

Monergism

THE ROCK *of our* SALVATION

A Treatise Respecting the Nature, Person, Offices,
Work, Sufferings, and Glory of Jesus Christ

WILLIAM S. PLUMER

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by William S. Plumer

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Christ is All in All

When I was a youth, in the bond of iniquity and in the gall of bitterness, I fell into distress concerning my soul. I feared I should be lost forever. Being in the company of two Christian ladies, one of them kindly expressed the wish that my impressions might not be transient. This I understood. The other expressed the hope that Christ might yet be to me all in all. To me, whose heart was covered with a veil of unbelief, her words were as the speech of a barbarian. Yet they made an impression. From them I learned that some persons knew a secret hidden from me and I longed to learn what it was. I hope I have gained some insight into it, and I propose to present some of the views I have obtained.

The great central truth of the religion of sinners relates to the person, character, work, sufferings, offices, and glory of Jesus Christ. These are vital in Christianity. As one is sound or corrupt here—so is he substantially right or wrong in the main. Both now and in the last day, the great question in determining character and destiny is the same: "What do you think of Christ?"

On this subject the controversy is old. It goes back to the first two men ever born. Cain and Abel split on this point. In the immediate family of Adam the strife began, and it has never ceased. In the days of Moses the hardest thing to be borne in the profession of the true religion, was "the reproach of Christ." When Messiah was born, the strife was resumed with more warmth than ever. The wise men brought their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; but when Herod heard of his birth, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him, and he sought to destroy the young child. And when Christ became a public teacher, some said—He is a good man; others, He deceives the people. One party worshiped him—the other crucified him. Even

when he was on the cross, the spectators were divided—some looking on with unutterable grief; others wagging their heads and deriding him. In fact, the very thieves who died with him were not of one mind; one reviling him, the other calling him Lord.

On the day of Pentecost the controversy was renewed with great vigor, and with great advantage to the cause of truth; and it has been kept up ever since. All the friends of God have at heart been on one side, and all his enemies substantially on the other—if not openly, yet secretly; if not by profession, yet in practice. For eighteen hundred years a large portion of all the heresies that have arisen have related to the person or work of Christ. Infidelity is most bitter against Christ, while piety feeds upon the truth—of which he is the sum. Many scoff and more refuse; while some admire and adore. Some obey; others cry—We will not have this man to reign over us. In no age has malice against Christ been more envenomed than in the present.

Jesus Christ is a wonderful, a glorious person. To look away from self and one's own works to Christ—is to lay hold on eternal life. Safety consists in fleeing to him and abiding in him. When he is in the ascendant, the night flees away, and the morning comes—a morning without clouds. His names and titles are as important as they are significant. Every one of them is as ointment poured forth. His lips drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under his tongue, and the smell of his garments is like the smell of Lebanon. His people sit under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to their taste. To them he is altogether lovely.

He is their **Advocate**, the angel of the covenant, the author and finisher of faith. He is as the apple-tree among the trees of the forest; the alpha and the omega.

He is their the **B**eloved, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, the bread of life, the righteous Branch, the bridegroom, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. He is a bundle of myrrh.

To his saints he is and is owned to be **C**reator, captain, counselor, covenant, cornerstone, a covert from the tempest, and the chief among ten thousand.

He is to them as the **D**ew, the door into the fold, a days-man, a day-star, a deliverer, a diadem, and the desire of all nations, ranks, and generations of pious men.

In their eyes he is the **E**lect, Emmanuel, the everlasting Father and eternal life.

He is a **F**ountain of living waters to thirsty souls, of joy to troubled souls, of life to dying souls. He is the foundation on which His people of all ages safely build their hopes of heaven. He is the father of eternity, the fir-tree under whose shadow the saints rejoice, the first and the last, the first fruits of the greatest harvest ever gathered, the first-born among many brethren and the first-begotten from the dead.

To his chosen he is as the most fine **G**old, a guide, a governor, a glorious Lord, God, the true God, God over all blessed forever.

He is the **H**ead of the church, the health, the hope, the husband, the heritage, the habitation of his people. He is the horn of their salvation.

He rides upon the heavens by his name **J**AH. He is the Jehovah, the inheritance, Judge and **K**ing of his saints. He is their **L**ight, their life,

their Lord, their leader, their lawgiver, their atoning lamb, the lily of the valley, the lion of the tribe of Judah.

He is the **M**an Christ Jesus, the master, the mediator, the messenger of the covenant, the minister of the true sanctuary, which the Lord pitched and not man. He is the mighty God of Isaiah, the Michael of Daniel, the Melchisedek of David and of Paul, the bright and morning star of John, and the Messiah of all the prophets.

He is the **O**nly-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He is at once the root and the offspring of David.

He is the **P**eace, the prince, the priest, the prophet, the potentate, the purifier, the propitiation for our sins, the physician of souls, the plant of renown, the power of God unto salvation, the passover of all saints. He is a polished shaft in the quiver of God.

He is the **R**ock, the refuge, the ruler, the ransom, the refiner, the Redeemer, the righteousness and the resurrection of all who walk in white. He is the rose of Sharon.

He is the **S**eed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, the stem of Jesse, the Son of God, the son of man, the shield, the strength, the surety, the Shiloh, the sacrifice, the sanctuary, the salvation, the sanctification, and the sun of righteousness to all believers.

He is the **T**ruth, the treasure, the teacher, the temple, the tree of life, the great testator of his church.

He is the **W**ay, the well of salvation, the Word of God, the wisdom of God, the faithful witness. He is **THE WONDERFUL**.

His person is one; his natures are two. He is both human and divine, finite and infinite, created and uncreated. He was before Abraham, though not born for ages after that patriarch slept with his fathers. He was dead, and behold he is alive for evermore.

On earth he had not where to lay his head; yet he disposes of all diadems. By him kings rule and princes decree justice. He has the arm of a God, and the heart of a brother. To him all tongues shall confess and all knees bow; yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. None loves like him, none pities like him, none saves like him!

It is not surprising that such a person lives and reigns in the hearts of his people. No marvel that the virgins love him, and the saints praise him, and the martyrs die for him, and the confessors are not ashamed of him, and the sorrowing sigh for him, and the penitent lie at his cross and pour out their tears before him, and the humble trust in him, and the believing lay fast hold of him and will not let him go. His frown shakes the frame of universal nature, his smile gives life, his presence converts dungeons into palaces, his blood cleanses from all sin, his righteousness is the white robe of the redeemed.

If men would be safe, or wise, or holy, or happy, or useful, or strong, or victorious—let them look to JESUS! Let them look to none else, let them walk in him, abide in him, glory in him, and count as loss all things besides. You may look at the law until the spirit of bondage overwhelms you with terrors and torments. You may go about to establish your own righteousness until you can boast, and sin, and perish like a Pharisee. You may weep until the fountain of your tears has gone dry, you may have all gifts, understand all mysteries, bestow all your goods to feed the poor, and yield your body to be burned; but all these things will not atone for sin, will do nothing

toward regaining the lost favor of God, will not make you fit for the inheritance of the saints in light. "None but Christ! None but Christ! None but Christ!" has been the cry of the faithful witnesses of all ages when truth has triumphed, when oracles were struck dumb, when sinners were converted, when saints shouted for joy, when the word of God mightily grew and prevailed.

True piety begins, continues, and is perfected, by our union with Christ. We are cleansed through his blood, we are clothed in his righteousness, we are purified by his Spirit. We meet the demands of the law of this day of grace, when we walk as he walked, and have the same mind that was in him. In proportion as men are truly pious, they make Jesus the foundation and the top-stone, the sum, and substance, and centre of all their hopes and rejoicings before God. He is accepted and believed on in the world, not merely because there is no other Saviour, but because his way of saving sinners precisely suits their case, and because it brings glory to God in the highest. The true believer not only trusts in Christ, but makes his boast in him. He not only makes mention of him; he admits none into comparison with him. To all the ends, parts, and purposes of salvation, Christ stands alone. There is none like him, there is none with him, there is none before him, there is none after him, there is none beside him. He had no predecessor; he has, and shall have, no successor. He has no vicegerent; he has no assistant; he wears an undivided crown, and wields a perfect sovereignty over an undivided kingdom.

If God's people exalt him above all others, so does his holy and eternal Father. If they crown him Lord of all, God also has highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name. If they surpassingly admire and extol him, there is cause for this preference. It is a holy, reasonable thing, to fall before him and cry, My Lord and

my God! If he is the delight of his redeemed people, he is also the delight of his Father. Listen to the voice from the excellent glory: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

We sadly err when we begin in the spirit and end in the flesh; when we regard Christ as the Author, but not as the Finisher, of our faith. A legal spirit is the bane of piety. It is as great a foe to holy comfort as it is to gospel grace. Through the law believers are dead to the law, that they may live unto God. This is the evangelical plan. Here is the secret of growing conformity to God. Here is power, here is life, here is wisdom. We are complete in him.

In the wars of opinion, the greatest contests ever known have been on the question whether Christ is the sole and sufficient cause of salvation to men. Strange that any who have God's word should be at a loss on this subject. The language of Scripture could not be more clear: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." This is the sum of inspired teachings on the subject. This doctrine is quite beyond the suggestion of human wit, but wholly accordant with right reason. The gospel is not the progeny of human wisdom, but it is the proper remedy for human woes. **The heart of man is strongly wedded to a plan that will not abase pride nor silence boasting.** Although in regeneration, this folly is so far cured that the soul reclines upon Jesus; yet even the converted sometimes fall into sad declensions, and lose their clear and lively apprehensions of the one way of salvation provided by God. Then follow darkness, dejection, and strange perplexities. They are then "bewitched," and "obey not the truth."

Christ is our life; severed from him, we are withered branches. It is only when Christ is clearly seen and cordially embraced that our peace is like a river, and our righteousness like the waves of the sea.

The entire Christian race is run by pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. All the acts of faith are the fruit of the Spirit; the object of them all is the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; the warrant of them all is the promise of God, the offer of the gospel: and while they utterly renounce self, they bring Christ into the soul, the hope of glory.

Oh that men would learn that mount Sinai is far from Jerusalem, and that Calvary is near by it. The nearer we are to the law as a covenant of life, the farther we are from Christ, from deliverance. The multitudes of saints who have finished their course and gone home to God all found in themselves sin, guilt, folly, misery, and helplessness; while in him were hid all the treasures of wisdom, grace, and glory! Hear their sayings:

John Brown of Haddington said: "The command is, 'Owe no man any thing.' What a mercy that there is no such precept as this, Owe a Savior nothing; or even this, Study to owe him as little as possible. Oh what a mercy that my admission into eternal life does not depend on my ability for anything; but as a poor sinner, will win in leaning on Christ as the Lord my righteousness; on Christ, made of God unto me righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. I have nothing to sink my spirits but my sins; and these need not sink me either, since the great God is my Savior."

McCheyne said: "Live within sight of Calvary, and you will live in sight of glory."

When dying, Dr. Nevins said: "I recommend Christ to you; I have nothing else to recommend."

Well was it said of old, "It is better to die with Christ, than to reign with Caesar."

Paul says, "God forbid that I should boast—except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This subject suggests a few remarks to two classes of people:

1. To Christians. In choosing Christ, you acted wisely. Exquisite suffering for him is better than exquisite enjoyment with the world. It is better to be a prisoner for him than a prince without him. To die in Christ is to fall asleep in Jesus, and be forever with the Lord. Hold fast your profession of his name. Stick to him, stand up for him, live unto him, look to him, be ready to die for him, let your desires center in him, let your motives to holy living be drawn from him, let your sorrows be sanctified by him, let your joys be heightened, chastened, sweetened by him. Keep to him alone. We are as much bound to believe that there is but one Mediator as that there is but one God. 1 Tim. 2:5. None else can do us any good. Devotion to Christ cannot be excessive. Many love, and serve, and trust, and praise him too little; but whoever loved, or served, or trusted, or praised him too much? "There is no love of duty, where there is no love to Christ."

2. To such as have not fled to Christ, and are yet in their sins. Will you not embrace the Savior? If Christ shall not be taken as your surety, you must pay your own sin debt. Despise not his cross. It is the life of men. By wicked men it was designed to be, and is still esteemed, the seal of infamy, the badge of ignominy. Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. But see to it that you follow not their wicked ways. Come to Christ; he died for our sins; he offered himself without spot to God, a ransom for many, a sweet-smelling savor. Cast yourselves upon him. Believe in him, and the law has no more penal demands against you; believe in him, and God will accept you in the Beloved; believe in him, and your right to the tree of life is at once complete; believe in

him, and the sting of death is extracted; believe in him, and you shall have part in the first resurrection; believe in him, and you shall have boldness in the day of judgment. But reject him a little longer, and your heart will be harder than it is now; reject him a little longer, and the call to light and life will reach you no more; reject him a little longer, and the day of grace will be gone forever; reject him a little longer, and you will awake to shame and everlasting contempt! "There is a fearful chasm in that heart, which has no love for Christ."

The Divinity of Christ

The design of this chapter is to state and prove the doctrine of the true, proper, and supreme divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. His Godhead is true, not fictitious; it is proper, not figurative; it is supreme, not merely super-angelic. None is divine in a higher sense than the Savior of lost men. The proofs of this truth are various, multiform, and abundant.

I. The names of God are, in Scripture, given to Jesus Christ.

One apostle says of him, "This is the true God, and eternal life." 1 John 5:20. Speaking of the Israelites, another apostle says, "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." Romans 9:5. In both Testaments he is called Immanuel, which means God with us. Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:23. Speaking of him, Paul says: "God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim. 3:16. The evangelical prophet calls him the "mighty God, the everlasting Father." Isaiah 9:6. Peter says, "He is Lord of all." Acts 10:36. Paul says, "He is the Lord of glory." 1 Cor. 2:8. Both Isaiah and Joel call him by the majestic and incommunicable name, *Jehovah*.

Isaiah 6:5; Joel 2:32, Compare John 12:41; Romans 10:13. The Bible styles our Savior, God, the true God, God blessed forever, Lord of all, Lord of glory, God with us, Jehovah, Lord Almighty. This language is used by prophets and apostles at periods long separated and on occasions very diverse; some before his birth, others at his birth, and others after his ascension to glory. Surely God's word thus teaches that he is divine.

Lord Jesus, God over all, Almighty Jehovah—be our Friend. Bless and help each one of us. Be unto us a horn of salvation.

II. Divine attributes are also ascribed to him.

ETERNITY is one of his perfections: "In the beginning was the Word." John 1:1. John the Baptist was born six months before our Lord, yet of our Savior he says, "was before me." John 1:15. In prophecy, Christ gives this account of himself: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, before ever the earth was." Proverbs 8:22, 23. When on earth, he asserted his own eternity and self-existence: "Before Abraham was—I am." John 8:58. More than sixty years after his ascension from Olivet, and within eight verses of the close of the New Testament, Jesus says of himself, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Rev. 22:13. He who is himself the Alpha, the first, the beginning—must be self-existent, independent, and eternal. Surely he who can truly thus speak of himself is divine.

O eternal Son of God, Father of eternity—remember that we are of yesterday and are crushed before the moth. Bring us, in the fullness of your grace, to behold your glory, which you had with your Father before the world was.

OMNIPRESENCE is another attribute of God claimed by Christ: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20. Christ could not thus meet all the little groups of his worshipers in all parts of the world, unless he were omnipresent. He claims the same perfection when he says to his disciples, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:20. If this promise conveys any natural and obvious sense, it is one that, beyond a doubt, implies the omnipresence—and therefore the divinity, of Jesus Christ.

Blessed Savior, who is everywhere present, preside in all our solemn assemblies, large and small. Walk in the midst of the golden candlesticks. Be unto us for a little sanctuary.

OMNISCIENCE is another attribute of God belonging to Christ. Peter said, "Lord, you know all things." John 21:17. By his omniscience, Jesus declared Judas a devil, even when he was unsuspected by any of his intimate friends. By his omniscience, he convinced Nathanael of his Messiahship and Divinity. Two things are wholly inscrutable, except to omniscience. One is, **the human heart**. Yet we are expressly informed that, even in his humiliation, Jesus "knew all men, and needed not that any should testify to him of man, for he knew what was in man." John 2:24, 25. And when for three-score years the Son of man had been in glory he said, "All the churches shall know that I am he who searches the heart." Rev. 2:23. The other thing unsearchable except to God only, is **the Divine nature**. Yet Jesus declares that he is master of that solemn mystery: "As the Father knows me, even so know I the Father." John 10:15. Surely he who thus knows the unsearchable God, is himself God.

Lord Jesus, search us, and know our hearts, try us, and know our thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in us; lead us in the way

everlasting; and reveal to us the glorious mystery of God.

IMMUTABILITY is another perfection belonging to God only; and by inspired men it is ascribed to Jesus Christ. Having shown that this earth and the heavens above, with all that is grand and solid in them, must pass away, the Scriptures say of Christ, "You are the same, and your years shall not fail." Psalm 102:25-27; Heb. 1:10-12. The inspired author of the epistle to the Hebrews declares in explicit terms that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Heb. 13:8. Without profaneness, we cannot ascribe unchangeableness to any but God. Yet Paul says that Jesus is ever the same. Is he not Divine?

Blessed Savior, we rejoice that you are the same as when you wept at the grave of Lazarus; as when you poured salvation on the dying thief; as when, in ascending to glory, you blessed your followers. We rejoice that your state is changed and your nature immutable. Oh pity and bless us. Be unto us a sure foundation—a munition of rocks.

Beyond all doubt, **OMNIPOTENCE** is an attribute of God alone. We cannot reason with one who persistently contends that almightiness is the property of man or angel. But God's word abundantly teaches that Jesus Christ is omnipotent. Surely he who in his own name raises the dead, and subjects the universe to his power—is almighty. Paul says Jesus does both these things: "Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subject everything to Himself." Phil. 3:20, 21. Surely such energy is omnipotent!

In Rev. 1:8, Christ thus reveals himself: "I am the Alpha and the Omega—the One who is, who was, and who is coming, the Almighty."

Nor did Jesus acquire omnipotence by his ascension to glory. Indeed, almightiness cannot be acquired, else a creature would become God. But even in his humiliation Jesus said, "What things soever the Father does, these also does the Son. As the Father raises up the dead and quickens them, even so the Son quickens whom he will." John 5:19, 21. Jesus could do none of these things, if his power could be resisted. But irresistible power is omnipotent power, is divine power, and so Christ is divine.

O you who is, who was, and who is coming, the Almighty—cover us in the hollow of your hand. If our hold on you is feeble, let your hold on us be the grasp of omnipotence. Go forth conquering and to conquer, until earth owns you Lord of all.

III. Those things which can be done by none but God are done by Jesus Christ, and therefore he is God. Such is the work of **CREATION**: "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made, which was made." John 1:3. "By him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him." Col. 1:16. If by creation the Father is shown to be truly God, by creation also we establish the divinity of the Son.

Glorious Redeemer, we all were made by you and for you. We own your perfect and sovereign right to us and over us. All we have and are, in soul or body, belongs to you. Nor can anything dissolve the ties that bind us to you forever.

Jesus Christ also **UPHOLDS, PRESERVES**, and **GOVERNS** the worlds which he has made. Isaiah says: "The government shall be upon his shoulder." Isaiah 9:6. Paul says: "To the Son he [the Father] says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." Heb. 1:8. In one place

the same apostle says, he "upholds all things by the word of his power." Heb. 1:3. In another he says: "He existed before everything else began, and he holds all creation together." Col. 1:17. Indeed his care and superintendence of all things is a necessity; for Paul says: "He must reign until he has put all things under his feet." 1 Cor. 15:25.

Thus all **creatures**, from the smallest insect that is seen by the microscope up to the archangel that worships and ministers before the eternal throne; all **events**, from the falling of a hair of the head to the destruction of nations by famine, pestilence, and war; all **rule** and **authority**, from that of a petty official, to that of thrones and principalities in heaven; the **material universe**, from the least particle which floats in the sunbeam to the grandest system of worlds which roll in immensity—all hang dependent on his powerful providence! And if one link in the chain of that dependence were broken, they would all rush headlong to destruction! He always has governed this world; and he shall ever hold the scepter over it, until his last foe shall be vanquished, and his last hidden one made victorious!

Lord Jesus, who upholds all things by the word of your power, bear us up, bear us on, bear us through, giving us the victory over death, and hell, and all the powers of darkness.

Again, **REDEMPTION** is more glorious than creation or providence; and Jesus Christ is the sole author of redemption. I never heard of anyone who believed in redemption by the Lord, who did not ascribe it to the Son. He alone was fit for this great work. Beveridge says: "Man can suffer, but he cannot satisfy; God can satisfy, but he cannot suffer; but Christ, being both God and man, can both suffer and satisfy too. And so is perfectly fit both to suffer

for man and to make satisfaction unto God. And thus Christ, having assumed my nature into his person, and so satisfied Divine justice for my sins—I am received into grace and favor with the Most High God."

Two things the Scriptures make very clear. One is, that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law—that salvation is by his blood and righteousness. The other is, that for this redemption Christ is entitled to the warmest love and the highest honors, and that he actually receives both from all the redeemed. The Author of one's eternal salvation cannot be inferior to the Author of one's earthly existence, and so ought to be honored and adored, because he is Divine.

Lord Jesus, who has died the just for the unjust, set your love on us, wash us from our sins in your most precious blood, and make us kings and priests unto God.

Moreover, when Christ was on earth, **he claimed and exercised the power of pardoning men's iniquities.** "Man, your sins are forgiven"—were his brief and solemn words of superhuman authority. He himself tells us that he thus spoke that we "might know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins." Matt. 9:6. In fact, Christ is exalted a Prince and a Savior to this very end, that he may grant repentance and remission of sins. Truly he is God.

Lord Jesus, spread the skirt of your bloody garment over our souls, and grant us repentance and remission of sins—and we shall be saved.

Nor is this all. **Jesus Christ shall raise the dead.** In Deut. 32:39, God says, "I kill, and I make alive." In Rev. 1:18, the Lord Christ says, "I have the keys of hell and of death." Raising the dead is an act of

almighty power, and so no creature can do it. Yet Paul says, "In Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:22. When on earth, Jesus gave life to the dead. He spoke, and was obeyed, like a God: "He shouted with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out bound hand and foot with linen strips and with his face wrapped in a cloth." John 11:43-44. He said, "This is the will of him who sent me, that everyone which sees the Son and believes on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:40. Nay more, he even raised his own body from the dead: "I lay down my life, that I might take it again." "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John 2:19; 10:18. Truly this is the Son of the Highest, and may fitly count it no robbery to be equal with God.

Kind Redeemer, we cheerfully follow you into the grave, in hope of a glorious resurrection. We would not live always. In the last day raise us up, and make our vile bodies like unto your glorious body. Give us part in the first resurrection.

In like manner shall **Jesus Christ judge the living and the dead** at his coming. He expressly says that the Father has given the Son "authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." John 5:27. In the same chapter he says: "The Father judges no man; but has committed all judgment unto the Son." John 5:22. The great tribunal before which we must all stand is "the judgment-seat of Christ." Romans 14:10. In Rev. 1:7, John says, "Behold he comes with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." If Divine perfections are required for anything, it is for deciding on the destinies of men and angels; yet the unerring God has committed this judgment into the hands of Christ. He must, therefore, be God.

Lord Jesus, when you come in your glory, with all your holy angels, and the heavens shall flee away at your presence—by your mercy let us have boldness in the day of judgment.

And as Jesus made, and governs, and shall judge the world, **so shall he destroy these heavens and this earth**. So says inspiration: "You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands: They shall perish . . . as a vesture shall you fold them up, and they shall be changed." Heb. 1:10-12. Who can do this, and do it with the ease with which man folds up a garment and lays it aside—but God alone? Yet Jesus Christ shall do this very thing. Surely he is divine.

Jesus, our Lord and our God, when you shall dissolve the frame of all sublunary things, remember and spare us according to the riches of your grace in glory.

IV. The Bible has done more to root out idolatry than all other books. It declares that idolaters shall have their part in the lake of fire. Yet this same holy book authorizes **the highest acts of worship to be offered to Christ**. Faith in him is as much required as faith in the Father: "You believe in God, believe also in me." John 14:1. We are required in both Testaments to embrace him and trust in him on pain of perdition: "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all who put their trust in him." Psalm 2:12. "He who believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him." John 3:36. The Scriptures never require of us to rely on man. On the contrary, they say, "Cursed is he who trusts in man." Jer. 17:5. But they also say: "There shall be a Root of Jesse, and he who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust." Romans 15:12. Yes, more: "At the name of Jesus every knee shall

bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Phil. 2:10. And all this is by God's command; for "when he brings in the First-begotten into the world, he says, And let all the angels of God worship him." Heb.1:6. Before he was born, his mother's cousin Elisabeth by the Holy Spirit called him "My Lord." Luke 1:43. After his resurrection, Thomas adoringly said, "My Lord and my God." John 20:28. The first Christian martyr worshiped him, crying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Acts 7:59. That Jesus receives the highest worship offered in heaven the Scriptures clearly assert: "Then I looked again, and I heard the singing of thousands and millions of angels around the throne and the living beings and the elders. And they sang in a mighty chorus: 'The Lamb is worthy—the Lamb who was killed. He is worthy to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.' And then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. They also sang: 'Blessing and honor and glory and power belong to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever!'" Revelation 5:11-13. No part of God's word speaks of a higher degree or more complete universality of solemn worship than is here said to have been offered to the Son. Verily he is divine. He is God. He has supreme divinity. There is no idolatry in heaven, yet Jesus is worshiped there.

O Lamb of God, grant us this one favor—to worship you with true devotion here below, and after this life to unite with the heavenly throng in ascribing to you blessing, and honor, and power, and glory, and salvation.

The foregoing is but an outline of the argument on this glorious theme. The Bible is full of it. Sometimes we have nearly whole chapters devoted to this weighty matter. Such are the eighth chapter of Proverbs and the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. Many

considerable portions of several books of the Bible are given to establish the same truth. The gospel by John is evidently written chiefly for the same purpose. The very first verse may be taken as a text of the whole: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Time would fail us to dwell on each of the proofs of our Lord's divinity found in this gospel.

Indeed, we may with Melville say: "There is no such book of contradictions as the Bible, if there be no person who was both human and divine. Nothing but such a combination will make sense of the Bible, or rescue it from maintaining a vast mass of inconsistencies. Some may think that it would simplify the Christian theology to remove from it the mystery that two natures coalesced in the one person of Christ; but as the divinity of our Lord is the foundation of our hope, so is it the key to the Bible. We acknowledge, reverently, a great mystery, but not the thousandth part as great as the whole Bible becomes on the supposition that Christ was only man."

1. If Jesus Christ is divine, he may safely be trusted with our whole case. He will betray no interest committed to him. He invites all to come. He welcomes all who come. He is all-sufficient. He is chosen, called, and ordained of God—to this very work of saving lost men who seek a refuge in him. A pious man once said: "If I did not know my Savior to be God, I would this night lie down in despair: the Scripture could in this case convey no comfort to my mind." But He is divine, and we may safely rest the whole weight of our salvation on his almighty arm, and **trust our most complicated affairs to the solution of his infinite wisdom.**

2. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a most reasonable duty. "He who has the Son has life; and he who has not the Son of

God has not life." 1 John 5:12. If we fail here we fail utterly, for there is salvation in no other. He is the Rock. All hopes not built on him must forever perish. Jesus is set for the rise and the fall of many. He will be to us a rock of salvation or a stone of stumbling; the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, or a rock of offence to the unbelieving. I have long since ceased to marvel that Jehovah has laid such stress on this doctrine. In their measure the pious do the same. They all cling to it as their last hope. Oh that every man would ask God to give him faith, saving faith; for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord—but by the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 12:3.

3. Will you have this Lord Jesus for your Savior? Will you bow your head, and take his yoke upon you? If you confess and forsake your sins, he is faithful and just to forgive your sins, and to cleanse you from all iniquity. Will you have him? You need him. You need him now. You need him urgently. You need him to help you live. You will need him to help you die. You will need his grace and mercy forever.

The Sonship of Christ

The Scriptures say much of the Son of God. Many scores of times is the Savior called the Son, the Son of the Blessed, the Son of the Highest, or the Son of God. Very often too have we the corresponding term, Father, expressing the relations of the first person of the Godhead to the second.

The Sonship of Christ is one of the glorious mysteries of our religion. Angels are, indeed, sometimes called the sons of God. Thus, in the only reliable history of the origin of our world, we are told that at the creation "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38:7. Because Adam came into existence without any created instrumentality, but directly from the hand of God, he is called the son of God. Luke 3:38. And because all believers are, by the Holy Spirit, renewed into the image of the Most High, and are adopted into the heavenly family, they are called the sons of God. Romans 8:14; 1 John 3:1. But the whole tenor of the argument in the early part of the epistle to the Hebrews goes to show that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Father in a sense far higher than can be claimed for any mere creature. He is preeminently God's own Son, Romans 8:32; and God's dear Son, Col. 1:13; and God is preeminently his Father, John 5:18.

Some have maintained that Christ was the Son of God only in the sense that he was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary. In proof, they cite Luke 1:35: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you; therefore also, that holy One who shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God." Should we admit that this passage teaches that Christ's human nature was so derived from the Holy Spirit as to make it proper to call him the Son of God, this would not show that he was in no higher sense begotten of the Father. Nor would this express his relation to the Father. But the passage fairly admits of another construction, namely, that he who is thus miraculously brought into the world is thereby infallibly proven to be the Son of God in the highest sense ever claimed.

It has also been maintained by some that Christ's designation to office constituted his Sonship. In proof, they cite John 10:36: "What

about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son?'" But, like the preceding, this passage may fairly refer to the proof, and not to the cause or nature of his Sonship with God. One text says, "The Son of God has come." Another says, "God sent forth his Son," Gal. 4:4. He did not become the Son of God by coming or by being sent, but being the Son of God, he was sent and has come. Many other texts afford similar proof.

Others have said that Christ is called the Son of God only because he rose from the dead. For proof they cite Acts 13:33: "God has fulfilled the promise unto us, in that he has raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, You are my Son; this day have I begotten you." But this passage receives its clear exposition from Romans 1:4, where the apostle says that Jesus Christ our Lord was "declared [defined, marked out as by a boundary, determined, that is, beyond doubt proven] to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." In other words, Christ's resurrection forever settled in all fair minds the question of his Sonship with God.

Others have said that Christ was called the Son of God simply because he is heir of all things. In proof, they cite Heb. 1:3-5: "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son?" But heirship comes from Sonship; not Son-ship from heirship: "If children, then heirs." Romans 8:17. The fact that Christ is heir of all

things is irrefragable proof that he is the Son of God. But Christ's Sonship is more than all these.

I. He is the Son of the Father in a higher and more glorious sense. In the preceding chapter, it has been shown that he existed long ages before he became incarnate; that he was possessed of all divine attributes; that he was uncreated, and justly claimed supreme divinity. This Sonship of our Lord clearly implies that he has the same nature with the Father; and so, as the Scriptures say, He was begotten of the Father. When we say that Christ is by nature the Son of God, we mean that the Father communicates to him his being and perfections. He himself says, "All things that the Father has are mine." John 16:15. "As the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself." John 5:26. Indeed, "the communication of the Divine essence by the Father is the generation of the Son." In nature, the Father and the Son are perfectly the same. Nor did the Father ever communicate by generation his divine essence to any other; so that Jesus Christ is properly called God's *only* Son, and his *only begotten* Son. This generation of the Son is entirely peculiar to himself, and is the foundation of all the holy worship offered to the Redeemer in heaven and earth, of all saving confidence reposed in the efficacy of his blood-shedding and intercession, and of the all-controlling gratitude felt towards him for his amazing condescension in coming into the world and dying for our salvation.

II. The Sonship of Christ is real, not imaginary; and proper, not figurative. It is the foundation of the everlasting relation between the Father and the Son, and not merely the mode of our conceiving of the Divine subsistence. Christ is as truly and properly the Son of God as Abel was the son of Adam; that is, his nature is as truly the nature of his Father as the nature of any man is that of his

parent. Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image. Gen. 5:3. So, by his generation, Jesus Christ is "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Every other name and title of our Lord has a delightful fitness and significance. Why should that of *Son of God* be an exception? He is called Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins. Who deserves the name of Savior as he does? He is called Christ, because the Spirit was wonderfully poured upon him. If Aaron's anointing filled his presence with sweet perfume, the anointing of Christ fills heaven and earth with an odor of a sweet smell. He is called Lord and Master, because he has perfect sovereignty over us. None ever so worthily wore a crown or swayed a scepter. He is called Wonderful, for his person, his birth, his life, his works, his doctrines, his death, his resurrection, his glory, all entitle him to that appellation. He is called Counselor, for none deals so prudently. Isaiah 52:13. His wisdom and plans will yet destroy every dark plot of iniquity. He himself says, "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding; I have strength." Proverbs 8:14. The Spirit of counsel and might rests upon him. Isaiah 11:2. Speaking of the man whose name is The BRANCH, the prophet says: "He shall build the temple of the Lord, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both," that is, between Jehovah and the Branch, between the Father and the Son. Zech. 6:12, 13. So that he is the Counselor of God. He is also the Counselor of all who believe in him. He is the true light, the infallible teacher of all the saints.

He is called Redeemer. None half so fitly bears that title. Others bought back captives with such corruptible things as silver and gold; he redeems through his most precious blood. They redeem from temporal, he from eternal woe. He is the Christ, and Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and Jesus Christ the Son of God is the Savior of lost men; but all this only shows that our Lord has many and excellent

names and titles, as he has also many crowns on his head. He is called Jehovah, because he is self-existent, independent, eternal, and unchangeable. He is called God, because the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily. He is called the Son of God, because he is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. His "names and titles, which are more than two hundred in number, include every thing which is great or glorious, amiable or excellent, in the estimation of mankind." [Payson.] He has no empty titles, no insignificant names. There is none like him. "He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6

III. The Sonship of Christ is eternal. This is clearly taught: "He is before all things." Col. 1:17. "He made the worlds." Heb. 1:2. Of course he existed before them. There never was a point in duration when the Son was not. Some have argued against the eternity of the filiation of our Redeemer from the phrase, "This day have I begotten you." But Owen well says, "'Today' being spoken of God, of him who is eternal, to whom all time is so present as that nothing is properly yesterday nor today, does not denote necessarily such a proportion of time as is intimated but it is expressive of an act eternally present, nor past, nor future." Addison Alexander says, "This profound sense of the passage is no more excluded by the phrase 'this day,' implying something recent, than the universality of Christ's dominion is excluded by the local reference to Zion. The point of time, like the point of space, is the center of an infinite circle."

IV. The Sonship of Christ implies much more than Mediatorship. It is eminently fitting that the Mediator between God and man should be the Son of God and the Son of Man; but Sonship is not Mediatorship, any more than Messiahship is Sonship.

The Word did not become God's Son, but being God's Son, he became God's Anointed by receiving the Spirit without measure.

V. The filiation of Christ is, and ought to be freely admitted to be, ineffable. When, as "the angel of the Lord," the Son of God appeared to Manoah, that holy man said unto him, "What is your name?" "And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why do you ask my name, seeing it is secret?" Judges 13:17, 18. Payson says: "It was doubtless the eternal Word, who is frequently called the Angel of the Covenant, that appeared on that occasion. The name which is here given him, signifies secret, mysterious, wonderful; and in each of these senses it may properly be ascribed to Christ." Christ himself says: "No man knows who the Son is, but the Father." Luke 10:22. The Sonship is ineffable, because the Divine nature is incomprehensible. Divinity is essentially inscrutable. So the Scriptures everywhere declare: "Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave—what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea." Job 11:7-9.

Another Scripture declares the **incomprehensibility** of the nature both of the Father and of the Son: "Who has ascended up into heaven, or descended? who has gathered the wind in his fists? who has bound the waters in a garment? who has established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if you can tell?" Proverbs 30:4. God, indeed, has revealed himself to us in a trinity of persons. He has said that the relation between the first and second of these persons is best expressed in our language by the terms Father and Son. But we must not strain such terms to make them imply all that we understand by them when used to denote human relationships. Among men, a father exists before his son; but

God the Father is eternal, and God the Son is eternal. The great idea conveyed by the word Father is, that he is the fountain of the divinity. So, when we use the words *begat* and *begotten* in this connection, the meaning is, that we cannot better express the manner in which the Father communicates the divine nature to the Son than by the use of these terms.

At this point it is convenient to give a statement of the doctrine of Christ's Sonship in several orthodox Confessions. This may prevent mistake, and show how steadfast has been the faith of God's people on this point.

The Apostles' Creed says, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord."

The Creed as given by Irenaeus has it, "I believe in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was incarnate for our salvation."

The Nicene Creed says, "We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only-begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father."

The Athanasian Creed says, "That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. . . . The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten."

The Confession of Wirtemberg says, "We believe and confess that the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, begotten of his eternal Father, is true and eternal God."

The Confession of Belgia says, "We believe that Jesus Christ, in respect of his divine nature, is the only Son of God, begotten from everlasting, not made or created, (for then he would be a creature,) but of the same essence with the Father and coeternal with him."

The Confession of Saxony says, "The Son of God our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the image of the eternal Father, is appointed our Mediator, Reconciler, Redeemer, Justifier, and Savior."

The Augsburg Confession teaches, "that the Word, that is, the Son of God, took unto him man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary."

In further support of this doctrine, consider the following:

1. It is clear that the Jews expected their Messiah to be the Son of God. Nathanael was an Israelite indeed, and he said to Christ, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel." Martha too said to him: "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who would come into the world." The high-priest said to Jesus, "I adjure you by the living God, that you tell us whether you be the Christ, the Son of God." John 1:49; 11:27; Matt. 26:63. Where did they all get the impression that Messiah should be the Son of God, if their prophets did not so teach them?

2. From many Scriptures it appears reasonable to infer that the Spirit of God designed to teach us Christ's Sonship with God. You remember that famous confession of Peter: "We believe and are sure that you are that Christ, the Son of the living God." John 6:69. John expressly informs us that he wrote his gospel "that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." John 20:31. Again he says: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the

Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God." 1 John 5:13.

3. On two occasions Christ received from God the Father glorious testimony to his Sonship. "Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3:16, 17. The other occasion was that of his transfiguration, when a voice out of the cloud, called by Peter the "excellent glory," said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear you him." Matt. 17:5.

4. The Scriptures lay great stress on this doctrine. In fact they assert, in plain terms, that the belief of it is essential to the formation and establishment of Christian character. "Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" 1 John 5:5. The Ethiopian treasurer made the confession of his faith in these simple words: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Upon this profession he was baptized. And John says expressly: "Whoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father." 1 John 2:23.

5. It is admitted that the term "Word" is applied to Christ in reference to his existence before his incarnation, and without reference to his office as Mediator. Yet John uses the term "Word" and the term "Only-begotten of the Father" as interchangeable terms: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14. The glory of the Word and the glory of the only-begotten of the Father is the same.

6. The ordinance of Baptism is administered "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." All who believe the

doctrine of the Trinity admit that *Father* and *Holy Spirit* designate divine persons. Surely the term *Son* does the same.

7. The Scriptures expressly state that the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him; that is, the only-begotten Son who has an eternal and infinite intimacy with the divine nature has revealed him.

8. The glory of the priesthood of Christ arises chiefly from his filiation with God. So the apostle sets it forth: He makes the Son a High Priest; "We have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God." Heb. 4:14; 7:28. The greatness of our High Priest clearly results from his being the Son of God.

9. If Christ was the Word before he was made flesh, he was the Son before he was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. John 1:1, 14; 1 John 3:8. Surely this is fair reasoning.

10. Fuller says: "It is the proper deity of Christ which gives *efficacy* to his sufferings: 'by *himself* he purges our sins.' (Heb. 1:3.) But this efficacy is ascribed to his being 'the Son of God.' 'The blood of Jesus Christ, *his* Son, cleanses us from all sin.' His being the Son of God therefore amounts to the same thing as his being a divine person." Yes, more; it shows how he is divine, namely, by an eternal generation.

The inferences from this discussion are many and important. The doctrine is full of rich consolation. Our Redeemer not only has glorious power and exaltation, but he has them because, being the Son of God, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. Heb. 5:8. Our Advocate has by nature a right to equality with God; and, being full of love and kindness—he is sure to manage the cause of all his people so as to secure their final salvation!

The Incarnation of Christ

When we say, The Son of God became incarnate, we mean to say that he became the Son of man, taking to himself human nature entire. In the Apostles' Creed this doctrine is thus expressed: "He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary." The Athanasian Creed says: "He is not only perfect God, but perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting." The Westminster Assembly thus teach: "The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man."

Respecting Christ's human nature, many wild and dangerous opinions have been held; but these need not now be formally refuted. The proof of the true doctrine will be sufficient.

The union of Christ's natures was formed, not by his humanity seeking to be affianced to divinity. This would have been presumptuous aspiring. But his Godhead sought union with manhood. This was infinite love and condescension. Christ's human

nature never existed separately, or otherwise than in union with his divinity. From his conception this union was complete. The preexistent divine nature took to itself human nature. Christ's human nature never had a personal subsistence by itself. So that Christ did not assume a human person, but human nature. "His person is not a compound person; the personality belongs to his Godhead, and the human nature subsists in it by a peculiar dispensation. The assumption of our nature made no change in his person; it added nothing to it; and the only difference is, that the same person who was possessed of divinity has now taken humanity." So that things done or suffered in either nature are ascribed to the one person, Christ Jesus. The properties of each nature are, and will ever continue to be, entire and distinct. Divinity cannot be subject to any change. Humanity cannot cease to be humanity—cannot become divinity. The Creator cannot cease to be Creator. The creature cannot cease to be a creature.

This union of the two natures in Christ is not without some similitude in ourselves. In his constitution man has two substances, one a soul, the other a body; one spiritual and immortal, the other material and perishable. By their union, one of these substances is not changed into the other. They remain distinct even when united. Yet a man is one person, and not two persons. When we say, He is sad, all know we refer to his soul. When we say, He is muscular, all know we speak of his body. Yet in both cases we speak of the same person. So Christ's person is one, and not two. When he spoke of himself he said, *I, mine, me*. When his apostles spoke of him, they said, *he, his, him*. When we address him, we say, *you, yours*. Acts 1:24. The Scriptures also use singular nouns respecting him, and call him a Prophet, a Priest, a King, a Shepherd, a Redeemer. The union of his natures could not be more perfect. It is personal, perpetual, indissoluble.

The Scriptures say, Christ was "*made of a woman.*" Human beings have come into the world in four ways. The first man, the very fountain of human nature, had neither father nor mother. Neither man nor woman was the instrument of his existence. The first woman had neither father nor mother, yet she derived her nature from Adam, but in no sense from a woman. Since the first pair, every mere man has had both father and mother. Yet none have denied that all these had human nature entire. Jesus Christ had a mother, but no father according to the flesh; even as in his divine nature he had a Father only. He was made of a woman.

To be our Savior, it behooved Christ to have a human nature. His incarnation was fitting and necessary.

It was fit that the nature which had brought our ruin, should bring our deliverance.

It was fit that the nature which had sinned, should make reparation for our wrongs, and so should die.

This earth, which is the abode of men, not of God or of angels, was the proper theater for the display of the grace, and mercy, and justice, and power, manifested in the life and death of Jesus Christ. He who was rich thus became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. 2 Cor. 8:9. In some respects, this was the most amazing step in our Lord's humiliation. It is more surprising that a prince should marry a shepherdess than that, having made her queen, he should nobly protect and richly endow her, or even die in her defense.

Christ was "*made under the law.*" As to his divine nature, he could in no sense be under the law. He was the Lawgiver. He was God; and God cannot live and act under rules fit for the government of

creatures. If the Savior was to live under the law as a rule of life, and set us an example in all things, he must do it in a finite nature, and as his mission was to us, most fitly in our nature.

Besides, Divinity cannot suffer, cannot die. But by his incarnation, Jesus was made "lower than the angels, for the suffering of death."

Thus he was made under the law in the two senses of being voluntarily subject to its precept, being thus bound to fulfill all righteousness; and being voluntarily made under the penalty of the law, that he might taste of death for every man. He even obeyed the law of religious rites under which he lived. In his infancy he was circumcised. In his manhood he was baptized. He perfectly, personally, perpetually kept the whole moral law. He never sinned once, even by omission. And he freely placed himself, and lived and died, under the curse of the very law which he perfectly obeyed during his whole life. Edwards says: "The meritoriousness of Christ's obedience depends on the perfection of it. If it had failed in any instance, it could not have been meritorious; for imperfect obedience is not accepted as any obedience at all in the sight of the law of works, to which Christ was subject. That is not accepted as obedience to a law that does not fully answer it."

The efficacy of Christ's death depended on his dying in the room and stead of sinners, who were under the curse of the law. If he did not bear the curse for us, we shall surely be obliged to bear it ourselves. Let us consider a few distinct propositions:

I. Prophecy required that Christ should assume human nature. It said he should be of "the seed of Abraham" and of "the seed of David." Gen. 12:3, 7; 17:7, 8; Gal. 3:16; 2 Sam. 7:12; John 7:42; Acts 13:23; Romans 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8. Other predictions required that he would "at the latter day stand upon the earth," Job 19:25;

that he would have a body, Psalm 40:6; and Heb. 10:5; that he would hang upon his mother's breasts, Psalm 22:9; and that his body should be dead, Isaiah 26:19.

Yet still more clearly, the very first gospel ever preached, even in Eden, foretold that he would have a human nature, and that derived from his mother: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Gen. 3:15; and later: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah 7:14. So that the Scriptures would not have been fulfilled, if Christ had not had a human nature—a human nature derived from his mother alone. In prophetic vision, Daniel called him the *Son of man*. Dan. 7:13.

II. These predictions have been fulfilled. The whole history of our Lord upon earth proves it. God has "sent forth his Son, made of a woman." In the New Testament he is often called a *man*. In the gospels alone, he is more than seventy times called the *Son of man*. More than sixty times he gives this appellation to himself. The year of his ascension Stephen saw him glorified, and called him the *Son of man*. Sixty years later John did the same. The gospel of Matthew is styled "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." John says: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14. Paul says: "He took upon him the seed of Abraham." Heb. 2:16. In his first epistle, 1:1-3, John expressly says that by three senses, hearing, sight, and touch, he and the other apostles had satisfied themselves of his incarnation.

Jesus Christ had all that is necessary to constitute human nature entire. He himself said, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see me have." Luke 24:39. Christ had a **soul**. He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death." Mark 14:34. He had

a **spirit**: "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit." Luke 10:21. "When he had cried with a loud voice, he yielded up the Spirit." Matthew 27:50. Jesus Christ had a **will**: "Father, not as I will, but as you will." Matt. 26:39. See also Matthew 27:34; John 7:1. Jesus Christ had the **affections** of a man. He rejoiced. Luke 10:21. He wept. John 11:35. He was grieved. Mark 3:5. He had hopes, even in his early infancy. Psalm 22:9. He had natural affection for kindred spirits. We are told that he loved Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, and John, and the rich young ruler. In some places his soul and body are mentioned together: "The child Jesus grew, and waxed strong in spirit filled with wisdom." Luke 40. He performed bodily acts. He walked, he rode, he ate, he drank, he sailed, he slept, he rested. He was not indeed subject to mortal diseases. Psalm 91:5-8. But he had the general infirmities of our nature. He hungered. Matt. 4:2. He thirsted. John 19:28. He was wearied. John 4:6. He was greatly pained. Luke 12:50. He was tempted. Heb. 2:18. He endured unparalleled agony. Luke 22:44. He died, as all admit. He had no moral infirmity. He was without sin. Heb. 4:15.

III. The incarnation of Christ is something entirely beyond human comprehension. It is an ineffable mystery. The Scriptures say, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim. 3:16. How could it be otherwise? The Father of eternity became an infant of days. "Though all things were created by him, he was placed on a level with his own creatures." He, whom the heaven of heavens could not contain, was laid in a manger. The eternal Word and the child Jesus were one person. Possessed of infinite blessedness, the *Son of God* is united with the *man of sorrows*. Himself in both natures spotlessly holy, he consents to be treated, tormented, punished, as a sinner. He made all things, yet was made flesh. He governed all things, yet was subject to his parents. He opened his hand and satisfied the desire of every living

thing, yet fasted forty days himself. **All the infinite perfections of God and all the innocent infirmities of man meet in the God-man, Christ Jesus.** There is no greater gulf than that which separates created and uncreated. Yet the Son of God passes it all, and takes our nature into indissoluble union with divinity. This union could not be more intimate. Soul and body may be separated for a season. When Christ himself died, his soul went to Paradise, while his body lay in the sepulcher of Joseph. But the union of his human and divine natures was not dissolved by death. Paul calls the blood shed by him the blood of God. Acts 20:28. So close was this union that we fitly speak of our Lord as a *divine sufferer*. When he was on earth, he spoke of himself as "the Son of man who is in heaven." John 3:13. We ascribe to the person of our Savior whatever belonged to either of his natures, or was done in either of them.

His incarnation is a mystery in itself. Basil says, "He was conceived not of the substance, but by the power of the Holy Spirit; not by his generation, but by his appointment and benediction." His incarnation is a mystery of love. It expresses infinite benevolence. It is also "the wisdom of God in a mystery" —a mystery of power, of truth, and of grace. It is the mystery of mysteries, because it is "the mystery of God." We are not required to divest it of inscrutableness, but we are required to embrace it, and rejoice in it. It is a fundamental doctrine, the belief of which is essential to salvation: "Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus, is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world." 1 John 4:2, 3.

IV. The Son of God did not become man at the giving of the first gospel promise, but more than four thousand years

after it. He took our nature "when the fullness of time was come."
This phrase designates—

1. The time set in the counsels of God. Jesus Christ was born no sooner and no later than the purpose of God had determined. Acts 4:28.
2. The time fixed in prophecy, which is but the revealed purpose of God. The seventy weeks of Daniel had expired. The second temple was soon to fall.
3. The state of the Jewish nation was such as to render Christ's appearance at that time very seasonable. The tabernacle of David had fallen very low, was cleft with breaches, and was lying in ruins, for Herod the Great, now king over Judea, was not a descendant of the royal Psalmist, but was an Idumean. Now was the fit time to build up the throne of David. Amos 9:11 Acts 15:16.
4. Many things in the general state of the world rendered this a fit time for Christ's coming.

It had been fully demonstrated by the experience of many powerful and civilized nations, that the world by wisdom could never come to know God. Letters, arts, science, civilization, philosophy, commerce, and experience had shown that they were all powerless to save men from polytheism, or to teach them the true nature of God.

Consequently, human misery was unabated. Men multiplied their sorrows by hastening after another God than Jehovah. The world had long been oppressed with its woes. The cry of its wailings was very loud.

At Christ's birth the earth was populous—much more so than it had commonly been at any previous period. So that his coming was likely to be known to many and to produce an impression on vast multitudes.

When Christ came the Greek was the universal language of the world, and the Latin was the popular language of multitudes in many lands, so that both what was spoken and what was written was likely to be widely and rapidly diffused.

At the birth of Christ, the Roman empire, the greatest and most terrible monarchy the world ever saw, was in its strength. It was the *iron* dynasty of all ages. It was peculiarly fitting that in the height of its dominion the stone cut out of the mountain without hands should break in pieces this immense and cruel power, and the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. Dan. 2:42-45. By words of peace and grace, by deeds of love and mercy, by meekness and holiness, by patience and martyrdom, this gigantic tyranny was wholly changed in less than three centuries after our Lord's crucifixion.

Christ was the Prince of peace, and it was seemly that he should come when war was not raging. When he was born the temple of Janus was shut—a thing that had not occurred for centuries until about that time. This was a sign that peace everywhere prevailed.

"Nor war nor battle-sound
Was heard the world around;
No hostile chiefs to furious combat ran;
But peaceful was the night,
In which the Prince of Light
His reign of grace upon the earth began."

The Jews were at this time very widely dispersed over the world. Though they often visited the holy city, yet they went everywhere. So that any change effected in Judea was likely soon to be known in all the chief cities of the world. On the day of Pentecost there were Jews, devout men of every nation under heaven at Jerusalem, and on their conversion and dispersion they went everywhere preaching the word of the gospel. Acts 2:5-11; 8:4.

Christ was born when the spirit of persecution was not raging violently in the world generally, so that his doctrine was less likely to be fiercely assailed for a season than if it had been propagated a century or two earlier or later.

No period could be conceived so little adapted to the exhibition of a *false*, and so well calculated to put to the test the merits of a *true* religion.

Thus did Christ become incarnate "in the fullness of time," that is at the right time, at the fittest time possible.

V. The incarnation of Christ was the greatest event that ever happened. The birth of a prince often sends a thrill of joy through an empire, yet he may prove a shame and a curse to the nation and the world; but the birth of Christ brought inestimable blessings to Jews and Gentiles, and shall do so forever. No ancient monarchy lives, even in history, to *bless* mankind; but the birth and kingdom of Christ are, and ever shall be, gladsome truths. The hopes of virtuous millions hang upon them. The joys of saints and angels are kindled by them. "The creation of the world was a very great thing, but not so great as the incarnation of Christ. It was a great thing for God to make the creature, but not so great as for the Creator to become a creature." Christ's incarnation was the confirmation of all that had been said and done in preceding ages to

encourage the hopes of penitent men. It fulfilled the glorious pledges of redemption. It opened boundless and amazing prospects of enlargement and glory to God's people and to their Redeemer. Some of its effects were immediate and some remote. Some related to angels and some to men; some to Jews and some to Gentiles.

The wise men who came from the east to worship Christ were Gentiles, and were representative men. Christ's personal ministry was a blessing to several Gentiles, and the only men converted in sight of his cross were Gentiles. These things were assurances of the fulfillment of all God had promised respecting heathen nations. These conversions were first-fruits of the great harvest to be gathered in all lands. The immediate effect of Christ's birth on the pious Jews was most happy. To Simeon and Anna, and such lovely specimens of genuine godliness, the event gave joy unspeakable. Those who hated God and all his messengers, of course wondered and perished.

The effect on angels was amazing. They felt new joys in heaven. One of their number announced the event to the shepherds, and "suddenly there was with him a multitude of heavenly angels, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men." Previous to the birth of Christ for about four hundred and twenty years, God's Spirit, as a Spirit of inspiration, had been quite withheld from men. But about the time of his appearance, there are recorded no less than eleven instances in which men and women received the Holy Spirit as a spirit of prophecy.

The effect of Christ's incarnation on fallen angels was great. Their power began at once to dwindle. They cried out, "Why have you come to torment us before the time?" The Lord himself said: "I saw Satan's

kingdom fall like lightning from heaven." It is credibly stated that the Delphic oracle ceased to give its usual responses, and when asked the reason, replied, "There is a Hebrew boy who is king of the gods, who has commanded me to leave this house, and begone to hell, and therefore you are to expect no more answers." And Porphyry says: "Since Jesus began to be worshiped, no man has received any public help or benefit of the gods."

From the day that Christ was born to this hour, all the desirable changes which have taken place in the world, either in people or communities, have been in consequence of his incarnation and of his glorious progress in setting up his kingdom. So shall it ever be. His kingdom is constantly enlarging. His diadem is more and more glorious. Every soul saved is a new jewel in his crown.

Of Christ's incarnation Robert Hall says: "The epoch will arrive when this world will be thought of as nothing—but only as it has furnished a stage for 'the manifestation of the Son of God;' when his birth, his death, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to glory, and his second appearance, events inseparably connected, will concentrate within themselves all the interest of history; when war and peace, and pestilence and famine, and plenty and want, and life and death, will have spent their force, and leave nothing but the result of Christ's manifestation upon earth."

VI. The person of Christ as now constituted remains perpetual. The bond of union between his divine and human natures is indissoluble. As he was from his conception, so he continues to be, "God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, forever." The same Lamb who was slain, is now in the midst of the throne! Rev. 5:6. The same Jesus who ascended from Olivet, shall come again. The progress of duration shall neither change his

natures nor his person, his character nor his readiness to save. He is able; he is willing.

1. Let none be offended at the mystery of the incarnation. If we cannot comprehend, let us adore. No fact is more plainly asserted or more amply proved. Let us receive and rest upon it. He who has no heart to praise the incarnate mystery, has none of the spirit of heaven. What a shame it is that the song of angels announcing Christ's birth "has never been answered by a general shout of gratitude from earth. Only a few faint voices from the low places of earth have responded to the loud concert of angels." O that must be a rotten heart, which loves not the Savior. Many hear of his love with hearts colder than marble. Such hearts cannot be right in the sight of God. No heart is good, which loves not goodness incarnate. If Christ's incarnation has its mysteriousness, it yet is the only doctrine that enables us to unlock every text of Scripture relating to his person. It admits that as God, he made the worlds; as a child, he grew in stature; as a man, he was sorrowful; as Mediator and in a low condition, he said, "The Father is greater than I;" and as God-man, he stands between Jehovah and us. Let us humbly and piously receive this doctrine; for as the Athanasian Creed says, "It is necessary to everlasting salvation, that we believe rightly the incarnation of Jesus Christ."

2. Salvation is clearly and wholly of the Lord. The devising of the scheme is as clearly divine, as the execution and application. Human wit, and wisdom, and strength, and merit—are nothing in such a work. "Boasting is excluded by the law of faith." We are nothing; we can do nothing; we deserve nothing. Our Lord has won the crown—and he shall wear it! It is his of right; it shall be his in fact.

3. Let us give God his own time. He knows what is best. He took four thousand years to prepare the way for the coming of the Redeemer. With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **We are no judges of what is best or wisest.** There is as much wisdom in saying, "When you will," as in saying, "What you will," or "How you will."

4. If any ask, Are we bound to celebrate the birth of Christ on any given day of the year? the answer is, God has given no such command, and he is sole Lawgiver in his church. There is no proof that for centuries the primitive church had any such observance. When such a day was at length observed, many churches fixed on the sixth day of January. Many learned men contend that Christ was born in October. Some think he was born in May. It seems certain that the Roman emperor would not require women as well as men to take long journeys in the depths of winter, and that shepherds would not then be watching their flocks in the open air. Compare Matt. 24:20 and Mark 13:18. But if any man observe a day in honor of our Lord's nativity, let him keep it unto the Lord. "One man esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike; let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Romans 14:5. It is, however, a significant fact, that God has concealed from us any positive knowledge of the day, the month, and even the year—of our Savior's birth.

The Messiahship of Jesus

In the English Bible we have the word Messiah, four times; twice in Daniel, and twice in John. But in the original Scriptures we have the word forty times. It is commonly translated, and often points to the Savior. In the New Testament we have the word *Christ* more than five hundred and sixty times. Both Messiah and Christ signify *ANOINTED*.

Jesus Christ was but once anointed with material oil, and that not by an official, but by a woman; not to his office, but for his burial. Jesus Christ was anointed to office by superabundant influences of the Holy Spirit, who is the oil of gladness indeed. Psalm 45:7; Heb. 1:9; Matt. 3:16; Luke 4:1, 14, 16. The Father gave not the Spirit by measure unto him. John 3:34.

That the Jews and others expected a great deliverer, called by the prophets Messiah, cannot be denied. The woman of Samaria, ignorant as she was, said, "I know that Messiah comes." John 4:25. Luke says, "The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Messiah or not." Luke 3:15. Indeed, there is evidence that the ancients generally expected a great deliverer to arise.

In inquiring into the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, the Jewish Scriptures are taken for truth. We believe all that is written in the law, and in the Psalms, and in the prophets. Besides, it is clear that if Jesus is not the promised deliverer, then the Messiah has not yet appeared. Jews and Christians alike reject all the pretenders who have arisen from the time of the Emperor Adrian to the year 1666, when Sabatai Sevi for a while deceived some. Nor is there any dispute between Jews and Christians as to the need of Messiah. We all, in words at least, confess that we are undone without him. Nor is there any doubt that for some cause, great calamities have overtaken

the Jews. They admit it. Rabbi David Levi speaks of the facts of "the exact accomplishment of every event foretold by Moses as affording such clear and unequivocal proofs of divine inspiration as to strike the deist and infidel dumb." He says: "I am free to assert, no nation has ever suffered the like during a period of almost eighteen hundred years The punishments which Moses denounced against the Jews have been exactly fulfilled in every particular." Nor is there any dispute as to whether Jesus of Nazareth lived, and taught, and died on the cross. Jews and Christians, Mohammedans and Infidels are alike agreed on this point. This chapter is an argument for the Messiahship of the great teacher of Nazareth.

The first question to be considered is:

I. Has the time fixed by prophecy for the coming of the Messiah already passed? The correct answer is, It has. The arguments are clear and decisive.

On his deathbed Jacob uttered this prediction: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet—until Shiloh comes, and to him shall the gathering of the people be." Gen. 49:10. The word here rendered *scepter* is used in that sense by no less than six prophets. Num. 24:17; Psalm 45:6; Isaiah 14:5; Ezek. 19:11, 14; Amos 1:5, 8; Zech. 10:11; and *scepter* in this clause corresponds with *lawgiver* in the next. The Septuagint gives it this sense, and so do ancient Jewish interpreters and the Chaldee Paraphrase. That *Shiloh* points to the Messiah is also admitted by the three Chaldee paraphrases, the Jewish Talmud, and several later Jews; and that the word signifies Savior, or Peacemaker, or Sufferer, or the Son, or the Sent, has the consent of nearly all the best scholars. Nor can we get any good sense from the passage unless we admit that *Shiloh* means Messiah. "To him shall the gathering of the people

be," is a phrase like that of Isaiah predicting the same person: "He shall stand for an ensign of the people." Isaiah 11:10. That the scepter or political power did continue with Judah until the birth of Jesus of Nazareth is evident; for though Herod was not of that tribe, but was an Idumean, yet the Jewish senate did never swear allegiance to him until after the birth of Christ. But in the days of Titus, about the year 70, all show and form of political power forsook the Jews. From that time they had not the smallest remnant of dominion. But their father and prophet Jacob said their power should last until Messiah should come. Therefore the time for the coming of Messiah is already past.

The same thing might be argued from Psalm 40:6-8: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said—Here I am, I have come—it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart." The blood of bulls and goats never did expiate the sins of men. Even as types, they were to be wholly abolished after the coming of Christ. Here then we have the prediction that the legal sacrifices shall be abolished when He who is to come, the Messiah, shall do the work so pleasing to God. It is now eighteen centuries since any Jewish priest offered a bloody sacrifice. When God would wholly reject sacrifices, Messiah was to do his will. Sacrifices have ceased, and where is Messiah, if Jesus of Nazareth is not he?

Another prophecy fixing the time for the coming and death of Messiah is found in Daniel 9. "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with

streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing."

The rule by which time is here counted is doubtless that given by Ezekiel (4:6): "I have appointed you each day for a year;" so that by seventy weeks we are to understand four hundred and ninety years. This is the longest time we have any reason for giving to the computation of the seventy weeks.

More than this, the prophecy says Messiah was to be cut off before the overflowing desolation befell the holy city. All history declares that Jesus was crucified more than thirty-three years before the armies of Rome laid waste Jerusalem. Surely the time for the coming of Messiah is past, and Jesus of Nazareth came neither too soon nor too late to meet the demands of prophecy in this respect.

I adduce but one other passage to show that Messiah has come: "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and *the Desire of all nations will come*, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the Lord Almighty. 'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the Lord Almighty. 'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the Lord Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the Lord Almighty." Haggai 2:6-9. By this sure word, Messiah, "the Desire of all nations," was to appear during the time of the second temple, here called "this latter house." It is also evident, as none will deny, that the second temple was destroyed by the Romans. Not one stone was left upon another. Messiah, therefore, must have come.

This passage also teaches that the glory of the second temple should excel the glory of the first. This promised glory did not consist in the superior magnificence of the structure, "for many of the priests, and

Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice," says an eye-witness, Ezra. Indeed, in the very chapter containing the prophecy Haggai has these words, "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do you see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" So that the second temple was inferior to the first and yet the second house was to have a glory surpassing the glory of the first. What was it?

Nor was the second temple equal, much less superior to the first in its appendages. For it is admitted that the first temple had, and that the second temple lacked, the holy fire, which came from heaven, the spirit of prophecy, the ark of the covenant, the Shechinah and the Urim and Thummim. In the eyes of Jews these were grand things. But they were not found in the second temple, and they were in the first. The promised superior glory of the latter house must have been that in it Messiah, "the Desire of all nations," was to appear. Malachi says: "The Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom you delight in." This key unlocks the mystery. Simeon told us what this glory was, "Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: 'Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'" Luke 2:25-32. Thus it has been shown by

four prophecies uttered during a period of eleven hundred and sixty-nine years, the first B. C. 1689, the second B. C. 1020, the third B. C. 538, and the fourth B. C. 520, that the time for the coming of the Messiah is already past. The second question to be considered is,

II. Does Jesus of Nazareth meet the demands of prophecy respecting the Messiah? Surely he does. Messiah was to be a lineal descendant of David. He was to be "a root of Jesse," "a rod out of the stem of Jesse." Isaiah 11:1,10. The first words of the first gospel are: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David," and then his genealogy is traced from Abraham through David. The scribes said that the promised "Christ is the son of David." When our Lord said, "What do you think of the Messiah? whose son is he? They said unto him—He is the son of David." Matt. 22:42. When men saw his miracles they said, "Is not this the son of David?" The blind men so addressed him. Luke 18:38. The hosanna of the multitude was "to the son of David." Matt. 21:9, 15. Indeed, before Jesus was born, the genealogy of Mary the mother of Jesus, and of Joseph her husband, were determined by the very process of law by which the lands of Judea were held, and this under the decree of the Roman emperor. Jesus meets this requirement of prophecy. He is the lineal descendant of David. None of the false Christs have given the slightest evidence that they were descended from David. Should any arise hereafter, they could never show their descent from David, for the genealogical tables of his family and of his tribe are confessedly irrecoverably lost. No man even pretends to have them in possession.

The prophets further said that Messiah should be born in Bethlehem of Judea. So the chief priests and scribes informed Herod, correctly quoting Micah 5:2 in proof: "You Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, are not the least among the princes of Juda." Matt. 2:4-6. Now it is matter of common notoriety that "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of

Judea." Matt. 2:1. Truly, God governs all things. Just before the birth of Jesus, his mother and her betrothed husband were required by an imperial edict to go to Bethlehem, some distance from their usual residence, there to be duly registered, "because they were of the house and lineage of David," and there to us was born "in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:4, 11. None of the false Christs either proved or claimed that they had been born in Bethlehem.

Prophecy required that Messiah should be born in a miraculous manner: "The Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel," which being interpreted is "God with us." Isaiah 7:14. That Jesus was thus born the angel declared at the time of his conception; that he was thus born was admitted by the husband of his mother, who fully vindicated the purity and innocence of his wife; that he was thus born God and angels and men have borne witness. No one else was ever thus born.

Jesus and no other endured all the suffering which prophecy decreed to Messiah. He had no form nor loveliness, and when we saw him there was no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; we hid our faces from him we esteemed him not. His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. He made himself of no reputation. He took upon him the form of a servant. Prophecy said: "They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver." Zech. 11:12. The chief priests agreed with Judas "for thirty pieces of silver." Matt. 26:15. The Psalmist predicted: "They pierced my hands and my feet." Psalm 22:16. Isaiah (53:5) said: "He was wounded." Zechariah (12:10) said: "They shall look on me, whom they have pierced." We all know how his hands and his feet were

pierced by the nails, how the soldiers pierced his side, and how Jesus himself afterwards showed the print of the nails. In Psalm 22:7, 8, we read, "They shall laugh him to scorn, and shake their heads, saying, He trusted in the Lord—that he would deliver him. Let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." In Matthew 27:39, 43, we read, "They that passed by, reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him, for he said, I am the Son of God." Isaiah says, "He was numbered with the transgressors." Mark says, "He was crucified between two thieves." The prophet says, "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." His biographers tell us how "Jesus, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst, and they took a sponge and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it him to drink." The prophets said, "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." In the gospels we learn how the soldiers "took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be." Isaiah and Daniel foretold that he should be cut off. No living man denies that Jesus died a violent death.

Isaiah said he would be "brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent—so he opened not his mouth." All history tells how meekly, and silently, and patiently he endured. "When he suffered, he threatened not."

Prophecy foretold that he would triumphantly enter Jerusalem riding upon a young donkey. In this way did he meekly enter the holy city, weeping over its impending ruin. Indeed, time would fail us to tell how, according to prophecy, not a bone of him was broken, how he died with the wicked, how he made his grave with the rich, how he never saw corruption, how according to the prophecy he is sitting at

the right hand of God, to the intent that "all the house of Israel might know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus whom they crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Look at another matter. By the prophet Amos God says: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he reveals his secret unto his servants the prophets" (3:7). It cannot be denied that Jesus of Nazareth has done more to change the opinions and practices of mankind than Cyrus, and Alexander the Great, and the Roman empire. Yet, if he is not the Messiah, the Old Testament is silent concerning him. No man, or set of men, have ever changed the opinions of enlightened nations as Jesus did. Yet if he is not the Messiah, God never showed his prophets anything concerning him. Can it be believed that God has never by any prophet said a word to warn mankind against him, or to invite them to receive him?—him whose coming has done more to revolutionize men's opinions, to mollify hardships, to diffuse virtue and happiness among the most enlightened nations—than any other hundred men that ever lived.

1. Let Christians greatly rejoice in the abundant evidence of the divine mission of Jesus. In embracing his doctrine we are not following cunningly devised fables. O no! Jesus was truth itself.

2. If in Jesus of Nazareth we have found the Messiah, have we embraced him? Such a Deliverer is not to be put off with civilities and compliments. We may say, Lord, Lord; but we must do more. We must take his yoke upon us. We must do his will. We must embrace him, and rely on him. We must by the Holy Spirit call him Lord. Have you in your heart received him? An American errorist has written a book in which he calls him the "Magnificent Jesus." He is far more than that. The temple at Jerusalem was magnificent. The temple of Diana was magnificent. Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior of

lost men, the Son of God! He is to be obeyed and loved, adored and embraced. God has set forth his Son as the object of saving faith. Will you receive him as such? Without faith in him we cannot be saved. Himself said: "If you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins."

3. If we ourselves have found Jesus the Messiah, let us, like Andrew, tell our brother the good news and bring him to Jesus. There is none like Jesus. There is none with Jesus. There is none besides Jesus. He is the Son of God. He can save, and he alone. Oh that you would embrace him and then persuade others to do so too. You will soon need his help. A great master of logic has recently left the world. When one of the clergy spoke of his fortitude in looking death in the face, he said: "Talk not to me of fortitude; it is my faith in Christ that gives me grace and strength."

4. Pray for the Jews. God can open their eyes. None else can. It is affecting to hear them on this point. Dr. Raphall, formerly of England, now of New York, says: "While I and the Jews of the present day protest against being identified with the zealots who were concerned in the proceedings against Jesus of Nazareth, we are far from reviling his character or deriding his precepts, which are, indeed, for the most part, the precepts of Moses and the prophets. You have heard me style him the 'Great Teacher of Nazareth,' for that designation I and the Jews take to be his due."

The Late Mordecai M. Noah also said: "I did not term Jesus of Nazareth an impostor. I had never considered him such. The impostor generally aims at temporal power, attempts to control the rich and weak believer, and draws around him followers of influence whom he can control. Jesus was free from fanaticism: his was a quiet, subdued, retiring faith; he mingled with the poor, he

communed with the wretched, avoided the rich, rebuked the vain-glorious. In the calm of the evening he sought shelter in the secluded groves of Olivet, or wandered pensively on the shores of Galilee. He sincerely believed in his mission; he courted no one, flattered no one; in his political denunciations he was pointed and severe; in his religion calm and subdued. These are not the characteristics of an impostor; but, admitting that we give a different interpretation to his mission, when one hundred and fifty million believe in his divinity, and we see around us abundant evidence of the happiness, good faith, mild government, and liberal feelings, which spring from his religion; what right has any one to call him an impostor? That religion which is calculated to make mankind great and happy, cannot be a false one."

PRAYER. O God, bring the children of Abraham to embrace Jesus Christ; and to us and to all who dwell in this land, give hearts to receive your Son, to believe on his name, to own him as our Savior; so that all the blessings of the covenant of grace may come on us and overtake us; that we may be blessed in the city and in the field; that your blessing may rest on the fruit of our body, and on the fruit of our ground, and the fruit of our cattle, and the increase of our flocks; that your blessing may rest on our basket and on our store; that we may be blessed when we come in and blessed when we go out; and that they who come out against us one way, may flee before us seven ways. Oh that all the land and world may soon avouch the Lord Jehovah to be their God, his Son Jesus Christ to be their Savior; his Holy Spirit to be their Sanctifier, Comforter and Guide! Unto the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only wise God our Savior—be glory, and honor, dominion and power, now and forever! Amen.

Christ the Mediator

The word Mediator is not found in the English version of the Old Testament. There we find the word *daysman* in very much the same sense, Job 9:33. In that place the Septuagint version employs the word rendered in the New Testament *mediator*. A daysman was an umpire and a reconciler. In the New Testament the word mediator is found six times. Once it points to Moses: "The law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." Gal. 3:19. Moses was a messenger to make known God's will to Israel, and to present the requests of the people to God. Once the word *mediator* is clearly used in a general sense, and refers to no particular person. "A mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one." Gal. 3:20. The meaning of this verse is, doubtless, that a mediator cannot act where there are no parties, and that he must act for both parties. As God is one, he needed not to be reconciled to himself. **Mediation comes in between God and those estranged from him.** In all other cases, the word plainly refers to Christ. Thus he is said to be "The Mediator of a better covenant," and "The Mediator of the New Testament." Heb. 8:6; 9:15. In Heb. 12:24 we are said to have come "to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant." We also have the word in 1 Tim. 2:5: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Boston says, "Mediator properly signifies a midman, that travels between two people who are at variance, to reconcile them." Owen says, "Christ's mediation consists in his being the middle person between God and us." In the Gaelic version, the word for mediator is "go-between."

Jesus Christ is Mediator not typically, but properly; not partially, but completely; not merely as a messenger from God to us, and as one presenting our requests to God; but as one who has removed all obstacles to friendly fellowship between God and man, and brings together in holy fellowship the offended Judge of all the earth and offending sinners.

The doctrine of mediation is no novelty. It has great antiquity. Job foresaw the day when the Redeemer should be manifest. Indeed, to Him gave all the prophets witness. Even some of the heathen had a faint idea of mediation. Plato says, "God does not mingle in familiar fellowship with mortals, but all fellowship and conversation with him are maintained by means of spirits." Ever since the fall, men have been afraid of the Divine presence. I find no Scripture for the opinion that, "although man had remained immaculately innocent, yet his condition would have been too mean for him to approach to God without a mediator." On the contrary, our first parents had delightful communion with the Lord God until they sinned against him. We know of nothing in the nature of God or of man to hinder their fellowship until iniquity separated between them. God's tender mercies are over all his works. He stoops to the basest worm. Infinite condescension is one of the glories of his nature.

Christ's mediation fairly presupposes man's sinfulness and alienation from God. Where there is no controversy, there is no room for mediation. If people are already at one, they need no reconciliation. If God loves and approves man's course and character, and if man loves and approves of God's ways, perfections and government, there is nothing to keep them from mutual delight. There is then no contest between them—nothing to be settled no room for mediation. Dick says: "**The necessity of the mediation of Christ arises from the existence of sin, which, being**

contrary to the nature and will of God, renders those who have committed it obnoxious to his displeasure."

Where there are parties entirely alienated, another, the equal and friend of both, may interpose, and tender his kind offices, and do whatever he is able honorably to reconcile the contestants. A mediator is different from a petitioner. From his dignity, he has a right to be heard with respect and candor. By his divinity—Christ was equal with God; by his humanity—he was equal with man. He was so much the friend of God, that he was willing to die for the glory of divine justice. He was so much the friend of man, that he was willing to lay down his life for human redemption.

The doctrine of mediation is that which chiefly distinguishes genuine Christianity from a system of pure deism. Let us consider this subject:

I. The advantages of mediation, as a method of reconciling God and man, are many.

1. It is very humbling to man, the sinner, the wrong-doer. It says to him, You are unworthy and unfit to come into the presence of God. You can neither justify nor excuse your wicked conduct. You are rejected. God will not even transact with you in your own name. He utterly abhors all your works, all your pleas, all your merits. You are condemned. You are vile. "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." Romans 5:6

2. A system of mediation is more honorable to God than any other mode of reconciliation could be. It shows that he is infinitely just and holy so that he cannot look upon sin, or have any close, friendly fellowship with sinners, except through a third party—one in whom he is well-pleased.

3. Mediation marks sin as very evil, deserving all the woes and wrath denounced against it. Though God is the Maker of our bodies and the Father of our spirits, yet so unspeakably does he detest sin and count it a horrible thing, that he refuses not only communion, but even conference, with the offender, except through the Son of his love.

4. A system of mediation marks sin as a public offence, demanding a public satisfaction and reparation. It is no private wrong that can be secretly repaired or adjusted. In accepting Christ as Mediator, every sinner confesses, before angels and men, that he has insulted and injured the government of God, and done what in him lay to disturb the order and harmony of the universe.

II. Let us consider Christ's FITNESS for the work of mediation.

1. His PERSON is wonderfully and admirably constituted. He is at once "God manifest in the flesh" and "the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 3:16 and 2:5. As a daysman, he can lay his hand upon both God and us. He knows God's rights. He knows our sins. By his divine nature, he has zeal for the divine glory. By his human nature, he has sympathy with us. He has all that is perfect and infinite in God—and all that is amiable and excellent in man. He will not betray God's interest, because it is the glory of his Godhead. He will not betray our interest, because it is the crown of his manhood. He has the confidence of God, and of all holy men. He is in sympathy with Jehovah on the throne, and with man in his misery. He knows what God demands, and what man requires. God has no claims that Christ does not hold to be just. Man has no real needs that Christ is not ready to supply. From his very nature, he must vindicate the laws and government of God, and at the same time hold forth the cup of salvation to us poor sinners. He can so present our cause and nature

to God, that he will not turn away from us with loathing. And he can so present to us the glorious perfections of God, as to show us their infinite amiability.

By his divine nature, it is no robbery for him to assert equality with God. God has never denied him anything: "Him the Father hears always." His claims to be heard are never questioned in heaven. For the honor of God he has poured out his blood, infinitely more precious than the blood of all the pious martyrs. And if man can be brought to hearken to terms of peace at all, surely it will be by Jesus Christ. He is so loving, he died so freely, he speaks so kindly, his grace is so rich, and his ways are so condescending—that if we will not hear him we will hear no one. By his human nature he is capable of suffering, and in his human nature he did actually suffer the penalty of the law; and being without sin himself, he was a spotless sacrifice to Divine justice. By his divine nature, which took the human into indissoluble union with itself, infinite merit attached to all Christ did and suffered. As the Father, by reason of Christ's holiness, found no fault in him; so we, by reason of his love and gentleness, are not repelled from him. **There is no more approachable being in the universe than Jesus Christ.** If God is his Father, we are his brethren. As man he suffered; as God he satisfied divine justice. His divinity gives unshaken stability to his mediation, as well as infinite worth to his humiliation.

2. Jesus Christ was CHOSEN of God to this very office. The Father calls him "my elect, in whom my soul delights." Isaiah 42:1. He is "chosen of God, and precious." 1 Pet. 2:4. Not by any arrogance, but by Divine appointment, he is the first-born among many brethren. All he said and all he did, was by the commandment of his Father: "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." John 14:31. Compare John 10:18. God never entrusted the work of

mediation to another, though he appointed some men as types and shadows of Christ, who alone was to do this work. God is in Christ—God is in none but Christ—reconciling the world to himself. Christ is our peace.

3. To the full work of Mediator Jesus Christ not only brought ample qualifications and a divine commission, but he has met with entire acceptance from God. In every way possible God has declared his confidence in Christ, and his approval of his undertaking. Before his incarnation, in anticipation of what he was yet to do, God poured out his Spirit on many souls, granted them pardon, acceptance, and renewal, and at death received them to glory. When Christ was on earth, and before his death, God expressed his approval of him by a voice from heaven, by amazing miracles, and by leading some truly to love him, and to forsake all and follow him. God further expressed approval of Christ by raising him from the dead, by giving him a glorious admission into heaven, and a seat with himself on his throne. God has further and wondrously expressed approbation of Christ's mediation by making the preaching of Christ crucified the power of God unto salvation—the salvation of millions, many of whom were sunk in almost unparalleled guilt, and shame, and ignorance, and misery—until they heard and believed the gospel.

4. In suffering and dying for us, Jesus Christ needed not to subject himself to humiliation, but for a time. He lived on earth over thirty years. Thenceforward his whole person partakes of incomparable bliss. Since his ascension into heaven he has no pains, no sorrows, no bitterness of soul. His short conflict was followed by eternal triumph; his brief agony by eternal joy. The lower he sunk on earth, the higher he rises in glory. What a blessed truth is this! How could his people be happy if they thought he was still a sufferer?

Of course Christ is a far better mediator than Moses. 2 Cor. 3:9. The mediation of the former was temporary; that of the latter everlasting. This is the last dispensation. "There remains no more sacrifice for sins." We may not expect "the bringing in of a better hope." The mediation of Moses was typical; that of Christ was real. Moses laid many burdensome rites on the people; Christ appointed a very simple worship. The tendency of the law, through sin, was unto death; through faith the gospel gives life. Heb. 9:13, 14. The former was the ministration of death; the latter is the ministration of the Spirit. The mediation of Moses prepared men for the gospel; that of Christ prepares men for glory. Christ excels Moses in that he is the Mediator of a better covenant established upon better promises. Heb. 8:6. Christ is more kind and compassionate than Moses. Both refused a crown; but Jesus wore a crown of thorns and hung on the cross. Moses was a servant, but Jesus Christ was a Son. The authority and energy of Moses were both limited; but Jesus raised the dead and performed countless miracles in his own name, and all power in heaven and earth is given unto him. Moses did a good work—but Christ a far better work. The law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

III. Let us look at some of the great and happy EFFECTS of Christ's mediation.

1. Through it, and through it only, do we obtain correct and sufficient knowledge of the divine nature. Like Moses, godly men cry, "Show me your glory." Like the disciples; they say, "Show us the Father, and it suffices us." We do greatly desire to have before us some representation of God; and as all idols and images made or conceived by man are no representation of him, but a horrible dishonor to him, it is with delight that we find Christ the image of God, the express image of his person. 2 Cor. 4:4 Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3.

So that now to know God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent, is eternal life. John 17:3. No man can see God's face and live. No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father—he has declared him. Now, if we would know what is the nature of God, let us look at it through the veil of Christ's flesh. Himself says: "I and my Father are one." "I am in the Father, and the Father in me;" and in yet stronger terms, "He who has seen me—has seen the Father."

2. It is only by and through the mediation of Christ that we can indulge any hope of reconciliation with God. We cannot answer for one of a thousand of our offences. We are justly condemned. God rightly counts us "reprobate silver." The single sin of not loving God with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength—is enough to blot out every hope of heaven. Our iniquities have risen up like the mountains between us and God. They are more than the hairs of our heads. And the guilt of every sin is greater than any man ever saw the guilt of any sin to be. Surely there is no hope left us that we shall ever see God's face in peace, unless it be by Christ's mediation. How sweet are his precious words: "I am the door!" "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father—but by me."

3. Through the mediation of Christ, and through it alone, are our hearts brought into such a state that we admire and delight in God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. Christ promised to send that Spirit for the conversion and purification of men's hearts. So that now, "we who were once alienated and enemies in our mind by wicked works—he has reconciled." Col. 1:21. Christ's Spirit by the gospel slays our enmity. Thus Christ is "made unto us sanctification." By the cross of Christ we are crucified unto the world, and the world unto us. All grace, all saving virtue comes to us

through the mediation of Christ. Owen says: "God communicates nothing in a way of grace unto any, but in and by the person of Christ as the mediator and head of the church." John 1:18. "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God." 1 Cor. 11:3.

4. Through the mediation of Christ, and not otherwise, can men be brought into the society and fellowship of angels. When the believer is exploring the counsels of love and the glories of redemption—as he goes deep into these unfathomable mines, he finds a bright cherub or a burning seraph in the same region of exulting inquiry, and, asking what they are doing here; he is told that they have divine permission to "look into these things." Angels hymned the birth of Christ. Angels rejoice at the conversion of sinners and the progress of Christ's kingdom. Though Christ is not the Savior of angels, yet by virtue of his great merit and dignity he has become Lord of angels. They serve and worship and obey him. They are his ministers. God has "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come, and has put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church." Eph. 1:20-22. Thus saints and angels constitute the one family named in heaven and earth. Thus "in the dispensation of the fullness of times" he shall "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." Eph. 1:10. The apostacy severed us from God and from one another. By creation angels belonged to another order of beings. The work of Christ brings us to love God and one another, and gives to angels and men a common Lord, the God-man, Jesus Christ.

5. The mediation of Christ, in an unparalleled manner, makes known the wisdom of God. That this is so is admitted by

all holy men, who never cease to admire the wonderful plan of salvation. That this is so is declared in Scripture. Paul says the whole scheme and mystery of salvation is, "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Eph. 3:10. The scheme of Christ's mediation, is God's chief work. As poet, painter, sculptor, and architect, Michael Angelo accomplished many admirable things; but above all the rest, his monument is St. Peter's at Rome. So God has filled the heavens and the earth; the sea and the dry land with wonders; but above all his other works the plan of salvation by Jesus Christ is God's monument, displaying his infinite skill and wisdom!

6. It is only through the mediation of Christ that the divine government has consistency, and the divine attributes have harmony—in the salvation of our race. "A God all mercy—is a God unjust." A God all justice—could not forgive a sinner. **In the cross we see infinite mercy and inflexible justice—kissing each other!** Truth, which cannot swerve, here meets peace which cannot be broken. Righteousness, which is the stability of God's throne, by Christ's mediation issues in unparalleled blessings to the rebellious.

7. Through the mediation of Christ, and through it alone—can an enlightened conscience ever find relief. But the blood of the covenant can hush the perturbations of the most agonized soul. It gave peace to the penitent thief on the cross, and to the penitent murderers of Christ. It quieted the conscience of even Saul of Tarsus, when he relied upon it.

8. By the mediation of Christ, man recovers the communion with God, which was lost by the fall. This is a wonderful result; "Now in Christ Jesus you, who once were far off,

are made near by the blood of Christ." Eph. 2:13. So that, with the last surviving apostle, all Christians may unite in the exultant exclamation, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:3. Bringing man into the fellowship of angels was very glorious, but it was as nothing compared with his restoration to communion with God!

IV. Christ is SOLE Mediator. So says the Scripture: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus." One such Mediator is enough. The word of God speaks of no more. The necessities of man demand no more. By Scripture we are as clearly shut up to the faith of one Mediator, as to the belief of one God. If it is an offence to the heavenly Majesty to believe in many gods, it cannot be pleasing to the Most High that we should hold the doctrine of many mediators. We do shockingly insult the Lord Jesus Christ and his Father when we bring in a great rabble of mediators and intercessors. Christ only, and Christ alone—is worthy of the Daysman's crown. To mention another is theft and robbery. John 10:1.

V. We should greatly REJOICE in Christ, the one Mediator.

He is our life and our light. Let us make him our joy and our song. We cannot praise him too much. We shall never laud him enough. He is the admiration of all heaven. He ought to be the delights of the sons of men.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

VI. As Mediator, Christ holds and executes the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King.

This method of stating his work is not a human invention. It is clearly and often taught in the Scriptures. It is based in the nature of things. It is really a useful mode of presenting truth. Christ does the full work of a Mediator.

Controversies between two parties are of three kinds:

1. Such as are founded in mere mistake, both parties being innocent and honest, neither intending any harm. In this case, all that is needed is light and explanation. But God is not mistaken respecting us. He understands our case perfectly. He is not misinformed. He is under no misapprehensions respecting us. He has no prejudices against us. And although we are willingly mistaken respecting God in many particulars, and have wicked prejudices against him, it is because we hate the light; for when we know him, we glorify him not, nor like to retain him in our knowledge; our carnal mind is enmity against him. The controversy between God and us cannot be settled by mere explanation. Jehovah's conduct needs none; ours admits of none.

2. In the second kind of controversy, both parties are to be blamed—both have done wrong. In human strifes this is often the case. One wrong leads to another. Before adjustment, oftentimes, both parties are censurable. But God has done us good, and not evil, all our days. He has never wronged us. Even when he has afflicted us, he has punished us less than our iniquities deserved. He has brought no false accusation against us. He has mercifully spared us, when he might justly have cut us down. He has done all things well. We have destroyed ourselves. He is holy, just, and good. In this fearful controversy we cannot blame him.

3. The only other kind of controversy between two parties is, where all the blame is on one side. This is the character of our controversy with God. We have sinned against him, not he against us. We are all wrong; we are wholly wrong; we are terribly wrong. Our iniquities have separated between us and God. He is righteous; we are unjust. He is holy; we are vile. He can do without us: without him we are undone. Let us say all this, and confess the whole truth. Let us joyfully accept the mediation of Jesus Christ. This way of reconciliation is as safe for us as it is honorable to God. This is the only method of ending the fearful contest. Reject this, and nothing remains but an eternal overthrow.

And the sooner we make peace with God the better. There is no time to be lost. Now is the day of salvation. Awake, O sleeper, and call upon your God.

The responsibility of living under the gospel—is great in proportion to its incalculable advantages. Heb. 2:1-4; 10:28-30.

Christ as Prophet

The prophetic office of Christ claims solemn attention. The life of men's souls is involved in it. The necessity of some great teacher to enlighten mankind was confessed by the heathen as well as by the Jews. Socrates said: "You may resign all hope of reforming the manners of men, unless it pleases God to send some person to instruct you." Plato said: "Whatever is set right in the present ill state of the world can be done only by the interposition of God." Cicero,

speaking of the philosophers, said: "Do you think that those precepts of morality had any influence, except in a very few instances, upon the men who speculated, wrote, and disputed concerning them? No! Who is there of all the philosophers whose mind and manners were conformed to the dictates of right reason? Who of them ever made his philosophy the law and rule of his life, and not merely an occasion of displaying his own ingenuity? On the contrary, many of them have been slaves to the vilest lusts." How the pious Jews longed, and waited, and prayed for the coming of a great prophet is declared in many Scriptures.

Let us consider this subject:

I. Among the ancients and moderns, civilized and crude, the office of prophet has been held in high esteem. In this agree Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, and pagans. The evangelical prophet expressed the popular sentiment of his countrymen and the common sense of mankind when, in the same list, he enrolled the prophet with the mighty man, and the man of war, and the judge, and the prudent, and the ancient, and the captain, and the honorable man, and the Counselor, and the eloquent orator. Isaiah 3:2, 3. Such men are the stay and the staff of a people. Among them all, none were more important, or were charged with more weighty duties, than the prophets.

II. What is the office of a prophet? The word prophet comes to us from the Greek, where its literal signification is a foreteller. The Hebrews had two words for a prophet. One was from their word to *see*. It was in use a long time in the early history of that people. So we read in 1 Samuel 9:9: "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spoke, Come, and let us go to the *seer*; for he who is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer."

The other word for a prophet signifies primarily to boil up or pour forth, as a fountain—to pour forth words like those who speak with fervor of mind, or under divine inspiration. Then it came to signify a prophet, one who spoke in the name of God, or in the place of God.

Proof is not lacking in the Scriptures themselves that the word designates one who speaks eloquently or beautifully. God said to Moses, "Aaron your brother shall be your prophet." This is God's answer to Moses, who had objected to his mission on the ground that he was "of uncircumcised lips." The Greek word *prophet* is by Paul himself applied to a heathen poet, Titus 1:12, either because the poet had written eloquently, or because he was held in high esteem as a teacher.

In the New Testament the word *prophecy* has at least in one case the sense of edifying the church by preaching. "The gift of prophecy included that of prophetic foresight, but it included more. The prophet was inspired to reveal the will of God, to act as an organ of communication between God and man. The subject of the revelations thus conveyed was not, and could not be, restricted to the future. It embraced the past and present, and extended to those absolute and universal truths which have no relation to time." A prophet then is an inspired, and so an infallible teacher, able to tell the past or the future, authorized to speak for God and by his authority, not merely as an expounder of truths already revealed, but to teach truths before unknown or forgotten by mankind. In this full and broad sense Jesus Christ was a prophet.

III. The fundamental passage on which we found the doctrine of Christ's prophetic office is Deuteronomy 18:15-19: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. For this is

what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die." The Lord said to me: "What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account." This prophecy is quoted by Peter in his address to the people in Jerusalem after the cure of the lame man, Acts 3:22, 23. It is also cited by Stephen, in his pungent address to the Jews who were about to stone him to death, Acts 7:37. In this prediction several things claim attention.

1. It is a *promise* made to the people on the occasion of their asking that God would not again speak to them in so solemn a manner as he had done. God was not angry at them for this request, but approved of their words. The prediction is full of kindness. It is a gracious engagement to give them a teacher whose presence should not be terrifying to them.

2. We have the best evidence that this prediction is not fulfilled, unless Jesus of Nazareth was the promised teacher. The last chapter of Deuteronomy was evidently not written by Moses, for it tells of things done after his death. It was probably written by different hands. Some, perhaps not without reason, ascribe it to Ezra, who compiled the canon of the Old Testament more than nine hundred years after the death of Moses. Its precise date we are not able to give; but it declares that up to that time there had not arisen in Israel a prophet like unto Moses, Deuteronomy 34:10. Nay more, no prophet like Moses had, in the belief of the Jews, arisen until the time of John the Baptist; for they asked him, "Are you that prophet? And he answered, No." John 1:21, 25. So

when they saw the miracles Jesus did, they said, "This is of a truth, that Prophet that should come into the world." John 6:14. Again: "Many of the people . . . said, Of a truth this is the prophet." Jews do not pretend any more than Christians that "that prophet" has arisen since the coming of Jesus of Nazareth. He has not as yet come at all, unless Jesus be he.

3. The great prophet that was to come was to be raised up from the midst of Israel, and to be one of their brethren. Jesus Christ was, as descended from his mother, a Jew. No one denies this.

4. The promised prophet was to be like unto Moses. In the following particulars Moses was a striking type of Christ:

Moses was hardly born when his life was sought by bloody men. No sooner was the birth of Jesus known, than Herod sought to destroy the young child.

Moses brought God's people out of the house of bondage. Jesus Christ delivers God's people from a worse than Egyptian bondage.

Moses was faithful in all his house. So Jesus was faithful to Him who appointed him. Heb. 3:2. Each of them spoke the will of God in honesty and sincerity.

Moses was a mediator between God and his ancient people. He is expressly so called in Galatians 3:10: "The law was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator." Moses received the mind of God and bore it to the people; and he heard the wishes of the people, and bore them to God. Nor did anyone but Moses perform this office to the Jews. So now Christ is our one and sole Mediator. "For there is

one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 2:5.

Moses was very intimate with God: "The Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." Ex. 33:11. "The Lord knew Moses face to face." So Christ was in the beginning with God. "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him." John 1:18.

Beyond all others before Christ, Moses attested his doctrine and commission by signs and wonders, both in the land of Egypt and in the sight of all Israel. Deut. 34:11, 12. So Jesus Christ has filled the world with the renown of his stupendous miracles. Even when he was on earth, many who were not his disciples said, "When Christ comes, will he do more miracles than these which this man has done?" John 7:31. Jesus called on his enemies to "believe the works" which he wrought. John 10:38. Indeed, our Savior's miracles were not only amazing in kind; they were countless in number. Having told us much of Christ, John says: "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should all be written, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." 21:25. So Cleopas said that "Jesus of Nazareth was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." Luke 24:19.

Moses introduced a new state of things, setting aside the patriarchal dispensation. So Jesus Christ introduced a new dispensation in the place of the Mosaic. Now we have the gospel instead of the Sinaic covenant.

In all these respects Moses was a striking type of Christ. Yet, as was fitting, the Anti-type far excelled him. Moses was a servant. Christ was a Son. Moses was a mere man. Christ was "God manifest in the

flesh." Moses was a sinner. Christ never displeased his Father. The Mosaic dispensation passed away. Christ shall never be superseded; while eternity lasts, the Lamb himself shall feed his people, and lead them to fountains of living waters. Rev. 7:17.

So convincing was the evidence which Christ gave of his divine mission, that the woman of Samaria said, "I perceive that you are a prophet." John 4:19. And the blind man who was healed by him, in the midst of taunts and threats said, "He is a prophet." John 9:17. So when he raised the young man of Nain, "there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying that a great prophet has risen up among us." Luke 7:16. And at one time multitudes of the Jewish nation, gathered at the holy city, were so affected that they said, "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." Matt. 21:11. Indeed, during his ministry his miracles were confessed. Nor did any one ever successfully impugn his teachings, or assail his claims to be *the* prophet of God.

The objections made were frivolous, such as these: "Search and look: for out of Galilee arises no prophet." John 7:52. To this bold statement there are several fair answers. 1. Neither Moses nor any other writer of the Jewish Scriptures had said where all the prophets should be born. 2. At this very time the Jews had among their canonical books the writings of two prophets, Jonah and Nahum, both of whom were natives of Galilee. 3. Jesus did not *arise* out of Galilee, for he was born in Bethlehem of Judea. 4. Isaiah had expressly foretold, not that Messiah should be born in Galilee, but that his ministry should greatly enlighten that dark region, sometimes called Galilee of the Gentiles, because it bordered on Syria and Arabia, and because there many Gentiles dwelt with the Israelites. Compare Isaiah 9:1, 2, and Matt. 4:14-16. 5. The cities of refuge, it is commonly admitted, were types of Christ, and one of

these, Kedesh (or Kadesh) of Naphtali, was in Galilee for Galilee included Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali.

Another objection has no more force. When Simon the Pharisee saw how Christ permitted the poor sinful woman to wash his feet with her tears, and to anoint him, he said, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches him: for she is a sinner." Luke 7:39. But Jesus did know not only the woman's sinfulness, but also her penitence, and amply vindicated his conduct. Simon did not know that Jesus came into the world to save *sinner*s. The mistake was all on his side.

IV. It remains to show how Jesus Christ fulfils "the office of a prophet, in revealing to the church in all ages, by his Spirit and word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning the edification and salvation of believers."

1. For about four thousand years Jesus Christ made known the will of God by his servants, the prophets. "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe." Hebrews 1:1-2. So Peter also says, "Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven." 1 Peter 1:10-12.

These Scriptures bring out these truths:

1. All the will of God was not revealed at once, but at various times from Adam to Malachi.

2. God's will was revealed in various ways; sometimes in dreams, sometimes in visions, sometimes by sending an angel, sometimes by an audible voice, and once by the Son of God assuming a human form.

3. But whatever the manner of the revelation, it was always by "the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets."

4. Much that the prophets spoke was dark to themselves, so that they found it necessary to study very carefully their own writings.

5. The theme of their messages was the sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow.

6. Their teachings were in their aspect chiefly prospective, relating to gospel times.

7. The same Holy Spirit, who dictated the prophecies, gives efficacy to the preached gospel.

8. Much that was said by the prophets, amounting in all to thirty-nine books, was put in writing, and committed to the ancient church, as the depository of the truth.

2. The prophets were followed by John the Baptist, who, for the clear light he gave and for pointing out the very man who was to save the world, was "more than a prophet." Matt. 11:9. He was in a sense an evangelist. He was Christ's herald and forerunner.

3. Then came Jesus Christ himself, the Light of the world, the life of men, and the desire of all nations. God "has in these latter days

spoken unto us by his Son." Heb. 1:2. Men saw him full of grace and truth. Men wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. And no marvel "for it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." Col. 1:19. During his personal ministry Christ taught us the will of God in four ways.

1. He wrought miracles in his own name and by his own power, thus showing not only that he was a teacher sent from God, but that he was himself divine.

2. In his entire human nature he set us an example of piety and benevolence, making plain to us all our duties. Whatever Christ did as a man, we are bound to do. In obedience to parents, in submission to civil rulers, in forgiveness of injuries, in all things his example was perfect.

3. During his personal ministry Christ uttered several remarkable predictions, which have been and shall be of eminent service to the church of God. Christ's predictions were strongly marked.

4. Jesus Christ preached much and in a manner wholly incomparable. When the minions of cruelty were sent to arrest him, they were disarmed by his amazing discourses. When asked why they did not bring him before the chief priests and Pharisees, the only account they could give of the matter was, "Never man spoke like this man." John 7:46. The guilty hands lifted against him fell nerveless before his amazing words. No wonder the people were "astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Matt. 7:28, 29. The word of God in his mouth was a sharp two-edged sword. Deut. 18:18 and Rev. 1:16.

4. When Christ left this world and ascended up far above all heavens, "he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some

evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Eph. 4:11-43. This whole work of the apostles and their co-laborers was conducted under the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit, who both taught them and brought to their remembrance all things taught them by the Master personally. John 14:26. It was given them what they should say. The same Spirit in his converting power was poured upon their hearers.

5. Jesus Christ inspired his apostles and evangelists to write for our use, twenty-seven distinct books, giving a full account of his life and doctrine, and of his will in all things pertaining to life and godliness, to the end of the world.

6. It is still Christ's gracious plan to pour out his Spirit on faithful ministers in preaching his word, and on the hearers of his word, so that great numbers are still converted, sanctified, and built up in faith and holiness unto eternal life. In these several methods Jesus Christ carries on his great work as the prophet of God.

Let us consider the excellence of his work as a teacher.

1. Everything he has taught us either by himself or by his servants is TRUE. In it all there is no mistake, no error, no delusion. The more it is tested, the more true it is proven to be. In a world full of falsehood and delusion, pure truth is a great matter. Now whether men jest or are serious in asking, What is truth? we can look up to God and say, "Your word is truth." "It is truth without any admixture of error." It is the truth of God. And it all comes to us through the Spirit of Christ. Indeed, he is the Rock, out of which the river of truth has ever flowed to make glad the city of God.

2. All he has taught us is very *PURE*. It cannot defile. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." "The law is holy, just, and good." The reason why the wicked hate God's word, is because it is so holy.

3. Jesus Christ has, in ways already stated, revealed to us the *WHOLE* will of God for our salvation. He has kept back nothing that would be profitable to us. He says expressly: "All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." John 15:15; Psalm 40:9, 10; Deut. 18:18.

4. The whole will of God thus made known to us through our great Prophet is accompanied by the strongest *ATTESTATIONS*. It is confirmed by witnesses who jeopardized their lives, and in most cases actually died martyrs. God has also borne witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is confirmed by the spotless life of Christ himself, and by the holy lives of his prophets and apostles. It is confirmed to us by its converting and sanctifying power over men's souls. It is confirmed by the commanding authority it has over the human conscience. It is confirmed to us by covenant and by God's solemn and unimpeachable oath.

5. The will of God, as revealed to us by our great prophet, is *PRACTICAL*. The doctrines can be loved and are loved by all whose hearts are right. All the precepts are just. They are obeyed sincerely by the godly. They were obeyed perfectly in our Lord's human nature, thus showing that they could be kept whenever sin did not oppose.

6. Our great prophet has made the will of God very *PLAIN*. "The common people heard him gladly." He never

mystified his hearers. "That which makes manifest is light." God's word is even a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It exposes to our view the secrets of our souls and the glorious mysteries of heavenly things. Neither Christ nor his servants handled the word of God deceitfully. If to any the Bible is a *sealed book*, it is because of the blindness of their heart. "All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse. To the discerning all of them are right; they are faultless to those who have knowledge." Proverbs 8:8, 9.

7. God's will is made known to us in the KINDEST, GENTLEST WAY. Our great prophet did not strive, nor cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. He held up a little child as the pattern he would have us follow. Even Moses, his servant, who was the minister of the Sinaic covenant, was the meekest of mere men.

8. Jesus Christ teaches all his people *EFFECTUALLY*. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people." Jer. 31:33. So that David said no more than every child of God may say: "I will never forget Your precepts, for You have given me life through them." Psalm 119:93.

APPLICATION

1. Let us not waste our life and time in gaping after some strange thing, some new doctrine, or some new revelation. Let us seek the old paths, the ways in which the prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, and confessors, and righteous men walked. There never was but one way of salvation for sinners. There is but one way now. It is taught us by Jesus Christ. Let us not, like the foolish, say, "Who will go up to heaven?" that is, to bring

Christ down or, "Who will go down into the abyss?" that is, to bring Christ up from the dead. On the contrary, what does it say? The message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart. This is the message of faith that we proclaim: if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. With the heart one believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses, resulting in salvation." Romans 10:6-10

2. The teachings of Christ as our great Prophet are not submitted to us for criticism, for speculation, for our entertainment; O no. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." 1 John 5:13. "Whatever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4. Hear the word of this salvation not as critics, but as criminals; not as theorists, but as candidates for eternity; not as idle spectators of a drama, but as those who must give account to God.

3. How very reasonable it is that such poor, ignorant, blind creatures as we are should pray for light and wisdom, and especially for the teaching of the Spirit of Christ. Of him it was promised by Christ, "He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you." John 16:14. Other things being equal, he who prays most will learn fastest. When Daniel was to expound Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he and his friends found out the secret by prayer. Dan. 2:18. Luther said: "Three things make a good theologian—meditation, temptation, and prayer." David was a prophet, yet often he cried, "Teach me your statutes;" "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."

4. Whatever we do or leave undone, let us not fail to hear and obey this great Prophet. God says we must: "Unto him shall you hearken." "Whoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name—I will require it of him." This is the law under which the gospel is promulged. Let none think to screen himself from this awful responsibility by the fact that Christ is no longer on earth. He is here by his essential presence, and he is here by his faithful ambassadors. Before he left the world, he said to his ministers: "Whoever listens to you listens to Me. Whoever rejects you rejects Me. And whoever rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me." Luke 10:16. The law of nations is, He who despises an ambassador insults the government that sent him. Such also is the law of the God of heaven.

The Priesthood of Christ

In Scripture much is said of the offices of Christ. In particular, his priesthood is distinctly stated. One of the epistles, that to the Hebrews, is an inspired treatise on this subject. It is clear and simple. It discusses the chief points in a natural order, and concludes with practical inferences fairly drawn. Christ's priesthood is our theme at present. We can find no better order in which to present the matter than that suggested by Paul.

1. The first thing asserted and proved by the apostle is, that our High Priest, Jesus Christ, is *DIVINE*. All his offices required that he should be God. None but God could be such a King as Christ is. None but God knows the things of God, or could

infallibly declare them to us as the Prophet of the church. None but God could satisfy justice, and bring in everlasting righteousness sufficient for lost men. On Christ's divinity, the power of his priesthood must rest. So Paul thought; and he takes up the whole of the first chapter of Hebrews in proving it. He uses four arguments, which to a pious mind are conclusive.

1. He says that Christ is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Then he says Christ's holy Father calls him "God:" "Your throne O God, is forever and ever." Heb. 1:3, 8. Then he shows, from Psalm 102:25, 26, that he is called Lord. In that psalm the word Lord occurs eight times. In every instance the original word is *Jehovah*, the great and incommunicable name of the self-existent God.

2. Paul argues the divinity of Christ from the fact that he is CREATOR. He says expressly, "By him God made the worlds;" and, "You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands." Heb. 1:2, 10. He also says: "This man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who has built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by some man, but he who built all things is God." Heb. 3:3, 4.

3. The third argument for Christ's divinity here employed is, that he is the author of PROVIDENCE. He governs and sustains the universe. Paul says of Christ, "He upholds all things by the word of his power;" and, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." Heb. 1:3, 8. Again Paul says: God "has appointed him heir of all things." Heb. 1:2. Well does Whitby say, "I believe it is as impossible to understand how a man should have this empire over

all things in heaven and earth, and over death itself, and yet be a mere man—as it is to understand any mystery of the sacred Trinity."

4. Paul's fourth argument for the divinity of our High Priest is, that by command of his Father, he is to be WORSHIPED. "When he brings the first-begotten into the world, he says, And let all the angels of God worship him." Heb. 1:6. Any one of these arguments, fairly stated, is conclusive. If Christ is fitly called God and Lord, or if he is the Creator, or if he is the author of providence, or if he is rightly worshiped—he is divine. What higher or better evidence have we that the Father is possessed of supreme divinity than that he is rightly called God and Jehovah, that he made all things, that he governs all things, and that it is proper to pay him religious worship? If we cannot prove the Son divine, neither can we prove the Father divine.

II. The second proposition of Paul respecting our High Priest is, that he is *HUMAN*, has our nature, is a man. We can conceive how our Lord might have been King in his divine nature alone. He could have ruled the world without becoming incarnate. To some extent, perhaps to a saving extent, he might have done the work of a prophet, and taught us the mind and will and nature of God, without becoming man. True, we should have very much missed his perfect example, set us in the days of his flesh. But by his word and Spirit he might have made men wise unto salvation without his example. He did this for four thousand years, and gathered many sons to glory. But how could he have been a *priest* without a nature capable of obeying, of suffering, and of dying. Divinity cannot obey, cannot suffer, cannot die. Without a nature capable of suffering, he could make no atonement. Although Christ's humanity has at divers times and under various pretexts been denied, yet it is now seldom impugned. It is not necessary

therefore to argue this matter at length. A few verses on the point will be enough.

In Hebrews 2:7 we have these words applied to him: "You made him a little [or for a little while] lower than the angels." In Hebrews 2:9, Paul says that he "was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." In Hebrews 2:10 Paul says that it was by suffering that Jesus became a perfect Captain of salvation. Then in Hebrews 2:14 he says: "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." And in Hebrews 2:17: "Therefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." And in Hebrews 2:18: "For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

These passages assign four distinct reasons why our Lord must be human:

1. Thus only could he be lower than the angels.
2. That he might suffer, and so atone.
3. That by death he might destroy him that had the power of death.
And
4. That he might by experience learn what temptation and sorrow were, and so be a merciful High Priest.

III. Jesus Christ was duly called of God to be our High Priest. He was no bold intruder into those solemn functions. Every step he took was agreeable to the counsels of God. This is to us a

matter of great importance; and so we are not left in doubt upon it. In Hebrews 5:4, 5 we read: "No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him—You are my Son; today I have become your Father." If it can be shown that any man was ever called of God to any office, much more can it be proved that the Son was called of his Holy Father to be a High Priest.

IV. Not only ancient usage, but the law of Moses required that the high priest should be ANOINTED. Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the Lord's Anointed. Twice in God's word, once in prophecy, and once in direct and inspired application to Christ, do we find these words: "God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows." Psalm 45:7; Heb. 1:9. In his first great sermon after his baptism and return to Nazareth, Jesus Christ clearly and unequivocally applied to himself these words of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek," etc. Compare Luke 4:16-22 and Isaiah 61:1-3. He said: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled."

V. Jesus Christ was *SENT* of God into the world on the very work of a high priest. Malachi had foretold that he should be the "Messenger of the covenant;" and Paul well calls him "the *Apostle* and High Priest of our profession." Mal. 3:1 and Heb. 3:1. In John's gospel Christ is thirty times declared to have been *sent* by his Father: "I must work the works of him who sent me;" "It is my food to do the will of him that sent me," are examples. Indeed, Jesus said expressly that he both taught and wrought miracles that men might believe that God had sent him. John 11:42. And in his days humble souls so received him; for Nicodemus said: "We know that you are a teacher sent from God."

VI. Jesus Christ was FIT to be our High Priest, because he was "without sin." Heb 4:15. He was without original sin, for he was not represented in Adam, our first parent standing only for such as descended from him by ordinary generation. So the angel who announced him to Mary called him "the **holy** One to be born will be called the Son of God." It was every way necessary that our High Priest should be holy. God could have been in no way pleased with a high priest acting, offering, or interceding for us—if like ourselves he was a sinner, tainted and vile. Nor could we, with any just sense of sin, ever have been brought to put our confidence in one who was himself guilty and rebellious.

Jesus was not only not a sinner, but he was **impeccable**. It is with great delight that we read: "For this is the kind of high priest we need: holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens." God the Father knew how vital this point was, and so he has given us the most ample satisfaction respecting it. At Christ's baptism a voice from heaven said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3:17. So on the mount of transfiguration, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear him." Matt. 17:5. John says he was "full of grace and truth." John 1:14. Even the miserable trifler who sat in judgment on our Lord said: "I find no fault in this man." Nay, more; he says, "I find no fault at all;" "I find no fault in him;" "I find no fault in him." Luke 23:4; John 18:38; 19:4, 6. Even infidels generally have admitted that his character was blameless. The only true thing his enemies ever said in their malice against him while on earth was, that in which we glory: "This man receives sinners." Luke 15:2. Though not a sinner himself, he loves sinners, he pities sinners, he died for sinners, he saves sinners, he saves none but sinners, he had no other errand on earth. O blessed be God, the Lord Christ owed no obedience to the law for himself, for he was the Lawgiver.

He needed not, as other high priests, daily to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's. Heb. 7:27. *We* have his merits and his blood for *our* salvation. He needed no sacrifice to make him personally a sweet savor unto God.

VII. Christ is a priest, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek. Under the law, the high priest held no other office; but Melchizedek and Christ held the two offices of King and Priest. Melchizedek signifies king of righteousness; and he was also king of Salem, which is King of peace. So Jesus, by reason of his infinite supereminence, is most fitly styled both king of righteousness and king of peace. He brought in everlasting **righteousness**, so that God is now as righteous as he is merciful in pardoning sin and in accepting the sinner. And Jesus is the King of **peace**. He is the author of all the peace between God and penitent sinners, between Jews and Gentiles. His blood speaks peace to the conscience. He is our Peace. Neither the name of Melchizedek, nor that of his parents is found in the genealogical tables of the tribe of Levi. "And it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood." Melchizedek was greater than Aaron, greater than Levi, greater than Abraham; for to him Abraham paid tithes, and from him received a blessing; "and without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better." In the whole history of Melchizedek he appeared but once; so "now once in the end of the world has Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." And as Melchizedek, so Christ had no predecessor and no successor in office. He needed none. None was fit for such a work. Christ's work is perfect.

VIII. Jesus Christ made a suitable OFFERING to God. "Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer." Heb. 8:3.

Accordingly Christ gave "himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." Eph. 5:2. In order to Christ's oblation availing for us, it must be something that he had a right to offer, something that he was willing to offer, something that was itself very precious, and something that God entirely approved and highly esteemed. On each of these points the Scriptures give us the most entire satisfaction. Not a doubt is left on the mind of one who takes God's word for his guide. Other priests offered bulls and goats and lambs; but Jesus offered himself, his entire human nature. "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Heb. 10:10. Here, as in many other places, *body* means the whole man. First he offered his corporeal nature. It was spit upon, smitten, crowned with thorns; was nailed to the cross, was filled with agony, was dead and buried. He also offered his soul. Even before his arrest, so terribly did the wrath of God press upon him that his sweat was as great drops of blood. He exclaimed: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." All this was according to prophecy, for the evangelical prophet had said, "You shall make his soul an offering for sin." Isaiah 53:10.

His divinity was the altar, which sanctified his oblation. His whole person made the offering, or presented the gift. And his entire human nature was the sacrifice. His sacrifice was true, not fictitious; real, not imaginary; proper, not typical. His one oblation was enough. It opened the gates of heaven to all believers. God has accepted it before angels and men. Under the law of Moses no sacrifice took away *sin*. Heb. 10:4. All was type, figure, shadow of something to come. But when Christ came he slew the enmity, he took away the hand-writing that was against us, he satisfied divine justice, he brought redemption. Under the law sacrifices were ordained only for sins of ignorance, sins against the law of ceremonies, and sins admitting of restitution. No provision was

made for sacrifices for murder, or unbelief, or pride, or malice. Accordingly, when David found himself convicted of violating the sixth and seventh commandments, he said, "You desire not sacrifice, else would I give it." But "the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world." "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin." So that "he has perfected forever those who are sanctified." He has made the comers to his altar perfect, as concerning offering for sin.

IX. When the high priest under the law had shed the blood and offered the victim, he made his intercessions in this lower world, in a place made with hands; but Christ has entered "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. 9:24. Thus he is "made higher than the heavens." Heb. 7:26. None else was ever permitted to stand before the blazing throne in heaven and with authority plead with God. In all things Jesus has the preeminence. Now "if any man sins, we have an Advocate *with the Father*, Jesus Christ the righteous." We know where he is and what he is doing. He "is passed into the heavens." He is at the right hand of God. He is preparing a place for his people. "He ever lives to make intercession for us." His blood speaks peace. His appearance is our advocacy. The arguments he uses are the wounds he received. His intercession never fails. "Him the Father hears always." If you would see how he prays, study John 17th. It is remarkable, however, that the law of Moses gives no form of words to be used by the high priest in the holy of holies. So Christ's intercession may be very much in his "appearance for us." When an Athenian was about to be sentenced for crime, his worthy brother, who had terribly bled for the liberties of his country, came into court, looked at the prisoner tenderly and at the judges imploringly, at the same time lifting up the stump of an arm, as if to plead. It was enough. The argument was decisive. The prisoner went free.

X. The high priest, having fulfilled his office in the holy place, came forth and gave his benediction to Israel, saying: "The Lord bless you, and keep you: the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you: the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace." Num. 6:24-26. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28. O yes! He will come again not in sadness, not with lips swollen with grief, not with his visage marred more than any man; but in his glory, and all the holy angels with him. Then shall he say, "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." O that our ears may hear that blessed plaudit!

XI. Under the law men came into the high priest's office, and went out of it again; but Jesus Christ, "because he continues ever, has an unchangeable priesthood." He "ever lives." He "is consecrated forever more." He is made a high priest, not "after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." He "is a priest forever." Heb. 7:16, 17, 24, 25, 28. He abides forever over the house of God. O I am glad—are not you?—that there is to be no change in the priesthood of our profession. No change is possible. None but Jesus is worthy of the office. Any change would be for the worse. We could never have another like Jesus.

His priesthood suggests these **LESSONS**:

1. How vain are all other sacrifices for sin. No tears, no blood, no offerings but those of Christ can avail for us. He who pleads other merits before God is a thief and a robber. John 10:1. A few years ago, an archbishop of Paris was dying of wounds received in an uprising.

He said: "O God, I offer to you my present bodily sufferings as an atonement for the errors of my episcopate." But the sufferings of a sinner have no merit, no efficacy to atone. Jesus only, Jesus alone—has so suffered as to make reconciliation for the people.

2. In Christ we have all we need. Jesus is so excellent in person and character, and is so highly in favor with God, that if he will but manage our cause and plead for us before the throne—we cannot fail. He counts it not robbery to be equal with God, and yet he is not ashamed to call us brethren. He can lay his hand upon God and upon us. In all things he suits our case and meets our necessities. His offering was perfect. It was fully accepted of God. He was a sin-offering. He bore the sin of many. This suits us. *Sinners, sinners only, sinners always* need expiation. The effect of Christ's oblation has been marvelous. Its wonders will never cease. It is now filling heaven with a happy throng of worshipers, and with thundering hallelujahs.

3. With Christ for our high priest, we may exercise great boldness in prayer. Thus Paul reasons: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Again: "Having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. 4:16 10:21, 22.

4. In Christ's priesthood we have a sure foundation for Christian steadfastness. So Paul reasoned: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast our profession." Again: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful who

promised." Heb. 4:14; 10:23. It cannot but be safe to rely on such a Redeemer, and fearlessly do our duty.

5. This doctrine is essentially connected with the whole life of faith as Paul shows at length in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

6. This doctrine is full of comfort to the afflicted. So Paul uses it at length in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews.

7. This doctrine leads the pious soul to acts of thanksgiving, as nothing else does. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." Heb. 13:15. The great gospel feast is that of the Lord's Supper.

8. The great motive to a life of benevolence is drawn from this doctrine of Christ's priesthood. So Paul uses it: "Let brotherly love continue. Don't neglect to show hospitality, for by doing this some have welcomed angels as guests without knowing it. Remember the prisoners, as though you were in prison with them, and the mistreated, as though you yourselves were suffering bodily." "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." Heb. 13:1-3, 16.

9. It is at our peril, that we reject the priesthood of Jesus. Yes more, we are undone if we do it. On this point Paul is urgent: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" "See that you refuse not him who speaks." "Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified

him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?" Heb. 2:3; 12:25; 10:28, 29. These solemn texts establish these points:

1. *Neglect* of Christ is refusal of his grace.
2. Persistent neglect of Christ is followed by inevitable damnation.
3. There is something worse than dying without mercy under Moses' law.
4. Sin reaches its height when we trample on the blood of Christ.
5. He who neglects Christ, despises and insults the Holy Spirit. A gospel despiser is acting as foolishly, as he is wickedly. O impenitent man! your condition is indeed sad. Your worst fears are not as bad as the truth would justify. The solemn sentence of a broken law is against you; your own conscience will sooner or later flash damnation in your face; even now your polluted heart often writhes in agony; your wicked life is a token of perdition. The day of your death is near at hand; there is a dreadful hell just before you, and you deserve to be cast into it. O turn, O turn, O turn to God—before the door of mercy closes forever!

Christ a King

Those who reject Christ as King, have never truly received him as Prophet or Priest. His authority and his redemption, his rule and his rest, go together. If his love does not make us obedient to his laws, we have no saving interest in his merits. We are not wise unto

salvation, until we bow to his authority. If we are partakers of his redemption, we are certainly partakers of his holiness. We may talk of his wonderful teachings, or boast of our interest in his amazing sacrifice, but it is all in vain so long as we refuse to own him as our Leader and Commander. Wherever he comes to bless, he comes as a Conqueror. His rule is as just, as it is welcome to the penitent: "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." Romans 14:9. No law of Christ is too strict for a believer. With a controlling power his conscience enforces, and his heart embraces every precept of his Master. The kingly office of Christ is our theme.

1. Prophecy required that Christ should be a King. So ran that great fundamental prediction made to David: "I will set up your seed after you . . . and I will establish his kingdom . . . and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son." 2 Sam. 7:12-14. Again: "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Psalm 2:6. Again: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this." Isaiah 9:6, 7. The great promise to Bethlehem Ephrathah was: "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village in Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past." Mic. 5:2. So also the angel Gabriel said of him to Mary: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of

Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1:32, 33. It is thus clear that prophecy required him to be a King.

II. When Jesus Christ was upon his trial before Pilate, that guilty trifler "said unto him, Are you a king then?" And in the language commonly used in those days to affirm, he answered, "You say that I am a king." The meaning is—You correctly say I am a king. And that all may see his solemn earnestness, he immediately adds, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice." So that Christ's mission into this world would have been in vain, if this "*truth*" had not been received. Twenty-seven years after Christ's trial, Paul, writing to a young minister, and giving him a charge to be faithful, calls his attention to this solemn scene in the judgment-hall, when "Jesus Christ before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession." 1 Tim. 6:13. The only thing Jesus confessed on his trial before Pilate was, that he was a king and Christ. This was his "good confession." It was good, because it was true. "He sealed it with his precious blood."

III. Jesus Christ is often called Lord, Master, Governor, Ruler, Shepherd, Prince, Prince and Savior, the great Prince, the Prince of Life, the Prince of Peace, the Prince of princes, the Prince of the kings of the earth, a King, the King, the King of kings and Lord of lords. This last title is first found in 1 Timothy 6:15, 16: "He is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, the only One who has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom none of mankind has seen or can see, to whom be honor and eternal might. Amen!" Some apply this passage to Christ, some to the Father, and some to the Godhead without distinction of persons. For the purposes of this argument, either mode suits our object. If it refers to Christ, it settles the question of his kingly authority. If it

refers to the Father, or to the Divinity without distinction of persons, then it settles the point that the highest sovereignty is thus declared. And we have the very same language, thirty-five years after, applied to Christ: "The Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords and King of kings;" "And he has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords!" Rev. 17:14; 19:16. Surely Jesus is a King.

IV. In the Scriptures, Jesus Christ is said to possess all the badges and tokens of a king. He has a **throne**: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever," Heb. 1:8. "To him who overcomes will I give to sit with me in my throne," Rev. 3:21. He has a **crown**; for we read of "the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals." Cant. 3:11. About a thousand years later John says: "And a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." Rev. 6:2. And to show the amplitude of his kingly authority, John says: "And on his head were many crowns." Rev. 19:12. Christ has a **scepter**: "A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom." Heb. 1:8. Christ has a **kingdom**. He says to Pilate: "*My kingdom* is not of this world: if *my kingdom* were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is *my kingdom* not from hence." John 18:36. Christ has **subjects**. In the verse just cited he speaks of his *servants*. His people in heaven and earth feel honored by being allowed to live under him, and to serve him. And at God's command all the angels of heaven have taken the oath of allegiance to him: "Let all the angels of God worship him." Heb. 1:6. He has the **sword**: "Gird your sword upon your thigh, O most Mighty, with your glory and your majesty." Psalm 45:3. He **deals with his enemies** like a great King: "He shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Psalm 2:9. Surely he is a King!

V. But what sort of a king is Christ? Let us see.

1. He is an EVERLASTING King. His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Mic. 5:2. He "was in the beginning with God." John 1:2. He "was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, before ever the earth was." Proverbs 8:23. Nor shall he ever cease to be King: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." Heb. 1:8. "The great prophet of the captivity expressly says his "kingdom is an everlasting kingdom," "which shall never be destroyed." Dan. 2:44; 7:27. "His throne shall endure as the days of heaven." Glory to God for that.

2. He is a WISE King. One of his names is Wisdom. Proverbs 8. According to prophecy, he has *dealt prudently* in all things. Isaiah 52:13. He has never made any mistake. He orders and establishes his kingdom with the cognizance of omniscience. He leads his people by the right way, that they may go to a city of habitation. Psalm 107:7. He teaches them all in the way of wisdom; he leads them in right paths. When they go, their steps shall not be straitened; and when they run they shall not stumble.

3. He is a JUST King. He preserves the faithful, and justly punishes the evil-doer. Just and right is he. He does not regard the rich more than the poor. "A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of his kingdom." Heb. 1:8. However things may seem to us, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. Our King can do no wrong. He never has done wrong to any. As much as he had set his heart on saving sinners, he would not open the gates of paradise to one of them until he had bound himself by oath and covenant to satisfy all the claims of justice, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. He will not carry one sinner to glory, trampling on the rights and government of God as he goes. When the

solemn scenes of the last day shall come, the heavens shall declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. Not a blot shall be found on his escutcheon, nor an error in his awards. Hallelujah! The Judge of all the earth will do right.

4. Christ is an ALMIGHTY King. Nothing is too hard for him. None can resist him. He carries the keys of the invisible world; he opens, and none can shut; he shuts, and none can open. He controls all causes and all agents. He is the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Who would set the briers and thorns against him in battle? He would go through them, and burn them together. At his rebuke the pillars of heaven tremble. The hiding of his power—none can understand. He is "the Almighty." Rev. 1:8. Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigns!

5. Jesus is a gentle, tender, merciful, condescending King. He never breaks the bruised reed. He never quenches the smoking flax. The haughtiest monarchs he has trodden to hell; but he never trampled on a broken heart. "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." Zech. 9:9. Yes, He who commands the twenty thousand chariots of heaven, Psalm 68:17, entered the holy city in the humblest manner, even when receiving a triumph decreed to him by prophecy. Yes more, he wept over the very city that was about to imbrue its hands in his blood. It was but ten days after his ascension until he sent his ministers and his Spirit to call his murderers to repentance; and in one day thousands of them were made to rejoice in his loving-kindness. Though the heaven is his throne and the earth is his footstool, yet he dwells with him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at God's word.

6. Jesus Christ is a King of EXHAUSTLESS RESOURCES. He has unsearchable riches. He is heir of all things. The stars, and the sea, and the dry land are his, for he made them. He is Lord of angels. "He is Lord of all." Acts 10:36. Yes, he is "the Lord of glory." 1 Cor. 2:8. All power in heaven and earth is given unto him. Matt. 28:18. When he promises grace and glory—we know it is sure to come. When he pledges a crown and a kingdom and a royal priesthood to the humblest of his followers—we may judge of his immense treasures and possessions. He gives even to his enemies, many a time, great wealth, and even diadems, though he respects no man's person. The earth is his, and the fullness thereof.

VI. But what kind of a KINGDOM has Christ? Just such as you would expect such a King to preside over.

1. It is divinely ordered and ordained. Hear his own words: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me." Luke 22:29. His regal power is no usurpation: "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church." Ephesians 1:18-22

2. Christ's kingdom is not of this world. He says so expressly, John 18:36. It is not based on worldly wisdom; it is not ruled by worldly maxims; it is not managed by crafty statesmanship. Scott

says: "It has nothing to do with men's temporal interests or privileges; it leaves rulers and subjects in the same situation as it found them. It is therefore no fit object of jealousy to any government. Jesus never armed his followers. His disciples were inoffensive in their habits, and were forbidden to fight for him, even when he was apprehended. So that his kingdom is clearly not of a secular nature, but relates wholly to spiritual and heavenly things, and is supported entirely by spiritual sanctions and authority."

3. Christ's kingdom is his by just desert. He has deserved all his honors and all his authority. He is not on the throne by an act of grace to him, but by his own amazing merits: "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:6-11. All heaven publicly and adoringly ascribes his kingly exaltation to his own merits. Rev. 5:12. Their cry ever is, "Worthy is the Lamb."

4. His kingdom is universal. It includes all worlds, all creatures, all causes. Nothing in heaven, nothing in earth, nothing under the earth is outside of it. His saints praise him. The angels adore him. The devils are subject to him. The king's heart is in his hands, and he turns it wherever he will. His kingdom rules over all.

5. Christ's kingdom is supreme. He is over all God blessed forever. There is no principality over him. His kingdom is not a

wheel within another wheel; but it is so exalted that there is nothing above it.

6. It is stable. Nothing can shake it. Many a bold conspiracy has been formed against it, but all in vain. Worms cannot spit their venom so as to reach the stars in their course. Nor can puny mortals reach the person or the power of our Immanuel.

7. Christ's kingdom is omnipotent. By his own divine efficiency he carries on his government. He upholds all things by his powerful word. He does his will in heaven and in earth. He is expecting until his enemies become his footstool. Not an empire rises or sinks but by his will. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice. Every change on earth is by his providence. He is subverting wicked counsels and defeating wicked plots, until he is finished his whole pleasure upon Mount Zion.

His work on his people is mighty. He subdues them to himself. By love, by power, by truth, by chastisement, by solemn things in righteousness, in mercy, in judgment, in faithfulness, in loving kindness—he reigns their Lord and Master. He chains their great adversary; he subdues their iniquities under them; he strips the world of its fatal fascinations; he makes them willing in the day of his power; he leads them into all necessary truth. A joyful allegiance to Christ is a great element of true piety.

8. His kingdom is above human comprehension. "God manifest in the flesh" is the mystery of mysteries. When Christ is about to do his greatest wonders, both of judgment and of mercy, he often gives no such notice as arrests attention. The kingdom of God comes not with observation. The Lord comes suddenly to his temple. He does mighty things which we look not for. When we are shut up and cannot come forth, then he brings us out into a large place.

When he turns our captivity, we are like them that dream. The resurrection of Christ, his ascension to heaven, the miracles of Pentecost, the release of Peter, the conversion of Paul surprised both good and bad men. It shall be so to the end of time. The judgment day itself will abound with wonders, beyond all the days of earth. One great mystery is that both we and the Captain of our salvation are "made perfect through suffering." Strange that he should scourge every son whom he receives; but so runs his counsel, and so we become partakers of the Divine nature.

Sometimes to us his delays are unaccountable, and we cry out, "O Lord, how long? Why tarry your chariot wheels? Why do the wicked prosper? Why are waters of a full cup wrung out to your chosen ones?" But we forget that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. He inhabits eternity. His prospects are bounded by no horizon. His delays to punish, are stupendous mercies. Without them no person would be spared.

1. Let us put our hand into our Savior's hand—to lead us as he will. A child of God was very sick. She had suffered long and severely. She was asked whether she would not prefer death to life. "Just as the Lord pleases," was her reply. "But," said one, "if God should refer it to you—which would you choose?" She replied: "Then I would refer it back again to God." She was right. She was wise. Should we settle such a question, it would almost certainly be decided wrong. If the Master determines it—there will be no mistake. Besides, when we wholly submit our will to his will, his will becomes ours, and so we have our way because God has his way. When that which pleases the Lord pleases us, nothing can take away our rejoicing. Much of the bliss of heaven consists in this happy temper. No doubt things are constantly occurring in the realms above, which would provoke resistance and rebellion in hearts not taught perfect

submission to the will of God. The demand for hearty acquiescence is most reasonable, because the Lord is unerring. If he were ever unkind, if he were unwise, if he were feeble—we might hesitate. But he is too good to be unkind; and too wise to be mistaken.

2. The church is safe. The gates of hell shall not prevail against her. She enjoys her Monarch's love and her Monarch's care. Jesus lives and reigns forever. To all believers we may boldly say, "Who shall harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?" The solution of a godly man's perplexities, and the quelling of his fears, can often be had by remembering that our Savior's throne is the throne of God, and that his ways are the ways of God. He gives no account of any of his matters. The Lord our God in the midst of us is mighty, mighty to save all who take refuge in him, mighty to destroy all who dare rise up against Zion. Christ's kingly office is made illustrious in bringing good out of evil, light out of darkness, and joy out of sorrow. When the unhappy Dr. Dodd was on his way to execution, a brutish man came and taunted him as a culprit, though a minister of the gospel. He had indeed committed a great crime, but there is some reason to hope that he was a true penitent. In his anguish, heightened by the gaze of the multitude and the reproaches of this base accuser, he quoted those memorable words which the prophet Micah put into the mouth of the church: "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." The gloomy procession moved on, the crowd becoming more dense, until at last the man who had used the reproach was crushed to the earth and died, though no one intended him evil. Thus were fulfilled the words of the very next verse, which Dodd had not quoted: "He who is my enemy . . . shall be

trodden down as the mire of the streets." Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth.

3. We greatly misrepresent the church, and Christ also, when we teach that his kingdom is of this world, that the weapons of her warfare are carnal, that the linen white and clean of her members can be trailed in the mire of this world's maxims, usages, and policy, without being defiled. The cause of Christ has been more injured by being represented, so as to sanction the vices and crimes and follies of men, than by all the fires of persecution ever kindled. The great error of the Jews respecting Messiah's kingdom was that it was of this world. His own followers labored under this error for a long time. They said, "Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

4. Let all who are yet out of Christ, be reconciled to him now while it is called today. He has a right to your highest homage. He is your rightful sovereign. Outside of him, you are undone. He has come and is calling for you. Will you accept his grace? He has done more for you than all your earthly friends united. He offers you the life that now is and that which is to come. Oh that you would be wise, wise for yourself, wise unto salvation, wise for eternity. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little."

"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God—be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." 1 Timothy 1:17.

Christ's Humiliation

Some distinguish between Christ's *condescension* in assuming our nature, and his *humiliation* in suffering. But the distinction is useless. God "humbles himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth." Psalm 113:6. Surely then he humbled himself when he became incarnate. This has already been considered.

Respecting the humiliation of the Savior, the language of Scripture is strong: "He made himself of no reputation [literally, he emptied himself] and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion [form or figure] as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." This is an outline of our Lord's humiliation, which has long been and will forever be the wonder and the song of angels and redeemed men. The whole of our Lord's history on earth was one series of acts of self-emptying and humiliation.

Let us begin with the humble circumstances in which he came into the world. The husband of his mother was an artisan, commonly supposed to be a carpenter. Matt. 13:55. Both he and the mother of our Lord were descended from David. Luke 2:4. But this family was fallen so low that when Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem their descent from David secured them no attentions or civilities, but they were lodged in a cattle stable. There the mother of our Lord brought forth her child, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn. Luke 2:7. And when she brought him to present him to the Lord, her offering was that of the poorest, "a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons." The law of Moses admitted that offering for those who were "not able to bring a lamb." Lev. 12:8. Thus the most highly favored among

women was found in the depths of poverty and in great neglect. Her first-born shared her lot. I have heard of but one child born in a stable. That was the holy child Jesus.

At his birth our Lord had all the weakness of infancy. He was helpless and dependent like other children. The inspired history tells us that he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Luke 2:52. He had the trials of childhood.

No sooner was his birth known than Herod the Great, a cruel and bloody man, became intent on his death. He killed all the young children in one district of the land in the hope that he would thereby surely destroy Jesus. By timely warning from God, the infant Savior was rescued from the threatened evil; but only by flight into Egypt—Egypt, the "Rahab" and "Leviathan" of Scripture. The cruel, idolatrous, and degraded people of that land had a hereditary and inveterate hatred against the Jews; but now their country was a safer asylum to this blessed family than any city or village of Judea.

On their return from Egypt, they settled in Nazareth. By some means this place had been rendered odious. Even the guileless Nathanael shared in the common aversion, and cried, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" John 1:46. Here Jesus spent the most of his life until he was thirty years old. Nazareth is not once mentioned in the Old Testament, nor by Josephus. Prophecy said that Christ should be "despised and rejected of men." This was the same as saying he should be called "a Nazarene." Compare Isaiah 53:3 and Matt. 2:23. Nazareth was probably infamous for the fierceness and brutality of its people. Luke 4:16-30. It was not the seat of any famous school. As a place of residence it had the advantage of privacy; and its geographical position was truly beautiful. Here our Lord lived and wrought at the same craft as Joseph, for his own

countrymen said, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" Mark 6:3. If there was any school at Nazareth, Jesus does not seem to have attended it; for the Jews said, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" John 7:15.

Another part of Christ's humiliation consisted in his being tempted. Heb. 2:18; 4:15. True, the prince of this world found nothing in him. John 14:30. In his holy soul was no fuel to be kindled by the fiery darts; but it must have filled him with anguish to have so foul suggestions made to him. So far as we know, his first great conflict with the adversary was in the wilderness. It lasted forty days. Luke 4:2. Christ was about to enter on his public ministry, and retired to the wilderness under the best desires to commune with God. But Satan annoyed him continually. The temptation grew worse and worse to the close. The adversary then tempted him to use his miraculous power to prove his divinity to Satan, and to satisfy his own hunger, as he had eaten nothing for forty days. The wicked one also tempted him to an act of presumption by throwing himself from the pinnacle of the temple. Finally, he offered him immense possessions and great honors, the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, if he would commit one act of idolatry. It added not a little to the power of these besetments that they were urged on Christ in his solitude. Although each assault was an utter failure, yet the devil departed from him but for a season. Luke 4:13. The Savior was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

As Jesus was born, so he lived and died—poor. He said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests: but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." Matt. 8:20. During his ministry he seems to have chiefly subsisted upon the charity of some poor, pious women. Well did he know what it was to suffer hunger and need.

When a tax was demanded of him, though it was but half a crown for himself and Peter, he could not pay it without a miracle.

Another element of Christ's humiliation was his liability to affliction. Above all that ever lived he was the "man of sorrows." He was subject to disappointment, grief, vexation, a sense of wrong, a sense of the ingratitude of men, and the pangs arising from a disregard of all the principles of friendship. His holy soul was filled with anguish by his cruel rejection. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not." John 1:10, 11. None of the princes of this world knew him. 1 Cor. 2:8. "We hid as it were our faces from him; . . . we esteemed him not." Isaiah 53:3. Those countless annoyances, called slights, must have pierced him deeply. The people of the city where he had been brought up were so offended at his first sermon in their synagogue, that they attempted to destroy his life by casting him down from a high rock. Luke 4:16-30. And when he claimed existence prior to Abraham, the Jews took up stones to cast at him. John 8:59. For saving two men from the most frightful torments, followed by the loss of some swine, the whole city of the Gergesenes "sought that he would depart out of their coasts." They preferred their swine, madmen, and devils—to the Prince of Peace. Matt. 8:34. Afterwards, on his trial, the Jews cried, "Away with him; away with him." John 19:15. They preferred to have a murderer turned loose on their community, rather than that the Son of God should longer teach his heavenly doctrines. Their cry was, "Not this man, but Barabbas." During his whole ministry the leaders among his foes denied that God had sent him. John 10:24-26. Never was a mission so well attested. Never were attestations so malignantly set aside.

And never were hard names and opprobrious epithets so heaped upon anyone. His enemies said he was a deceiver, John 7:12;

gluttonous and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, Matt. 11:19. They said he was in league with the prince of the devils, and that by Satanic power he wrought miracles. Surely above all others he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself. Heb. 12:3. Nor were these things without their dreadful effects on **his refined and tender nature**. "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." Speaking in his name the prophet said, "Reproach has broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." Psalm 69:20. The same prophet had elsewhere said in his name, "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head." Psalm 22:6, 7.

The annals of our race furnish no parallel to his history in the lack of sympathy under amazing sufferings. No terms of derision, no taunts in the midst of his agonies were by his enemies deemed indecent. Matt. 27:40-43. In his greatest trial, when he most needed the offices of friendship, his "disciples forsook him and fled." Matt. 26:56. The very boldest of all his followers denied him thrice, and even with oaths and curses. Mark 14:71. Never by countenance did friend express such surprise, regret, and reproof—as when Christ looked on Peter after the rooster crew.

He was not only denied by one disciple; he was betrayed by another in a manner full of base hypocrisy, even *with a kiss*. The general motive for his betrayal was the depravity of Judas. The special motive was covetousness. Yet the son of perdition sold him for the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver, the amount fixed by the law of Moses as the price of a slave, to be paid to his owner if his death had been brought about by the goring of a neighbor's ox. Ex. 21:32. In

prophetically speaking of this sum, Zechariah ironically calls it a *goodly price*. He cast the amount in scorn to the potter in the house of the Lord. Zech.11:13.

Another element in our Lord's humiliation was the character of the testimony on his trial. The witnesses all gave perjured testimony. The Jews "sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death, but found none, yes, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none." Matt. 26:59, 60. That is, the law required two concurring witnesses, and they found not two who agreed. "At the last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." Matt. 26:60, 61. These witnesses lied, for *they* had not heard him say anything about destroying the temple, and what he did say was quite unlike what they alleged. "Destroy this temple," (that is, kill this body,) "and in three days I will raise it up." John 2:19. The thing charged was absurd and frivolous as well as false. No wonder Jesus *held his peace and answered nothing*. The Jews evidently felt that they had made good no serious charge; for they tried to get from him a confession that he was *the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One*. Our Lord felt it was a right time to speak, whereupon he made that "good confession," so precious in the church ever since. He said he was the Christ.

The course of the judge who sat on his trial, while it was a disgrace to himself, was a deep humiliation to Jesus. If history can be trusted, Pilate was a monster of perfidy, avarice, cruelty, and obstinacy. Previously he had fallen on some poor Galileans and butchered them while they were making their prescribed offerings, thus mingling their blood with their sacrifices. Luke 13:1. No decency of life, no solemnity of religion could restrain him. Over and over again did he confess that Jesus had violated no law, had committed no offence.

His wife warned him to do nothing against that just person. He knew that the chief priests had delivered him up because of envy. He was afraid that he would lose his place if he did not give sentence against Jesus. Instead of abiding by his own clear convictions, he turned to the malignant enemies of the innocent sufferer before him and asked them what the sentence should be. Compare Matt. 27:18, 19, 24, and John 19:12-16. Before yielding to the violence of the mob around the judgment-seat, this mercenary and vacillating creature made a feeble effort to convince the Jews that the prisoner before him ought not to die, saying, "Why, what evil has he done?" Matt. 27:23. This failing, he thought to save his popularity and the life of Jesus by working on their sympathies. So he delivered Christ over to be *scourged*. This was a dreadful infliction. The back was made bare, the arms were drawn up, the scourge was applied first with the right hand and then with the left. At the shocking sight men often grew faint. All this had been predicted by the evangelical prophet: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to those who plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Isaiah 50:6.

But all this had no effect in appeasing the rage of the malignant throng. Nor did it strengthen any just purpose in the bosom of the judge. So he delivered his guiltless victim to be crucified. Matt. 27:26. It is often asked, What became of Pilate? His murder of the Galileans and like acts of violence would probably have caused his dismissal, had not Tiberius died. He however fell under the displeasure of the successor of that emperor, was degraded from office, became a wretched outcast, and ended his days by committing suicide.

As the form of trial granted to Jesus was a mockery of all justice and decency, so mockery was kept up to the last. They spit in his face and buffeted him. Others smote him with the palms of their hands, and

taunted him, Who is he who smote you? They stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe, as though he were a royal personage. But all was in derision. And when they wove a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head. And after they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. Matt. 26:67 27:28, 29.

It would be amazing indeed, if so long and sleepless sorrow, such scourging and smiting, had not much exhausted his strength. And so we find it. At first by their bidding he bore his own cross, John 19:17 but, as is supposed, growing faint under it, he could bear it no farther. They took a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Matthew says they compelled him to bear the cross. Luke says they laid the cross on him that he might bear it *after Jesus*. Compare Matt. 27:32 and Luke 23:26. Who this Simon was, friend or foe, or how he felt on the sad occasion, is not certain; but he was probably suspected of leaning to the cause of Christ. It is not certain whether he bore the whole cross or only part of it.

As the procession advanced, there followed him a great company of people, and of women which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus, knowing he should soon be through his troubles, and seeing the glory that should follow, turning to them, said, Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children. He then foretold the solemn doom of the holy city. Luke 23:27-31.

Reaching the dreadful spot, Jesus was again stripped, and nailed to the cross. Truly this was the hour of darkness. A few days before, the Son of God was in tears. The night before, he had been in bloody

sweat. Now he is on the cross, receiving at the hands of men a punishment reserved for the worst criminals. Some think hanging on the cross produced dislocation. So they understand that phrase, "All my bones are out of joint," Psalm 22:14. Others think it is figurative language, descriptive of dreadful agony, *as if* all the bones were dislocated. Perhaps this is the more probable view. The mode of death by crucifixion was the extinction of life, not by strangulation, nor by loss of blood, but by nervous distress. The extremities, the seat of very tender sensation, were wounded and lacerated. The distortions of the frame were dreadful. The sufferer was confined to one position, itself great torture if long continued. One may read the history of crucifixion until his feelings are petrified. The details are indeed lacerating. No doubt a graphic description of them in a large assembly would make many swoon away. But the object of this chapter is not to harrow up sensibilities, but to show how Jesus humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Wondrous cross! Wondrous tree! The human mind, ever prone to superstition, has sought, and claims to have found, more wood belonging to our Savior's cross than is found in one of our large edifices. But the efficacy of the cross is not in the wood, but in the blood shed by him who hung upon it. Pious minds must have experienced sensible relief when the first Christian emperor, considering the horrible nature of the torture, and wishing to put honor on the death of Christ, abolished punishment by crucifixion.

Every death by the cross was shameful. That of our Lord was peculiarly so. He was crucified between two thieves, and with every mark of ignominy.

Such was the agony of death by the cross that, as a matter of humanity, it seems to have been customary to administer some powerful narcotic to produce insensibility. "Wine mingled with myrrh" was offered to our Savior, but he "received it not." Mark 15:23. He drew his solace from another source. As he had despised their reproaches and cruelties, so he despised their offered stupefying cup. Christ would end his days with an unclouded intellect. He would not leave the world in voluntary stupor. Yet even the offer of wine mingled with myrrh was soon followed by renewed derision. Matt. 27:42, 43.

The death of the cross is often called *accursed*. It was so indeed. Paul says: "It is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." Gal. 3:13. He refers to Deuteronomy 21:22, 23: "If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance." These texts do not teach that eternal misery always followed this kind of death. We know this is not so. The penitent thief went from the cross to paradise.

A few remarks may aid us in understanding these verses.

1. Hanging in any way has always been esteemed odious, gibbeting the dead very much so, and crucifixion most of all.
2. The Jews contend that they never crucified the living, though they admit that, after the death of a vile criminal, they sometimes hung his lifeless body on a tree. Some contend that they crucified the living. Perhaps they did. See Josh. 8:29; 2 Sam. 21:9. Josephus tells (lib. 13, cap. 22) of the crucifixion of eight hundred men by Alexander, king of the Jews. However this may be, the Jews and all

ancient nations regarded hanging on the cross as the most execrable death.

3. In the passage cited from Deuteronomy, God himself teaches that whoever is righteously and according to the divine law delivered over to hanging, does therein receive the curse of God.

4. So terrible was this death, that God said it should be all the punishment and disgrace man should inflict on any criminal. It was "the curse of God;" that is, the extreme penalty provided for evil-doers in the Jewish commonwealth. Accordingly, at sunset the body was to be taken down, that the land might not be defiled by scenes which could but harden men's hearts.

5. Though the sentence given by Pilate was wholly unjust, and though it was with wicked hands that Jesus was crucified and slain, Acts 2:23, yet, as he voluntarily and by God's approval stood in our place, he bore "the curse of the law," not for his own, but for our sins. No doubt the Mosaic law pointed to the death of Christ, for above all that ever lived, he was "made a curse," though not for himself, yet "for us." He was not only forsaken of men, but of God. The bitterest cry ever heard came from the cross: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Not long after, our Savior cried with a loud voice, and gave up his spirit. That he was dead the executioners admitted, and neither friend nor foe doubted. The water that came from his side proved that he was dead and cold. But the Lord of heaven and earth had no sepulcher of his own. The love of one of his followers secured him burial. Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable Counselor and a rich man, who had hitherto shown much timidity, went in boldly unto Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. He bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulcher

which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the mouth of the sepulcher. Mark 15:43, 46. Here the Lord lay surrounded by a strong guard of Roman soldiers.

This was the end of his humiliation; for that clause in the Apostles' Creed which says, "He descended into hell," means no more than that his body was under the power of *death*, and that his soul was in the invisible world. That our Lord's soul was not in torment after his death is certain, for he said to the penitent thief, "This day shall you be *with me in paradise*;" and paradise is a place of bliss.

1. Why should we be in love with this world? It reviled, maligned, and crucified the Lord of life and glory. It deserves not our confidence or our love.

2. Let us not make much ado about our sufferings. Our Master fared far worse. If personal innocence and unswerving benevolence could screen anyone—our Lord would never have met a rebuff.

3. Let us not be afraid of humiliation. In the end it will do us no harm. It is the highway to glory. If we would be very high, let us know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and be made conformable unto his death. Phil. 3:10. If we would reign with him—let us suffer with him.

4. It is as safe as it is necessary to trust in the divine mercy granted to sinners through the blood shedding of Christ. To believe in Christ is a duty, is wisdom, is eternal life.

General Views of Christ's Work

It is common to many languages to put a part for the whole. The sacred writings abound in this type of figure of speech. The whole nation of Israel is called Jacob. The law often signifies the whole Mosaic dispensation. The death of Christ, or the cross of Christ, is a term to denote the whole system of gospel truth. The fear of God and the love of God are used to express the whole of religion. So when the apostle says, "We preach Christ crucified," he intends to say that he and his co-workers set forth the whole of the gospel, giving a just prominence to the great fact of the sacrificial death of our Lord.

As preliminary to this discussion it may be observed:

1. Unless man is a sinner, he needs no other good news than that God is just. The whole need not a physician. The innocent require no pardon. The holy need no change of heart. In the righteous there is no need for forgiveness of sin. It is the lost who need a Savior. Whoever denies his guilt rejects Christ. Let the Governor offer pardons where guilt has been proven; let him not insult the virtuous by an offer to remit the penalty for crime of which even the suspicion of guilt is a great wrong.

2. A full and thorough conviction that we are sinners is both right and useful. A vague and general suspicion of guilt will hardly lead anyone to embrace the gospel. Whenever one feels that he is wrongfully accused, and is fully conscious of innocence, he asks no relaxation of legal rigor. All he desires is sheer justice.

3. The gospel is rendered null and void as to any saving efficacy in regard to all men who refuse to say, in the spirit

of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Its morality may secure to them respectability; its civilizing influences may soften the asperities of their character; its enlightening power may rescue them from barbarism, but its *saving* influences they will never feel while entertaining self-complacent views of themselves. Whoever would be cleansed in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, must confess his guilt. Whoever would be made rich, must own his poverty. Whoever would be clothed with the righteousness of Christ, must bewail his own nakedness. To him who sees that floods of tears can never cover the mountains of his sins, it will be good news that, through Christ, God will cast them into the depths of the sea! God gives grace to the humble; but he knows the proud afar off.

4. As many as are under the teachings of God's Spirit will always welcome even a plain and familiar explanation of the plan of mercy revealed in the gospel. Wisdom is justified of her children. All others will wonder and perish!

5. In preaching the gospel, nothing is to be concealed. It is at our peril if we withhold a truth because it is offensive to the carnal mind. We may not even disguise it or obscure it by the arts of rhetoric. Thus Paul says, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." Nothing could have more offended the prejudices of Jews, or assailed the wisdom of Greeks, than preaching Christ crucified. To call upon them to believe in one that had been crucified on a tree seemed to them monstrous. Yet Paul preached this very doctrine. He knew its power. He says: "Unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ" is "the power of God and the wisdom of God." Nor did he publish this vital truth in words which man's wisdom teaches, but in words which the Holy Spirit teaches. Let us follow his excellent example. Let us not

try to render the gospel pleasing to men by denying or disguising its unwelcome truths. If we could persuade all men that Christ was never crucified, the work of salvation would be at an end, the humble would be cast into despair, the ignorant be rendered more brutish, and the world quickly return to idolatry and atheism.

6. While the death of Christ was the crowning event in his humiliation and an essential part of it; it is not to be separated from his incarnation, his perfect obedience, and his previous sufferings. His whole life upon earth, followed by his death on the cross, and that by his exaltation at God's right hand—must be taken together.

7. The salvation of a sinner in no sense depends upon his fitness, but only on the fullness of Christ Jesus. If the gospel makes anything plain, it surely teaches that we are saved by grace through faith, that is in Christ the Lord.

With these explanations, let us notice several methods by which we often point to the effect of the death of Christ in saving lost men. *The human mind is weak and full of darkness by reason of sin.* It is a mercy, therefore, that in several well-chosen ways God makes this doctrine plain to our understandings.

I. Sometimes we represent Christ as taking our place and so **SUBSTITUTION** is the name by which we designate the glorious plan of gospel mercy. This mode of expression is appropriate and striking. Among men substitution is common and well understood. One is drafted into the army; his brother or friend, seeing the importance of his presence at home; or a stranger moved by financial reward—becomes his substitute. When once, with his own consent, he is thus enrolled, he is bound to obey all orders as if the lot had originally fallen on himself. In his case, as in any other, desertion is

severely punished. Substitution, once admitted, binds in all its rigor. There can be no abatement in favor of him who voluntarily consents to stand in the place of another. When he has done all that the other was bound to do, and not before—is he released.

So Jesus Christ voluntarily became our substitute. He took our place in the eye of the law, and "became obedient unto death." He perfectly fulfilled all his engagements. He never said, "It is finished," until he had showed us on the cross what temper he would have us exercise in the severest trials, and until he had drunk the dregs of "the cup of astonishment" put into his hands by the offended majesty of heaven. He entirely finished the work which God had given him to do. His release from the tomb was God's public declaration that the Substitute was bound to no more obedience or suffering for us. He who takes Christ as his substitute, does therefore publicly approve of this method of salvation. By the act of faith in the Redeemer, he is released from the penalty of damnation, and from the law itself as a covenant of works, by the keeping of which unfallen creatures stand justified before God.

II. Near akin to substitution is **SURETYSHIP**, in which one person undertakes to make good the engagements or liabilities of another. Christ is expressly called our *Surety*. In the Lord's prayer, our sins are called *debts*. They are indeed dreadful debts. We could never pay them. We are said to owe ten thousand talents—a sum equal to twelve tons of gold. Who can meet such liabilities? Besides, we all owed a perfect obedience to the precept of the law, a sinless keeping of every commandment. Not one of Adam's race could meet such demands. Seeing our indebtedness and helplessness and poverty—Jesus mercifully became our Surety. He did not indeed endorse our worthless names, but he gave his own most worthy name to God. He bound himself to pay all our debts, that is, to suffer the penalty due

to us for sin, and to obey the precept of the law for righteousness to us. He did it—he did it all.

The law, either as to its curse on the rebellious or as a means of justification before God, claims nothing of believers. Their tears and groans pay no part of their debt incurred by transgression. Their works of love and faith prove their sincerity and adorn their profession, but form no part of their justifying righteousness. So wonderful was this suretyship, and so perfect was the confidence of God in the engagements of the Surety, that "the souls of the elect were saved upon trust for four thousand years. The Father gave credit to Christ and glorified his saints on the footing of a sacrifice not then offered up, and of a righteousness not then wrought. Christ also, in the days of his flesh, went on credit with his Father every time previous to his death he said to a sinner, 'Your sins are forgiven you.'" [Ryland.] Thus, though Jesus was not actually crucified until the days of Pontius Pilate, he was in the esteem of God "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." So that "if you have been looking at works, duties, and qualifications, instead of looking at Christ, it will cost you dear. No wonder you go to complaining. Graces are no more than evidences: the merits of Christ alone, without your graces, must be the foundation for your hope to rest upon." [Wilcox.] Blessed be God, "Christ is not more rich himself than he is liberal to contribute of his treasures. He makes his people sharers to the uttermost of all that he has." [Crisp.]

III. Sometimes we speak of Christ as meeting the demands of God's law against us, and then we call his undertaking a **SATISFACTION**, a satisfaction to the law of God, a satisfaction to divine justice. This mode of speaking goes on the supposition that God's law is holy, just, and good; that its demands, both in precept and penalty, ought to be met; and that God's justice is an amiable attribute, calling for no

more than is right. The word satisfaction is often used in a general sense, not different from atonement, compensation, amends. But the primary meaning of satisfaction is, *doing enough*. To *satisfy* is to do all that is properly demanded. The judgment of all right-minded men the world over is, that God's precepts concerning all things are right, and that his judgments are equity and truth. To satisfy God's law is, to meet its demands in all respects. This Jesus Christ did for us. He said: "I delight to do your will, O my God; yes, your law is within my heart," Psalm 40:8; "My ears have you opened," Psalm 40:6; that is, you have made me your servant.

As God's law is a transcript of his character, in full accordance with his justice and holiness, to do and suffer all the law demands is of course to satisfy justice—to do and suffer what justice requires. Christ's satisfaction goes upon this supposition, that mere absolute remission of undeniable guilt cannot take place without loosening the bands of good government. Guilt cannot be removed without what some theologians call "compensation"—without what most call satisfaction. If laws had no penalties, they would be mere advice. If their just penalties were not enforced, they would be idle appendages to the best laws, and so government would be at an end. But God's government is perfect; he never demands more than is right; he never unjustly condemns; he cannot pardon capriciously; he must show mercy, if at all, in some way consistent with the demands of law, justice, and good government. Hence the necessity for satisfaction.

The satisfaction which Christ rendered is taken sometimes in an extended sense. It then includes all he did and suffered for us. Sometimes it is used in a more limited sense, and then it denotes his meeting all the demands of the law against us as sinners by enduring the penalty in our stead. Those who thus use the term speak both of

the *satisfaction* and *merit* of Christ. By the latter they signify his obedience to the precepts of the law; by the former, his amazing sufferings, by which we are set free from the curse of the law. His satisfaction delivers us from death; his merit procures for us the inheritance of sons. By the one the chains of condemnation are taken off; by the other, the best robe is put upon us. One brings us out of Egypt; the other brings us into Canaan. This difference in terms, however, makes no difference in doctrine. Blessed is he who has accepted this full and glorious satisfaction made by God's dear Son. On him the second death shall have no power. God has declared the law met and justice satisfied by Jesus Christ. Is not that enough? Jesus gave himself for us that, "the justice of God being satisfied and the law fulfilled, sinners might be freed from the wrath to come."

How necessary this undertaking of Christ was, is well stated by Owen: "To pardon sin without satisfaction in him who is absolutely holy, righteous, true, and faithful, the absolute, necessary, supreme Governor of all sinners, the Author of the law, and sanction of it, wherein punishment is threatened and declared, is to deny himself, and to do what one infinitely perfect cannot do." Another writer says: "The atonement may be defined as that satisfaction for sin which was rendered to God as the moral governor of the world, by the perfect obedience unto death of our Lord Jesus Christ—a satisfaction which has removed every obstacle, resulting from the divine perfections and government, to the bestowment of mercy upon the guilty." [George Payne.]

It is an objection of no force that the word *satisfaction* is never used in the Scriptures in regard to the work of Christ. We are not contending for words. The doctrine is taught, and that is enough for us. It is, however, a good word, and is used in Scripture on a like

subject: "You shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer."
Num. 35:31.

IV. Sometimes we represent the work of Christ for us by speaking of him as a **SACRIFICE**. It is expressly said in Scripture that Christ "has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor;" "he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" "he offered up himself." Eph. 5:2 Heb. 7:27; 9:26. He "bore our sins in his own body on the tree." 1 Pet.2:24. His soul was made an offering for sin. Isaiah 53:10. Although the word sacrifice is sometimes used to denote every kind of offering, yet, a sacrifice, strictly speaking, differs from a mere oblation in this, that in a sacrifice there is a real destruction or change of the thing offered; while an oblation is a simple gift without any such change. Thus tithes, first-fruits, and every kind of property devoted to religious uses were oblations.

But sacrifices, in strictness of speech, were either wholly or in part consumed by fire. They were of three kinds: first, *eucharistical*, to express gratitude for mercies received; secondly, *petitions*, to obtain some favor; or, thirdly, *expiatory*, to atone for some sin. This last was specially and peculiarly the sacrifice of Christ. "He was made sin [a sin-offering] for us." He died as a victim in our room and place. He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He offered one sacrifice for sins. The Jew, who had incurred ceremonial guilt, brought his lamb and confessed his sins over it; and it became his victim, and died for him, and for him alone. But when John the Baptist saw Christ he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin [not of one man, or of one nation, but] of the world." John 1:29. So that Paul well argues that there is no need of daily, yearly, or any more sacrifices, for by once offering himself to God, Christ has forever perfected those who believe, has made an end of transgression, has

put away sin, and become the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Thus is Christ the propitiation for our sins. That is, his sacrifice averts from us the wrath of God, and renders God propitious to us. The word propitiation is borrowed from the propitiatory, or mercy-seat, which covered the tables of the law. So the propitiation of Christ covers up the handwriting that was against us, and opens the way for God's mercy to flow forth to us lost men. It should be for our perpetual joy that "the redeeming power of the blood of Christ is greater than the condemning power of sin." [Mather.] The vilest sinners the world has ever seen, the murderers of Christ and the murderers of his saints, when they have been able to see the completeness of this one offering, have said, "It is enough: my conscience demands no more sacrifice: God requires no further offering."

V. Sometimes Christ's work for us is called his **OBEDIENCE**—his obedience unto death. This mode of speaking is found in Scripture, and is often adopted by good writers. Paul says that "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;" that "though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;" and that he "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Romans 5:19; Heb. 5:8; Phil. 2:8. Christ's obedience was both active and passive. He kept the precept and he bore the penalty of the law. He obeyed in suffering. He suffered in obeying. In Romans 5:19 *obedience* in Christ is put in contrast with *disobedience* in Adam. This is *active* obedience. In Philippians 2:8 we read of *obedience unto death*. This is *passive* obedience. Though we thus distinguish, we never separate these two kinds of obedience. They are inseparable. Had our Lord lived a blameless life, the example would have been good for us, and his life pleasing to

God; but how could his life have saved us from wrath? On the other hand, if our Lord had not been holy, his death could in no way have availed for us. The whole obedience of Christ has these excellent qualities. It was obedience unto God. So he said, "I have finished the work which you gave me to do." "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" It was perfect. There was no defect in it. He did all that God required. He suffered all that God inflicted. His obedience was un failing. He shrank from nothing. He came short in nothing. He was full of zeal for the honor of God. In his greatest darkness he prayed, "Father, glorify your name." He was full of compassion to men. Having loved his own, he loved them to the end. It was because he loved us, that he gave himself for us. Gal. 2:20.

1. There is a rich and harmonious variety of modes of expressing and explaining the great doctrine of salvation by Christ. Every suitable method of teaching this truth is either used or suggested by the sacred writers. While we find this pleasing variety, there is no diversity in the scope of their teachings. They wonderfully agree.

2. It is of paramount importance that we believe and maintain the true doctrine respecting Christ's undertaking for us. At no time and at no hazard let us yield to the clamors or insidiousness of error. In the salvation of a sinner, all depends on the work and sufferings of the Savior. Here alone can the guilty have peace with God, or the despairing have hope beyond the grave.

3. There is no danger in making Christ all and in all. "It is Christ who brings us everything we get. . . . If you would have any good, you must get it by Christ." [Crisp.] "If you ever saw Christ, you saw him as a rock, higher than self-righteousness, Satan, and sin. And this rock follows you and there will be a continual dropping of

honey and grace out of this rock to satisfy you." [Wilcox.] Make much, O make much of Christ. "Whoever has Christ cannot be poor; and whoever lacks him cannot be rich." [Dyer.]

4. The salvation of Christ is no more rich than it is free. It gives milk and wine in abundance. And it gives without money and without price. If you would be saved, you must simply believe, simply accept the grace that is offered. An experienced Christian said: "I never had a more lively sense of my acceptance with God through Christ than when I was sensible of the greatest recumbency on him: when I laid most stress upon him, I always found most strength in him." [Thomas Coles.]

5. As our persons, so also our services have acceptance through Christ. The love of God refuses nothing which the obedient love of his people offers through Christ Jesus, Imperfect indeed are all our doings. But perfect is the righteousness of Christ—through whom believing sinners and works of faith are graciously owned and accepted.

Redemption by Christ

It has long been customary to speak of the recovery of lost men as the work of Redemption. Job, David, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, all speak of the Redeemer. Though the word redeemer is not in the New Testament, yet *redemption* and corresponding terms are there of frequent occurrence. In the Old Testament the same word is rendered Redeemer and Avenger. The avenging of blood and redeeming from bondage both devolved on the nearest male relative so that a redeemer was a kinsman. Our Redeemer is our brother, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. In the New Testament are three verbs rendered *redeem*. One is from a noun which signifies a *market* and means simply *to buy*. It is found more than thirty times. It is the word used by our Lord when he speaks of *buying* a field, *buying* oxen, *buying* foods. It is the word used by Paul, when he twice says, "You *are bought* with a price." 1 Cor. 6:20 7:23. It is used by John: "You *have redeemed* us to God by your blood." Rev. 5:9. See also Rev. 14:3, 4. God's people are redeemed from the earth, from among men, from their sins by the blood of Jesus—a great price paid for such poor creatures—such sinful worms.

Sometimes we have another verb, a compound of the foregoing. It occurs four times. This is the word used by Paul when he says: "Christ has *redeemed* us from the curse of the law;" "God sent forth his Son . . . to *redeem* those who were under the law." Gal. 3:13; 4:4, 5. This word signifies to buy again, to buy out of the hands of another.

There is still another verb thrice used in the New Testament, and always rendered *redeem*. "We trusted that it had been he who would have *redeemed* Israel;" He "gave himself for us that he might *redeem* us from all iniquity;" "You know that you were not *redeemed* with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Luke 24:21; Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19. This word has a noun corresponding to it [lutron]. This is the word used by our Lord when he says: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a *ransom* for many." Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45.

We have yet another word, a compound of the foregoing [antilutron]. It is used by Paul when he says that Christ "gave himself a *ransom* for all." 1 Tim. 2:6. Each of these nouns points to the *price* paid for redemption.

In the Jewish Commonwealth redemption was well understood. If a man became poor, so that he could not pay his debts, he was sold into servitude to the year of Jubilee. But it was the privilege and the duty of his near and wealthy kinsmen to pay his debt, and let him go free. Among other nations also, before the coming of Christ, redemption was not unknown. In the early history of the world, prisoners of war were often put to death. At length, humanity forbade so cruel a practice, and they were sold as slaves. On the return of peace, their kin or their country sometimes sent and paid a ransom for them, thus redeeming them from their masters.

The moving cause of the redemption of sinners is not anything good in them, but only the sovereign, eternal, and unchangeable love of God. The procuring or availing cause of redemption is the

humiliation and death of Christ. The end of redemption was the promotion of the divine glory, as it marvelously illustrated the divine perfections. The effect of redemption on man is full, complete, gratuitous, eternal salvation.

The subject of this chapter is **the wisdom of God in redemption**. In this matter it may aid us to keep clearly in view these truths:

1. God is a holy God. By the unchangeable rectitude of his nature, he hates sin. To him it is abominable.

2. God is the Creator of all things, and therefore he has a perfect right to treat all his creatures as he pleases. His solemn challenge is—'Shall I not do what I will, with my own?' Who dares take it up?

3. God is every way fit to govern the world and all its inhabitants. He has all and infinite perfections. He justly claims and exercises the right of universal empire and control.

4. Man is a creature. He is therefore not independent. He is bound by his Maker's will. Nothing can release him from these everlasting bonds.

5. Man is a rational and voluntary agent. He is therefore a fit subject for moral government. He is rightly and justly accountable.

6. Man is a sinner. He has violated the law of his being. He is thus guilty, depraved, and miserable. He is under a curse, in a state of pollution, and a child of sorrow. He is not so unfortunate—as he is criminal.

7. Sin is an evil of such magnitude as not to be manageable by finite beings. It is easier to make breaches than to repair them,

to pull down than to build up, to kill than to make alive. "He who cannot build a hut, may destroy a palace." One man may kill another, but all men united cannot give life. This is the law of our nature. Let it never be forgotten.

8. The whole problem of redemption was therefore beyond the solution of a finite mind. The limits of man's understanding and faculties are narrow. Our wisdom consists in confessing our ignorance, in seeking instruction, in shunning dizzy heights. For human weakness to meddle with the great affairs of God only ends in failure.

9. Let us all, therefore, learn what we can, and pretend to no more than we have. Let us refresh ourselves in the river of truth, but let us not venture beyond our depth. Creation is beyond the reach of fair criticism. So also is redemption. Let us be lowly. There is a relationship between humility and solid advancement in knowledge. Paul confessed his insufficiency to fathom the deep things of God: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." Such ignorance is wiser than all boasting.

10. All men do at times feel the necessity of some redemption-price being paid to God for them—some satisfaction being made to divine justice. Adam Smith, the author of the "Wealth of Nations," whom none will suspect of too strong an inclination to Christian doctrines, says, "Man, when about to appear before a being of infinite perfections, can feel but little confidence in his own merit, or in the imperfect propriety of his own conduct. To such a being he can scarcely imagine that his littleness and weakness should ever seem to be the proper object either of esteem or regard. But he can easily conceive how the numberless violations of duty of which he has been guilty, should render him the

object of aversion and punishment; nor can he see any reason why the divine indignation should not be let loose, without any restraint, upon so vile an insect as he is sensible that he himself must appear to be. If he would still hope for happiness, he is conscious that he cannot *demand* it from *justice*, but that he must *entreat* it from the *mercy* of God. Repentance, sorrow, humiliation, contrition at the thought of his past conduct, are, upon this account, the sentiments which befit him, and seem to be the only means which he has left of appeasing that wrath which he has justly provoked. He even distrusts the efficacy of all these, and naturally fears lest the wisdom of God should not, like the weakness of man, be prevailed upon to spare the crime, by the most importunate lamentations of the criminal. Some other intercession, some other sacrifice, some other atonement, he imagines, must be made for him, beyond what he himself is capable of making, before the purity of the divine justice can be reconciled to his manifold offences." Thousands feel as much as is expressed by this author; as he says, it is very natural that they should. A sense of guilt renders the existence of many almost intolerable; nor can it ever be effectually removed but by the great sacrifice of the bloodshedding of Jesus Christ.

11. Wisdom marks all the divine conduct. In actual operation wisdom selects good ends and right means to accomplish those ends. "The wisdom of God is formed of his omniscience and benevolence, united in planning and accomplishing all real good in the progress of his immense and eternal kingdom." [Dwight.]

We are now prepared to look at the truth that **there are unfathomable depths of wisdom in the dealings of God with our race in the great work of redemption.**

It is evident that the illustration of any attribute of God or man, furnished by any work, is in proportion to the difficulties to be overcome. Some things are simple and have few relations. Others are vast and complicated, and have bearings remote and immediate. Their course is through a long duration. They involve the happiness of many. Such is the work of redemption. It is God's chief work. He has expended more on it than on all his other works; more than in creation and providence. It would seem as if it was known that God would redeem men, before it was known how he would do it. The wit of angels seems to have attempted no solution. The case was too difficult for them. Of Jehovah it is said: "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." Isaiah 69:16. Jehovah was the sole **author** of redemption. He alone **devised** it. He alone **executed** it. He alone **applies** it. "Salvation is of the Lord." Let us notice some particulars.

I. God's wisdom shines out in redemption, as his plan reconciles all the divine attributes. Redemption must not weaken the divine government, and must not impair the divine honor. God could consent to nothing which would evince the possibility of his denying himself. When human governments pass by offences, it is a confession of weakness. God could ignore no offence. Yet the eternal ruin of all men would have left the human and angelic races without a single case of mercy shown to the guilty.

"**Mercy** pleads—if man is totally ruined, the creation is in vain. **Justice** pleads—if man be not sentenced, the law is in vain. Truth supports justice, and grace abets mercy. What shall be done in this seeming contradiction. Mercy is not manifested if man be not pardoned; justice will complain if man be not punished; therefore an *expedient is found out* by the wisdom of God to *answer these*

demands, and adjust the differences between them. The **wisdom** of God answers—I will satisfy your pleas. Punishment shall be inflicted, yet pardon shall be bestowed. Justice shall not complain for lack of an infliction of wrath; nor mercy for lack of an exercise of compassion. I will have an infinite sacrifice to meet the demands of justice; and the virtue and fruit of that sacrifice shall be the delight of mercy. The rights of both those attributes shall be preserved, and the demands amicably accorded in punishment and pardon, by transferring the punishment of our crimes upon our Surety, exacting a recompense from his blood by justice, and conferring life and salvation upon us by mercy—without one drop of our own blood being required. Thus is justice satisfied in its holy severities, and mercy in its gracious indulgences. The riches of grace are entwined with the terrors of wrath. The glories of divine mercy are wound about the flaming sword of justice; and the sword of justice protects and secures the glories of mercy. Thus is God righteous without being cruel; and merciful without being unjust. His righteousness remains inviolable, and the sinner becomes recoverable. Thus is resplendent mercy brought forth in the midst of all the wrath threatened to the offender." [Charnock.]

This scheme has no parallel in heaven or earth. Such a suretyship as that of Christ was never before heard of. It stands by itself in the history of all worlds. Around the cross of Christ were assembled Jews and Gentiles, men and devils; but **in the cross of Christ justice and mercy, righteousness and peace, severity and compassion embrace and kiss each other**. So that now forgiveness to the believing sinner is no less consistent with justice than is the destruction of the unbelieving reprobate. "God is just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity." All penitent souls may say: "We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God has set forth to be a

propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Romans 3:24, 25. God's rational creatures had never before seen it. So far from being able to devise or execute such a scheme, man is not able to comprehend it. All he can do, at least the best he can do, is to embrace it, obey its calls, wonder, and adore.

II. The wisdom of God is displayed in the choice of his incarnate Son, as the Redeemer. Neither an infinite God, nor an enlightened sinner would be satisfied with the doings or sufferings of a mere creature. What our case demanded was something far above the power of worms. Any redemption wrought out by men or angels must have been wholly inefficacious; but if it could have saved any one, it must have resulted in idolatry. No sinner saved from hell could have failed to give his heart to his deliverer. But the Lord Jesus Christ was every way fit to be our Redeemer.

1. He was divine, and so able to lay his hand upon God. He counted it not robbery to be equal with God. He was the eternal Son. To worship him was no idolatry. Before all worlds he was the Well-beloved of the Father. If any redemption could avail, his would not be powerless. He had no superior in nature. He was chosen, appointed, ordained of God to this very work. If any ask—Why was the second, and not the first or the third person of the Trinity chosen to be the Redeemer, we may not be able to tell what we shall know hereafter, and we ought both to think and speak reverently; but we may safely say that the Father could not fitly become incarnate and our surety, for then he must have stood in the relation of one answering for our guilt before the Judge of all the earth. This would have subverted the order of the Trinity. The Father is the first person in order. As such, there is a peculiar fitness in his demanding satisfaction for sins and receiving applications for mercy.

He is the fountain of the Godhead. Besides, he could not properly be sent into the world, as it is of the Father to send the Son, and of the Father and Son to send the Holy Spirit. The order of subsistence in the divine persons is properly the order of their operations. The Father is of none. He was neither begotten, nor does he proceed from any. The Son is of and from the Father—eternally begotten. Whatever the Son does, he does of the Father: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do." John 5:19. When the Son came, it was as he was sent of the Father, and to "do the will" of the Father. Thus it appears that the Father was not the proper person to do the work of redemption.

Nor was the Spirit the proper person to undertake that work. True, he proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is sent by them, yet it was fit that the Third Person should glorify the Second in calling men to believe on him, rather than that the Second should call men to bow before the Third; for this would invert the order of divine operation. The Redeemer is the object of saving faith. The agent of saving faith is the Holy Spirit. In order, the object precedes the exercise of faith, and of course it precedes the author and existence of faith. It is fit that the Spirit should apply the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Thus we see wisdom in sending the Second, and no other person of the divine nature, to be our Redeemer. His eternal Sonship in heaven well consists with his supernatural Sonship on earth. This double Sonship well fitted him to be our elder Brother, by whom we become sons and heirs of God.

2. This leads to the remark that God's wisdom is gloriously displayed in the incarnation of his Son. The glory of redemption much depends on its being effected in the very nature whose fall made redemption necessary: "By **man** came death; by man came also the resurrection of the dead." "As by the offence of

one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." The first Adam was earthy, and sunk us in ruin; the second Adam was heavenly, and saves us from wrath. By the sin of one imputed we fell; by the righteousness of the other imputed we rise to sonship with God.

Thus by his two natures Christ is equal with God in glory and authority; and equal with man in lowliness and suffering. None is higher—none is humbler. The Father greets him with gladness: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The sinner hails him with joy: "My Lord and my God." Thus we see the wisdom of God in the choice of the Redeemer—one who can be safely trusted with the honors of God's throne—and with the sins and sorrows and salvation of men; one who can be worshiped without idolatry—and approached without terror.

III. The wisdom of God is also manifested in the works and sufferings of the Redeemer.

1. In his **WORKS**. They were all faultless, perfect. Even Pilate found no fault in him. His works were without a blot or stain. They were many. They exemplified every perfection of God and every virtue of the creature. They set a pattern for every duty; they gave a measure for every attainment; they magnified every precept of the law. His obedience to law wrought out a spotless robe of righteousness for every believer. This is the linen white and clean, called the righteousness of saints. No robe of personal innocence is so glorious. Angels in heaven are not so beautifully adorned. And it is all by the merit of Christ. Thus is boasting excluded, God honored, the dignity

of the heavenly state unimpaired, and the sinner abundantly saved. Thus is God's wisdom displayed in Christ's works.

2. So also in Christ's **SUFFERINGS** do we see God's wisdom. He was subject to the penalty of the law. He suffered as one held guilty in law, not for himself, but for us, whose law-place he took. His sufferings began with his birth and lasted until he expired on Calvary. They were not solely from man, but chiefly from God; not merely corporeal, but mainly mental; not confined to his last hours, but running through his whole life; not only present, but anticipated for long years. Luke 12:50. "The radical error of the Unitarian system is, that men are saved solely by influence or power. But the truth is, we are not saved so much by any action as by a passion; not so much by exertion as by endurance; not chiefly by vital energy, but by dying blood. It was not finished until Christ died. We are made near by the blood of Jesus. We are *healed*, not at all by his words or deeds, but *by his stripes*." [Nevius.] Law is stern, and uncompliant. It "ought to be severe and solemn too, or it will excite nothing but contempt." By the suffering of death, Christ satisfied the demands of the law, and gave to the troubled conscience ground of hope. Now no justification is more perfect than that of sinners who believe in Jesus. Though without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, yet by the shedding of Christ's blood there is no lack of forgiveness. He who poured out his soul unto death is exalted a Prince and Savior, to grant both repentance and remission of sins. Thus is God's wisdom displayed in Christ's sufferings. The law is magnified—the sinner is saved!

IV. The wisdom of God is manifested in the effects of redemption on the universe.

1. We have seen how redemption harmonizes all the divine perfections; let us see how it **illustrates** them. In the cross we have the strongest possible expression of benevolence. The infinite dignity of the sufferer, the unparalleled humiliation he underwent, the debasement of those he would save, and the utter impossibility of ever adequately requiting his love—all show the amazing extent of the Divine compassion. If any ever doubted God's hatred of sin, all such uncertainty comes to a full end at Calvary. If God would not spare his own Son, when he suffered the Just for the unjust, surely he is the solemn and determined enemy of all unrighteousness. The scheme of saving mercy evinces at once the greatest love to the sinner and the strongest abhorrence of his sins. "Christ was no partisan with the sinner against the law." In like manner it would be easy to show how God's truth, and faithfulness, and power, and all his perfections, are wondrously displayed in the cross of Christ.

2. The influence of redemption on holy angels is both great and benignant. It affords them the most wonderful theme of inquiry. They *desire to look* into it. It gives them new and delightful employment. They *minister to the heirs of salvation*. It gives them a new Head. Though Christ is not their Savior, he is their Lord. It brings them and men into relations of amity and brotherhood, so that they make one family in heaven and earth. It gives them great and new sources of joy. They are glad with exceeding joy when a sinner repents. Luke 15:10. Nor have they any theme for songs so sublime as those concerning salvation.

3. To man, the effects of redemption are glorious and elevating. He who is saved from hell should be most of all struck with his deliverance—most of all drawn towards his Deliverer. None are so changed by redemption as the redeemed themselves. They pass from the lowest depths--to the greatest heights! They pass from just, total,

and dreadful condemnation--to full, free, and irrepeatable justification! They pass from a state of the lowest depravity--to a state of purity and holiness fitting them for fellowship with God! They pass from a state of inconceivable misery--to a state of unspeakable comfort and joy! They pass from a state of fearful estrangement from a holy God--to a state of lasting friendship with their Maker! The bond which binds them to God and to angels binds them also to one another, and that forever.

1. How futile are all schemes of man's devising for securing the favor of God and his own happiness. None of them comprehend the real evils in his case. They do not dispose of sin—either in its power, or guilt, or pollution.

2. How vain are all objections to the gospel drawn from the feeble, erring, sinful soul of man. Never is man more a fool or a transgressor, than when he sits in judgment on this greatest plan and work of God. Did any wise man ever undertake to show how God could have more fitly formed the dove, the eagle, or the horse? Yet many a prating simpleton undertakes to tell the world how he would like the plan of salvation, God's greatest work, to be arranged.

3. How attractive is the character of Jesus Christ. He is the perfection of a Savior. Some have made the suggestion that he might have rescued many from sin and wrath without so full, and frequent, and amazing acts of condescension. But who ever taught that he ought to have given higher evidences of compassion and tenderness? All the redeemed join in praising him, unite in crowning him, contend in the strife of extolling him. Matchless Redeemer! None among all the sons of the mighty, none among the holy angels—can compare with you!

4. If any desire a rich, pure, exalted, inexhaustible theme of study and inquiry—he has it in the redemption wrought out by Christ. He need go no farther. Here the holy angels all stop, and bow, and worship.

5. Unconverted men ought to feel a lively and profound interest in the undertaking of Christ. It mightily concerns them to know something of its wonders. If they ever find life or peace—it must be here. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col. 2:3. In him is life, and the life is the light of men.

6. Children of God, rejoice and obey, "You are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6:20. Give him all. Keep back nothing that can honor him. Hear the voice of mercy whispering good counsels to your souls. Present your whole selves a living sacrifice to him and let the love of God, like holy fire, come down and consume you. Be not straitened in your charity. Be not slothful in your labors of love. Be not cold in your zeal for the Master. Be enlarged!

The Atonement

The word *Atonement* is found but once in the English New Testament: "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Romans 5:11. Yet the Greek word here rendered *atonement* frequently occurs elsewhere. Our word atonement is compounded of *at* and *one*. *At-one-ment* is

therefore the same thing as a reconciliation. It brings together those who have been at variance. The words *reconcile*, *reconciled*, *reconciling*, and *reconciliation*, in application to the work of Christ, are found in the New Testament nine or ten times. "The ministry of reconciliation" is the ministry that makes known the atonement of Christ. "The word of reconciliation" is the doctrine of atonement.

Here are four striking passages from the New Testament in which the word occurs: "In all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Heb. 2:17. "All things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 5:18. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." 2 Cor. 5:19. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself." Col. 1:19, 20. In like manner Daniel, 9:24, says: "Seventy weeks are determined upon your people and upon your holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." Each of these phrases used by Daniel is explanatory of the others. Each of them points to an atonement; and an atonement is a reconciliation, a bringing together of those who have been alienated.

We have forsaken, insulted, and rebelled against God. He has followed us with mercies, reproofs, and exhortations, and yet we persist in iniquity. As a moral Governor, he must punish sin in his dominions. He is holy, and hates iniquity. His nature and his office both require that transgression be punished. He saw men ruined and lost, yet he pitied them. He provided a mode of reconciliation by the life and death of his Son. Jesus Christ is the Reconciler. He is fit for

this work. He has the nature of God, and so can appear with honor before the heavenly Majesty. He has the nature of man, and is by experience acquainted with all our natural infirmities. He knows what temptation and sorrow and death are.

In the passage cited from Colossians, God is said "to reconcile all things to himself" by Jesus Christ. This mode of speaking is not unusual in the sacred writings. The reason of this seems to be, that God is the *offended* party and we are the offenders. As such, we have need to be reconciled to him. The price of reconciliation was, therefore, paid to him, not to us. The learned Grotius has very justly remarked that in heathen authors *men's being reconciled to their gods* is always understood to signify appeasing the anger of their gods. When our Savior commanded the offending one to go and be reconciled to his brother, the plain meaning is, that he should go and try to appease his brother's anger, obtain his pardon, and regain his favor by humility, entreaty, and, if required, by reparation or restitution. This is also the use of the word reconciled, in 1 Samuel 29:4, where the Philistines say of David and his difficulty with Saul. "Wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? Should it not be with the heads of these men?" They thought David would try to assuage Saul's anger and regain his favor by destroying his enemies. Indeed, this is the ordinary sense of the term in Scripture. To make reconciliation, therefore, is to offer an atonement.

The doctrine of atonement is vital in the Christian system. It claims our candid and careful study. When we speak of atonement, we mean that "Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully pay the debt of all his people, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf." It was a *proper* satisfaction; that is, it was not figurative or emblematical. It was *real*, not imaginary, not feigned, not fictitious, not theatrical. It was *full*, and not partial. It

was complete, entire, lacking nothing. The only possible **THEORIES** respecting the work and death of Christ are these:

1. That Jesus Christ fully satisfied all the penal claims of the law for all men, and that all shall therefore infallibly be saved. This was formerly the doctrine of Universalists. They held that Christ had paid all the debts of all men, and that God would certainly save all men by the merits of his Son.

2. Another theory respecting the atonement is, that Christ did not by his death satisfy Divine justice for any of the sins of any man; that he died merely as a martyr to the truth; that no man required any real atonement, and that God required no satisfaction to his justice. This was the view held by old Socinians of Europe, and embraced by their modern followers.

3. Another theory of the death of Christ is, that he made atonement for some of the sins of all men, and left them by their own works and sufferings to satisfy for their other sins as best they could. This view presents the work of Christ as partial and incomplete. It is *practically* the theory of all who by pains, prayers, penances, and acts of voluntary humility--propose to make themselves acceptable to God.

4. The last view is, that Jesus Christ made full and complete satisfaction for all his people; that in him they are complete; that in him they possess full redemption and perfect righteousness before God. This is the true, Scriptural doctrine of atonement. It is full of comfort to all who are so humble as to be willing to be saved by sovereign grace. It puts the conscience at rest, so that it demands no more atonement. Indeed, it kindles up untold delights. "We rejoice in

God through our Lord Jesus Christ--by whom we have now received the atonement," says the Scripture.

As the doctrine of atonement is not of human origin, but is matter of pure revelation from God, it is evident we must be guided in the formation of our opinions by the Scriptures alone. If they settle not the points involved, all our logic and philosophies will be useless. Our appeal is directly to God's word.

No one will deny that in the sacred writings Christ is called a Savior, a Redeemer, a Deliverer, a horn of salvation. He is said to be the Bread of life, the Tree of life, the Water of life. Indeed, he is said to be the Life itself.

The Scriptures as clearly ascribe our salvation to the death of Christ. They say he "died for the ungodly;" that "to this end Christ both died, and rose and revived;" that Christ "died for our sins;" that saints should live to him who died for them; that he died for us that we should live with him. Romans 5:6; 14:9; 1 Cor.15:3; 2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Thess. 4:14; 5:10.

The Old and New Testaments wondrously harmonize in their teachings on this subject. Isaiah says, "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded [margin, tormented] for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [or, which procured our peace] was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. . . . You shall make his soul an offering for sin. . . . For the transgression of my people was he stricken. . . . The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . He bore the sin of many."

In sin are two things: one its defilement or pollution; the other its desert of punishment. To say that God laid on Christ the pollution of

our sins is blasphemous; but to say that Christ "bore our sins in his own body on the tree," is a heavenly doctrine. When the prophet says, "You shall make his soul an offering for sin," we know he refers not to any iniquity in Christ, for he had no sin. Nor did our Lord bear the sin of fallen angels. He took not on him their nature. Between them and God there is no mediator. They are reserved in chains under darkness, to the judgment of the great day. And yet his soul was an offering for sin. What sin can be meant but ours? One says, "We may, in many cases, say that the innocent suffers for the guilty, when one is exposed to loss or pain by means of another's fault, or for his benefit; but can it be said, with propriety, that the Lord lays upon the innocent sufferer the iniquity of the offender, or that the former bears the sins of the latter, when no translation or imputation of guilt is intended and no real atonement made? If so, what words can convey the ideas of imputation or atonement? What determinate meaning can there be in language?" [Scott.]

Peter declares that "Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." 1 Pet. 3:18. If he suffered for sins--whose sins were they? They were the sins of the *unjust*, even of those whom he would rescue from a righteous and eternal destruction. Indeed, almost every form of language is employed to show that Christ's sufferings were vicarious, not for himself but for others. Paul says, "God has made him to be sin [or a sin-offering] for us." 2 Cor. 5:21. In the very same verse it is declared that Christ knew no sin. Surely he bore the wrath of God, which was due to us.

When Peter says that he, "his own self, bore our sins in his own body on the tree," 1 Peter 2:24, what is the meaning of this solemn language? The expression *bearing sin*, or *bearing iniquity*, occurs more than thirty times in Scripture, and in every instance it means to bear the sufferings or penalty of sin. Thus in Leviticus 5:1, God

ordains that if a person does not speak up when he hears a public charge to testify regarding something he has seen or learned about, he will be "*bear his iniquity*." This means that guilt shall so rest upon him that he shall be liable to punishment. So also in Leviticus 22:9, God says "they shall therefore keep my ordinance, lest they bear sin for it and die." So in Ezekiel 23:49, God says, "You shall bear the sins of your idols." Clearly, the meaning is, you shall be held liable to punishment for worshiping your idols. Again, in Leviticus 24:15, the Lord says, "Whoever curses his God, shall bear his sin." In Hebrews 9:28, Paul says, "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;" and in Isaiah 53:11, God says, "My righteous servant . . . shall bear their iniquities." Could words more plainly teach that Christ endured the wrath of God for us, and bore the penalty of the law in our room and stead?

In Galatians 3:13, Paul says, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." This passage seems specially intended to meet all cavillings. In the language of an Israelite, the law consisted of a precept, a statute, a rule, or a direction--and of a curse, or penalty, and of a promise or blessing. The rule or command was for all. The promise or blessing was for the obedient; the curse or penalty was for the transgressor. Indeed, our Anglo-saxon word *curse* has precisely the same meaning with the Latin word *penalty*. As we were all transgressors, we were all under the curse. But Christ has redeemed us by enduring the penalty or by being *made a curse* for us. The slight variations in the sense of the word *curse* in this passage need mislead no one. In the latter case, it means a victim, one devoted or accursed for us. In quite a number of passages is Christ spoken of as a lamb, a Lamb slain, a Lamb who takes away sin, as a Lamb who is worshiped in heaven, a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:8, 12, and 13:8.

It is admitted that Christ resembled a lamb in his uncomplaining gentleness. But in what sense did a lamb ever take away sin, but by dying in the room of the offerer, and how could Christ as a lamb take away sin, but by the sacrifice of himself? If he were slain, it was not for himself--but for us. All the lambs offered in sacrifice died the innocent for the guilty; the spotless for the criminal. Do not these things clearly teach that Christ endured the penalty of the law, that he died as a substitute for others?

The same doctrine is variously taught in the Scriptures in connection with the phrase, *the blood of Christ*. It is expressly said that he "made peace through the blood of his cross," Col. 1:20; that "by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," Heb. 9:12; that his blood shall purge our "conscience from dead works to serve the living God," Heb. 9:14; that "the blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanses us from all sin," 1 John 1:7; that he has redeemed us to God by his blood, Rev. 5:9; and that we "are made near by the blood of Christ." Eph. 2:13. Now the shedding of the blood of Christ by his enemies was the greatest crime ever committed on this earth. It is impossible that such wickedness could be pleasing to God. In what sense then does his blood cleanse us from sin? It cannot be otherwise than as he offered himself as a Lamb without spot unto God; poured out his soul unto death--that we might live forever. Blood, innocent blood, calls for vengeance. The blood of Abel cried from the ground, and the cry went up to heaven. But the blood of Christ speaks better things than that of Abel. It calls for salvation to all who believe.

The Scriptures no less clearly declare that Christ endured his sufferings for the iniquities of his people. Isaiah says, "For the transgression of my people was he stricken;" 53:8. Paul says that "he was delivered for our offences," Romans 4:25; that he "died for our

sins according to the Scriptures," 1 Cor.15:3; and that he "gave himself for our sins," Gal. 1:4. There is no desirable sense in which Christ could have done and suffered these things for sin, unless it be as an atonement. And it is very clear from the New Testament that Christ's dying for sin is matter of exultation to all the pious. Indeed the only feast instituted under the gospel is a feast expressly ordained to show forth his death until he come.

The Scriptures no less frequently declare that Christ died for guilty men. "This is my body which is given *for you*." Luke 22:19. "I lay down my life for the sheep." John 10:15. "In due time Christ died for the ungodly." Romans 5:6. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8. There is danger of weakening the force of such clear and solemn passages by any explanation. Still it may be asked, In what conceivable sense could Christ die in our place if it be not as a vicarious, atoning sacrifice?

The Scriptures also declare that all hope of pardon for us lost men is centered in Christ. But why in him--if he is not our atoning priest? Thus says Peter, "Him has God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31. Paul says as explicitly, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." Acts 13:38. Again, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. 1:7. Where is the fitness of connecting the remission of sins in so remarkable a manner with the person and the blood of Jesus Christ--unless he is indeed the substitute of his people and their Savior in the highest sense ever claimed by the Christian world?

These clear, Scriptural proofs and statements receive confirmation and elucidation from the following **CONSIDERATIONS**:

1. If we deny that Jesus Christ endured the penalty of the law, and that his sufferings were vicarious--then we must deny that he was the substitute of his people, and that their sins are imputed to him. If this is true, we are of all men most miserable; for we have given up this world in the hope of attaining a better world, through Christ's substitution for us. But all our sins still remain, unless we have remission through his blood. We are eternally disappointed, and our guilt is still upon us. If we go thus far, we must in consistency maintain that justice is unsatisfied and must ever remain so, and that if there is any salvation for sinful men, it must be in derogation of the justice of God; it must be by trampling under foot the penalty of God's law.

2. Some who deny that Christ's death and sufferings were vicarious and for us, yet admit that the Scriptures *seem* to teach that doctrine. But they warn us against being led astray by figurative language. To this these answers may be given:

1. If figurative language teaches nothing, then it is nonsense.

2. In all languages, the very strongest things that are said are said in metaphor.

3. A great variety of metaphors are employed by the sacred writers on this subject.

4. Oftentimes the Scriptures speak in language perfectly plain. "He bore the sin of many." "He was wounded for our transgressions." "He died for our sins." "He suffered the Just for the unjust." These are forms of expression as free from figure as language can well be.

3. If the Scriptures which are generally relied on as teaching the doctrine of a vicarious atonement may be so explained as not to teach it, then it is useless to attempt to prove anything by the word of God.

4. Any scheme of doctrine which opposes the retributive justice of God will, if carried to its legitimate results, subvert also the doctrine of the Divine holiness. God punishes sin because his nature leads him to abhor it.

5. If God has set aside the penalty of his law without a full satisfaction, must it not have been at first too severe? And if the penalty was at first wrong, may not the precept for the same cause be too strict? Thus by our speculations, we subvert the whole law.

6. In like manner we shall subvert the gospel. What the convinced sinner needs and seeks is, not merely that he may escape hell and reach heaven, but he wishes to do it in a manner that will secure the honor of God. He wishes to see how God can be just and yet justify the sinner. On the old Bible doctrine of a vicarious atonement, all is plain; but on any other scheme there is no way of satisfactorily accounting for the death of Christ or the offer of salvation. If Jesus Christ bore the penalty--why did God smite the man that was his fellow?

7. How well does the true doctrine, and how ill does the opposite doctrine, agree with the types of the Old Testament. Without referring to the many great offerings in detail, let any one carefully consider the offering of even the young pigeons or the rite of the scape-goat, and see what can be the meaning of such services, if Jesus Christ did not die for us. If Christ bears our sins, well may we be forgiven.

8. How well does the true doctrine, and how ill does the opposite doctrine, harmonize with the worship of heaven: "The songs of the redeemed in heaven, even of those 'who had come out of great tribulation,' and had shed their blood in the cause of Christ, afford an unanswerable argument in favor of a real atonement and a vicarious sacrifice in the death of Christ. Without one discordant voice, they ascribe their salvation to 'the Lamb who was slain, and redeemed them unto God by his blood,' who washed them from their sins in his own blood. But in what sense could *the Lamb who was slain wash them from their sins in his own blood, unless he was literally an atoning sacrifice?*" [Scott.] What is there to make exultant the worship of sinners saved if, after all, God merely connives at their transgressions?

9. It cannot be safely denied—indeed it is commonly admitted—that the early Christian writers, the reformers, and the Christian world generally, until after the middle of the eighteenth century, held and taught that Christ bore the curse and endured the wrath of God in the room and stead of sinners. Is not this fact a strong presumptive proof that the doctrine is true? Is it possible that God's hidden ones have so generally mistaken the prophets and apostles, and been left to embrace delusion?

10. It is a great fact confirmatory of the true doctrine, that it has a mighty power over all right hearts. "O what a melting consideration is this, that out of Christ's agony comes our victory; out of his condemnation our justification; out of his pain our ease; out of his stripes our healing; out of his gall and vinegar our honey; out of his curse our blessing; out of his crown of thorns our crown of glory; out of his death our life: if he could not be released, it was that we might be; if Pilate gave sentence against him, it was that the great God might never give sentence against us; if he yielded, that it should be

with Christ as they required, it was that it might be with our souls as well as we can desire." [Hopkins.] Hearts must be harder than the rocks, if the love and death of Christ do not move them! When he died--the rocks were rent.

The Folly of Objecting to the Atonement

The minds of the apostles were warm with saving truth. The more fully the way of salvation was understood, the more did they glory in the cross and in its power to save. With them, worldly philosophies were as nothing. Learned heathen had wasted centuries in idle debates, in refuting one another, and in deceiving mankind; but they had effected nothing truly useful. Not a sinner was saved, not an aching heart found ease, not an idol was abolished. But when the gospel was fully and faithfully preached, it wrought wonders. It saved men's souls. It was full of power. The early preachers of righteousness gave to mankind the triumphant challenge, "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" 1 Cor. 1:20. Yet the wise, the scribe, and the disputer, had many objections. They mocked; they cavilled; they scorned; they counted the gospel foolishness. Anon they pretended to reason. Their utmost powers were directed against the cross and the person of Jesus Christ. They hated the doctrine of atonement. It is even so still. Time, which mends many things and wears out many things, has not improved the temper of the carnal heart, nor exhausted its fondness for debate.

Let us look at some of the objections made against the atonement. These are sometimes stated, with apparent modesty, in the form of questions, and sometimes categorically and polemically.

1. It has been urged against the doctrine of vicarious atonement, that it involves a transfer of moral character. To meet this, it is sufficient to ask, Is there not a difference between the penalty of sin—and its pollution? between the penalty of the law incurred—and the vileness of the heart indulged? between legal responsibility—and moral character? If an innocent man pays the penalty for a guilty man—does that make the surety a partaker of the moral character of the criminal? Surely one may voluntarily assume pains and penalties for even a guilty man without approving of his wrong, or without being like him in moral character. The truth is, a transfer of moral character is simply impossible; but nothing is more common than a transfer of legal responsibilities. The correct doctrine on this subject is well expressed by Owen in his work on justification: "Nothing is more absolutely true, nothing more sacredly and assuredly believed by us, than that nothing which Christ did or suffered, nothing that he undertook or underwent, did or could constitute him, subjectively, inherently, and therefore personally, a sinner, or guilty of any sin of his own. To bear the guilt or blame of other men's faults—makes no man a sinner, unless he did unwisely or irregularly undertake it."

2. Again, it is urged that if Christ bore the curse due to us, and fully satisfied Divine justice, then it is no mercy in God to forgive and accept us. But was there no mercy in God's providing that justice should be satisfied, so that salvation might flow forth to sinners? Was it not mercy in God so to love the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him might not perish, but have everlasting life? Is it not mercy in the blessed Spirit

of God to purify our hearts? To Christ, indeed, who has bought us with his blood, justice and the covenant of God require that he have a seed to serve him. But to the seed who do serve him, considered in themselves, salvation from first to last is the fruit of infinite grace. To believers, considered as in Christ and confessing their transgressions, God is faithful and just to forgive their sins. He is faithful and just to himself, faithful and just to his Son. But to those forgiven it is never of debt—but all of mercy, pity, and love.

The whole objection goes on the supposition that justice and mercy—in the gospel scheme, even after all that Christ has done—are antagonistical to each other. Whereas Christ's first and great work was to satisfy the claims of justice—and now justice and mercy gloriously harmonize in man's salvation. Mercy abounds and grace is free, because justice is fully satisfied. "The transcendent graciousness of the gospel covenant consists not in requiring less righteousness to give title to life than was done at first; not in requiring a perfect righteousness of us personally to that end; but in providing and accepting that of the Surety, according to the apostle, Romans 8:3, 4. The law could not give us life, because, being weakened by sin, we could not perform the perfect righteousness which it required; but what the law could not do Christ has done, giving us a title to life, fulfilling the righteousness of the law on our behalf." [Clarkson.]

3. It is sometimes said that if Christ bore the curse due to us for sin, there is no increase of happiness in the universe by means of his mediation. Such an objection goes on the supposition that Christ's sufferings were in exact proportion to the number of those who shall finally be saved, and that they were in amount equal to what would have been the everlasting sufferings of all his people if they had not been rescued from wrath. But this is not the doctrine of the Scriptures. It is wholly unsupported by the word

of God. It is shocking to the feelings of pious men. It is not maintained by one enlightened friend of the doctrine of a vicarious atonement. It utterly overlooks the infinite dignity of the eternal Son of God, from which his sufferings derive their chief value, and which puts them far beyond all comparison with the sufferings of mere creatures. So that there is no ground whatever for the objection. His sufferings, though great, were short. They were soon followed by unparalleled glory, in which all his redeemed partake. The happiness of the universe is already infinitely increased by the death of Christ; and yet his kingdom is far from being completed, and all its subjects have an eternity of bliss before them.

4. Sometimes it is asked, How could Christ make an atonement for us? how could he bear our sins, endure the penalty of the law for us, and for us work out a perfect righteousness?

So far as there is a real difficulty in this matter, and so far as it has not its seat in our depravity, let the following things be carefully considered:

(1.) God was under no obligation to provide any Savior for us. He might justly have left us to perish—as he did the fallen angels. But if in his mercy he has provided a Redeemer, who has satisfied divine justice, why should we find fault? If the demands of the law and Lawgiver are fully met, it is perverseness in us to cavil or object.

(2.) God could not relax his demands and accept a righteousness less perfect than the law requires. "Christ's righteousness is called the righteousness of the law. For, though righteousness does not come by our obedience to the law, yet it does come by Christ's obedience to it. Though by the deeds of the law as performed by man no flesh living can be justified; yet, by the deeds of the law as performed by Christ, all the elect are justified." [Gill.] Romans 8:4. So the penalty

of the law is death, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission, even though Christ undertake for us.

(3.) The whole work of Christ from first to last was voluntary. He was not forced to obey the law or bear the curse for us. No man took his life from him. He laid it down of himself.

(4.) Mere suffering, even of such a one as Christ, would not of itself avail for us without the consent of the sufferer and of God the Lawgiver. Jesus Christ died in fulfillment of a covenant between himself and his Father. Hence the efficacy of his blood shedding.

(5.) When we say that Jesus Christ bore the penalty of the law in the stead of sinners, we do not deny that his sufferings were different from those of sinners on whom the curse falls. He felt neither despair nor remorse. His holy soul could feel neither, because he had done no sin, and because he knew his sufferings would soon be followed by great glory. But despair and remorse are nowhere said to be the penalty of the law. They are indeed incidents to the wicked, who suffer the curse, but they are not the curse itself. Christ also suffered but for a short time, whereas sinners who bear their own iniquity must suffer eternally.

The reasons of this difference in the duration of sufferings are, first, Christ's infinite dignity and glory, which made his humiliation in time of more avail than the anguish of man to all eternity; and secondly, when Christ bore our sins, he bore them all, and made provision that his people should cease from sin; but the wicked, who fall under the wrath of God, sin always, and provoke the Most High by new transgressions forever. But an eternity of suffering is nowhere in Scripture said to be an inherent element of the penalty of the law. It accompanies it only when borne by finite creatures, themselves sinners. The death of the body and that endurance of the

wrath of God in the mind, which is properly called the death of the soul, constitute the penalty of the law. Jesus Christ bore these, for all admit that his body died and was buried; and that his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death. This is the sense, and the only sense, in which any sound writer maintains that Christ bore the penalty of the law.

Admitting these views, how plain is it that God could be just and yet justify the ungodly. But if we reject these views, and maintain that in saving his people it was the deliberate purpose of God to set aside the penalty of the law—who can conceive of the object of Christ's death? All admit that he died not for his own sins, for he had none. If divine justice requires the punishment of sin, how is God just in not punishing his people, unless the wrath due to them was borne by their Substitute? We cannot prove that God is righteous in permitting any one personally innocent, not standing in the place of the guilty, to suffer much or little. Good angels have sometimes visited our world in the form of men; and some have sought to harm them. But God never permitted one of them to endure the least pain. There can be no greater injustice than to visit with stripes, one who is under no penalty. The sufferings of Christ can never be reconciled with justice, unless he bore the wrath of God due to us. For God to inflict pain on one who has done no wrong or who has not assumed legal responsibilities for others, is absurd.

Some hold that Christ's sufferings were not penal, yet that his death was an exhibition of God's justice, and hatred of sin. But how can it illustrate these excellent attributes of the Most High to inflict unparalleled sufferings on one who had never displeased him, and who had not undertaken to bear the penalty of the law in the room of others? The only legal obstacle to the salvation of any sinner is the penalty of the law. If that is not borne, it remains in full force, and

forever demands satisfaction. To admit men to heaven with the penalty of the law still unsatisfied, would be trampling the law under foot. No government can maintain its authority when the penalty of its laws is not enforced. The penalty not executed, the precept falls into contempt. If sinners were thus saved, the heavens would be filled with thieves and robbers, as Christ speaks, that is, with men who would be there in spite of law and right, and in contempt of God's retributive justice.

Where, then, is the difficulty in the case? God, the Judge of all, objects not to our salvation by the death of his Son. The Son died and lives for this great purpose. The Holy Spirit calls men to repentance. Why should we waste our lives in crying, "How can these things be?" A little simple faith in Jesus Christ will scatter the difficulties men make about this doctrine.

5. Others say that if Jesus Christ made a vicarious atonement for those who believe on him, and laid down his life for his sheep—how can we offer the salvation of the gospel to all men, as we are commanded to do?

Let us look at this matter candidly and fairly. In reply it may be stated that the Scriptures clearly teach that Christ died to save his people, and with the covenant engagement on the part of his Father that he should effect that great end. He himself says, "I lay down my life for the sheep;" and prophecy said, "He shall prolong his days; he shall see his seed." Yet we have the example of God, of the prophets, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the apostles—in favor of making an indiscriminate and urgent offer of salvation to our fellow-men. But it is no part of the true doctrine of the atonement that the merit of our Savior is exhausted in the salvation of those who believe on him. No respectable writer teaches that Christ's humiliation and sufferings

would have been less if the number of his chosen people had been smaller; nor that his humiliation and sufferings would have been greater, if the number to be saved had been greater. The old standard writers all held that the offer of salvation was to be made to men indiscriminately, earnestly, and tenderly; that it was entirely consistent to make such an offer; that there is an infinite fullness in Christ—a sufficiency of merit to save the souls of all who would come. Mark the testimony of eminent divines.

Calvin: "We know the promises to be effectual to us only when we receive them by faith: on the contrary, the annihilation of faith is the abolition of the promises. If this is their nature, we may perceive that there is no discordance between these two things: God's having appointed from eternity on whom he will bestow his favor and exercise his wrath—and his proclaiming salvation to all. Indeed, I maintain that there is a most perfect harmony between them."

Owen: "It was, then, the intention and purpose of God that his Son should offer a sacrifice of infinite worth, value, and dignity, sufficient in itself for the redeeming of all and every man, if it had pleased the Lord to employ it for that purpose; yes, and of other worlds also, if the Lord should freely make them and would redeem them. Sufficient, we say then, was the sacrifice of Christ for the redemption of the whole world, and for the expiation of all the sins of all and every man in the world. This sufficiency of his sacrifice has a two-fold rise. First, the dignity of the person that did offer and was offered. Secondly, the greatness of the suffering he endured, by which he was able to bear and did undergo the whole curse of the law of God due to sin: *and this sets out the innate, real, true worth of the blood shedding of Jesus Christ.*"

Thomas Boston: "There was virtue and efficacy enough in Christ's oblation to satisfy offended justice for the sins of the whole world, yes, and of millions of worlds more; for his blood has infinite value because of the excellency and dignity of his person."

John Brown of Haddington: "Such is the infinite dignity of Christ's person that his fulfillment of the broken law is sufficient to balance all the debts of all the elect, nay, of millions of guilty worlds. . . . In respect of its intrinsic worth as the obedience and sufferings of a divine person, Christ's satisfaction is sufficient for the ransom of all mankind; and being fulfilled in human nature, is equally suited to all their necessities."

What broader, surer foundation for a sincere and consistent offer of mercy, than is found in such views as these, can any one demand?

Hervey: "The obedience and atonement are as sufficient to secure perfectly all sinners that fly by faith under the covert of his wings, as the immeasurable circuit of the sky is roomy enough for a lark to fly in, or as the immense brightness of the Sun is lightsome enough for a laborer to work by. When the thunders roar, and the lightnings flash; when the clouds pour down water, and a horrid storm comes on; all, that are in the open air, retire under the branches of a thick tree, or fly to some other commodious shelter. So the blood and righteousness of Christ are a covert. Hither we may fly and be screened; hither we may fly and be safe."

Witherspoon: "I shall lay down three propositions which I think can hardly be called in question, and which are a sufficient foundation for our faith and practice."

"1. The obedience and death of Christ is of value sufficient to expiate the guilt of all the sins of every individual that ever lived or shall live

on earth. This cannot be denied, since the subjects to be redeemed are finite, the price paid for their redemption is infinite. Christ suffered in the human nature, but that nature was intimately and personally united to the divine; so that Christ the Mediator, the gift of God for the redemption of sinners, is often called his own and his eternal Son. 'He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.' Romans 8:32. Such was the union of the divine and human nature in Christ, that the blood which was the purchase of our redemption, is expressly called the blood of God. Acts 20:28. This is the great mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh, in which all our thoughts are lost and swallowed up.

"2. Notwithstanding this, every individual of the human race is not in fact partaker of the blessing of the purchase, but many die in their sins, and perish forever. This will as little admit of a doubt. Multitudes have died who never heard of the name of Christ, or salvation through him; many have lived and died blaspheming his person and despising his undertaking; many have died in unbelief and impenitence, serving divers lusts and passions, and if the Scripture is true, he will at last render to them according to their works. But

"3. There is in the death of Christ a sufficient foundation laid for preaching the gospel indefinitely to all without exception. It is the command of God that this should be done: "And he said unto them, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15. The effect of this is, that the misery of the unbelieving and impenitent shall be entirely at their own door; and they shall not only die in their own sins, but shall suffer to eternity for the most heinous of all sins—despising the remedy and refusing to hear the Son of God.

"Let us neither refuse our assent to any part of the revealed will of God, nor foolishly imagine an opposition between one part of it and another. All the obscurity arises from, and may be resolved into, the weakness of our understandings; but let God be true, and every man a liar. That there is a sense in which Christ died for all men, and even for those who perish, is plain from the very words of Scripture."

In like manner Symington: "We hold that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus possessed an *intrinsic value sufficient for the salvation of the whole world*. In this sense it was adequate to the redemption of every human being. . . . The worth of Christ's atonement we hold to be, in the strictest sense of the term, *infinite, absolute, all-sufficient* *This all-sufficiency is what lays the foundation for the unrestricted universality of the gospel call* Such is my impression of the sufficiency of the atonement, that were all the guilt of all mankind concentrated in my own person, I should see no reason, relying on that blood which cleanses from all sin, to indulge despair."

So also Dr. Candlish has written at length to show that there is a fitness in the "universality of the gospel offer," and that it is sincere and in "good faith on the part of God."

"We maintain that the death of Christ lays the foundation for the offer of the gospel to all men universally, and lays the foundation for that offer being honest and free on the part of God."

Precious as is the doctrine of a vicarious atonement, and glad as must be the heart of him who hopes that he personally is interested in the sacrifice of Calvary, yet it abates nothing from the riches of divine grace, but on the contrary, enhances its glories, that the blood of Christ will never lose its power; and when all the redeemed shall have obtained a full supply, the treasure of gospel grace will be as

ample as ever. Let sinners everywhere know that if they perish, it is not because there is not merit in Christ sufficient to meet all the demands of law and justice against them. Let them all turn and embrace the kind, the sincere, the urgent call to life and salvation by mere gratuity on the part of God: "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." As God is not mocked, so neither does he mock any of his creatures.

Other objections have been urged against the doctrine of a vicarious atonement, but it is not necessary here to dwell upon them.

1. Let the Christian glory in the fullness and sufficiency of the work of Christ. His crown and his inheritance are sure. In this world's possessions you may be poor; but "a poor ragged Christian is dearer to God than a godless millionaire." "God is a portion of which his people can never be robbed. Impoverished you may be, but not undone; discouraged, but not disinherited." [Arrowsmith.] I recommend Christ to you more and more. Hold fast to him. Never let him go.

2. Especially, let all sinners everywhere accept the salvation that is so fully provided and so freely offered. Why will men stand and cavil, and wonder, and perish—when they are called to return to God and seek salvation? "There is mercy enough in God, and merit enough in Christ, and power enough in the Spirit, and scope enough in the promises, and room enough in heaven." O why will men refuse salvation?

Christ's Resurrection

The humiliation of Christ being completed in his death and burial. His exaltation began in his resurrection from the dead. This is a great cardinal truth in the Christian system. It has often been shown to be so. It is so by the confession of all Christians, and of the apostles themselves. Paul says, "If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. . . . If Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." 1 Cor. 15:14, 17-19. Clearly this doctrine is fundamental. It should be often preached and never yielded. "It is the cardinal fact of Christianity, without which all her other facts lose their importance." [Mason.]

It is agreed by Jews, Christians, and Infidels, that Christ was dead and buried. For a time his body was lifeless. Any decent regard to truth must admit this. Of his death there is no doubt. He himself admitted it more than fifty years afterwards: "I am He who lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."

It is also clear that prophecy required that Christ should rise from the dead. "You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay." Psalm 16:10. That this does not apply to angels is certain, for angels are pure spirits and have no "flesh." They never die. That it does not refer to any mere man is certain, for the person here spoken of is called God's *Holy One*, and all mere men are sinful. That it does not apply to David, who wrote the Psalm where it is found, Peter proved on the day of Pentecost: "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day." We know that he has seen corruption, for he has been lying in the grave for centuries. But, continues Peter, "But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing

what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact." Acts 2:29-32. Jesus foretold his own resurrection: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John 2:19. "He spoke of the temple of his body."

In the resurrection of Christ there was a concurrence of all the divine persons. Peter says, "God raised him up." Acts 10:40. Paul also says, "God the Father raised him from the dead." Gal. 1:1. But this work is not ascribed to the Father alone. The divine nature of Christ was employed in quickening his own dead body. He himself said of his own body, "I will raise it up." "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." The Son of God participated in the resurrection of his own body. And in Romans 8:11 the same work is said to have been effected by the Spirit of God. As in creation and providence, so in the raising of Christ's body—each person of the Godhead concurred.

Peter says that Christ was raised up *the third day*. Acts 10:40. In reckoning time, both Hebrews and Greeks frequently counted the part of a day on which a thing began as one day, and the part of a day on which it ceased as another day, and, adding these to the intermediate days, gave the total. Thus, among the Hebrews, the day on which a child was born was set down as one day, and the day on which it was brought to be circumcised was put down as another day, and only six entire days intervened between its birth and circumcision, and so it frequently happened that a child was not seven times twenty-four hours old when it was circumcised, and yet the law required that sign and seal to be put on the child on the eighth day. Greek antiquities show that the same mode of reckoning was often used in Eastern Europe. At other times the Hebrews

counted only the entire days. Compare Luke 9:28 and Mark 9:2. So that either mode might be used. The gospels state that Christ was buried the afternoon of the day before the Jewish Sabbath, and that he rose very early on the day after the Jewish Sabbath. So that he continued under the power of death one whole day and a part of two others. This method of computing time explains the phrases *three days* and *the third day*. Jesus arose the third day; this was the time fixed by his own prophecies; had he risen sooner, some might have doubted the reality of his death; had he remained longer in the grave, the season of terrible fear and darkness to his people would have been needlessly prolonged; had he remained much longer under the power of death, his body must have "seen corruption," which prophecy had said would not be.

Christ's raised body was a real body, and not merely the appearance of a body. In the minds of his followers there were doubts on this point. Once when he stood in the midst of them they were "affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." To settle this point he said, "Touch me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see me have." Their sight and their touch alike informed them that there was no illusion.

Jesus Christ had the same body after his resurrection that he had before. The sepulcher was opened and the sacred body it contained arose. After his resurrection our Lord said to his disciples, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself." To unbelieving Thomas he said, "Reach hither your finger and behold my hands; and reach hither your hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." Christ's risen body was the same as his dead and buried body.

Do any ask, Why did not Christ's followers recognize him immediately? In at least one instance "their eyes were blinded" that they should not know him, until by reasoning with them out of the Scriptures, he had satisfied them that he "ought" to have suffered these things, and then enter into his glory. And although Christ had plainly foretold his own death, burial, and resurrection, yet through the strange power of unbelief, his disciples did not understand or receive those truths. This error was not wholly removed from their minds until near the time of his ascension. When he was dead, the best thing they could bring their feelings to say was, "We hoped that it had been he, who would have redeemed Israel." Moreover, in a mind greatly afflicted there is a strange unwillingness, amounting almost to incapacity, to believe good tidings. It looks upon any very good news as too good to be credited. Luke tells us that this was the state of mind in the followers of Christ: "They believed not for joy, and wondered." Such a state of mind is not unusual, as might easily be shown.

Let us now examine the evidence by which the fact of Christ's resurrection is established. Peter says: "God . . . showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead." Acts 10:40, 41. It is worthy of notice that to the disciples there were two heavenly witnesses of Christ's resurrection. Luke indeed speaks of them as "two men . . . in shining garments;" but John expressly says they were "two angels in white." Luke 24:4-6; John 20:12, 13. These elder sons of God were the first, and they were fit witnesses of the wonderful event.

Respecting the witnesses of Christ's resurrection, several things may be stated:

1. Their number was large, between five and six hundred. From the days of Moses to this time, the most enlightened nations have admitted the testimony of two or three men. Here we have two or three hundred times the number of witnesses required to prove even that a mother killed her own child. Five or six hundred witnesses are as good as five or six thousand. The number is sufficient.

2. The witnesses were competent. They had the use of all their senses, and they had the best opportunities of obtaining correct information. Peter says the witnesses "did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead." In Acts 1:3, Luke says that "he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them [the apostles] forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." So that the witnesses fearlessly say, "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of life, . . . declare we unto you." 1 John 1:1, 3. In Scripture are mentioned eleven particular instances in which our Lord was seen by some or all of these witnesses.

His first appearance was to Mary Magdalene, who at first mistook him for the gardener, and to whom he announced his early ascension into heaven, Mark 16:9; John 20:14-17. Christ's second appearance was to Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women, who had prepared spices to embalm his sacred body. Matt. 28:1-10; Luke 24:1-12. His third appearance was to the two disciples, as they went into the country on their way to Emmaus. Mark 16:12, 13; Luke 24:13-35. He was afterwards seen by Peter, 1 Cor. 15:5. He was afterwards seen by James, 1 Cor. 15:7. He was then seen by the ten apostles, Thomas being absent, John 20:19-24. Eight days afterwards he was seen by all the eleven apostles, John 20:26-29. He was next seen by his disciples at the sea of Tiberias. There

were seven apostles present on that occasion, John 21:1-14. He was also seen at one time by more than five hundred brethren, 1 Cor. 15:6. Perhaps it was on this occasion that he ascended to heaven in the sight of the men of Galilee.

Paul also, on his way to Damascus, perhaps about two years later, saw him in his resurrection body, and conversed with him. In these interviews with his disciples, they had every opportunity to be certified of his being truly the risen Savior. There is no reason to believe that the evangelists have told us all the instances in which Christ was with his friends. Both John and Luke would lead us to this conclusion, John 20:30; Acts 1:3. Christ conversed with them. The pious women held his feet and worshiped him. These witnesses saw him walk; they heard his arguments and his reproofs; they saw his wounds; they received both his command to spread his gospel, and his blessing. Infidelity itself has never impugned the competency of the witnesses. Their testimony was not built on rumor, on the report of others, but on what was submitted to their own senses and observation.

3. The testimony of these witnesses agrees. Some mention things that others did not see or hear; but all agree that he rose from the dead, and that they saw him in his resurrection body. There is no contradiction between the witnesses. They agree in all things of which they speak. The early infidels labored to find out some contrariety in their testimony, but their labors were a singular compound of ignorance and malice.

4. The witnesses, by lives of humility, benevolence, uprightness, and self-denial, proved that they were honest men, and their word to be relied on. There is an almost universal belief that the apostles were pious men, and afraid of offending God, which they would have done

by fabricating falsehood. It is not even pretended that any of them ever amassed fortunes by maintaining that Jesus had risen. They lived and died poor men. The sublimest of the apostles was willingly a tent-maker. Jesus forewarned all his followers that adherence to him was the highway to poverty. These witnesses too were banished, stoned, slain with the sword, and crucified. They were hated of all men; ignominy was heaped upon them. They foresaw it would be so, and they were not disappointed. They were not in quest of fame, or ease, or pleasure. They counted it joy to suffer reproach for Christ. They hailed with composure the fire and sword of persecution. "There were no motives to corrupt them. . . . It is evident that nothing desirable in this world had the least influence on the apostles. Nay, on the contrary, whatever was terrible to nature discouraged them. They suffered all temporal evils, even death itself, for this testimony." The enemies of the Christian religion do commonly admit all this. The way of weakening this testimony is, by such insinuations as these:

1. The witnesses were unlettered and unphilosophical men. Suppose this were true, it would not prove that they were not good witnesses. Science and literature do not qualify men to tell the truth respecting a matter of fact occurring before their faces. But men who could speak all the languages of their times ought not to be held up to the world as liable to contempt for their ignorance. And men who have revolutionized the moral sentiments of mankind must have had something better than mere science. Such men were capable of being witnesses.

2. Some have said the apostles were credulous, and so are not worthy of confidence. But the whole history shows that they were not credulous. Mark says they "believed not." Mark 16:11. Again, on the next declaration of the fact, he says: "Neither believed they them."

Mark 16:13. Again: "He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at table, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen." Indeed, Christ often reproved their slowness to believe on this point. The whole history shows that they were not credulous. Notice here the unfairness of these infidels. When we state how slow Christ's followers were to believe his resurrection, some say, Why did they doubt, if the evidence was good and sufficient? Then when we give the reasons of their hesitancy, and show that finally the evidence was complete and to everyone satisfactory, we are told that they believed only because they were easy of belief. Each of these statements destroys the other. Neither is true.

3. But some have said that the witnesses in this case, and especially the apostles, were fanatics, and therefore not to be believed. It is freely admitted that a well-established charge of fanaticism must impair confidence in any testimony; but who has adduced the slightest evidence of the truth of such a charge in this case? It is no evidence of wild enthusiasm to believe an extraordinary yet possible thing, when it is proven to us. It is no evidence of fanaticism to say that we are witnesses of what we thus believe. Fanaticism relies on impulses and unaccountable impressions. It pays no just regard to evidence. But the apostles appealed to well-known facts. They said, "You know" so and so. "These things were not done in a corner." "We testify that which we have seen." This is not the language of madmen. Fanatics are proud, and boastful, and arrogant. All history shows that the apostles were humble, meek, and modest men. They avoid all needless allusion to themselves. They record their own imperfections. They praise not themselves. The chief of them says he was "not worthy to be called an apostle;" that he was "the least of all saints;" yes, that he was "the chief of sinners." Fanatics could never have sent forth a system claiming to be divine, and accompanied

with such evidences as to deceive such men as Milton, Locke, Boyle, Bacon, and Newton, and a large portion of the most enlightened nations of the earth, for the last eighteen hundred years.

But it is worthy of notice that **the Jews at first generally denied Christ's resurrection**. They said that while the soldiers were asleep, his disciples stole away his body. This story cannot be believed for the following reasons:

1. The guard at the sepulcher was unusually large—as large as Christ's enemies desired it should be. Matt. 27:65, 66.
2. It is wholly incredible that a guard, a large guard of Roman soldiers, should be asleep on their posts. The season of the year, at least during the night, was cool. The penalty for falling asleep on guard was death.
3. The dead body of our Savior could have done nothing in producing the belief that he was alive.
4. During the hours that Christ lay in the sepulcher, his disciples spent their time very much in mourning and weeping. Mark 16:10. It is incredible that this company of unarmed, dispirited, heart-broken followers of Jesus Christ should have laid and executed a plan to rescue the precious body of their Lord from a trained and armed soldiery.
5. The testimony of these soldiers, as eventually given, was wholly incompetent; for it related to a fact which they said occurred when they were asleep.
6. Their testimony, as first given, was full and satisfactory in favor of our Lord's resurrection. Of the two stories they gave out, we are at

full liberty, yes, we are bound, to believe the one that they told without "large money."

If Jesus Christ was not the Son of God, and did not rise from the dead, then he was a gross deceiver. Nevertheless, his followers, in that case so cruelly misled, were willing to lay down their lives for him. Is not that very strange?

If Jesus Christ did not rise, then a few men, who never had nor claimed any political power, any fortune, any favor with civil rulers, were able to convince hundreds of thousands of Greeks, Romans, and Hebrews, that one who suffered as a malefactor, was the Savior of men, and yet all in the teeth of evidence to the contrary.

If Jesus Christ did not rise, then we must believe that millions have "madly suffered imprisonments, tortures, and crucifixions, to spread an illusion."

If Jesus Christ did not rise, then it is true that "ten thousand miracles were wrought in favor of falsehood."

All admit that Christ died. Yet "his death is incomparably a greater wonder than his resurrection." Surely it is less to be expected that "the Son of God, who originally possessed immortality, should die, than that the human body united to him should be raised to a glorious life." "It was not possible" that he should have been held by death. Acts 2:24. His eternal power and godhead forbade it. Divine justice required his resurrection that his innocence might be vindicated.

Many important truths, essential to the comfort of a Christian life, are suggested and confirmed by this discussion:

1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ incontestably proves that in nothing was Jesus an impostor.

2. Christ's resurrection clearly manifests his divinity and his Sonship with God. If he raised himself from the dead, he must have been divine. If he claimed to be equal with God, and the Father and the Spirit cooperated in his resurrection, then he was equal with God, for God would not work a miracle to establish a lie. Paul says expressly that he was "declared to be the Son of God with power," that is, in a powerful manner, "by the resurrection from the dead." Romans 1:4.

3. Christ's resurrection gave ample proof of the completeness of his satisfaction to the law and justice of God. So Paul argues: "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Romans 4:25. "Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, yes rather, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." Romans 8:34. Paul says "the God of peace . . . brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus." Heb. 13:20. He was the God of peace because his justice had been fully satisfied. "His death appeased God, his resurrection assures men. . . Justice incensed, exposed him to death; and justice appeased, freed him from the dead."

4. If Christ rose from the dead, so shall his people. "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of those who slept." 1 Cor. 15:20. He is "the first-born from the dead." "We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him." 1 Thess. 4:14. "Our Savior's victory over death was obtained by dying; his triumph by rising again. He foiled our common enemy in his own territories, the grave." We shall be raised "in the likeness of his resurrection."

Romans 6:5. Our vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body. Phil. 3:21.

5. If we would know the fullness of the blessings of eternal life hereafter, we must know the power of Christ's resurrection here. Phil. 3:10. One of Whitefield's best sermons is on this subject.

6. On the fact and doctrine of Christ's resurrection depend all our hopes for eternity. So the apostles taught. 1 Pet. 1:3, 4. There is no room for doubt here. We cannot yield this point without surrendering all that is worth contending for.

7. How wonderful is that providence of God, which permitted death to come by man—and which arranged that by man also should come the resurrection of the dead. 1 Cor. 15:21.

8. The Bible is true. Christianity is divine. Its author was the Son of God. Obedience to him is required, and is most reasonable. Will you believe and obey the Son of God?

Christ's Ascension and Session at God's Right Hand

The first step in Christ's exaltation was his resurrection; the second, his ascension to heaven; the third, his sitting at the right hand of God. Having considered the first, let us now meditate on the other two.

I. CHRIST'S ASCENSION.

1. Our Lord, having risen, did not at once ascend to heaven, but remained on earth forty days. Acts 1:3. By this delay:

(1.) He would give his followers all reasonable proof of his humanity: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet." Luke 24:39, 40. Long after his ascension to heaven, the last surviving apostle testifies: "That which was from the beginning; which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life . . . declare we unto you." 1 John 1:1, 3.

(2.) Christ would give all reasonable satisfaction concerning the reality of his resurrection. This he did many ways, calling one poor doubter to reach forth his finger and behold his hands, and to reach forth his hand, and thrust it into his side. John 20:27. Indeed he showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible signs. Acts 1:3.

(3.) Christ remained on earth a season that he might aid his disciples in recovering from the terrible shock which their faith had received at the crucifixion, and that he might further confirm and instruct them in the nature and things of his kingdom. "These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." Luke 24:44, 45.

2. Prophecy required the ascension of our Lord, and the Scripture cannot be broken. So we read, "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." Psalm 47:5. "You have

ascended on high, you have led captivity captive: you have received gifts for men; yes, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Psalm 68:18. Of this prediction we have an inspired and so an infallible interpretation given by Paul in Ephesians 4:8-13. Daniel foretold the same thing: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him;" etc. Dan. 7:13, 14.

Our Lord himself often foretold his own ascension: "I go unto the Father." John 14:28. "I go my way to him who sent me." John 16:5. See also John 1:51. Much more did he say to the same effect. So that beyond all doubt several predictions, running over the space of at least a thousand years, required that Christ should ascend to God.

3. With the prophecy, the historic record well and fully agrees. Neither Matthew nor John record Christ's ascension. Yet it is declared in four books of the New Testament. The testimony of Mark on the subject is, "So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." In his gospel Luke says, "When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God." Luke 24:50-53. In Acts 1:9-11, we read: "After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus,

who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." In 1 Timothy 3:16, Paul says he was "received up into glory." Thus the record agrees with the prediction and explains it.

4. On the southeast side of Jerusalem, and separated from it by the valley of the brook Kidron, is a mountain-ridge running north and south. Its summit is about half a mile from the wall of the holy city. For many thousand years it has been famous for its olive-trees, and from the days of Samuel to the present time it has been called *Olivet*, or the Mount of Olives. 2 Sam. 15:30. Over this David fled weeping, as he retired from his palace in the rebellion of Absalom. The road to Jericho and the Jordan crosses this ridge. At its base on the west lay the ever-famous garden of Gethsemane. On its eastern slope was the retired village of Bethany, so often favored with the presence of the Savior. Often did he cross Olivet. This mount, which rises about two hundred feet above Jerusalem, is chosen by Zechariah either as the place or the emblem of great and terrible judgments. It witnessed many of the wonders and mercies and sufferings of our Lord. From it he ascended. Tradition attempts to mark the spot whence he arose; but all this is uncertain. On this mount he had beheld the holy city and wept over it. At its base he had been sorrowful and very heavy; yes, "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." It had witnessed his human weakness and his dreadful sufferings. At his ascension, it witnessed his triumph and amazing glory. Here he had fought with the powers of darkness. Here he now "made a show of them openly."

5. From Olivet Christ ascended to heaven. His going to heaven is expressly said to have been necessary: "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things." Acts 3:21. God's purpose, the truth of prophecy, and the fitness of things required

Christ's ascension into heaven. Mark says: "He was received up into heaven." Luke says: "He . . . was carried up into heaven." Christ himself says: "No man has ascended up to heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven." John 3:13. In Acts 1:11 we have the words of the angels: "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven." Stephen saw "the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Paul warns masters to be kind and gentle, and gives this as a reason, "knowing that your Master also is in heaven." Eph. 6:9. Again: "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Phil. 3:20. Again: "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. 9:24. Peter also says, He "is gone into heaven." But Paul says he is "made higher than the heavens." Heb. 7:26. This mode of speech may have reference to the Jewish idea of three heavens—first the aerial heavens, and then the starry heavens. Christ is made higher than these heavens, and has entered the third heaven, often called the heaven of heavens.

6. When we speak of Christ ascending, we speak of his human body and human soul. His divine nature fills, and has always filled, heaven and earth. Essentially it fills all space, is confined to no place, but pervades immensity. When Christ was walking here on earth, he spoke of the Son of man as being then in heaven. John 3:13. At all times this was true of his divine nature, and of it only. The effect of this exaltation on the human nature of Christ was not to annihilate it, not to sublimate it so that it ceased to be human nature, but to glorify it, to crown it with glory and honor. When Saul of Tarsus saw him, soon after his ascension, he shone with a luster above the brightness of the sun. The vision produced blindness, which was miraculously

healed. About sixty years later John saw him, and he fell at his feet as dead. The ordinary mode of explaining this wonderful change in the appearance of Christ is, that while he was here on earth his glory was veiled. At his transfiguration the veil was taken away, and his raiment became white and glistening. In heaven there is no veil, no covering. The glory shines out brightly, and nothing obscures it.

7. The manner of Christ's ascension is worthy of our attention. Christ ascended not figuratively, but literally; not spiritually, but corporeally; not insensibly, but visibly. His disciples saw him ascend to heaven as clearly as they saw him on the cross, or on the ship, or at the sea-side. He ascended in a cloud. No one has told us how bright that cloud was, or what was its appearance; but it was like the cloud in which he will come to judgment. Acts 1:11. Nor was he taken away suddenly. He was seen to leave the earth, and seen for some time after he left it. They gazed upon him as he went up.

His ascension was triumphant. Forty-three days before he had ridden into Jerusalem on an donkey' colt. He now ascends triumphantly into the heavenly Jerusalem. He left the world speaking words of encouragement and benediction to the humble. The first nine sentences of his sermon on the mount began with the word *blessed*. The last thing he ever did on earth was, to pronounce a blessing on his people. His ascension to heaven was every way glorious. His appearance was doubtless such. And his retinue was first the heavenly host of angels. In Acts mention is made of but two angels having been seen. But the prophecy which expressly foretells his ascension begins by saying, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place." Psalm 68:17. Compare verse 18 and Ephesians 4:8-12. The law on Sinai was given by angels. The Savior shall come to judgment with his angels *in like manner* as he left the

world. Our Lord's ascension was every way a joyous event, and was so regarded by his disciples, as Luke expressly informs us. It was the blessed fruit of his sufferings and obedience. And it was witnessed by a sufficient number of competent and credible witnesses, not less than five hundred. 1 Cor. 15:6. No man has ever suggested a plausible pretext for any one saying that he had seen him ascend, unless it was true.

II. HIS SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.

This is the third measure of our Lord's reward—the third step in his exaltation.

This was required by prophecy. David had said: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." Psalm 110:1. Compare Luke 20:42 Heb. 1:13. Both Peter and Paul prove that this applies to Christ. Christ himself foretold the same thing when he was in the hands of his murderers: "Hereafter shall the Son of man *sit on the right hand* of the power of God." Luke 22:69.

This session at the right hand of God is much spoken of in Scripture. Mark says, he "sat on the right hand of God." Paul says, God "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Eph. 1:20. Peter says, he "is on the right hand of God." 1 Pet. 3:22.

1. The question then arises, What is the import of the phrase, "*sitting* at the right hand?" The word sitting does not teach that our Lord's body is always in a sitting posture. Indeed, mere posture is not referred to at all. Peter and Paul, each once, simply say, he "is at the right hand of God." And Stephen, dying, saw "the Son of man *standing* on the right hand of God." Acts 7:56. Standing

is a posture in which one is ready to receive another, or give him assistance. This was just what Stephen needed.

(1.) The first thing taught by Christ's "*sitting* at the right hand of God" is, that he now has **quiet, repose**. He is entered into his rest. He has ceased from his own works. Thus says Micah: "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid." Micah 4:4. So in Revelation: "To him who overcomes will I grant to *sit* with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and *am set down* with my Father in his throne." Rev. 3:21. It is right that after toil should come rest; after war, peace. After the conflict, both Christ and his people rest from their labors and sorrows.

(2.) The term sitting also denotes **permanency** of abode and possession. Thus it is said, "Asher continued [literally, *sat*] on the sea-shore," Judges 5:17; that is, he had permanent possession of that country. Christ has rest and a permanent abode and a rightful possession in heaven.

(3.) Sitting also expresses authority and **dominion**. "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool," Psalm 110:1, is parallel to "He must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet." 1 Cor. 15:25. It is not fit that the king should stand in the presence of his subjects, even of those admitted nearest to his throne.

(4.) Sitting is also a fit posture for a **judge**. Solomon speaks of "a king that *sits* in the throne of judgment." Proverbs 20:8. Speaking of Christ, Isaiah, 16:5, says: "In mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall *sit* upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hastening righteousness." And he shall not fail nor be discouraged until he have set judgment in the earth;

yes, "he shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor." Psalm 72:4.

2. Sitting, being, or standing *at the right hand* is figurative. God has no bodily parts. He uses such language in condescension to human weakness. The figure is one of frequent use in the Scriptures. Jacob put his right hand on the head of Joseph's younger son wittingly, to give him the greater blessing. In Psalm 80:17 are these words: "Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, upon the son of man whom you made strong for yourself." What is the import of the figure?

(1.) The hands are the chief instruments of human bodily **power**, and by reason of use, the *right hand* is commonly the stronger of the two. It is a fit emblem of strength, and is often used to denote the almighty power of God. Thus in Moses' song: "Your right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: your right hand, O Lord, has dashed in pieces the enemy." Ex. 15:5. So Jesus Christ at the right hand of God has all power. He is able to do all his will.

(2.) With the right hand **gifts** were commonly bestowed and received. So when Christ ascended up on high he received gifts for men, and for himself glory and dominion. Eph. 4:8.

(3.) The right hand of regal power is by men esteemed a place of **enjoyment**. As such it is much sought after. So in Psalm 16:11, which much relates to Christ, we read: "In your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Our Savior is no longer "a man of sorrows." Grief reaches him no more.

(4.) The right hand, according to Hebrew ideas, is the post of **honor**. When Solomon would confer peculiar honor on his mother he caused her to sit on the right hand of his throne. 1 Kings 2:19. To say that

Christ is on the right hand of God is to declare that he is exalted by his Father to great dignity and glory. This corresponds with the declaration of Paul in Philippians 2:9. Our translation is, "God has highly exalted him." The Syriac is, "God has multiplied his sublimity." The Arabic is, "God has heightened him with a height." Justin renders it, "God has famously exalted him." God has heard his prayer and glorified him with himself, with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. Yes, "we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor." John 17:5; Heb. 2:9. **To a higher degree of rest, and rule, and bliss, and favor, and power, and majesty-Christ not be raised.**

In this glorious state Jesus Christ executes all the mediatorial offices. He is the great PROPHET of the church. With him is the fullness of the Spirit. By his Spirit he convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. We may not say, as some do, that the Spirit was purchased by Christ, much less that he is the minister of Christ. The Holy Spirit is "free." Psalm 51:12. He has no guide or Counselor. He is equal with the Father and the Son. He is sovereign in all his acts. 1 Cor. 12:11. He cannot be purchased either with money, or tears, or blood. But there is a glorious harmony in the counsels of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. There is no diversity of counsel or of will in the Godhead. On the day of Pentecost Peter said, "Jesus, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has shed forth this, which you now see and hear." Acts 2:33. So the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. He enlightens our minds, works faith in us, and saves us. Christ also raises up, qualifies, and sends forth every real, genuine gospel minister. He is head over all things to the church.

In his exalted state Christ continues to be our PRIEST. He makes, indeed, no more offerings; but he gloriously intercedes for us. The glory of his intercession may be learned from these facts: 1. The person of the intercessor is ineffably gracious; 2. He is the delight of his Father; 3. His intercession is full of authority; 4. It always prevails; 5. It is alone; 6. It continues forever.

In his exaltation Christ is also a KING. In this his great glory is: 1. His kingdom is spiritual, and so has its seat in the hearts of his people. 2. It is wholly ordered in truth, and equity, and righteousness. 3. It is as stable as the throne of God. 4. It is forever and ever.

1. We have a right to expect the conversion of all God's chosen. Native depravity and long-continued habits of sinning may seem to render a change of heart hopeless; but because Christ is *sitting at God's right hand, his people shall be willing in the day of his power*. Psalm 110:1, 3.

2. There will be no failure in the completion of all God's plans and schemes: "The Lord at your right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen. . . . He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head." Psalm 110:5-7.

3. The church is safe. Her Head is exalted, and he loves her, and bought her with his blood. He has engraved her on the palms of his hands. Her success depends on an arm full of power, on grace that is infinite, on intercession which always prevails. Humble and exclusive confidence in the Captain of our salvation, can never be disappointed.

4. To what a glorious state believers in Christ are rapidly tending. Heaven, the heaven of heavens, the third heaven, paradise, the new Jerusalem, the city of God, are some of the names by which the glory of the spirits of just men made perfect is shadowed forth. The glory of that blessed world is, that the Lamb is the light thereof. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Our vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body. We shall be forever with the Lord.

5. Hearty and universal submission and obedience to Christ are both reasonable and obligatory. Submit we must, either joyfully unto salvation, or reluctantly unto destruction. Now men may affect, and even feel contempt for religion and its Author; but those are shallow thinkers who do not know that inconsiderate courage soon gives way to appalling dismay, while sober apprehension prepares the mind for the worst. No cries for mercy will be more loud, no shrieks of anguish will be more piercing, no moanings of despair will be more heart-rending, than those uttered at the last by men who all their lives made light of eternal things. If you are yet in your sins, one of two things is true—either your conscience is at perpetual and fearful war with your practice—or you have embraced some error which strips life of dignity and death of hope.

Christ in Heaven

Pious souls feel a profound interest in the person, life, and glory of Christ. Let us consider him in his exaltation; and the benefits received from him by his people.

I. Christ in his exaltation.

1. His exaltation is **DESERVED**. He has merited all the honor and glory he has. He is the only one who has in the highest sense earned all that he has received of God. Originally possessed of infinite perfection, and freely consenting to great humiliation, his merit consists in his perfect obedience to the law, and in his bearing its curse for us. All Christ merited for us was as our Mediator, was by a blessed covenant with his Father, and was through the gift by grace, which has abounded unto many. Rom, 5:15. He is worthy to live and reign forever.

2. Christ's life is **IMMORTAL**. He was dead, but he dies no more. Rom 6:5. He says, "I am he who lives, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore." Rev. 1:18. It is greatly to the joy of the child of God, that his Savior can be spit upon no more, can be wounded no more, can be crucified no more, can be laid in the sepulcher no more. He has immortality.

3. Christ's exaltation is very **GLORIOUS**. His very scars are resplendent with light and radiance. Soon after his ascension Saul of Tarsus saw him, and his light was above the brightness of the sun, and such was the glory that it covered the persecutor's eyes with scales. John says, "When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands. And standing in the middle of the lampstands was the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were bright like flames of fire. His feet were as bright as bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was as bright as the sun in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one who

died. Look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave." Revelation 1:12-18

Among all the bright objects in glory, far the brightest is the Son of man, the Son of God, our great deliverer. There is no mistaking him for another, or another for him, in that bright world above.

4. Christ's exaltation is full of **AUTHORITY**. He has the keys of hell and of death. Rev. 1:18. On his vesture and on his thigh is a name written—King of kings, and Lord of lords. Rev. 19:16. He is far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. Eph. 1:21. He is the head of all principality and power. Col. 2:10. Indeed, before his ascension he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matt. 28:18. Blessed be God, our Savior sways the scepter of universal empire. There is none above him. He is Lord of all. He has no rivals. He shall never be superseded.

5. And yet his love is **UNCHANGED**. Great is the change in his state; but he is as meek, as lowly, as gentle, as tender-hearted as when he gave his face to spitting and his back to the smiter; as when he cried, "Learn of me;" as when he set a little child as the model he would have us copy; as when he wept at the grave of Lazarus; as when he prayed for his own murderers. Change of state has not changed—his heart, his love to his people, or his pity for sinners.

6. Christ's exaltation is full of holy **ACTION**. He is not sunk down into the repose so much celebrated in Hindu theology. His rest, like that of the spirits of just men made perfect, is consistent with eternal activity. His toils, and sorrows, and weariness are over. But his energy and operations remain.

He is still executing the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. No man knows the Father but as the Son reveals him. He ever lives to make intercession for us. "He must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet." He feeds, and guides, and protects all his people. He is the Angel that leads Israel in all the wilderness, and in the heavenly mansions.

Wherever and whenever a sinner is made **penitent** and is pardoned, it is by and through him. For he is on the hill of Zion to grant repentance and remission of sins. He leads his chosen like a flock. He gathers the lambs in his arm and carries them in his bosom.

He is present at every closet of **secret devotion**. He hears all our weeping and supplications. He says: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." "He who loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

He is present at every **meeting** of his people, however small it may be. Two or three are enough to claim the fulfillment of his promise. Matt. 18:20. To all such gatherings he says, "Whatever you shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." John 14:13, 14.

He is no less present at all our solemn **assemblies**. When he sent forth his disciples to preach the gospel to every creature, he said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Many a time his servants have failed to meet their appointments; but our Lord has always been true to his word.

He is always ready to help his people in their **temptations**. His promise is: "My grace is sufficient for you." Never, in any case, does he fail to make good his engagement. A thousand times would their

feet slip, and their profession be covered with reproach—but for his timely aid and succor. His *peace* is their solace when Satan roars. John 14:27.

He is also with his chosen in **sorrow**. Into deep affliction he often brings them. There for a long time he often keeps them. But never does he leave them to bear their sorrows alone. For intrepid consistency in fearing God, the three faithful Hebrews were cast into the burning fiery furnace. But though its intense heat consumed those who cast them in, yet the smell of fire was not on their garments. Not a hair of their heads was singed. Nor are we at a loss to account for their preservation. The tyrant of Chaldea, though a heathen, found out the cause of their preservation: "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spoke, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Dan. 3:24, 25. This explains the whole mystery, not only of this, but of all cases of Christian endurance. The presence of Christ shut the mouths of the lions, that they hurt not Daniel. It made Paul and Silas pray in the jail at Philippi, and sing praises, so that the prisoners heard them. Ten thousand times it has converted deserts into Bethels, and dungeons into sanctuaries.

The Lord Jesus also receives all **departing saints**. He said he would, John 14:3; and he keeps his word. Not a soul of a believer passes out of time, but Jesus does for it what he did for Stephen in his dying hour, though he does not always before death give like full evidence of his being at the gate of heaven ready to put forth his hand and take in his dove.

Christ is also building the heavenly Jerusalem. In the Divine purpose, this blessed abode was prepared from the foundation of the world. So also has its location long since been determined. But ever since his ascension, the Redeemer has been enlarging and beautifying it, and bringing the glory of the nations into it. To his sorrowing disciples he said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also." John 14:2, 3. In a sense, the works of creation were finished from the foundation of the world. Heb. 4:3. Yet Providence has in a thousand ways made great changes here. Had sin never entered, there is no telling to what heights of advancement things would before this have been carried on our globe.

As there is no sin in heaven, and as there is the abode of the Redeemer, and as there is the city of the living God, we know not what its glory is. Of this city we know some things, though the half is not told us. It is the city of the great King. It is his abode. He is its Builder and Maker. It is stable. It has foundations. Heb. 11:10. It is the true "Zion, the city of our solemnities . . . Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no [enemy's] galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby." Isaiah 33:20, 21. It is the city of truth, Zech. 8:3; the perfection of beauty, Lam. 2:15; the city of praise and joy. Jer. 49:25. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness." Psalm 48:1. It is the city of righteousness. Isaiah 1:26.

All its inhabitants are righteous. The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers,

and idolaters, and all liars are shut out of its pure precincts. Rev. 21:8, 27. Inside of its walls are no sickness, no poverty, no sorrow, no weeping, no tears, no crying, no pain, no death, no curse. Rev. 21:4; 22:3. This too is the greatest of all cities. Babylon was fifteen miles square; but this city is represented as fifteen hundred miles square. Rev. 21:16. This is the capital of Immanuel's dominions, that great city, the holy Jerusalem, having the glory of God. Her light is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal. Rev. 21:10, 11. The walls of this city can never be scaled. "The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." Rev. 21:16. They are walls of salvation, impregnable, girt with omnipotence. Isaiah 26:1. In it is no temple; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And it has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof. Nor is it a desolate, uninhabited city; for it has in it those who are saved. Nor is it a poor, small city; for the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. Rev. 21:22-24.

II. The BENEFITS received from Christ in his exaltation. These are expressed very forcibly in the last gospel: "Because I live, you shall live also." John 14:19.

1. Because he lives and reigns, all who believe shall be **JUSTIFIED**. Now if any rises up to condemn us, we cry, "It is Christ who died, yes rather, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." Romans 8:34. As he rose from the dead, so are believers risen with him from the death of sin. Col. 3:1. He sat not down at the right hand of God, until he had by himself purged our sins. Heb. 1:3. As the expiation of Christ was complete and perfect, so is the justification of all who have fled to him.

2. By the life of Christ his people are **SANCTIFIED**. We are dead—dead to the world, dead to sin—and our life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. Col. 3:3, 4. Christ is made of God unto us sanctification. 1 Cor. 1:30. The Spirit of Christ, sent into our hearts by the Savior, purifies them. In so doing, he puts great honor on the death and life of Christ by using them as means and motives of our purification. Col. 3:1.

3. Sometimes the word live seems to be nearly synonymous with *being happy*; as where Paul says, "Now we *live*, if you stand fast in the Lord." 1 Thess. 3:8. So we live and are happy because Christ lives and is happy. He is beyond the reach of malice or misery. For thousands of years it has been for a song in Israel: "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: if we believe not, yet he abides faithful: he cannot deny himself." 2 Tim. 2:11-13. Though we see him not, yet believing that he lives and is blessed, we live and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

4. By Christ's present glorious life, believers have every encouragement. They are fully authorized to expect that, as he has overcome and sat down with his Father on his throne, so they shall overcome, and sit down with Christ on his throne. Rev. 3:21. It is a reasonable duty and a great help to *look unto Jesus*, and to *consider him* who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds. All good hopes spring from the cross, and center in the person of Christ.

5. By Christ's living and reigning above, the natural life of believers is continued and made safe. Each child of God is immortal until his work is done. The very hairs of his head are all numbered. Every

believer may say to every persecutor as Christ said to Pilate: "You could have no power at all against me, except it were given you from above." John 19:11. Every lion is chained. Not a dog can move his tongue against God's people, unless God gives permission. Exod. 11:7. Daniel never spent a night more safely than that he spent in the lions' den.

6. It is by the life of Christ that the bodies of all his people shall be raised to life and beauty. So teach all the Scriptures: "Your dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust: for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Isaiah 26:19. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of those who sleep." "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." 1 Cor. 15:20, 49. Christ's resurrection put the resurrection of his people beyond all doubt. Each one may shout and sing: "But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he will stand upon the earth at last. And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God." Job 19:25-27.

7. By the life of Christ his people are fully saved. So argues blessed Paul: "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Romans 5:8-10. No man can find in mathematics more conclusive and irrefragable argument than this.

8. Because Christ lives, all his people have and shall have everlasting life. They cannot be condemned, because they are accepted in the Beloved. They cannot be overcome, because He overcame. They cannot fail of eternal life, because they hold their title to it through

the merits of him who sits on the throne. If they could fail of salvation, Jesus would fail of his reward; for they are the purchase of his agonies.

1. Humility well befits the saints. They are less than the least of all God's mercies. In themselves they are poor creatures, yes, they are nothing. Christ is all. He is their life. It is easy for us to esteem Christ too little—and ourselves too much; but it is not possible for us to think too much of him, and too little of ourselves. In a life of faith the more we think of Christ, the lower do we put ourselves. We cannot be too low in self-esteem. The Lord gives grace unto the humble. Wisdom is with the lowly.

2. The true, blood-bought, blood-washed church of God is safe. She is loved by her Redeemer, and he is strong. The high priest carried the names of the twelve tribes inscribed on his breastplate. But his church is engraved on the palms of the hands of her Redeemer. Isaiah 49:16. If a dying Savior could redeem, a living Savior can give the victory.

3. The ministers of Christ have a peculiar interest in this subject. Let them hope in him forever. Each of them may say as Cyprian: "While I oversee the church, Christ oversees me." Most of the promises personally made by Christ when on earth, were first made to his ministers, and through them to all believers.

4. God's people are truly blessed. With them all is right. Nothing can harm them, nothing can destroy them, because they are in Christ, and he lives forever. If they die, they sleep in Jesus. If they leave this world, they go to be with Jesus. He is everything to them. A pious, sorrowful widow used to say, "Jesus lives!" Once a wretched state of nerves seemed to rob her of courage, and she burst into tears. Her little child, who knew her habits of cheerfulness and the ground

of her courage, recalled her to her trust by saying, "Mamma, is Jesus dead?" The child supposed nothing could go wrong in life, if Jesus lived. The mother was thus reproved, and regained her Christian heroism. So blessed are the people of God, that even in this world a company of believers could not in a day or a year count up their privileges.

Some time since a number of eminent servants of Christ were together, and each one was asked to repeat as sweet a text of Scripture as he could then think of. One said: "Unto you therefore who believe, he is precious." This is, indeed, refreshing. Another said, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What an eternal rock is this! Another, since gone to glory, said: "We know that all things work together for good, to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose." Another gave this as his text: "God is love." Another this: "As the Father has loved me, even so have I loved you." Another said: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Such a string of pearls might be made ten times as long, and yet it would be but the beginning of all that God has said and done for his people.

5. But how sad is the state of the wicked. Instead of promises and assurances, the Scriptures are full of woes and threatenings to such, saying, "They shall not see life;" "God is angry with the wicked every day;" that Christ the judge of all will say, "Depart accursed;" that the Most High will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear comes; and that they shall endure "the wrath of the Lamb." The Bible gives whole chapters to show the necessity and the dreadfulness of the doom of impenitent men. See Ezek. 15; Isaiah 14; Matt. 25. Surely the wicked must turn or burn; must repent now or mourn forever; must embrace Christ or embrace death. The very truths and

principles which secure the eternal life of the righteous—make certain the eternal death of the wicked.

Christ's Personal Absence from this World

The family of Christ was the most interesting society that ever existed on earth. Most of its members were remarkable characters; and the head of this household was the most wonderful person that ever appeared in any world.

In such a brotherhood we should look for affecting scenes. Nor are we disappointed. It is not rash to say that the last interview, before the crucifixion, between Christ and his disciples, was as tender and overpowering as any of which the human mind can form a conception. While inspiration employs no epithets to characterize it, we yet have the substance of what was said and done. The chief source of affliction to the disciples in the upper chamber, where for the last time they celebrated the Passover, and for the first time partook of the Lord's supper, was the prospect of their Master's leaving them. To prepare their minds for this event, he said many soothing things, yet did he not conceal the fact of his departure: "I go away;" "I go unto my Father;" "I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away." John 14:3, 12; 16:7.

The subject of Christ's absence from the visible church is in many respects one of great interest, and has always been made to hold an important place in Christian doctrine, and in pious meditations.

Their belief on this point, greatly affects men's comfort and efficiency.

From the best views we can get, it is clear that it was in itself proper that our Lord should go to his Father when he did. In proof it may be said—

That it is fit and right that honor should follow faithful and eminent service, and that the highest honors should follow so distinguished services as those rendered by Jesus Christ. This is the Scriptural method of speaking on this subject: "When you shall make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." Isaiah 53:10, 11. Compare Phil. 2:7-9.

It was right that Moses after serving God and his generation, should enter upon his reward; but Moses was a mere servant, and an imperfect one too. He owed all the obedience he ever rendered. But Christ was a Son, and his whole work was in the highest sense voluntary. Yet in the form of a servant he rendered perfect and blameless obedience. He never once failed. Truly did he say to his Father, "I have glorified you on the earth." He brought to God such a revenue of honor as none else in heaven or earth ever did or can do. Well, therefore, might he say, "Now, O Father, glorify me"—in the presence of all your creatures, let suitable honors follow my humiliation. If angels, who owe all the obedience which they render, are crowned with heavenly glory, how much more proper that Christ should receive honor and glory from God. If he who so preeminently merited the richest gifts of God had failed to receive them, how could poor sinners, though they believe in him, hope for anything good?

Moreover, ever since Christ's incarnation, a large majority of his real people have been in heaven, and it seems proper that as their bliss and glory are in and through Christ, he should be personally with them, and by his presence make them glad.

From the days of righteous Abel to the time of Christ, there was a long succession of pious men, who believed in the Redeemer, and walked with God. They endured much for his name. They loved him. They saw his day approaching and rejoiced in it. They were as dear to Christ as the people of God in any age could be. They were saved by his blood. And there were many of them. Even in one nation, and when there was a great apostacy, God says there were seven thousand who had not revolted to idol-worship. What number of souls before Christ's birth were saved, none can tell; but beyond a doubt far more of the redeemed have for long centuries been in heaven than have been living on the earth at any one time. Is it not proper that the great body of Christ's followers who are in heaven, should enjoy his personal presence? Is he not their light and life and glory? Is he not the admiration of all his saints? Yes the Lamb is the light of that bright world. His presence fills it with radiance and effulgence. His ascension brought to it a vast accession of gladness. It may then be asked, Would it be proper that we upon earth, a mere handful, should have his bodily presence, while all heaven should be left without it? Blinded as we are by ignorance and sin, even we may see a fitness in this arrangement. Surely it is right that the great cloud of witnesses, who have, in ages of darkness long gone by, stood their ground and fought the good fight, should have with them the great Captain of salvation and rejoice in his fullness and glory, even though we, who for the trial of our faith remain on the earth, should be deprived of his blessed presence.

Besides, it seems proper that one having so vast dominions should dwell in the capital of his empire. Christ's authority and government are over all creatures and all worlds. This earth is a mere speck in creation. It probably constitutes not a millionth part of the intelligent universe. Since sin has entered, this world has become peculiarly unfit for the residence of any one in a glorified state. Much less is it suited to be the great center of influences in the kingdom of God. When Christ was in the world, it was in a way of voluntary exile from his proper home and country. One thing we know: he has chosen another part of the universe for the seat of his throne; having fixed the center of his kingdom there, it is right that he should not desert it.

It is also expedient for Christ's people on earth that he should not be in this world, but in heaven. Suppose that he were here; he must be here either in glory or in humiliation; either bearing the signs of majesty and divinity which now attend him in heaven, or in apparent weakness, his godhead covered with a thick veil, and himself appearing much like other men. If here in glory, who could abide his coming? His brightness is intolerable to the eyes of mortals. Even when Moses had been in the mount but forty days, conversing with God and beholding his glory, his countenance acquired such brightness that upon his coming among the people it was necessary that he should put a veil upon his face. They could not look upon him. Yet Moses was a mere man, and a sinful man too. How then could we, with open face, behold the KING in his glory? Isaiah saw Him in a vision before His incarnation, and the sight so overpowered him as to make him cry out, "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord Almighty!" Isaiah 6:5; John 12:41. When Christ was transfigured before his disciples, and his raiment became shining, even his most intimate

friends who were present became "sore afraid," so much so that Mark says Peter "knew not what to say." If the transfiguration produced such terror even on bosom friends, how could the mass of men, even of Christian men, while in the body, endure his divine effulgence?

From these and like known facts, it is apparent that a full vision of Christ's unveiled glory would not be to us, in our present state, tolerable. In his 'History of Redemption', Edwards properly says: "It is not to be supposed that any man could exist under a sight of the glory of Christ's human nature as it now appears." At such a vision we should, like Saul of Tarsus, become blind; or like John, as dead men. Should Christ, therefore, be personally present on earth for our good, it could not be in his glorified condition, but in a state of humiliation. And is it right that the Son of God should again humble himself and assume the form of a servant? If he should reappear in a lowly state on earth, where would be the assurance that his faithful followers shall ever be glorified? The servant may not expect more honor than the Master; the disciple will not rise higher than his Lord. How then could we believe that our glorification should ever come and never cease, if Christ should be brought back to earth in a lowly condition? Verily it is expedient for us that Christ, having overcome, should sit down on his Father's throne, and thus certify us—that when we shall have overcome we shall sit down with him on his throne.

Nor is this all. If Christ were here in person, that is, in his human nature, in any state in which we could bear his presence, it is evident that he could not be everywhere on earth at once. Omnipresence belongs not to manhood in any state. Christ's human nature possesses not the attribute of omnipresence. If then he were here, he must at any one time be in some particular place in a sense in which

he could not be in other places. Then, in order to enjoy his bodily presence, the whole church must be assembled in one spot or vicinity, and thus the perishing nations would be left without the light of holy examples and gospel preaching; or the Savior would of necessity travel over the earth, visiting every portion of the world; and even then many of his devoted followers would never see him. The sick, and the poor, and the prisoner would be among the less favored of his followers. Thus would be created continual dissatisfaction in the church, some thinking one place too highly favored, and others neglected. Indeed it is very probable that, blind as we are, all the pious now feel the Savior to be nearer to them than they would if he were anywhere upon earth. Is not this view of the matter just and important?

There is still another thought upon this subject. The absence of our Savior is the means of furnishing an excellent test of character. In the parable of the talents, our Lord seems to teach this doctrine. He represents himself as one "traveling into a far country," and "after a long time coming and reckoning with his servants." In this way all motives except those arising from genuine love to him lost their force; and if his servants were not sound at heart, they would evince their true character by disregarding his will; and if they really loved him, their devotion to his interests would not die out as he left them. Eye-servants are often very industrious when their master is looking on; but faithful servants are governed by higher principles. Their controlling purpose is to do right, whether they are applauded, or neglected, or blamed. Our Lord alludes to this matter when he says, "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he comes, shall find watching; verily I say unto you that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down at table, and will come forth and serve them But and if that servant say in his heart, 'My Lord delays his coming,' and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens, and

to eat and drink and to be drunken, the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looks not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." Luke 12:37, 45, 46. No man ever loved Christ who did not love him present or absent; and all must admit that cheerful and uniform obedience to him in his absence, is to us and to our neighbors the best proof we can give of sincere attachment to his cause and his person.

Furthermore, if Christ were here upon earth in an humble state, would not the feelings of his people be continually mortified and deeply wounded by the direct insults and personal indignities offered him by his foes? The world is in no better humor with holiness than it ever was. Christ's presence on earth would be a continual and sharp rebuke to the abounding wickedness of every age and country; and those who are in love with sin, and determined not to forsake it, would bear reproof no better now than formerly. To a godly man, what could be more trying than to have continual slanders uttered respecting the daily conduct of his Savior, and to know that wicked conspiracies were constantly forming against his person? Even if all plots should be defeated by miracle or otherwise, it would still keep the church in deep distress to witness fearful exhibitions of deadly malice against their Beloved. Or if the Lord were here and invulnerable, his friends would be subjected to unusual and dreadful persecutions for cleaving to One whose light terribly condemned the world. Now the Christian rejoices that, however malevolence may vent itself against Christ, he is forever beyond its reach. May not this explain what he means by that saying, "If you loved me, you would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father?" John 14:28.

Again, in Christ's absence faith has full scope for exercise; whereas, were he present we should walk somewhat at least by sense, and not

by faith only. Any arrangement friendly to the vigorous growth of faith is advantageous to the pious. It was, indeed, a great privilege to be able with the disciples to say: "We have seen with our eyes, . . . and our hands have handled of the Word of life." Compared with ages preceding, the lifetime of our Savior afforded great privileges to the godly. Nor is it asserted that faith and sight necessarily destroy each other; but we may say that faith has now fewer obstacles to overcome than if Christ were here. For then it would not be easy to separate, or even distinguish emotions awakened by sight from those which spring from a living faith. In the days of our Lord's flesh many, moved by what they saw, outwardly became his followers. Though they had no pious confidence in him, nor reliance on him, yet they mistook their strong feelings for true piety; but the root of the matter was not in them. Under one pungent discourse many such forsook him. John 6:66.

It is indeed true that the distance of the sun makes it appear to us very small; but by the aid of science, we learn its dimensions and know his vastness. Now faith is "divine reason," as Leighton calls it. It corrects the errors of sense. It teaches us firmly to believe, and on the best grounds—the word of God—that the Sun of Righteousness is far more glorious than we can conceive; and of course more glorious than we could possibly apprehend by our senses. Foster well says that it is "evident that to see the Messiah in his personal manifestation was a mode of contemplating him very inferior, for the excitement of the sublimer kind of affection, to that which we have to exercise by faith. It is true that to those who regard him as nothing more than a man, all this will appear impertinent and fantastic. But those who solemnly believe that their salvation depends on his being infinitely more, will feel the importance of all that gives scope to their faculties for magnifying the idea of their Redeemer."

Now that Jesus is in heaven "we have no exact and invariable image, placing him before us as a person that we know; exhibiting him in the mere ordinary garb of humanity." Now "we can with somewhat more facility give our thoughts an unlimited enlargement in contemplating his sublime character. Thus also we are left in greater freedom in the effort to form some grand though glimmering idea of him as possessing a glorious body, assumed after his victory over death. Our freedom of thought is more entire for arraying the exalted Mediator in every glory which speculation, imagination, devotion can combine to shadow forth the magnificence of such an adored object."

Our Savior himself has pronounced a special blessing on those who believe without seeing. To Thomas he said, "Because you have seen, you have believed: blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed." This settles the point. We may fearlessly assert that the present arrangement is more advantageous to believers, however weak their faith, than if our Lord had continued on earth after his resurrection, or were now to return again to this world.

We should not forget that no physical view of Christ is profitable to the soul. Thousands saw him, conversed with him, traveled with him, ate with him, heard his sermons, witnessed his miracles—were as little profited as if he had been a common man. It is a remarkable fact that no picture of our Savior was ever taken, fables to the contrary notwithstanding, and that we have no reliable description of his stature, of his figure, of his gait, of his complexion, or of anything respecting his personal appearance. The Bible says, "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men;" and there it leaves the matter, as if to warn us not to indulge in carnal thoughts of him.

If an artist should give to the church a perfect likeness of our Savior, as he appeared in the days of his flesh, he might indeed lead many into idolatry; but he would render no real service to any true believer. It is as true of the Son as of the Father that he who worships him must worship him in spirit. Does anyone seriously believe that our spiritual conceptions of the glory and grace of Christ would be in the least aided by the knowledge of anything respecting his outward appearance as a man?

It is enough for us to know that the Son of man is glorified, and that he shines with a brightness above the brightness of the sun. His is a "glorious body."

Nor should we forget that our Savior assigns yet other reasons for leaving his disciples: "I go to prepare a place for you." "I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." John 14:2; 16:7. The great promise of a copious descent of the Spirit is in importance second to none ever made. The Holy Spirit is God, has all divine perfections, has never been incarnate, works in the church unseen, yet mightily. He is essentially everywhere present, he is infinitely loving and tender, and in all respects suited to apply the work of redemption. He comes not to speak of himself, but he takes of the things of Christ, and shows them. He glorifies Christ. John 16:13-15.

Should any inquire why Christ's abode on earth was inconsistent with the abundant gracious presence of the Holy Spirit, we might, perhaps, without irreverence, assign certain reasons of fitness in the case, drawn from the nature of things. We might dwell upon the fact that the word *Comforter* and the word *Advocate* are in the original the same word, that both the second and the third persons of the

Trinity are called Advocates or Comforters, and both make intercession for us, though in different ways. John 16:7; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:26. It seems proper that so long as a part of the church is above and a part below, one of the Advocates or Comforters should be on earth, while the other is in heaven. We need not speculate, but rest the whole upon Christ's word—that if he did not go away, the Spirit would not be poured out. He lays this down as an ultimate, though certain truth. The church may not expect the personal presence of Christ, and the copious effusion of the Holy Spirit at the same time. There were days of Pentecost when our Lord was on earth, but none of them was marked by the descent of the Spirit, like a mighty rushing wind, converting thousands in a day. All the glorious revivals witnessed since Christ's ascension, have been in consequence of his absence from the church below. He said: "He who believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." John 14:12. The blessed Spirit comforts ten thousands, yes, ten millions of hearts at once, filling with joy the souls of believers, at the same hour, in different parts of the world. This is better than Christ's personal presence on earth. The Spirit is in all, through all, over all. He is just such a Comforter, just such an Advocate, as the church militant needs. His presence may revive ten thousand churches at once, and each of them be as much blessed as if his visit was to it alone.

1. The present arrangement of all things concerning the church is the best. If there ever was a point respecting the expediency of which the pious might have doubted, it was Christ's leaving them on earth. Yet even his personal followers lived to see that this dark event was for the best. **Man, with his ignorance and folly, will never be able to suggest any improvement in God's method of governing the world and saving the**

church. It is best that Christ should be on the other side of Jordan and beckon us over. Rays of heavenly brightness from the upper world light up our darkness even in our passage to eternity. The Sun of Righteousness gilds the path of dying saints. The departing believer now rejoices that he is going to his Savior. Death is far less dismal than it would be if, in leaving earth, we were going away from the blessed Redeemer.

Besides, after the High Priest has shed his blood, what is so proper as that he should go into the holy of holies, sprinkle the mercy-seat, appear for us in the presence of God, and execute the full work of intercession for his chosen?

As things now are, **Christ is the great attraction to heaven and heavenly-mindedness.**

2. Let the people of God everywhere and always rejoice in a Savior risen and made higher than the heavens. Let them do this in adversity as well as in prosperity. Bates says: "One of the sorest and most dangerous temptations of the afflicted is, that they are out of God's favor. The mourning veil darkens the eyes of their minds, that they cannot reconcile his gracious promises with his providential dispensations; or the good things he has prepared for hereafter with the evil he sends here. Gideon complained to the angel, 'If God is with us—why does all this evil come to us?' Augustine introduces God as thus addressing his afflicted and tempted child: 'Is this your faith? Did I promise temporal prosperity to you? Were you made a Christian that you might flourish in this world?'" Blessed be God, who has said, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." **God had one Son in this world without sin, but never a son here without affliction.** His promise is, I will bring them through the fire, and they shall be refined as gold and silver is

tried; and they shall say, The Lord is my God. Zech. 13:9. If it were expedient for the Master to leave the disciples, surely it is no great stretch of faith to believe that it may be for our good that friends, and health, and prosperity, and reputation should leave us. He who overrules for good the heaviest losses, will not permit lesser ones to do us harm.

3. All things are now ready for the conversion of sinners and for subduing the world to knowledge, to love, and to obedience. The atonement is finished. Christ has made an end of transgression. His work has been owned and accepted before heaven and earth. His ascension was a public triumph in the presence of angels and men. In it he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men. The chief of the mercies he sends down to accompany pardon of sin and acceptance—is the sanctifying, enlightening, and comforting presence of the Holy Spirit. In God's government, all obstacles to the salvation of sinners who will believe have been removed. The propitiatory has been sprinkled with precious atoning blood. It is now indeed a mercy-seat, and it is accessible to all the guilty sons of men who are willing to bow before it; so that we may now proclaim aloud: "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." If we need more grace, more liveliness in our affections, more success in our labors, we have access to God. The door is open to poor, perishing men, the guilty and the helpless. Let them only look and live—believe and be saved.

Christ on the Judgment-Seat

"For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil." Ecclesiastes 12:14

The fourth and last step in Christ's exaltation is yet future. It consists in his coming to judge the world. "He has set a day on which He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead." Acts 17:31

No man knows that he will ever see the sun rise or set again; but it is certain that everyone shall see the Son of man coming to judgment, and witness the solemn transactions of the last day.

Conscience anticipates a solemn reckoning. She says it will be right and fair to have a final settlement of all things. The resurrection of Christ from the dead gave assurance of a judgment-day. Acts 17:31. It is in itself proper that God should show to the whole universe that in all things he has done right. This can fitly be done in the assizes of an assembled world. The doctrine of a day of judgment was not a secret to any of the prophets. Enoch foretold it as clearly as any apostle. The author of the first psalm says: "The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment;" and the author of the fiftieth psalm gives a full account of its solemn grandeur, and of the principles on which its awards shall be made. Solomon says: "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Eccl. 12:14. Time would fail us to show how often and clearly Christ himself, and Paul, and James, and Peter, and John speak of such a day. This solemn subject now claims attention.

I. God has appointed a DAY in the which he will judge the world. Respecting this day several things are noticeable.

1. To God it is a certain and fixed day. He has *appointed* it. Acts 17:31. Nothing can hasten it; nothing can retard it. The purpose of God concerning it is fixed, unalterable.

2. To all creatures it is an unknown day. "Of that day and hour knows no man; no, not the angels of heaven." It is clear from the teachings of Scripture, that God designed that no conjecture should be formed by any generation of men respecting the precise time of the judgment. Twice is it said, that it will come as a thief in the night. 1 Thess, 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10. Compare Matt. 24:36, 42, 44; Luke 21:35, 36.

3. The day of judgment will be THE great day. So inspired men often call it. It will be the greatest day in the annals of the universe. It is the day for which all other days were made. There will be more done that day than was done perhaps for thousands of days, or even years, of former times. This day is so well known to inspired men, that they call it *the day, that day*—as preeminent over all others.

4. It will be *the day of the Lord*. 2 Peter 3:10. Christ will then appear in his glory. On that day men will not question his divinity, or his humanity, or his authority. Then he will be crowned Lord of all. It will be exclusively his day.

5. It will be *the LAST day*. It is so called by Christ himself, John 6:39, 40. After it, time will be no more—it will cease to exist. Duration will no more be measured by seconds, minutes, days, months, years, centuries, cycles; but all will be boundless, shoreless, fathomless, unmeasured eternity!

6. It will probably be a long day—how long we are not informed, but long enough to answer all the purposes for which it was

appointed, displaying God's justice, vindicating the right, condemning the wrong.

7. It will be a very bright day. Other days had their dawn, their twilight, and their clouds; but this day will begin, continue, and end in ineffable effulgence. They had their light from the sun; but this will have its light from the brightness of Immanuel.

8. It will be a day of unusual sounds. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God." The heavens shall pass away with a great noise. To these shall be added the shouts of the redeemed and the wailings of the impenitent.

9. It will be a day of wonderful clearing up of the character of the innocent. God will then bring forth their righteousness as the light and their judgment as the noonday. The slandered will that day have the sting of calumny forever removed; the persecuted will no longer clank their chains; those who were persecuted, will no more fear the minions and myrmidons of cruelty.

10. It will be a day of astounding exposures. Villany will be covered up no more. Every disguise will be taken away. There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Indeed, there never was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad. Luke 12:2; Mark 4:22. "The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them." 1 Tim. 5:24.

11. It will be a day of especial grandeur. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above and to the earth, that he may judge his people." For

majesty and glory, for sublimity and grandeur, the pomp of all other days shall, in comparison with this, be as nothing. If Felix trembled when Paul merely reasoned of judgment, how will sinners tremble when Christ shall come to judgment?

12. From first to last it shall be a day of miracles. "All the wonders ever exhibited before will be nothing to the wonders of this day. Indeed, all that is natural will end on this day, and everything will be miraculous."

13. It will be a day of intense excitement. There will be no listless spectators of those scenes. Every faculty of the intellect and of emotion will be aroused to the highest possible exercise. Men may sleep under sermons concerning the judgment, but they will not be dull when they go to judgment!

14. It will also be a *day of separation*. The precious and the vile, the wheat and the tares, the sheep and the goats, saints and sinners, shall no longer mingle together. The separations of this day will be final. The righteous and the wicked shall part that day to meet no more.

15. It will be a *day of decision*. The tribunal of Christ is the court of last resort. Causes and destinies will be inquired into no more. Saved that day, saved forever. Lost that day, lost forever. Holy that day, holy forever. Filthy that day, filthy forever.

16. It will be a *day of triumph*. Christ and his people will fill the heavens with their peals of exultation. At his ascension from Olivet the Redeemer went up with a shout. Psalm 47:5. He shall come to judgment with a shout. 1 Thess. 4:16. His return to heaven will be with vehement notes of triumph still louder. When the Israelites brought the ark of the covenant into their camp they shouted with a

great shout, so that the earth rang again. But when all the elect shall receive their welcome plaudit, their shout shall fill the heavens with its thunder.

17. It shall be a *day of despair* to all the unregenerate. The last hope will be gone from fallen angels and incorrigible men. Everywhere sinners will be crying to the rocks and the mountains: "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!" Was ever despair more dreadful than this?

18. This will be a *day full of surprise*. Not only will it come unexpectedly, but its awards will fill saints and sinners with astonishment. So Christ teaches at length in Matthew 25th. The wicked will be amazed *that* they are lost, and *how* they are lost. They will be especially surprised that God sets no value on their self-righteousness. The sons of God will receive more honor than they ever asked or thought of. The sons of Belial will receive more wrath than they ever feared. Christians will marvel why they *are* saved. Sinners will wonder why they are *not* saved. Each class of people will cry, "Lord, when saw we you a hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison?" Many will be saved and more perhaps be lost, contrary to the judgments formed of them by their neighbors. But more will be saved and more will be lost contrary to the opinions they had formed of themselves.

"That is the way it will be at the end of the world. The angels will come and separate the wicked people from the godly, throwing the wicked into the fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
Matthew 13:49-50

II. The Bible says on that day God will judge *the WORLD*. In the Greek Testament are three words rendered *world*. One of these

signifies duration past, present, or future, but often with a limit. It is the word used by our Savior when he speaks of "this world," of "that world," of "the end of the world," and of "the world to come." In this way of using it, it is equivalent to age. In the plural it often signifies eternity. It is never used to teach whom God will judge.

A second word, rendered world, is of frequent occurrence. It is found in Acts 17:24: "God that made the *world* and all things therein." Here it evidently means the universe; so also in many other cases. Often it means *the earth*, and then its inhabitants. It is often used in connection with the judgment. In Romans 3:6 it is said: "God shall judge *the world*."

But in Acts 17:31, "He has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world," yet another word is used for *world*. In Luke 21:26 it is rendered *the earth*; in all other cases, *the world*. In Luke 2:1, it is put for the Roman empire, because that embraced most of the known world. But commonly it means *the habitable earth*. It occurs fifteen times, and, with the exception already noticed, is uniformly rendered *the world*, as when Jesus says, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations." Matt. 24:14.

The Scriptures declare that all men shall be judged. The Lord "shall judge the earth," "shall judge the ends of the earth," "shall judge the people," shall judge "all nations," "shall judge those who are without," "shall judge his people," "shall judge the righteous and the wicked," "shall judge the living and the dead."

Other Scriptures say that angels shall be then judged. Christ shall bring all his holy angels with him. Matt. 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26. They shall be the reapers on this great harvest-day. See also 2 Pet. 2:4.

It seems to be intimated that all angels, fallen and unfallen, all men, saints and sinners, great and small, living and dead, shall be judged. All rational creatures shall makeup the assembly. The servant and his master, the prisoner at the bar and the judge who sat on his trial, the assassin and the assassinated, the seducer and his victim, the invader and the invaded, the hireling and his oppressor, the king and his subjects, the fool and the wise man, the persecutor and the persecuted, the apostate, the hypocrite, the child of God and the child of the devil, the angels that stood and the angels that fell, shall all be there. No rational creature shall be so mighty, no mortal shall be so lowly—as to elude the eye or the sentence of him who shall sit upon the throne of judgment.

What a massive multitude will this be, when prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, saints of all ages, when sinners, liars, infidels, blasphemers, moralists, and murderers, shall all be there; when the sea and the dry land shall give up their dead, when the third heaven shall pour forth its glorious legions, when death and hell shall deliver up the dead who are in them, when all who lived before the flood, all that have lived since the flood, and all that shall have lived to the end of time shall stand before God. This will be the first and the last assembly, in which may be found every person that God ever made.

III. This great assembly shall be judged in RIGHTEOUSNESS.

. No injustice shall be done. Even the condemned will have nothing to allege against the equity of their doom. Every mouth will be stopped! The evidence will be full, the record complete. For "the **BOOKS** shall be opened."

1. The volume of NATURE. It shows forth the eternal power and godhead of the Most High. Its lessons are taught everywhere. "There

is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." So that all men are "without excuse." Psalm 19:3; Romans 1:20.

2. There is the book of PROVIDENCE. How many disregard all its lessons! They despise the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering. They never think that his goodness should lead them to repentance; but their hard and impenitent heart treasures up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath. Romans 2:4, 5.

3. There, too, will be the book of CONSCIENCE. On it is written the work of the law. Now this volume may be closed. There it will show its faithful records.

4. Then, too, will be opened the book of holy SCRIPTURE. Christ says that even infidels, who refused to believe God's word, shall be judged by it. "He who rejects me and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12:48. Willful ignorance is no excuse. Willful rejection of the Bible enhances men's condemnation.

5. Then, too, will be opened the book of REMEMBRANCE. Its record will be full, minute, infallible. When it is opened every sinner will say, "Innumerable evils have compassed me about. My iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart fails me."

Thus will be revealed all forms and degrees of sin; **open** sin, which proclaims its guilt on earth; **secret** sin, which no man could prove, or without uncharitableness suspect, Romans 2:16; sins of **commission**, which were acted out; and sins of **omission**,

which in every case will make a formidable array. The fig-tree was cursed because it had *no* fruit. Indeed, in his solemn account of the judgment, in Matthew 25, Jesus Christ mentions no sins but those of omission. **The life of man consists in thoughts, emotions, words, and deeds. For all these he shall give account.**

(1.) Thoughts. "The thought of foolishness is sin." Proverbs 24:9. God destroyed the old world because the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was evil, and that continually. Gen. 6:5. It is an alarming charge against the wicked that "God is not in all his thoughts." Psalm 10:4. "The thoughts of the righteous are right." Proverbs 12:5. "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord." Proverbs 15:26. All good thoughts and all evil thoughts shall be judged.

(2.) Emotions. Malice, lust, covetousness, envy, sinful anger, hatred, inordinate affection on the one hand; and love, hope, joy, peace, gentleness, patience on the other; all good emotions and all sinful emotions shall be judged.

(3.) Words. Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. "For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned." Matt. 12:36, 37. Not a word, good or bad, shall be passed over. "Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in an ear in private rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops!" Luke 12:3. All vain, false, unchaste, impudent, provoking, profane, blasphemous speeches; and all pure, pious, loving, wise, right words—shall alike and properly be noticed and judged.

(4.) Deeds. All our good deeds shall be reported before the Judge. And he will not wipe out our good deeds that we have done. Neh.

13:14. To the ungodly Jehovah will "Repay them according to what they have done—according to the evil of their deeds. Repay them according to the work of their hands; give them back what they deserve." Psalm 28:4. "According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay." Isaiah 59:18. He says: "I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands." **The matter, the manner, the motive of every act, good and bad—will be judged.**

(5.) As no man has a good thought, or feeling, or speaks a good word, or does a good deed—but by divine grace; and as in this life sin cleaves to all men so as to mar their best performances; and as all the wicked do nothing but sin; if there was no other book besides these to be opened, all must perish. But there is another. It is **the BOOK OF LIFE of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.** Rev. 13:8. In the other books was nothing found that could save any man. But this contains the names of all those who shall have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. According to this book all who believe in Christ shall be justified. They shall receive a rich, free, gratuitous salvation. But "whoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire!" Rev. 20:15.

IV. The JUDGE will be the Lord Jesus Christ, called in Scripture, *the man whom God has ordained* to that work: "For the Father judges no man; but has committed all judgment unto the Son." John 5:22. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." 2 Cor. 5:10. Christ shall come not only in the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, but in his glorified human nature; God has given him authority to judge, because he is the Son of man. John 5:27. Christ the Lord will be the righteous Judge. Others shall approve the sentences he shall pronounce, and in this

sense saints are said to judge angels. 1 Cor. 6:3. But in the full sense shall Christ alone "judge the living and the dead." 2 Tim. 4:1.

How altered the state and appearance of the Savior will be from what it was when he walked and wept on earth, and especially when he hung upon the cross, or lay in the sepulcher of Joseph. His coming shall be visible to all: "Every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him." Rev. 1:7. Even those born blind shall see him. Christ will come visibly, and be seen as a *man*. We shall behold him in human form. So he himself declared more than once: "You shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven." Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62. So testified the angels at his ascension: "This same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:11. But Jesus ascended visibly; so will he descend visibly. He ascended in human nature entire; he shall descend in human nature entire. He shall come with great power and glory! Mark. 13:26.

At his presence nature shall dissolve. The elements shall melt with intense heat. 2 Pet. 3:10. Great signs and terror shall witness his coming. "The stars of heaven fell to the earth as a fig tree drops its unripe figs when shaken by a high wind; the sky separated like a scroll being rolled up; and every mountain and island was moved from its place. Then the kings of the earth, the nobles, the military commanders, the rich, the powerful, and every slave and free person hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains." Revelation 6:13-15

The sentence passed by the Judge will be solemn and irrevocable. That of the righteous will be: "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" That of the wicked will be: "Depart from me, you cursed, into

everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" In both cases the sentence will be at once executed. Matt. 25:34, 41.

1. Let us not be much troubled by the apparent confusion we now witness in human affairs. Here vanity often rides in splendor—while piety is clothed in rags; folly rolls in chariots—while wisdom lies in chains; brutality wields unlimited power over decency and piety; and oppression puts its iron heel on all that godly men love. But the last day will set all things right! Eccl. 2:14-17; 5:8.

2. What a mighty argument is the day of judgment for a holy life. So Peter says: "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him." 2 Peter 3:10-14.

3. Nothing but uprightness and consistency will stand the test of the last day, and be followed by glory and honor: "Do you really think—anyone of you who judges those who do such things, yet do the same—that you will escape God's judgment?" Romans 2:3.

4. In his address to the people of Athens, Paul uses this subject as an argument to repentance: "God . . . commands all men everywhere to repent, because he has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he has ordained." The call

to repentance thus given is solemn and full of authority. It is a command from God. It is urgent. **The judgment is coming. The Judge stands at the door. The time is short.** There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, nor repentance in the grave, where you go.

Some say, God has not made us to punish us. But if they die in their sins, they will find that "He who made them will not have mercy on them, and he who formed them will show them no favor." Isaiah 27:11. O **drunkard**, how would you look and feel if called to go raving and reeling into the presence of your Maker and your Judge? No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. 6:10. And you shameless **profligate**, unless you speedily repent, you will be forever given over to appetites and passions which will sink you to the lowest hell. I pray you to repent. And you **profane** man, who mingles your Maker's name with your ribaldry, your passions, or your lies; beware lest you become one of those "that cannot cease from sin, . . . to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever." Oh repent while you may. You **abuser of holy time**, if you sin a little longer, you will be in a state where you would give ten thousand worlds for another Sabbath in a gospel church. You **foul-mouthed** man, with your present love of sin you can never sing, Hosanna to the Son of David.

When, on his trial, Latimer heard the pen of the notary running behind the curtain—he was very careful what he said. Take heed what you speak. The recording angel is about. Your words will meet you at God's bar. Are you an apostate? "If any man draw back," says God, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Tertullian says: "The apostate seems to put Christ and Satan both in the balance, and having weighed the service of each, prefers that of the devil, and proclaims him master." Surely you must repent: "God will make his

sword drunk in the blood of apostates." Finally, are you an unbeliever, perhaps moral, serious, kind to the poor, well-behaved in the house of God—yet without living faith in Jesus? Repent, and believe the gospel, else it had been good for you if you had not been born! Let every sinner cry for mercy. Let him cry mightily—O Son of David, have mercy on me!

Christ the Good Shepherd

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." John 10:11

"I am the good shepherd. I know My own sheep, and they know Me."
John 10:14

With the exception of the Egyptians, Gen. 46:34, the ancients appear to have held in high esteem the occupation of shepherd. Much of the romance and poetry of antiquity related to pastoral life. It was therefore very natural for the sacred writers by a shepherd and his flock to represent the relations between rulers and their subjects, between ministers and their people, and between God and his church. There is peculiar propriety in thus setting forth the character and offices of the Savior and the relations subsisting between him and believers. Quite a number of inspired writers employ such language. With his own blessed lips our Lord said, "I am the Good Shepherd." We may here consider:

I. The QUALITIES of a good shepherd, as they are found in Christ.

One of these is, *devotedness to his office*. He who would well fulfill the place of shepherd, must not be idle. He holds no position that requires little or no work and that provides an income. He must be very attentive. He has a great work on hand. This is the case when the shepherd has but a small flock, and they of little value. It is much more true when he has the care of souls. It is above all true of the Savior of men. Who ever served God or his generation like the Redeemer? Even when on earth, he was often wearied and hungry

and thirsty, yet nothing could divert him from the great business he had undertaken. In every age he has fully performed the engagement to each believer, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." At home and abroad, in sickness and health, in the height of prosperity and in the perfection of trouble does he attend his "little flock." He is not merely a Savior afar off, but also a Savior at hand—a very present Help in time of trouble.

Another quality of a good shepherd is, ***love for his office***. If his heart should be set more intently on something else, he cannot possibly succeed. If he prefers some other calling above that in which he is engaged, disaster must come on the flock. It is delightful to be able to assert, on the authority of single promises and of the tenor of Scripture, that no object in creation lies nearer the heart of the good Shepherd than the care and salvation of his flock. This was so in the countless ages of a past eternity, as himself declares: "Then I was by him as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." Proverbs 8:30, 31. When he was here, "having loved his own, . . . he loved them unto the end." Never did he neglect one of his flock. Never did he slight his appropriate work. As one whom his mother comforts, so does he comfort his saints. To Zion he says: "Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me." Isaiah 49:16.

Another important quality of a good shepherd is, ***watchfulness***: "Your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria"—Nahum 3:18—was among the saddest signs of Nineveh's ruin. To the church God says: "He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." Psalm 121:3, 4.

"Those wakeful eyes,
That never sleep,
Shall Israel keep
When dangers rise."

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward him." 2 Chron. 16:9. It is a great mercy that God's people are so seldom allowed to fall under the temptation to believe that their way is hidden from the Lord, and their judgment passed over from their God. But even when Satan does gain a temporary advantage, in such a case they know that it is not for the lack of loving care and tender watchfulness in their God and Savior.

Another desirable quality in the shepherd is **wisdom**. Woe to the flock whose guide has only "the instruments of a foolish shepherd." Zech. 11:15. When the shepherd takes the whip rather than the crook, the scourge rather than the staff of Israel, when he would only drive, and not at all allure—it is sad indeed for the flock. Alas for the "shepherd that cannot understand." Isaiah 56:11. But the good Shepherd employs no unwise instruments or measures. He knows what is best. He sees the end from the beginning. He understands all our case. He charges his angels with folly. He takes the wise in their own craftiness. No plot is so deep, and no machination so cunning, that he cannot at once, and with infinite ease, pour confusion upon their authors.

Another necessary quality in a shepherd is **strength**. Without it the sheep are defenseless. With it they are safe. In Amos 3:12, we read of the shepherd taking out of the mouth of the lion the two legs of one of his sheep. With supernatural strength God endowed David, when he was but a shepherd's boy, that he might deliver his flock from a

lion and a bear. It may be in special reference to the power of Christ that he is called "that great Shepherd of the sheep." Heb. 13:20. He is also styled "the chief Shepherd." 1 Pet. 5:4. In strength, as in all other good qualities, he excels all shepherds: "God has spoken once: twice have I heard this, that power belongs unto God." In Scripture our Shepherd is called "the mighty God." Isaiah 9:6. He claims for himself the solemn title, "The Almighty," Rev. 1:8 and one Almighty is more than all mighties. Indeed, our Shepherd "appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty." Exod. 6:3.

It is a matter of no small weight that a shepherd be no intruder, but be rightfully in his office. This is the case with our Shepherd. Before he gave the commission under which the gospel is now preached, he assured his church, saying, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matt. 28:18. Indeed, early in his ministry he said to his disciples: "All things are delivered unto me by my Father." Matt. 11:27. Even long before his advent, prophecy declared that there should be "given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him." Dan. 7:14.

No quality of a shepherd is of higher value than *love to the sheep*. This shows itself in gentleness, in constant care, in readiness to encounter danger for their defense. O how wondrously loving is our Shepherd. He is so gentle. He neither strives, nor cries, nor lifts up, nor causes his voice to be heard in the streets. When reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not. How different was he from the shepherds of the flock of slaughter. They pitied not the distresses of those for whom they were bound to care. It was love; O, it was compassion like a God, which caused the good Shepherd to lay down his life for the sheep.

Some of the Roman emperors claimed to be shepherds to their people. Trajan was such a one. He sent his own raiment to bind up the wounds of his soldiers and for that kindness many loved him. But Jesus, the good Shepherd, had his flesh torn, and his blood shed, and his heart melted like wax—that he might heal our wounds. **He has the only sovereign balm.** This pity of Jesus shows itself in his readiness to receive and tenderly treat the weakest and most sickly of his flock. Continually does he fulfill the prophetic promise, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Isaiah 40:11. One of the last charges of the chief Shepherd to Peter, and through him to all ministers, was, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep, feed my sheep." Jesus never forgot the lambs. Jesus never forgot one of his sheep.

When a bird, frightened by a hawk, flew into the bosom of a man, though he was a heathen he said, "I will not betray you to your enemy, seeing you come to me for sanctuary." So in time of danger the good Shepherd loves to have his affrighted sheep come close to him and abide with him. In a sense, all times are times of danger; so we cannot cleave too closely to the Redeemer. This ardent love to the flock secures fidelity, as our Lord has said: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will leave the sheep because they aren't his and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. The hired hand runs away because he is merely hired and has no real concern for the sheep." John 10:11-13. But Jesus saw the wolf coming, and stood his ground, and laid down his life for his sheep, and saved them.

II. Let us consider the OFFICES which the good Shepherd actually performs for his people. It would do no good to a flock

to have a shepherd ever so well qualified, if he exercised not himself in their behalf. Our Shepherd unceasingly seeks and promotes our good.

It is required of a shepherd that he know his flock. The words of Jesus, so full of comfort, are, "I am the good shepherd; I **know** my own sheep, and they know me." John 10:14. And in verse 3 he says, "He calls his own sheep by name."

Sometimes in Scripture the word *know* has the same sense as *foreknow*. In this sense Jesus knew his people. "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate." Romans 8:29. He saw Nathanael under the fig-tree, and Zaccheus in the sycamore-tree. He knew all about them. Sometimes the word *know* is equivalent to *distinguish*. In this sense, also, Christ knows his people: "The Lord knows those who are his," that is, he distinguishes the sheep from the goats. Sometimes to *know* denotes familiarity. So our Lord Jesus says: "I will come unto you;" "I will make my abode with you;" "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Sometimes to *know* denotes recognition as of friends. So Jesus says, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his Lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." John 15:15, 16. Besides, he himself has taught us how a good shepherd will seek a lost sheep, and rejoice over it when he has found it. Thus he illustrates the emotions awakened in heaven over a lost sinner recovered from the snare of the wicked one. And he explicitly tells us that he came to seek and to save that which was lost, and to do it by dying. Indeed, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6. With what joy each believer sings,

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed his precious blood."

By Ezekiel, 34:6, God complains, "My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them." He then adds, verses 12-14, "As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel." Ezekiel 34:12-14. This, blessed be his name, is just what the Lord is doing. He is seeking and finding the lost sheep, and bringing them into his fold, and blessing them, by the thousand and the ten thousand, with his own presence and infinite mercy.

Not only does a good shepherd once gather his sheep into his fold, but when they wander he brings them back: "He restores my soul," says David, Psalm 23:3. This is according to the whole tenor of Scripture. Compare Psalm 89:30-33. When Peter strayed, Jesus sought him. When Ephraim wandered, God said, "Is Ephraim a dear son?"

It was one branch of a shepherd's work to go before his flock, and thus be their leader. So the good shepherd "leads them out, and

when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them." John 10:3, 4. In like manner the psalmist cries: "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock." Psalm 80:1. The shepherd went before the flock to keep the sheep from going into barren or dangerous places, to guide them into green pastures and to cooling fountains, and at evening to bring them safely to their fold. O how gently the good Shepherd leads his flock! How abundantly he supplies all their needs. The science of mathematics affords no stronger reasoning than this: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not lack." It was an solemn charge that God brought against some of old: "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" Ezek. 34:2. Surely the good shepherd will not do thus. He provides food for the body. Not a sparrow is forgotten before God. Are you not of more value than many sparrows, O you of little faith! Your bread and your water is sure. When the last handful of meal was preparing, then was the prophet sent to supply the widow with plenty. Jesus also provides for the sustenance of our souls: "My grace is sufficient for you." There is his blessed word. There are his precious ordinances. He has made provision that by his Spirit all the appointed means shall be efficacious. In short, God denies a Christian nothing—but only to give him something better.

Jesus also keeps and defends his flock. If now and then wild beasts prowl about the fold and alarm the sheep, this makes them gather the more closely around their glorious Leader. Or if, in the way of persecution, Apollyon shall let loose his dogs upon the flock of Christ to worry them, it shall only make them the more willing to remain in the fold. God controls all that seek to do his people harm. "Hear the word of the Lord, O you nations, . . . He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd does his flock." Jer. 31:10. The Master said, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of

wolves." Matt. 10:16. Yet he adds, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27. If their enemies are mighty, he is almighty; if they are cunning, he knows all things; if they muster many, he marshals all the host of heaven, and devils are subject unto him. When Christ's sheep hear his voice and know it, it is to them most cheering. For the "words of the wise," which "are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies," are "given from one Shepherd." Ecc. 12:11. The true flock of Christ has a remarkable discernment, which makes it very difficult to lead them astray. "A stranger will they not follow." Jesus accustoms them to his voice. Its gentle tones and winning sweetness, bind them close to the Redeemer. He is all in all to them.

III. Let us observe the effect of the good Shepherd's care over his flock. They know his voice and they follow him. His word is living and powerful in their hearts. His example they love to imitate. Was he benevolent? So are they. Did he go about doing good? So do they. Was he meek and lowly? They are not proud and revengeful. Their great hope and aim are that they may be like him, and see him as he is. 1 John 3:2. They will be satisfied when they awake with his likeness. They learn to flee to him in times of danger. His name is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe. Like the conies, God's people are a feeble folk, and like the conies, their defense is in the rock. On their Shepherd they depend for everything. In him they have strong confidence, yes, great boldness in the Lord. Yet they are far removed from self-confidence. They plead no merits of their own, but plead their title to membership in his flock. Hear them of old: "We your people and sheep of your pasture." Psalm 79:13. "Oh come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand." Psalm 95:6, 7.

Other places show how these timid ones come with boldness even to the throne of grace.

IV. But what are the MARKS which Christ puts on his sheep? These are much hidden from the eye of unregenerate men. Even the chief Shepherd was not known by the wise and prudent of his day; much less do such men see the image of God on the hearts of his people. Like their Master, they are often esteemed impostors, babblers, blasphemers, madmen, possessed of devils. But still they have their marks.

1. A sheep is gentle and quiet. It is not for war. A meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price. The difference between a saint and a sinner is the difference between a sheep and a goat, sometimes between a sheep and a wolf. "A sheep before her shearers is silent," though losing her fleece. God's people have a law whose spirit they love: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you."

2. A sheep is free from deceitfulness. A fox is cunning and sly; but sheep have no craft. They are artless. Of each of Christ's flock it may be said with more or less exactness, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit."

3. Sheep are compliant and not stubborn. From their nature they are governable. God loves the obedient, not the complaining; the submissive, not the murmuring.

4. A sheep is of a cleanly nature. Its habits are quite different from those of the swine. We expect to see the sow in the mire—it loves to be there. But if the sheep is there, it is not willingly. God's people are holy. If they were as holy as they desire, they never would sin any more.

1. All accounts of the Shepherd's life show us that there is much fellowship between him and his flock; and that as he loves them, so they love him. This holds in a spiritual sense. Here is a delightful theme. Christ manifests himself to his people as he does not to the world. Many a time does he come unto them, and show them his covenant. Nor are these manifestations of his grace and glory lost upon them. Their souls learn to follow close after him. They count all things but less for the excellency of his knowledge. Consequently, the more fellowship between Christ and his people, the better do they love him.

2. Let us never forget that there is but one Shepherd and but one fold. How careful then ought we to be not to disown any whom Christ has received. It is better, through honest mistake, to receive him whom Christ rejects, than through uncharitableness to reject him whom Christ has received. How many wicked partition walls are set up in the fold of Christ! "Is Christ divided?" It is at our peril if we wound where Christ would heal.

3. Dear Christian brethren! sheep of Christ's pasture! often seek the guidance of your Leader. Go in quest of the green pastures and the still waters. Cry mightily to God. Ask him to lead you in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Never lose sight of the Redeemer. Constantly petition him as did the spouse of old: "Tell me, O you whom my soul loves, where you feed, where you make your flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one who turns aside by the flocks of your companions?" Cant. 1:7.

How sweet and solemn is the place, with Christ within the doors. It was communion with the Redeemer before his incarnation that made Jacob exclaim at Bethel, "This is none other but the house of God and the gate of heaven."

Blessed Jesus! What delicious fare. How sweet your entertainments are! All must come humbly to the mercy-seat. Set your needs before the Lord as the widow set her empty vessels before the prophet, and he will supply them all; yes, there shall not be room enough to contain the blessing. A dear young Christian mother expiring three thousand miles from the Cape of Good Hope, in the interior of Africa, sent to her mother and sister in the capital of Virginia this message: "I never have regretted coming to this land of darkness. Heaven is as near to Africa as to Richmond." She then kissed her babe and bade farewell to earth. So do his rod and his staff comfort those who walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

4. Here the sheep and the goats often mingle together; but it shall not be so always. The chief Shepherd will appear by-and-by, "and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." Matt. 25:32, 33. Solemn indeed will be that day. Final and fearful will be its separations. Nothing but that which infinite purity and omniscient rectitude shall approve, will stand the test of the last day. I ask not, Are you a rare Christian, but are you a real child of God? You may not be a splendid worshiper—but are you sound at heart? What think you of Christ? Is he all your desire and all your salvation? Do you mark his footsteps? Do you exhibit his temper? Do you love his cause? Do you die unto the world? Are you alive unto God? Be honest with yourself; the day that is coming will strip off every disguise.

"When you, my righteous Judge, shall come,
To take your ransomed people home,
Shall I among them stand?
Shall such a worthless worm as I,

Who sometimes am afraid to die,
Be found at your right hand?"

Christ a Physician

"The whole head is hurt, and the whole heart is sick. You are sick from head to foot--covered with bruises, welts, and infected wounds!" - Isaiah 1:5-6

Often in Scripture is **sin** spoken of as a disease, a sickness, a hurt; the plan of **mercy** as a remedy, a balm, a healing; and **God**, and particularly Christ, as a Physician. Psalm 38:7; Isaiah 1:6; Jer. 8:21, 22; Hos. 5:13; Matt. 4:23; 8:17; 9:12, 35; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31. More just or striking figurative language is nowhere found. Men's sins make them sick. The only remedy is sovereign grace. The Physician must be divine. Let us look at the great doctrines of the gospel under this figure:

I. Sin is a dreadful disease. Yes, it is the very **worst** disease. It was the first, and so is the **oldest** malady. It infected man very soon after his creation. The devil was a murderer from the beginning. John 8:44. For nearly six thousand years sin has committed its ravages and been gaining inveteracy. No other disease is so old.

Sin is also a **universal** disease: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way." Romans 3:10-12, 23. Other maladies have

slain their thousands; but sin has slain its tens of thousands! The whole world is a graveyard, full of spiritual death and corruption. No man ever lived without sin. As soon as we begin to live, we begin to transgress.

Not only is every man sick, but **our whole nature is diseased!** Our **understanding** is darkened. Our **memory** is polluted. The **thoughts** of our heart are only evil continually. Our **throats** are open graves. Our **tongues** practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on our **lips**. Our **mouths** are full of cursing and bitterness. Our **feet** are swift to shed blood. Ruin and misery mark our **ways**, and the way of peace we do not know. There is no fear of God before our **eyes**. Our **heart** is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Our **hands** are full of bribes and of blood. We **love** darkness rather than light. We put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. We call the proud happy, and the humble miserable. We are utterly diseased with sin!

Sin makes men blind, and deaf, and dumb, and lame, and lethargic. It is a terrible complication of diseases. It is a rottenness in the bones. It is a maddening fever, a wasting consumption, a paralysis of all the powers. Human nature is wholly corrupt. "The whole head is hurt, and the whole heart is sick. You are sick from head to foot—covered with bruises, welts, and infected wounds!" Isaiah 1:5-6

Sin is a **perpetual** disease. It rages day and night, on the sea and on the land, in the house of mirth and in the house of God. The wicked "sleep not, except they have done mischief." They devise mischief upon their beds. They "cannot cease from sin." Even in sleep their dreams are vain or vile. Sin has no rest. If for a season the evil spirit forsakes his house, it is only to bring with him seven other spirits

more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Sin is a **hereditary** disease: "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." We are conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity. The child of a consumptive may die of old age, but the children of sinners must be sinful. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"

Sin is also **contagious**. Sinners are enticers, seducers, corrupters. Isaiah 1:4. Many are "factors for hell, studying to corrupt all about them." Men are often partakers of each other's sins. To the perpetual disgrace of Jeroboam and Manasseh, it is said that they "made Israel to sin." Some men strongly resemble the upas-tree, whose leaves and bloom and shade blighted all within its reach.

Sin is also the most **deceitful** and **flattering** disease. One of its strong delusions is, "You shall not die." Paracelsus tells us of a disease "which made men die dancing." So with the wicked. When they cry, Peace and safety, lo, sudden destruction comes upon them, and they shall not escape. See the throng of ungodly men marching to perdition, the slaves of Satan, the servants of corruption, the enemies of God. Their mirth would make an ignorant man think them the happiest of mortals, and not, as they are, condemned criminals, on their way to the eternal prison-house of inflexible justice. Just as the fool thought himself prepared for a long and merry life, his soul was required of him. Sin has its hectic flushes, its unnatural excitements, its delusive dreams, its strange ecstasies. The worse a man is, the better he thinks himself to be.

Sin is the **worst** disease, because it is the parent of all other diseases. In Paul's argument, "death by sin" is an axiom. But for sin, we would

never have seen a human being faint, or sicken, or die. Suffering and agony have one parent—sin!

Other diseases are calamities—sin is a **wickedness**. Sin is not a misfortune—sin is a crime. It is a wicked thing to be a sinner. Transgression brings guilt. God is angry with the wicked every day. The more sinful any one is, the more is God displeased with him.

Sin is the most **loathsome** of all diseases. Pride is the worst kind of malady. No heart is so vile as a hard heart. No vileness compares with an evil heart of unbelief. No sight is so appalling as a sight of vile affections. The physician of the body sees sights which try his nerves, but he who has right views of sin is sickened and frightened at the discovery. It is horrible and abominable to God and to all holy people.

Sin is also the most **dolorous** disease. They multiply their sorrows who hasten after transgression. The most bitter cries that ever were heard were extorted by sin. This is true of saints and of sinners, of earth and of hell.

Other diseases do but kill the body—but sin **kills soul and body in hell forever!** They may pursue their victims to the grave; but "sin kills beyond the tomb." Sin will rage more violently beyond the tomb than on earth. It will be followed by eternal regrets and reproaches, eternal weeping and wailing, eternal wrath and anguish!

Sin cannot be cured by any means of human devising. If music did cure the bite of the tarantula, the music of the angelic choir, announcing the advent of Messiah, will not of itself heal any soul. Nay, the melodies and harmonies of the skies, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, would not save a soul. All reformations wrought by persuasion and the natural will, can never cure the heart.

"If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shall you plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." Job 9:30, 31. "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess," said the Pharisee, while spiritual wickedness reigned within. Herod heard John gladly, and did many things, Mark 6:20, but he sinned on. Saul lifted up his voice, and wept, and confessed his sin, but he was not turned from folly. Nor can any mortal "redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious." Psalm 49:7, 8. We may weep and lament over our own sins or over the sins of others, but that will neither dethrone sin nor atone for it. God alone can do that work. Though conversion is not a miracle, as we now use that word, yet it is wrought by the almighty power of God, as truly as creation was the work of omnipotence.

II. There is a REMEDY for sin. This remedy is in Scripture sometimes called a healing, sometimes a recovery, and sometimes "the balm of Gilead." Let us carry out this figure. The balm or balsam here alluded to was an oily juice gathered from a tree about fourteen feet in height. It chiefly grew in Gilead. We know that this balm was very highly prized. It was famous as a remedy in many lands. The Ishmaelites who bought Joseph were going from Gilead to Egypt with myrrh and spices and this balm. Gen. 37:25. When Jacob sent presents down to Egypt, he sent balm. Gen. 43:11. Ezekiel informs us it was part of the merchandise of Tyre. Ezek. 27:17. The best quality of balm sold for double its weight in silver. This celebrated medicine has long been mentioned as the best cure. Jeremiah says of Egypt: "Go up into Gilead and take balm; O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shall you use many medicines, for you shall not be cured." Again, of Babylon he says, she "is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed." Jer. 46:11; 57:8. So that the general import of the phrase is clear and very

striking. The remedy for sin, the gospel balm of Gilead, is found only in the work and death of Christ. His blood cleanses from all sin. 1 John 1:7. With his stripes we are healed. Isaiah 53:5. His merits clothe our nakedness.

1. By the blood and righteousness of Christ we are JUSTIFIED. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is all our salvation. The word *Jehovah*, commonly rendered LORD, is in Scripture variously combined with other words, and always much to the strengthening of our faith. Thus we have Jehovah-jireh, Gen. 22:14, the Lord will provide; Jehovah-nissi, Exod. 17:15, the Lord is my banner; Jehovah-shalom, Judg. 6:24, the Lord send peace; Jehovah-shammah, Ezek. 48:35, the Lord is there; Jehovah-rophi, Exod. 15:26, the Lord that heals you; and Jehovah-tsidkenu, Jer. 23:6, the Lord our righteousness. Which of all these could believers spare from the teachings of Scripture? Not one. But among them all, none are more precious than the two last cited.

The types all foretold that Christ should bear our sins. The prophecies did the same. Christ's death atones. By his sufferings we have remission of sin. He is our ransom; and by his obedience we have acceptance, justifying righteousness, a right to the tree of life. Our blood is nothing, **our tears are nothing, our works are nothing; all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; they are of no avail.**

The first effect, therefore, of Christ's undertaking for us, is an effect external to us. It changes the state of things at the throne of God in reference to us. It reconciles God to the offer and grant of saving mercy to us sinners. It makes him willing and just to take into his favor us poor miserable outcasts and rebels. Thus by what Christ has

done and suffered, all barriers to God's merciful communications to sinners are removed, and they are actually restored to the Divine favor. Eternal Justice is no longer against them, but for them. The sovereign Lord makes them his sons, his heirs, and joint heirs with his Son to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away.

2. The same Jesus who reconciles God to sinners; reconciles sinners to God: "**Christ is made unto us SANCTIFICATION.**" If human hearts are ever overcome and brought sweetly to comply with the demands of God's law, it will be by looking on him who was pierced. When the Romans saw Caesar's bloody robes, they said, "His murderers shall die!" And when by faith the sinner sees how his sins crucified the Lord of glory, he says he will mortify his members, which are on the earth.

"Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die,
My heart has so decreed;
Nor will I spare the guilty things,
That made my Savior bleed."

Nothing but the cross will melt a hard heart, or bend a stubborn will, or give a death-blow to corruption. A sight of hell never frightened one out of the love of sin. The thunders of Sinai never made a rebellious heart submit to God. Pliny, the naturalist, says that blood readily extinguishes fire. It is sure that the blood of Christ not only quenches the flaming wrath around the throne of God, but it also extinguishes the fires of unhallowed desires in the soul. It begets hatred to sin, and love to holiness.

In its application this remedy is often painful. The sinner is so accustomed to look to himself for righteousness and holiness, that

when God is convincing him of his guilt and helplessness, he often fears that all is forever lost. He supposes his exercises are but a foretaste of the wrath to come. Even renewed men, having a clear sight of their sins, are sometimes sorely vexed. Luther in desperation was so overcome that he lay as one dead. But in all cases where it is applied, the gospel remedy is sovereign and effectual. It availed for the dying thief, for the bloody Saul of Tarsus, for the cruel jailor, and for millions on millions who once esteemed themselves as vile and as worthy of everlasting death as any of us can possibly esteem himself. Christ came to save the *chief* of sinners, and if he failed in that, the *whole* object of his mission would not be attained.

III. There is a great and good PHYSICIAN. His name is Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace, Jesus Christ the Righteous. He is the Physician of souls. None but he can cure a sin-sick soul.

He is a very **tender** Physician. He can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He was once hit by the archers himself. His compassions are without a parallel. The bruised reed he will not break; the smoking flax he will not quench. **He died for his patients!** His strength was dried up like a potsherd, that we might be strong in the Lord. His heart was melted in him like wax, that ours might be melted in penitence. By his stripes we are healed. He knows what temptation and sorrow mean. He is the most approachable being that ever walked the earth.

He will go wherever he is asked. He will go among rich or poor, old or young, captives or captors, if they really desire him. Never did he refuse to heal a sin-sick soul who submitted to him. From the days of righteous Abel until now, he has graciously received every returning penitent. I was once asked, What is the most consolatory

text in the Bible? I have never been able to answer the question, but I know of none sweeter than this: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." The Lord Jesus is still as ready to save as when he called Zaccheus, poured his mercies on the dying thief, or granted the request of the Canaanitish woman.

Then **he is always at hand**. He is omnipresent. We need not wait a long time for him to come. He is a present help in time of trouble. Romans 10:6-10.

He makes no charge for all his cures. He practices without money, without price. He utterly despises all sordid proposals. The full soul he sends empty away, but he fills the hungry with good things, and gives grace to the humble. Grace is poured into his lips; the oil of grace is poured into every bleeding heart.

He seems most ready to go where he is most needed. When he sent forth his apostles to preach, he told them to begin at Jerusalem—to begin with his murderers—those who had taunted him, mocked him, and crucified him, crying, "His blood be on us and on our children." He knows that the whole need not a physician—but those who are sick.

And well does he **love** his work. Nothing could thwart his purpose. Having loved his own, he loved them to the end. His heart is set upon saving sinners, so as it is set upon nothing else. He delights in his work. He sees the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. His people are his crown. His redeemed are his diadem.

He is vastly **skillful**. He knows what is in man. He understands all the difficult and stubborn cases. His wisdom is more than equal to any demands we can make upon it. He has the tongue of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in season to him who is

weary. He knows the enormity of sin, the dreadful burden it brings upon the conscience, and its fearful obstinacy. He knows our frame and remembers that we are dust.

Never has he failed in any case that he undertook. One of his names is, Mighty to save. Manasseh and Paul and Bunyan are as holy and as happy, as if sin had never defiled their souls. Whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. Where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded.

He is a **famous** Physician. His whole undertaking has been "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eph. 3:10, 11. So famous is he who his name is above every name that is named in heaven and in earth. All heaven thinks itself well employed in singing, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain—to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

He will take his own **time**, use his own **pleasure**, and employ his own **methods** respecting the cure. He will have his own way—or he will not do anything. He knows that his way is best. He admits no Counselor to teach him. The wisdom of creatures is folly.

His prescriptions are useless unless we confide in him implicitly. The whole efficacy of his remedies depends on our confidence in him. "According to your faith, be it done unto you," is still the rule of distribution and measurement in his kingdom.

And now, poor, sin-sick, dying soul, flee to this Physician, submit your case to him, and seek for the healing remedy! If you stay away, you must die! "The wages of sin is death." There is balm in Gilead,

and a Physician there. Why then is not your health recovered? Nothing but your unbelief hinders you from being a sharer in the infinite mercies of God. O come, and welcome to all the blessings of salvation!

The Gentleness of Christ

The needs of men are such, that any suitable relief brought to them must be marked by great kindness and gentleness. The wicked are often rough and boisterous. Towards God their conduct is insolent. They care not for the Redeemer.

With the heirs of salvation it is different. They feel themselves to be feeble. They are grieved in spirit. They are often faint-hearted. They are poor and timid. A sense of sin bows them down. A sense of weakness destroys their self-confidence. Their boldness does not diminish their humility. Their confidence consists with contrition. Their adversaries are many, mighty, and malignant. Their understanding of divine things is often imperfect. The best of them have no confidence in the flesh.

Some of God's dear people are born with great weakness of intellect, which is not relieved either by education or by grace. They never take clear and strong views of any subject. They live and die as *children* in understanding. They are often perplexed by things which are plain to others. **Regeneration does not give new faculties, but a right direction to those we have.**

Sometimes disease or a casualty shatters the nervous system, and for life renders one incapable of vigorous exercise of mind or resolute purposes of heart. **Divine grace does not restore health to the sickly, though it gives sweet submission in suffering.** Many have a morbid tendency to dark views of their spiritual state. Nor have they learned to discriminate between exercises of mind which are the result of natural causes, and those produced by spiritual truth.

Wrong teaching, especially in the earlier stages of religious experience, often sadly affects character. The truths of Scripture are presented out of proportion. The solemn and the dreadful and the gloomy aspects; sometimes take the place of the mild and the gentle, and the bright and cheering. Even in true piety there is often a sad mixture of superstition.

In some Christian men there is such a tendency to levity and inconstancy, that the Savior sees it necessary often to make them smart for their transgressions, and to humble them in the dust. The terrors of the law are let loose upon them. The arrows of the Almighty stick fast in them. Some who now, by Divine grace, have a well-regulated temper, once had wild passions; but they have been tamed by severe discipline. Some of the most cheerful Christians once had months or years of dejection of mind and sharp anguish of spirit, to cure their lightness and fickleness.

Besides, such are the infinite majesty and glory of divine things, such the unhappy effects of sin upon the mind, and such the unspeakable importance of salvation in the eyes of a renewed sinner—that the strongest among the saints often have the deepest sense of their weakness, and those who have the clearest views are the least satisfied with their attainments.

Consequently, many in the church are desponding, yet sincere. Their faith is weak, though true. They have many fears about themselves, while others have good hopes of them. Though they walk in darkness, they walk uprightly. If they do not go forward like some, yet they do not go backward. Their hearts cleave unto God. They stick to his ways.

There is not a more interesting subject than **the treatment which Christ gives to the timid and feeble among his people.**

1. All his people, at some time or other, have fears—and are conscious of feebleness. Their weakness and their leanness often constitute their song.

2 Any provision for such, includes also the necessities of the strong.

3. It is delightful to the pious, to know that their weakest brethren shall be cared for and upheld.

4. All sincere Christians love to contemplate the kindness of their Lord and Master, to whoever manifested.

We dare not tell such, that a dim view of religious truth or a low state of religious enjoyment is the best. **There may be a necessity for present distress, arising from some defect of character.** But all Christians should seek for enlargement and establishment in truth, holiness, and comfort. Even the most mature should be beckoned on to higher attainments.

Nor should we abate anything of the requirements of God's word as a rule of life, or of self-examination. If God is merciful, he is also holy. If he is condescending, he is also full of majesty. Presumption is a great foe to grace.

The great resources of God's people, whether comparatively weak or strong—must be found in the character, the covenant, and the grace of the Redeemer. In a review of their lives, the Lord's people ascribe their triumphs to no other cause. Like David, each of them says, "Your gentleness has made me great." 2 Sam. 22:36; Psalm 18:35.

1. The CHARACTER of Christ, as given us both in prophecy and in history, **is full of encouragement to all his people, even the feeblest.** Thus said the evangelical prophet: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth." Isaiah 42:2, 3. Nothing in all the Scriptures is said contrary to this prediction. Our Lord's whole life upon earth was an illustration of its verity. In his righteous indignation, he has trodden blaspheming tyrants to hell; but **never did he trample on a broken heart.** Human ingenuity has never yet suggested anything expressive of kindness which he might have said or done, that he did not say or do, or something more loving.

The shortest, but by no means the least instructive verse in his history is, "Jesus wept." This was at the grave of his friend Lazarus. At his last celebration of the Passover, he laid himself out to say the tenderest and most consolatory things to his mourning disciples. In his agony, he apologized for their drowsiness. To erring Peter he sends a personal message to meet him in Galilee. He bids unbelieving Thomas come and thrust his hand into his side, that he might no longer doubt. Often did he invite poor sinners to partake of the blessings of his salvation: "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." After his ascension to heaven, when one of his followers was pierced by a thorn in the flesh, and terribly buffeted by Satan, he made this consolatory revelation: "My grace is sufficient for you."

2. The COVENANT of Christ, of which he is the surety and the head, abounds in **provisions** and **promises** made to the trembling and the feeble. "As your days, so shall your strength be." "He who is feeble among them at that day shall be as David." "He gives power to the faint; and to those who have no might he increases strength." "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God." These are mere samples of engagements made before the coming of Messiah. In the New Testament they are confirmed. Speaking of "him who is weak in the faith," Paul says: "He shall be held up, for God is able to make him stand." Like promises abound in the gospels and in the epistles. The very last book of Scripture is full of the kindest things spoken to sincere believers. All these promises are yes and amen in Christ. Study them. Let them dwell in you richly.

3. In some stage of their experience all Christians have their fears and weaknesses. We must be babes before we are men. We must crawl before we can walk, and walk before we can run. The very best things come from small beginnings. The greatest rivers at their head are but little rills. The greatest oaks come from acorns no larger than a thimble. The greatest families and kingdoms had humble beginnings. The kingdom of heaven in the heart is like a grain of mustard-seed, which is the smallest of all seeds. Despise not the day of small things. We must take root downwards, and then bear fruit upwards. The finest picture on earth, when only the outlines were drawn, was a poor thing; not until it was finished was it fair to pronounce judgment upon it.

4. Some humble child of God may say, "I have made but poor progress. I have sore troubles, "fears within, and fightings without." Let such remember,

1. Whatever makes us humble is good for us. Humility is the most excellent of graces. Without it there is no real progress heavenward.

2. Paul speaks of it as the common experience of Christians in his day that they were sorely troubled: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." We are not sufficient, as of ourselves, to think anything. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Your troubles are not greater than these.

3. God's plan is that our sanctification ordinarily should not be begun and finished in a day, as was that of the thief on the cross. Nature and grace are like the house of Saul and the house of David. The contest between them is long and deadly; but the house of Saul waxes weaker and weaker, and that of David stronger and stronger, finally getting full dominion.

4. It is a precious token of God's regard to us, that he so deals with us as to destroy our carnal security, mortify our pride, make us loathe and abhor ourselves, and yet gives us a relish for spiritual enjoyments, and leads us to seek them above all other things.

5. He is a real Christian and is making progress, to whom Christ is more and more precious. As our estimate of him rises, our estimate of ourselves necessarily becomes lower. To believers Christ is everything. He is all their salvation. But for the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, that would have been one of the least celebrated of all towns. But for his residence in Nazareth, the proverb might still have been true of it. But for his visit to the second temple, its glory would have remained every way inferior to that of the first. Christ dignifies everything with which he is connected. Union with Christ is life from the dead. If we are guilty, he has atoned; if we are vile, he is worthy; if we are nothing, he is all in all.

And then he is so gracious to the needy and guilty and faint and trembling. See how he reasons with the desponding disciples on the way to Emmaus. During his ministry he granted great blessings even to those who approached him doubting and saying, "If you will," or, "If you can." When the poor afflicted woman thought to steal a blessing from him and escape his notice, he stopped her, but only to deal kindly with her. Christ never puts new wine into old bottles. Some men begin their ministry with denunciations and threatenings of the law, but from the first Christ pronounced blessings on the humble. The very last words in the Bible are: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." **There are heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of mercy in Christ—beyond all human necessities, miseries, and sins. To be in Christ is heaven begun. To be with Christ and like Christ is heaven completed. His mercies are shore-less, fathomless, eternal, unchangeable! He has helped myriads to glory who were as weak, as unworthy, as desponding as any of us.**

6. To his sincere followers Christ has a tender regard at all times and in all trials. His kind providence over them is constant, wise, and wonderful. With them everything has a good outcome. With them all is for the best. Everything helps on the saints to glory. To the deeply afflicted, the Savior says: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten;" "therefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees." Your brethren may cast you out under pretense of glorifying God, but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. Isaiah 66:5.

7. Christ surely includes the case of even the feeblest and most desponding of his people when he speaks of them as his little ones. He will certainly avenge the wrongs of such. He regards them as the apple of his eye. **He knows their sins, and**

errors, and follies—but he still loves them tenderly! They may be babes and sucklings, yet out of their mouth he will ordain praise. Their weakness affords him a welcome opportunity to show pity and condescension. His are the compassions of a God. He is the express image of his Father, and his spirit is as loving as the Father's to the Son.

8. In his word Christ fully authorizes us to persuade all his people, even the humblest, to look at the quality rather than the quantity of their attainments. The stronger our graces the better. Christian character cannot be too vigorous. Nor should any sit down contented with small acquirements. But any real grace is a token for good. A shilling may be as good money as a pound. A dew-drop is as truly water as the ocean. A spark has the nature of fire no less than the glowings of a furnace. Kind is one thing; degree is another. To doubt the genuineness of our faith because we have not full assurance is not wise. He to whom Christ is precious, to whom the word of God is sweeter than honey, to whom sin is odious, to whom secret devotion is a delight, who makes it the business of his life to honor his Master, and who regards the world as a broken idol, has the witness that he is passed from death unto life. "It is safer to be humble with one talent than proud with ten; yes, better to be a humble worm than a proud angel." [Flavel.] "He who is contented with just grace enough to get to heaven and escape hell, and desires no more, may be sure he has none at all, and is far from being made partaker of the divine nature." [Janeway.]

9. If the trembling and feeble would have the full comfort of Christ's salvation, let them do his will. In keeping the commandments there is great reward. "If you know these things, happy are you if you do them." Whenever we wander from the path of duty, we weaken our principles and wound our consciences. Let us

carefully guard against censoriousness and severity of judgment. Let us forgive, as we hope to be forgiven. Let us love others as Christ has loved us. Let us wait upon the Lord in all his ordinances. If Paul could not do what he would, he would yet do what he could. "Prayer and pains, through faith that is in Christ Jesus—can do all things," says Eliot. No man ever sincerely did what he honestly believed to be his duty, and then solely relied on the infinite mercy of God in Christ, and yet came short of heaven. But we must obey as well as trust. We must do the will of God, as well as hope in his mercy. "Blessed are those who keep his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

10. It would greatly comfort all God's people, if they would rely more upon the promise, covenant, and oath of God—and less on their own frames of mind and heart. Our feelings vary with a thousand influences; but the covenant of God is sure and unchangeable. "If we believe not, yet he abides faithful: he cannot deny himself." The life of the believer is hid with Christ in God. He is like mount Zion, which cannot be moved. But O how variable are his feelings; how easily discouraged is his heart. If left to himself, he must fail. But Jesus never changes. His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear him and keep his covenant. He pities like a God. He pours water upon those who are thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.

11. Let all believers remember that they are not forbidden the nearest access to God. The covenant is as sure to the trembling and feeble, as to any others. Christ's power is made perfect in man's weakness. If he accepted and saved none but the strong and resolute and unwavering—who would be saved? Did ever a good husband neglect a wife because she was weak and timid? and is not Christ the husband of all who put their trust in him? He says: "For a

small moment have I forsaken you, but with great mercies will I gather you. In a little wrath I hid my face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the Lord your Redeemer." Jehovah, he is God. Let his people shout for joy. Let his ministers speak a word in season to those who are weary. Let all the saints comfort the feeble-minded. Let despondent, yet sincere believers, hope in God—for their redemption draws near!

Christ Shall Yet Have a Glorious Reward

There is a general impression among Christians that true religion will yet pervade the earth. There is a difference among some godly people as to the manner in which this work will be accomplished; but all agree as to the fact. Neither do we know the time when the inconceivable blessings of the gospel shall be made known to all men. "In giving us prophecies, God did not intend to make prophets of us." Yet we may modestly inquire what and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ did signify, when he foretold the latter-day glory. Much prophecy is yet to be fulfilled, and some prophecies are now in course of actual fulfillment.

I. Let us take a brief view of the present moral state of the world. It is admitted that appearances are often dark; and that the aspect of the world is discouraging.

Now and then **Atheism** proclaims its tenets, is confident that mankind are superstitious in their worship of Jehovah, makes its disciples of the drunkard, the licentious, the prostitute, and the

blasphemer, and once in a while threatens a terrific eruption of its scalding lava on the face of society. Its latest form of development is in a wretched Pantheism.

Infidelity still uses great swelling words of vanity, makes hard and ungodly speeches respecting Jehovah and his saints, often spews out its venom against all that is pure and holy, asserts the sufficiency of human reason as a guide to heaven, betakes itself to the caves of sorcery, and can boast of nothing better than a death without hope, and a grave without a resurrection.

Heathenism still boasts her myriads of altars, purple with human gore and smoking with abominable incense. What heathenism once was, it still is. The pencil of inspiration has drawn a perfect portrait of it, Romans 1:21-32. For nearly six thousand years the pagan world has been seeking an image of the invisible God, and the summit of its aspirings still reaches no higher than the sun, or moon, or stars, or devils, or crocodiles, or peacocks, or serpents, or images of gold, silver, wood, or stone. Its morals never mend. Under its sanctions every precept of the decalogue is broken publicly and privately, ritually and legally. No marvel that when Satan is worshiped, there should be found habitations of cruelty. No nation without God's word has in its language any term expressing what Christians mean by sanctification. Corruption is and ever has been the alpha and the omega of heathenism. All that is stupid in the donkey, silly in the dove, filthy in the swine, fierce in wild beasts, and venomous in serpents—is fitly ascribed to heathenism. "The wicked freely strut about, when what is vile is honored among men." Psalm 12:8.

From what abominations has the the gospel saved us! "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers

nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Although just now somewhat shorn of his power to persecute, **Muhammad**, the prophet of Mecca still practices his sorceries, maddens the passions of men, holds the cup of carnal delight to the lips of his besotted worshipers, and endeavors to light up the horrors of the grave by pointing to a Paradise of sin!

Notwithstanding all that has been done in blessing and in cursing, in fulfilling prophecy, and in setting up Messiah's kingdom, **Judaism** is still entrenched behind Targums, Paraphrasts, an oral law, endless traditions, and the most inveterate prejudices and enmity against the truth. Thus it is with things claiming no connection whatever with Christianity. When we come to nations professedly accepting the gospel, there is still much to dishearten.

The **Catholic church** still adheres to her ignorant priesthood, her sacraments of human invention, her apostolic supremacy, and her nearness to Messiah's sepulcher; but knows not that she is poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, far from Christ's precepts, far from his example, far from his doctrines. In the pride of her apostolicity she renounces every distinctive truth taught by apostles.

She, that has made the kings, merchants, and dwellers on earth drunk with the wine of her fornications, holds forth other goblets to the nations, saying: "I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill." Follow her footsteps to any region of the world, and you find that "the doctrine of the cross is least understood where crosses most abound." The lamp of God's

Word is put under a bushel, candles are substituted, and darkness becomes visible.

Universalism still teaches that the wheat and the tares shall both be gathered into the garner, that the sheep and the goats shall be forever in the same fold, that hell is a fiction, and damnation a mere fabrication of the mind.

Pelagianism is not dead. It does not even sleep, but still preaches human ability, and boasts of the ease with which the Ethiopian can change his skin, and the leopard his spots. It boldly calls evil good, and bitter sweet. It denies the need of efficacious grace.

In its grossness **Socinianism** still talks about a created God, and speaks loudly in praise of virtue, though its rules and motives for a pious life are no better than those of Epictetus.

Unitarianism tells of the magnificent Jesus, philosophizes into thin air the vital doctrines of the gospel, emblemizes the blood of Christ, and raises its hideous voice against a vicarious atonement.

Arianism soars to its usual adventurous heights, and speaks of a grade above finite and below infinite. It discusses divinity as though by searching it could find out the Almighty to perfection.

Then, too, we meet **fanaticism**, presenting us a congeries of wild speculation, silly purpose and wicked practice. Break up its nest among the lawless, and presently you shall hear of it among the orthodox pretending to aid in a revival of religion.

And **Antinomianism**—that horror of all good men—still flourishes in many places. It boldly marches up to the cross of Christ, and from

his precious blood draws arguments for living in sin. By its dearth of good fruit, you shall know it.

Besides, **a low state of piety** paralyzes half the limbs of the body of Christ. Cold and selfish, many never aim high. A low estimate of evangelical doctrine makes many indifferent to the teachings of Christ himself. Often too do we hear unpleasant whisperings and buzzings in the Christian camp. Some act as if they would rather make a proselyte from a sister church—than a convert to Christ who would not follow with them.

The standard of Christian living and morals is low. Doubts of personal piety afflict many of Christ's professed followers. Sadly is the Christian profession compromised. Covetousness has fearful power. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life terribly prevail among professors. Fashion is the Juggernaut of Christendom. Christ and Belial are invited to the same feast. Blasphemy vomits forth her poison. The church is a vassal often ingloriously chained to the car of state. The seed of the bondwoman lords it over the seed of the free woman. Tyranny, like the owl, loves darkness, and binds the masses in chains of ignorance. Often the shaking of the nations makes the loops of society fall from their ancient fastenings, and introduces wild lawlessness. Yet there is no room for despair.

II. Let us consider some of the encouragements to hope for the wide spread of truth and righteousness.

The **promises** of God and the **prophecies** of Scripture, like the udders of well-fed cows, are well distended and full of fatness. "All the promises do travail." Sixteen hundred and eighty-nine years before the Christian era, Jacob says, "Unto Shiloh shall the gathering of the people be." Gen. 49:10. Six hundred and sixty-six years later,

the prophet David speaking in the name of God to Messiah, says: "Ask of me and I shall give you the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession." Psalm 2:8. Three hundred and eleven years later, by Isaiah, Jehovah says: "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. . . . He shall see his seed; he shall prolong his days. . . . He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." Isaiah 52:13 53:10, 11.

A hundred and fifty-seven years later, the great prophet of the captivity says: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom—that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. 7:13, 14. In this passage, by the "Son of man" we are clearly to understand the incarnate Savior and by "the Ancient of days" the everlasting God, seated on the throne of the universe. The coming of the Son of man with the clouds of heaven was his ascension to the right hand of God. This prediction was to begin to be fulfilled after the establishment of the Roman empire, spoken of in the same chapter as the fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, having great iron teeth, devouring, breaking in pieces, and stamping the residue with the feet of it, diverse from all the other beasts that were before it, and having ten horns, ver. 7. The terms "dominion, glory, and a kingdom," denote the extent, grandeur, and permanency of the possession purchased by Christ, and secured to him by covenant. What Daniel therefore saw was, "that in the vigor of the Roman empire Jesus Christ ascended to his God and Father, the Ancient of days, and took his

seat at his right hand, and received a title to and entered on the possession of a kingdom—grand, glorious, and permanent."

Other Scriptures declare that under the reign of Messiah "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold as the light of seven days." Isaiah 11:9 30:26. With these texts compare Psalm 22:27-31; 72:19; Hab. 2:14; Zech. 14:9. These passages clearly indicate a state of things not yet fulfilled in the history of the world. There is no method of interpreting language so as to confine these predictions to the past. Christ has not yet had his reward in the gathering of the nations. Great and glorious things may properly be expected in behalf of Zion.

Nor are **pleasing indications** entirely lacking. The present mode of studying the Bible in the original, so generally adopted by many of God's ministers, is favorable to a clear understanding of Scripture doctrine. It often looks as if Providence was erecting machinery that was to move the world. There is a blessed sisterhood of institutions, cooperating for the spread of the truth. All modern controversies have been handled to the advantage of sound Christianity. In no case has the enemy gained any decided or permanent victory. Modern inventions are generally capable of being turned to good account. Commonly they have had a good influence. Many great political changes have favored freedom of inquiry, the reading of God's word, and a sense of individual responsibility.

The general **orderings of Providence** in this age have favored the church. Great success has attended many efforts to spread the gospel, especially among the most degraded tribes of men. The hope of better days, powerfully animates the bosoms of many throughout the world. What has been done in the last *seventy* years is great

compared with what was done for the same time preceding; yet much remains to be done; large portions of the world are still sunk in gross darkness.

III. What can we do to promote the cause of Christ?

It should not discourage us that we can do nothing *effectually*. The excellency of the power is of God. We may plant and water, but God alone can give the increase. This is the best arrangement. If we depend on God, we shall not be disappointed. If he does the work, it will be well done; and to him, without dispute, will be all the glory. Yet we may do much *instrumentally*.

We may keep ourselves and those under our influence, **informed** respecting the state of the world. It is a great thing to know and to make known how men are living in sin and dying in despair, having a dismal eternity before them, and their ruin being unnecessary, salvation having been provided, a ministry instituted, and a glorious gospel commanded to be preached.

We may cultivate an ardent love to the souls of men. Oh that there were a thousand times more of that godlike spirit which Shaftsbury scornfully called a "rage for saving souls." No man ever had too much love or pity for those who were perishing under the load of their guilt and in the horrors of their depravity. It is easy to over-estimate wealth, honor, station—but it is not possible to set too high a value on the salvation of a soul by Jesus Christ.

We may all encourage, and should never discourage—wise and practicable schemes of usefulness. Let us hinder nothing good. Let us do all we can to cheer the hearts and strengthen the hands of all faithful laborers, even if they follow not exactly with us.

Let us believe assuredly that all flesh shall see the salvation of God, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. The decree has gone forth. Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The whole work of evangelizing the world is a work of faith. O have faith in God.

In particular, have faith in Christ, in his mediation, in his ability to execute all his offices. He has dominion over wicked men and devils. All power in heaven and earth is given to him. He saves, and he destroys. He kills, and he makes alive. He has the keys of death and of hell. He does all his good pleasure—in all worlds. For the good of his church he orders all things. He and his people are so far one, that in all their affliction he is afflicted, and in all his glory they rejoice. That which, in Daniel 7:14, is said to be given to Christ, is in the same chapter, verse 27, said to be given to the saints of the Most High. When Christ is glorified, his people shout for joy. When they are glorified, they enter into the joy of their Lord.

The desire to spread the gospel belongs to the very spirit of piety. "Let him who hears say, Come." **He who thinks he has escaped perdition, and has no desire to rescue others from wrath, does not know his own heart.** He who is begotten of God, loves his fellow-men. He longs for their salvation.

God's people can **pray** for the reign of grace over all the earth. Such supplications are agreeable to the will of God. Psalm 122:6. The first three petitions of the Lord's prayer embrace the same subject. There is too little united, hearty calling on God. All the progress hitherto made in bringing men to a saving knowledge of the Redeemer has been in answer to the fervent cries of the children of God. **There is nothing more powerful for good, than prayer.**

Those who know somewhat the doleful case of the heathen, ought to plead their cause before all Christian people. We are slow to believe how terribly the perishing nations have multiplied their sorrows, by hastening after other gods than Jehovah.

Every member of the church should be trained and urged to do his full share of the great work. He should know his place, and accomplish it. He should love to do what he can for so blessed a cause.

All the churches should be trained to liberality in giving their worldly substance for spreading the gospel. Systematic benevolence is loudly called for. We must learn to carry our liberality to the extent of self-denial. We must remember **the power of littles**. The ocean consists of the aggregation of drops.

Our young men must freely give themselves to the work of the ministry at home and abroad. Parents must cheerfully give their sons to this service. It must come to be, in popular esteem, an honor to serve the Lord in any way his providence may permit. Why is the ministry so lightly esteemed? Why do we so seldom find a Hannah, a Eunice, or a Monica in the church of God? One, well-qualified, laborious minister of the gospel is commonly far more useful than two men of equal talents in any other calling. It is enough to break the heart to see revival after revival without a group of young men rising up to publish salvation.

There should be a much deeper tone of piety in all the churches. Love is too cold. Faith too often staggers. Repentance sheds too few tears. Joy has but few feasts. Pity for the perishing too seldom stirs the soul to its depths. Adoring views of God have too little power over men's minds. Hope is too feeble to impart much animation. "In doing good," says Burke, "we are generally cold, and languid, and sluggish,

and of all things, afraid of being too much in the right. But the works of malice and injustice are quite in another style. They are finished with a bold, masterly hand, touched as they are with the spirit of those vehement passions which call forth all our energies when we oppress and persecute." Oh that ministers and people, fathers and mothers, young men and maidens loved as they should a dying world, and labored as they ought to turn many to righteousness.

PRAYER

Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty! The whole earth is full of your glory. Blessed be the Lord for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that couches beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth, and the fullness thereof. Still more would we bless you for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush, and for your precious loving-kindness, and for the precious seed of gospel truth, and for the precious promises, and for precious faith to believe your word, and for the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, and for the precious death of your saints, and for the precious name of Jesus, which is as ointment poured forth, and for the precious blood of the Son of God, through whom we have redemption.

Look in mercy on this dark world. Remember Zion. Make Joseph a fruitful bough, whose branches run over the wall. Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion. Bring back the captivity of your people, that Jacob may rejoice and Israel be glad. You have set your Son on your holy hill of Zion. Righteousness is the belt of his loins, and faithfulness the belt of his reins. Hasten the time when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and

a child shall lead them; and the cow and the bear shall feed, and their young ones lie down together, and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the viper, and the nations shall learn war no more, and your ancient people the Jews and the fullness of the Gentiles shall be brought in; when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ; when the Lord shall call them his people which are not now his people; when the angel shall fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

Lord God Almighty, cut short the work in righteousness. Let the ploughman overtake the reaper, and let a nation be born in a day.

"Pity the nations, O our God;
Constrain the earth to come;
Send your victorious word abroad,
And bring the strangers home."

We are indeed asking great things, but we do it at your command. We ask no more than you have promised to your Son—and no more than he has purchased by his most precious blood—and no more than he himself intercedes for in heaven. Amen.

The Gospel of Christ is Hidden from Some

"The beauty of Scripture," says Luther, "consists in the personal pronouns." It is sweet to find such Scriptures as these: "*I* am the Lord *your* God." "*I* have called *you* by name." "*I* am with *you*. *I* will strengthen *you*. *I* will uphold *you* with the right hand of *my* righteousness."

The Christian heart delights in fastening its affections on spiritual things, and calling them its own. This is laying hold on eternal life. Thus the soul tastes and sees that the Lord is gracious. What could the saints do were they never permitted to claim an interest in heavenly things? Wilkinson says: "All consolation in religion is connected with personal appropriation." Accordingly Job says, "I know that *my* Redeemer lives." David: "Unto you will I cry, O Lord *my* rock." In the Canticles the church says, "*My* Beloved is mine, and *I* am *his*." Thomas said, "*My* Lord and *my* God." Paul says, "He loved *me* and gave himself for *me*." "*I* know whom *I* have believed."

Nor is there anything selfish or exclusive in this appropriation. The saints delight to have others joint partakers with them in the infinite benefits of salvation. The psalmist says: "O Lord *our* Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth." "The Lord Almighty is with *us*, the God of Jacob is *our* refuge." John says, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon *us*, that *we* should be called the sons of God." In like manner Christians commonly speak of *our* Lord Jesus Christ, and of *our* brethren. If we are believers, to us pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the service of God, and the promises. Paul says, "Who shall separate *us* from the love of Christ?" He also says that those that call on Jesus Christ as Lord, own him as both *theirs* and *ours*. He further says to the Corinthians, "*We* are *your* rejoicing, even as *you* also are *ours* in the day of the Lord Jesus." Jude speaks of the *common*

salvation, that is, the salvation in which all believers have a joint interest, and are made fellow-heirs.

So also Paul speaks of "*our* gospel," as though he and his brethren were joint partakers of its benefits, as well as unitedly concerned to make it known. "***If our gospel be hidden, it is hidden to those who are lost.***" Very solemn language is this, and the more so as the same thing is taught in other Scriptures: "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;" "Behold, you despisers, and wonder, and perish." 2 Cor. 4:3; 1 Cor. 1:18; Acts 13:41. Let us consider this solemn matter under the form of speech just cited: "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." We may inquire—

I. In what sense the gospel is NOT hidden from any of us.

1. The gospel is not hidden from any of us in the same sense in which it is hidden from the brutes. These have no natural capacities for understanding, receiving, or enjoying the gospel under any culture, however wisely or assiduously administered. The God who made them, has given them neither minds nor hearts capable of grasping divine things. If their natures were so elevated as to lay hold of the gospel, they would no longer be brutes. With men it is far different. Their original capacity is such as to make it proper to address to them the gospel with all its doctrines, precepts, promises, requirements, and obligations. No man, therefore, can now truly plead *incompetence of nature* as a justification for a course of neglect or contempt towards the evangelical message. In this sense therefore the gospel is not hidden from any of us.

2. Neither is the gospel hidden from us in the sense in which truth is hidden from unbalanced, disordered, deranged minds. From the force of his disease, the poor maniac connects ideas and facts most remote from each other, and groups

together the most discordant assemblages of truth and fiction. He lays down false premises, and then makes deductions; or he lays down true premises, but infers something foreign and unnatural. Incoherence of thought is his disease, or flows directly from it. But these things cannot be said of men in general. In the human mind as it came from the hands of God, there is nothing that would lead it thus to wander. Men have sense enough on all points on which an evil heart has no perverting tendency. There is not found in the human soul any disease unfitting it for receiving plain gospel truth, whenever it is rightly disposed.

3. Neither is the gospel hidden from us in the sense in which the abstruse and difficult sciences are hidden from the majority of men. It cannot be expected, it is not required, that men generally should become skilled in all the depths of mathematic or scientific inquiry. These things must remain very much confined to a few, and hidden from the many. And the many may be wholly excusable. But the gospel is a clear statement of plain facts and doctrines of such a nature as to require no profound argumentations, no brilliancy of wit, no scholastic acumen to know and apprehend its great essential truths. Thousands of unlettered men have understood its sublime mysteries of justification and sanctification by the blood and righteousness and Spirit of Jesus. The gospel is so plain that any right-minded person of common sense and an honest heart, may understand enough of it to be saved by it. To such the Holy Spirit is given to enlighten the mind, take the veil from off the heart, and lift the soul up to God. Our gospel, therefore, is not hidden from men in the sense in which the difficult sciences are hidden from the multitude.

4. Nor is it hidden from us by any act of prohibition from God, forbidding us to inquire into its truths. There is no

flaming sword turning every way, and warning us not to enter any book of Scripture. On the contrary, the Author of our religion says, "Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." The great apostle to the Gentiles teaches the same when he says, "Test all things; hold fast that which is good." It is a grand error of the Romish church to keep, contrary to God's will, the Holy Scriptures from the common people, thus taking away the key of knowledge. God has purposes and plans which he has concealed from us, some of them in part, and some of them wholly; but the very object of a revelation was that we might know his will. "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." They are God's gift to us. Therefore they are not hidden from us by any divine prohibition.

5. Nor is the gospel hidden from us, as it was from men who lived before the coming of Christ. Now the types and shadows have given way to the bright beams of light and truth issuing from the Sun of righteousness. So Paul says: "I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness--the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. 1:25-27. The revelation is therefore made. We see the things which kings and prophets and righteous men desired to see—but could not. We have them in our own language, in plain statements, easily read. We have the Bible, the clearest book ever written respecting so weighty matters. "He who runs, may reads it." No honest inquirer after truth ever mistook its teachings on vital points.

If we cannot read this book, we can hear its truths preached. It is in reference to this preaching especially that the apostle is speaking in 2 Corinthians 4:1-5. He says that he and his fellow-laborers had not handled the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God; and immediately adds, "If our gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are lost." The fault was not in the preachers, for they told the truth, using great plainness of speech. In like manner, all of us do or may hear the gospel published in a way clear and decided. Who among us has not heard many sermons which faithfully presented the gospel? Christ is preached, and we all hear or can hear. The object of all good preaching is not to hide the gospel, but to make it known.

6. Nor is the gospel hidden from us—as it is from the heathen, who never heard its blessed truths. How shall men "call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? . . . Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." There are millions on earth who never heard that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. The guilt of their transgression is not enhanced by a knowledge of the glorious gospel. Its light has never shined on them. If men sin without law, they shall perish without law. But fearful beyond expression will be the doom of those who, knowing the way of life, turn from the holy commandments. To him who knows to do good and does it not—to him it is sin. In none of these senses is the gospel hidden from us.

II. We may now show in what sense the gospel is hidden from the unbelieving.

Then Jesus prayed this prayer: "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for **hiding the truth** from those who think themselves so wise and clever, and for revealing it to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way!" Matthew 11:25-26

This is truly a solemn subject. It is so in its very nature; and it concerns many. The essence of this *hiding* consists in one's having eyes and not seeing, in having ears and not hearing, and in having a mind and heart—and not understanding. In some way, the truth reaches the intellect, and perhaps slightly moves the affections, but there it stops. It changes neither the heart or the life. Thus one may be a learned critic, a clear expositor, or an apt teacher of many truths of the gospel—and yet never see its true force, nor apprehend its chief design. Pride and perverseness may hold him in such a state that he may not discern the real nature of the most glorious things. **Sin hides the most precious gospel truths from the mind, as clouds hide the rays of the sun from the earth.** A benighted soul is a lost soul. A state of darkness—is a state of guilt, depravity, and death. All sin produces blindness of mind. For their wicked rejection of known truth and duty, God, as a sovereign, hides the gospel from men.

In sending so terrible spiritual judgments, God is not to blame. He is not bound to continue favors which are slighted and contemned. The pious and amiable John Newton says: "Let us suppose a person to have a curious cabinet, which is opened at his pleasure, and not exposed to common view. He invites all to come and see it, and offers to show it to anyone who asks him. It is hidden, because he keeps the key; but none can complain, because he is ready to open it whenever he is desired. Some people disdain the offer, and say—Why is it locked at all? Some think it not worth seeing, or amuse themselves with guessing at the contents. But those who are simply desirous for

themselves, leave others disputing, and go according to appointment, and are gratified. These have reason to be thankful for the favor, and the others have no just cause to find fault. Thus the riches of divine grace may be compared to a richly-furnished cabinet, to which Christ is the door. The word of God likewise is a cabinet, generally locked up—but the key of prayer will open it. The Lord invites all, but he keeps the dispensation in his own hands. They cannot see these things except he shows them; but then he refuses none who sincerely ask him."

So that God is clear in this matter. He hides not these things in any way that can impeach his justice or his wisdom; yet he hides them effectually. Left to themselves, men seek to become wise—and become fools! This is a punishment for their pride or other sins. We read of some on whom God sent strong delusion, and gave them up to believe a lie, that they might be damned, because they had pleasure in unrighteousness. They delighted not in the truth. They cared neither to know nor to do God's will. Surely God was at liberty to hide from them that which they so much disliked. Their ignorance proves the truth of the words, "If our gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are lost." All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. He who despises the Savior, despises all the lessons we can learn from him. The truth is also hidden in the letter of Scripture. As the time of the day is hidden in the figures of the sundial, but cannot be read unless the sun shines and reveals the truth—so is saving truth hidden in the letter.

The instrumentality employed in hiding the gospel from the minds of men is various. Sometimes the work is done by SATAN. So says the apostle: "If our gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are lost: in whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of those who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of

Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The great adversary darkens and confuses the mind of unbelievers. For this they are to blame, because they are in league with the wicked one. Let them resist and renounce the devil, and he shall have no power to hide the gospel from them.

MEN blind one another. Many seducers and deceivers are entered into the world. They operate "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." Many lie in wait to deceive, beguiling unstable souls, and employing cunning craftiness and sleight of men. Such cannot succeed—except with those who do not wish to know the truths of the gospel. The deceiver and the deceived are both guilty.

Men hide the gospel from THEMSELVES. They love darkness rather than light. They love to be deceived. They shut their eyes against the truth. Its light is painful to them. They seek darkness. They extinguish the lamp of truth. They corrupt their own minds. They obliterate good impressions. They resist the Spirit. They seek to hide the gospel, and it is hidden.

Thus is God righteous in all cases, even where the blindness is most dreadful. God is not responsible for this darkness. Man is the author of his own blindness. Were it not for the sun, we would have perpetual darkness; and were it not for God, we would never have any divine light. Were the sun never to shine on the world, and were God to withhold all his beams from us—neither the one nor the other would be chargeable with the darkness that would follow.

When the sun shines in his strength, and all nature rejoices in his light, the blind cannot behold his beauty. Were there ten thousand suns, the blind would be no better off. The fault is in their vision. So

if, instead of one, there were ten thousand gospels, each giving the brightest light to lead the soul to God, the unbelieving would continue in their present unhappy state. The very light which is in them is darkness—and they love to have it so! When Lord Nelson put the telescope to his blind eye, we do not wonder that he could not see the stars! If our gospel be hidden—it is hidden to those who are lost.

This subject has a solemn bearing on people who were once somewhat enlightened, but are now in deeper darkness than ever. So was it with Jerusalem, over which Christ wept and said: "If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace! but now they are hidden from your eyes." Luke 19:42. There are set times, chosen seasons, precious harvests—when, if people are rightly disposed, they may know. But if these are neglected, solemn darkness ensues. The gospel, once made to shine into the mind, but then rejected—may be hidden from the eyes forever. Such are undone. Their day is past. Their doom is sealed.

Some complain that the Bible is so mysterious that it is like a sealed book, and when they read it, they become bewildered. They see nothing in it plain or intelligible. Ought not such honestly to inquire into their spiritual condition? Does not their bewilderment prove that they are *lost*?

Others apprehend somewhat of the truth, but presently "stumble at the word, being disobedient." Their stumbling makes them disobedient, and their disobedience makes them stumble. This is the grand error of many. They refuse submission to what they do know—and so they learn nothing aright. The light is hidden from such—because they are *lost*.

To some *Christ crucified* is foolishness. The idea of salvation by the righteousness of another—is opposite to all their conceptions. They

deride the doctrine of *life to sinners by the death of the Savior*. Speak to them of their own merits as the ground of their acceptance—and they approve such boasting. A *gratuitous salvation* they scorn. Their present temper continuing—they are lost forever.

Some think that by their own natural wit, they can arrive at saving knowledge. Such often exclude themselves from heaven by a jest or a trifle. **Many are damned for a quibble.** They judge all things by some fantastic rule, perhaps in their view quite rational. When will men learn that the world by wisdom never knew God? Persisting in this self-conceit, such are hopelessly lost!

God always hides saving knowledge from the "wise and prudent." That which we learn by our unaided faculties—puffs up and blinds the mind. "See a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him!" The lifting up of the soul unto vanity does itself exclude the light of truth. This is its natural tendency. Such a state of mind spurns the aid of the Spirit of God. And flesh and blood can never reveal the great truths of the Bible. It is only by an unction from the holy One that anyone is ever able to see divine things aright. They are spiritually discerned. He who is not led by the Spirit of God—must err. Often do we see men stumbling at straws; making difficulties where a child sees its way clear; insisting upon understanding abstruse things of no immediate practical utility; and yet refusing to bow their necks to the plainest and most practical precepts. Such are lost!

No marvel that the careless never come to the knowledge of the truth. If men would be wise unto salvation, they must cry after knowledge, and lift up their voice for understanding; they must seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasure. The whole plan of God requires care, sincerity, attention, earnestness. Some are

so heedless that they do not know what the gospel is. They dream or guess at the contents of the Bible. They are deaf to the proclamations of mercy. O they are lost!

Caviling, prejudice, cherished error, a halting mind, an unforgiving temper, any sin willfully indulged—may work the same ruin to the soul. Thus we see that the work of destroying the soul is a work done in this life. One says, "When men perish *under* the gospel, they are benighted at noon. They have created to themselves a horrid darkness in the midst of a bright and clear day. They are lost in a day of salvation. *Lost*, not only *under* the means of salvation—but *by* them! Gospel light strikes them blind. The sweet, vital fragrance of the gospel strikes them dead. Invited—yet lost! Warned, exhorted, besought, reproved—yet lost. Not a part lost—but the whole. *Lost contrary* to all sound reason."

The darkness, the errors, the ignorance, the folly of unregenerate men—are as sure and certain tokens of what is to be their state hereafter; as are the faith, and hope, and love of Christians respecting their eternal well-being. As the work of saving the soul is a work of time, and not of eternity; so the work of destroying the soul is also done in this world, and not in the next. And the evidences of this work being done or in process, are often clear and decisive. If men would reason as fairly about their standing in God's esteem as they do respecting temporal matters—they would soon be convinced of their lost estate. The smoke of the bottomless pit issuing forth in ungodliness, surely proves that the fires of perdition are burning within their souls! One wanders up and down in a forest and finds no safe path. He knows that he is lost. But when one errs from the truth and follows the mazes of iniquity—he often infers that he is in a safe way!

Remember that men are lost in this world. On a lost soul in the day of judgment will be found no sign of perdition, which is not found upon it on earth. Whatever may be men's apprehensions, but few of the unregenerate learn the truth that they are already lost. In two ways men are convinced of their miserable state. One is in time—and leads to eternal salvation. The other is when the day of grace is over—and leads to eternal perdition.

Tabitha was very sick. Her physician was sent for. He came and kindly watched by her bed. The day before her death she seemed calm and tranquil, and inquired if she would probably recover. She was answered in the negative. "How long can I live?" said she. The answer was, "Possibly until tomorrow morning." "Then," she said, "I am lost, lost, lost!" At short intervals until she breathed her last, her piteous cry pierced the ears of attendants: "I am lost, I am lost, lost, lost, lost!" O why will unbelievers keep on in sin, and go to eternity forever to mourn heaven lost, a crown of glory lost, an eternity of bliss lost, the means of grace lost, the day of salvation lost, all opportunity to make peace with God lost, and lost forever?

Though the unregenerate are at present lost, yet they are not lost beyond recovery. By God's command Christians still pray, ministers still preach, and offers of mercy are still given and by God's grace sinners are still converted. What a glorious truth that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save those who are lost. Almost the only true thing Christ's enemies ever said against him was, "This man receives sinners." He admitted the charge—and spoke three parables in vindication of his matchless mercy.

The Sin and Danger of Not Believing in Christ

In both Testaments God expresses his displeasure against unbelief. By Moses he says to Israel: "You did not believe the Lord your God." "You rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God, and you believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice." Deut. 1:32; 9:23. Again, God complains of Israel: "They would not hear, but hardened their necks, like their fathers, who did not believe in the Lord their God." 2 Kings 17:14. By the psalmist he says, "They believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation." Psalm 78:22. By another prophet he thus threatens them: "If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established." Isaiah 7:9.

The New Testament is no less clear. The great sin of the Jews under the ministry of John the Baptist was their unbelief. Matt. 21:32. The Son of God marveled at the unbelief of his own disciples, and sharply rebuked it, Mark 6:6; Luke 24:25. Our Lord himself expressly says: "He who believes not, is condemned already." "He who believes not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." John 3:18, 36. Paul says, by unbelief the natural branches were broken off. Romans 11:20. Unbelief hinders prayer: "How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed?" Romans 10:14. "The God of this world has blinded the minds of those who believe not." 2 Cor. 4:4. "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thess. 2:11, 12. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars—shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Rev. 21:8. Unbelief may relate to any doctrine, or

promise, or threatening of God. It commonly has special reference to the person, work, offices, and sufferings of the Savior—then it is a rejection of him as he is offered in the gospel. He demands our affectionate confidence, and we withhold it.

Unbelievers are of two classes, speculative and practical. All **speculative** unbelievers are also practical unbelievers; but some **practical** unbelievers have no intellectual doubts of the truths of the Bible. Speculative unbelievers are of two sorts. Some rage and rail and blaspheme. Others doubt, hesitate, are skeptical. This latter class alternately hope that the Bible is not true, and fear that it is true. Meantime they live as if it were not true, and so are practical unbelievers. If they do not deny, they suspect. This is truly unbelief. Not to credit is to disbelieve. Not to receive is to reject. A refusal to *obey* the gospel is as truly dangerous as a scornful denial of its claims.

The object of this chapter is to show **the sin of unbelief**. It is a great offence against God in many ways. It is very wicked and deserves God's hot displeasure.

1. Unbelief is a very heinous sin, because it is an impeachment of the divine VERACITY. God's word is his testimony—it is the highest testimony ever given. When a judge gives a decision or a jury gives a verdict contrary to good evidence, all right thinkers have but one opinion. We take the testimony of men. We act wisely in so doing. But "if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." 1 John 5:9. Man is fallible, man is corrupt. Man often deceives, man is often deceived. Yet in some cases man is and must be believed. Under certain circumstances everyone gives credit to the word of man. Much more then should we believe God, who is infallible, and who cannot lie. From the days of Moses until now the

best governments on earth have held that two or three witnesses were sufficient to prove any fact. If so, shall we not believe the Trinity of persons in the Godhead? Jesus adopts this kind of argument when he says: "But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me." John 8:16-18.

The testimony of Christ confirming all the doctrines taught by the prophets and by himself was open, clear, decisive. The very highest proofs of his knowledge, veracity, and sincerity, were amply given. The testimony of his Father was given in an audible voice from heaven. It was repeated in the many stupendous miracles wrought by Almighty power. In these the third person of the adorable Trinity also bore testimony in a manner both striking and convincing. In Hebrews 2:3, 4, Paul argues thus: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, [that is, Christ,] and was confirmed unto us by those who heard him; God also [that is, the Father] bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit." So that the three who bear record in heaven, have given testimony upon earth. Their witness is harmonious, unequivocal, often repeated, and accompanied by infallible signs. He, therefore, who lives in unbelief, discredits and impeaches the testimony of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That this is a heinous sin cannot be doubted.

Well do the Scriptures say, he who believes "has set to his seal that God is true." They as distinctly say, "He who believes not God, has made him a liar, because he believes not the record that God gave of his Son." 1 John 5:10. This language is indeed solemn, but it is just.

God's honor in regard to his veracity is dear to him. He never will part with it. He says: "My glory will I not give to another." The heavens and the earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away. Every jot and tittle shall be fulfilled. Because God is perfect, he is jealous of the honor of his name. An evil being may be reckless of his repute for veracity, but a good being, never. To man you can offer no greater indignity than to say that he is a liar. How dreadful then the sin of making God a liar!

Besides, God has made his **word** the chief means by which to test the confidence of his creatures in his truth: "You have exalted your word above all your name;" that is, above all by which you have made yourself known. And the chief theme of God's word is, redemption by his Son—together with histories, laws, doctrines, promises, and threatenings. His word is truth selected from the boundless field of omniscience. It is more precious than gold, yes, than much fine gold. His words are fitly spoken. They are like apples of gold in settings of silver. They are more precious than rubies. To disbelieve them is to trample pearls under our feet. It is to take the covenant of God and treat it with contempt.

Unbelief, therefore, is of the nature of sacrilege. It puts the holiest things to base uses. Moreover, God has not only pledged his word, but he has added to it the solemn solemnity of an oath. He who disbelieves his word charges him with falsehood. He who discredits his oath charges him with perjury. A witness may give his testimony upon oath, and we may decide in the teeth of all he swears, but in so doing we declare our utter lack of confidence in his statements. If God is displeased at anything, it must be at this atrocious insult.

Nor is this all. To disbelieve God is to believe his enemies, and especially his great adversary, the father of lies. Eve believed the

devil rather than her Maker. When Ahab rejected the testimony of the man of God, he was ready to believe the lying prophets of Baal. Chateaubriand says: "Men are ready to believe anything, when they believe nothing. They have diviners when they cease to have prophets; witchcraft when they cease to have pious ceremonies; they open the caves of sorcery when they shut the temples of the Lord." He who does not believe God, surely believes the great deceiver. Such impiety is shocking to all right-minded people. Its wickedness is manifest to all whose consciences are not seared as with a hot iron.

2. He who by unbelief rejects the word of God and his well-beloved Son, impugns the Divine WISDOM. If we say that we do not need the salvation of the gospel, we charge God with making a needless sacrifice, and needless provision for our souls. When one says he is well—he declares that he needs no remedy. When one says he is good enough, and justifies himself—he cannot but look upon redemption by atoning blood as either a fable or a folly—a vast expenditure to no wise purpose. God's wisdom determined that Christ's work and death were necessary for our salvation. Unbelief says, "We can do without a Savior." Or if the sense of guilt is strong, then our unbelief, tending to despair, impeaches God's wisdom by saying that the death of Christ is insufficient, and his blood inefficacious to wash away our sins. We say the remedy is not adequate. We say that sin stains too deeply and guilt presses too heavily for us to hope in the atonement of God's dear Son. In this view, the scheme of redemption is a failure. It lacks virtue. It meets not men's needs. Could a more heinous impeachment of God's wisdom be made? Shall man be wiser than God, who charges his angels with folly? Is it surprising that the Judge of all the earth should be offended, yes, incensed—when men reject his Son and his gospel, which is both the wisdom of God and the power of God unto our salvation?

3. Unbelief is a rejection of kindness, a slighting of unspeakable MERCY offered to us by the Lord. The refusal of Jesus Christ—has no parallel for ingratitude, stubbornness, and daring impiety. Sovereign Love holds to our lips the cup of salvation. Unbelief thrusts it away, and says, "Keep your gifts to yourself—I need them not; I trust them not; I accept them not." In unbelief, the debtor in prison refuses to let Jesus be his Surety. By unbelief, the poor naked soul refuses the spotless righteousness of Christ—and cleaves to the filthy rags of its own righteousness! Unbelief refuses to permit the great Deliverer to come in and knock off the chains of fiery condemnation. It spurns the balm of Gilead, although the soul is all diseased. God expostulates with the wicked, and says, "How shall I give you up? As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner." The Father of mercy calls them. The Son of his love cries, "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden." The Holy Spirit woos. The church of God says, "Come." Surely it cannot be safe, it must be perilous, lightly to esteem such love and pity, such mercy bought with blood—the blood of propitiation; mercy offered to us by the Lord himself; mercy so much needed by us all; mercy rejected by none but the perverse. God's love to us is amazing; Christ's love to us far exceeds any love the best man bears to him; the love of the Holy Spirit is unsurpassed. How, O how can we slight such kindness?

4. Unbelief is a denial and refusal of the GRACE of God in the gospel of his Son. And we need all the grace offered to us. We are sinful, guilty, justly condemned, blind, ignorant, wretched, impotent. We are without strength, without holiness, without righteousness, without saving knowledge, without healing medicines, without hope, without God in the world. This is our state—and must continue to be our state—until we are made partakers of that grace which is rich, free, unmerited, abundant, treasured up in Christ, and

proclaimed in the glorious gospel. But unbelief says, Christ has died in vain, his intercession is fable, his gospel is a fabrication. In robbing our own souls of this mercy, we rob God of the glory of his grace. In a word, if a man should choose to set himself in a universal opposition unto God, he can think of no more compendious way, than unbelief.

5. Unbelief is a slighting of God's power both to save and to destroy, and of his authority as a LAWGIVER and Governor. He has brought all his sovereignty to bear on the duty of faith in Christ: "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son." To disregard this command is to despise all his authority over us, for he requires faith in his Son under the sanction of the most solemn threatenings, many of which have been already recited.

6. The sin of unbelief is in most cases terribly aggravated. It is commonly a sin that has been long persisted in. If men are now unbelievers, they have been committing that sin all their days. Their lives have been lives of unbelief. For one act of unbelief, Moses was denied admission into Canaan. For one act of unbelief, Zacharias was struck mute. But our acts of unbelief have been as numerous as the calls of mercy which we have resisted. And our unbelief has been indulged against much instruction and knowledge. Often has the light shone as clear as day. Often have we heard appeals as solemn as death, and as tender as the compassions of a dying Savior. If we are now in unbelief, we have long known it was a sin. For unbelief indulged under a much darker dispensation, the carcasses of six hundred thousand men fell in the wilderness.

Again, we have seen great sinners turn from sin to the Savior, and find mercy. In their renovated lives, we had the proof of the power of

Christ to save. We must be guilty for disregarding the lessons of such examples. Hear the Son of God himself on this matter: "For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this—you did not repent and believe him." Matt. 21:32.

Yes more, the salvation of the gospel is God's last offer to man. Christ's atonement rejected by unbelief, there remains no more sacrifice for sins. God will never send another Savior into the world. Christ himself said: "If you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins." Indeed, unbelief is by preeminence the damning sin of all who hear the gospel and perish. It is of the nature of all sin to work death; but unbelief is a sin without which no other sin that we in a gospel land commit, renders damnation inevitable. **Unbelief is the act of a poor condemned criminal on his way to execution refusing a pardon!** It is the act of Esau taking the pottage, eating it, and giving up the birthright forever.

Unbelief is a sin always wilfully committed. So charges Christ himself: "You will not come to me, that you might have life." So charge the apostles: "You judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life."

Unbelief persisted in, seals our perdition. It closes every door of hope, and leaves us enshrouded in the darkness of despair forever and ever. It does all this by grieving the Holy Spirit, by vexing him to depart from us.

7. Indeed, how can unbelief be other than an enormous sin—when it has its seat in pride, self-will, self-righteousness, love of riches, love of human honors, and hardness of heart? "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God." "How can you believe, who receive honor from one

another, and seek not the honor which comes from God alone?" "You cannot serve God and mammon." "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "You always resist the Holy Spirit." These are but samples of the manner in which God speaks of the causes of unbelief. **All unbelief has its seat in dreadful depravity.**

8. We may judge of the heinousness of the sin of unbelief from the dreadful SENTENCE resting on all in whom it reigns. The Bible says they are "condemned already." They are condemned by the first covenant, which says: "Cursed is everyone who continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." "The soul that sins—it shall die!" *It shall die—it shall die—it shall die!* And O what a death! But to this condemnation is added that of the gospel: "He who believes not, is condemned already." "This is the condemnation—that light has come into the world—and men loved darkness rather than light." O this double condemnation, how terrible! It is a condemnation from God, the Lawgiver, the Judge of all. His sentence is irreversible. And this condemnation "already" rests on unbelievers. The day of judgment will declare and enforce it—but it will not alter it. He who lives and dies condemned—will awake to shame and everlasting contempt on the morning of the last day, and will stand self-condemned as well as God-condemned at the tribunal of Christ! Beware, O unbeliever, beware. 'Forsaking truth and embracing error—angels shrunk into devils. Forsaking error and grasping truth—sinners rise to the dignity of saints, and to the companionship of angels.'

1. What a dreadful thing is sin! It is so daring, so stubborn, so mischievous, so ruinous to man, so dishonoring to God.

2. What mercy is found in God in providing a Savior, in offering him to our acceptance, in waiting on ungrateful and rebellious men so long, and in actually leading many to the Savior.

3. What a dreadful doom awaits those who will not be reclaimed! It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for such! "Unbelief brings greater guilt" and sorer punishment "than the sins of the worst of heathens, who never heard of these glorious things, nor have had this Savior offered to them." "The moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool," says God; "but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation." Isaiah 51:8.

4. Let us carefully guard against that great parent of unbelief, a self-righteous temper, which says, "I am holy, I am clean, I am pure." "If righteousness came by the law, then Christ died in vain." Gal. 2:21. To expect heaven on the ground of your own merit is, says Edwards, to "arrogate to yourself the honor of the greatest thing that ever God himself did." "To take on yourself to work out redemption is a greater thing, than if you had taken it upon you to create a world." A self-righteous spirit is fatal to the soul.

5. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Heb. 3:12. It dishonors and provokes God. It grieves the Savior. Mark 3:5. It grieves the Holy Spirit of promise. An attack of illness is not so bad as an assault of unbelief.

6. The great business assigned us on earth by God himself is, believing—believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. When the multitude said to Jesus, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work

of God, that you believe on him whom he has sent." John 6:28, 29. So when the jailor cried, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." Acts 16:30, 31. This is the tenor of all the Scripture. It is only by faith that we enter into heavenly rest. Be sure you truly believe: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." "Until you have this faith, you have no saving interest in Christ. It is only believers who are united to him and are his living members. And it is by faith that he dwells in our hearts, and that we live in him. Eph. 3:17; Gal. 2:20. In vain do you boast of Christ, if you are not true believers. You have no part or portion in him. None of his special benefits are yours until you have this living, working faith." [Baxter.] The law presses until we believe. Forgiveness and acceptance come not until we close in with Christ: "He who believes on him is not condemned; but he who believes not is condemned already." Why—O why do not all perishing sinners flee to Christ? Why will men involve their souls in deeper sin and more alarming danger, by persisting even for an hour in the rejection of Christ?

The Reproach of Christ

Reproach is shame, opprobrium, infamy, disgrace, exposing men to scornful derision.

Nothing has rendered men so liable to taunt, reviling, and malignity as love to Jesus Christ. The Lord himself told his people that it would be so: "You shall be hated of all men, for my name's sake." "If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you." The

reproach of the cross has not ceased. Matt. 10:22; John 15:18; Gal. 5:11. Whoever would be a true Christian must obey the summons: "Let us go forth therefore unto him outside the camp, bearing his reproach." Heb. 13:13. **The great scandal of Christianity is the cross and the Crucified.** It has long been so. The very expectation of a Redeemer, thousands of years before his coming, was an offence to men, and exposed them to virulent scorn.

It is mentioned by the apostle to the Gentiles, as worthy of special notice, that "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded **disgrace for the sake of Christ** as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward." Hebrews 11:24-26. This is an illustrious example of faith, and full of instruction. Let us look at it in some of its more important bearings.

Ancient Egypt was a wonderful country. The Hebrews called it Mizraim, from the son of Ham, who bore that name. To this day the Arabs call it Mizr. By the Greeks and Romans it was called Egypt, the origin of which word we do not know. To its great river, the Nile, was first given the name of *the Father of waters*. To the overflowings of this river the land of Egypt owes its extraordinary fertility. Egypt is about four hundred and fifty miles in length. It is commonly divided into Upper Egypt, Lower Egypt, and the Delta. Anciently it was subdivided into forty-two provinces. In Upper Egypt was one of the most remarkable cities known to antiquity; and the whole land was sufficiently supplied with cities and towns. The Egyptians were greatly averse to the life of shepherds or herdsmen. They gave great attention to the culture of grain. Not less than twenty million bushels of corn were for a long time annually sent from Egypt to Rome. The

land generally afforded two crops every year—one before and one after the overflowing of the Nile. The Egyptians were a people remarkable for their skill in the arts. No contemporary nation equaled them. To this effect ancient history speaks clearly. The productions of the soil were very various. Different species of wood and varieties of marble in Egypt induced men to become skillful manufacturers. The monuments of ancient art among this people are amazing. For thousands of years the pyramids have been the wonder of the world. One of these covers an area of thirteen acres, and is still four hundred and seventy-four feet above ground. In Upper Egypt, the sphinxes, obelisks and temples still amaze the beholder. Wonderful statuary and paintings are still found in that region. The ancient Egyptians were to a great extent the fathers of science and of literature. Philosophy, astronomy and geometry, early found favor among them. There too the practice of making permanent and intelligible records seems first to have extensively prevailed. In their acquirements, the priests of Egypt excelled the *learned* of all nations; yet the superstitions of the country were strange, mighty, and numerous; there were gods by the thousand; religious worship was addressed to men, to stars, to domestic animals, and even to plants; thus proving that mere science can save no people from debasement, and that "those who are most delicate as to the decencies of life, are often the most gross as to the decencies of religion."

For a long time this country was governed by a race of kings known to us as the Pharaohs. The word Pharaoh signifies sovereign power, and is not very different from our word emperor or autocrat. Each of the Pharaohs probably had a proper name; but none of these names are preserved to us in Scripture until the time of Rehoboam, when Pharaoh Shishak lived. We do not, therefore, know which of the Pharaohs was on the throne at the birth of Moses.

But we are well informed that he had an only child, a daughter, whom he greatly loved, and who was herself childless. According to the Egyptian laws, she was at liberty to adopt whom she would as her son, and on his adoption he became the heir expectant and apparent of the throne of Egypt. The name of Pharaoh's daughter, according to Josephus, was Thermutis. This woman was led to adopt Moses under the following circumstances. For some time a cruel decree had been in force that all the male children of the Hebrews, who had now for a long time been in abject slavery, but who yet rapidly increased in numbers, should be put to death as soon as they were born. In Hebrews 11:23, the apostle says: "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." What it was that made them regard him with unusual interest, we know not; but they risked their lives to save his. Having kept him concealed for three months, and finding further secrecy impractical, they put him into a small water-tight basket, on the banks of the Nile. Thermutis, the king's daughter, coming there to bathe, and perceiving the basket, ordered it to be brought. She opened it, and found a weeping infant. There was watching, at a little distance, a Hebrew girl, about ten years old. It was Miriam, the only sister of Moses. She came to Thermutis, and asked if she would have a Hebrew nurse. God led her to assent, and soon the delighted little sister brought Jochebed, the wife of Amram, and the mother of the babe. The princess gave to the child the name of MOSES, which is a compound Egyptian word signifying *drawn out of the water*.

Thermutis had her adopted child taught in all such matters as the vast science and literature of the country could afford. He was also instructed in more important matters. His pious parents taught him the religion of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and early imbued his mind with excellent precepts of wisdom, virtue, and godliness. At

what precise age his education was considered complete, is not certain; but it is probable that it was not until he was at least thirty years old, perhaps nearer forty than thirty.

The Scriptures do not inform us as to the circumstances attending the first open act whereby Moses disowned any connection with the royal family. Whether it was done in words and actions, or by actions only, is not known; nor is it necessary that it should be. His forsaking of the court was a matter which could not be misunderstood. Soon after, he fled the country, and went to Midian, and allied himself to Jethro, and remained for forty years longer, until he was called of God to return to Egypt. But it is his conduct in retiring from court that is specially noticed by the apostle: "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded **disgrace for the sake of Christ** as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward." Hebrews 11:24-26

In contemplating the reproach of Christ, and the manner of overcoming it, let us consider

I. The CHOICE which Moses made. It consisted of two parts: something forsaken—and something embraced; something refused—and something received; something relinquished—and something laid hold of.

A. What did Moses give up?

1. The highest HONORS which earth had to bestow. Egypt was at this time, in an important sense, the mistress of the world. She had more resources, more character, more national glory, than

any of the nations of antiquity. Her glory had been filling the world with wonder for ages, and at no time more than within the last eighty years. No crown on earth glittered with such dazzling brightness as the crown of Egypt. More foreigners came to that land to seek wisdom and to wonder, than were then going to all the world besides. Priests of other lands came here to study theology. The magi of remote nations visited its schools to study astrology. Whatever was supposed to be useful or ornamental in life, could be found or learned in Egypt.

By leaving the court, Moses lost all opportunity of conversing with learned men, and of being an object of admiration as the great light of science and literature in his generation; for although he was not an eloquent man, yet the Bible tells us he was a man "mighty in words." The meaning is that he had not any great fluency, nor did he seek meretricious ornament in speech; yet his great learning and wisdom were remarkable. That Moses could write with sublimity hardly equalled by any of the ancients, has always been confessed by sober critics. That in sentiment and style, if not in delivery, he was a sublime preacher and poet, requires no proof beyond that given us in the last two chapters of the Pentateuch. As a historian and a lawgiver, he has no equal. His fitness to govern, and his power to command, have never been surpassed. Moses, then, relinquished all the honor which, as a scholar, a man of science, a military commander, and king of the most enlightened and powerful nation under heaven, he might have enjoyed. Converse with the elite and the great, even as their Mentor, he gave up for the life of a shepherd in Midian. The crown of Egypt grew dim, and its glory faded before his eye of faith.

2. He also relinquished all the *PLEASURES* which the absolute monarchy of ancient Egypt might have

afforded. The Scripture says he cared not to enjoy "the pleasures of sin for a season." How many wondrous arts for gratifying our carnal nature are known at courts of great kings, is no secret.

3. He also gave up *great WEALTH.* There is much force in that phrase, "the treasures in Egypt." Many ancient thrones had vast treasures. It was so with the Jewish throne in the days of Hezekiah, and with that of Babylon in the days of Belshazzar. It was unquestionably so in Egypt in the time of Moses. During the long famine in the days of Jacob, Joseph had bought up all the land in Egypt, and brought it into the possession of the crown.

B. What did Moses embrace?

The apostle uses two phrases, neither of which sounds sweetly in the ears of a carnal man. The first is, "**affliction with the people of God;**" the other is, "**the reproach of Christ.**"

The afflictions of the people of God at this time were very great. They were in the most abject bondage. They were the slaves of slaves. Servants ruled over them. The Egyptians themselves now for a long time had been nothing but tenants at will of the land under their sovereign. They were at the mercy of their monarch for a home, for food, for clothing, and even for life. These were the degraded people who were the masters of the Hebrews. Over them they had the power of life and death. They had actually murdered many of them, and had made all of them to groan and sigh with the enormous burdens of labor and toil which had been placed upon them. Joseph, who had been dead one hundred and four years, was forgotten. Gratitude for his eminent services was nowhere found. For Moses to make common lot with such a despised people was an act of great humiliation.

The rest of their condition can easily be conjectured. It was exceedingly dark. None of us has ever witnessed such scenes of misery and degradation. Abject poverty had wrought its usual effects. The Hebrews were far from being highly virtuous, as we might have hoped from their possessing the knowledge of the true God. But few of them were truly pious. The great mass of them were gross and sensual unbelievers, who, for their outbreking sins, perished in the wilderness. When Moses first appeared among them, about the time of his forsaking the court; "Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not." Acts 7:25. Yet they were the people of God by promise and by profession. What little piety there was on earth was chiefly among them. They, too, had the traditions of the patriarchs. They were beloved for the fathers' sakes. To them pertained the covenant, and the promise, and the ordinance of circumcision.

Then their pretended expectation of the Messiah rendered them even more hated than otherwise they would have been. To the Egyptians it looked like a mark of special stupidity, stubbornness, and arrogance for a people thus sunk down in the deepest degradation to be talking about a great king that would arise from among them, be the King of kings and Lord of lords, and establish a government that would have no end and no limit—a kingdom that would rule over all. Hence "the reproach of Christ" mentioned by Paul as coming on Moses at the making of his choice.

II. Let us consider the ELEMENTS of Moses choice.

1. It was a *choice*, a firm and decided purpose of the *will*, a hearty and voluntary preference of one thing, a cordial and controlling refusal of another thing. Paul speaks both of

choosing and refusing. What Moses did, he did not by compulsion, nor by over-persuasion, but of choice.

2. It was a choice made at the most critical period of life, when he was about to enter on a splendid career; "at an age when the heart is most devoted to the pursuit of pleasure, most susceptible of the allurements of ambition."

3. It was a deliberate and intelligent choice. Nothing in the existing state of things around him led to his decision. The popular current was quite the other way. It was also the choice of a man, and not of a child who could not understand what he was doing. The Bible says "he was come to years." In the Greek it is "when he was become great." It is manifest from the Bible chronology that Moses was over forty years old. Nor was it the choice of a man who knew not the sweets of a palace. He had been brought up in ease and affluence. He was not a crude boor, incapable of enjoying the refinements and elegancies which encircled the throne of Egypt. Nor was it the choice of a man whose mind was soured by unsuccessful fellowship with the world. So far his relations, public and private, had been as pleasant as possible. The whole history of Moses shows him to have been a man of uncommon tenderness of sensibility, fitting him for fellowship with refined society. He was no ascetic. Nor did he expect by voluntary humility to merit the favor of God. Nor was his choice that of an old man who knew that he could not much longer enjoy the world. Eighty years later "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." He was no dotard. His choice was that of a full-grown man with a sound, matured mind, just as he was about to enter on a course for life—a life in which he had been led to expect stirring events.

4. The choice of Moses cannot be properly estimated without remembering that it was not the pursuit and prospect of great earthly advantages which he relinquished, with the probability that affliction and reproach would come in their room. No! **He gave up the actual possession of these good things—with the entire certainty that the evil things would come.** He was not merely in the high road to honor and wealth and power, but he actually possessed them all. He had "become great," "mighty in words and deeds;" he was eminent among the Egyptians.

5. Nor could Moses have failed to remember that in refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter **he was exposing himself to the charge of base ingratitude towards his royal benefactress.** Moses was not a man whose feelings were so blunted that he was not alive to any just reproach that might be cast upon him. Indeed, the fourth chapter of Exodus shows that he was a man peculiarly modest, and sensitive to the opinions of mankind. Yet he chose as he did.

6. The choice of Moses was an unreserved, an unconditional, and a final choice. The royal displeasure once incurred, and the royal confidence once forfeited—there was no hope of return. He indeed had no desire to win back the favor of the Pharaohs. He gave up all to the cause he espoused. He did not even look back.

7. His choice was a gracious choice. Without the aid of God's Spirit on his heart, he never could have made it. Flesh and blood did not reveal to him the great things that lay at the foundation of his decision.

III. Let us now consider the WISDOM of Moses choice. It was wise *then*. Moses *believed* it to be so. His history since has

demonstrated its wisdom. True, he was forced to flee his country. Soon he was away in Midian. But God visited him there, and spoke to him in the burning bush, and in due time called him to be leader to his people. In the majesty of a mighty man of God, he appeared the magnificent ambassador from heaven at the court of Pharaoh; there he wrought great wonders; then in a marvelous manner he led forth God's afflicted people; became the historiographer of the world; gave laws to the most renowned nation in history; in an important sense he became the lawgiver of all nations; he inscribed his name on the pinnacle of fame above that of any of his countrymen or contemporaries; he beheld God and knew him face to face; he had so much honor paid to him, that to hinder his tomb from becoming the scene of superstitious devotions, no man knows the place of his burial unto this day. When he died God stood by him; when he was buried Jehovah buried him—an honor conferred on no other.

Ages **after** his death, he appeared in great glory on the mount of transfiguration. Since that time his splendid career has been becoming still more brilliant; and yet it does not appear what he shall be, only when Christ shall appear he shall be like unto the glorified Lamb of God. It is now 1867—nearly three thousand four hundred years since Moses made his choice. Eighty of these were spent in affliction and reproach, yet not without comforts, joys, and supports which none of Egypt's monarchs ever tasted. The remaining more than three thousand years have all been spent in heaven. Yet eternity is hardly begun! The glories of salvation have but begun to be revealed. Already in heaven they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb; yet what is that song compared to the hosannas and hallelujahs which shall fill the upper temple when the fullness of the Gentiles, the abundance of the seas, and the nation of the Jews shall return to God; and when the work of redemption shall be concluded by the sublimities and splendors of the resurrection morning, of the

judgment day, and of the marriage supper of the Lamb! **Could we ask Moses what he now thinks of his choice, does any doubt what his answer would be?** When Peter, James, and John saw him on the holy mount, did they see anything in his appearance that argued sorrow or relenting of choice? Was his countenance sad or gloomy? Rather, was it not cheered with light like the sun, and glory like unto that of the angels of God?

IV. The CAUSE of Moses choice, next claims our attention. The cause of his choice was his **faith**. So we are distinctly told: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." The great object of Hebrews, chapter 11, where the choice of Moses is stated, is to celebrate the grand achievements of this illustrious grace. The faith of Moses was not a blind credulity; it was not a sottish superstition; it was a reliance on the divine testimony given to the fathers, and through them to their posterity. His faith looked at things which could be seen neither by sense nor reason. "He was looking ahead to his reward"—the reward of eternal life. He looked back to former ages, and he looked forward to coming ages. The chief excellency of his faith was, the respect which it had to the Messiah. He believed all that God had said respecting the Deliverer who would arise. The coming of the Messiah was no secret among the Jews. It was always a pillar of their faith. Moses bore the reproach of Christ. He "esteemed the scoffs cast on the Israelites for expecting the Messiah to arise from among them, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed—greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Wonderful indeed have been the effects of true faith, wherever it has existed.

1. True religion is the same in all ages. It is based in the same principles; it produces the same effects. Whoever properly believes

God, has the same religion that Moses had, and under fair trial will prove it.

2. Let every man examine himself, and see what manner of spirit he is of. It is a great mercy when God so deals with us here as to furnish us a real test of our true character.

3. The apostle speaks well, when he tells us of "precious faith." What could we do without it? "Faith makes all evil good to us, and all good better; unbelief makes all good evil to us, and all evil worse. Faith laughs at the shaking of the spear; unbelief trembles at the shaking of a leaf. Faith finds food in famine and a table in the wilderness. In greatest danger faith answers—I have a great God. When outward strength is broken, faith answers—The promises are strong still. Thus faith pulls the sting out of trouble, and draws the wormwood out of every affliction." O let us have faith in God. Lord, increase our faith.

4. Let us not be discouraged, however much our condition may differ from our wishes. The life of a man does not consist in what he now is—but in what he will forever be. The same God who led Moses into Midian—can bring us out of any depths into which affliction may have cast us. The strong arm with which God saved Moses and his people—is as mighty as ever.

5. The wicked one gives his servants a treatment very different from that received by God's people. "The wages which sin promises to give the sinner are—life, pleasure, and profit. But the wages it actually pays him are—death, torment, and destruction. He who would understand the falsehood and deceit of sin, must compare sins promises and its payments together." But the Lord gives good measure, pressed together and running over. In death he gives victory.

"How often has the gloom which spread
Above the Christian pilgrim's head,
And darkened all his earthly way,
Like Israel's beacon, cloud by day,
Changed, as the hour of death drew nigh,
To flame that streamed along the sky,
And lit his footsteps through the night
With holy fire and heavenly light."

Where is your treasure? Where are your affections? If the earth should be burned up, have you anything left?

6. Let us receive the word of exhortation. Like Moses, we all are passing through scenes, which are manifesting our preferences. Had he chosen this world, how different his history—and how sad his final destiny! We must choose this world or the next. The present is near, urgent, and flattering; but it is vain, fleeting, and full of disappointment. "Our love to creatures is like the running of a stream in a channel that is too narrow for it, where stops and banks do make it go on with roaring violence. Our love to God is like the brook that slides into the ocean, where it is insensibly swallowed up."

7. Let us not be cast down by the reproach of Christ. Others have borne it, and even triumphed in it. All will end right at last. The Son of man has been here in weakness and suffering; but in due time he shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and before him shall be gathered all nations. Then it will be found an immortal honor to have borne shame and spitting for him: "If you are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you; for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you." All this will be manifest in the last day. For the King shall say unto them on his right hand, "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from

the foundation of the world." One smile from the eternal Judge will forever obliterate all painful impressions made upon us by the scorn of men who have despised us for Christ's sake!

"Under sorrows and reproaches,
Let this thought our courage raise:
Swiftly God's great day approaches;
Sighs shall then be changed to praise.
We shall triumph
When the world is in a blaze!"

Conclusion

Great and glorious is our theme when we speak of Christ. He will occupy our thoughts forever! The preceding chapters have discussed several weighty points. The pious reader will allow some brief remarks on kindred topics in conclusion.

I. UNION with Christ.

The New Testament abounds with teachings respecting the union between Christ and believers. Our Lord himself dwelt much on it, especially near the close of his life. In his intercession he prays, "May they all be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You. May they also be one in Us, so the world may believe You sent Me. I have given them the glory You have given Me. May they be one as We are one. I am in them and You are in Me. May they be made completely one, so the world may know You have sent Me and have loved them as You

have loved Me." John 17:21-23. The union between Christ and believers is variously set forth in holy Scripture.

1. Inspired writers compare it to the **union between the stones in an edifice and the foundation**. By one of the prophets Jehovah says: "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief Corner-stone, elect, precious; and he who believes on him shall not be confounded." The apostle of the circumcision takes up the figure, and refers it to Christ: "As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone." 1 Peter 2:4-7. The apostle of the Gentiles employs like language: "You are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, grows unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." Believers rest their whole weight on Christ. This foundation can never fail. The conflagration of the last day shall not disturb the Rock on which they rest. It shall stand forever. They are not dead, but living stones, and are a habitation of God through the Spirit.

2. Union with Christ is compared to the **union of the members in the human body**. "You are the body of Christ, and members in particular. . . . For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." Let not the hand say to the foot, "I have no need of you;" nor the eye to the hand, "I have no need of you." Christ is the head of the

body, the church. So she is sure of his sympathy. No man ever yet hated his own flesh; neither did Christ ever hate one of his own members. He regarded the cruelties of Saul of Tarsus as directed against himself. He loved his church of old; he loved her unto death; he loves her still; he shall love her forever!

3. Christ is the Husband of his church, and she is his spouse, his love, his dove, his undefiled one. "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. . . . Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." No husband ever loved his wife as Christ loved the church. His love is infinite, eternal, unchangeable. Feeble as she may be, she comes up safely "from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved."

4. Union with Christ is sometimes compared to the **union of the branches with the stock**. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:1-5. Thus believers get sap and nourishment and fruitfulness from Christ, and from Christ alone. In the same connection, the Savior says: "apart from me you can do nothing." No wonder that the branch severed from the trunk withers and dies.

By this union with Christ his people enjoy all spiritual blessings. In particular, they have pardon by his blood, acceptance by his

righteousness, renewal by his Spirit, increase of grace, divine sympathy in their sorrows, victory in temptation, support in death, a glorious resurrection, a public acquittal in the day of judgment, and everlasting life. Severed from Christ, no man is strong, or wise, or righteous, or holy, or safe. United to Christ, all that is included in a great salvation belongs to the believer.

So that the real child of God ought not to faint, nor be discouraged. He may have the same temptations and afflictions as his Lord; but "if we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us." Therefore, "if any man suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf."

Thus also the feeblest child of God shall be tenderly beloved and cared for. The weak in faith shall be held up, for God is able to make him stand.

If these things are so, it is not amazing that God's people have so fervent love one to another. Their union among themselves arises from their union with Christ. The closer they are drawn to him, the nearer they are to one another.

II. ADMIRATION of Christ.

The people of God do greatly admire and wonder at the excellence and glory of Christ. In proportion to their faith, they delight in thinking of his all-sufficiency, and are carried away with their pious thoughts, their souls being made like the chariots of Amminadib. This shall be a part of their employment in the last day—and forever.

When Christ shall come to be glorified in his saints, he shall also come to be admired all those who believe. Even in this world, the people of God often forget their trials along the way, and are lost in

admiration of Christ. When a young man, for seventeen days I watched by the dying-bed of a dear Christian friend. Shortly before his death, thinking of the Redeemer, he wrote: "What Christian has not sometimes given expression to the feelings of his heart in some such language as this: 'WHAT A SAVIOR!' That there should be to us, lost and ruined sinners, *any* Savior, is marvelous mercy, is worthy of our highest admiration; but that there should be to us *such* a Savior, is still more astonishing. I have thought that we might have had a Savior, who would have been able to save us, and would have actually saved many, and yet not have been such a Savior. Less tender, less condescending, less forbearing, I have thought, he might have been, and yet have been a Savior. It seems as if Jesus had said more kind things and done more kind acts than were absolutely necessary to have been said and done by him. Need he have made that apology for his disciples, who could sleep when he was in his agony—'the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak?' I wonder how they could have slept in such an hour; but I wonder more at the apology their Master made for them. Need he have uttered that prayer on the cross, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do?' We do not expect such things from the innocent one, when dying by the hand of violence. If he had maintained silence during these hours of inconceivable anguish, we would have been satisfied. But Oh, think of his forgetting himself, and when they were deriding, and in every way insulting him, hear him meekly addressing his Father on their behalf, asking him to forgive them, and pleading for them, that they knew not what they did. It was not necessary that he should have paid any visible attention to the supplication of the thief. It would not have been expected of him. But that he would have turned his head, and looked such forgiveness and love while he said, 'Today shall you be with me in paradise,' is a strange mystery of love. O what a Savior! Why, he knows from experience what pain is; he has had the trials I have; he has been

through the valley of tears; he knows how I am tried; he remembers how he was tried. He wept—even over the very city and people whose soil and hands were about to be stained with his blood. I wonder I love him so little; I wonder he is not more precious to me; I wonder any should be offended at him. How can he appear a root out of a dry ground? Why don't all see his form and loveliness?"

Such admiration of the Savior naturally leads to—

III. The IMITATION of Christ.

It is with great authority over the conscience that the Scripture says: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus;" and "Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds." Christ's example shows us what the Christian graces are, and how far they are to be carried. It is sometimes said that there is a point beyond which forbearance ceases to be a virtue. If there be such a point, surely it would have been reached in the life of Christ. But where is it? He has left us an example that we should follow his steps. True Christians love to sing:

"Such was your truth, and such your zeal,
Such deference to your Father's will,
Such love, and meekness so divine,
I would transcribe and make them mine.

"O be my pattern; make me bear
More of your gracious image here!
Then God the Judge shall own my name
Among the followers of the Lamb."

That this is not overstraining the matter is evident from Scripture. John says that every one who hopes to see Jesus as he is, purifies himself even as He is pure. 1 John 3:3. Paul says: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me." Gal. 2:20. It is therefore a great fault in professors of religion that they do not more earnestly strive to imitate Christ in love, and gentleness, in tenderness of heart, in submission to the will of God, in zeal for the divine glory, in self-abnegation, in silence under unjust reproaches, and in all his imitable virtues. The highest honor we can render to the Lord Jesus is honestly and earnestly to pray and labor to be like him.

Of course nothing distresses the people of God so much as to find themselves full of imperfection, even after they have long been followers of the Lamb. They still daily cry: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

Philip Henry says: "If my prayers were written down, and my vain thoughts interlined, what incoherent nonsense would there be! I am ashamed, Lord, I am ashamed! Oh pity and pardon! These following sins were sent home with power upon my conscience:

1. Omissions innumerable. I fall short of duty in every relation.
2. Much selfishness upon every occasion, which fills my way with thorns and snares.
3. Pride; a vein of it runs through all my conversation.
4. Self-seeking; corrupt ends in all I do. Applause of men often regarded more than the glory of God.

5. My own iniquity. Many bubble up of heart-corruption, and breakings forth too. O Lord, shame has covered my face."

Indeed, the most godly men weep day and night over their unbelief, hardness of heart, pride, vanity, ingratitude, discontent, self-will, self-righteousness, irritability, envy, censoriousness, carnal security, spiritual deadness, lack of fervor, and other sins and short-comings.

This has been the case with men of every age. Job says, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." David cries, "My iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart fails me." Isaiah said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." Peter "fell down at Jesus' knees, saying—Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

The bitterest cry ever heard on earth was that of the Savior on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Next to this in bitterness was the cry of Paul: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" *The body of this death* is a Hebrew form of expression, signifying *this dead body*. The language is supposed by some to have been derived from the mode of punishing murderers adopted by certain ancient tribes, who fastened the several parts of the body of the murdered to the corresponding parts of the murderer, then confining his hands so that he could not effect his own release. In his distress, the poor criminal would cry, "Who shall deliver me from this dead body? Oh that I had some relief. Will no one help me?"

So Paul cried for deliverance. He loathed sin. He hated nothing so much. Whenever he contemplated it, it filled him with terror and detestation. He consented to the law that it was good: yes, he

delighted in the law of God after the inward man. With his mind he served the law of God. He loved holiness, yet so annoyed was he by indwelling sin, and so violent were its assaults upon him, that he pronounces himself carnal, sold under sin. The contest was dreadful, the war fearful. Nothing was to him so offensive as his own corruptions. In the jail at Philippi, his flesh torn with the scourges, his feet fast in the stocks, surrounded by the gloom of midnight, he prayed, and sang praises to God, and the prisoners heard him. "I have worked harder, been put in jail more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. Five different times the Jews gave me thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. I have traveled many weary miles. I have faced danger from flooded rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the stormy seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be Christians but are not. I have lived with weariness and pain and sleepless nights. Often I have been hungry and thirsty and have gone without food. Often I have shivered with cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm." 2 Corinthians 11:23-27.

Yet of all these he said, "None of these things move me." But when sin pierces him he cries, "O wretched man that I am!" O, it is a good sign to mourn for sin, and to long for holiness. How sweet heaven will be to all weary pilgrims. There we shall be forever done with temptation. There we shall never, never sin. There we shall be like Jesus, for we shall see him as he is. Even now a view of him by faith has a transforming power, as Paul teaches: "We with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2

Cor. 3:18. And Paul himself follows his cry with the triumphant shout: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

IV. GLORIFYING Christ.

If the views previously presented are correct, then it is true that all the saints do greatly desire to put the highest honor upon Christ—they glorify him. In receiving honor from his people, Christ and the Father are not separated. When we in heart honor one person of the Godhead, we virtually honor all. And it is the will of God that "all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." John 5:23. How full the Scriptures are of this matter, the pious reader will easily remember.

This truth is often and delightfully illustrated in the Life of David Brainerd. Under date of November 22, 1744, he writes: "Came on my way from Rockciticus to the Delaware. Was very much disordered with a cold and pain in my head. About six at night I lost my way in the wilderness, and wandered over rocks and mountains, down hideous steeps, through swamps, and most dreadful and dangerous places; and the night being dark, so that few stars could be seen, I was greatly exposed. I was much pinched with cold, and distressed with an extreme pain in my head, attended with sickness at my stomach, so that every step I took was distressing to me. I had little hope for several hours together, but that I must lie out in the woods all night in this distressed case. But about nine o'clock I found a house through the abundant goodness of God, and was kindly received. Thus I have frequently been exposed, and sometimes lain out the whole night; but God has hitherto preserved me, and blessed be his name. Such fatigues and hardships as these serve to wean me from the earth; and, I trust, will make heaven the sweeter. Formerly when I was thus exposed to cold, rain, etc., I was ready to please

myself with the thoughts of enjoying a comfortable house, warm fire, and other outward comforts; but now these have less place in my heart, through the grace of God, and my eye is more to God for comfort. In this world I expect tribulation; and it does not now, as formerly, appear strange to me. I do not in such seasons of difficulty flatter myself that it will be better hereafter; but rather think *how much worse it might be*, how much greater trials *other* of God's children have endured, and how much greater are yet *perhaps reserved for me*. Blessed be God, that he makes the thought of my journey's end and of my dissolution a great comfort to me under my sharpest trials, and scarcely ever lets these thoughts be attended with terror or melancholy; but they are attended frequently with great joy."

The secret of this remarkable calmness and heroism is elsewhere clearly expressed by the pious sufferer. Under date of July 26, 1747, he says: "This day I saw clearly that I would never be happy—yes, that God himself could not make me *happy*—unless I could be in a capacity to please and glorify him forever." Again, September 19th, of the same year: "Oh how I longed that God should be glorified *on earth!* . . . Bodily pains I cared not for; though I was then in extremity, I never felt easier. I felt willing to *glorify God* in that state of bodily distress, as long as he pleased I should continue in it." Again, September 27th, of the same year, he says: "I am almost in eternity. I long to be there. My work is done; I am done with all my friends; all the world is nothing to me. I long to be in heaven, praising and glorifying God with the holy angels. All my desire is to glorify God." The last recorded words taken from his lips are, "I shall soon glorify God with the angels."

Thus felt also inspired men of old: "I will glorify your name for evermore." Psalm 86:12. Thus the prophet enjoined: "Glorify the

Lord in the fires." Isaiah 24:15. Thus the Savior taught: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Matt. 5:16. The sickness of Lazarus was "not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." John 11:4. Christ and the Father are one. Whoever glorifies the Father, glorifies the Son; and whoever glorifies the Son, glorifies the Father.

V. REIGNING with Christ.

Many saints have left the world crying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." The Master had come, and was calling for them. The last words of Robert Bruce were: "Now God be with you, my children; I have breakfasted with you, and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night!" Grimshaw said: "I shall have my greatest grief and my greatest joy when I die. My greatest grief, that I have done so *little* for Christ; my greatest joy, that Christ has done so *much* for me!" Felix Neff's last words were: "Victory! victory! victory! by Jesus Christ!" Dr. Marshman's were: "Can you think of anything I am yet to do for the kingdom of Christ?" Dr. W. J. Hoge: "I could tell of Jonathan Edwards, and of many wonderful authors and poets, but they are all comparatively low down. Christ! Christ! O the glory of Christ!"

Though Christ's people know their Lord—the best is that they are known of him.

It was probably a part of a hymn in use in the primitive church, and is certainly a part of Scripture: "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." 2 Tim. 2:12. More than half a century after our Lord's ascension to glory, he sends to the angel of the church at Laodicea this message: "*To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.*" Rev. 3:21. Doddridge's paraphrase of this

promise is: "For your further encouragement, hear the last promise which I make to all who exert themselves in that holy warfare to which I am calling you, with becoming vigor and resolution. As for the valiant conqueror, I will give him to sit down with me upon my glorious and exalted throne in the heavenly world; as I also myself have conquered the enemies which violently assaulted me in the days of my flesh, and am set down with my Father upon his throne; my faithful servants shall partake with me of this honor in the great day of my appearing, and shall live and reign with me forever."

Poole explains the promise thus: "I will give him great honor, dignity, and power; he shall judge the world in the day of judgment, 1 Cor. 6:3; he shall be made partaker of my glory, John 17:22, 24. But such must come to my throne as I came to it. I overcame the world, sin, death, the devil—and then ascended, and sat down with my Father in his throne: so those who will sit down with me in my throne of glory must fight the same fight, and overcome, and then be crowned."

What is meant by this glorious promise is, and must remain, very much a secret, until we go and see for ourselves, and by a blessed experience find out what it is to enter into the joy of the Lord. Even Paul, who had often been enrapt in visions of the third heavens, could tell us no more than this: "I heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter." The ancient artist drew Helen with a veil over her face, thus confessing that to paint her was impossible. It is far more impossible for us to picture the glories of the celestial state. We must wait until we behold it with our eyes. Then we shall say, "The half was not told us!"

"On wings of faith mount up, my soul, and rise;
View your inheritance beyond the skies.
Nor heart can think, nor mortal tongue can tell,

What endless pleasures in those mansions dwell.
Here my Redeemer lives, all bright and glorious;
O'er sin, and death, and hell he reigns victorious.

"No gnawing grief, no sad, heart-rending pain,
In that blessed country can admission gain.
No sorrow there, no soul-tormenting fear,
For God's own hand shall wipe the falling tear.
Here my Redeemer lives, all bright and glorious;
O'er sin, and death, and hell he reigns victorious.

"No rising sun his needless beams displays,
No sickly moon emits her feeble rays.
The Godhead here celestial glory sheds;
The exalted Lamb, eternal radiance spreads.
Here my Redeemer lives, all bright and glorious;
O'er sin, and death, and hell he reigns victorious.

"One distant glimpse my eager passion fires.
Jesus, to you my longing soul aspires.
When shall I at my heavenly home arrive?
When leave this earth, and when begin to live?
For here my Savior is, all bright and glorious;
O'er sin, and death, and hell—he reigns victorious."

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