect of this chain of prejudice that binds these captives is the offense they take from the humble socio-economic condition of God's redeemed people. They see that those zealous for religious strictness are often from the poorer segment of society, while the rich, great, and fashionable people are not part of this way. This prejudice affected many against Christ, who came to purchase, proclaim, and grant liberty to poor captive sinners (Matthew 13:55). People questioned, "Is this not the carpenter's son?" (Matthew 13:57) and were offended by Him. The Pharisees were also ensnared by this bias (John 7:46) when they said, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46), and they asked, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" (John 7:48), adding, "But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed" (John 7:49). Let us attempt to dispel this prejudice and break this bond in these five brief responses.

1. Will the greatness, wealth, and splendor of sinners avail them anything beyond the grave or benefit them in any way in the afterlife or at God's judgment seat? Will they be spared from Hell and the torments of the damned because they were rich and prosperous in the world? Will they be saved or welcomed into Heaven upon death simply because they were wealthy in their earthly lives? Won't death strip them of their estates and expensive attire? Won't death render these grand individuals as lifeless as the poor, with no distinction between the corpse of the most refined lady and the poorest beggar? Won't both of them

decay in the earth and be consumed by worms? Will the worms differentiate between the two? When the graves open and both the rich and the poor who were buried therein have their skulls and bones unearthed, can you discern the bones and skulls of the rich from those of the poor? Which one was adorned in silks and which in rags or coarser cloth? Which one enjoyed the sweetest morsels and the greatest delicacies, and which subsisted on coarser and more modest fare? No, you cannot. So, why, when you will soon be equalized with the poorest beggar, are you prejudiced by the modesty of Christ's followers? Won't you stand naked before the fair Tribunal of an Impartial God, just like those you currently disdain and scorn because of their poverty? Will your appearance, with the locks and curls you take so much pride in, or adorned with your rings and jewels, be significant then? Will you be recognised because you adorned your mortal bodies with such items in your lifetime? No, no, it's more probable that you will wish you had never possessed them, that you had never utilised them, especially given that your hearts were so puffed up with pride that you scorned Redemption by Christ because many of His followers were far below you in worldly possessions.

2. What if both the rich and the poor were afflicted by the same ailment, and there was only one remedy for the recovery of both? Would the rich decline the only remedy because it is used by the less fortunate? Would they rather perish and go to their graves or endure suffering than employ the same remedy that has cured the less privileged? This is precisely the case: a prince and a beggar, a nobleman and a commoner, the high and the lowly, the wealthy and the poor all suffer from the same spiritual maladies. All are equally guilty of and tainted by Original Sin; all, by nature, are children of wrath, subject to the curse of the

Law, and deserving of damnation in Hell. There is only one means of Salvation, one Redeemer and Saviour (Acts 4:12), and the method and means to partake in Christ and His blessings are identical for all. God has not prescribed one path to Salvation for the rich and another for the poor; it is the same for both. Must the poor believe? So must the rich, or they will be damned. Must the poor be holy and converted? So must the rich, or else they will never see God or enter His Kingdom. Will you then choose to perish eternally rather than be saved in the same manner and through the same means as the less fortunate are saved? If you are so obstinate, proud, and haughty as to reject God for this reason, then let Him be, and to reject Christ for this reason, then let Him be. In the end, see who will have cause for complaint—God or you—and who will be worse off, the poor or you.

3. If it pleases God to call and convert the less fortunate, to bestow His Son, His Spirit, and His grace upon them, what right have you to quarrel with God or take offense at His grace's method? Isn't Christ God's own gift, and His grace, His Kingdom, and eternal life His gifts, all within His control? Can't He give them to whomever He wishes? What if God has chosen the poor of this world to make them rich in faith and heirs of glory (James 2:5)? Will you prefer to remain children of wrath and captives to sin and Satan rather than be co-heirs with those whom you consider contemptible? Who do you believe will suffer loss—you or them? If their poverty and humble state do not diminish God's love for them, there is no reason for your prejudice against the only path to eternal happiness.
4. It is better to be a poor freeman than a wealthy man under strict restraint and bondage. Civil liberty should be preferred over many other enjoyments, let alone valuing spiritual freedom over

the world's honours, pleasures, and profits. Is it not better to be in humble circumstances during life and be saved upon death than to be ungodly, wealthy in this world, and damned in the next? Isn't it better to journey to Heaven and eternal glory with truly gracious and believing individuals, even if they are poor, than to accompany the Christless and graceless, even if they are rich and noble, to everlasting torment?

5. When you speak of true riches and who is truly rich, believers are not impoverished. At that point, the tables are turned, and the ungodly are the ones who lack, while the godly are the ones who possess true wealth. The godly have the most secure, the safest, the most suitable, and the most enduring riches—eternal riches. God is their wealth, and Christ, in whom unsearchable riches reside, is their wealth. The treasures that lie above are their riches. They are rich in grace, rich in promises, and rich in special spiritual privileges. When worldly riches fail to benefit you, when they provide no advantage or profit, their riches will comfort them, remain with them, and continue forever. Is there any valid reason for you to be bound by this prejudice against the freedom you could have in Christ, just because many of those whom Christ sets free are poor and humble in their worldly circumstances?
6. Another link in this chain of prejudice by which these captives are bound is the belief that the path to spiritual freedom is a persecuted one, filled with thorny troubles and painful tribulations. Those whom Christ liberates often suffer the loss of possessions, the loss of physical freedom, and even the loss of life itself. They are mocked, scorned, and reproached, while others flourish and prosper. Indeed, this has been a significant temptation for good and gracious individuals, such as David

(Psalms 73), Jeremiah (chapter 12, verse 1), and Habakkuk (chapter 1, verses 13-14). However, it serves as a strong barrier that prevents wicked individuals from embracing the path to freedom. Oh, that God would empower you to break this bond and sever this chain by instilling in your hearts the following considerations.

7. Those who follow Christ have peace with God, even when they face trouble in the world. They have God's favour, even when they encounter disapproval from men. When men are their foes, God is their friend. Even if men despise them, God loves them. Though men are against them, and devils oppose them, God is for them. In fact, everything in God is for them—His mercy, His power, His truth. Isn't peace and friendship with God more than enough to make them happy, despite all the troubles they face from men, which only serve to make them miserable? Is it not better to have an all-powerful, true, and eternal God as your friend, even if the whole world is your enemy, than to have such a God as your enemy and weak, mortal men as your friends? If you continue in your sins and live in comfort and ease, God will be against you; His justice, His truth, and His power will be against you. Both God's people and the wicked will experience God differently: God will be the most dependable friend to the former and the most formidable enemy to the latter.
8. Despite their outward troubles, those who follow Christ experience inner joys and comforts. They have peace within themselves, and their joy is impervious to external threats. While their possessions and lives may be taken from them, their comfort and joy remain unassailable (John 16:22). The testimony of their conscience brings them joy (2 Corinthians 1:12). They are filled with such inner consolations that they can

triumph and sing even in the midst of external tribulations (Romans 5:3). When they are imprisoned and bound (Acts 16:23-25), when they are beaten and scourged (Acts 5:40-41), their inward comforts mitigate the bitterness of their external sorrows. You witness their troubles and afflictions, but you are strangers to their comforts. Otherwise, you would not be so biased against the path of holiness due to the external hardships that those who walk in it may face.

9. The troubles and sufferings of God's redeemed ones are brief, lasting only a short while. In contrast, the sufferings of the Devil's captives are lengthy and enduring, lasting for an immensely long eternity. If you compare their sufferings in this life with the eternal joys they will experience in the future, their sufferings are brief. Or if you compare their sufferings with the eternal torments that the slaves of Sin will endure, their sufferings are but a moment. At most, their sufferings will only last as long as their earthly life, which is but a short duration. After a few more years, months, or weeks, all their sorrow will be over, gone, and done. Similarly, your ease and comfort will also pass away and never return for all eternity. Their sufferings will soon conclude, and their rest, ease, and joy will begin, never to end. In contrast, your ease will soon conclude, and your sufferings and sorrows will commence, never, ever to end. Now, what do you think? Is it not better to endure trouble for a while and then be placed in a realm of everlasting rest, love, and joy than to live comfortably in sin for a while and then roll and tumble in an unending lake of burning brimstone for all eternity? If you do not hold this view now, it won't be long before you do.

4. The troubles faced by God's holy, humble, and sanctified people are not only short but also light. While they may seem heavy in themselves and to our flesh and blood, when compared to the weighty Crown of Glory that will be placed upon their heads, these troubles are but light (2 Corinthians 4:17), not worthy of comparison (Romans 8:18). Compare their troubles here with the sufferings of the Devil's captives in the hereafter, and they will still be found to be light. The sufferings of the former come from angry and displeased men, while the sufferings of the latter come from an angry and offended God. Can the arm of men be compared to the arm of God? Can the wrath of men be compared to the wrath of God? Can feeble men deliver blows as powerful as a strong and mighty God? Can a child strike as a mighty giant does? You shall soon experience the weight of God's avenging fury. If you think it won't be as bad or as heavy on you and that you can bear it well enough, then tell me, why do you cry out and roar under the extreme pain of a toothache? Why do you complain that you cannot rest or sleep? Why do you make such a commotion when afflicted with colic, gout, or kidney stones? Why don't you say, "This is nothing to bear; this is easy to endure"? But alas, what is all of this compared to the torments of the damned? What is it compared to lying in a fiery furnace or in a place of utter darkness, where there will be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth forever? Where the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched? What is all of this compared to lying in those flames that God has ordained to burn for the punishment of sin? To lying in that place that God has provided to display His justice, holiness, and His utter hatred of sin, by pouring out His fury and greatest indignation upon the sinner? Oh, may God break this bond, so that you are no longer kept as bond-slaves to the Devil.



5. Another link in this chain of prejudice that binds these captives is their perception of the difficulty of religious duties. They find duties such as mortifying sin, practicing self-denial, cultivating heavenly-mindedness, engaging in fervent prayer, maintaining constant and holy vigilance throughout life, and conducting rigorous self-examination to be displeasing and burdensome. Consequently, they are unwilling to make the effort to perform these duties, and if they attempt them, they quickly find them to be heavy and burdensome, ultimately casting them aside. To begin breaking this bond, consider the following:

6. It is the sinful nature of man, and specifically the sinful part of man, that finds holy duties displeasing and burdensome. This is evident because the sinless angels of God do not find obedience to God burdensome; rather, they find it delightful. When God's people are perfectly cured of all spiritual diseases, they will not find constant and perpetual acts of holiness difficult or tiresome. Initially, when God created man, he took pleasure and found great delight in obeying God's will. Therefore, the difficulty in practising religion and the sense of holiness being a burden arise from the corruption of your depraved nature and the wickedness of your own hearts. Just as a person with a physical ailment does not savor or enjoy their food, what others find sweet, they find bitter. The issue is not with the food but with their taste buds. Would such a person cry out that their food is bitter, or would they recognize the severity of their illness? Would they refuse sustenance and die of hunger rather than eat? Similarly, would you cry out and complain that godliness is burdensome, and that religion is an arduous task? Or would you rather blame the corruption of your heart for making what is pleasant and delightful to others appear heavy and displeasing to you? When you say that God's commands are grievous, remember that

others have found them to be the opposite (1 John 5:3). When you say that Christ's yoke is heavy and His burden unbearable, remember that Christ said His yoke is easy and His burden is light (Matthew 11:30). If you find serious and constant study of God's holy Word to be burdensome, remember that David found it sweet, pleasant, and delightful (Psalm 119:35, 14). It was better to him than thousands of gold and silver (Psalm 19:72). If you find God's commands to be as bitter as gall, remember that others have found them sweeter than honey or the honeycomb (Psalm 19:10). They are more desirable than necessary food (Job 23:12). So, when God's commands are unpleasant to you, remember that it is not the commands themselves but the wickedness of your own depraved heart that causes this displeasure. Have you, through your own sinfulness, weakened yourself and now cast blame upon God's commands, effectively blaming God Himself? Such thinking is not wisdom but wickedness.

2. It is the external aspect of duties without the enjoyment of God within them that makes them heavy and burdensome to you. You do not engage with the spiritual essence of religious practices. To pray without truly meeting with God in prayer, to merely sit and listen, or to fast and afflict the body without communion with God—these are the reasons why religion seems tedious to you. But in the internal realm of religion, in loving God, believing in Christ, and encountering God, there is sweetness. When the soul is in this state, it does not perceive duty as a burden. Instead, it finds solace and gladly abides in such a place. In fact, there is more genuine delight in denying the pleasures of the flesh than in indulging them. You may not have experienced this, but ask God's people, and they will affirm it. Inquire of them, and they will assure you that it is so. So,

should you be prejudiced against something you do not fully understand? If you knew, your prejudice would quickly vanish. You engage in the performance of a duty but do not pay attention to its essence, and this increases your prejudice against it. If you were to love God in prayer, grieve for sin in prayer, and, if capable, apply promises to yourself—promises of pardon and promises of heaven—as you read and hear the Word, then it would become sweet and pleasant. Even though you may not find it so in your unconverted state, do not assert that it is not so. Instead, believe those who have experienced it and have truly come to God and Christ. Then, like the Samaritans, you will declare (John 4:42): "Now we believe, not because of your words, for we have heard Him ourselves, and we know that He is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." Or you will echo the words of the Queen of Sheba concerning Solomon (1 Kings 10:4-8): "The report I heard in my own land about your deeds and your wisdom is true. But I did not believe these things until I came and saw them with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth, you have far exceeded the report I heard. How happy are your men! How happy are these servants of yours who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom." The flesh may make false reports about God's ways, but come and test them for yourself. You may have heard much about the alleged tediousness of religion and the ease of Christ's yoke, but now you may find that not even half has been expressed regarding the delight and sweetness within it, which removes its burdensomeness.

3. Consider the necessity of being found in the ways of God against the difficulty of walking in them. Even if something is challenging and unpleasing, if you deem it necessary, you will tackle it. It may be a burden for some people to take medicine,

but when they are so sick that it becomes a matter of life or death, they take it. Friends, do not stand there debating. It may indeed be difficult to be holy, to love God, to turn away from sin, and to serve God, but whether it is hard or not, it must be done. Burdensome or not, it must be done, or else you will face eternal damnation. You must do the things that God requires—repent, believe, become new creatures, accept Christ, be holy—or else you will be damned. There is no room for trifling in this matter, no place for arguments. These things must be done, or your souls will not be saved. If the Word of God is true, then this is true. These are not my words; they are the words of the true and eternal God. Turn and see (Matthew 18:3, Mark 16:15-16, Romans 8:13, John 3:3, Luke 13:3-5, Galatians 6:7-8, Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Revelation 21:8). What do you say now? Do you believe this to be the Word of God? Do you believe that you will be judged by it, either damned or saved according to this Word? Hasn't God spoken plainly and declared His unchanging resolution that you must turn to Him or burn in hell? That you must repent, believe, and do so quickly, or you will be lost forever? Why, then, do you, poor captive sinner, stand delaying and lingering? Why do you cry out that it is hard to abandon your sins, to repent, to commit to holy duties? Tell me, sinner, in the name of God, I demand your answer: Will you do what God requires, or will you not? Isn't it a matter of dire necessity if you wish to be saved? And if it is indeed so difficult yet so necessary, why do you procrastinate? Shouldn't you make use of all the time available to undertake this challenging yet essential task? Why do you postpone it until you fall ill or approach death? Do you expect to be fit for the most difficult work when you are no longer fit for any work at all? Do you sometimes think it is easy, and therefore postpone it to the last moment, while at other times you find it too hard to even

attempt? Poor captive soul! Do you twist and turn in your thoughts, entertaining ideas that may prolong your captivity and tighten your chains? Will you keep saying that it is a hard and burdensome task to be genuinely religious and truly holy? Tell me more.

4. Will it not be even harder to bear the wrath of God forever? Is duty now burdensome to you? How then will you bear the torments of Hell? Can you not bear the burden of a holy life, yet expect to bear the damnation of Hell? Do you not think that the thoughts of losing God, Christ, and Heaven will be a heavy and continual burden to you? Do you not think that the sight of devils surrounding you will weigh on you? And what about constantly hearing such dreadful cries: "Woe, woe forever! What shall we do? This place is hot, oh, it is exceedingly hot! This pain is great, oh, it is exceedingly great, it is extreme!" And to make it worse, it is eternal too. Will not hearing such dreadful outcries be a burden to you? Do you, poor captive sinner, not consider the pain that your body will endure from the burning fiery flames and the torment your soul will suffer from the ever-gnawing never-dying worm? Will these not be burdens to you? Is it difficult to love God, and will it not be difficult to bear the wrath of God? Is it difficult to serve Him, and will it not be difficult to suffer from Him? I tell you, it will be the hardest task you will ever face, to endure the torments of the damned. So, come, sinner, come away. Even though it is difficult to leave your sins, do it. Even though it is hard to walk strictly before the Lord, come and do it. Otherwise, something will happen to you shortly that you will say is hard to endure.
5. The difficulty you find in religious duties is because you currently have no strength but your own to perform them.

However, if you renounce the Devil and the flesh and give yourself to God and Christ, you will have help from Heaven, and then these duties will be easier for you. While you are bound by sin, you lack the strength and skill to carry them out, which makes them hard. But if God sets you free, you will have both, and then prayer and repentance will be smoother tasks. When God comes to break and soften your heart, it will be easier to repent. When God gives you a sight and sense of your sins and needs, of your lack of grace, pardon, Christ, and a renewed heart, it will be easier for you to lament your sins and pray for what you lack. God is not a harsh Master to His servants; He does not assign them work without giving them the power and reward. Even though we can do nothing without Christ (John 15:5), with Christ's strength, we can do everything necessary for the salvation of our souls (Philippians 4:13). The Spirit is given by Christ to help the weaknesses and infirmities of His servants (Romans 8:26). He will assist you in finding the right words for prayer, in expressing your desires and heart to God. When you lack words, He will help you with sighs, sobs, and tears, which are powerful pleas to the Lord. He understands the stammering and groaning of His children (Romans 8:27).

We have now discussed the second chain that binds these captives: the prejudice of their hearts against the holy ways of God's redeemed and free-born people. We have attempted to break this chain, but alas, it is too challenging for any human, any minister on earth, or any angel in heaven to do. Sinners are so tightly bound in their fetters that it requires Almighty power to shatter them, allowing the captives to escape and be set free. Oh, that God would come and completely break this chain! Oh, that God would remove it, even if it's just from one or two of you today, so that although you came here as captives in chains, you may leave as free men and women! But

something is required from you. You should impartially and thoughtfully consider what has been said to remove this prejudice from your hearts. It is this prejudice that makes you content with your captive state and reluctant to break free from it. If what has been spoken is not sufficient to silence these carnal arguments, I humbly request the congregation's prayers for me. Pray that God may forgive my weakness and pardon my lack of skill, for I know no better way to deliver a message from the Lord. Pray that I may be better prepared for this weighty task in the future. However, if there is truth in what has been delivered and spoken to you today, I charge you in the name of the dreadful and eternal God, in the name of my Lord Christ who sent me, not to disregard it. If I have spoken my own words, reject them and accuse me of lying. But if it is in accordance with Scripture, then treat it with the utmost seriousness. If you believe the evidence presented here is true, that these grounds of prejudice have been shown to be empty and frivolous, yet you choose to remain in your captive state rather than come to Christ and be set free, and if you go to your grave and to hell with these fetters on your soul, know that you will be rendered inexcusable.

## **CHAPTER V.**

### **The Third Chain: The Love of the World**

3. Another chain binding these captives is the excessive and prevailing love of worldly profits and riches. This holds thousands fast, preventing them from moving towards Christ for their liberation. They are bound by golden chains, and because

these chains are made of gold, they are all the more enamored with them. The Devil doesn't mind the cost if it keeps you in bondage. He won't hesitate to lavish you with the riches of the world if it means keeping you out of heaven. Many morally upright individuals who have refrained from the gross sins of the world, those who do not swear, get drunk, or openly indulge in profanity, often delude themselves into thinking they are in good standing. However, they are just as surely the Devil's prisoners, enslaved and in bondage, and they will undoubtedly perish and be damned unless they break free from this chain. Believe this as an absolute truth, for it is the word of the Lord. Read Ephesians 5:5, "For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." The Holy Spirit provides a reason for this, stating that such a person is an idolater, making gold his god. The love, delight, and joy that should belong to God are given to the world, and this God will not tolerate. The hope and trust that should be placed in the living God are instead placed in uncertain riches, something the jealous God will never condone. Turn again to Colossians 3:5-6. God emphasizes this repeatedly in various passages, warning you to be cautious about remaining in bondage to this golden chain. It is a very potent chain, as the Lord tells us, "For the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). Many forms of sin sprout from the lives of individuals, but they all stem from this root—the heart's fixation on love for the world.

1. Neglecting one's duties, such as neglecting private and family prayer, and excessive preoccupation with worldly wealth, stem from the same root cause. The heart is so consumed by the pursuit of riches that there is neither time nor inclination for more virtuous pursuits. Even when there is time, the worldly



heart is disinclined to engage in them and remains indifferent to heavenly matters.

2. Engaging in sinful acts, such as using false measures and deceitful practices, overstepping boundaries, breaking promises, and speaking against one's conscience, is also a consequence of this evil root—the immoderate love of worldly possessions. Many individuals find themselves in compromising situations, such as excessive drinking in the company of others. When reproached, they respond that it is necessary to maintain such associations. They argue that if they don't drink with certain people, they will lose profitable business transactions. Is that so? Yes, they say, and it prevents many bouts of excessive drinking. But what is the purpose of your own houses, your shops, and the marketplace, if not for conducting your worldly affairs? It is disgraceful that it has become customary for many to engage in buying and selling only in the company of alcoholic beverages. But even if you do partake, is it necessary to drink to excess? Are others forcing you? No, they are not; you lift the glass to your own mouth. Your own hand, under your own will, is the one responsible. You would be better off without such a customer and without the profit you gain from them than to sin, harm your soul, and lose it. This branch of wickedness stems from the cursed root—the love of money. Some people will go from one drinking establishment to another, from morning till night, day after day, simply to gain what their hearts desire while they are here. Balaam was bound by this bond, for he loved the wages of unrighteousness (2 Peter 2:15). Achan was similarly ensnared (Joshua 7:20-21), as was Gehazi, who told falsehoods for worldly gain and later tried to conceal it from his master with a lie (2 Kings 5:20 onwards). The young man in Matthew 19:21-22, whom Christ saw bound by this chain, led Him to proclaim to

His disciples that it was exceedingly difficult for a rich man to be saved. Although He clarified that it is not the possession of wealth but the excessive love for it and trust in it that hinder salvation (Mark 10:24). Judas, too, was bound as the Devil's captive by his love for money, which led him to betray his Lord and sell his soul for it (Matthew 26:14-16). Demas, as mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:10, was also ensnared. Undoubtedly, thousands remain in eternal chains of darkness, captives to the love of the world while they lived in it. But shall we not attempt to break free from this bond? Until your hearts are weaned from the world, we cannot win them for Jesus Christ. You cannot love God and the world with prevailing and predominant affections simultaneously (1 John 2:15, James 4:4). And as long as you love the world, you cannot value Christ, nor are you worthy of Him (Matthew 10:37-38).

Consider the following:

1. Do you not have other and better things to set your hearts' love upon? Is there not a God and a Christ for you to love? (1) Is God not a more noble and excellent object of your affection? (2) Is He not a more suitable good for your soul? (3) Is He not a sufficient and therefore satisfying good? (4) Is He not a more necessary good, given that you can be happy without worldly possessions, but not without God? (5) Is He not an everlasting, enduring good? Once you gain a true knowledge of God and the world, you will see reason to redirect your heart's affections from earthly things and set them upon God.
2. Should you set your heart's love on earthly possessions, which you will soon leave behind and cannot take with you into the next world? Have you forgotten that you are a pilgrim on this

earth and that this is not your permanent abode? After a few more nights of sleep and a few more days of walking, your final hour will come when you must bid farewell to this world and all that is on it. Whether you go to heaven or hell, you will not stay here. Whether you are damned or saved, or whether you go to God or the devil, you will not remain here. Will you take your riches with you? They have no purpose in another world. Whether you go to heaven or hell after death, riches will be of no use to you. God will be there for you, Christ will be there for you, and grace will accompany you, but you must leave your worldly riches behind, and they will leave you when you need comfort and support the most (Luke 12:19-20, Psalm 49:17, Ecclesiastes 5:15, 1 Timothy 6:7). So why fix your heart on these things and become entangled with the love of them, thereby keeping yourself from God, Christ, and heaven forever?

3. Will these things bring you comfort at your departure? Or will your soul not be wounded when you realize that you loved the world more than God and Christ? Have you never stood by the bedside of a dying person who, in the agony of their soul, cried out, "Woe is me, for I have spent my time laboring for this vain and empty world, while God, Christ, and heaven were neglected by me! Oh, if I had loved God and Christ as I loved the world, I would now be a happy, blessed person, even though I am dying. God and Christ would have comforted me now, and I would have had solid, lively hopes of heaven to comfort me. But the things that had my heart and all my love, I find and feel, do not comfort me. You won't stay to enjoy them here, you can't take them with you where you're going, and they won't comfort you on your journey to eternity. Is it reasonable, then, that you should be so bound by your love for them as to keep you from God and Christ here and in the hereafter?

4. Was this the purpose for which you were born? Did God give you such affections of love, desire, and delight so that you would set them upon such things? Did God intend for these things to become the chief objects of your soul's affections, or did He create your soul's affections for these things? Did God send you into this world to amass a heap of refined earth, only for you to love it more than Himself, who made you? Doesn't this place God beneath the creature and elevate the creature in God's place? Doesn't this mean you're missing the purpose of your creation?
  
5. Isn't this loving things that cannot, do not, and will not love you in return? If you give your heart to God, He will give His heart to you (Proverbs 8:17). But silver and gold cannot love you; your lavish possessions cannot love you. Here, your love is in vain and cannot be reciprocated, nor can love be returned to you. Yet, God would love you more than you could ever love Him, and Christ's love for you would surpass your love for Him. So, come and free yourself from enslavement to the world and from being held captive by the Devil with these chains of gold. I suppose a person would choose liberty with a modest and humble worldly condition rather than spend their days imprisoned in a palace or dungeon, bound by chains of gold.
  
6. Will gaining the world compensate for what you lose? Will it make up for (1) the loss of God, (2) the loss of Christ, the only Redeemer, (3) the loss of the company of angels and saints, (4) the loss of your own unique and immortal soul (Matthew 16:26)? (5) Can you truly be happy if you lose all these? (6) Aren't these things common to both the good and the wicked? Some are special mercies like God's pardoning grace and a title to heaven. (7) Aren't they sometimes given with a curse and as

judgments, while Christ and grace are always given in love and mercy?

## **CHAPTER VI.**

The Fourth Chain is Presumption.

4. Another chain that binds many of these captives is presumption, vain and false hopes of heaven. This is the downfall of most who ultimately fail, having groundless hope in their eternal salvation. How few are there, even if they are ignorant of the path to heaven, who do not hope to reach it? They walk the broad, well-trodden road leading to hell, yet they hope to reach heaven, as if a person were constantly traveling westward but was confident they would end up in the east. The drunkard hopes for salvation; the swearer, the profane, the hypocrite, and the unbeliever, even they hope for happiness. This hope is so strong in the worst of people that when they want to emphasize the certainty of something, they use the expression, "as I hope to be saved," as if to say that it is as true and sure as the truth that they hope to be saved. Though their hope may not be genuine, the fact that they hope is true. The strength of this bond is evident in the fact that these hopes are the last thing wicked individuals are willing to part with. When they are so sick that they realize they must part with their riches, they still won't part with their hope of heaven. When they are so sick that they know the hour of parting with their dearest friends is near, they still won't let go of their hope. Even when they see that they must part with life itself, they still

won't part with hope. Only when soul and body are separated do these poor captives lose both their souls and their hopes. They descend into hell with their hopes of heaven, and in that place, they can hope no longer. One of the most challenging tasks for ministers is to shatter these false hopes of heaven in their congregations. If this could be accomplished, a significant part of the work would be done. Despite being warned about their misery and danger, the wrath of God against sinners, and the torments prepared by an angered God, people continue to ward off all these warnings with their vain and unfounded hopes. If only we could rid you of these false hopes, then we might have hope that you could be delivered from your bondage and escape from this captivity, in which you are so firmly held. No one is more securely bound in fetters than someone who is ungodly yet firmly believes they will be saved. If you could speak with damned souls, thousands of them would tell you that this was their undoing. If you were to ask them, "Were you not told that sin would lead you to this place of torment? Were you not warned by ministers and by God Himself that you were on the path to misery and damnation?" What would they reply? "Yes, yes, we were told often and clearly, but our hope led us astray. We hoped it would turn out better for us." Shall I then attempt to break this bond? But because a mere human can only demonstrate to you the futility of your hopes, I pray that God Himself will come and powerfully convince you by His Word and Spirit that your hopes are baseless and groundless, so that you will no longer be kept in bondage by the Devil through these chains of false hopes of heaven. I understand that this is a complex issue with many underlying factors. However, if I can show you from the Word of God that your reasons for hope are no better than those that graceless individuals might put forth, and which many now in hell once claimed as well, then you may

no longer allow Satan to delude and deceive you, keeping you captive with false hopes of heaven. First, let me ask you whether you will believe that what God speaks in His Word is true, or whether you dare to claim that what is contained in Scripture is a forgery and a lie? If you choose the latter, God will soon convince you of the truth. The flames of hell will soon persuade you, and the pains and torments you will soon feel will powerfully demonstrate that all the sayings of God are true. If you choose the former, that God's Word is true, then I have no doubt that I can demonstrate the falsehood of your hope, provided you are willing to test your hopes against the Word of God, by which all of us, you, me, and everyone else, will soon be judged and either acquitted or condemned. I have no doubt that I can show that Satan has fooled you for all this time. God has plainly told you that in an unconverted state, without faith in Christ, without repentance and reformation, you cannot be saved. This is as clear as can be spoken. Yet, contrary to God's revealed will, do you dare to hope for salvation? Which do you think will be proven false: God's word or your hope, which contradicts His word? Both cannot be true. Will a drunkard claim that God's word is false? No, he will not. Then your hope is false. See 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, where God plainly and unequivocally states that without exception, all drunkards, whoremongers, and graceless individuals (if they die in that state) will not inherit the Kingdom of God. So, all of you who say you hope to be saved, come forward, even those who consider themselves the most pious. Present your reasons, and in the fear of God, seriously consider the answers you will receive.

1. One link in this chain of false hopes by which these captives are bound is the misapprehension and misapplication of God's mercy. You say, "God is a merciful God and is ready to show

mercy to His creatures. It is true that I have no merit, but there is mercy in God, and since God made me, I hope He will save me." Is this all you have to say in such an important matter? Do you think you are redeemed from your bondage and will be forever free from the torments of the damned? So that you may no longer be bound by this chain, consider the following:

2. Even the devils themselves and the damned souls in Hell can say as much as this. Poor damned devils know that God is a merciful God and is willing to show mercy to the penitent and humble sinner. Devils and damned souls can declare that they are God's creatures, yet despite this, they are miserable and will remain so forever. This is the aggravation of their misery, that despite God's mercy, they are eternally damned. What does it matter to them that God is merciful in Himself and shows mercy to others if He is not merciful to them? And what does it matter to you if God is merciful, if due to your continuance in a state of unregeneracy, you will never benefit from His mercy? I acknowledge that there is a difference between the damned in Hell and wicked men on Earth. The damned in Hell have passed the possibility of mercy, but you have not. They will no longer have offers of mercy, but you still do. However, you must repent and be converted, which they were not. Otherwise, you will not benefit from God's mercy, just as they did not.
3. God could be infinitely merciful, even if you (and thousands like you) perish in your bondage and are damned forever. What a proud and blasphemous thought it is that God should not be merciful unless He takes you, steeped in your sins, from your alehouse bench and puts you into heaven. The greatness of God's mercy is not demonstrated by the number of people who will be saved, but by the means and method through which He



saves them. If God had saved only one person out of the many millions of mankind, without that person deserving it, and contrary to their desert, through the death of His own Son, it would have been a clear demonstration of God's mercy. Must you measure God's mercy by whether you are saved or not while you continue to walk contrary to His laws and His revealed will? This is like a criminal who has deserved death for murder and is on trial for his life, yet he hopes to escape because the judge is a merciful man. Nevertheless, the judge proceeds to pass a death sentence upon him. You would all acknowledge that the judge might still be a very merciful man and that the prisoner was a fool to hope for mercy when he deserved execution for breaking the law. The same principle applies in this case, which is easy to understand.

4. God is just and true as well as merciful and gracious. Why should you not fear that God will damn you because He is a just God, just as you hope that He will save you because He is a merciful God? You do not have a correct understanding of God if you think of Him as merciful without justice or gracious without truth. Both attributes exist in God. This merciful God has said that unless you repent and turn from sin, you will find no mercy from Him. So what will become of God's truth if, contrary to His word, He saves you without repentance while you continue in your sinful ways? Must God break His word to save your soul? Do not hope for it, for He will never do it. When God proclaims His mercy to the penitent, He also declares His justice, His jealousy, and His firm resolve that the guilty will not go free (Exodus 34:6-7). He is full of fury towards the wicked as He is full of mercy towards the godly. He reserves a crown for one and wrath for the other (Nahum 1:2-3).

5. Although God is merciful, He presents conditions in the Gospel that you must meet if you want to partake in His mercy. God is determined that if you do not accept His mercy on His terms, you will never receive it. When you claim God's mercy by saying, "Lord, have mercy on me, for You are a gracious God," He may respond, "Yes, I am gracious, and those who have repented and believed will find Me to be so. But didn't I also tell you what kind of person you should have been—holy, humble, and repentant—if you wanted to be saved by My mercy? Yet you chose not to be. Therefore, I have no mercy for you now." God may say to you, "Did I ever promise you or anyone else that I would save you or them without repentance and faith in My Son, Jesus Christ? Did I ever promise to pardon the impenitent? Did I promise to save unbelievers who persist in unbelief? If I have, then show Me where and when I made such a promise, who delivered it, and where it can be found. If I have not made such a promise, and indeed I have not made any such promise, why were you so vainly confident in My mercy? Therefore, accept My answer and be gone. I will not show mercy to you." (Luke 13:25-27). Mercy itself will not save you except through the means of mercy presented in the Gospel.

5. When you claim that God made you, therefore He will save you, consider that, based on this account, even the vilest sinner in the world should go to heaven, indeed, every one of them. The whoremonger, whom you yourself would condemn, might make the same plea as you. By doing so, you are broadening the path to heaven beyond what God intended. Furthermore, if you had remained as God originally made you, He would have made you eternally happy. God created you as holy and upright, but you have rebelled against Him. God created you as a creature, but He did not create you as a drunkard, a worldling, or a liar.

Therefore, let God's creature be holy, and God will not damn His creature. But if you choose to be a drunkard or a hypocrite, and God damns the drunkard or the hypocrite, what will become of God's creature? God answers this decisively, and I will provide it in His own words from Isaiah 27:11: "It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them, will show them no favor." Is this not directly contradictory to the basis of your hope? Will you continue to plead this while you persist in your sin and not let Satan keep you bound with this cord any longer? If you do, remember that you have been warned that this is a shaky foundation for your hope and that you will not receive the everlasting mercy shown to God's redeemed ones who have truly been delivered from their bondage and captivity.

6. Another link in this chain of false hopes that binds captives is a strong (though false) belief in salvation through the death of Christ the Redeemer. If you ask many carnal, ignorant, and ungodly individuals why they believe they will be saved, they will tell you it's because Christ died for sinners, and they are sinners (says one) as all men are, and indeed, I am the worst of sinners. Therefore, I hope things will turn out well for me. Another person will say the same, and a third, and many will offer no better explanation, without any concern or understanding of how to apply the death of Christ to themselves and its power and virtue to slay their sins. Thus, the very means of redeeming captives is misused to make their bonds stronger and keep them more firmly bound in their captivity.

By way of concession, it is granted: (1) that the death of Christ and the satisfaction He made to the justice of God is the only meritorious cause of humanity's redemption from bondage and salvation, and

whoever is saved, is saved through Christ's death, for there is no other Saviour or Redeemer besides Him (Acts 4:12). (2) It is true that this Redeemer is offered to all where the Gospel is preached. No one is excluded from the offers of grace, pardon, and the benefits of redemption. His death shall be sufficient and effective for delivering from bondage and setting free those who obey His call and accept Him as Lord and Redeemer, as offered in the Gospel (Acts 10:43, John 3:16). However, to prevent you from being more ensnared by your own misunderstanding of the means of redemption and to ensure you are not more tightly bound by misconceptions about salvation through the death of Christ, consider the following:

1. If this were enough to prove your redemption and salvation because Christ died for sinners, and you acknowledge yourselves to be such, then the damned souls in Hell might have hope of being delivered and saved. They know that Christ died for sinners, and they are now aware that they are sinners and miserable. The pains they feel convince them that they are sinners. I acknowledge, as I have previously stated, that there is a difference between the state of devils and damned souls and that of sinners on earth. Christ is preached to the latter and not to the former. Freedom from bondage is possible for the former but not for the latter. Mercy entreats, the Spirit strives, and patience waits upon the former, but not upon the latter. Mercy and patience have done with the damned souls forever. There is no more asking them, "Will you have Christ now? Will you be pardoned now?" although, through mercy, this is not your current condition. However, regarding the basis of your plea for redemption and salvation by Christ, as previously mentioned, "Christ died for sinners, and you are sinners," what is the difference? All people on earth and the damned in hell, who have heard of Christ, might say the same. Is it not a matter of

great astonishment for sober, serious people to see poor sinners bound so firmly in a captive state with this vain confidence of being set free by Christ, yet they can say no more than damned souls might say: "We are sinners, and Christ died for sinners"?

2. Consider that not all sinners will be saved by the death of Christ. Christ has died, yet thousands will be tormented forever (Matthew 7:13-14), and the damnation of many will be greater than it would have been if Christ had never suffered.
3. Know and understand that the benefits of redemption and the completion of all in salvation at the end are conditionally presented by God in the Gospel. Why, then, should you be so confident when you have not met the condition? Pardon can be obtained through the blood of Christ, but there is a condition without which you will never be pardoned (Acts 10:43). Salvation through Christ is available, but there is a condition without which you will never be saved (John 3:16, 36; Mark 16:16; Acts 16:31). Justification can be obtained through the blood of Christ, but remember that there is a condition without which you will never be justified (Romans 5:1). Throughout the Word of God, offers and grants of pardon, deliverance from Hell, and release from the curse of the Law, offers and grants of salvation and eternal life, are made conditionally. If you believe, if you repent, if you are converted and born again, then you can have them, but not otherwise. Christ did not die so that sinners, merely as sinners, should be saved, for then all sinners should be saved, and that which is the reason for men's condemnation should be a qualification for men's salvation. However, Christ died so that believing sinners might be saved, that repenting and returning sinners might be saved. Christ died so that unholy ones might become holy and be saved, that unbelievers might

believe and be saved. He did not die so that unholy, impenitent, and unbelieving persons, living and dying in that state, should have salvation by His death. Therefore, know, O vain person, that even if you had a thousand souls, they would all be damned, even though Christ has died, unless you believe, repent, and turn to God. The shedding of Christ's blood upon the Cross saves no one's soul without its application to the conscience. Faith in Christ, regeneration, holiness, and the restoration of the image of God in the soul are necessary for salvation in their rightful place, just as the death of Christ is necessary for its purpose. To illustrate this, consider that when many individuals are in bondage and taken as captives, unable to ransom themselves, the king's son pays the ransom for them. But the king and his son propose certain conditions to the captives: if they acknowledge the king as their redeemer, become his servants and subjects, and obey his laws, they will benefit from the ransom. Otherwise, those who refuse these conditions will remain, die, and perish in their fetters, even though a sufficient ransom was given for their redemption. This analogy applies to the present case.

I beseech you, therefore, sirs, do not any longer flatter and deceive yourselves with such groundless hopes of being delivered by the death of Christ from your slavery and bondage without faith in Him and repentance for your sin. These things that I am now preaching, and you are hearing, are of everlasting concern to your souls. I desire to preach as one who believes that I must give an account to God for the doctrine I deliver, and I hope you will listen with the seriousness and diligent attention that those should who believe they must give an account to God on the Great Day for what they hear and how they obey it. I charge you, therefore, in the name of the great eternal God, whose truths I declare to you, not to hope for deliverance from Hell

and wrath to come, though Christ has died unless you believe in Him, become new creatures, forsake your sin, be sanctified and made holy, love Him above all, and count all things as worthless compared to the excellence of Jesus Christ. Do not continue to be drunkards and hope you will be saved, do not continue to love your sins and the world more than Christ, or remain unholy and unconverted and yet think or hope that Christ's death will save your souls. If you do, and if you persist in doing so, let God be a witness for me, and let all those who fear God in the congregation be witnesses for me, and let the consciences of these captives themselves be witnesses for me, that I have plainly, from the Word of God, given warning to you not to perish by this deceit. Bear witness that I declare that those who have been drunkards, swearers, profane, liars, hypocrites, if they repent and turn, become holy and believing persons, may and shall be saved by the death of Christ. But if they continue in sin, living and dying as such, a crucified Christ will not save them. Let believing parents bear witness against their wicked and ungodly children, and believing children against their ungodly parents. Let believing husbands bear witness against their unbelieving wives, and believing wives against their unbelieving husbands. Let believing masters bear witness against their unbelieving servants, and believing servants against their unbelieving masters. Let it be understood that all, without exception and without respect of persons, who do not repent for their sin, have no faith in Christ, and are neither holy nor converted before they die, shall be eternally damned and perish in their bonds and fetters, even though Christ died to redeem and save holy, humble, repenting, and believing sinners.

Alas, poor captive sinners! What will you do, and where will you go, when this Redeemer shall come to judgment? When all shall be raised out of their graves and stand before the bar of God? To whom will you appeal, and from whom will you expect mercy and salvation?

Methinks I hear these prisoners at the bar crying, begging, pleading, "Lord Jesus, save us! Lord Jesus, open unto us! Lord Jesus, now glorify us with Thyself! Save us, oh, save us now from yonder place of torment, from yonder flaming fire, from yonder lake of burning brimstone! Oh, send us not down to yonder dreadful place, for we trusted in Thy merits and hoped to be saved because Thou hadst died!" Methinks I hear Jesus the Judge reply to the prisoners at the bar, "No, oh no, there is no room for you in Heaven. There is no entrance for ungodly men into the holy place. There is no mansion for any such in the Kingdom of My Father. Who bid you trust to Me for mercy without believing in Me? Who bid you hope for Heaven because I was crucified, without holiness and repentance? Had you any warrant from Me in My Word to do so? Or did My Ministers, whom I did send unto you, tell you from Me that you may be saved by My death, though you did not repent, believe, nor were converted? Did they? Which is he? What is his name? Lo, here they stand. Point him out to me, the one who preached such doctrine to you. My Ministers, come forth. What do you say against the prisoners at the bar?"

"Lord, we told them in Thy name that there was a ransom paid for captives by Thy blessed self, and that Thou wast willing they should have the everlasting benefit thereof. We studied for them, prayed for them, and preached unto them about Thy sufferings and Thy death for sinners. We begged and entreated them to come unto Thee, and when we did not prevail one day, we prepared and preached the next, and so we continued to do as long as they lived, until Thou didst call us from that work by death. But did you ever tell them that they should be saved by My death, though they continued in their sins, though they had no faith in Me, though they were not sanctified nor converted? Oh no, our blessed Lord, we never did. We never did. There they stand before Thee. They cannot say we ever preached



such doctrine to them. On the contrary, we told them from Thy Word, which we made the rule and matter of our sermons, and turned them to the places where Thou hast said that without holiness they should not see Thy face with comfort (Heb. 12:14). We bid them turn to Mark 16:16, where Thou toldst them Thyself that he that believed not should be damned, and to many more such declarations of Thy mind to sinners. Lord, there stands one that used to hear me, and he cannot deny it. There stands another that used to hear me and turned to the chapter and the verse, and marked it down as if he would have observed what Thou hast declared. Lord, there he stands. He cannot deny it. Yea, Lord, here is a whole cluster of them standing together that used to hear me, and there is not one amongst them all that can deny we told them of what they now find. Here are those that did believe in Thee through our preaching of Thy Word, and they can say and witness for us that we told them of the necessity of converting grace and faith in Thee. In the same sermon that we preached that Thou didst die for sinners, we also told them that they must take Thee for their Lord, obey Thy laws, resign their hearts and wills, and love Thee above all. But they would not do it. They never did it. This is the evidence that we give against the prisoners at the bar."

"Come then, ye captives. Is this true, or is it not?"

"Yes, Lord, our consciences compel us to acknowledge that Thy Ministers did declare such things unto us."

"Did they so? Then why did you not believe them? Go, get you gone. Go, get you down to your deserved torments. Come hither, ye, my glorious Angels, take the prisoners at the bar, that in their lifetime were fettered and bound with chains of sin. Now come ye hither, and take them, bind them hand and foot, and cast them into utter

darkness. Drive them from My presence. Away with them, away with them. Come ye, damned devils, you took them captive and kept them in their sinful bondage. I would have redeemed them and knocked off their fetters from them, but they would not hearken unto me, and now I will not hearken unto them. Come take them, then, and drag them down to the place of punishment, where you and they shall be forever."

Oh, woeful souls! Poor wretched sinners! Ah, poor condemned prisoners! How do they tremble? How do they hang down their heads? How are their countenances changed? What hideous outcries? What doleful lamentations will there be on that day, especially by those who hoped for heaven but had their hopes disappointed? Methinks I hear them say, "Is all our hopes come to this? Is this the end of all our confidence? Prisoners we were to the devil and our lusts; we might have been made free. Woe unto us that ever we were born, that we did deceive ourselves, and that these then tempting and now tormenting devils should so much deceive us, contrary to the plain declarations of the will of Christ. We should so confidently hope for life and for salvation by Him while we did refuse Him for our Lord and to yield obedience to Him. Oh, now we are ashamed of our hope, of our vain and foolish hope. Yet thus it is, we were deceived, and we are now disappointed. Now farewell, Christ, forever. Now farewell, heaven, forever. And now farewell, hope, forever. We hoped, but now can hope no longer. Farewell, all you holy, blessed angels. You shall be rejoicing forever, while we shall be sorrowing forever. Farewell, all you saints of God, you who are the Lord's redeemed, who once were captives like us but were redeemed by the blood of Christ and sanctified, and now are saved forever. You shall rejoice, but we must mourn. You are blessed, but we are cursed. You shall be with God and Christ, your Redeemer, forever, while we

shall be with the devil and his angels forever. Farewell, farewell. Adieu, adieu. To all eternity."

Beloved hearers, if this shall be the doleful end of vain and groundless hopes, of unwarrantable and unscriptural confidence in the death of Christ without faith and sanctifying grace, be no longer kept as captives bound by this chain of false hopes of heaven.

3. Another link in this chain of false hopes wherewith these captives are bound is that they have often great trouble of conscience and inward terrors of mind after they have committed sin. "I have," says one, "been troubled for my oaths and cried, 'God forgive me.' And if I have been drunk," says another, "I have been troubled for it. Sometimes it breaks my sleep, and sometimes I cannot eat in peace, nor think of my sin, but my heart is filled with horror at the remembrance of it. Therefore, I hope that I am redeemed by Christ and got loose from my bondage state, and that God will have mercy on me and will save my soul." I answer:
4. False repentance strengthens false hopes, and many times, the more the sinner is troubled for his sin, the faster he is bound in his sinful captive state. The more tears fall from your eyes, the tighter your fetters are locked upon your soul. Because as true repentance makes way for a well-grounded peace of conscience and for solid comfort, so false and counterfeit repentance afterward makes the sinner more secure and strengthens his mistake concerning his spiritual condition. He has sinned, and he has sorrowed, and now he thinks all is well. The devil has him in his hold more firmly than before.
5. Terrors of conscience for sin, though great and grievous to the point where you are restless and weary of your life, are no

argument that you are made free from captivity. Have you ever been as troubled as Cain? Or have you ever been filled with such amazing horrors as Judas? Yet, these were captives to the devil still and are bound in chains of sin, guilt, and punishment to this day, and so shall be forever. And who has greater terrors, reprovings, and reproaches from their own consciences than the damned in hell? These terrors in your soul and conscience might be the forerunners and beginning of those hellish horrors you shall be filled with in another world.

6. But what are your terrors and your tears, the agonies and anguish of your heart, without an inward change? What are all these legal fits of sorrow while you are the same person, still sinning, and your love for sin remains unchanged? When temptation comes, your course and practice are the same. If you wear the skin from your knees by going often to confess your sin, and weep yourself blind, and pine away with sorrow, yet if your heart secretly still loves your sin, and you are not inwardly renewed, nor have accepted or clung to Christ by faith, then whatever your apprehensions about your good condition, you are still a captive to the devil, especially when you sometimes seem to lament your sin with sorrow and at other times delight in committing the sin you lamented. You confess your sin and then commit it again, and like a slave, run in circles between confession and commission of your sins. Whereas in a true penitent, there is a renewal of the heart and a reformation of life. There is a loathing and leaving of the sin lamented (Ezek. 36:31; 18:30-31; Isa. 57:7; Joel 2:12-13).
4. Another link in this chain of false hopes with which these captives are bound is that they have good intentions, good wishes, and desires. Although they may not be as eloquent as

others or possess the same gifts, they thank God that their hearts are good, and have been so from their childhood. They believe that even though they cannot express themselves, they have good intentions in their hearts. However, consider this:

1. Many have gone to hell with such good intentions and wishes in their hearts. Take Balaam, for example, who wished to "die the death of the righteous" (Numbers 23:10). Who wouldn't wish to be forever happy and free from eternal misery and torment? But such wishes don't lead to salvation; you wouldn't accept them from your idle servants who wish their work was done.
2. Can your intentions be considered good when they are accompanied by wicked actions and neglect of duty? What good intention is there in keeping Christ out of your heart or profaning God's Sabbaths? What good intention is found in neglecting to make peace with God or seeking His grace and righteousness?
3. Good intentions in your heart don't make your actions or life good. If your heart is truly good before God, your life will reflect that goodness before others. "A good tree brings forth good fruit" (Matthew 7:17-18). Your failure to see the badness of your heart is evidence that it is not truly good. The more you justify the goodness of your heart while neglecting your duty, the clearer it becomes that your heart is not good (Jeremiah 17:9-10). Don't think that your heart, which you believe is the best part of you, is actually the worst.
4. You claim to have good things in your heart that you can't express with your tongue. Is your heart so full of goodness

that there is no way to express it through your actions or words? Are there no works or words that can reflect this supposed goodness? This is unlikely. When you are hungry, you find words to express your needs. When you are sick, you can communicate your pain. But when a minister asks about your spiritual state, you claim that you cannot express the good in your heart. Is it really impossible? Are there no words, even in broken language? In other areas of your life, your words flow freely. You have no trouble discussing worldly matters, possessions, goods, and apparel. However, when it comes to matters of God, you become silent. This is a clear indication that it's not a lack of words but rather a lack of God's work in your heart. Don't let the Devil keep you bound with the false belief in the goodness of your heart, your wishes, and your intentions.

5. Another link in this chain of false hopes with which these captives are bound is quite the opposite. Some of them have strong intellectual abilities, extensive knowledge of God's matters, and are very skilled in spiritual discourse. The Devil has various fetters for his different prisoners and employs various chains to keep them in captivity. This is not the weakest or least effective of his strategies, for when people mistake gifts for grace and common knowledge for genuine salvation. But to break free from this chain, consider the following:

There might be a theoretical knowledge of the things of God, even if a person has never experienced them personally. A person who has never repented may be able to explain what repentance is, and someone who is not converted might understand the process of the Spirit in converting a sinner. Many can talk about God without ever having tasted the sweetness of His presence. Many can discuss

Heaven without ever entering it. The mind can be filled with knowledge, while the heart remains empty of grace. People can talk about faith, its nature, its actions, its excellence, its necessity, and its effects, yet lack faith themselves. The same applies to love and other graces. The more knowledge you have, the greater your responsibility, and the greater your misery if that knowledge is separated from practice and obedience (Luke 12:47, 48).

Now that you have heard how strong the chain of false hope of Heaven is, how it is constructed, and how it is reinforced, and how it can be broken, what will you do? Will you continue to be bound by this chain and remain captive? Unfortunately, I suspect that many of you will. Despite all that has been said, some drunkards will continue to hope for Heaven and salvation, and swearers and profane individuals will persist in their sinful ways while hoping for Heaven and eternal life. Because this fetter is so powerful, let me ask you a few questions in an attempt to remove it from these captive sinners:

1. What if Christ Himself were here with you, preaching to you and personally telling you that the grounds of your hope of redemption and salvation by His blood are unsound and unwarranted? Would you still hope for redemption and salvation? If Christ were visibly present, and you heard Him say with your own ears that drunkards are captives to the Devil and will not be saved, would you reply, "No, we are not in bondage to the Devil or our sins, so we will hope we are redeemed and will be saved"? Would you believe Christ Himself? If you say you would believe Him, why then do you not believe what Christ has already spoken and left recorded in His Word? The same teachings that Christ preached in person are faithfully recorded in the Gospel. In His sermon on the Mount, He said, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees,

you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20). Does the righteousness of gross sinners or close hypocrites exceed that of the Pharisees and scribes, who were known for their strictness? Look again at Luke 13:3, 5, Mark 16:16, and Matthew 18:3. Yet, when Christ tells you that unless you repent, you will perish, unless you believe, you will be damned, and unless you are converted, you will not enter the kingdom of God, you remain captives. Do you not repent, believe, or convert, yet you hope you are free and will be saved? The truth is, if you do not believe the ministers preaching Christ's own words, you would not believe Christ Himself (Luke 10:16). If you reject their words, you reject Christ and God Himself. Believe me, or rather, believe Christ Himself, who tells you that without converting grace, you will be damned. If you are not converted, do not hope that you are delivered from your captivity or that you will be saved. Do not let the Devil deceive you and keep you in bondage.

2. What if God sent an angel from heaven to you, delivering a message while you are still a drunkard, swearer, profane, liar, hypocrite, or worldling, unsanctified and in captivity, saying, "You are a captive to the Devil and, remaining so, you will not be saved"? Would you continue to hope for salvation after receiving such a message from God through a glorious angel? Or would you then leave your sins, seek grace, and make it your priority to escape from bondage? If an angel came from heaven, he would preach the same doctrine found in the Word of God; otherwise, he would be a cursed creature (Galatians 1:8). However, you have a more certain way of knowing God's will through Scripture (2 Peter 1:17-19). If an angel came from heaven, you might doubt whether he truly came from God. But the Scriptures are undoubtedly from God, and if you do not believe the Scriptures, you would not believe an angel sent from heaven either.



3. What if you could safely approach the gates of Hell and witness the thousands there suffering in restless torment, individuals who once lived as you do now, convinced that they were redeemed and would be saved just as confidently as you are? Would you continue in your sinful state and course of life, still hoping for salvation after witnessing such a sight? If you saw thousands damned before you for the same sins you currently live in, would you remain confident that you would be delivered? Poor sinner, what can I do for you? What can I say to you? Will nothing convince you or awaken you before you feel these truths in the flames of Hell? Will you not believe any of these truths until you experience them firsthand? Will you be more foolish than even your own beast, which you cannot force or drive into a burning fire? Yet when you are told that there is a fire into which the slaves of sin and Satan will be cast, you willingly walk the path that leads you to it. What if God were to take you to a place and command you to stand and witness millions rolling in a lake of brimstone, listening to their groans, hideous howlings, doleful cries, and painful complaints? One confessing, "God has justly damned me for my drunkenness and my oaths," and another saying, "I am tormented here for my Sabbath-breaking and indulging my flesh," and another admitting, "I am suffering in these flames for my hypocrisy and unbelief," with a thousand others making similar confessions. After hearing such things, would you still remain a drunkard, a swearer, a Sabbath-breaker, a hypocrite, and an unbeliever, a captive in the bonds of sin, while convincing yourself that you are free and will never be among this cursed company? I believe that witnessing such scenes and hearing such things should awaken and alarm you. So, tell me, why should you not believe the True Eternal God as much as you believe your own eyes and ears? There are those who died without repentance and faith, dying in their state of

bondage. The same God who has already damned them also threatens you with the same damnation for the same sins. Will Satan still keep you bound with this false hope of a better place? I implore you, as you love your soul and desire to escape this fate, do not let him continue to deceive you in this way.

4. What if God sent one of your acquaintances and companions who has been in Hell for a year or two, a month or two, someone you used to swear and swagger with, drink and carouse, whose funeral you attended not long ago, and whose soul, upon departing from the body, descended to Hell? What if this person came to you and said, "I used to be merry and jovial in your company; I used to gamble and have fun with you, wasting and squandering my precious time, and I hoped I would be saved when I died, just as you do now. But alas, I was mistaken to my everlasting shame and sorrow. I find I was deceived. I deluded myself. I wouldn't believe it, but now I know it's true. I wouldn't believe it, but now I feel it. Ministers warned me about this place and told me I was headed there, but I wouldn't be convinced until I arrived in Hell. I kept hoping I would go to Heaven, but now I am convinced. Unfortunately, it's too late for me to be converted. I am finally convinced. Believe me, even though I am a damned soul, believe me, the Word of God is true, God's threats are true, and what your ministers preach from God's Word about sin and misery caused by sin is all true. Believe me now, who have been in Hell since the day I died, that the slaves of the Devil who die in their captivity all go to this dark and dreadful Dungeon." If one of your neighbors who departed and was damned not long ago were to appear in your room one silent night and bring you this message, would you believe him and repent? Would you refuse to continue serving the Devil? Perhaps you think you would believe this doctrine then, take

warning, and mend your ways. So tell me, should you not believe the True Eternal God of Heaven sooner, more than a damned soul in Hell? The truth is, if you will not believe the Scriptures, the ministers of God who preach His truths to you, repent, and turn away from serving the Devil to serving the Lord, you would not do it even if someone came back from the dead (Luke 16:27, to the end).

5. What if you yourself had been in Hell for a month or two, experiencing the pains and torments there, and God released you, placing you in the same condition you are in now, under the same means and ministry as you currently enjoy? What if the same doctrine were preached to you, and the same offers of Christ, pardon, heaven, and eternal life were presented to you as you hear now? Would you then listen to our doctrine, renounce the Devil's service, and beg God to remove your fetters and chains? Would you willingly become a servant of the blessed and living God instead of a slave of Satan? Or would you continue living as you do now, hoping once again on the same grounds that you would not be cast into that place of torment a second time? So why would you not believe in the True Eternal God, who cannot lie, as much as you believe in your own experience?

Though this God will never do it; He will never test you again, nor place you in this life again. For once in Hell, and forever there; God will not grant you a second life to correct what was amiss in your earthly living. If you believe you would be more careful if God were to test you after damning you, so that you may avoid damnation again, why should you not be as careful now to avoid damnation altogether?

So what, poor captive sinner! Will you, after all that has been said, continue in sin and still hope that you will do well? Will the Devil continue to hold you in captivity and keep you firmly bound in this false belief that your state is good and in baseless hopes of salvation? I am afraid he will, oh, I greatly fear he will. Poor prisoner! What is on your mind? What ails you? Why are you not more concerned upon hearing these things? Will you remain in a fool's paradise? Why do I preach, and why do you come to listen, if you will not heed what is spoken to you from the Word of God, in the name of God? Oh, how difficult it is to stand and witness so many souls, despite all the study, effort, prayer, and preaching for you and to you, still in the Devil's chains, heading in shackles to the prison of Hell, tightly bound in sin to a place of eternal torment? How can I bear the thought of your damnation? Oh, it is a burden, a heavy burden indeed, to my soul to think that any of you should be damned; that you should go from here to Hell; from a place of solemn worship to a place of torment and blasphemy. Do you think it is not enough to break the heart of a poor minister, to preach and labor so that your bonds may be broken, your souls may be set free, and yet after all, you remain in fetters? If it were not for some who listen and obey, if it were not for those who give great hope that they are leaving the Devil's service, and their chains are broken, it would be a strong temptation to preach no more. But alas! Even though some are set free, what shall we do for the rest who still remain in bondage? Especially in this, which is so strong: a false belief that you are already free and false hopes that you will be saved forever. Friends, the stronger your false hopes, the greater the real sorrow of poor ministers; the more confident you are that you are not in bondage, albeit falsely, the more discouraging it is for us. If we depict the misery of these captives, we labor in vain as far as you are concerned because you believe you are not among them. If we exhort and direct you to seek liberty, our labor is in vain, because you are convinced

(though falsely) that you are already free. Whereas, if you could see yourselves in chains and feel your bonds, there would be more hope that we might persuade you to accept a Redeemer. Oh, may God break these bonds! May God open your eyes, so that you can recognize that you are captives and not vainly confident that you are already set free! Oh, if my head were filled with water and my eyes with fountains of tears, I would weep day and night over the woeful state of these captives who are on their way to Hell, yet believe they are on the path to Heaven. But let me leave this with such presumptuous captives: If you hope while your eyes are open, know that when death closes your eyes, you shall hope no more. Allow me to recommend to you the earnest study of three passages of Scripture, and then I will proceed to the next: The first is Job 8:13, which says, "The hypocrite's hope shall perish. 14. Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web." If your hope perishes, will not your soul perish as well? If your hope is cut off, will your soul not fall short of the hoped-for Heaven? If your hope is as frail as a spider's web, can it be a secure hope? Can a spider's web withstand a broom? God, with the broom of death, will sweep your hope away.

The second passage is Job 11:20, which states, "But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the Ghost." You, poor captive, hope for Heaven, but your eyes will fail before you attain it. You hope for happiness, but you will wear your eyes out before (without being set free by Christ) you can enjoy it. You hope to escape wrath and Hell, but you will not escape. It is the infallible God who declares that you shall not escape, and your hope shall be as the giving up of the Ghost, for these reasons:

1. A man is reluctant to give up the ghost; it is the last thing he does. You are reluctant to give up your false hopes of heaven; unless God prevents it, it will be the last thing you will do.
2. A man must give up the ghost, though he is never so reluctant to do it; he would not die, but he must; you must eventually give up hoping; even if you keep this hope until you die, then you shall hope no more; it is as impossible for you to maintain these hopes forever as it is for you to live on earth forever.
3. A man that gives up the ghost, by all the power on earth cannot be called to life again. When your soul and body part, then your soul and hope shall part, and you shall lose both hope and soul together. The parting of the soul and body is a sad parting, but the parting of the soul and hope is a sadder parting; and when your soul has parted with its hopes at death, hope shall never return again; your soul parted from your body shall return to it again, but not your hope unto your soul; your body falls and shall rise again, but there shall never be a resurrection of your hope.

Some translate these words thus, and their hopes shall perish at the expiration of the soul. The sinner shall breathe out his soul and hope at once. These words [ The giving up of the Ghost ] are but two words in the Hebrew Text; and the one signifies not only the soul but also the breath or a puff of wind, and the other signifies to blow, which implies that the hope of wicked men, the Devil's captives, shall be but as a puff of wind or as the blast of a man's mouth: and one of the words sometimes signifies to grieve and to be sad; so the hope of these captives shall end in sorrow and sadness; it shall make him sad to puff and blow, having trusted for such great and weighty things as Heaven and Salvation on such slight and slender grounds. Again, the

Hebrew Word has another meaning, to despise, loath, and nauseate a thing: this may teach us that although these captives now think well of their hope, at last they shall loathe it and abhor it, as a man would do some rotten and unsavory thing. Now you will not loathe your sins, but hereafter you shall loathe your very hope: now you will not loathe yourselves for your iniquity, but hereafter you shall, for your folly.

The third Text is Job 27:8. For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Yes, what is it indeed? You have gained riches, and you have gained in a way of hypocrisy (which men could not judge of) credit and esteem, a name of a good, and holy, zealous man! But what is this gain, or what is your hope, though you have gained the name of being religious, when God taketh away your soul? From where? From your body; where to? To eternal torments; what will be your hope then? And will you still be bound by this chain? This has had a greater proportion of time than can be allowed to the rest because I judge it to be one of the strongest bonds in which multitudes are carried captive to the hellish prison.

## **CHAPTER VII.**

The fifth Chain whereby Captives are held is Despair.

5. Another Chain whereby some Captives are fast bound is contrary to the former, a despairing of mercy; not only a despairing in a man's self, seeing an utter inability to help

himself, this is necessary, but a despairing of pardon and salvation notwithstanding the mercy of God and the merit of Christ; through which pardon and salvation are tendered unto them. The Devil uses various, yea contrary means and methods to hold fast sinners in their bonds; if he can, he will keep them from a sight and sense of sin and misery thereby: If he cannot, but God opens a sinner's eyes and awakens his conscience, the Devil will set out his sins with all the aggravations of them but endeavours to keep from the sight of Christ; sometimes persuading sinners that their sins are not so great, but they may do well enough, sometimes that they are so heinous, that there is no hope, nor help for them: sometimes he blinds their eyes that they see no need of a Saviour; sometimes he shows them their sin in a multiplying or magnifying glass, that a Saviour can do them no good; and the poor captive is held and kept from Christ the Redeemer either way, though it is more rare that sinners despair, but it is more frequent and more ordinary for them to presume; as it was said of Saul and David; Saul slew his thousands, but David his ten thousands; 1 Sam. 18. 7. so we might say, if thousands perish in their captivity by despair, there are ten thousands many times told, that perish by presumption and false hopes of Heaven. Sometimes the sinner cries out with Cain, Gen. 4. 13. My sin is greater than can be forgiven; and with Judas is tempted to despair, and to destroy himself.

But that the poor Captive that is convinced of his sins, might not be kept from Christ the Redeemer by this bond, I shall speak three things towards the breaking of it. Do you then cry out in the anguish of your soul, Oh the greatness of my sins, they are scarlet, crimson sins! oh the number of my sins, they cannot be reckoned up! there is not a viler wretch upon God's earth, not a man that hath a worse heart, that breathes in God's air; did you know me, and the



wickedness I am guilty of, and were privy to my secret sins, you would think as well as I that there is no mercy for me; that there is no hope. Let such a soul consider,

1. The mercies of God are more and greater than thy sins, let them be never so great, never so many; thy wickedness does not exceed God's Goodness; his goodness is the goodness of a God, and his mercy the mercy of a God, and therefore Infinite, without bounds, limits, or measure. It is as easy for Infinite mercy to forgive many sins as few, and great as small; the Sea covers great rocks as well as the smallest sands. If thou hast a multitude of sins, God hath a multitude of mercies, Psal. 51. 1. if thou hast manifold sins, God hath manifold mercies, Nehem. 9. 19. if thou hast abundantly sinned, God can and will abundantly pardon, Isa. 55. 7, 8 if thy sins be sins of all sorts, of all sizes, God can and will forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin, Exod. 34. 6, 7. only be thou willing, heartily willing to leave thy sins, only be thou willing, soundly willing, unfeignedly willing to accept of mercy as it is tendered to thee, and of Christ the Redeemer as he is offered to thee, and the number, the greatness of thy sin shall not hinder thee from pardon and salvation.
2. The merits of Christ the Redeemer are fully sufficient to purchase pardon for thy sins▪ were they more and greater than they be. Darest thou say thy sinnings are more than Christ's sufferings; or that thy debts for which thou art in bonds are more than Christ the Surety for poor captives is able to satisfy and pay? Christ hath more pardons, than thou hast sins; more healings than thou hast wounds; there is more in Christ to save thee, than in thy sins to condemn thee: thy sins are but pennies in comparison of the pounds that Christ hath to pay. Come forward then, poor captive sinner, approach nearer to thy Lord-

Redeemer, come forwards, why dost thou thus go from him? come, and though thou doubts, yet do not despair. If thou hadst not been a sinner, thou wouldst have stood in no need of a Saviour; and the greater sinner thou hast been, the greater haste thou shouldst make unto a Saviour: methinks I hear Christ calling to thee, poor sinner, why art thou thus dismayed at the sight and thoughts of thy Iniquities! come unto me, and I will help thee! why art thou thus cast down, at the remembrance of what a sinner thou hast been, and what wickedness thou hast done? come, I have healing for thy wounds, I have plasters for thy sores; come to me, I will surely help and heal thee: art thou affrighted by the justice of my Father, come to me, rely on me, leave thy sins, and rely on me, and I will undertake to make thy peace with God; and I will get and give thee pardon of thy sins. Methinks I hear him say, thou criest out because thou hast sinned, and if thou hadst not, there had been no need of my coming from heaven to earth, there had been no need of my dying on the Cross. Art thou a sinner? I knew thou wast; and therefore I came on purpose for to help thee: art thou a lost sinner? I knew thou wast, and therefore I came to seek thee: art thou a captive bound in fetters? I knew thou wast, and therefore I came to ease thee, and release thee; only be but heartily willing to receive me for thy Prophet, Priest and King; and consent to the conditions of the Gospel; and do no more despond as if there were no hope, nor help for thee; come hither, and see me in my sweat and agony; come hither, and behold the wounds made in my side, my feet, my hands, my heart and all, and these I suffered for such sinners; look through the wounds made in my side, and see if thou canst not there see Love in my heart, and pity in my heart to poor returning sinners: what did I suffer for, and what did I bleed and die for, but to help and save poor sinners? come, to me, and I will be thy friend; come to me,

believe on me, receive me, and God will be thy friend. So then, poor captive soul, if thou be willing, indeed willing to leave thy sins, thy fetters and thy bonds, to resign thy will, thy love, thy heart to Christ, make him thy end, and take him for thy Lord-Redeemer, there's no reason thou shouldst despair of pardon and salvation; let not then Satan keep thee in this bond, from coming unto Christ, to be set at liberty.

Thy sins and thy wickednesses are not greater, are not more than all the sins of all the elect of God who are now in Heaven, and yet mercy has pardoned them, and Christ's merits have purchased life and salvation for them, and they are now in possession of it: thou hast out-sinned any one single man, yet hast thou committed more, or greater sins, than all the sins of all the millions now in glory, put them all together; and yet has God been able and willing to pardon them, and Christ able and willing to save them? if thou wilt repent and believe, as they did thou shalt be saved as they are! if thou wilt leave thy sins and be converted, as they were, do not despair, nay, do not doubt, but thou shalt be happy as they are. Hast thou sinned more than Adam did, that at one blow did wound and kill so many souls, as never man did the like, no, nor ever shall again? Hast thou sinned more than Manasseh, read and judge, 2 Chron. 33. 1. to 14? Hast thou sinned more than Paul who was a bloody persecutor of God's people, 1 Tim. 1. 13? Hast thou sinned more than Peter, who did swear and curse he knew not Jesus Christ? or more than Mary Magdalene? or if thou couldst say, thou hast sinned more than any one of these, yet hast thou sinned more than all these put together, and thousands of thousands more? thou canst not say it. Why then, what is the matter with thee, that thou sittest in thy chains lamenting of thyself, saying, there is no hope for me, there is no help, no mercy for me? what! no hope for a sinner, and a Saviour by thee? no help, no deliverance for a Captive, and the Ransom paid, and the

Redeemer come unto thee, waiting that thou would be but willing to receive him for thy Lord and Saviour, and he is ready to receive thee. Say, O say then, what did this tempting Devil mean, one while to draw into sin, because it was no great matter he did tempt me to? and what now doth this accusing Devil mean, that when he hath wounded me, would persuade me, there is no healing for me? O my soul! once this enemy did befool thee, when he did persuade thee, thy condition was so good, that thou didst not need to fear, and now shall he befool thee, to make thee think thy condition is now so bad, that there is no reason why thou shouldst hope? Tell him, O tell him, that yet his condition is not thine; though thou hast sinned, as he hath done, yet there is a Saviour offered unto thee, that never was, that never shall be offered unto him; Oh my soul! Satan is bound in this chain of despair himself, and it never can be knocked off; tell him then, O mine enemy thou canst not repent, and therefore canst not hope; thou canst not believe, and therefore canst not be saved; Christ did not die for thee, but he died for sinful men, who shall have the benefits of his death by believing in him; Oh I will now repent, and by the grace of God I will believe, and while the Devil despairs and would hold me from going unto Christ by despairing too; yet since there is mercy in God and merit in Christ, whereby others have been saved, and this is offered unto me, God doth call me, and Christ doth call me, and the Spirit striveth with me to come to Christ, and mercy is promised if I do, and pardon is promised if I do; why then should I sit here lamenting of my doleful case? or why do I sit here despairing of mercy? I will arise and go and venture to cast myself on Christ, and trust my soul with him If I stay here from Christ, I am sure I shall perish; but if I go, it may be I shall live. Did I say it may be, oh God hath declared in his word that if I do repent, and believe, that it shall be, that I shall be saved. Resolve therefore as those four Lepers, 2 Kings 7. 3. that said one to another, Why sit we here until we die. 4. If we say we will enter into the City, then the famine is in

the City, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall into the Hosts of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us we shall but die. If thou sittest still in thy natural state, and wilt not go to Christ, thou shalt surely die, and if thou goest to him, thou needs not say I can but die; for if thou goest, thou shalt not die. So then (though all this be no ground to encourage anyone to go on in sin, and yet hope for Heaven, who were spoken to before, yet) all this is reason of encouragement to those who have already sinned, and are penitentially grieved that they have done so, that they should now despair as once they did presume; and the Lord grant that as you have been convinced and awakened, that you might be no longer kept in bondage by presumption, so now you might go to Christ the Redeemer of Captives, and not be kept Captives still and perish by despair.

## **CHAPTER VIII.**

A Sixth Chain is embracing Morality and relying on Religious duties.

6. Another Chain with which many of these Captives are bound is their satisfaction with a morally blameless life. One may say, "I live peaceably among my neighbors; I defraud no man, I am just in all my dealings, I give everyone their due." Another may claim, "I am no drunkard, no swearer, no open profaner of Sabbaths; no one can lay anything to my charge, nor say I am a wrongdoer." Many sinners rest here, convincing themselves that their condition is good, and do not realize that they are in

bondage to the Devil, failing to seek Redemption through Jesus Christ.

Although all this is virtuous in itself, it does not necessarily indicate that your condition is good, as it is not sufficient for salvation. God requires more than this to make you fit for Heaven. To break free from this bond, consider the following:

1. Negative holiness, which involves abstaining from sinful actions, is not a basis for hope in future glory or proof of a good present condition. Neglecting affirmative commandments such as repentance, belief, prayer, and forsaking sin will condemn your soul. There are commands from God instructing you to repent, believe, pray, and forsake sin. Not repenting or believing will keep you in Satan's bonds. You must not only refrain from doing evil but also actively do what is good (Isaiah 1:16, 17; Matthew 25:42).
2. Even if your life is blameless, you still possess a corrupt and sinful heart. If you have been free from every actual sin throughout your life (which is unlikely), there is still enough sin in your heart to condemn you to the deepest depths of hell. Your heart contains sins such as adultery, murder, pride, and unbelief. Therefore, while you may claim that your life is fair, God sees that your heart is foul and impure. It is not only an unblemished life but also a pure heart that qualifies you for God's presence (Matthew 5:8; Hebrews 12:14).

Hast thou wronged no man? What! nor God either? Dost thou give to every man his due? What! and to God too? Thy heart is God's due (Proverbs 23:26). Dost thou give to God thy heart, which is his due? Thy love and obedience are God's due (Matthew 22:37). Dost thou indeed give these to God? Thy time, service, and religious worship

are God's due (Matthew 4:10). Dost thou deny these to God and yet boast that you give to everyone their due? Or do you look upon it as evil to withhold from man what belongs to him and not consider it a greater evil to withhold from God what belongs to him? Will you pay men and rob God and still consider yourself guiltless? Will you be righteous towards men and unholy towards God and yet hold yourself innocent? The same God who commands you to live soberly towards yourself and righteously towards men also charges you to be holy towards him (Titus 2:12). What if you are at peace with all men, but not at peace with God? Are you not still a captive? What if you are in charity with the world (as you boast), but have no love for God? Are you not still in fetters? What if you bear no malice in your heart towards anyone, but if your heart is full of hatred and enmity towards God, hasn't the Devil still a firm hold on you? Have you never read Matthew 19:18, 19, 20, where the moralist said as much as you do and yet remained in the bonds of his iniquity? Have you never read Luke 18:11 where the Pharisee boasted to God himself that he was not like other men, not an extortioner, adulterer, or unjust, and yet remained in the guilt of sin? A moral person without converting, sanctifying grace is like a pig in a beautiful meadow; although it's not wallowing in the mire, it's still a pig. So do not stay here. Since there are many in hell who were not common drunkards, swearers, or profane debauched individuals, do not let Satan keep you any longer bound in your captive state with this chain of your applauded moral conduct.

7. Another chain with which some captives are bound is their reliance on religious and holy duties. These individuals go a step further than the former group but are just as securely bound, if not more so. When many gross sinners are set free from captivity, and their bonds are broken, hypocrites become even more entangled with chains of their own making. Publicans and

harlots enter the Kingdom of God while hypocrites are excluded (Matthew 21:31). Just as Paul compared himself to others (2 Corinthians 11:22), saying, "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? I am more—in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft." Similarly, hypocrites compare themselves to those set at liberty by Christ in terms of external duties and common gifts, believing they are also free. These hypocrites are more tightly bound. Are God's free-men much in prayer? So am I, says the hypocrite. Are they frequent in hearing? So am I. Are they admitted to all ordinances and received into church fellowship by godly, strict, and careful ministers of Christ? So am I. Do they talk and discourse of God, Christ, and Heaven? So do I, and more than many of them. Have they suffered for religion and been in bonds and prisons for religious worship of God? So have I.

These are strong bonds, and the more they pray and hear, the stronger their bonds become. While they are praying and hearing, the Devil is binding these captive hypocrites even faster. Their misery, more specifically, is that they see these chains made for their close imprisonment as ornaments and glory in them. To break this bond, consider:

1. The external performance of religious duties has been carried out by many now in Hell. Some of the souls damned today were often present at sermons, just like you, and often on their knees in prayer, just like you. Yet, at that time, they were in the bonds of sin, and you might still be, or you are now in chains in utter darkness. May God, in His mercy, grant that you may never be in that state. Outward duties may be done for God, even when



there is prevailing inward love for self, sin, and the world. It is not so much the content of your duties as the manner in which you perform them that indicates your freedom from captivity. It's not just what you do, but the principle and purpose behind your actions that distinguishes the Devil's captives from the Lord's free men. Christ clearly tells you that not everyone who professes religion will be delivered from the prison of Hell (Matthew 7:21, 22, 23) and that the children of the Kingdom may be cast into outer darkness (Matthew 8:12). Therefore, know that even if you hear ten thousand sermons and offer as many prayers, without an inward, real change through converting grace in your hearts, unless you love God above all and choose and value Christ above all, you may not be released from captivity now or saved in the future.

2. Your spiritual bondage or freedom cannot be accurately judged based on the opinions of others. People may judge you with charity, but God's judgment is certain. People assess your hearts through your actions, but God evaluates your actions through your hearts. You might be welcomed into the purest congregation and yet not admitted into Heaven. Even if Christ Himself were on Earth, you could be an audience to Christ and still be captive to the Devil. Christ tells you as much in Luke 13:26, 27, 28. So, what does it matter to be applauded or approved by people and condemned by God? Your fate, whether damnation or salvation, is not determined by what people think of you but by what God knows about you. Remember Judas, who behaved in a way that made the other disciples suspect themselves rather than him when Christ said that one of them would betray Him. Remember him and be cautious, so that while others may be bound captives in the bonds of open and

visible iniquity, you do not remain bound by the bonds of hidden and secret hypocrisy.

## **CHAPTER IX.**

Containing the 8th, 9th, 10th Chains or Bonds of these Captives.

8. Another chain by which some are held captive is the examples of others, whether they be 1. those of the past or 2. those of the present. One may say, "I follow the same religion as my forefathers did; my father and my grandfather followed this path. Who would dare say that our forefathers were not redeemed or saved? Who would claim that our forefathers died as captives and descended into hell? Will any zealous preacher condemn our forefathers? And should we be wiser than they were?" Another may argue, "If we look at this present age, the majority of the world lives as I do, or even worse. If my condition is not good, may God help many others. Will God send so many to hell? And if I am damned, woe be to thousands; their fate will be like mine." Both these ways keep individuals in their captivity. To break this bond and sever this chain, consider the following in response to the first argument:

9. We have no authority to pass judgment on your forefathers. They are beyond the reach of our preaching and exhortations. We leave them to the righteous judgment of God, who has already determined their eternal destinies. Our message is for the living, and our duty is to inform you of your sins and

miseries, to call you to repentance, and to acquaint you with the conditions of peace between God and yourselves. We are here to tell you what you must become and what you must do to escape damnation and partake in the redemption that Christ has secured for poor captive sinners.

10. You may share the same religious profession as your forefathers and yet be condemned, while they were saved. They may have been redeemed and set free, but you might still be held captive. Your forefathers professed faith in Christ, prayed to God, and performed religious duties, just as you profess to do. However, if they did these things sincerely, and you do them hypocritically, they are now in glory and at rest, while your souls may never reach that state. In the same age, people may make the same religious profession, and yet some are righteous while others are wicked. Some are set free, and some remain in captivity. For example, the five foolish virgins made the same profession as the wise ones in Matthew 25:1-13, and Judas followed the same profession as the other disciples, yet he was captive while they were redeemed. The same can happen to people living and professing their faith in different ages.
  
3. But why should you content yourselves with being like your forefathers? Although I cannot, dare not, and will not say that they are damned, can you be so certain that they are saved? Are you absolutely sure that all your forefathers believed and repented? Were they all sanctified and saved? If that is the case, then that era was better than the present, and it would have been better to live then than now. But if they did not believe or repent, would you want to end up where they are now? Would it bring you any comfort to join your forefathers there? Your wisest and safest course is not to say, "We will live as our

forefathers did," but rather to follow the commands and guidance provided by God in His Word.

4. Why couldn't you be wiser and better than your forefathers? Were they perfect in wisdom and goodness? If they were not truly wise for attaining heaven and the salvation of their souls, and if they were not genuinely good, then you must strive to be wiser and better than they were, or you will not be saved. If they were truly wise and good, they likely considered it a failing that they were not wiser and better. So why should it be considered a fault for you to aspire to be wiser than they were when they themselves lamented their lack of wisdom and goodness?

Moreover, don't you aim to be wealthier and more esteemed in the world than your forefathers were, if possible? Don't you strive for greater fortunes than they had, whether they had little or much? If they had little, wouldn't you desire to have much? If they had much, wouldn't you desire to have even more? If you wish to be richer and more esteemed, why not also aspire to be wiser and better than they were?

5. What if some of your forefathers were to return from the dead and tell you that they were mistaken and deceived, that they are damned and have been in hell since they died? Would you then feel compelled to be wiser and better than they were? If your father or your father's father were to come to you and say, "Oh, don't disregard Christ as we did. Don't remain in a natural state like we did, suffering God's wrath and eternal damnation. Don't follow our example or live as we did, neglecting to worship God in your families or doing it carelessly and negligently, as we did. Lest you end up in the same place of torment where we are condemned, and where we must remain forever. Take the

Scriptures as your guide, not our example. Do not follow our sinful ways, our careless neglect of God and Christ, lest you follow us to hell and damnation too. If you content yourselves with living and dying as we did, as captives to the Devil, and if your children after you content themselves with following and imitating you, as you follow and imitate us, then the generations descended from us will be damned from one generation to the next." After such a warning, would you still plead your forefathers' examples? Do not let the Devil continue to lead you captive by the bond of their example, as if it were more binding than God's commands.

To break the other part of this cord by which the Devil binds his captives, namely the examples of those living in the same age who live as I do, think about this:

1. The majority are not the best. The largest number consists of the worst kind of people. Christ's flock is small (Luke 12:32) while the Devil has a great multitude (Matthew 7:13, 14). If you follow the crowd, they will lead you to a place of sorrow (Exodus 23:2).
2. On the day of judgment, there will be no escaping in a crowd. You will not fare better just because many others sin as you do. If thousands remain captives to the Devil, they will all be damned. God will damn millions of people rather than go against His Word. Even if people sin together, they will suffer together.
3. The fact that multitudes are led captive to Hell will not make your chains lighter or your suffering easier. When you are in Hell, looking around and seeing multitudes there with you will not alleviate your torment. Multitudes of sinners do not lessen your sin, and multitudes of damned souls will not lessen your

damnation. God has enough wrath for you and them. Even if He pours out His wrath on millions, He still has more than enough for you. Would you choose to be in Turkish slavery just because others are there too? Seriously consider this and do not let Satan keep you captive to keep company with others.

4. Another bond that keeps these captives in their state of bondage is their intention to repent and forsake their sins in the future. From your childhood, you intended to repent when you reached adulthood, then when you grew old, and now, as you come close to sickness and death. From birth to death, you remain a captive to Satan and sin. You were born a captive and, with these delaying intentions, die as one. To break free from this bond, consider the following:
5. Who assured you that you will definitely live until the time you intend to repent? Was it God or a human? Humans cannot, and God usually does not, reveal to sinners how long they will live. How can you have knowledge beyond others? Imagine if your body is in the grave and your soul is in hell before that intended time arrives. Where will your repentance be then? Many infants have gone to their graves at a young age. You are here today and could be in eternity tomorrow. You are alive now, but you might be dead tomorrow. All flesh is compared to grass (Isaiah 40:6, 7, 8; Matthew 6:30) and a vapor (James 4:13, 14, 15). Wasn't the rich man in Luke 12:19, 20 a fool for thinking he had many years to live? When you go to bed, how can you be sure you'll wake up? When you fall asleep, can you guarantee you'll wake up, unless the trumpet sounds and the call is, "Arise, you dead, and come to judgment?"

6. How can you be certain that when you are sick, you will have the use of your reason and understanding? If not, where will your repentance be? Haven't you witnessed sick individuals lose their understanding, rendering them incapable of seeking or receiving counsel and advice?
7. Is repentance within your control? Can you repent whenever you want? Can you? The more to blame you are, the greater your sin and shame for not repenting now. Can't you? The more foolish you are to postpone it as though you could. Moreover, the longer you remain in sin, the harder your heart becomes, and the harder your heart, the more difficult it will be to break it (Jeremiah 13:23).
8. Do you read about anyone other than one person who repented at the last moment, on their deathbed, in all of God's Word? Are there any other examples of this besides the Thief on the Cross? If you only have this one example, why would you risk your eternal state on it?
9. Doesn't your intention to repent and abandon the service of Satan and sin later imply a present resolution not to repent yet? Does it not mean you are resolved to continue in sin? Is it not more wickedness to decide to be a servant of the Devil and your lusts until you are sick or old than goodness to intend to be a servant of God when you will have neither time, strength, nor inclination to serve Him? Judge if this is reasonable, and if it is not, do not let Satan keep you captive by this any longer.
6. Is it right that you should give the first of your time and strength to Satan rather than to God? Is it not wickedness to say, "I will first serve the Devil, and after him, God?" Shall God receive

what the Devil leaves behind? Will you give the Devil the best of your time and God the leftovers?

7. Doesn't God require your immediate turning and repentance (Hebrews 4:7; Ecclesiastes 12:1)?
8. If you were poor, wouldn't you want to be rich immediately? And if in pain, wouldn't you desire instant relief? Isn't God, Christ, and Grace more desirable?
9. If you had drunk a cup of poison, wouldn't you want an immediate remedy to save your life?
10. Couldn't God give you over to spiritual judgments, hardness of heart, and the reigning power of sin, saying, "Be filthy still" (Revelation 22:11), and declare that His Spirit shall strive with you no longer (Genesis 6:3)?
11. Another chain that truly binds them is their unbelief, a wilful refusal to accept Christ—the only Lord and Redeemer—as He is offered in the Gospel. This is the chain that fastens the guilt of all other sins to their souls. To break free from this bond, consider:
12. There is no other Redeemer than Christ (Acts 4:12). If you do not acknowledge Him or submit to Him, you will perish in your bonds and die without redemption. For other sins, the wrath of God comes upon people (Colossians 3:5, 6). But because of unbelief, the wrath of God remains on them (John 3:36), and they remain in their captivity.
13. This is the greatest folly. Is it not foolish to prefer bondage over liberty, especially when you could be set free freely, without any



price paid by you, but by the ransom that the Redeemer has already given to God, with the benefit offered to you? Yet you reject the Redeemer, just as the Israelites rejected Moses, who came to lead them out of bondage (Acts 7:27).

14. This is the highest ingratitude. The Son of God was bound so that you might not be bound forever. He was condemned so that you might be acquitted. He suffered so that you might be saved. He offers you the benefits of His redemption, calls, commands, and waits for your acceptance. But you prefer the world and sin over Him, choosing to keep your sins in chains of bondage rather than accepting Him as your Lord and Saviour, along with the crown of glory. By now, you can see what bonds have held you captive for so long. Now, pray that they may be broken. If not, consider what follows next.

## **CHAPTER X.**

Demonstrating that the Captivity of sinners by Satan is worse than the Captivity of people in physical Slavery.

Having presented to you the likeness of Sinners to Captives and various chains that keep them bound in this captivity, I will now proceed to show you how the condition of these Captives is far worse than that of any other captives on Earth. I implore you, in the fear of God, to seriously consider your peril and reflect on your wretchedness before it becomes too late for recovery and redemption. Even if everything I have said thus far has been

forgotten or disregarded by you, do not close your ears, stiffen your necks, and harden your hearts against what will be further presented to awaken your consciences. In terms of civil liberty, you are all born free, and many of you are free citizens. However, as Satan's captives and slaves to sin, your situation is deplorable. Yet, through the mercy extended to you and waiting for you to this day, it is not beyond hope. If we are moved to compassion upon hearing about someone held captive by a cruel enemy, as Jeremiah's eyes were filled with tears and his heart with sorrow when he considered the captive state of God's people, much more should we lament with abundant tears and heartfelt sorrow that sinners are held captive by the Devil. This captivity is far worse than any other, as evidenced by the following particulars.

1. It is spiritual bondage, and the captivity of the soul. If a person is enslaved by others, they have power only over their body and outward self; their soul may remain free. The more noble the subject is, the more grievous the bondage. Matters concerning the soul, whether good or bad, have the greatest significance. Promises of blessings to the soul are the best promises, and mercies for the soul are the best mercies. Conversely, threats against the soul are the severest threats, and punishments upon the soul are the harshest and heaviest punishments. The loss of the soul is the greatest loss (Matthew 16:26): "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" It would be better to have the body burdened with as many chains as it could bear, as long as the soul is free, than to have the body roam freely while the soul is in bondage to Satan and sin. Sinner, it is your soul, your only, precious, and immortal soul, that is in chains. Can you rest, eat, drink, and sleep in peace when your soul is held captive? Can you be so cheerful and joyous with

chains on your soul? Can you pursue worldly gain with such zeal while Satan has control over your soul? If your lands were mortgaged, wouldn't you strive to redeem them? If your jewels were in pawn, wouldn't you seek their return? Do you value a few acres of land, the very earth you walk on, more than your soul? Are a thousand jewels worth more than this one precious jewel of your soul? Wouldn't you feel compassion for criminals (whose execution is imminent) gambling, drinking, and singing with chains rattling at their heels? Yet, you have no compassion for yourself, and your heart is so light, even though your time of death and execution is near and approaching. Does this lightness of heart not reveal the hardness of your heart? Remember, you would be better off with your body possessed by a thousand devils or torn to pieces by a thousand devils than to have your precious soul led captive by the Devil and held prisoner by the reigning power of any one sin. Will you ponder on this: it is your soul that is in captivity and in bonds?

2. This captivity and bondage to Satan and sin are worse than any other because these captives are not aware of their enslavement. They do not lament their own condition, though it is incredibly dire. The children of Israel groaned and sighed due to their bondage (Exodus 2:22). When Manasseh was bound with fetters and taken captive to Babylon, he was conscious of the physical restraints on his body, which he had never felt before concerning the bonds of sin that held him captive to the Devil. How do poor captives under Turkish slavery sigh, groan, and bitterly lament their harsh treatment? How do many prisoners grieve and lament the actions for which they are imprisoned? Does one need to spend many hours and make long speeches to convince a captive among the Turks of the sadness of their condition there? However, how many hours must a minister spend

studying and preaching before these captives can be made aware of their woeful and miserable condition, before they can be convinced that they are indeed in this captivity? It is only here and there among a multitude who see it, believe it, and lament it. Who has witnessed your groans and tears? When have you complained to God or man about the chains and bonds of sin that have been on your souls for so long? When did you retire to your closet and mourn over your wretched state? Is it not a dreadful situation to be near hell and not see it? To be near damnation and not fear it? To be led by the Devil in the chains of sin to a place of torment and be completely unaware of your destination? Will nothing but the flames of hell convince you of your bondage? Will you not believe that the Devil is leading you to hell until you see, find, and feel that you are there? Will you not acknowledge that you are among Satan's captives on Earth until he brings you to the lake of burning brimstone, and you look around and realize, to your eternal sorrow, that you are one of the captive souls in hell? This makes your captivity all the more severe, and your bonds all the stronger because you are not aware of your enslavement.

3. Another reason this captivity is worse is that you are a willing bondsman to Satan and sin. You are the Devil's servant, and you willingly remain so. You could have liberty, but you choose not to. You are like the servant who plainly said, "I love my master; I will not go out free" (Exodus 21:5). Slaves in Turkey are there against their will; it is not a matter of choice for them. They are captives, but they are not willing captives. They do not love their chains or the work and service they are forced into. But you are in captivity to Satan, and you love it. You toil in his service and enjoy doing so. Yet, what will you do in the end? (Jeremiah 5:31). Others are taken and kept captive by force, but you

willingly offer yourself as a slave. Satan could not have taken people captive or kept them without their consent. Like Ahab, you sell yourself as a slave (1 Kings 21:20). What do you sell yourself and your soul, a captive, for? For a little profit and momentary pleasure? Are you content to be a slave forever to gratify your lusts briefly and please your palate and flesh for a short time? When a person is taken captive, their will is not taken; when their body is fettered, their will is not conquered. They still have the will to resist, even if they lack the power. They have the will to break free from their chains, even if they cannot. They have the will to escape and gain freedom, even if there is no one to ransom them. But the Devil's captives have no desire to be delivered or freed from their bondage, even though a ransom has been paid and the benefit of it is offered to them.

4. It is a complete and full captivity. Everything about the sinner is in bondage, not just the will, but all the powers and affections of the soul. There is nothing in them that is free. If a person is in bondage to others, their thoughts and affections might be free—free to love God, free to delight in God, free to desire God. But Satan's captives have no freedom for anything that is spiritually good and pleasing to God. Therefore, this is a severe bondage.
5. These captives are children of God's wrath, whereas others who are captive to men might be children of God's love. They love and delight in God even when they are in chains, and God may love and delight in them. Even if a person's outward condition is terrible, they can find solace in the knowledge of God's love for them. "Though I am in prison, God loves me; though I am in chains, God loves me." However, the Devil's captives do not love God, nor are they loved by Him. God has had a love of goodwill toward many of these captives, a love of purpose to do them

good by delivering them from their bonds. But a love of complacency and delight, where God takes pleasure in them while they are willingly and entirely the Devil's slaves and servants, is not present in God towards them. Oh, if only you knew the wrath of God, the fury of the Lord, how great and intolerable it is! Could you find contentment in the condition you are in when you are the objects of His wrath? There is no love like the love of God, but there is also no wrath like the wrath of God. Therefore, no matter how bad your condition may be, you may still find solace in being the object of God's love. But that condition is not as terrible as the one in which you are and will be the objects of His wrath.

6. Death does not deliver Satan's captives from their thralldom and bondage but tightens their chains and strengthens their bonds, putting them in an impossible state of redemption forever. If a slave is not delivered while alive, they are freed when they die. Death brings them release and discharge (Job 3:17). "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master" (Job 3:18-19). When the King of Babylon took Zedekiah captive, he bound him in fetters and imprisoned him until his death, after which he was no longer his prisoner (Jeremiah 52:12). But these captives remain so until they die, and, worse still, they are captives even after death. Others might console themselves, saying, "This is hard, but it is not enduring; this is bitter, but it will come to an end. Though it lasts as long as life, death will eventually come, and then we shall be released." However, these captives may say, "It is bad while we live, and it will be worse when we die. If we are not delivered while alive,

death will not, death cannot deliver us." Therefore, this bondage is worse than any other.

7. A worse and more dreadful prison is prepared for the Devil's captives than any slaves on Earth could ever be cast into. Hell is the prison appointed and prepared for all captives who are not set free by Christ (1 Peter 3:19). Several factors make this prison worse than any other.
8. The prison prepared for these captives is a close prison. Currently, you are like prisoners who may sometimes walk about with their keeper. You are a prisoner at large, walking freely, though in the chains of sin and guilt, with the Devil as your keeper, attending and watching you wherever you go. If you attend a sermon, your keeper accompanies you to prevent you from breaking loose. When you leave the sermon, he tempts you to return to your sinful ways. However, in the future, you will be a close prisoner, never allowed to step out again. You will be kept so closely that no one will visit or comfort you. It may alleviate a prisoner's grief that although they cannot go out to see their friends, their friends can come to visit them. But this will not be permitted to you once you are confined to hell. Your friends on Earth will not desire your company or visits after death, even if you had the liberty to come out. Such visits from damned souls would be burdensome, disturbing, and terrifying to the living. They would prefer that you remain confined to your prison rather than being allowed to disturb them with your visits. No one will be permitted to come and comfort you, even if they wanted to. In fact, no one would be willing to venture to hell to comfort you. Though the rich man desired Lazarus to come and comfort him with a drop of water, it was not granted to him because he was a close prisoner (Luke 16:24-25).

Furthermore, a great gulf is fixed between them and the saints above, preventing passage from one place to the other (Luke 16:26).

9. It is a dark prison, a true dungeon, a place of complete darkness, where there is thickness and blackness of darkness forever (Matthew 25:30, Jude 13). Darkness adds to the discomfort of their eternal condition in that prison. It was a staggering judgment on the Egyptians to endure thick darkness for three days (Exodus 10:22-23). What a dreadful dungeon this world would be without the light of the sun, moon, stars, or candles, even if there were no physical pain or lack of other worldly comforts. Living in perpetual darkness would be undesirable. So, consider the sadness, terrors, and fears of those captives who will be in pain, torment, and darkness forever. If a person were to spend all their days in a palace with rich provisions to feast on and soft beds to sleep on but always in the dark, it would be a great affliction. Then, imagine living in pain and darkness, rolling in a bed of flames in a lake of brimstone while shrouded in darkness. Being among devils, all in darkness, and residing in a place where the light of God's countenance never shines upon the prisoners forever.
3. It is a filthy prison, full of noisome stench and unsavoury smells. Prisons are generally unclean places, offensive to the senses, but the stench of the brimstone in hell shall be more troublesome to the prisoners there than the foulest dungeon on Earth.
4. It is a strong prison. Just as it is so confining that no one can comfort the prisoners, it is also so secure that no prisoner shall escape, break through, or get out for all eternity. Once these



prison doors are shut, and if Christ, who holds the keys of death and hell, puts you inside and locks the door, there is no opening it forever. Currently, you are bound in chains of your own making, crafted from your sins. But in the future, you will be bound in chains made by God. There are four bars or bolts on the prison gates of hell that will fill the prisoners with despair of ever being released.

5. These prison gates shall be eternally sealed and reinforced by God's counsel and decree. God has ordained that the imprisonment of those captives who die before they are set free shall be eternal. It is God's unalterable will that they shall remain in chains forever. God does not change; He remains steadfast in His purpose, and His will endures forever. Therefore, the prisoners must abide by it forever.
6. These prison gates shall be securely locked by the justice of God. Justice will guard the prison door, and no prisoner will be released until they have made satisfaction for their sins and paid their debts in full. However, that will never happen. Even if the prisoner has been there for a thousand years and pleads, "Lord, I have been here a thousand years, it is a long time," justice will respond, "No, I am not satisfied yet." And when another thousand years pass, and the prisoner pleads again, the answer remains the same: "No, I am not satisfied yet." So, there is no hope.
7. These prison gates shall be firmly locked by the truth of God. God has declared in His Word that this fire burns forever, and those who are not sanctified shall be cast into it to dwell there forever. God's truth is eternal, and as long as God's Word remains true, these captives will remain in this prison.

8. These prison gates shall be firmly locked and secure by the power of God. There is no escape by force or any opposition they may attempt. The same power that sent them there will keep them from dying in this prison or escaping from it. If the gates of this prison are sealed by God's unchanging decree, justice, truth, and power, then the prisoners can rest assured, or rather, they will never find rest because they will never escape from this prison.
  
9. This prison is far worse than any other prison because of the company that is there. Even in many prisons on Earth, there can be a wicked group of individuals who swear, curse, and engage in sinful behaviour. If a godly person were placed in such company, the company would be a greater affliction than the prison itself. However, in hell, the company consists of devils and souls who hate and blaspheme God. It shall be found that all are wicked; not one good soul will be among the millions there. Just as in heaven, all are good, with not a single bad soul among the thousands. Here, these captives sin together, and in prison, they will be together, with one cursing and crying out against another, regretting that they ever had any association with them on Earth. Furthermore, the devil and his slaves will be imprisoned together, the conqueror and the conquered, all cast into a lake of brimstone (Matthew 25:41).
  
6. The recollection of the deeds for which these captives shall be cast into this prison will make it worse than any other. Remembering that we are here because we obeyed the Devil instead of God, that we heeded the Devil's temptations while we closed our ears to the cries, calls, and counsel of God. If only we had listened to the voice of mercy, the entreaties of Christ, or the exhortations of His ministers, we would now be free from this

torment and pain. Had we served God as diligently, daily, and faithfully as we served the Devil, we would now be in a better place with a better reward. Are we damned for pleasing our flesh at the expense of displeasing God? Are we enduring eternal suffering for the folly of prioritising the short-lived pleasures and profits of the world over God, the greatest and supreme good? For the sake of pleasing my palate? This is the consequence of my indulgent drinking! The wine in the glass was not as sweet as the bitterness of God's wrath in this cup, which I have been drinking for a thousand years, but cannot finish, cannot swallow, cannot drain. I would have preferred having scalding lead poured down my throat instead of those delightful cups for which I am now in the greatest agony. The recollection of why they are in prison will make the prison even more unbearable.

7. The remembrance of the price and ransom that was given for captives, as well as the benefit offered to them numerous times, will render this prison even more intolerable. To remember that the Son of God descended from heaven and offered His blood, His soul, to redeem sinners from bondage. "It was offered to me," says one, "and to me," says another, "but I, like a cursed and ungrateful wretch, disregarded it and rejected it," says one; "and I, like a miserable wretch, chose my sins and desires over the Redeemer," says another. We were often warned about this place and repeatedly asked and implored to accept Christ and the deliverance He offers. There was a time when ministers came to us, Sabbath after Sabbath, in the name of God, offering us freedom. How often they asked us to be willing to cast off our chains, how earnestly they begged us to be willing to have our fetters removed, and if we had only been willing, it would have been done. But that time has passed, those opportunities are

gone, and here we lie, bound in fetters forever. Oh, time, where have you gone? Can you not be recalled? No, it cannot be recalled, and those offers will never be repeated, only to our greater condemnation, by the gnawing worm.

## CHAPTER XI.

Showing what freedom Captives set free by Christ, enjoy and hope for.

Doct. 2. The second general Head containing the glad tidings to these miserable Captives is that there is Liberty to be had by Christ; or, that it is by Christ, and Christ alone, that poor captive sinners are delivered and set at liberty. Had it not been for Christ, we must have perished in our Bonds and remained in perpetual slavery while we had lived, and been forever bound in chains of darkness when we die. Isa. 59. 20. applied to Christ, Rom. 11. 26. Acts 4 12. John 8. 36.

Man might be considered in a fourfold State.

1. In his first condition as created by God: then man was a free man, bondage came in by sin: when man sinned, he lost his freedom. And in this estate, there was a threefold Liberty that man had.
2. Man was free from sin; not the least spot or stain by creation in this pure nature of man; he was then free from pride, and free from the inordinate love of the world, and from everything offensive and displeasing to God. Eccles. 7. 29.—God made man

upright. The uprightness of a man renewed by sanctifying grace denotes the sincerity of his heart, though there be sin inherent in him. So Job was an upright man, Job 1. 1. But the uprightness of man at first created by God denotes the perfect Image of God in the presence of that which was good, and absence of all sin. Gen. 1. 26, 27.

3. Man had freedom or liberty of will, to will and to do what God did require from him.
  4. Freedom from all misery, calamity, and punishment. Man had then freedom from sickness, from sorrow, and from affliction and death; for all these are the fruits of sin: Man had never been in bondage to these if he had not become a bond slave to Satan and to sin. And in this state, man had no need of a Redeemer because he was not then a captive.
  5. Man might be considered in a state of Corruption, and so his condition is quite contrary to what it was in his first estate; as before he was free, so now he is a slave, before at liberty, but now in bondage: and this bondage is opposite to the former threefold Liberty.
1. In man, there is now a bondage to sin, enslaved to his own lusts and his own vile affections, so that there is no part in him free from sin; his understanding is not free from ignorance, darkness, and error, his will is not free from obstinacy and rebellion, his affections are not free from disorder and confusion, hating what he should love, and loving what he should hate, shunning what he should desire, and desiring what he should shun, rejoicing in that which should be the cause of his sorrow and grief, and grieving and being weary of that which

should be the matter of his delight and joy. This is man's sinful bondage.

2. The very will of man is enslaved. Although man has a liberty of will as to natural actions and civil actions, and outward spiritual actions, such as coming to hear if he will, engaging in the outward duty of prayer if he will, or reading the Word of God if he will, yet he has no liberty of will for supernatural actions without the grace of God, such as believing in Christ and loving God above all. Man must have a will as well as power from God to do these things. Phil. 2. 13. It is God who gives us the will and ability to do His will according to His good pleasure. This is a significant bondage, although a natural man may not feel it or be aware of it.
3. Man is in bondage due to punishment, being liable to all the curses, plagues, and penalties threatened for sin in the Word of God, both in this life and the life to come. This includes sickness, sorrows, pain, grief, eventual death, and hell and damnation after death. In this state, man needs a Redeemer and a Ransom, or he is utterly and eternally lost if not delivered from this bondage.
4. Man could be considered in a state of grace, as recovered by Christ, renewed, and restored by the Spirit of God. God does not allow all men to remain in their bondage, and those who are redeemed and restored must not attribute this to their own free will, but to the free grace of God. In this state, man partially partakes in the fruits of Redemption by Christ.
5. Man could be considered in a state of glory. In this state, the Saints are completely and eternally free; they have perfect liberty from sin, sorrow, temptations to sin, any inclination to

sin, and any possibility of sinning. In this state, the Saints of God fully and eternally enjoy the fruits of Christ's Redemption and His self-sacrifice as a ransom for them.

Qu. 1. What is it that we do not have liberty from through Christ the Redeemer? There are many things that Christ did not come to purchase or proclaim liberty from while we are in this life.

1. None of God's Elect are freed by Christ from being born in original sin; we are not born free but are made free. Even those who are descended from free men in Christ are by birth in spiritual bondage. For grace does not come by blood but by the will of God, John 1. 13. No one, since the Fall, except Christ the Redeemer, has been free from this sinful contagion that has infected all mankind, Rom. 5. 12. 17, 18.
2. Christ does free us in this world from the indwelling of sin; Christ does free all Believers from the reigning power of sin, Rom. 6. 14, but not from the conflicting power of sin, no, nor altogether from the captivating power of sin: the Lord's free men might sometimes be overpowered by temptation and corruption, and in a particular combat be carried captive, Rom. 7. 23. Nor does Christ free us at all from the indwelling of sin. Just as God did not immediately free the people of Israel from the Nations that oppressed them, nor drive them out all at once, but gradually, He left some of them to test and humble them, Exod. 23. 28, 29. Similarly, all God's redeemed and free servants still experience the remnants of sin and corruption and complain about it, Rom. 7. 24. There are still traces of pride, unbelief, and hardness of heart. Thus, we are not free from distracting thoughts in holy duties, nor from all dullness of affection and deadness of heart in the service of God. This is reserved for the

state of glorious freedom in the life to come when we shall be in the immediate presence of the blessed God above and shall delight in beholding Him who has redeemed us from our captivity and bondage.

3. Christ has not freed us from the service of God but rather engages us in it. Wicked men consider living as they please, gratifying their lusts and pleasing the flesh as liberty. This is not liberty but licentiousness; it is indeed the bondage that Christ came to deliver us from. The blind world is greatly mistaken when they consider their own bondage as liberty. The strictest service of God is the greatest liberty, Psal. 119. 45. It is not liberty from duty but from sin and misery that Christ came to purchase and proclaim, Luke 1. 74, 75. 1 Pet. 2. 16. Rom. 6. 18. Most people under the Gospel continually neglect their duties and commit sins, as if Christ came to grant them liberty to do so, although they could have done so even if Christ had never come.
4. This spiritual freedom through Christ does not exempt or excuse us from the service we owe to people in the positions and relationships that God has placed us in. Indeed, the Lord's servants must not be subservient to men in such a way that displeases God, 1 Cor. 7. 23. However, someone who is the Lord's free man might be in a servant's position to man and should diligently pursue his master's business. This should be done with greater care and conscience than others, even towards masters who serve sin, Ephes. 6. 5, 6. 1 Pet. 2. 18. Gal. 5. 13. Likewise, masters who are the Lord's free men, 1 Tim. 6. 1, 2.
5. Christ does not free us from afflictions or troubles caused by people. Nowhere has Christ told us that He came to free us from scorn and reproach, from imprisonment and tribulations. On



the contrary, John 16, last. All God's Free men will be hated by the Devil's Slaves, and we will not be freed from them until we are out of their reach, which will not happen until we get to Heaven. Those who have spiritual liberty may lose their civil liberty. A person may have civil liberty but not spiritual liberty, just as one may be free in a city, free in a company, and yet not free through Christ. Thus, a person may be in prison, bound in chains there, and still be spiritually free, as Joseph in prison, Daniel in the den, Jeremiah in the dungeon, and yet all were the Lord's Free men. When Christ calls many people in their bondage to come to Him to be set free, they would make an agreement with Christ that they should be free from crosses, troubles, and sufferings. Christ does not free His followers from these, and they would prefer to have freedom from suffering in their bondage rather than suffering with spiritual freedom.

6. Christ does not grant us freedom from the temptations of the Devil, so that we will no longer be buffeted by that wicked one. Christ Himself was not free from temptations by Satan or persecutions by men. We must resist the Devil, watch, and pray against his temptations, as we are unlikely to be freed from them until we reach Heaven.
7. Christ does not free us from the stroke of death; the Lord's Free men are bound by the bonds of death, just like others. Our souls and bodies are not free from dissolution, and our bodies are not free from decay. However, we are freed from the sting of death, and death does not have the same effect on the Lord's Free men as it does on the Devil's Bond men.

Q. 2. What is the liberty that we have by Christ? This will be addressed by discussing two specific aspects. First, as this liberty and

freedom is privative. Second, as it is positive; or, what we are freed from; and what it is that we are freed to.

1. What it is that believers are freed from by Christ; and these are great and severe evils, and such as would have made us unspeakably and eternally miserable if Christ had not freed us from them.
2. Christ has delivered us and set us free from the power of Satan, so that he no longer rules over us as he once did. He used to rule in our hearts, Ephesians 2. 2; and we willingly submitted and obeyed him. However, Christ has bound this strong man, deprived him of his possessions, dispossessed him, and removed him from our hearts, where he used to dwell and reign as if on a throne. This is what Christ came to do, Hebrews 2. 14, 15; He has delivered us from the justice of God through His sacrifice and redemption and from Satan's power through His mighty hand.
3. Christ has set us free from sin; not completely in this life from the indwelling of sin, as you heard before, but in two respects:
4. Through Christ, believers are freed from the guilt of sin. We are no longer bound by the obligation to eternal torment, so we will never face condemnation for our sins. All our numerous sins are forgiven; our grave and serious sins are pardoned, Romans 8. 1, 33, 34. Many could accuse us—the Devil, people, conscience, and the Law could accuse us. However, Christ has freed us in a way that no one can condemn us. This is an incredibly blessed aspect of our freedom! What would you have done to answer for your sins? What would you have done to bear the punishment for your sins? Indeed, you could neither answer for yourself nor bear the wrath of God that was due to you for your sin.

Therefore, recognise the eternal obligation placed upon you to love this blessed Christ, to value and esteem this once crucified, and now glorious Christ, who has removed this obligation from you. He has freed you from an obligation to eternal condemnation and has placed upon you a strong and lasting obligation to love Him and praise and admire His love and grace to you forever.

5. Christ has set us free from the dominion of sin. The sinner was the captive, and Sin was the Lord and conqueror. But the one who is liberated by Christ has become the conqueror, and Sin is now the captive. The victory is not yet complete, but sin has been dethroned. The sinner, when captive, was in chains, but now, having been set free, sin is in chains. Sin was once embraced but is now detested. It was once willingly surrendered to but is now resisted and opposed. It was once welcomed but is now mourned and lamented. It was once looked upon with pleasure and contentment but is now beheld with a sorrowful heart and weeping eyes. Sin has become a burden and source of grief, whereas before, it was loved and cherished by the sinner's heart. Now, it is prayed against, watched against, and actively resisted, whereas before it was indulged, permitted, provided for, and willingly submitted to. The redeemed sinner now says, "My hardened heart burdens me; my proud and unbelieving heart is a source of grief to me; my vain and worldly heart is a burden, trouble, and sorrow to me." They are freed from the reigning power of sin, Romans 6. 14.
  
7. Christ has set believers free from the curse of the Law. The Law has its purpose under the Gospel; through it, we come to the knowledge of sin, Romans 3. 20, and 5. 20. It convicts us of our wretchedness, showing that through sin, we have earned death

and damnation, Romans 7. 10. This helps us see the urgency of turning to Christ, Galatians 3. 24. It serves as a guide for our conduct and as a mirror in which we perceive the imperfection of our duty and obedience, preventing us from relying on them for life and salvation. But from the condemning sentence and curse of the Law, Christ has set believers free by becoming a curse for them, Galatians 3. 10, 13.

8. Christ has set believers free from the harm of death. The Lord's Free-men must die just like the Devils Bond-men, but death will be a different experience for a Free-man than for a Captive. What is dreadful to a sinner is desirable to a Saint. Christ has removed the sting of Death, 1 Corinthians 15. 55. Death, which was once an enemy, has become a friend. Whereas Death is one of the plagues that befall the Devils Captives, it has become part of the Charter of the Lord's Free-men, 1 Corinthians 3. 22.
9. Death for the Lord's Free-men means the complete elimination of their sin; it frees them from the very existence and indwelling of sin. When the soul is separated from the body, all sin and corruption are also separated from the soul. In contrast, the Devils bond-men die in their sin and, after death, retain their hatred for God and enmity towards Christ, becoming even more confirmed and hardened in their state.
10. Death for the Lord's Free-men puts an end to all their sorrow and affliction, all their troubles and suffering. It is God's Handkerchief, wiping away all tears from the eyes of His redeemed people, Revelation 14. 13. But for the Devils Captives, sorrow begins or intensifies at death. If they were at ease while alive, they will be in pain when they die. If they rejoiced and sang while alive, they will lament and weep after death. Death

takes them away from their riches, friends, and worldly pleasures, removing everything dear to them in this world's enjoyments and places them in a realm of pain and torment—a place of utter darkness where they will weep, howl, and lament their woeful state and irretrievably lost happiness forever.

11. Death for the Lord's Free-men is the gateway to glory, their passage into eternal life. It opens the door to their Father's house, sending them into the presence of God and their Redeemer to live, reign, and dwell with Him forever. Their freedom, which began here, is consummated and perfected in heaven on the very day they die, Luke 16. 22.
12. Death for the Lord's Free-men comes at the best time. All people die in God's timing, as He appoints. However, the redeemed by Christ will die at the best time—when their work is done and when God deems it better for them to die than to live. God selects the most suitable moment for the departure of His people through death. In contrast, wicked slaves of sin and Satan die at a bad time—whenever they die, it is bad because they go to hell that day, facing eternal torment. The day of their demise is the day of their damnation—a day filled with profound sadness. They die before completing their work, before believing, before repenting. That day is inevitably a sorrowful one. Weeds can be cut down at any time, but the harvest of wheat occurs at the right and ripe time.
13. Death for the Lord's Free-men has lost its terror. Although not all of God's redeemed are completely free from the fear of death and may sometimes experience bondage due to such fear, they have grounds and reasons not to fear it. Devils Captives, on the other hand, always have cause to be terribly afraid of death, and

if they are not, it is due to the blindness of their minds and the hardness of their hearts. It is astonishing that individuals can be as close to hell as they are to the grave and yet not be afraid to die. It is remarkable that individuals can be as close to an endless, miserable life as they are to the end of this short, uncertain life, and yet their fears do not deter them from sleeping at night and enjoying themselves during the day. The Devil has both blinded and bound them, which is one reason for their lack of fear. However, these individuals cannot be freed from the fear of death on solid, rational, and religious grounds. In contrast, the Lord's Free-men can, and they have Jesus Christ to thank for it, Hebrews 2. 14, 15.

14. Christ will liberate believers from the grave through a joyful resurrection. Although they experience the power and impact of death and are briefly laid to rest in the grave, it will only be for a while. Death and the grave will not always have dominion over their bodies. Death may bind them, but Christ will break these bonds and set them free. Just as Christ broke free from the grip of death, as it was unable to hold Him in His grave, Acts 2. 24, He will release all His followers from death's fetters, bringing them forth to happiness. This is as certain as His own resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15. 13, etc. Moreover, He will not only free them from the grave but also from the afflictions and imperfections to which their bodies are subject in this life. Although they will have the same bodies in essence, those bodies will possess improved qualities at that time.
1. Then Christ will free them from the mortality to which they are now subject; currently, they are liable to death every day and hour, but then they shall never die again.

2. Then Christ shall free them from all pain and sickness, from cold, hunger, and thirst that they often experience now. Their heads will never ache, their hearts will never sicken, and no part of them will experience any pain for all eternity.
3. Then Christ shall free them from the necessity of food to sustain them and from the need for nourishment from creatures, which currently repairs and supports them daily this side of the grave. But on the other side of the grave, they will need these no more than the Angels do in heaven.
4. Then Christ shall free them from the weariness that their bodies often feel and groan under now, for He will make their bodies strong and powerful. Nowadays, the work in the service of God wearies their bodies, but in the future, although they will be engaged in praising and glorifying God for an endless eternity, they will neither grow weary of it due to wickedness nor weary in it due to weakness, as Christ will free them from both, 1 Corinthians 15. 42, 43.
5. Christ will then free them from all imperfections, making them like Christ's glorious body. Can we desire greater freedom for our bodies than to be made like Christ's glorious body, as stated in Philippians 3. 21?
6. Christ frees all His followers from the damnation of hell. While the Devils Captives will be in agony, suffering exquisite and unspeakable punishment, rolling, tumbling, shrieking, howling, and bitterly lamenting themselves, those redeemed by Christ will never be touched by the flames of that fire. The second death will have no power over them, as mentioned in Revelation 20. 6. Christ ensures that those who love Him above all and choose Him before all will never face condemnation, John 3. 16,

18. What mercy it is to be freed from hell! What grace and kindness it is to those who were once Captives, deserving it and in danger of it, that through Christ, they should be freed and delivered from it! The damned, who have experienced the pains and punishment of hell, would think, say, and confess it to be the greatest mercy if they could be released from it. However, they are in it and will never be delivered from it, while the Lord's free-men are out of it and will never be cast into it. Such is the extent of the liberty we have through Christ the Redeemer of Captives, concerning what we are freed from.

What are the positive blessings that we are made free to by Christ? Christ came to redeem poor sinners when they were Captives, not only to prevent them from being miserable but also to make them happy. These blessings are many, great, and glorious. Let me provide you with a glimpse of them in the following points:

1. By Christ, believers have freedom and liberty to approach the throne of grace. It burdens wicked, graceless hearts to come and pray to God. They are hesitant, weary of it, as if it were part of their slavery and bondage to seek mercy for their souls, ask for pardon for their sins, request converting and renewing grace now, and seek eternal, endless glory hereafter. Judge this as you will, but know that Christ paid dearly to purchase this liberty for us. It is not merely a duty we must perform; it is genuinely a privilege we may enjoy. We have the freedom to come before God on our knees and beg for special, spiritual, temporal, and eternal mercies. Imagine a poor prisoner who deserves to die, considering it a privilege to have the freedom to approach the King as often as he wishes, to present his petitions, request a pardon for his crime, and plead for the preservation of his life—all with hopes of being heard and obtaining what he asks for.



When humanity sinned, they were driven out of Paradise, filled with fear due to guilt, and there was no freedom for the rebellious sinner without Christ to come before a provoked, angry God with hopes of mercy. But a new and living way has now been revealed to you (Hebrews 10. 19, 20, 21, 22) so that you may approach with freedom and ask with a free spirit and free speech for what Christ has purchased for you and God has promised to you (Ephesians 3. 12; Hebrews 4. 16). You may approach God with freedom and pour out all your grievances, burdens, temptations, and wants and open your heart to Him.

2. By Christ, believers have freedom and liberty to apply the promises of the Gospel to themselves. These promises are numerous, significant, and precious, encompassing many great and valuable things. You are not only free to read them but also free to apply them to yourselves, to live by them, and to wait and hope for their fulfillment and performance. There is a promise of pardon, and it is made to me; a promise of more grace and perseverance, and it is made to me; a promise of eternal life and glory, and the blessed, glorious God has made it to me. Through Christ, I may freely apply it, build upon it, and rest in it.
3. By Christ, we are granted freedom to enjoy all the privileges of redeemed people. These privileges are also numerous, significant, and precious, offering many great and valuable benefits.
1. By Christ, believers are free to a state of friendship and favour with God. As there is a freedom between friends, so there is between God and His redeemed by Christ, who partake in the benefits of His redemption. They have transitioned from a state of enmity to one of friendship and reconciliation. God is no

longer your enemy, and you are no longer His enemy. A lasting and everlasting peace has been made by Christ between God and your souls (Colossians 1. 20, 21). With comfort, you can conclude that even if people hate you, God loves you. Despite people being your enemies, God is your friend, your surest and most steadfast friend.

2. By Christ, believers are free to a state of justification. The righteousness of Christ is freely imputed to them. Just as the devil's captives bear the imputation of Adam's disobedience, the Lord's freemen are under the imputation of Christ's righteousness and obedience (Romans 5. 19; 2 Corinthians 5. 21). You are free to trust and plead Christ's righteousness for your justification in the sight of God.
3. By Christ, believers are made free to a state of sonship and the privilege of adoption. You have transformed from being slaves to becoming not only servants but also sons. You have shifted from being children of the devil to being children of God, from being children of God's wrath to being the children of His love. Men may redeem captives, but they do not adopt them as their children. However, all those redeemed by Christ have the liberty to become the sons of God (John 1. 12; 2 Corinthians 6, latter end).
4. By Christ, believers are free to have communion with God in His ordinances. God is no longer a stranger to them, and they are no longer strangers to God. They enjoy sweet conversation and fellowship with God (1 John 1. 3). They come to their duties and encounter God in them. In prayer, hearing, and receiving, they experience the gracious, powerful, heart-quickenings, soul-comforting, cheering, softening influences of the Spirit of God.

They witness their souls yearning for and delighting in God. When this happens, it brings great joy to their souls.

5. By Christ, believers are free to a right to heaven and the enjoyment of the blessed, glorious God forever in His kingdom. They have the liberty to partake in the happiness of the life to come. They will freely enter the heavenly paradise, where the gates of heaven will be wide open for their departing souls, without any hindrance or obstruction. They have a partial freedom now, and when they die, they will be perfectly free among the saints in glory (Romans 8. 21). This glory is prepared for them (Matthew 25. 34), and they are prepared for it (Romans 9. 23; Colossians 1. 12). Describing your future happiness is beyond the power and ability of any person on earth to fully explain (1 Corinthians 2. 8). An angel in possession of it could describe it better than a sinful, albeit sanctified, person who lives, waits, hopes, and prays in anticipation of it. Nevertheless, the names by which it is called may help you grasp the extent of its excellence and glory: (1) It is referred to as a Crown, surpassing all earthly crowns (1 Peter 1. 4, 5). It is a Crown of life (James 1. 12), a Crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4. 8), and a Crown of glory (1 Peter 5. 4). (2) It is described as a Kingdom (Matthew 25. 34). (3) It is called our Master's joy (Matthew 25. 21, 23). (4) It is referred to as our Father's house and the house of the Father of our Lord Jesus (John 14. 2). (5) It is called the inheritance of the saints in light (Colossians 1. 12). (6) It is the purchase of Christ (Ephesians 1. 14). (7) It is called eternal life (Romans 6. 23). Apart from these names, meditate on a passage that illustrates it well until your hearts are deeply moved by it, longing to possess it. One such passage is 2 Corinthians 4. 17, where you can see how the Apostle progresses

step by step to express the happiness you are granted freedom to enjoy.

1. It is called glory. Now, free in grace, then in glory. The thought of that glory would dim and disgrace the greatest glory of this world.
2. It is called a weight of glory; not a burdensome weight, not a weight to weary you. Are your afflictions weighty? So shall your glory be. But afflictions are but light when compared to the weight of glory.
3. It is an exceedingly weighty glory; it exceeds all worldly glory.
4. It is a more exceedingly weighty glory; more than can be conceived.
5. It is a far more exceedingly weighty glory.
6. It is eternal too. All this is not for a little while only, or for some thousands of years only, but forever and ever. The glory of the world, as it is but light when weighed against this; so it is but fading and transient, and but short when compared with this that is eternal. Thus, you have a small glimpse (and alas, it is but small) of the positive freedom and liberty that you have through Christ.

## **CHAPTER XII.**

## Containing the Uses of the whole.

Use 1. Then search your hearts, and examine narrowly and thoroughly what you are, bond-men, or free; whether yet Captives, or redeemed and set at liberty. The misery of spiritual Captives you have heard does exceed the misery of Captives by men. And the good estate of such as are made free by Christ, you have also heard; Now say to yourself, Tell me, O my Soul, which of these two is thy state and thy condition; one of them is thy condition, but which it is, is worthy of thy strictest search, and most diligent enquiry. Are thy fetters knocked off, and thy bonds broken, and thy chain cut, and thou delivered? or art thou yet held fast by them? Take heed, O my Soul, of being mistaken in this point. If thou takest it for granted, that thou art made free, when yet thou art in bonds, and leavest thy body in this mistake, thou art lost forever; if on the other hand thou sayest thou art a captive still, when thou art made free, thou will lose the comfort of thy freedom, and wilt spend thy time and life in complaints, and griefs, and fears, which thou shouldst spend in praising and admiring God for his love and mercy in bringing thee out of thy captivity.

For your help herein take these few marks to try yourselves by, for the resolution of this question.

1. Freemen have their spiritual eyesight restored unto them. When Christ opens the prison doors to let the Captives out, he also opens their eyes, to let them see that in sin, in God, in Christ, in grace and holiness, that before they never saw. That the redeemed Captive cries out, "Oh, I never thought my heart had been so bad, so bad, so very bad as now I see it is: I never thought, that sin had been so vile, so very vile, and so deformed as now I plainly see it is: I never thought that Christ was so

excellent, and so necessary, so absolutely necessary for me, as now I see he is; Oh, methinks he is now altogether lovely, altogether desirable; after I have had a view of the beauty and the excellency of Christ, methinks all the glory of the world, and all the delights in pleasure and sin are darkened, and do vanish and disappear: Oh how was I blinded in my captivity, that I never saw the excellency of Christ, and deformity of sin till now, Isa. 42. 6. Act. 26. 18, 23. Col. 1. 13. Rev. 3. 18.

2. When Christ breaks the bonds wherewith poor Captives were held, he also breaks their hearts that they have been kept and held thereby in the service of Satan and sin, from God and Christ so long. As the eye does see and weep, so the heart does consider, and bleed, and grieve at the remembrance of his former folly and sin. Oh, what did I do to sin against this blessed, gracious, merciful God! Oh, what did I mean so long to stop mine ears against all the calls, and woings, and entreatings of this Lord-Redeemer, who was so kind to suffer, bleed, and die for such a wretch as I, for such a wretch as I, for such a rebellious, disobedient, and delaying wretch as I. Oh, there is no love like his, there is no mercy like to his, there is no kindness like to his! Oh, why did I slight him so much, so long, so very much, so very long as I have done! Oh, what a fool was I, to prefer the world, the pleasures and the profits of the world, before this blessed Redeemer! Oh, what a beast was I, to prefer my very lusts and sins, and the service of the Devil, before this glorious, gracious Saviour, and the serving of him that died to deliver me from my bondage! O Lord, I am grieved that ever I did so; it is the burden and the breaking of my heart that ever I did so; Oh, now I could wash myself in tears at the remembrance of my folly and my madness! but if I should, that will not wash me from my guilt, and from my filth; and because that would not

do, this blessed Saviour shed his blood for the cleansing of me from my guilt and my pollution. I weep, but not enough; my heart is troubled, but not enough; my Soul is humbled within me, but not enough, for so great rebellion against, and slighting of this Lord Redeemer. But I am troubled because I am no more troubled; Lord, I grieve, because my heart is yet so hard, and can grieve no more; my sin is bitter unto me now, which once was sweet and pleasant to my Soul.

3. Such as are made free by Christ, are delivered from the reigning power of sin. For it is impossible to be a willing voluntary servant of sin, and yield obedience to the Law of sin, and to be made free by Christ, 2 Pet. 2. 19. Rom. 6. 16, 18. Does sin command you, and you obey? has sin the chiefest room and place in your affections and your hearts, you are then yet in your bondage.
4. Such as are made free by Christ have resigned up themselves, their hearts, their love, their all to him, accept of him for Lord as well as for their Saviour, and to consent to take him in all his Offices, for Prophet, Priest, and King, and giving up themselves to him, do become his servants and consequently yield obedience to him; they have changed their master, and they have changed their work and ways, and are become new creatures, having new hearts, wills, and affections, ends and designs, than what they had before. For the Condition of sinners being partakers of Christ's Redemption is their believing on him, and consenting to him as Lord and Saviour, choosing him before all, and loving him above all; and if this you do not do, you are yet in your bondage to Satan and to sin.

For is it not reasonable, you should be his Servants▪ that brings you from this slavery? And if he purchase and buy you out, is it not reasonable, you should take him for your Lord, and obey him? and that universally, submitting to all his Laws, even those that are most spiritual, and cross to your corrupt hearts and most beloved sins; not pick and choose, but to have respect unto them all, Psal. 119. 6; constantly, not by fits and starts, not only when in straits and sickness, but at all times to have the frame, and bent, and inclination of your hearts to yield obedience to Christ, your Lord-Redeemer: freely and voluntarily, as matter of your choice; from a free principle of love, because you love him, you will pray to him; because you love him, you will hear from him, and wait and attend upon him, rejoicing when you please him, grieving when you do offend him.

If by these things you discover what you are, bond or free, I shall close the whole with an Exhortation to both sorts, both bond and free.

Use of Exhortation, 1. To you that are bound, that you would look after spiritual freedom; young men that have hard service, long to be made free; and those that be in prisons and chains, long to be at liberty, and shall any of you be content to abide in your thralldom? what will sin do for you? and what will Satan do for you, that you are so loath to leave their service? Is the Redeemer come, and wilt thou not mind him? hath he paid the ransom, and waiteth for thy acceptance of him, and wilt thou still refuse him, and the liberty and freedom thou mayest have by him, and canst not have without him? What say you, sirs, you young and old? shall I have your answer? will you be made free, or will you continue in your bondage? if thou wilt, thou mayest; be but willing, and thy chain shall be taken from thee. If thou will not remember liberty was offered to thee, and thou didst refuse it, thou wouldst not be free. Though thou hast been a very vile



sinner, and rebellious, yet thou mayest be made free, Psal. 68. 18. Isa. 49. 6. Do these things.

1. Labour to convince thyself that thou wast born in bondage, a slave by nature to Satan and Sin. The Pharisees did not believe that they were in bondage, and therefore did not look out to Christ to be made free, Joh. 8. 33. This is the undoing of multitudes, that they conclude their condition to be good, when it is not so; and they conclude before they try. Did you but see your bonds, and understand your slavery, Ministers would have hopes that by their Sermons they may do you good.
2. Work upon thy heart by serious consideration, thy misery and deplorable condition while thou art in a state of bondage. When by diligent search thou hast found thyself in a bondage-condition, hold thy thoughts unto this subject till thou art awakened and affected with it; think with thyself, and say, Oh my soul! being yet a Captive to Satan and to Sin, thou art yet an enemy to God, a slighter of Christ, under the guilt of all thy sin, in danger of damnation; awake, arise, and look about thee, and get out of this condition, lest it be too late forever.
3. Set thyself under the preaching of the word, and constantly attend upon God, and come to the hearing of the word, as to an Ordinance of God; and look upon faithful Ministers as the Ambassadors of Jesus Christ, that come to you in the Name of Christ, as having Authority from God to propose the Gospel-conditions of deliverance from Captivity, and to treat with you in the Name of God about your being made free. So indeed it is 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20. You come to hear a man's Parts; but you do not look upon them as persons in Office, having a commission from God to propound Articles of Peace betwixt God and you; to treat

with you from God, and in the Name of God, about your everlasting state, and your deliverance from your present bondage, and future torment. Did you believe this, would you sit and sleep as if what were delivered to you were not worth the hearing and regarding? or would you sit and hear, and go away and slight all that hath been said unto you?

4. Make application of the Word of God, when you hear it, unto yourselves. This is spoken unto me, this is my misery, and this is my condition, and this is my danger; and mercy offered to sinners is offered unto me; and Christ is tendered unto me to help me out of my woeful state of bondage. The Minister makes Uses of the Doctrine he delivers, but all this is ineffectual until you take it and lay it home to your own hearts: for want of this, you sit and hear like people not concerned; you sit and hear without affection and go away without the due and powerful effect of the Word upon your hearts. Let Conscience tell thee, thou art the Drunkard, the Hypocrite, the Unbeliever, that is threatened and in danger of damnation.
5. Look up to God through the Ordinance, and beyond the Minister that does speak unto thy ear, that God would speak unto thy heart and conscience. Ministers might speak, and yet Conscience might not speak; Minister and Conscience might both speak; Conscience seconding the Minister, that says, Thou art in a dreadful condition while thou art in spiritual bondage: Yes, says Conscience too, so thou art; and yet till God shall speak, thou wilt not hearken. Oh then when you come to the place where sinners are made free, look up to God that he would speak unto your hearts.

6. Pray to God that he would have mercy on thee, and pity thee in thy bondage, and help thee out. As a poor prisoner, look through the grates to Heaven, and say, Lord, some pity for a poor Prisoner, some relief and help for a poor Captive. Lord, I am in chains of sin, but cannot break them; held fast by Satan, oh let me not perish; oh let me not live and die in this spiritual bondage; the ransom is paid for my redemption, I give myself to thee, upon my knees, I do resign myself, my will, my love, my heart, and all to thee. Sinner, Wilt thou, when thou comest home, not sit and talk vainly, and not sit idly as heretofore; but go apart, and beg of God for mercy, and do it earnestly; for it is for thy life, thy soul.

2. Exhortation: To you that are set at liberty; Your privilege is a singular privilege, and calls for something singular from you. You were debtors to God, and prisoners to his Justice, and were liable to everlasting imprisonment in the life to come; but Christ has made you free, and you are free indeed, Joh. 8 36. Stir up and awaken yourselves to these following duties.

First, Be thankful unto God and Christ, that of bond-men you are made free. If a Captive were delivered out of Turkish slavery by the means of another; or a man exposed to perpetual Imprisonment for his debt, another should free him from the prison, and the danger thereof; What expressions of thankfulness would he abundantly utter, saying, O Sir, I owe my present ease, and freedom from my future danger, unto you. I shall never forget your kindness while I live. I do acknowledge I have not such another friend that hath done the like for me, in all the world. For as much then as the difference of being a debtor to God, and a debtor to man; of being exposed to a prison upon earth, and to the prison of Hell, is unspeakably great, methinks you should break forth into holy admirations of the grace

and love of God, and say, O Lord, I was indebted unto thee in the debt of sin, and of that I am discharged and freed: and now I am indebted in the debt of thankfulness unto thee: O the riches of this grace! O the greatness of this love and favor! Was ever love like this? Was any kindness ever comparable to the kindness and the bounty which thou hast shown to my soul? O Lord, I am forced to cry out, I never had, and never can have in heaven or in earth, such another friend as thou hast been and art unto my soul!

But alas, O Lord, I find my heart exceedingly dull and dead; a smaller kindness from a fellow-creature would have greatly affected me, and have made deep impressions on my heart; but by sad experience, and to the grieving of my Soul, I find, I am too too stupid and unsensible of this manifest and matchless mercy, which thou hast freely vouchsafed unto me! I believe, that there are many now in the hellish prison, as certainly as if I saw them with mine eyes, where I also might have been; and I see others in this world still Captives to the Devil, fast bound in the cords and chains of lust and sin, that are going to the place of that cursed damned crew of lost souls, eternally separated from the enjoyment of thy blessed Majesty, amongst whom thou hast given me good hope through grace I shall never be; thou showest mercy unto me, while thou pourest out thy wrath and fury upon them. Oh whence is this! and how comes this to pass? why am I poor silly wretch partaker of this love? what didst thou see in me but filth and sin, that might have provoked thee to deal with me as thou hast done with them? surely, Lord, thou hadst mercy on me, because thou wouldst have mercy on me! when I did lie in my blood, and bonds, in my fetters and my chains of sin and guilt, thou didst pass by me, but didst not pass me by, but showedst grace and goodness to me! When thy Servant and Apostle Peter was in prison, bound with chains, and the keepers before the door kept the prison, thou didst send thine Angel, who came upon him, and a light shined

in the prison, and he said unto him, arise up quickly, and his chains fell off from his hands; but when I was in a worsen case, and sorer condition, having fetters on my Soul, and darkness in my understanding, and the Devil the keeper of the prison stood to watch me, to keep me in his strong hold, thou didst send thy Son (for an Angel could not do it) to knock off thy chains wherewith I was held, and thy Spirit came upon me, and a light did shine into my mind, and he said, Arise up quickly, and the chains fell off from my Soul: all this thou didst for me, a Captive and a Prisoner; and it was long before I knew that it was true which was done for me: but while I think and muse hereon, how I was bound, and now am set at liberty; how I was enthralled, and in great distress, and thou hast enlarged me; I begin to find and feel my love to kindle in my breast, and my heart to be enlarged with thy praise; and as thy Apostle did sit in the prison and sing, so shall my soul, being brought forth and delivered from captivity, magnify thy name. Come then, awake O my soul! triumph and sing, be glad, and greatly rejoice, since thy loving, holy, Blessed Lord hath opened the Prison-doors, and brought thee forth into the liberty of the Sons of God. Oh! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases: who redeemeth thy life from destruction: who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.

To quicken your hearts to real thankfulness for deliverance from this Bondage, and captivity, dwell in your thoughts upon these Particulars following.

1. The greatness of your Debt for which you were exposed to everlasting imprisonment. Consider here the kinds of your sins, the number and the aggravations of them.

2. Work upon your thoughts your utter inability and incapacity to make payment of your Debt, for want of which you might have been a Prisoner forever. You could not say to God as the servant did to his fellow-servant that demanded his Debt of him; Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all, Mat. 18. 29. There was a double Debt that you owed unto God, one as a reasonable creature, the other, as an unreasonable sinner: the first was the debt of obedience required by the Law, the other the debt of punishment for the transgression of the Law; and you could have paid neither of them; Not the debt of perfect and perpetual Obedience; First, because all that you can do is due for the present, and that which is due for the present will not be accepted as payment for that which is past: as if a Tenant owe for Rent, due many quarters past, the payment of what is the rent of the last quarter will not satisfy for all that was due before. Secondly, all that you could do is less than what you ought to do; and in strict justice a part of payment is not accepted for the whole; every living man comes far short of his duty to God, and runs more and more in arrears with God, and therefore so far from paying that we run daily behind hand. Thirdly, man in bondage had not the least mite of that kind which the Law requireth and accepts, to wit, sinless, spotless and perfect Obedience without mixture of sin, pure gold without any dross; and if the Prisoner offer for his liberty money that is not current, the Creditor may refuse it, and keep him in the Prison still. And as you could not pay the debt of obedience to the Law, so neither could you satisfy for the debt of punishment due to you for your disobedience thereunto: the payment or satisfaction must be equivalent to the wrong that was done. God that was offended is an infinite God; therefore that which satisfieth, that the Offender might be free, must be something of an infinite value, which no mere man had to give to God; and therefore those

Prisoners that are not set free by Christ shall be always paying, but can never fully pay; satisfying, but can never fully satisfy; and therefore such shall never be released, but must lie in Prison forever.

Thirdly, weigh also this, satisfaction must be made, or the Prisoner never have his liberty. God might, and did demand his Debt. When Adam sinned, Hue and Cry was made after the Offender, Adam, Where art thou? was apprehended and arraigned at the Bar, What hast thou done? Hast thou eaten of the fruit of the Tree, of which I commanded that thou shouldst not eat? He was convicted by his own Confession, I did eat; and was condemned and a sad sentence past upon him, Gen. 3. 17, 18, 19. This was the pitiful case that man was in, sinned he had, apprehended he was, found guilty, under sentence, justice required satisfaction: man could not give it; and thus he knew not which way to turn himself▪ for help & for deliverance from his Bondage and Captivity which by sin he had brought himself unto. Oh what a strait were you in, when you owed millions, and had not one mite to pay? after you have paused upon this, Consider,

Fourthly, To release you from your Bonds Jesus Christ did voluntarily undertake for you, did interpose himself betwixt the wrath of God and the poor Captive, enthralled sinner; as if Christ should say, Father, man that was made free, hath abused his liberty and is become a Bond slave, fallen into the hands of revenging justice, which might arrest him, and clap him up in Prison forever; I see he is undone and lost; help himself he cannot, but I will be his Surety and his Bail; what he oweth thee, set that on my account, I will pay it. I am willing to do and suffer in their nature what may please and satisfy thy justice; if my life will be taken for their salvation, I will lay it down, if my blood will be accepted for the ransom of these poor Prisoners I will shed it for them, rather than

that they shall always remain in this Captivity. Oh can you think how ready Christ was for to engage, and to become your Surety, to die for you, that you might live, to be bound for you, that your Bonds might be broken, and your soul escape, and not have your heart affected with his love, and your tongue employed in his praises? Jer. 30. 21. Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord. Who is this forward Engager, that is so willing and hearty in this work? It is one that is able and mighty to save, to redeem by price and power, poor Captive Sinners, even the only Son of the ever blessed God; and so he is said to be our Surety, Heb. 7. 22. A Surety is one that undertakes for, or gives assurance in the behalf of another; one entering into Bond and standing engaged for another to do & to perform for another, what he was bound to do. Among men Suretyship is a dangerous thing; he dissuures his own estate that is surety for another. Prov. 11. 15. He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretyship is sure. But notwithstanding suretyship is thus among men, yet Christ would become a Surety for us to God himself, to bring us forth from our Bondage; and that you might be the more affected, and inflamed with his love, consider how far he acted for poor Captives beyond what ever man did for any man.

1. How many Captives Christ engageth for! How many millions he became a Surety for, for their ransom and deliverance! one man might be bound, and become a Surety for one, or two, but who will be Surety for thousands? especially if you add,
2. The greatness of the Debt of those he became a Surety for; One man might be persuaded to be Surety for another, if the Debt be small; but if it be for thousands and for millions, men are shy, but if it be for multitudes that owe such great sums, everyone so much, who will be persuaded to be Surety for them? but if they



be in Prison or in Bondage there they lie for want of money of their own, or Suretyship from another. But Christ became Surety for multitudes, and each one owed abundance, that it doth pass the skill of the ablest Arithmetician to cast up the total sum that one of these Prisoners were in Bondage for.

3. Christ knew most certainly that he should pay undoubtedly the Debt of all, he became a Surety for. Many men are Sureties for others, hoping they shall never be called upon for the Debt, but that the Debtor will pay it himself; some will be bound for a man, whom they judge to be worth as much as they owe and more too; but if it be a poor man, not worth one farthing, and his debt be thousands, Who will then become Surety for him? a Prisoner he is, and so he is like to be: and if any become bound for another, and pay the debt for him ▪ what trouble doth this cause unto him? it breaks his sleep & he is displeased with himself, that ever he entered into Bond, and saith it shall be a warning to me, while I live, how I become a Surety for another; I thought him able enough, else I would not have brought myself into such snares.

But all this was known to Christ, when he did become our Surety. He knew our beggary and our poverty, and that we could not contribute the smallest mite, towards the satisfaction to be made in order to the freeing of the Captives from their Bondage; and he knew that God would not spare him, but exact the utmost from him, and yet he did voluntarily undertake our ransom. Oh what love was this!

4. Christ became a Surety for you, when you were a stranger to him. He did undertake to release you out of your Bonds and Fetters when you had no special actual relation to him. Some men will not be Sureties for their most intimate acquaintance,

and near relations, not for a Brother, father, son, but for a stranger who will do it? herein then admire the love of Christ that when you were in Chains of sin and guilt, and a stranger too, Christ did undertake and did pay a ransom for you.

5. Yet more to affect your heart, Consider, that Christ did ransom you from your Captivity when you were an enemy unto him. A man might possibly take some pity on a stranger, but an enemy that hates him, and that would and doth dishonor and reproach him, who would be deeply engaged for him? yet Christ did this for you, when you were enemies unto Christ, Rom. 5. 10.
6. Yet to raise your admiration and affection more, Consider Christ did become a Surety for you, before you did or could desire any such kindness at his hands. What Man or Angel could have thought of the ransoming of Captives by the Son of God, becoming the Son of Man, and God himself redeem us by his blood? How long might you ask, how many might you go to? and how many entreaties might you use before you can prevail with one to be engaged for you for much, when you have nothing of your own? but Christ did this for us all, before any man had any such desire in his heart, thought in his mind, request in his mouth, that he would do so great and wonderful a kindness for us.
7. Christ did this alone, without any other engaging with him. Men require counter-security. If I be bound for you (saith one) you shall find to be bound with me, to be bound to me, to save me harmless; or you shall make over such houses, or such lands for my security, that if I be called upon, or the Bond be put in suit against me, I might save myself: But as Christ did tread the

wine-press of God's wrath alone, so did he alone undertake to ransom and redeem us from our bondage and captivity.

8. Christ did never repent of this undertaking, nor desired to stand bound no longer. Men engaged for others, when they fear they will fail, make all means they can to get out of the bond, and to stand surety no longer; they will scarce sleep till they have got themselves free, though the party that is the principal debtor be arrested and put in prison. But Jesus Christ our Lord-Redeemer and Surety, to bring us out of bondage was constant to the death; and when Peter did dissuade him from suffering (which was the payment of our ransom), how sharply did Christ rebuke him, Mat. 6. 21, 22, 23? Yea he was desirous of the time of actual performance, Luk. 12. 50, I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished. Christ never said, it doth repent me, that I did ever undertake to ransom Captive sinners; God said indeed, it did repent him that he made man, Gen. 6. 6; but Christ never did repent that he had engaged himself to redeem sinners.
9. Consider what it was that was the price that Christ did give to make you free from your captivity. Men might be Surety for men to pay a sum of money; but Christ became our Surety to the shedding of his own most precious blood. Men might give some money to redeem a Captive from Turkish slavery; but Christ himself, his life, his soul and body, to bring us from our bitter bondage, and miserable captivity. Thus take some time to ponder upon the Lord your surety, that did so freely undertake the ransoming of your captivated Souls. Which was the fourth head to get your hearts affected with this privilege of being set at liberty.

Fifthly, Consider, That God was pleased to accept of the undertaking of Christ, and what he hath laid down for your ransom from captivity. God might have exacted the debt from man that did owe it. It is a voluntary act for a man to become a surety; no man is to be compelled to it; and it is a voluntary act of the creditor to accept such a surety; they are both free and at their choice; but when the one offers himself to become bound, and the other does accept his suretyship, then is the debtor or prisoner relieved.

It was free love in Christ to become our Redeemer; it was grace in God to accept Christ's ransom for us. The Son might have said, Man hath sinned, why should I suffer? Man hath deserved the wrath of God, let him undergo it. And the Father might have said, Man hath transgressed my Law, and violated my Covenant, and I will make him suffer for it; they have brought themselves into bonds of misery, and they shall lie therein, and they that sinned, themselves shall die. Oh wonder then at this blessed agreement between the Father and the Son, for bringing forth poor souls in bondage from their captivity.

Seventhly, From all the former, it follows that the Salvation of such as are made free is sure and certain. Heaven now belongs to you, and the glory above you have a title to. Does Satan object against you that you have sinned and deserved to lie in everlasting chains? You might reply: it is true, but Christ is my Surety and Redeemer and has set me free. Does the Law or Conscience accuse you? You might answer all from the Ransom of your Redeemer. Do you fear the Justice of God? Well, your Debt is paid by your Surety, and then the Debtor cannot be cast into Prison. The Surety and the Debtor in Law are but one Person, and the Surety is liable to make satisfactory payment (Prov. 22. 26, 27), and Christ has done it, and you are discharged.

God has given some to Christ, whom he is to bring to Heaven, and they shall not perish (John 6. 38, 39, 40), as Judah did engage to Jacob for Benjamin (Gen. 43. 9): "I will be Surety for him; of my hands, thou shalt require him. If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame forever." And therefore, when Benjamin was to be detained by Joseph, Judah pleaded hard and offered himself to abide in his stead and to be a Bondman there, so that Benjamin might return to his Father with his Brethren (Gen. 44. 33). Christ has undertaken to bring all those out of their Bonds and Fetters, which the Father gave unto him, and to set them in Heaven before him. The price is paid, the Bonds are broken, the Chains have fallen from your Souls, in which you were held while unconverted. As he has opened the Prison-doors that you might come forth, so he will open to you the Palace-gates that you may enter in. For hopes hereof be thankful, be exceedingly thankful and rejoice in the Lord your Redeemer.

Second Exhortation. The next duty I would encourage you to embrace is to be compassionate and to cultivate tender compassion for those who are still bound in the fetters and chains of their sin and guilt. While you rejoice in your freedom, do not forget to show compassion to those who are still captives.

1. Let Ministers consider this when they are preparing for, praying for, and preaching to their congregations. Contemplate how your people are in bondage and slavery, and that unless their chains are loosened and their fetters are broken and removed, their souls are lost forever. They will soon be bound hand and foot and cast into a place of outer and eternal darkness. Reflecting on their present danger and future misery should infuse greater vitality into all our efforts to save them from eternal condemnation. Should we then preach to them with such

lukewarmness as if we were recounting a tale or conveying our message as if we didn't believe the truths we declare? Or as if it didn't matter whether our listeners believed, received, and obeyed the message we deliver to them or not, even though it concerns the weighty matters of everlasting life or death? Preaching about a Redeemer to captive souls requires great skill, life, love, zeal, and pity for their souls. May God forgive any lack of these qualities in me and grant me a deep belief in their eternal state and a serious heart, so that I may speak and preach the doctrine of redemption to enslaved sinners as if they were lost forever unless they are persuaded to come to Him, submit to Him, accept Him, and wholly give themselves up to Him, acknowledging Him as their only Saviour who paid the ransom for their deliverance. When I was called to preach to the prisoners in Newgate several years ago, and saw my listeners in chains, hearing their chains rattling at their heels, I found it to be a deeply moving sight. These men were about to face human judgment, and some of them were likely to be sentenced to death and executed. But if we consider our listeners standing before us, free from such literal iron chains, yet bound tightly in their lusts and sins, and understand that they will soon face God's judgment, and that without deliverance by Christ, they will receive a sentence of death, be banished from the presence of the blessed God, and cast down to devils and damned spirits, it should move us to pray for them, weep over them, and preach to them with the utmost compassion. As we see so many people before us, among whom many are the Devil's captives, whom he is leading, shackled, to eternal perdition, it should stir strong affections in our hearts for them and prompt us to speak to them with great earnestness and tender love, as becomes those who are speaking in the name of God to lost sinners, with the goal of their recovery and deliverance from captivity.

2. Let parents who have found freedom have compassion for their children who are still bound. If any of your children were put in chains for committing a crime against human laws and were being taken in shackles to their execution, wouldn't this pierce your hearts like a sword? It would be a source of grief and distress for you. Tears would flow from your eyes, and bitter lamentations would escape your lips, lamenting that you brought forth and raised children who would end their days in such shame and infamy for both you and them. Or if you had a son abroad, and you heard that he had been taken captive by the Turks or was in the Spanish Inquisition, what anguish you would feel! You would shed tears, wring your hands, and smite your breast upon hearing such news. You would make sorrowful complaints and grievous moans, saying, "Oh, my son, my son, my poor afflicted and distressed son, you have fallen into the hands of barbarous and cruel men. You are subjected to drudgery and slavery. Oh, my son, my son, what can I do for you, my son? Oh, that I could give or find a ransom for him! If everything I have could set him free, he should not remain in chains and fetters, nor continue in such a dire captivity!" Why, then, do you, parents, lament the physical bondage of your children, which is consistent with the well-being of their souls, and which will soon come to an end, and yet overlook their spiritual bondage? They are held captive by Satan, in danger of being cast into everlasting darkness, and yet you make nothing of it. Why do you not speak to them, informing them of their plight and the remedy? Explain how they ended up in this condition and how they can escape from it. Why do you not plead with them day and night, instruct them, and exhort them so that they can avoid the torments of Hell by being delivered from bondage now? Why do you not pray to God to set them free? Why do you not implore at the throne of grace, saying,

"Lord, I have children who are Satan's captives. My poor children are bound in the fetters of sin, in the bonds of iniquity. O God of grace, who has shown favour to me, also show favour to my children! May they be released! May you, by your grace, have mercy on them in their bondage and redeem them through the ransom paid by your Son. By the powerful working of your Spirit, may their wills be subdued and inclined to accept the only Redeemer, the one you sent to proclaim liberty to captives. O God, may you bring them in, enable them to lay hold of the mercy offered in the proclamation of the Gospel, so that they may not perish in their bondage."

3. Let masters who have found freedom and liberation have compassion for their servants who are bound in the chains of sin. They are not only bound to you (being bound to serve is for their benefit and freedom), but they are also ensnared in the cords of their iniquity, which is their present slavery and leads to their eternal misery. Does it not move you to see your servants become servants of the Devil and in bondage to their own desires? Does your heart not stir within you when you consider that anyone under your roof should be enslaved to Satan? And if you do see this, do you have nothing to say to them throughout the week to make them aware of their danger and conscious of their misery? Is it sufficient for you to teach them the skills and trade of your profession and grant them freedom in the city or corporation where you both reside after seven years, while neglecting to help them (as instruments under God) escape from the bondage of Satan and sin? Can you find contentment in thinking that they entered your household as slaves to sin and leave seven years later just as they came in? Should you not strive for their spiritual freedom while they continue to serve you? They would have every reason to bless God for you and for



coming into your home if they could say, "When I first became a servant to my master, I was also a servant to my sinful desires, but through his guidance, admonitions, and example, I became a servant of God before I ceased to be a servant to him." If it should be otherwise, let it not be due to your neglect, for it would be a sin and a source of misery for your servants, as well as a guilt upon you.

I could make a similar appeal to other relationships, acquaintances, and friends. Husbands should have compassion for their wives, wives for their husbands, and neighbours for each other. Those of you who know what it's like to be in these wretched bonds and what it's like to be set free should do your utmost to assist and support those who are still in the chains of sin, who do not understand the evil of it, nor the benefits of the opposite condition. Therefore, do not mourn over the past or desire to return to it.

Third Exhortation. Were you once in bonds, and have they been broken? Were you once in fetters, and have they been knocked off? Then conduct yourselves in your lives in a manner befitting a ransomed and redeemed people. It is not fitting for you to live and act as others do. There is a tremendous difference between your condition and that of others, and there must be a difference in your conduct and theirs. Ensure that you live with humility, holiness, and a heavenly focus. Strive to be fruitful in every good work and faithful to your Lord and Redeemer, and do not become entangled once more in the sins and snares from which you have been delivered. Now that you are set free, walk closely with God, for true liberty is found in holiness. As the Psalmist says in Psalm 119:45, "I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy Precepts." Remember that the freedom to which you have been called does not grant you a license to live licentiously but invites you to walk in the paths of piety. So, go on, persevere in your

path to the end, and when the servants of sin find themselves bound in a place of darkness, pain, and torment at the arrival of Death and the Day of Judgment, you will be free in a place of rest and light, life and love, singing and proclaiming the eternal praises of your Redeemer.

Amen. FINIS.

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## **MONERGISM BOOKS**

Captives Bound in Chains Made Free, by Thomas Doolittle.  
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