

FREE GRACE

or

The Flowings of Christ's Blood Freely to Sinners

Being a Display of the Power of Jesus Christ on the Soul of one who had been in the Bondage of a troubled Conscience upwards of Twelve Years; till now upon a clearer discovery of Jesus Christ, and the Gospel; wherein many Divine Mysteries of the Soul, respecting Corruption, Unbelief, Sin, and Temptation, are experimentally opened; together with a Description of a Natural, a Legal and a Mixed State, under Law and Gospel. With a further Revelation of Gospel-glory in its Liberty, Freeness, and Simplicity, for Salvation in Christ.

By John Saltmarsh: Preacher of the Gospel at
Brasted in Kent.

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Edition: Revised by William Huntington.*

To My Honorable Friends: *Sir John Wray,
Knight and Baronet; Sir William Strickland,
Knight and Baronet; both Members of the
Honorable House of Commons.*

Honorable; I know ye both well to have loved the acquaintance of Truth long, and in those times when truth was esteemed error, and light darkness in the account of most; therefore I hope the same Lord will not cease to reveal to ye more of himself, till at last ye come to know even as ye shall be known.

The truths {if I mistake them not} I here present you, are of Free Grace; such things when cleared to the believing, would enlighten them more into the workings of the "mystery of iniquity" than any other. There is one thing appears to us in the discovery of this, which is love, God loving us freely in Christ, and sending his Spirit of love into our hearts; this should be the only principle of power in believers now under the Gospel; love began all the work of salvation in God, and love should carry on this work of salvation in men. This is a free-way of Gospel service which none know, but those "whom the Son hath made free indeed."

The Lord fill ye with this love, that ye may obey as gloriously as ye are commanded in the Gospel, and that the experiences of Free Grace may dwell richly in ye; that ye may spiritually judge of the finer and more subtle parts of Antichrist. All is not in that gross Idolatry which is seen and felt; there is more of mystery than many apprehend in it.

I could not but thus publically acknowledge ye, who are such public Assertors of that Liberty we of this Kingdom enjoy at this day, and because ye have acknowledged me in many favors to myself formerly; for which I am,

Your Servant in the Lord,
JOHN SALTMARSH

AN OCCASIONAL WORD

It would be matter of much peace amongst believers, if the names of Antinomian, and legal Teacher, and such like, might be laid down, and no mark or name to know one another by, but that of believers, who hold thus and thus for distinction. Surely, carnal suspicions and jealousies do much increase our differences. Some, hearing the doctrine of Free Grace, think presently there will follow nothing but looseness and libertinism; and the other, hearing of holiness, of duties and obedience, think there will follow nothing but legality and bondage, and self-righteousness; and upon these jealousies, each party over-suspecting the others doctrine, bend against one another in expressions something too uncomely for both; and there are some unwarrantable notions to be found on all sides. But let us consider.

Can the Free-grace of Jesus Christ tempt any one of itself to sin? "Can a good Tree bring forth evil fruit?" And shall we call every one Antinomian that preaches Free-grace, or a little more freely than we do? If any man sin more freely because of the forgiveness of sins, that man may indeed suspect himself to be forgiven; for in all Scriptures and Scripture-examples, the more forgiveness, the more holiness. Mary loved much, because much was forgiven to her; justification and holiness, blood and water, Jesus and Lord, Christ called and justified, are still to be found together in the word, and in the believer.

There are some too of another sort, who make some noise about Free-grace; but, if all were well examined, it is not found so free as it seems. I have heard of a Gentleman that, because he would appear very free to his Neighbors, bid them to fill out Wine freely; but he

had commanded the servants beforehand to burn it, so that it should be too embittered and hot for any of them to drink. I wish the Gospel-Wine held forth by some be not overmuch heated with Law conditions and Legal pre-qualifications, so that poor souls cannot taste of it freely, notwithstanding it be dished out ever so freely.

Free-grace may be there in the notion of it, yet not in the truth of it. The Arminians boast themselves to be as great Patrons of Free-grace as others; and why? Because they teach, that all that is still given to man is for Christ's sake, and in Christ; and though by Faith and works, yet all is free gift. So the Papists boast of Free-grace, that Christ is given freely from the Father for sinners; and it is of Free-grace that we are accepted, though of works too; so surely there is some other way of carrying Free-grace, than by joining men in the work; for else it is but a Popish or an Arminian Free-grace after all.

Jesus Christ hath appeared more of late, and his glory hath been more abroad, than this Kingdom ever saw before; and indeed Antichrist never goes rightly down, but when Christ is lifted up; and if Jesus Christ had been more in the divinity of these latter times, and in their preachings for Reformation, and Moses less, we had not only had more of his grace, but more of his glory than we yet see.

Yet I do not see that the power of Christ crucified is so abroad among believers as it should be; but some several Ordinances are rather the business of this age; yet thus it hath been always, whenever there were any shadows or carnal Ordinances, believers went more after them than after Christ himself. Under the Law it was so, and under the Gospel it is so; some outward truths of Christ are sought after more than Christ Himself, and we make more of the beams than the Sun of Righteousness, and rather warm ourselves by the sparks than the fire; like

those soldiers who cast lots for Christ's garments, but let his Body alone upon the Cross; not but that everything of Christ is precious, yet nothing so precious as himself. "These these things ought we to have done, and not to have left the other undone."

I hope by this time Free-grace is no Antinomianism amongst believers; yet it hath been ever Satan's policy and the Lord's providence to manage a truth sometimes through a whole age, yea, and ages too, in another name than its own; and some other age have seen it for a truth; which God would not reveal to those unthankful times. Light hath walked abroad in a veil of darkness, and truth in the likeness of error; and Christ hath been crucified by those who after knew him for their Lord of Glory, and were wounded for him whom they had wounded themselves. Oh that the times we live in had not too many of these who would persecute that Christ now, whom hereafter they may preach.

But I have done; and if I have erred in anything, {for I see but in part, and know but in part,} it is in pouring out that Wine too freely; which the Master of the Feast, if I mistake not, hath bidden me, saying, "Oh friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, Oh beloved." {Song.5:1}



To all Readers who are TAUGHT OF THE LORD

Christian Reader,

Thou art here presented with a treatise published many years since by a Mr. Saltmarsh, minister of the Gospel at Brasted in Kent. His name, if taken to pieces, seems pregnant with meaning; 'salt' is a savory article, and a 'marsh' is famous for fattening sheep; the author seems to have had salt in himself as well as in his name, and has left some savory meat behind him for an heir of promise, and some good pastures for the King's flock.

The subjects treated of are legal bondage and gospel liberty; in handling which he has carefully laid our burdens where God in mercy laid our help, I mean upon Him that is mighty to save. This wise and safe way of building has enrolled his name in the black register of Antinomians; the godfathers and godmothers who gave him that name were the ancestors of those that stood against me, namely the Arabs and the Hagarenes.

However, many have changed their names, to enjoy an inheritance by choice; and, if we are compelled thereto, let us pocket the affront; the heir of promise shall stand in his lot, when the bastard will stand upon the sword. It is better to be a roe upon the mountains than an archer in the wilderness; so I preach, and so you believe; and neither my preaching, nor your faith, shall be in vain in the Lord.

William Huntington

Paddington, April 3, 1792.

*{A Preface from the Eleventh, 1792 Edition,
Printed by G. Terry, who was printer for William
Huntington.}*



TO THE READER

In the Experiment of this soul, you may see a spirit of adoption in Bondage, and one made poor in spirit through the ignorance of the riches of grace, and by a legal faith {as I may say;} that is, by being both under Grace and the Law at the same time. Surely such legal believers are as much subject to death and bondage in their own apprehensions under the Gospel, as they were before under the Law.

You have here the frame of this soul, or the constitution and condition of a spirit before conversion, under conversion, and under the relapse or falling back into the same sins, and under the temptations for those sins, and under a legal recovery out of those temptations, and under a fuller revelation of Grace and Truth, drawn out of their own experiences; by which we may see what it is to want of the true knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The more Christ is known, and that love of God to the sons of men, which was manifest in the flesh, the more that glorious liberty from the Law, Sin, and Satan, is manifested in the soul. This made Paul desire so to "know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified," and the more this light of the Gospel shines in the face of Jesus Christ, the more doth the ignorance of flesh and blood dissolve; and the shadows of the Law, as doubts, fears, terrors which are cast in, vanish before it; "for the day breaks, and the shadows flee away."

The only scope of this Discourse and these Observations is to hold forth the glory of Free-

grace; and that by this one Experiment, "wisdom might be justified of her Children." Oh, the riches of his grace! Oh, the fountain of his love! Oh, the exceeding and comprehensive freeness in the flowing of Christ's blood, washing us when we are polluted in our own! Thus he calls us beloved, who were not beloved; and we who had not obtained mercy, do obtain mercy in Christ.

And I thought myself not a little happy to have such an effectual door as this opened, to deal with the experiences of a soul in this way.

And for the following Conference, my Observations, and other particulars, I took this occasion to draw out my discourse of Grace and Gospel-glory, from the faithful experiences of such a soul, wherein the work of Nature, Grace, Spirit and Satan, was clearly visible and discernible, rather than to found them upon mere notions and conjectural principles. For in the experiences of a soul, we may more clearly discern the deep things of the Spirit, reading them in the spirits of such as possess Christ, as in a counterpart of the Scriptures; for herein truth answers to truth, as in water face answers to face.



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The flowings of Christ's Blood freely to Sinners; Occasioned by an Experimental Discourse.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Parties natural condition under the Law, and how they felt themselves in their alienated state of nature, before they could persuade themselves into a profession of faith, and before Christ was revealed, as the "end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."

Question: What manner of life did you lead, to the best of your remembrance?

Answer: I continued in a course of some particular sins long.

Question: Had you no fits of terror of conscience in your continuance in those sins?

Answer: I had some griping and accusations in my conscience for those sins; but they tarried not long with me.

Question: Had you any reluctance in sinning, or did you go out with full consent?

Answer: Yea; with full consent, to my remembrance.

Question: Were you much delighted in those sins, so as you committed them with greediness, or were you partly over-powered, through the strength of corruption?

Answer: I delighted in them, and felt no over-powering of that kind.

Question: In this your natural state, how far did the light of conscience check you or put you upon any Reformation?

Answer: Upon some duties of Prayer, and hearing the Word; and checks divers times I had.

Question: Were not your checks such as put you upon some other religious duties?

Answer: Yes, not only upon prayer and reformation; but I also made many vows and covenants against corruption; but it was I thought rather for my self-ends than for love to Christ.

Question: But did you not seem to be satisfied in the performances of those, as if now all were well betwixt God and you, having done something that was commanded you in God's word?

Answer: Yes, I thought all was well until I brake the bonds and vows that I had made, and then I was full of terrors and checks again.

Well, the time being so long since, we shall let alone further questions; here being enough to let us see something of your natural condition before conversion.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FORMER DISCOURSE

I. *Of the bondage that a mere natural man sins in, and wherein true spiritual freedom from sin consists.*

They that are in a mere natural or carnal state, though they sin freely, with content and delight; yet they sin under bondage, being not able to obey a better Law. We know a stream that hath strong bias runs freely, yet all the motion is on that side that the bias lies; so men naturally run that way the power of their corruptions weigh them, whether to lust, or drunkenness, or covetousness, &c., and this is the misery of men in their sins, who are not set free by the Son,

Jesus Christ; they are but the servants of sin and Satan, though they conceive they sin at pleasure, and at their own wills. "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." {II Pet.2:19} And such is their condition, as they have no strength for obedience to a better Law, than the Law of sin, "for the carnal mind is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be." Take any whose ingenuity or wit lies fully to one trade or art, he cannot naturally apply himself to any other, but you may discern much of bungling and un-suitableness; so men, being naturally sinful, without the power of Christ within them, cannot frame themselves to the ways of God, but in a way of bungling and hypocrisy, or mere form of religion, like then that could not sound Shibboleth, but Sibboleth. {Judg.12:6} It is only Jesus Christ the Son, that can make us free; for "if the Son make you free, then you are free indeed." And that freedom is a true spiritual freedom, both from the dominion or law of sin, which is the curse; and the nature of sin, which is the corruption. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." {Rom.8:2} And such freedom is like Paul's, who did not account himself free, according to the privilege of a Roman, until the magistrates themselves came to the prison, and pronounced his liberty; and so the believer will not count himself free indeed, but from Jesus Christ's own presence and command upon his soul; for it is he only that brings the prisoner out of prison.

II. *Of the resistings of sin and sorrowings for sin, which are in a natural man.*

They who are yet in a carnal or unregenerate state, have certain convictions against sin, from

the law of their natural conscience; which is strong enough to reprove, but not to reform or change into a new creature; therefore the condition of such is a very deceivable condition, for a kind of inward wounding or remorse for sin, makes them conceive that some better light or principal bears rule in them than truly does; because they find a conflict sometimes bearing the image of that spiritual warfare which is between the flesh and the spirit in the regenerate ones; whereas all their resistings of sin or sorrowings after the commission of sin is only because they committed it against some inward law or beam of natural glory and excellency which is in the soul, whereby it in part condemns and excuses itself in its own conversation. This is that which the Apostle speaks of in the Gentiles, "for when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." {Rom.2:14,15} Yet this natural law is but very weak in respect of any transforming power it hath, as the Law of the Spirit of Jesus Christ hath in itself. We see in a clear frosty night, though the moon shines very bright, and the stars too; yet it is both cold and hard, as if there were no light at all; but the sun hath another kind of power and enforcing warmth in the beams thereof; for so it is in those that are enlightened only by the law of nature, or conscience; for they are cold and hard, or impenitent, and have no warmths or meltings as in the true regenerate believer.

III. *How far many go in a formal profession and mere natural religion, raised up a little by the power of the word.*

I observe, that they that are in their carnal state are by the power of the word, and the common light of conscience bearing witness to the law of the word, often carried into a form of religion; but it is such a form as is made up mostly of outward obedience and observations, while the power and spirit of Jesus Christ is not in all their thoughts, they looking at God no otherwise than in a kind of a natural way or notion, and so forming up a religion according to themselves, of pleasing or displeasing Him by what they do, or do not, and putting all satisfaction, and pardon of sin and salvation, in matters of form and outward obedience, as vows, covenants, &c., outward reformation, &c., and thus, "though they know God, yet they glorify him not as God, but become vain in their imaginations, and change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man; for going about," through a natural light or knowledge, "to establish their own righteousness, they submit not to the Righteousness of God by Jesus Christ." So as here we may see the danger of resting in such carnal forms and convictions, and ways of obedience, without the power of Jesus Christ; there is but a more supreme damnation to be got at last by them, therefore let us breathe towards the more excellent and powerful workings of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, because all other faith is but a dead faith; which though it may go far in the resemblance, carrying the image of something like the new man, as the faint reflections of the sun in a cloud look like the sun, but are not; and may both deceive the soul of the person where it is, and others that judge according to the appearance; yet there being no true spiritual life in such a soul, no Christ formed in such a soul, there can be neither any right spiritual enjoyments, nor any solid communion with God in Christ, though all the changes of the Spirit may seem to be there to such a carnal,

formal, deceived heart; there may be Repentance, or a kind of sorrow for sin, as Ahab had; there may be a kind of joy in the Gospel ordinances, as Herod had; there may be a kind of reforming, as in the same Herod, "who did many things that John taught;" there may be a kind of faith, as in them who believed in the parable, and in the time of temptation fell away; there may be a kind of frequenting the word preached, as in those that may say, "have we not eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets;" there may be convictions of sin, as in Felix, who trembled at Paul's preaching; but all these are not wrought in the power of Christ, nor in the life of the Spirit, and therefore all such religion is but that of a carnal professor, or a self-deceiver, or self-sufficient hypocrite, who deceives not another more than himself; and in a religion or form of godliness of this nature, their goeth always a spirit of bondage or fear with it, which shows such to be children of the bondwoman, not of the free; for the Son having never made them free, they cannot be free indeed, nor can there be any of that pure joy and peace in believing; so the fruits and seeming graces of such, are but like the berries upon the thorn in the wayside, not like the grapes upon the vine, their comforts as fast as they arise are damned with the workings of the spirit of bondage and fear, which makes them like Belshazzar, to be afraid in their time of feasting, or most formal profession, because of the handwriting of ordinances upon the wall, or the Law, unto which they are yet in bondage upon every sin and failing, being ever awakened by the curse and condemnation due to sin; and thus, like wandering stars, clouds without water, ever rolling up and down, but never established; not being built on the rock, Jesus Christ, and other foundation which can no man lay; such live like children, who only wink but see not the danger

they are afraid of; many of these dare not look on their former lives, nor cast up their account of sins, nor reckon with their consciences; for the blood of sprinkling is not there, and without blood there is no remission, and without remission there is no victory against sin, no looking conscience in the face.

CHAPTER II.

Of the parties first troubled for the sins they lived in, which was supposed to be the time of conversion, calling, or light from Christ.

Question: How came you to be troubled for these sins? Was it from some sermon, discourse, or reading the word, or how?

Answer: It was not by sermons, nor any discourse, nor by reading the word of God.

Question: Was it by some sudden accident or rather Providence?

Answer: Yes, by some sudden act of Divine Providence.

Question: Had you left your course of sinning before this act of Providence?

Answer: Yes.

Question: How did you leave it? Upon any strong conviction, or slight conviction only, because you would leave sin in the general; or, was your sin left by you from some particular evil you saw therein.

Answer: I left it because I saw it was sin, and I had a desire to leave what preachers bid me leave.

Question: But how came you first, as you thought, to be convinced of this sin?

Answer: By this; going to reprove one for a particular sin, whom I had said in a rash word I would never reprove again, at the instant I did it an horror and trembling fell upon me, and then my own course of sinning came into my thoughts.

Question: How came your trembling first upon you? Upon the breach of your word or upon the thoughts of your living in sin?

Answer: First, upon the breach of my word; then that was taken away, and the other of my living in sin remained.

Question: Did you open your mind to the party that you went to reprove?

Answer: No, but told the party they were undone, and they had undone me.

Question: What did you in your trouble of mind?

Answer: I ran up and down and could not rest, but thought myself undone, and was as it were distracted in myself.

Question: How long did you conceal it?

Answer: It was a year before I revealed it.

Question: Were you not quiet sometimes in conscience?

Answer: Yes, I thought my conscience quiet diverse times in that year, and sometimes I wondered in myself at my trouble; then on a sudden it came upon me again.

Question: Did you not during this time apply yourself much to sermons?

Answer: Yes, but not with delight; for I was ever loth to hear.

Question: Why were you loth to hear? Was it through fear of being more wounded by sermons, or from some carnal slothfulness in you?

Answer: No, for I thought every sermon would rise in judgment against me; I was in a sad condition in that respect, being in a straight betwixt hearing and not hearing; for if I did not hear, I was afraid that I contemned the ordinance; and if I did hear, I was afraid of judgment.

Question: How came in the trouble or terror upon you, when it came in? Through much thinking of living in sin, or how?

Answer: It came in suddenly and very violently, when I would not have thought of my former life.

Question: Would you not have applied yourself much to company or business, to put away such thoughts?

Answer: Yes, I would, and did all I could of that kind to put them from me.

Question: What spiritual course did you take then?

Answer: I sought much by prayer that God would comfort me, that I might not reveal my condition.

Question: Whether had you any strong persuasion to reveal your condition?

Answer: Yes, very strong.

Question: Were those persuasions sudden, or continued, settled persuasions?

Answer: They were not sudden, but continued upon considerations with myself, that I could not in myself be satisfied.

Question: Did you then resolve to reveal your condition?

Answer: Yes; but when I came to preachers, I went away oftentimes, and did not reveal myself; nay, I could not, for it went so against my heart, for temptations of fear and shame were upon me.

Question: But when you desired to reveal yourself, was it upon thoughts to get some advice from them in the general to allay your trouble, or that you might receive some soul satisfaction and true spiritual comfort.

Answer: One main thing, I'm sure, was, to get some soul saving comfort, and partly in respect of some others concerned with me.

Question: When you opened your mind to the preachers that you came to, what desires had you towards Christ, as you remember?

Answer: When I came to them I would have done anything, and I desired that they would direct me to any means whereby I might find Christ.

Question: How did you find yourself for the time after you had revealed yourself? In what disposition to the means of Grace?

Answer: I had an earnest desire after Salvation, and I was very much afraid of sin; for I could neither think, nor speak, nor do, but in fear of sin; I could not, I thought, be content with desires after Salvation; but I earnestly desired after holiness of life and doing the will of God from the heart.

Question: When you did reveal yourself to some preacher, what did he say to your condition?

Answer: He said, that he had no question but it was a safe condition, because God had revealed my condition to let me see my sin.

Question: What course did he bid you take?

Answer: He bid me be humbled for sin, and pray, and set me upon duties; but I heard not anything of Christ from him.

Question: What did you say to this?

Answer: I objected, that I could not pray.

Question: What said he to you then?

Answer: He asked me if I could not desire to pray, and told me my desires to pray were prayers; he told me that Hezekiah could not pray but only chatter, and yet this was accepted; and he told me of the publican, who said, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner;" and asked me if I could not say so much.

Question: Did not this satisfy you?

Answer: No, this did not satisfy me; for that Scripture was in me, "these people draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me;" and I thought my heart was not as it should be, not spiritual enough.

Question: It seems then that you are not satisfied with what he said?

Answer: No, for I asked him how I might know that my desires to pray were for God's glory and not my own ends.

Question: What answer did he make to you?

Answer: He said, by the constancy of them.

Question: What did you say to that?

Answer: I answered that sometimes I had some desires, sometimes cold desires, sometimes no desires.

Question: What did he say then?

Answer: He said that desires were not always alike, sometimes slugging; but because I did not

rest in not desiring, therefore he said that my desires were constant.

Question: Were you not satisfied with that answer?

Answer: No, for I thought that I must have more than desires, I must have endeavors; I thought desires were nothing, and even sometimes I had no desires.

Question: What did he then say?

Answer: He asked me if I had a desire that I might desire; that was a stay to me a little, but it could not hold me up.

Question: What else did he bid you to do?

Answer: He bid me to repent and to be sorry for my sin.

Question: Could you not be sorry?

Answer: No, I could not be sorry for my sin, as sin against God, I thought; but for fear of hell and damnation, which I thought was a legal sorrow, and slavish terror, which Judas and Cain had.

Question: What said he to that?

Answer: He said, sorrow for sin might go with sorrow for punishment, as David saith, "I am afraid of thy judgments."

Question: What did you say to this?

Answer: I said, great sins should have great sorrows; my sins had been great, and a great part of my life, but I did not sorrow enough for them.

Question: What did he say to that?

Answer: He told me of that place in the Corinthians, "yea, what fear, yea, what indignation," &c., and asked me if these were not

in me? I answered him as I did before, yea these were in me; but I questioned the truth of them.

Question: What answer had you?

Answer: He bid me to try further.

Question: And what did you upon further trial?

Answer: I found that I could sorrow more for outward things, or for horrors of hell; but I had not such a sorrow as should be in God's children, as brokenness of heart, and meltings of heart.

Question: How did other of the preachers that you went to, deal with you?

Answer: Others bid me to be sorry for my sins, and to lead a better life, and made no question but that my condition was safe.

Question: Could you not fall upon such a course as they bid you, and be contended?

Answer: I did desire to enter upon such a course of life, but I could not pray; I could not repent; I could not yet enter into such a course.

Question: But did they not talk to you of believing?

Answer: Yes, they said I must labor to believe, and that, "Christ came into the world to save sinners, and such were some of ye, but ye are washed, but ye are cleansed;" and this their urging me was not at first, but a good time after they had bidden me to repent and to be sorry.

Question: Did all that you dealt with speak to you along these lines?

Answer: No, one bid me be to believe in Christ; and I asked him how I could believe? He told that, "Christ came into the world to save sinners," and that I was bound to believe, because I was lost in myself and saw my need of Christ.

Question: Did he not bid you to seek for qualifications or conditions first in yourself.

Answer: No, he said, I might kindle sparks, and lie down in the sparks of my own kindling.

Question: When they applied promises to you, why could you not lay hold of them?

Answer: I could not, because I thought I was not in a condition to receive the promises, for there were conditions in them, such as I could not find in myself.

Question: Did you see no need of Christ?

Answer: Yes; but I thought that it was rather for selfish ends than for love to Christ. One asked me, if I could be contented without Christ, if it were possible that I had my sins pardoned, and peace of conscience, and have not Christ; I answered, that I did not know.

Question: But after all these proceedings and soul-conflicts, which I perceive you had, and your dealings with many concerning your condition; how came you to that assurance of your calling, and of the Spirit, which you were once persuaded you had?

Answer: I shall relate unto you my experiences which I had {from which I was then assured} of my calling.

First, when I was tempted and going to make away with myself for my sin, the Lord sent into my mind this word, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Ah thought I then, "hath God loved me with such an everlasting love, and shall I sin against such a God!" Secondly, I had many doubts and fears, but through the grace of Christ I overcame all; these doubts and fears arose from the examination of myself, as to how I could find the work in my soul agreeable to that

testimony of God's word, for I was much afraid of being deluded. Thirdly, the promise in Isa.55:1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price," did stay my heart on Christ in my partaking of him in his Ordinances, and did sweetly witness, exceedingly so, that he was my Redeemer. Fourthly, I went on for some time full of joy and of comfort, upon these promises, and another I had, "fear not, I will be with thee, I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee." Fifthly, I was in fears again, that I could not pray, but I had a promise, "I will fulfill the desires of them that fear me;" these, and many more, were my grounds and evidences, which I thought were solid evidences of grace, when I first received them. Sixthly, sometimes in hearing the Gospel, Christ did witness to my soul, yet but seldom. But, Oh how I did strive against this work, as I thought, of my being called, to put away all promises of mercy from me; for I may justly say that the Lord saved me whether I would or no; for sometimes I was dead and could not pray; sometimes very much quickened and stirred up, and I could pour out my soul in much sorrow and remorse for sin. Oh, me-thought I could spend a whole night in praying for what my soul wanted! That which I much desired in prayer, was still, that my sinful soul might be healed of sin; and that this running issue of sin that ran and ceased not, might be stopped. Yet at this my time, and those days, I seldom desired pardon of sin till I were fitted for mercies; but now I see we are pardoned freely, I cannot even now but say this, Oh rest not therefore in your own duties or in any experiences, lest you perish in the sparks that you kindle, as I had almost done. I observed a good providence of the Lord to me, in providing

me still many believers to complain to in this my sad condition.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FORMER DISCOURSE

I. Of the Preachers several dealings with this Party to settle them, and not in a way of believing first.

I Observe, that now this soul questioning the truth of all his assurances, they labour to persuade him to faith or believing upon a ground of sanctification or hope in himself, which hath no evidence, nor for the present moment can bring any demonstration to the spirit; for Satan, and the party's own suspecting heart, will not let them believe that there is any truth in that which they have found so faulty; as, for instance, a man that hath had cause to be jealous of his wife, and hath seen some miscarriages, all the friends she can make are not able to satisfy and take away all grounds of fear and jealousy from him by their persuasion, but he will still suspect, because he once had some real ground; and unless they can take away this, they cannot persuade him to that.

So in that soul where there hath been real failings, and a spiritual discerning of its own unrighteousness, all the persuasions of others cannot make it have any good opinion of itself, nor persuade it of its righteousness, unless they can take away that unrighteousness and sin, or make it to be no sin, and no unrighteousness; for the soul which is only troubled for sin, must be settled upon something which is not sin; and upon a righteousness, either in itself, or some other, or there can be no settlement, peace, or comfort in that soul; and yet this is the common way of dealing with souls, and bringing them up into assurance; as thus, repent, pray, and live an

holy life, and walk according to the Law of God; and if they answer that they cannot do thus, Oh then, say they, can you not desire to pray and repent? And if they say they cannot desire, Oh but then, say they, can you not desire that you may desire? And thus they wind them up by acts of their own spirit, and run them out to the end of their own workings; when alas, these desires of desires, and the spinning of such fine threads in divinity, are not strong enough to bind up a broken spirit; for, after all, this is but the broken work of a soul; for how many have desired to enter in, and have not been able? Nay, who is there that hath not a desire? All the world of common believers are carried on by this principle of a desire.

We see now the vanity of such reasonings with a soul troubled for sin, and questioning the truth of the spiritual work in themselves; such kind of arguing may give some hints to the soul that hath the Spirit of God in it, and some spiritual motions to pacify and persuade it a while, because it finds something in itself agreeable to such a discourse; but these are too narrow and weak to bear up the burden of sin, and legal terror, like the bottom or point of a top, which, being small, may for some time while it is in motion, bear up the body of the top as we see it, but when the motion ceases, the top falls, having nothing proportionable to support it; and so the soul turns upon such hints of comfort a while, but soon flattens again and drops.

This is the utmost satisfaction the discourse of such divines can give; yet I despise them not in the light that they have, so they contend not against the more glorious light of truth; but the Lord {if he please} can reveal more unto them. But you will say, how will you deal then with a soul thus puzzled; and questioning? I answer, I shall not dare to place them on any bottom of their own righteousness,

or to satisfy themselves by anything only in themselves; for that were to take the disease for the Physician, and to give them no ointment, but blood of their own wound to heal them; nor should I take that other way, which many do that are of this legal strain do, by first applying promises to them, which many times, instead of drawing the soul to Christ, puts it further off, because of some conditions, which the soul questioning in themselves, dares not meddle with, before it be prepared by Christ and his freeness.

But you will say, what way will you take then? I answer, that way which the Scriptures reveal to me; first, the laying down, and establishing, and bringing forth a perfect righteousness, even the righteousness of Christ, and then showing forth the way of right and interest to this righteousness, which is contained in the freest promises for bringing souls to partake of this perfection and righteousness, more plainly thus; Christ crucified is the foundation, and corner-stone, and rock for sinners. The righteousness of this Christ is every way perfect and complete; his righteousness is that which hath taken away sins, so as no sin is now to be satisfied for, nor no righteousness to be wrought by any for salvation; only, all that will be saved are to believe their interest and right in this righteousness and already purchased and finished salvation; and for the way of coming by a right, or purchasing an interest in this righteousness or salvation; it is held out without price or works, in the freest, clearest promises of salvation to sinners only, by taking, receiving, and believing, all being ready wrought to our hands.

So this is as good a ground for one to believe on as another, without any exception; and in this way of salvation, to believe is life eternal, and not to believe is condemnation. "He

that believeth hath eternal life, and he that believeth not is condemned;" and this being a Scriptural way, I would leave the soul upon these principles, and under this Commandment, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; for this is the Commandment, that ye believe on his Son, &c."

But you will say, what if a soul answer, I cannot believe, I am not elected? I shall answer then to such a soul thus, it is God's word, and because it is a Commandment, you are not to make an objection from election or reprobation, against believing; for that were to set one part of the truth against the other; and thus you misinterpret both God and his Word.

But you will say, how if a soul answer, I cannot believe for all this? I answer, this being a Scripture-way, and the clearest way revealed to salvation, I shall commend such to the Lord, who is the only "Author and finisher of Faith," Heb.12:2, and for establishing souls upon any works of their own, as a way, means, or ground of assurance, as that upon such and such a measure of repentance or obedience they may believe by, I dare not deal in any such way of our own righteousness, because I find no infallible mark in anything of our own sanctification, save in a lower way of persuasion, or motive. I find in the Old or New Testament scarce any believer that stood so sure, but they had some cause, through sin and corruption, and that unregenerate law in their members, to suspect their righteousness, as David, and Peter, and Paul, &c. And likewise the stream of the Word runs all against our own righteousness.

But you will say, what are all the divers Scriptures which set us upon trial and examination of our faith and works? I answer, there is another kind of analogy and rule to interpret these by, more principal than that of assurance for salvation. These are rather marks for others than ourselves, to know by; as in the

Epistles of John and James, &c. And as for those other few Scriptures, they are rather to be interpreted to the testimony of the Spirit of God witnessing and persuading, than to the mixed, spiritually carnal works of our obedience and holiness, which can give but a mixed testimony of assurance at the best, being of a mixed nature of flesh and spirit.

But you will say, what way of assurance would you commend to a soul thus troubled? I answer, Christ in the Word and Promise to believe in for assurance. This was that way the Lord himself commended to his Disciples; as to Peter, when he knew he should deny him, and foretold him of it, and knew how it would discourage him and wound him; yet he puts not Peter to this course, saying, Peter, thou art an holy, obedient, loving apostle; remember this to comfort thyself under the denial; but he says, "Peter, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." And thus he laid him in an encouragement from a word or promise to believe by, and not from anything in himself; and so to his Disciples when he was to leave them, he laid them not in assurances thus, Oh my Disciples, though I am from you, yet ye have been thus and thus penitent, humble, loving, obedient; and let this be your ground and assurance when I am gone; but he lays in words and promises, "You believe in God, believe also in me, I will send the Comforter, and I will see you again;" and these are the grounds for their assurance to believe by; and this was Abraham's way, "he believed the promise in hope against hope;" and so all that walk in the steps of faith, walk in the steps of our father Abraham. {Rom.4:18}

II. The unstableness of such as are not converted in a pure Gospel-way.

I observe, that the calling and conversion which souls have in a legal-Gospel-way, not from a pure and clear apprehension of Jesus Christ revealed in the Gospel, Covenant, or Promises, though there may be truth in such a calling, and Christ may have been received, yet the manner being not in the way of pure Gospel Dispensation, the soul may be exceedingly puzzled and perplexed; so though Christ may be truly there, yet being not in a Gospel, but a legal form, the soul may mistake and lose the knowledge of Christ, as when Christ was in the habit of a Gardener. Mary knew him not, and when he walked with the two Disciples to Emmaus, they knew him not. And thus many under the Law, though they had Christ as truly then as now, yet not in that form, not manifested in the flesh, and the free Promises, as now; and Christ observes this to his Disciples, "Ye believe in God," says he, implying how their Faith was more carried out to God under the former dispensation than, than to himself; and therefore he adds, "Believe also in me," that is, now let me manifested in the flesh be the truth which you believe.

III. The several ways which the Lord makes use on to salvation.

I observe, that the Lord doth improve many ways and means to bring a soul under the power of the Gospel, as several incidents and occasions, though those things are not properly or principally to be called the Ministry of Christ, or the Gospel ordinances for revealing Jesus Christ; but they are like the chariot in which the Eunuch rid, which was only an outward accommodation to his receiving Christ, but the proper and more immediate means, was the Book of the Prophets,

which he had with him in his chariot. We see Paul was by a sudden accident brought into a way for the Gospel to have the free passage to his soul; nor did that accident or occasion serve as the means of his receiving Christ, but Ananias who was sent to him; the means instituted by the Lord to be a way of conveying the power of Christ upon his soul. "Faith cometh by hearing" the Gospel, which is the "power of God unto salvation," and the Spirit comes by the preaching of Faith.

IV. The want of pure Gospel knowledge in Jesus Christ is the cause of many distractions in believers.

I observe, that when the Lord sends the light of Jesus Christ into a soul that hath formerly been in darkness, and in the shadow of death, then it immediately begins to see its corruptions and lusts; and if there were any master or chief sin, which had dominion, as lust in some, pride in others, revenge in others, worldly mindedness, &c., then the soul presently is pricked upon the discovery of it, and there is a remorse and perplexity in the soul; as they in the Acts, after Peter had laid open their sin of shedding the blood of Christ, were pricked to the heart for it, and were inwardly troubled and wounded, saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And if there be not a clear understanding of Jesus Christ and the Gospel, the soul thus wounded, will groan under many legal convictions, and will hardly distinguish its condition from a worse or more miserable one, even that of sorrowing under the power of the Law.

Had not Peter been assured of the love of Christ from his own mouth, "that his faith should not fail;" his tears, and the sorrowing of Judas, would appear all of one color and kind, to such a beclouded apprehension; as Joseph, who, till he

had opened himself to his brethren, was mistaken by them for a cruel and a harsh Governor; but, when they saw it was their brother Joseph, Oh what meltings and embracings were then amongst them! Many a soul, convinced by that Spirit which Christ hath sent to reprove the world of sin, walks sadly under their wound or burden, not knowing the nature and condition of such a spiritual wound.

Many Preachers, like some surgeons, who keep their patients from healing too soon, that they may make the cure the more admired, do accordingly keep such souls with their wounds open; and if they pour in anything, it is rather vinegar than oil, rather something of the Law than the Gospel; so as they are not only long in healing, and getting peace through Jesus Christ; but they carry a scar with them for many years, and are as it were lame in their consciences a long time after, like some poor patients that have had as much of the sound flesh cut away as the rotten, and so have been healed, though but to a bodily infirmity all their life time.

All this is for want of the knowledge of the Spirit of Adoption being in such a soul, and the Spirit's workings clear apprehensions of Christ, {as it is not enough to enlighten the world that there is a sun, but there must be a clear body of air for this sun to shine through,} and so there must be the application of Gospel promises, persuading to faith and believing in Jesus Christ for the pardon of sin, to settle, assure, and establish a soul more; and the light that comes in through such Gospel applications, and power, will exceedingly melt and wound a soul; but they are the woundings and meltings of love, and the Spirit of Adoption, not of fear and bondage, but of power, love, and of a sound mind. Mary wept and washed Christ's feet; Peter wept bitterly, not in fear, but in love; witness her box of ointment, and Peter's profession, "Lord, thou knowest I love

thee." The sensations which this Gospel way works in the soul, are such as bring enlargements, and flowings, and pourings out of Spirit; but the sensations which the Law works, bring in a straightening, a contraction, a gathering up, or narrowness in the spirit; and therefore it is called bondage and fear.

V. The opening of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, is the best and surest way to deal with sinners.

I observe, that they that are wounded for sin, and are enlightened to discern it, and are so wrought on by the Spirit as to feel and be sensible of it, being sensibly taken into Covenant with God in Christ, though their stony heart be taken out, and being yet dark in the purer conceiving of the Gospel, such are ready rather to put away Gospel-promises than to receive them, and imagine themselves rather fit for judgment, than mercy or grace. Now if Preachers run to the Law in their dealings with such souls for their thorough humiliation, as they say or pretend, and not to the Gospel, and Faith in Jesus Christ; they bring fire, and not water to quench them, and so kindle them the more; and setting the everlasting burnings of the Law before their souls, put them all into a spiritual flame and vexation.

Nathan dealt otherwise with David, though under the Old Testament, where there was a privilege for the Law, II Sam.12:13, "I have sinned" {saith David,} "the Lord hath put away thy sin" {saith Nathan;} this is "to give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of an heavy heart." {Prov.13:6} "If anyone sin, {saith John,} we have an Advocate with the Father, Christ Jesus the righteous." Here is Gospel applied to the sin, and the Physician brought home to the sick, and

Jesus Christ brought to the very gates of a groaning spirit.

I know the Divinity of some former ages, as at these present times, made up all their receipts for distempered souls of so much Law mixed with so much Gospel, and usually but a grain or dram of Gospel to a pound of Law; they not being clear enough in judgment to unminge things which Antichrist had confounded and put together, as the two Testaments or two Covenants, and not rightly discerning Christ's manner or way of preaching, nor his Apostles, in their holding forth Law and Gospel with proper distinctions.

The Apostle saith, "received ye the Spirit by the preaching of the Law, or the preaching of Faith?" {Gal.3:2} They that would make the Law the Ministry of life, and of the Spirit, are not spiritually discerning, as the Lord hath revealed; and such put souls upon a legal method of conversion, for coming to Christ. First, they must be kept so long under the Law for humiliation, contrition and confession, and then are to be brought to the Gospel, as many books and teachers do; whereas the Law hath no power to infuse such gracious passions into the soul as the Gospel calls for. Blessed are they that mourn, and they that are poor; but this is not meant of the mourning spirit under the Law, nor the poor spirit under the curse of the Law for sin, but the Gospel mourning, and Gospel poverty, even mournings of love, like the groanings of the turtle. {Cant.2:12} If they be only such as the Law brings forth, and presses out of the soul, they are no better than the contritions of Esau and Judas; but if they be such as the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, {Rom.8:2,} or the Law of life and love works in the soul, then they are of a more spiritual and precious nature; but this is from the Gospel and the preaching of Faith. What Law did Peter preach to Cornelius, or

Philip to the Eunuch, or Ananias to Paul, or Paul to the Jailer and his household, but only Jesus Christ? Nor can you find the Decalogue, I mean the commandment in its form, as a Covenant preached, but to those that were under the Law, and pretended to stand by the Law, and to set up a righteousness by the Law, as the Pharisees and Jews did. In all this, I esteem no less of the Law than any other; the Law is holy, just and good, as it was a Law for the people of God under Moses, and having something of the Image of God in it. But now we are under a better Law, a more excellent Law, and a more spiritual Commandment. That Law contained but a few single beams of righteousness, but a Decalogue of righteousness; yet now in the glorious Gospel of Grace, the righteousness of God is brought forth in more glorious and spiritual beams of an infinite righteousness in Christ. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." {Jn.1:17} In this righteousness of God, in which the righteousness of Christ is brought forth; which makes the condition of God's people a blessed condition, so as they stand righteous now in all their obedience to the righteousness of God, which is the more pure, transcendent and excellent Law of the Commandments of the Gospel, or the more perfect Rule of the righteousness of God in the righteousness of Christ; so as the New Testament is the Law magnified in the Gospel, or the righteousness of God and Christ more gloriously manifested. "Do we therefore make void the Law by the preaching of Faith? Yea, we establish the Law, Christ being the end of the Law for righteousness."

VI. A further opening of the doubtings of a soul not clearly discerning the power of the Gospel.

I observe that soul that is not informed by a pure Gospel-light, nor apprehending clearly the way of Faith, of Christ, and the Promises, and the glory of the New Testament, is ever unsettled, unstable, full of fears, doubtings, distractions and questioning; and the more such a soul is reasoned with concerning their condition, the more they question the truth of every spiritual working in them; and this comes from the power of the Law still upon their consciences, which is more powerful to convince and accuse them, than the Gospel is to exonerate and acquit them, having more of the ministry of condemnation before them, or in their eye, than of the ministry of life, and Jesus Christ; Satan taking advantage of their legal condition, stirs up jealousies and doubts; and so much as there is of legal apprehensions, so much there is to hinder the bringing in of the Kingdom of God into the soul, which is not only righteousness, but peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; and therefore under the Old Testament, where they saw the Blood of Christ only through the blood of bulls and goats, and heard the Apostles afar off in the Prophets, and were brought to the mountain that smoked, they lived in much bondage, and being under the Law till the fulness of time that the Seed came, were like servants, though heirs; "the heir {as the Apostle saith,} differing then nothing from a servant, though he was lord of all."

There is nothing but the taking in of the Law, with its accusations or condemnations, that can trouble the peace and quiet of any soul; for "where there is no law there is no transgression," and where there is no transgression, there is no conscience for sin, all trouble arising from the voice of the Law demanding satisfaction of the soul for the breach of it, and such a satisfaction

which the soul knows it cannot give, and thereby it remains unquiet, like a debtor that hath nothing to pay; and the Law too being naturally in the conscience, as the Apostle saith, the conscience accusing or else excusing, it is no marvel that such souls should be troubled for sin, and unpacified; the Law having such a party and engagement already within them, which holding an agreement with the external in letters, or tables of stone, must needs work strongly upon the spirits of such as are but weakly and faintly enlightened, and are not furnished with Gospel enough to answer the indictments, the convictions, the terrors, the curses which the Law brings; therefore all the power of Christ and the Gospel, is to be applied to raise up such souls from under the power of those stones and burdens which the Law would roll upon them; such are to have more Gospel than ordinary applied, because they have so much Law naturally within them; such are to be shown the refuge from that storm, viz., that they are not now under the Law, but under Grace; and the Law hath no more dominion over them, and they are dead unto that Husband, and they are now upon a new foundation, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; and we should say to such, "let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Jesus Christ."

VII. The working of the Spirit of Christ in a soul though not so clearly enlightened.

I observe, that in a soul though legally enlightened, or receiving Christ, yet there are certain Gospel workings, whereby it will appear that Jesus Christ is there.

1. There is a closing or fastening, or clasping about the name of Christ in the Promises of the Gospel, especially some of the freest and fullest of Grace; for they can only find some

freedom of going out towards Christ, in such, as some who delight most in men of easiest and hearty behavior, and can sooner make a friend of them than any other; and if there be but any promises with the least condition of repentance, &c., they dare not meddle with such, suspecting themselves not enough prepared for them, and suspecting the promises, like strangers of too narrow a behavior for them to be familiar with; like some modest homely maid that is unwilling to go abroad into company of greater quality than herself, lest she should not be well thought on, or kindly received, being too mean or ill-bred for their society; and so are the souls of such who keep at a distance from the conditional promises.

2. There is in such, some breathings of soul to God, some flowings out of spirit, some meltings of heart in prayer and dispositions, like a birth newly quickened, wherein are many motions of life, so where Christ is newly formed; like a lock in tune, where there is in every wheel and every ward turnings and movements. "My beloved, {saith the spouse,} put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh upon the handle of the lock."

3. There is in such, a secret working against sin and lust, or corruption; the Spirit that is come in, is a pure, a clean, an holy Spirit; and all the motions and operations of it, are to make the soul and body clean and spiritual; as they that are of a neat and fine disposition, they will not live in a room upswept and ungarnished. "So, I have put off my coat, {saith the spouse;} and how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" And "he that hath this hope, {saith the Apostle,} purifieth himself, even as he is pure;" and having received such

promises, there will be a cleansing themselves from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit; for what communion hath light with darkness?

4. There are in such souls some acts of Communion with God in his several Ordinances, and by the Spirit of Christ; such will find a power and efficacy, a relish and sweetness, a stirring and awakening in the Word preached; in prayer, in spiritual conference, in every Ordinance, which others that are yet merely carnal do not experience; though it fares often with such, as with Samuel when he was young, the Lord called him, but he thought it had been Eli that had spoken; he was not acquainted with the voice and speakings of the Spirit of God; and so the souls of such know not the Word, know not the Spirit in their souls many times; the voice of Christ is not heard for the voice of Moses; nor the voice of Grace for the voice of the Law; and they know not when the Lord breathes or comes, as Elijah, "whether in the wind or in the fire;" whereas he is in the still small voice of the Gospel. There are many things which hinder such in their discerning and perceiving of the Spirit of Christ; not only things without, as the Law, &c., but something working within, the passions and legality of their own spirits which trouble both their spiritual hearing and seeing; and that makes many souls walk so little in the Spirit, and be at such a loss in their Communion with God; and all this is for want of bringing the soul more out into the glory of the Gospel, being called the Ministration which exceeds in glory, till with open face they behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord; {II Cor.3:18;} which glory would exceedingly force away the darkness, the clouds of ignorance, fears and doubts from the soul, which like smoke arises from the fire and kindling of the Law in weak believers. We know how green wood with any fire in it will set all the room on a smoke; so believers, whose spiritual

principles are but green, having sparks of the Law, and the curse for sin kindling in them, will have more smoke than light; therefore they are called smoking flax. "I will not quench the smoking flax." "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth." {Is.42:3}

CHAPTER III.

Of the parties falling into the same sins in some measure, which they had lived in, in their unregenerate estate, from whence all their late bondage proceeded.

Question: I pray, relate to me how long you continued in your backsliding state, till the Lord let you see it, to the terror of your soul, as you thought?

Answer: No long time; for I saw it shortly after; then I had great terrors, almost in a despairing way, and then I questioned all my assurances and evidences of God's love and promises I had received. Then I went to my friend the preacher, full of terror, who desired to know the cause, and I told him. Then he asked me how it came to be so with me? I told him, through violence of temptation and natural corruption. He told me that the sin was not mine, only so far as I consented; but that could not satisfy me. He asked me, if God were not able to forgive it; and I told him, I questioned not God's ability, but his will. I desired some particular instances of him, of any falling into the same sin again. I knew the saints of God had fallen into divers great sins, but not into the same; he then alleged to me that of the prophet respecting backsliding Israel; but because he could not clear to me that it was the same sin, I was not comforted by it. Many and divers promises, both he and all the rest applied unto me; I was sometimes refreshed, yet but for

a while. They chide me oftentimes, and said, I looked for such a measure of grace, which I did not, but the truth of grace in me; and indeed they never told me of any promises, but what had certain qualifications in them, which made me question all.

Question: It seems then this was your case, you could not persuade yourself of the truth of your light, because of your returning to sin; nor find such conditions in yourself, upon which you could rightly, as you thought, apply the promises. I pray, let me know some particular temptations you have had, if you think good?

Answer: I was tempted to make away myself, lest the longer I lived, the more I should dishonor Religion. Satan came again, tempting me to eat something with pins in it, to choke myself, that it might not appear how I died; which I did, but, in mercy, I found no harm; the Lord prevented it, I know not how. Many times I have been tempted by divers means to destroy myself, but was still prevented by several providences. I have been much tempted to keep alone, at which times, the temptations I had, came in always most violently, and furiously; I could scarce hold, I was almost beside myself. The Lord once, when I thought to have stabbed myself, sent in a wicked fellow, who brought a book and read, by which I was mercifully prevented. I found still in all my temptations that I was prevented by some providence, and upheld; and if in the temptation, I could but get to consider once, then it ended; and in this course I have lived and continued mostly.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FORMER DISCOURSE

I. The danger of placing assurance principally in mortification of sin.

I observe, that Satan doth tempt our natural corruption exceedingly, to the same sins which have reigned in us in the times of our unregenerate condition; for by that, he may the more easily draw us to unbelief and persuade us against the love of God in Christ, and to question our calling, because we are naturally apt to take measure of our graces and God's love to us by the mortification of sin in us, and our dying to former lusts; and if we find it otherwise than we would wish, we presently let go our hold upon the promises, and slacken our believing, and persuade ourselves that because it is thus and thus with us, and corruption quickening again, that we are deceived in ourselves, and that the Spirit was never in us, because we find some goings back, and fallings again into the same way we did at first. I confess, as to natural things, the outward workings and effects do give the best assurance concerning the truth of their essence or being; but that is not the way to get spiritual assurances; they are more by way of word and promise, as work and operation. "Abraham believed in hope against hope." {Rom.4:18}

II. The danger of drawing most of our comforts from a change in the outward man.

I observe, that the soul naturally examines its spiritual state or condition by calling to mind former ways and times of uncleanness, and by comparing times and seasons, the latter with the former; and the assurances and comforts of many, are raised upon this very foundation of comparisons; therefore if Satan can force them,

or entice them into any part of their former conversation, he knows that he can exceedingly puzzle and perplex them, and keep them long under bondage. I know the Apostle sets forth the state of the church at Corinth, &c., by comparing times; "such were some of you, but ye are washed, &c.," but this is not by way of putting true believers upon a method for assurance; but in describing and comparing the outward state of the Church with what they were before. And hence it is, that relapsing and falling again into the same sins, do bring such anguish and terror upon such souls, even almost to confusion of face; nay, many souls by this one snare go desperately forward to sin upon a new score or tally; as if it were in vain for them to persuade themselves of Christ or the love of God, but rather to sin it out in this life, not considering that the Blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin, I Jn.1:7, and that when "we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" I Jn.2:1, but go upon an empty and half despairing belief of salvation, like some bankrupts, that having once broken, run desperately more and more into debt; and finding themselves unable to discharge some, they take no care for any; as they who said, "it is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?" {Mal.3:14}

III. The spiritual condition in this life consists more in being justified from sin, than cleansed from sin.

I observe likewise, that a soul which is once brought into these entanglements of backsliding, especially such as have no clear Gospel light nor understanding to undeceive or unwind themselves, fall under very sad temptations at

length; for whither may not Satan roll such a poor soul, that is tumbling down the hill already? And they that weigh their state of grace only in the scale of mortification of sin, as it is commonly taken for dying to particular acts, cannot be so infallibly or certainly persuaded, as they that place their assurance most in the blood and righteousness of Christ, in the free promises; because sin hath ever a stronger side in us than the spirit; and in this life, the sin is more taken away than the lust, and our blessedness consists more in having the curse of it removed, though the corruption remains; and our justification is more glorious than our sanctification, {thus, we glory more in our justification than in our sanctification,} and our forgiveness from sin, more than our cleansing from sin. For the justified shall live by Faith, which is not a life of sense and sanctification merely, but a life by believing for life in another, even in Christ; and therefore our life is said to be hid with Christ, and Christ is called our life; "when Christ who is our life," &c., {Col.3:3,} I speak now to believers who are weak and wounded for sin, not to the carnal and un-regenerated, who live in sin.

IV. The greatest temptations upon sinning in an enlightened condition.

I observe next that the temptations of self-murdering and self-destroying, are much from an inward perplexity and restlessness of soul for sin, in an enlightened condition; so that "a wounded spirit who can bear it?" And that a yielding up the soul to the least violence of temptation is very dangerous; and that the fury of temptations is best allayed by prayer and the word of God; so gaining time upon the temptation, and not closing with it. These are the fiery darts the Apostle speaks of; darts, because they come as shot into the soul; and fiery, as enflaming the

spirit; whereas the Spirit of God is a pure, peaceable, and easy to be entreated Spirit, and his workings more gracious; temptations being so quick, violent and raging, are best resisted in Christ's own way and manner; he did not submit, or stand hearkening and parleying, but applied the word presently in his own power against them; it is written, thus and thus. And in the Apostle's way, "resist the devil, and he will flee from you;" neither give place to the devil. And amongst all the spiritual Artillery, the shield of Faith is the strongest; and we may sooner believe Satan from us, and believe unto victory, and conquering through Christ, in whom we are more than conquerors, as the Apostle saith, not by reasoning or arguing; for then we fight against a temptation in our own power; but, by believing in Christ's power.

V. That backsliding or relapsing is much mistaken, and mortification of sin; of the more mystical mortification believers have.

I observe that this one mistake in some preachers and people, hath deceived many; that a soul converted doth scarce fall back into the same sin; and that such a fall or relapse is a ground for us to question all.

Now we must know, that the spring and fountain from whence that sin flowed, which was a powerful sin in the unregenerate state, as lust, or the law in the members, or the body of sin, or the flesh; there are all these, and more names for sinful nature. Now the converting a soul to Christ, doth not dry up this fountain of sinful nature, nor take it quite away; but there is still a power in the flesh to lust against the spirit; so that it is both possible and easy for the same particular sin or act of corruption to break out and appear upon the juncture of the same temptation, God's taking off for a time his power

of restraint and spirit. We know corruption may gather strength in the regenerate ones, and so the fountain may bubble at the same place after conversion as before.

Conversion takes not away corruption from the nature of man, but engrafts or plants in a new nature of spirit into the nature of man, which weakens, impairs and works against the power of the flesh. The inward growing of the new man causeth a perishing of the old or outward man; and we being now regenerated in the second Adam, who is the quickening Spirit, our old man, or Adam the first, with his former lusts is put off daily; yet not so put off but we may be much confused and deceived in our account of it, as many are; for there is great deceitfulness in mortification of sin, as is too commonly received. The not actings of sin, or conceivings of lust, is not pure mortification; because there may be lust or sinful nature; and yet that lust through the power of some Law, Covenant, Promise, or Legal watchfulness, as is usual with some under Legal conversion, may be so kept under, that it breaks not out, and yet it is there; as in the paring of the nails, or cutting off the hair, or pruning of the tree, there is a cutting off, but not a cutting out, nor an eradicating or rooting up of such a nature; and so, look ye, as there may be a breaking out, a springing again; and so in corruption or sinful nature. Thus I conceive it is rather tradition than truth, that converted persons can scarce relapse into the same particular sin; yet we have been told of a strange power which contrition or repentance brings with it to the melting away the former sin quite, or at least, to lay in such a spiritual restraint upon the soul, that it shall scarce ever commit the particular sin of its unregenerate state again. For my part, I like the notion well, if it did not cast a snare upon souls that are weak and of a backsliding nature.

As for example, if one ride through a stony way where he hath often fallen, his falls may make him ride more watchfully, and carefully; but they cannot secure him against falling again.

But surely, mortification of sin is not purely understood; for it is not the restraint or legal watchfulness over a particular sin, in which many a Papist, as well as legal Professor, abound, as it were a preserving the soul by a carnally spiritual carefulness from sin, as a keeper that hath a Lion on a chain, who is only tame, because he cannot break out; nor is it only a spiritual change or transforming power which the Holy Spirit brings with it into our nature, but it is a more spiritual thing; yet it is an implanting or embodying with Christ in the fellowship of his sufferings, passion, death, and resurrection; and it is a dying to the dominion of sin more than to the nature of sin, even to the sting, and strength of sin, which is the Law, as the Apostle saith; for if the not acting such or such a sin, or the spiritually carnal change, as the sanctification of this life is, there being no pure indwelling inherent righteousness in any. If this were pure mortification, then not only your Popish anchorites or hermits would excel, who live in their cells or in the wilderness, keeping their corruptions, as Jailors keep their prisoners in irons and grates, that they break not out and wander abroad, as other men's corruptions that have more liberty do; and yet they are as bad as the rest, like those in a prison, who are as very thieves in the dungeon, as they that are robbing on the high-way.

But further, there would be something of our sanctification, which we might call our righteousness; and so in time be as confident, as they that will not lose the merit of their own works.

I speak thus, you see, to further and advance a Gospel-mortification, or a dying to sin in the power and life of Christ, for it lays in that as well as the spiritual nature, or new man; but I would not have the power of mortification and conversion from sin, mistaken, as consisting in the not acting such or such a particular sin which was acted before, or merely in the particolored change or inchoative sanctification only; for we know what an overvaluing of that hath brought, because such a mortification is too low and legal for true believers; but in that implantation and mystical engrafting the soul into the glorious fellowship of Christ in his death, &c. As for instance, we put not a man's living and excellency of reason in an outward motion of the body, or some one or two reasonable words spoken, but in the life, and soul, and glorious spirit within him. We put not the glory of the light in the windows or panes of glass where it shines, and perhaps clearly too, but in the body of the sun, the fountain of light below. So pure and spiritual mortification consists radically or principally in our fellowship and union with him who killed sin in our nature in the body; and thus we are spiritually and mystically dead to sin, and that corruption which is within us, will not be able to live long under the power of such a spiritual death and nature as Christ's is, but will waste and die daily, though still pure mortification consists not principally in the not indwelling of corruption, but in our implantation into fellowship with Christ; for if such dying of corruption were true mortification, then they that are dead in the graves, and can sin no more actually, or they that are on their sick bed, and disabled to former sins, were mortified persons.

No, it is an higher mystery to be mortified to sin, than to not sin, or not act corruption, to be spiritually changed by the Spirit, or spiritual nature within; nor dare any interpret the matter,

as if they that were thus spiritually mortified, need not strive against sin, or the strength, or the growing of it in the flesh or nature. No, that were a contradiction, and is an impossibility; for the cherishing corruption, and stimulating or nourishing sinful nature, will no more stand or agree with such a spiritually, mystically, mortified believer, than liberty to sin will stand or agree with assurance of pardon for sin in the same child of God. Show me any taken into the fellowship of Christ's death, that can make such provision for sin; I speak not of some particular acts only, and that is the reason we read in Scriptures of so little conversation in sin, or continuing in sin, in the saints and believers of old.

Nor do the Scriptures ascribe the image of Satan to justified men, though they may indeed fall into particular sins, calling them wicked men, though the things they might happen to fall into were so; as in David's uncleanness, Job's passion, or Moses for his unbelief, or Peter for his curses and denial and Jonah's rebellion, &c. No, but the image of Satan is ascribed to, and stamped on the children of the flesh, that are unregenerate, and under the curse, as in Cain, Esau, Jeroboam, Ahab, Judas, &c. Such are wicked men in the account of Holy Scripture, who are unregenerate and wicked by nature, not from any particular action. As a tree is not evil, because it may bear an evil fruit, but because it is naturally an uncultivated evil tree.

*The sum of the mystery of mortification
of sin in a believer.*

In a word, to gather up this mystery of mortification of sin into a few plain words, that it may be more clear, both to the comforting weak believers that are wounded for sin; and to help all believers more powerfully against sin, in the mortifying of it.

1. First let this be considered, that mortification of sin consists not in the negative or not committing sin; for then children and civil moral men would be reckoned as mortified persons.

2. That the fountain of sin, or sinful nature, is not wholly taken away by the spiritual nature begun in regeneration or the new birth.

3. That pure mortification of sin consists not in the negative, or mere absence of the body of sin; for then, dead or sick men would be reckoned as mortified persons.

4. That the pure spiritual and mystical fountain for the mortification of sin, is the "being planted together in the likeness of Christ's death," our old man being crucified with him. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." {Rom.6:6} Our union with Christ, our head, our righteousness, our Vine.

Now from these things thus considered, we may draw this inference concerning the mortification of sin.

That they who are mystically and spiritually planted into Christ, are partakers of the power of his death, which that is the highest, purest, and most mystical mortification that any have; and with this there goes a spiritual power, transforming and changing the whole man from former lusts; and this latter is called a putting on of the new man, and a being renewed in spirit and in mind, and a putting off the old man which is corrupt. {Eph.4:22,23, Col.3:10}

Now that power whereby sin is perfectly mortified, is our union with Christ, our being planted in the fellowship of his death, &c., though imperfectly, or in part, mortified in ourselves, for beside that transformed, or spiritual nature, there is a body of sin in a believer, more or less, till he lay down this body, and takes it up a more

glorious one. So that a believer is to consider himself completely dead to sin only in the fellowship of Christ's death mystically, and to consider himself only dying to sin in his own nature spiritually; so that in Christ alone he is complete, and in himself imperfect at the best. "We are complete in him," saith the Apostle, Col.2:10, yet there is such a power and efficacy, and mighty working in this mystical union and fellowship with Christ, that he shall find sin dying in him by this, the Spirit working most in the virtue of this; this being like the spice, or the spirit in the wine, that makes it powerful and quick; therefore we are said to be risen with Christ and to die with Christ, and our life to be hid in Christ, Col.3:1-3, Christ being the life, power, virtue, and energy of the spirit; and the more of Christ we take against sin, the greater and surer will our victory against corruption and sin be; and this would be well observed by those that are a little legally biased, or led to mortify sin by vows, promises, shunning occasions, removing temptations, strictness and severity in duties; forgetting that the fear of hell and judgment never rise so high for mortification as Christ.

Now these in themselves are but empty, weak means of prevailing against sin; like the mighty sails of a ship without either wind or tide; many of those do well in their place and order, like oars in a boat, which though it be carried with the tide, if well managed, they may help it to go the faster; such as shunning occasions, strictness and severity in duties, and watchfulness. But Christ crucified is the power of God to all, and in all that believe; it is Christ lifted up as Moses lifted up the Serpent, which strikes more soundness into the wounded beholder, than any other merely legal way or experiment, wherein many believers have toiled, and carnally fished, all their time for power over

some corruptions; who, like Peter and the rest, have caught little or nothing, because Jesus Christ was not in the company.

There is danger in putting too much weight on the sin, or heinousness of relapsing, or back-sliding in believers.

To conclude, I would have men take heed how they make conversion consist in a mortification to that particular sin or act which was the sin of an unregenerate condition, lest, while they lay down a law to prevent a sinning again, or a second wounding by the same sin, they make that sin, if committed again, {as it may be,} wound the believer more, even to the danger of unbelief; than which there can be nothing greater to hinder true mortification; because that any unbelief keeps the soul and Christ as it were asunder, and from closing in the soul's own apprehension; and all that time, there can be little power brought home from Christ by Faith against that sin. My reasons are these.

1. Because that sinful nature is not wholly healed in this life; so there remains a natural inclination to that particular sin, as well as another; nay, rather because nature is more biased towards it than any other.

2. The wound, pricking, or sorrow that any soul enlightened by Jesus Christ feels for that sin, is not of such an exceeding, or rather infinite virtue, as to abolish it, or to lay in such a perpetual impression upon the soul, that the soul should live under the image of that remorse and wound, and so never dare, or adventure, to commit it again. I find no such lasting, and continuing, and firm, or thorough work in the spiritual motions, operations and impressions, but by degrees. Christ upbraided his disciples how soon their "hearts were hardened;" and we

find the spiritual affection and resolution of Peter, wherein his soul was raised up on high, wasting and flatting into a denial. The gales and breathings of the Spirit are like the wind, Jn.3:8, which makes a thing move or tremble while the power of the air is upon it; but as that slackens or breathes, so doth it.

3. There is no promise that I can find for the present, against the never committing again such a particular act or sin which one lived in, in his unregenerate state. I know there are differences made, and certain marks set down to know a sin, by that is committed in a regenerate state, and before, as the weakness, and contrary dispositions or reluctancy, in which it is committed, as Paul implies in Romans, chapter 7, &c., though herein, some of these divines may be puzzled in their way of discrimination too; for take a man in the strength of natural or common light, living under the word of a powerful Preacher, by which his candle, as Solomon saith, is better lighted than it was, such a man shall sin against as seeming strong convictions as the other, if not more.

But by the way, I humbly conceive there are certain dampings of Satan, and flesh, and blood, together with the withdrawals of the Spirit on God's part, that will puzzle the best that goes so exactly by marks and sense more than by Faith; for the way of the Spirit is not so gross, and carnal, and discernible, as the Divinity of former times, and of some of this present age, would make it. It is as hard to trace and find the impressions of the Spirit, as the way of a bird, as Solomon says, in the air. The Spirit that is of God, knows only the way of the Spirit, and the Apostle speaks "many things too," as he says, "because of the infirmity of our flesh;" we must not therefore form up the things of the Spirit too much for the feelings of flesh and blood; and they that write so of a regenerate man's estate,

and set us down such infallible signs as we meet with commonly, do take their experiences too low and carnally, mistaking the allegory and way of the Word or Scriptures, which speaks of things because of the infirmity of our flesh, such would write of spiritual workings, as Philosophers upon moral virtues, and do bring down the Spirit into the very allegory, and so allegorize and incarnate, or make fleshly the things of the Spirit; and so do many both preach and write of regeneration as a work of nature, though not a natural work.

4. The restraints of the Spirit, or that Law of Jesus Christ in the soul, is not circumscribed to the soul, concerning particular acts or sins, but only concerning the power of sinful nature in general, to the weakening and destroying of that; neither are the particular Laws or Commandments in the Gospel always in their power upon the soul; but when the Spirit of Christ doth take them, and apply them, and quicken them unto the soul, and put a spiritual majesty upon them.

The Conclusion, concerning mystical and spiritual mortification.

To conclude, the experiences of the Spirit in those that are spiritual, are not all in one degree, some more, some less; and the Law of the Spirit, in those that are spiritual, will carry them against the law of sin and flesh; because it is both contrary to the flesh, and likewise of a spiritual and transforming nature; and so gathers strength in us against the body of sin, and is still working itself a greater part, and dominion in us, and fashioning us like unto Jesus Christ, both in righteousness and true holiness; and the people of the Lord are very rarely found in the great sins of their unregenerate estate, especially if they were gross ones, such as the light of their natural

conscience abhors, as well as the purer light of the Spirit, as adultery, murder, blasphemy, theft, &c., they being doubly armed against them, and so may more rarely commit them; but if they be such particular acts or sins as are not so clearly condemned by nature, as some kind of concupiscence, inordinate affections, wrath, hypocrisy, passion, lying, &c., they may the more easily be committed again, because the light of nature is but faint or little that opposes them, or takes part with the light of the Spirit against them.

These things may be sufficient to let us see into the nature of backsliding in the regenerate ones, and to bind up the broken hearted that are fallen, as well as to show a more excellent way to keep from falling, in the strength of Jesus Christ. And therefore let this be written upon the heart, and on the palms of the hands of all, both wounded and whole believers. That being planted into Christ, and the fellowship of his death, completely mortifies us to sin; yet we are but dying to sin in the spiritual mortification of our sinful nature in this life; and therefore let not any that have stumbled into particular acts of sin despair, considering they are perfectly dead or mortified in Christ; nor let such a complete and glorious way of mortification tempt any to a neglect of mortification of sin in the body, no more than the Free Grace of God in forgiveness of sins, ought to tempt any to take liberty to sin.

*Some Scriptures concerning
falling away, interpreted.*

But for all this, there are certain Scriptures which have the sound of much terror in them against backsliders, as in Heb.6:4,5, "for it is impossible for those that were once enlightened, &c., and in II Pet.2:20,21, "for it had been better for them

not to have known the way;" and some others of this sort.

Now, these places are much misinterpreted; for these concern not true believers, but such as fall from a common enlightening, as in Heb.6:8, II Pet.2:22, and form of a profession, not having the power of God and the Spirit in it; but so far as to bring them into the number of believers, or church of visible Saints, of which sort John speaks thus, "they went out from us, because they were not of us;" yet the Apostles write this to the Churches, because they should know that a form of profession merely, cannot secure any, unless there be the power; and these cautions, which do more immediately and directly belong to apostates, and false professors, yet also have their usefulness upon true believers and saints to produce quickening, heart-searching, watchfulness, and close walking with God, and of praise, that they whom the Lord preserves from such apostasy may be more awakened to glorify his Free Grace upon themselves that stand, as appears in Heb.6.9-18, in which places the Apostle raises up their thoughts into the immutability of the Covenant in which they now stand, and that they cannot fall away, God having assured it by an Oath.

Yet if any shall object further, that these places show how fair a profession one may make, and how far one may go in the way of Christ, and then fall off; and here the soul may doubt, and say, "but, Oh! Am not I one of this kind, because I am fallen back?" But I answer that no soul can make any such application in a true Gospel-sense, unless it fall or apostate from the Faith of Christ, which is here spoken of and meant, and not of particular infirmities or failings committed. But against the power of these, and all other places which Satan would interpret, to the wounding of a spirit; we must know the only

remedy is believing, as Abraham did, in hope against hope; and that soul can never fall away that believes; and no sin can damn it, if it by faith receives the pardon of that sin, which every believer receives in Christ. "And this is his commandment that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ," I Jn.3:23, not merely by parts, but considering himself wholly a justified and righteous person in Christ, and justified when Christ rose for our justification. For the consideration of the pardon of sin in this sense that our divines have commonly taught and preached it, not minding the spiritual analogy of the word, concerning the righteousness of a believer, breeds all this distraction; for some deal out Christ's blood as the pope of Rome deals his pardons, for one sin after another, never wholly stating a believer in the righteousness of Christ, and so in a fully pardoned condition. {Eph.5:27} "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." {Rev.1:5}

CHAPTER IV.

The Party, after such openings of the frame of their spirit, is now discoursed with upon certain particular Questions.

Question: Let me know now in order, what your doubts are, which you think, if you were satisfied in, your soul could be at peace.

Answer: I question whether I am in Christ.

Question: What grounds have you to question your being in Christ?

Answer: 1. My falling back into sin. 2. I do not find that change in the whole man. 3. I cannot believe.

Doubt 1.

This is then your first doubt; that you are not therefore beloved of God or in Christ, because you fell back again into sin, so as you did. Suppose that I prove to you that though transgression will bring the rod on God's children, yet no transgression or sin of theirs can alter his everlasting love in Christ, so as to make them, in that sense, less the beloved of God or less in Christ Jesus. Answer: Then I may conclude, that, though I have transgressed, and have fallen into sin, yet that cannot alter or hinder the everlasting love of God to my soul, which, like himself, is unchangeable, and still abides sure.

I shall prove that no relapse, transgression or sin of his children, whom the LORD once loves in Christ Jesus, can make them unbeloved, or less beloved in Christ Jesus. 1. The mercies of God are called sure mercies, his love an everlasting love, his Covenant an everlasting Covenant, "I am persuaded, saith Paul, that neither death nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, &c., shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." So then, to whom he is once merciful he is ever merciful; whom he once loves he ever loves; whom he once takes into Covenant, he is ever theirs. "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." {Mal.3:6} 2. Whom the Father loves, he loves in the Son, in whom he is well pleased; and his Son is always alike beloved of him; "the same yesterday and today, and forever;" and whom he loves in his Son, he accounts as his Son; for Christ is made unto us righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; so as we being not beloved for our own sakes, but for the sake of Christ alone, nothing in us can make God love us less or more, because he loves us not for ourselves, nor any thing in our selves, but in and

through his Son in whom he is well pleased. 3. If God should love us less or more, as we, according to our own apprehensions, are less or more holy, then he should be as man, and as the son of man; and if believers stood upon these terms with God, then how are these Scriptures true? "He rose again for our justification;" "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" "Who shall condemn?" "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." "The Foundation of God standeth sure." "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." So God is ever the same that loves, and his love is as himself, ever the same; and Christ in whom we are beloved, ever the same.

Doubt 2.

Your other doubt is this; that you find not a change in the whole man. What mean you by this change, in your own sense? Answer: I mean not a perfect change, but a newness in all the powers and parts of soul and body, which I suppose to be sanctification. Question: The end which you propose to yourself in finding out this change of the whole man, is it for grounding an assurance of God's love, and your interest in Christ on? Answer: Yea, because they that are in Christ are so changed, and there is such a work wrought; all things are become new, and old things are passed away. Now this is what I find not. Question: The scope of your doubt then is, that because you are not satisfied with your sanctification, you think you are not justified.

I shall allow you your sanctification so far as the Scriptures do, as a lower motive, and more carnally mixed and uncertain way of persuasion and assurance of justification. But to observe to you two parties, sadly mistaking one another in points of this nature. The one cries out against the other, as if they held we were

justified partly from our being sanctified, or from our works; the other, on the contrary, cries out, that some would cast out all sanctification; but no such opinions are in either of them, justly I mean, in such as can spiritually judge. But there are some expressions on both parts, which would make the one pass for legal teachers, and the other for Antinomians; the one giving too much in their sermons and books to faith and works, in an unwarrantable jealousy, lest holiness should be slighted; some other less than is fit, lest Free Grace should lose her due; and both in an unwarrantable jealousy. And indeed, the latter I must prefer before the former; for, if I must err, I had rather cry down men to exalt Christ, than Christ to exalt men, though I would do neither; but let both have their place and order.

In this point I hope in the Lord, to keep from dashing against the Scriptures either way; the Spirit of the Lord lighting my candle.

The Doubt.

Because I am not satisfied with my sanctification, I fear I am not justified. The Doubt being thus, I shall lay down these particulars.

1. If you suppose that God takes in any part of your faith, repentance, or new obedience, or sanctification as a ground upon which he justifies or forgives you, you are clear against the Word, "for if it be of works, it is no more of grace, otherwise work is no more work." 2. It must then be only the evidence of your being justified that you seek for in your sanctification. And these two things premised, I now proceed.

1. We must allow any to take in anything of your sanctification to help your assurance, which the word allows you to take, such as the Spirit, and the fruits of it, repentance, mortification of sin, new obedience, &c., but then it must be done in the Scripture's own cautions

way. 2. The Scriptures lay down these following things.

1. Christ's sanctification, or his true holiness, to be ours. 2. Faith about our own sanctification.

1. As first, Christ is revealed to be our sanctification; "of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "And ye are Christ's." "But ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus." "He hath quickened us together with Christ." "We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works." "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." "Christ may dwell in your hearts by Faith." "That new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." "And be found in him, not having my own righteousness." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "That we present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." "But Christ is all and in all." "Your life is hid with Christ in God." All these Scriptures set forth Christ, the sanctification and the fullness of his elect, "the all in all." "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever." {Heb.13:20,21} Christ hath believed perfectly, he hath repented perfectly, he hath sorrowed for sin perfectly, he hath obeyed perfectly, he hath mortified sin perfectly, and all is ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. {I Cor.3:21,22}

2. The second thing is faith about our own sanctification. We must believe more truth in

regards to our own graces than we can see or feel, which the Lord hath in his infinite wisdom and dispensation so ordered, that here our life "should be hid with Christ in God," and that we should walk by faith and not by sight; though we may suspect our own, yet we are to believe our repentance true in him who hath repented for us; our mortifying of sin in ourselves doubtful, but true in him, "through whom we are more than conquerors;" our new obedience true in him, who hath obeyed for us, and is "the end of the Law to everyone that believes;" our change of the whole man, though partial in us, yet true in him, who is righteousness and true holiness. And thus "without Faith it is impossible to please God."

This is the Scripture assurance for a child of God, or believer, to see everything in himself as nothing, and himself everything in Christ. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things unseen." {Heb.11:1}

All other assurances are rotten conclusions; {oft, erroneously deducted from Scripture itself,} and such things as legal Teachers have invented, not understanding the mystery of the Kingdom of Christ. The Scriptures bid you see nothing in yourself, or all as nothing. These legalists bid you see something in yourself; so as the leaving out Christ in sanctification, is the foundation of all doubts, fears, and distractions; and he that looks on his repentance, on sincerity, his love, his humility, on his obedience, and not in the tincture of the Blood of Christ alone, must needs believe weakly and uncomfortably. But now, to propose some questions to you.

Question: You say that you feel not the change of the whole man. Answer: Yes.

Question: Then, I must prove your sanctification to you, not your justification. Answer: Yes; for they that are justified, are sanctified too, which I cannot find in myself?

Question: Will you say a

thing is not there, because you perceive it not there? Answer: But I do not know it to be there. Question: But will you conclude it is not there, because you know it not to be there? Answer: Nay.

You say well, for David cried out in the bitterness of his soul, that his "sin was ever before him," and then his sanctification was out of his sight, and that God had forgotten to be gracious; "but, says he, I said this is my infirmity." You know in a house when it is dark, all things may be there that were there before; but you see them not till the candle be brought in; so the woman's piece of silver, according to the Parable, was in the house, but she found it not till she had lighted her candle. Therefore you must say as David, "light my candle Oh Lord;" for the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. "For thou wilt light my candle; the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness." {Ps.18:28}

But I feel corruptions violent, which they would not be if it were truly mortified. Answer: Quite the reverse; for it is from life in you, and spirit in you, that you feel corruption; for if you were dead in sins and trespasses, you could feel nothing more than a dead man; these grievous oppositions in you show a twofold law within you, a law in your members, warring against the law of your mind; two natures in you of flesh and spirit; the flesh lusteth against the spirit; nor is the light of a mere natural conscience, or a soul commonly enlightened such a strange opposer and complainer against the law of sin in the flesh, as you seem to be; besides, John saith, "if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves." But I dare not carry you on too far by signs of this nature without Christ, who is a believer's sanctification as well as righteousness. But to stop the issue of the soul in these questions and scruples with another inquiry.

Question: Can you have any assurance that the change that is in any child of God, in this life, or their sanctification, is such in any particular act or work, as that there is no spot of sin in it? Is it not a mixture of flesh & spirit? Why then do you feel after it in the way that you do? Since the best and most thoroughest sanctification in any, is not pure enough for the eyes of the Lord; why make you it then any bottom for assurance? You see all the while you have so done, you, like Noah's Dove, can find no rest for the soul of your foot; for saith Christ, "when you have done all you can, you are but unprofitable servants;" and all our righteousness is but as filthy rags; and while you gaze on your work of sanctification, you find a rottenness in every part of it, and are ready to call all into question, and find fault with your repentance, mortification, new obedience, and all; therefore you must take Christ in here, for your complete sanctification still, to settle and establish your spirit.

Question: But what use is there then of my sanctification? Are not the fruits and effects of the Spirit in me, such as follow immediately upon my being justified?

Answer: Yea, they are the natural flowings and workings of your faith, they help to evidence your faith, and comfort your faith, in their kind and degree; but, as I said before, they are given to be a light in some measure to your own, and others consciences; "let your light so shine before men;" and glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirits. Show me thy faith by thy works; they are the ornaments of the spouse of Christ, they are the beams of Christ, the Son of righteousness.

Now, clouds may hinder the beams from enlightening a room, but the sun is still where he was; the tree, you know, is there where it was, though the apples or grapes may be blown down;

so the glory of sanctification may be often darkened, and the fruits of it blown down by the wind of temptation, spoken on in the Parable; but such promises as the following are laid in for such a season. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." {Isa.50:10} "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." {Jn.8:12} "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry;" for, "the just shall live by faith." {Hab.2:3,4}

Question: But why do the Apostles insist so much on sanctification, and the new man so, and love, and new obedience, &c., in all their Epistles? Answer: I answered this partly before; that Sanctification is the beginning of the forming of Christ here in this life, in one part of him, which is holiness, which shall be perfected in the life to come, when we shall be fashioned like unto his glorious Body. Sanctification is a witness to the Righteousness of Christ, which being a glory out of sight, to the soul and the world, is made clearer by faith and holiness to both; so as in sanctification, both soul and body, flesh and spirit, join to glorify the riches of Christ. "For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." {I Cor.6:20} "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light." {Eph.5:8} So as the wisdom of the Spirit is seen much in the Scripture, in pressing sanctification, and praising sanctification, both to set forth the nature of the Spirit in believers, and to warn flesh and blood against an empty and formal Profession.

CHAPTER V.

The Parties third Doubt concerning Faith or Believing, which I call the great.

The third Doubt is whether you do believe or no?

The great Gospel-secret concerning Faith or Believing.

First, I shall show you my thoughts concerning the nature of this Doubt. It is one thing to believe, and another thing to know that we believe.

I suppose, instead of questioning, men should set about believing, and they would soon know whether they do believe or not; at the same time they would learn more of the truth and strength of their faith. Righteousness being revealed from faith to faith. My grounds for this observation are these.

1. Christ's command to believe, and "this is his commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ." Now, commands of this nature are to be obeyed, not disputed. Good servants do not reason their duty out first with themselves, but fall to doing as they are commanded.

2. I find not any in the whole course of Christ's preaching, or the Disciples, when he preached to them to believe, asking the question, whether they believed or no, or whether their Faith were true Faith or no? I find one saying, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief;" but not, "Lord whether do I believe or no?" And, "Lord increase my faith;" but not, "Lord, whether is this true faith I have or no?" It would be a strange question in any that were bidden to a Feast, to ask the Master of the Feast whether his dainties

were real or a delusion. Would not such a question disparage the host as a Sorcerer? So in the things of the Spirit, to be jealous of the Truth of them, as many poor tempted souls are, doth not honor the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. Believers are called to taste and see how good the Lord is. Spiritual things are best known by feeding upon them. "Eat Oh friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, Oh beloved."

3. For any to doubt whether they do believe or no, I find to be a question only fit and proportionable for Christ himself to satisfy, who is called the Author and Finisher of our Faith; therefore they would do well to go to him, and ask for satisfaction. None can more properly prove to a soul it believes, than he on whom it believes. Who can more properly show one that he sees, than the light which enlightens him for that very purpose?

4. Faith is truly and simply this; a being persuaded more or less of Christ's love; and therefore it is called, a believing with the heart. Now, what infallible sign is there to persuade any that they are persuaded, when themselves question the truth of their persuasion? There may be some things which may strengthen and help, which I shall hereafter show you from the word, which are by way of effects and properties of this faith and belief; but none can simply persuade a soul that it doth believe, but he on whom it doth believe. "God shall persuade Japheth." {Gen.9:27} Who can more principally, and with clearer satisfaction, persuade the spouse of the good will of him she loves, but himself? Can all the love-tokens, or testimonial rings and bracelets? They may concur and help in the manifestation; but it is the voice of the beloved. "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." {Song 2:10}

5. We believe till we be persuaded that we do believe, because the more we do believe, the more we shall be persuaded to believe; according to that place in the Ephesians, "in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise;" and "he that believeth hath the witness;" though there is more to be said to this last Scripture. The way to be warm is not only to ask for a fire, or whether there be a fire or no, or to hold out the hands towards it, and away, and wish for a greater; but to stand close to that fire, and abide by it till we gather heat.

6. We ought I suppose, no more to question our Faith, which is our first and foundation Grace, than we ought to question Christ, the foundation of our Faith; for, as all Christian Religion is destroyed by unbelief, so all the salvation in that Religion is brought to any soul in particular, by faith; therefore it is said, "they entered not in because of unbelief;" and again, "the word did not profit them, being not mixed with Faith in them that heard it;" and hence is the Apostle's caution, "take heed lest there be in any of you an heart of unbelief, in departing, &c."

7. It is Satan's greatest policy to put a soul upon resolving such a question; for by this he sets the soul to seek for evidence from things which he knows can afford little but questionable assurance, as persuasions most upon marks and signs of our own sanctification, or works, which cannot hold good without Faith itself, to bring down the evidence of Christ upon them; for he puts us clean back, if we observe them, because we are attempting to prove our faith by our works, whereas no works can be proved solidly good but by our faith; for without Faith it is impossible to please God; therefore when we cannot evidence our faith with them, we cannot see God's love on us. We know that every piece of coin or money is valued according to the

image and superscription that it bears; and if the image of Christ be not there, though it be still silver, yet it is not coin, it is not so current; and he that hath it cannot make such use of it, and so assure himself to trade with it, as otherwise he might do. So there is not anything of sanctification current, or of true practical use and comfort to a believer, unless Jesus Christ, and the Image of Christ, which is righteousness, and true holiness, appear by faith. While Satan puzzles us in questioning our faith or believing, he keeps us off from believing, knowing that this is the condemnation. "He that believeth not is condemned already."

We are first brought to faith in Christ, and all other evidence will follow.

Here I cannot but wonder at any that keep broken-hearted souls in acts of preparation and qualification, from the act of believing, as if we could believe too suddenly; and many a one loses some degrees of faith while they are seeking it thus in the evidence of their works; for, while faith is kept off from Christ, and the soul suspended, faith decays, and becomes weaker and weaker; but when, as if it were, exercised upon Christ in the promises, it soon brings a clearer and more un-deceivable evidence with it than can any other way be ministered unto it.

In the Gospel all are immediately called to believe; "today if ye will hear his voice." "Sirs, what must I do to be saved," asked the jailor, and they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "And this is the work, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent," saith Christ; and saith Philip to the Eunuch, "if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So as I shall draw this

conclusion for many that are in the dark in this point, both preachers and people.

None can believe too soon or too steadfastly in Jesus Christ our Righteousness, because righteousness is revealed from faith to faith; and, while we believe not, we live not properly; for the just shall live by faith; and, while we believe not, we may after a sort be said to be under condemnation; "for he that believeth not is condemned." So as we ought not to stay, either for a certain degree of repentance or humiliation, or any other grace; but we ought to believe, that we may receive evidence; "for faith worketh by love," &c., and "add to your faith virtue, saith the Apostle, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness." All these are to be added to faith, or to work from faith; nor are we to stay our believing till we be assured by some signs that we do believe; for we are to believe, that we may know that we do believe; for the witness comes by believing, "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Yet to these I do allow you any examination or trial of your faith, which may consist with believing.

Well, I shall put some Questions to you on these grounds. Question: Is faith always with full assurance? Answer: Nay. Question: Can you conclude you have no faith, because you have no full assurance? Answer: Nay. You say well; for there are degrees of believing; one degree is to believe, another is to be assured you believe. There are described by the Word, in the church of Christ, believers of several ages; some are called little ones, weak ones, babes, children, strong men; some are such as have been sound believers, and are made weak through sin, and temptation, and ignorance of the Covenant of Free Grace, and their Righteousness in Christ,

and the glorious estate of a believer under grace, as a man that is not perfectly healed of some infirmity.

For the nature and properties of true saving Faith, which I told you, are better discerned in the Word and Christ, than in the soul that hath them, because they are not seen in the soul purely, but surrounded with corruption; which, like mud in the water, troubles the sight, and the spiritual discerning; and that makes so many believers, who can spiritually judge, care so little to see themselves in their own righteousness, but in Christ's alone; as Paul said, "not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

To describe the nature and properties of true saving faith is almost the business of the whole New Testament.

1. The nature of faith is this; it is called the ground of things hoped for, and the evidence of things that are unseen.

2. The properties are everywhere described by repentance, and humiliation, and love, and godliness, and purity, and charity, and meekness, and all holy conversation, and prayer, and hearing and obeying the will of God. All these attend true faith; and a believer is one, who, though he hath all these, yet he will not behold them in himself, but in Christ, as Paul did, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Now the great mistake which I find in this, and ages before, is the singling out the properties of a true faith, and sending a believer to gather his assurance from them in himself; which caused the believers of former ages, to walk in bondage, though possessed of the Spirit of adoption; and to make up their assurance much like the believers under the Law, from their obedience, and repentance, and humiliation in

themselves; Christ being much in the dark as to them, and little seen by them. And much of the same darkness covers this age we live in, who are very dark in that mystery of glory which Paul speaks of, in believers, "as sorrowing, and yet always rejoicing, as dying, and yet behold we live, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Question: But I pray, what temptation had you concerning your not believing? Answer: I thought that I was one of those that could not believe, and that I being such a sinner, it would be presumption in me to believe. For your being one of those that could not believe, I shall speak to it in these questions.

1. Is there any exception against you, in particular, in the whole Book of God; as to say, you, such a one, or such a one, cannot believe, as you have no right to Christ?

2. Can the counsel of God, concerning the vessels of wrath be known? Can any say that I am not elected, seeing his wisdom is unsearchable, and his ways past finding out?

3. Are not some called at the eleventh hour of the day; the thief upon the Cross at the hour of his death? Is not this Satan's temptation, then, to persuade you to conclude anything for your condemnation beforehand?

For your other doubt of being such a sinner, and therefore not daring to believe, I shall put these Questions to you.

1. Do not they that would believe, only if their sins were less, or less heinous, believe rather upon some ground in themselves, than upon God's promise in Christ?

2. Do not the promises belong to sinners as sinners?

Answer: Yea; but as repentant and penitent sinners. Question: What were the Churches of the Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians; and what was Paul before Christ

came to him? Were they sinners or qualified? And what were all that believed, before they believed? Answer: They were sinners. Question: Came not the promise to Adam, even then when he was dead in sin? Answer: Yea. Question: Whether were not you in their condition or no, that is, a sinner, according to your own apprehension? Answer: Yea. Question: Are not you then as free for Christ to come to as they were? Answer: Yea. Question: Are not the promises as free and open to you, as to them, all being alike sinners, and God's will being revealed no more for one's election than another's, no more for their election than yours? Answer: Yea. Question: Whether are any promises made to any in Christ, or out of Christ, or to any only in themselves? Is not Christ the only qualified person for all promises; and so through Christ derived to all his, we being said to be complete in him. Doth not all fullness dwell in him, and all receive of his fulness? And are not all the promises in him, Yea and Amen?

These Conclusions then I shall draw forth.

1. Election and Condemnation being secret things, belong to the Lord; and were not revealed in the Word to the end to hinder any from believing; for that were against God's goodness and mercy revealed in Christ; and they that make such use of them, serve not the Lord's ends, but Satan's, for such an end is against the sweet simplicity of the Gospel of Christ.

2. The only ground for any to believe is that the LORD is faithful that hath promised; not anything more or less in themselves. This is the Commandment, "that ye believe on the Son of God."

3. The promises of Christ are held forth to sinners, as sinners, whether as repenting sinners or humble sinners, yet not as requiring any condition in us, upon which we should challenge

Christ; for then it would be no more of grace, but of works. Now we are freely justified by his grace.

4. Whatever promise there is which hath any condition, it is ours in him, that is in Christ, who was the only conditioned and qualified person for all promises, all being in him, Yea and Amen; and all being complete in him who is the fullness.



A SHORT PREFACE.

Having thus far discoursed occasionally upon Temptations, I shall add a few Observations more, for clearing the way of Salvation a little further, and then I shall open the several ways of Revelation, that the Mystery of Godliness hath been received in, and in what seekings, and in what degrees Free Grace hath been inquired for in this present age.

I. God's first revealing himself to man in Goodness and Free Grace.

God hath revealed himself under several notions and names, and orders of working, to man; and in them we are to rest, and not to form up meditations, or make up notions beyond them; for beyond them is infiniteness and glory, and we may sooner be dazzled than discern anything of God, or the workings in himself. If we attempt to be wise above what is revealed; there lie the depths of the wisdom of God, and the unsearchableness of his ways; and who can know the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his Counsellor? {Rom.11:33,34}

God then, that he might make himself known to the sons of men, first reveals himself in

goodness, and makes man according to something in himself; so as there is more image of God in him than in any other thing below, for God said, "let us make man in our image, after our likeness." {Gen.1:26} And herein is the goodness of God; that he gives any being to anything but himself, and any glorious being to man, more than to any other. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." {Psa.8:4,5}

Man being thus created, must know himself to be but man, and a creature; therefore he had a law given him to live by, and to order his obedience to him that made him; but man being made merely by the will of God, is made only to continue by the same will, and not to be unchangeably good; that the creature might consider the glory he had was not his own, but only at the pleasure of him that made him; which will and pleasure was revealed in the law of the tree of life, and executed accordingly upon the disobedience of man to that law. Now man sins and disobeys, and by that is brought to see the power of him that created him, who in the beginning of things revealed himself only in glory, power, and dominion to the world, and in no other form or notion to the creatures he made, but that of Lord, or Creator, or Law-giver.

I find there was infinite wisdom of God appeared in the ordering the fall and disobedience of man; for by this, the creature came to see and acknowledge itself under the power of a law, and in subjection and dependency on him that created it; so as the glory of God was much advantaged by such a change, which if the creature had never experienced, could not have been so evident or fixed. And hence it is, that the angels, or spirits of an higher order, fell too, as well as man; so as

by this, the power of God was made known to the creature, and the creature's subjection or dependency upon God, in itself; this change running through the order of the whole Creation.

The creature being thus brought by itself, under a change of condition, God raises himself advantages and glory from hence to display himself before the creature in his power, will, mercy, love, &c., that the world may know him more, and know that there is yet an infiniteness in him not to be known; and all our knowledge is bounded in those things which he hath made out for himself to be known by.

To the time of sinning, or the first disobedience, the Lord revealed himself only in glory and goodness; his glory was in the creating and commanding; his goodness in giving anything a created being, or subsistence, or for obeying and laying out his image or resemblance upon one creature preference to the rest, and making man to have dominion, under him, yet for him, over the Creation.

But man now falling under the power and curse of a law, God reveals himself in mercy, and in a glorious way of compassion and pity, and seeks out man who was now a sinner, and brings to him the tidings of something in a promise, which, though it might be dark to him who was now in the region and shadow of death, yet God made it something clearer by his dealings and carriage towards him, making coats for him, and clothing him, and taking care for him; and so holding forth something of compassion towards him; yet mingling it so with the curse and change in the creation, and his condition, that he might feel somewhat of the anguish of the curse, as well as the power and comfort of the promise; and how much of Christ Adam knew; that is, how much the first Adam knew of the Second, is not revealed. Surely not much; for this time, and that under the law too, was the time of the hiding

of this Mystery in promises and sacrifices, and the keeping it secret, till that which was called the Fulness of time was come, and Christ was manifest in the flesh. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." {Eph.1:10} "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." {Heb.9:10}

II. God's Free-grace to sinners more discovered.

We find the Scriptures set forth God in a way of Free Grace; and therefore we must so order our apprehensions and conceptions of God, that we may know him in his Free Grace, as well as in his Love, and look on him, and consider him in this order of working. God first and more properly had mercy upon man fallen, when under the curse; and he is called a God showing mercies, and great in mercy, and rich in mercy, and plenteous in mercy, abundant in mercy, and the Father of mercies, and the Lord God merciful and gracious. So sinful man, who, by the power of sin and the curse, was under condemnation {for death entered by sin,} yet, by a Power more infinite than that of sin and the curse, was raised up to be the subject of this mercy, and that only thing about which this Free Grace or mercy was exercised; and thus, light was wrought out of darkness, and good out of evil. And now a work of redemption, more glorious than that of creation, is beginning to the world, and God's work of mercy is exceeding the work of his power, and yet infiniteness in both; for God himself was to become a creature, or "the Son of Man" in this second work, which he was not in the first. And thus we see how this change in the

creature makes room and liberty for the fulness of God to work out to the sons of men, as well in a work of redemption as creation; and saving those that were made, as well as making them; yet this work of redemption was carried at first in a Mystery rather of mercy than love; for there was little but a promise of the "woman's seed" revealed; so as here was rather mercy appearing as yet than love, and a remedy held forth to man for sin, by that time the sin was committed, to show that God was never an enemy, though man was; and so much of God's good will only revealed, as man might rather conceive himself not destroyed than saved, and rather not damned than redeemed; and the prophets sets forth God rather at first in mercy and compassion to us, "no eye pitied thee, to have compassion of thee; when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy blood, I said unto thee Live," Ezek.16:6, and the Apostle calls us vessels of mercy, "that he might make known the riches of his glory on his vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory," Rom.9:23, so in this manner of revealing the infinite work of Salvation, we may be better satisfied than by going out into the glory of God's counsels, where we may lose our selves rather in the fullness of Truth.

Thus God hath drawn out things more to our reason; for how can we think God, who is infinitely pure, whose eyes are purer than to behold iniquity, can love a sinner as a sinner? All love is from something amiable in the thing loved; but what is there in man fallen and corrupted, for God to love or delight in, to make his delight with the sons of men? Where is the comeliness? Therefore God must from mere grace, more properly than love, order some righteousness, or new glory for man; in which, he may beautify, adorn, and love him. And this is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, in which we

are said to be chosen and predestinated to the adoption of sons. Thus God in Free Grace had mercy on us, and gave Christ for us; and in him we are made capable of the love of God, and "accepted in the Beloved," Eph.1:6, and not as some say, that man was elected before Christ, the body before the head, and Christ for man, as shall appear more fully in another place.

III. More of God's Free Grace and Love; of man's sin and redemption discovered.

The Scriptures reveal to us a pure God, a just God, a perfect law, the first man sinning, a law broken, a curse entering, mercy working in a promise of life, a way of salvation faintly discovered, Jesus Christ this way of salvation, Jesus Christ given for sinners, and yet purchasing sinners. All this wrought in time, and yet a predestination and election of grace before all time. God loving us, and giving Christ for us, and yet loving us in the same Christ. These things are thus brought forth in the Word; and the Spirit of God can only guide us into safe constructions of the mystery thus revealed, and to conceive the work of redemption in such order, that sin and death by the first man may appear, and righteousness and life by the second, and the counsel of God concerning both, before either was brought forth to the world; to conceive something of it, though not all.

I find, before sin and righteousness did thus appear in the world, that God is said to predestinate and elect, and choose us. I find that all this work, thus wrought in time; yet is said to be present before God before time began. Therefore Christ is called, "the Lamb slain," Rev.13:8, so long ago; and we are said to be "chosen in Christ before the foundations of the world were laid." {Eph.1:4}

So I can find out this glorious mystery, which is made up of such contrary ways and workings of sin and grace, justice and mercy, an old Adam and a New, and predestination or election of grace will amount to this; that man sinned, God had mercy, and gave his Son, who was God with him from everlasting, to be that for man, and in man, which he could not be in himself, righteousness and true holiness; and thus man becomes a new creature to God again, not in himself, but in another, even in Christ.

God still is the same, though man is not, nor is God the less unchangeable because of several carriages or distributions of this his work respecting man; as man's falling, and redemption in Christ; man's sin, and Christ's suffering, may be said to be but the love of God, ordering man to the praise of his Free Grace, through several conditions of innocency, sin and righteousness.

Yet this I find further, that this main and glorious work of redemption was that full and final work ordained by God the Father himself. So man's sin only made a way for this, for the bringing about the work of redemption, decreed of God, and occasioned by man's fall, God foreknowing the changeableness of his creature, and so working by that, not taking any new counsels upon this change in man, which he took not before, but ordering this, to that salvation he had ever ordained. Nor is the revealing of God's predestination or election in Christ so much to let us see into the order of his counsels, "for who hath known the mind of the Lord;" as to set up God in the glory of his power, will, and wisdom, before our eyes, that we may not look at anything as happening from its own causes or unobserved of him, and to order us from conceiving any change in God, as if our sin and Christ's sufferings had wrought any alteration in his purpose, either to enmity or to love.

If you would know this mystery without confusion, and yet in admiration, know that all this work of Free Grace, and man's salvation in Jesus Christ, was ever the same with God, "who calleth things that are not, as if they were," and man's sinning, and God's revealing Christ in promises, and in the flesh, and in the gospel, is, that the creature may partake of it. And whereas there is a work of sin, of time, of persons, of order, of Scripture notions, of manifestation, etc., these are but so many several ways by which the work of grace, love, sin, Christ, salvation, and transgression, is made an end of in the things themselves. And all these several parcels of law, gospel, sin, righteousness, free grace, election, etc., go to the completing the body of Christ, the elect. If the law had been wanting, then there had been no transgression; if sin not committed, there could have been no Everlasting Purpose of God and no Free Grace; if righteousness were not established, then there had been no redemption, &c. So as this one infinite work of salvation is manifested in many parts to us, who could neither enjoy it, nor know it otherwise, in that fullness or infiniteness as it is in God. And these many parts make up that one work of redemption in Jesus Christ. Nor can we know anything of it, but thus in parts, nor in the whole glorious depth of it, for "we know but in part."

IV. The Son of God – now considered in the Work of Salvation.

There are certain Scriptures which contain the mystery; yet in the letter of them hold it forth under a diverse notion or word. 1. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," Jn.3:16, with other Scriptures of this kind, as I Jn.4:9,10. 2. Of the other sort are these Scriptures, "God has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world," Eph.1:4, "God hath

saved us according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us through Jesus Christ, before the world began;" II Tim.1:9, with many other Scriptures of this kind.

Now these words say, that God loved us, and gave Christ, and that he loved us in Christ. And these are both true according to the manifestation of this mystery to us; for one Scripture contains not all of the mystery of God's love to sinners; some hold forth only so much of it as to make his power and will in it appear; some so much as to make his Free Grace in it appear; some so much as to make love in it appear; some so much as to make predestination and election in it appear; some so much as to make Jesus Christ appear as the Lamb slain before the world for sinners; some so much as to make Jesus Christ appear crucified in time for sinners; some to make God's love appear in giving Christ. Some to make Christ's love appear in giving himself; some to make God's love appear complete to us in Christ; some that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; some that he is the Son of Man, and Saviour of men; some, so much as to make Him appear to die for all, and for the world; and some, so much as to establish this all, and this world such only as were his before the world, and only all such as He had loved and chosen in Christ.

And thus is the mystery opened to the sons of men in each part of Scripture, which, like so many several stars, give out their beams and light for the manifestation of this mystery of godliness. "God manifested in the flesh." {I Tim.3:16}

Now we must be sure in our conceptions concerning this redemption, and beware that we raise not up, nor form to ourselves, anything to explain this mystery which God himself would not approve by his word and Spirit; there being so many discoveries and displays of God, who,

though he be one pure, glorious essence, yet his creation cannot behold him so, but as in so many compound parts and beams of glory. Man cannot take God, nor the mystery of God in, but by way of parts in distinct kinds of excellency, and so view him in one thing with another; thus he is best discovered in Jesus Christ.

So, when we would consider the work of salvation in and by Jesus Christ, we must take heed of confining it to the mystery of God's love only, lest something be left out by our narrow conceptions, or the mystery be but in part represented, and the other parts of the work have no room, by which, though we may know more of one part, yet we may know less of another, like one who, pumping water through a narrow pipe, may not fill his vessel, while another, that works through a larger, fills his; and indeed the not taking in Scripture interpretations in spiritual extent and variety, but running away to some one doctrine more than another, which agrees better with some principle in us, may make us rather opinionated than spiritually wise.

In the work of salvation we must consider Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as he is revealed, distinct from his incarnation, before his incarnation, and in it. Before it, he is revealed to be the Word of God, the Wisdom of God, the eternal God. Before it, he is revealed to be the Seed of the woman, the Promise, the Elect, the Covenant, the Angel of the Covenant, &c. In his incarnation he is revealed to be Emmanuel, or God with us, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, the Mediator, the Priest, the Propitiation, the Son, the Son of Man, &c.

Now these several descriptions will direct us, and order our thoughts according to a Scriptural revelation of this mystery; when we read of this Son of God, under the names or characters last spoken of, as the Son, or Jesus,

or Redeemer, then we are to consider of this work of Redemption in the flesh, manifested and amongst us; and then consider what part of the work comes under that description.

And, when we read of his other names, we are to consider what part of the mystery falls under those, either without incarnation, or flesh, as he was one with the Father, &c., or else before incarnation, and so he was in the time of the law of ceremonies and types; and from all these we may draw this conclusion; that the Son of God, as Jesus and Christ, and so manifested in the flesh, was sent out, and given as it were of God; foretold and figured before he was given; ever with God, being God himself, and everlastingly present, as God, and present as Mediator in the election of grace, being the Elect, in whom we are chosen, and whose body we are.

These conceptions of God, as the Word, and as Jesus Christ, and Redeemer, and Mediator, is but the drawing forth the mystery of redemption in its several parts and degrees; and all this is true, that God loved us, and gave Christ, and we are chosen in Christ, and he was the Lamb slain before the world in purpose, and in the world according to his purpose. Nor are we to consider God's love to us without Christ, nor God's love to us before Christ, nor ourselves out of Christ, in whom we are chosen; but rather thus, God loved us in Christ, and yet gave Christ; and all this is true in the way and order of manifestation, beyond which we cannot see; nor can we Scripturally consider any act of grace from God, but in the Son; there being no way of union and communion with God for man, but by him who is both God and man.

V. God's love manifested in Gospel Expressions.

Wherever there is any appearance of God in mercy, or grace, or love, there is Gospel; and wherever there is any Gospel, there are such expressions and appearances of God. As in the Old Testament, we find him under these names, "the Lord thy God, the Lord, the Lord merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and of much goodness; a Lord passing by the transgression of his people, loving his freely, counting them the Apple of his eye, the signet upon his hand, his Jewels, his Vineyard, his Children."

And in the New Testament, where God appeared in the fullness of love, there he is called, "a Father of mercies;" and his grace, "Free Grace;" and his love, a "love manifested and unsearchable."

And thus the soul is to look on him, and trace him from grace up to glory; in love, and in righteousness; and this is that which will draw on the soul to have communion with him. We have only to do with him now in Gospel appearances and expressions. In our first man, Adam, we had to do with him in a way of subjection and righteousness; but now in our second Adam, in a way of sonship, adoption and Free Grace.

VI. The New Covenant, no Covenant properly with us, but with Christ, for us.

God makes a Covenant, properly speaking, under the Gospel as he did at first; but his Covenant now is rather all a Promise. Man is not restored in such a way of Covenant and condition as he was lost, but more freely, by grace and mercy; and yet God covenants too, but it is not with man, but with him that was God and Man, even Jesus Christ; he is both the Covenant, and the Messenger or Mediator of the Covenant. God

agreed to save man, but this agreement was with Christ, and all the conditions were on his part; Christ stood for us, and artiled with God for us, and performed the conditions for life and glory; and yet, because we are so concerned in it, it is called a Covenant made with us, "I will make a new Covenant with them;" and yet that it may not be thought a Covenant only with us, as the first was, it is called a new Covenant, and a better Covenant; and Christ is called the Mediator of it. And lest we should think some conditions are to be performed on our parts, as in the first, it is added, "I will write my Law in their hearts, I will put my Spirit within them;" so as in this new Covenant, God is our God of Free Grace and righteousness on his part, not for any conditional righteousness on ours; yet in Scripture it is called still a Covenant, because God is our God still in a way of righteousness, though of Redemption too, and of condition too; yet not on ours, but on Christ's part for us; and yet it is a Covenant with us, because we belong to Christ. "And ye are Christ's." {I Cor.3:23}

VII. God's manner of Covenanting.

God takes us into Covenant, not for any condition in us before; he brings with him Christ, and in him all the conditions, and makes us as he would have us; not for the Covenant, but in it, or under it; we are his people before, and he is our God. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." {Heb.8:10,11} "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." {Jn.15:16}

***VIII. They that are under Grace revealed,
are no more under the Law.***

While we are out of Covenant with God, we are, in our own apprehension, under the curse for any breach of law or disobedience; but, when we are once under grace revealed, we are ever under grace, and no more under the Law. The Law can only tell a believer he sins, but cannot tax him with damnation. "We are not under the law, but under grace." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died."

***IX. When God is said to be in
Covenant with a soul.***

A Soul is sensibly in Covenant with God, when God hath come to it in the promise, and then when it feels itself under the power of the promise, it begins only to know it is in Covenant; and yet to yield obedience, as if it were but just entering into that Covenant which God hath made with it in Christ, before it could do anything; so as they that believe, do rather feel themselves in that Covenant which God hath made with them, without respect to anything in themselves either, faith or repentance, &c.

***X. A justified person is, in God's
account, a perfect person.***

A person justified or in Covenant, is as pure in the sight of God as the righteousness of Christ can make him, {though not so in his own eyes, that there may be work for faith,} because God sees His only in Christ, not in themselves; and if they were not in such a perfect righteousness, they could not be loved of him, because "his eyes

are purer than to behold iniquity," or to love a sinner as a sinner.

XI. Sin separates not the eternal bond of union with God, but separates from Communion with God.

No sins can make God, who loves forever and is unchangeable, change in his love; and yet a believer justly grieves for sin, because it grieves the Spirit of his God; and, though he knows sin cannot now alter the love of God, yet, because it hides it, he hates it; and in this sense it separates not eternally, but from temporal Communion with God, "grieving the Holy Spirit of God."

XII. Christ in the flesh.

Christ in the flesh was God himself, who, that he might reveal his love to us, made us partakers of the divine nature, by fashioning our nature for his own glory to live in, and by being both God and man amongst us, and for us; and herein is the mystery of Reconciliation; none but the nature of God could reconcile God, and no nature, but man's that had sinned, could properly suffer for man; therefore "there is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus."

XIII. Christ being in our nature.

Christ was love, mercy, and riches of Free Grace manifested in the flesh, and in our nature, that they might flow out more abundantly upon our nature, on the vessels of mercy chosen in this Christ, before the foundations of the world. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of

children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." {Eph.1:4,5}

XIV. Christ's love.

Christ's love must needs exceed all the love of the children of men; for he was the very love of God clothed in flesh and blood. This is he that was "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called the Word of God." {Rev.19:13} "Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." {Rev.1:5}

XV. Christ doing and suffering for our sakes.

Christ came into the world, that he might do, what we could not do, fulfil the Law, and suffer what we could not suffer for the breach of the Law. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." {I Pet.3:18}

XVI. Christ's Mediatorship.

Christ standing now as a Person betwixt God and the children of men, on whom righteousness and sin met; the righteousness of God, and sin of men, whereby all the sins of his people were fully done away by an infinite righteousness and glorious atonement. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins." {Mt.1:21}

***XVII. The right general Redemption,
by the second Adam.***

Christ is the second Adam, in whom all are made alive, as all in the first Adam were dead; but not so, as if all who were dead in the first Adam, were made alive in the second; but as the first Adam was the person in whom all that are dead did die, so Christ is the second Adam, in whom all that are alive do live; for Christ is the common nature of the living seed who live unto righteousness, as Adam was the common nature of dead mankind, who die unto unrighteousness, "for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;" Rom.5:19, God hath concluded all under sin, "that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." {Gal.3:22}

XVIII. Christ's love.

The love of Christ excelled in this, that he gave himself to die for us when we were enemies to him, and crucified him ourselves, who came to be crucified for us; and could neither love him, nor pity him for what he did; "for while we were as yet sinners, Christ died for us;" and greater love than this hath no man. This is the mystery, that man could not live by Christ, till he had first killed Christ; and thus he was wounded in the house of his friends. Oh all ye that pass by the way, behold and consider if ever there were mystery like unto this mystery!

XIX. Christ's blood.

The blood of Christ was not the blood of man only, but the blood of the Son of God, and therefore it was a price for sin; the very power of the Godhead being in union with the Man Christ

Jesus, bleeding for sin; by which it is called, "the Redemption of his blood, and the blood of the Son of God." "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." {Acts 20:28}

XX. Christ's Blood poured out.

The Blood of Christ poured out wrought greater compassion in God towards men {I speak as a man} than the sufferings of all the men in the world could do, because he, being begotten of God himself, and the express Image of his Person, though he could not suffer, being infinite glory, yet, because that person suffered which was God and man, or the Son of God in man; the Father in an unspeakable way beheld the travail of his soul, and was satisfied.

XXI. Christ's Vesture dipped in blood.

Christ's garment which he was described in by the Prophets under the Law, is of a color to set forth love and suffering under the Gospel; for this is he that "cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? Glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." {Isa.63:1}

XXII. Christ's comeliness.

The comeliness of Christ in the Gospel is a most desirable comeliness for the sons of men to love; it is the glory of "the only begotten Son of God," full of grace and truth, the sweetest object for those in misery to delight in. This is that beloved which is more than another beloved. {Song 5:9} "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is

true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." {I Jn.5:20}

XXIII. Christ's beauty.

Christ hath both the form and power of love in him, and therefore it is that his spouse, or His elect, behold him as white and ruddy, and the "fairest amongst ten thousands;" white in the glory of his Godhead, and ruddy in the sufferings of his Manhood; and, because of his sweet ointments or pourings out of his Spirit, the virgins follow him, for his hands drop myrrh upon the soul, even spiritual graces upon the handles of the Lock.

XXIV. Christ's names.

Christ will be known to His own by no other names but names of love and grace; "a Lover, a Bridegroom, a Physician, a Saviour, an Emmanuel or God with us, an only begotten Son of God, the Brightness of his Glory, a merciful and faithful High Priest, a Sacrifice for sin, a Mediator, an Advocate for sin, a Beloved;" and he brings a soul to the banqueting house of spiritual things, and his banner over it is love. {Song 2:4} "Draw me, we will run after thee; the king hath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine; the upright love thee." {Song 1:4}

XXV. Christ's and his.

Christ having adorned his in the riches of his righteousness, looks on them, and loves them in his own glory, so as they both love one another; Christ and his spouse delight in one another. "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of

thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck," saith Christ; {Song 4:9,} and saith the spouse, "my beloved is the fairest amongst ten thousands." "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." {Isa.62:5} "And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people." {Is.65:19}

**XXVI. Christ's love in Heaven to us,
or Christ exalted.**

The love of Christ is abundant now in Heaven towards us, by how much more the love of God is gloriously shed abroad within him, yet his nature is the same; for he is no less man, nor more God than he was; but more excellently God and man, even the Man Christ Jesus. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" {Rom.8:32}

XXVII. The Gospel is Christ revealed.

The Gospel is Christ himself, and love revealed, or the "word of God" in the Word, or the glad tidings of what he hath accomplished and suffered for sinners, and over whom he hath conquered, being Captain of our salvation, having spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them openly, and triumphing over them. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." {Col.1:20} It is the ministry of life and peace, and glory, or God speaking to his elect from Heaven, as though he did entreat them to believe, that he was born of the seed of David, suffered, died, and rose again for their

justification; and that they are sitting together with him in heavenly places.

XXVIII. The Mystery of Christ in the Gospel, a Mystery of Love.

The whole business of Christ, as it was begun in love, and brought forth in love unto the world, so all the actings and workings of it from God's being in Christ, to Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, are but a Gospel or relation of unspeakable love revealed to the world; so, the carrying on of all yet, is in love; man through the Gospel is wrought on by irresistible love, persuaded of such love in love, and sweetly attracted and drawn to love again in the ministry of the Gospel; whilst the love of God, and the Spirit of love and adoption is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost, through the Gospel on the souls of men, to reconcile them who were otherwise enemies in their minds by wicked works, and to make them love him, who never was an enemy to them in Jesus Christ, in whom they were chosen, though the mystery is revealed to us under a particolored work of sin and grace.

XXIX. A Believer's glorious freedom.

The Spirit of Christ sets a believer as free from Hell, the Law, and bondage, here on Earth, as if he were in Heaven; nor wants he anything to make him joyful in the enjoyment of it, but a revelation of it to him. For the world, the flesh, the devil, and the Law, are all so near, and about him in this life, that he cannot so walk by sight, or in the clear apprehension of the safety of his state, as he should; notwithstanding "the just do live by faith, and faith is the evidence of things not seen."

***XXX. All the sins of believers
done away on the Cross.***

There is no sin past, present, or to come, which Christ did not pay down the price of his Blood for upon the Cross; "making peace through the blood of his Cross;" and yet a believer will avoid and hate sin as much as if all his sins were to pay for yet; knowing that he is not redeemed to sin, but from sin; not that he may sin, but that sinning he may not suffer for sin; Christ is risen for our justification.

XXXI. Christ preached to sinners.

Christ in the Gospel calls out of Heaven to sinners by that very name, and tells them that salvation is finished for them who believe on him. Nor doth he stand upon what sins, less or more, great or small; so that none may say they are too bad to partake of this salvation, be they never so sinful.

***XXXII. A believer must live in Christ,
and out of himself.***

A Believer hath a twofold condition; {yet as a believer but one;} in Christ, in himself; yet he ought ever to consider himself in Christ by faith, not in himself; for in Christ he hath perfectly obeyed the whole Law, perfectly suffered and satisfied for all his sins to the Justice of God, and in Christ is perfectly just and righteous; and therefore it is said that "our life is hid with Christ in God," and that we are raised up with Christ, and "made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," even already; but in himself there is a body of lust, corruption, and sin; and there is a Law revealing sin, accusing and condemning. So if a believer live only by sense, reason, and experience of himself, and as he appears to men, he lives both under the power and feeling of sin

and the Law; but if he lives by faith in Christ, believing in the life, righteousness, obedience, satisfaction, and glory of him, he lives out of the power of all condemnation and unrighteousness. And thus a believer is blessed only in a righteousness without, not within him; and all his assurance, confidence and comforts, are to flow into him through a channel of faith, not of works, believing himself happy for what another, even Christ, hath done for him, not what he hath done or can do for himself.

XXXIII. How Christ and a believer were one as to his sins and Christ's righteousness.

All the ground of a believer's righteousness and salvation, and exemption from the Law, sin, and the curse, is from the nature, office, and transaction, or work of Christ, by God's account in the work of imputation; Christ stood clothed in our nature, betwixt God and man, and in that, with all the sins of believers upon him, "God having laid on him the iniquities of us all;" in his Office he obeyed, suffered, satisfied, and offered up himself, and now sits as a Mediator to perpetuate or make his sacrifice, obedience, sufferings, and righteousness everlasting; and thus bringing in everlasting righteousness; and God accounts, reckons or imputes all that was done in our nature, as done by us, calling things that are not, as if they were, and in his Person, as in our person; and thus he is made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

XXXIV. We must not appear but in Christ, therefore not as sinners, but as righteous.

A believer in all his dealings with God, either by Prayer, or other way of drawing near, is to state and consider himself thus in Christ in the first place, in the relation of sonship and righteousness, and to look at, or consider sins no otherwise in himself, than as debts paid and cancelled by the blood of Christ; and by faith in him, all bondages, fears and doubtings are removed, and his spirit is free; for the Son hath made him free; and now he comes in the spirit of adoption, and calls God Father; and here begins all faith, hope, confidence, love, liberty, when as others dare not believe themselves in such a condition, till upon certain terms of humiliation, sorrow for sin, works of righteousness, they have, as they think, produced a reasonable measure of, as a price or satisfaction to come with, and then begin to believe, hope, and be confident; and thus in way of compounding and bargaining with God, deal with him at all occasions; but such "submit not to the righteousness of God," and the free-gift of justification by grace, and give not glory to God; for they that believe upon something first produced in themselves, shall, as they have kindled a fire, lie down in the sparks of their own kindling, and have nothing in Christ, because they will not have all in him; for we must either have all in him, or nothing; and though some will have all in Christ for salvation, yet they will have something in themselves to believe their interest in this salvation; and though this is not to reject Christ for righteousness, yet it is to reject his free-promise or word of assurance for this righteousness, and rather a being persuaded upon sight than faith, and on sense than promise, and something in themselves, than in himself.

XXXV. *The Law of the spirit of life in the Gospel is now the rule for a believer to walk by.*

The Gospel is both a perfect law of life and righteousness, of grace and truth; and therefore I wonder that any should contend for the ministry of the Law, or Ten Commandments under Moses, which is of less glory than that which is now revealed, and exceeds in glory; or should strive for the Law in preference to the Gospel, which is established by the Gospel; nor is the holiness and sanctification in Christ, now such as is fashioned by the Law or outward Commandment, but by the preaching of faith, by which the Spirit is given to renew and sanctify a believer, making him a spiritual law of Commandments in himself, and his heart as it were the very two tables of Moses; and though the Law be a beam of Christ's glory in substance and matter, yet we are not to live by the light of one beam, now that the Son of righteousness is risen himself; that is fit for those who lived in the region and shadow of death; and it is with the Law now or light of righteousness under the Gospel, as it was with the light in the Creation, when that which was scattered, was gathered into one body of light; so Christ now being revealed, holiness and righteousness, as well as grace and love, are revealed in him, and gathered up in him. And what need we light up a Candle for the children of the day to see by? Why strive for a stream in the channel, when the fountain is open? Nor doth it become the glory of Christ now revealed, to be beholding to any of the light upon Moses' face. The Word is now made flesh, and dwells amongst us, and we behold his glory as the glory of the only begotten Son, full of truth as well as grace. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." {Jn.1:17} "And when they had

lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, {not Moses himself,} save Jesus only." {Mt.17:8}

***XXXVI. Legal and Gospel Commandments,
Persuasions and Duties.***

Gospel and Legal Commandments, do not go forth in the same power, in the same manner, or to the same end; the Law commands men to obey, to love, to fear, to be holy, that God may be their God, and they his people; the Gospel commands us to obey, and love, because we are the people of such a God; the Law commands us in the power of God as a Lawgiver, Tutor, or Judge; the Gospel in the power and constraints of a Father; the Law commands by promises and threatenings, blessings and cursings; the Gospel persuades rather than commands, it overcomes by love, and gives power; by promises, the Gospel exhorts, entreats and reasons us to be dutiful, obedient and loyal to Christ. It rather draws by love than drives; and by setting forth promises, and privileges, and prerogatives, and works accomplished on God's part, and Christ's part for us and in us; and in love powerfully persuades us into doing and working, till love reproduces love again; and Christ is chiefly propounded, both for holiness and obedience, for mortification and newness of life; so as the Gospel operates rather by pattern than precept, and by imitation than command. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God; for consider him." {Heb.12:1-3}

Nor is to the same End. The end of the Law was to bondage, fear, tutorship, revealing of sin, outward obedience and conformity. The end of Gospel-law is to love, newness of spirit, praise and thanksgiving for righteousness and life received, and testimony to our righteousness received in Christ. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." {II Cor.7:1} And thus, Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden light, and his Commandments are not grievous; for they are Commandments that carry life and power, and quicken to that duty they command, like the sun who warms us in the very shining upon us; and so we work, and walk and live under the Gospel, as being saved already, as redeemed, and bringing forth in the power of this redemption and salvation, though the Spirit of adoption, freely working to the praise of that free-grace, and freely obeying for such free redemption, and doing everything in love, because of the love shed abroad in our hearts, not from a slavish fear of judgment, hell, or damnation; nay, nor Heaven, nor glory, to force on the work, or quicken the duty; but doing all from the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus; except when corruption or temptation hinders the freeness and spiritualness in our dutiful walk by grace.

***XXXVII. The Gospel in the
holiness and grace of it.***

There is doctrine of holiness in the Gospel, as well as grace and love; and there are commands for obedience, as well as glad tidings of forgiveness. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this

present world." {Tit.2:12} And this kind of Gospel is such in the revelation of it, as is agreeable to both God and man. God the Father may be seen in commanding holiness, and the Spirit in forming the holiness commanded, and the Son in redeeming us to holiness, even to the will both of the Father and the Spirit. And this Gospel fits man, who is made up both of flesh and spirit, and so hath need of a law without, in the letter, as well as in the heart and spirit; for "the Law is spiritual, but we are carnal." Nor can such a state of flesh and spirit be ordered by a law only within; for the Word and Law of the Spirit is merely for the spiritual condition or estate of glory, as Angels, who only live by a law spiritual, or word of Revelation; but our estate here, being partly carnal, must needs be ordered yet in part by the Law of a literal Commandment; and yet the voice of this Law is not such as it was before the Spirit quickened us, mere words in the letter, but it is now under the Gospel a law of life, spirit, and glory; it is a Law in the hand of Christ, and with the promises of Christ about it to make it spiritual indeed. Thus it is according to the just, wise, and righteous distribution which God hath made to our divers estate of flesh and spirit, by dealing out to us both the word and spirit, the letter and life. Therefore the word is called Scripture, as "given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;" and the Spirit is called the anointing received of God, which abideth in you, teacheth you of all things. {I Jn.2:27} "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, &c., for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." {Heb.8:10-12} "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." {Jn.14:26}

"Ye yourselves are taught of God." {I Thes.4:9}
Thus, whatever doctrine of holiness is in the New Testament, as the Spirit works it, we perform it, because it is now the doctrine of him who is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord as well as Christ; and one who reigns and rules, as well as saves; nor is there any Covenant of works in such kind of obedience; as life is given to make us obey, but not for our obeying.

XXXVIII. The New Covenant further set forth to be a Covenant of promise.

The Covenant that is called the New Covenant that God makes with his Son, revealed in the Gospel, is to be all performed on his own part, without any thing on man's; he makes himself ours, and makes us his; all is of his own doing. Though a Covenant in the strict legal common sense, is upon certain articles of agreement and conditions on both sides to be performed; and thus stood the Old Covenant, there was life promised on condition of obedience, and so in covenants and contracts betwixt man and man, but now in this case there is a Covenant, or rather a free promise in Jesus Christ, who is called the Mediator, or Manager of the Covenant, in which God gives himself freely in Christ, to be a "Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins;" Christ undertaking all, both with the Father and with the soul. Such a kind of a covenant was established with Noah, "and I will establish my covenant with you," &c., Gen.9:11, nothing required on man's part; and this is called a new Covenant, for it is clear against the strain of the old, wherein man was to have his life upon performing certain condition. It were good, that we did not rest too much in the notion of covenanting; nor is it the way of a covenant that the Gospel uses, but rather the free promise of grace, and salvation in

Christ; for the Spirit uses the word 'covenant' only by way of allusion, because the soul being under the power of a legal spirit, may itself contract and covenant with God to obey, though God gives no life in such a way of a covenant or obedience. And I have observed, that the usage of this word hath a little corrupted some in their notion of free-grace, making them conceive a little too legally of it; and I conceive, that the Doctrine of it in Heb.8:10, &c., I will write my law, &c., and I will take away your stony heart, &c., and put a new spirit within you, Jer.31:31, Ez.36:26, &c., doth clear it to be only promise and grace, and free-love to a sinner; for if anything were to be done for life or salvation, we should darken the glory of free-grace, and make it a promise neither wholly of grace, nor wholly of works. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace." {Rom.11:6} Nor is this promise of salvation given to sinners as sinners, barely, simply, and singly, for being so qualified or conditioned; not to sinners as sinners, for God can only love in Christ; nor as any other ways qualified or conditioned; for so life would be purchased or merited by us, rather than for us; whereas we are only sinners in our own and others' judgments, but truly and ever loved in Christ, which love is revealed to us when the promise comes. And though by nature ungodly, and sinners, and children of wrath; not that we are so, but seem so, for we are not so in Christ or not so in God's account, but so in the world and in ourselves; and so here is ground enough for hope of salvation to the vilest sinners, and for the vilest sinners to receive; for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. {II Cor.5:19}

XXXIX. The way of assurance for believers.

The surest knowledge that any one hath that they have received the promise of life in Christ, is by assurance of the closing of the heart with Christ; the real receiving and believing, the relying and going out of the heart upon Christ, the just or justified living by faith, Rom.1:17, and thus we walk by faith, and not by sight. This was the assurance the father of the faithful had, "who staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but gave glory to God." Yet this assurance is such as the soul cannot be content with only; for there is something in man beside faith to be satisfied, for reason will have some light to see by; and therefore the working of the Spirit in new obedience; that is, producing faith, love, repentance, and self-denial, are such glimmerings as the soul may be refreshed, strengthened and comforted by; though not sustained or supported by; and these works, wrought under an impulsion or inclination of the Spirit, though they cannot assure by themselves, yet, when raised up by faith, may with it cheer up the soul. Also, if we believe more of those works than we see or feel, to the strengthening of faith, they may become like the tokens and changes of raiment, by which Jacob was persuaded that Joseph was alive; by these we may be better persuaded that we live, and live in Christ; therefore the soul being a reasonable and discursive spirit, is much satisfied in such a way, when the Spirit of God helps it to reason aright, and draw conclusions from gospel grounds. For instance; the Word says, "whosoever believes shall not abide in darkness, or perish;" but, I believe, saith the soul; and therefore according to this promise, shall not perish; nor walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. {Jn.8:12} The Word says, to believe is to receive, or put confidence in, or trust, as in John

1:12, "but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name;" but, I receive Jesus Christ for mine, saith the soul, and I trust in him for the whole of my salvation; therefore I believe. The Word says that repentance, love, self-denial, obedience to the will of God, are all the fruits of the Spirit; but these are in me, saith the soul, for I repent, and love, and deny myself, and obey. Again, the Word says, that we are complete in Christ, and righteous in Christ, and when I repent, or love, or obey, I believe I am in Christ, and therefore, my love, and repentance, and obedience is such as I may believe, though not in themselves, yet in him, to be good and spiritual. And thus a believer may believe for assurance, and reason for assurance; and some other questions a believer may put to his own spirit, and draw it out into more conclusions for believing. Am I Christ's, or my own? If I be Christ's, do I walk with Christ; and live to Christ; and obey Christ? Do I delight in Christ, and those that are Christ's? Or do I live to myself; to my lust; to my profit, or credit? To others or the world?

XL. The Gospel Ministration very glorious.

The ministration of the Gospel exceeds in glory; for now under the ministry of Jesus Christ himself, the heavenly things themselves are brought forth, the free love of God in Jesus Christ, and the free love of Jesus Christ himself, all the pourings out of the blessed Spirit of promise, and the full discoveries of love, were reserved for Christ's own day; the Kingdom of God, righteousness, justification, forgiveness of sins, the spirit of comfort, and the glorious liberty of peace, with joy unspeakable, are the glories of Christ who came in the flesh; the treasures that went with his own Person; and they who were

under the Law saw this Gospel day but afar off, for they saw by the blood of bulls, and goats, &c., grace and peace afar off; but blessed are our eyes, for we see; and our ears, for we hear that which many kings and righteous men have desired; we see the Son of God himself bleeding, and are under a more spiritual sprinkling than they; for theirs was a fleshly purifying; they were as children, and servants that were not of age, and so had neither the use, nor freedom of the heavenly inheritance; they were subject to carnal ordinances, to death and bondage; and we are delivered from them to serve him without fear; for "through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father;" "in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." {Eph.2:18, 3:12} They were kept under the school-mastership of the Law; we {now that "the fulness of time is come"} enjoy the "precious liberty of the sons of God;" the light which they lived in before was glorious {compared with the darkness the Nations lived in before, even under a region and shadow of death;} but it was darkness compared with the light of the Gospel; the light of the Son of righteousness which now is sown for the righteous. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." {Ps.97:11} Not such an enlightening as that of Mount Sinai, gendering to bondage and fear, a light with smoke in it, and thunder in it, or a light with types and terror in it; but a more clear, comfortable, and soul-refreshing light; the beams of Christ now shine with grace and love upon the souls of his people, like the sun in the spring time, in whose light there goes a virtue which causes the earth to spring and blossom; so do the souls of the saints under "the Sun of righteousness." Now grace, mercy, and salvation is in the light thereof; and love, joy, and peace, with all the fruits of the Spirit do appear.

So as a Gospel ministry hath the substance and body of Christ, and all that is Christ's; the Gospel ministry hath the flowings of the Spirit, Acts 2:17,18, with power and life to change the soul from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord, II Cor.3:18, the dead hearing the voice of the Son of God, and these who hear, living and responding to the drawings of the Father's love, Jn.5:25; the Gospel, being God's own power unto salvation, bestowing spiritual freedom, and setting souls at liberty from death and the curse; as everlasting righteousness is brought in, and the fullness of age is come. Christ finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, he made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness, &c. {Dan.9:24} So when this fulness of time did come, and the severity of the Law, as a Schoolmaster, hath done whipping us; we now find ourselves under the reign of sheer grace. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." {Gal.4:5,6} The Gospel-ministry hath Jesus Christ himself, not a mere sign of him, not a distant type of him; here is no sacrifice now, no Moses, but the very Son of God himself, and with him a total change of the priesthood and ordinances. Now no more priests to reconcile God, but God reconciled in Christ, and Ministers of reconciliation; the Ordinances are few, clear, and spiritual, and the ministry free and large; no more to Jew only, but to Jew and Gentile, even to the world. "God so loveth the world, that whosoever believeth, shall have life." "Sing, Oh barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD." {Isa.54:1}

XLI. In what respects the Gospel is glorious.

Though the Gospel tells of glorious things, yet they that perceive not Christ will discern but little of it; for in the bare letter of the word, there is but a little glory; it is a sad story of one, of one crucified, dead, and risen; all the outside is but mean; the ministry only a plain business of strange tidings, or the foolishness of Preaching. {I Cor.1:18} The other parts of it, plain and homely, some water for Baptism, a little bread and wine for food, &c. The meanest and poorest most commonly for followers and friends of it; "not many noble, nor many mighty," I Cor.1:26, the Ministers of it, or preachers and publishers of it, but homely; "who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed." {I Cor.3:5}

The House of God, or family, consists of some poor ones, called saints in fellowship; the officers but few and plain, pastors, deacons, elders; the Laws, some bare words of entreaty, as well as commandments; so that both word, ministry and officers, with all the doings and administrations that concern Christ, all suited to a poor crucified, dying Jesus, to a state of humiliation; and thus, all so mean, as to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. {I Cor.1:23}

Thus the Gospel appears in the world's view of it. Thus Christ, as it were, neither striving, nor crying, nor any one hearing his voice in the streets. {Matt.12:19-20} Thus is the work of salvation carried on in a mystery; this is the wisdom of God in a mystery, I Cor.2:7-8, and yet great is this mystery of godliness. {I Tim.3:16} First, in Jesus Christ himself, appearing as the carpenter's son, yet he is the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth; the brightness of his glory, and express image of his person.

{Jn.1:14, Heb.1:3} The word itself or Scriptures, though a word or book like a common writing, yet it is a word of truth, and made the power of God unto salvation. {Rom.1:16} The Ministry, though but a little plain teaching, yet "mighty to save," to reconcile and to cast down high imaginations; and the ministers of it are stewards of the Mysteries of God, Ambassadors in Christ's stead; whose feet are beautiful with glad tidings to sinners. {II Cor.5:20} So that the people of God, or friends of this Gospel, though counted the off-scouring of this world; yet a spirit of glory resteth on them, I Pet.4:14, as dying, and yet behold they live; as sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. {II Cor.6:10-11} The Kingdom of God, though a thing not seen by carnal men is full of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. {Rom.14:17}

***XLII. The form of the Gospel,
or way of dispensation.***

The Gospel dispensation is formed by preaching, exhortations, persuasions and promise. "We beseech you to be reconciled, &c., suffer a word of exhortation, &c.; and of promises, &c., as, whosoever believeth shall not perish, &c.; of judgment to come, as, he that believeth not is condemned, &c.; of admonitions, if ye love me, keep my Commandments, &c."

Now the dispensation of the Gospel thus fashioned, is on purpose for the better dispensing of it to the souls of his people, that divine and spiritual things might be more effectually conveyed in a comprehensive and natural way; as a key is made fit to the wards of a lock. And these ends are to be answered, {in this Gospel fashion,} rather than to stir up any supposed free-will in man, as some imagine; for the Gospel

is proclaimed not upon freedom of will in any, but those who are made willing to receive it, in a way as near to their own condition and nature, as can be; for none are converted against their will, but their will is spiritually persuaded, so they are made willing in the day of his power. {Ps.110:3} God doth break up the hearts of his people, and doth open them, while he stands and knocks. Lydia's heart was opened; and he stood at the door and knocked. {Acts 16:14} This is the Gospel-way of his entrance; for he doth not strive nor cry, nor doth any one hear his voice in the streets; he doth not force himself into the soul against the will, but bringing in spiritual things so suitable to their condition, that they cannot, nay will not, resist him. "Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice." {Jn.10:16} "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." {Jn.6:37}

XLIII. Gospel Promises.

The promises are words whereby God engaging himself to man freely, and of grace; and as his promises are of grace, so his performances are in faithfulness; and in these promises, the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit, are spiritually revealed and effectually conveyed with the treasures and riches of salvation to sinners. And thus in this life, all is passed over upon promise to us, and by our believing this word, and taking in the things of Jesus Christ thus upon God's bare engagement; he hath bound himself freely to give all hereafter, and yet all is of free gift too, things freely given to us, as a free gift from him. And in this time of our waiting, and believing, and relying, we have an earnest, even a spiritual and glorious earnest, given to us here, even the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance; Eph.1:14, and though some promises speak of conditions, as of faith and

repentance, &c., yet they are only ours upon this condition, that they were Christ's, and we were Christ's before; for "in him all the promises are Yea and Amen." {II Cor.1:20}

The promises that God makes thus in Christ are free; and being made in Christ are firm, for Christ is all that to God that we should be unto him, and we are in Christ; so Christ takes away all discouragements and excuses in any that dare not believe themselves to be heirs, on account of their unworthiness; and therefore, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." {Rev.22:17}

XLIV. God's Dispensations under both the Law and the Gospel – also of Legal and Gospel worshippers.

Before Jesus Christ came in the flesh, and offered up himself, God offered him beforehand in Types and Sacrifices of blood, &c., and the whole Ministry was wrapped up in a priesthood, so as the priesthood and sacrifices of the Law did set forth and shadow Christ in way of offering, or sacrifice to God the Father; therefore God, under that dispensation, did appear rather under a condition of reconciliation than as already reconciled, though all were saved then actually in the same Christ who was to suffer. But how much of this salvation they knew, is a question; for it is very likely, and sometimes clear from the Scripture, that God was very sparing in that time of the discoveries of himself in Christ; and they rather saw him in his glory above than below; and possessed the typical inheritance of the Redemption, rather than the Ministration or Gospel of it.

God appearing thus, the whole ministry of the Law was taken in, as agreeable to that

manner or pattern; and the Law of Commandments revealed on Mount Sinai, did help to form that ministry, and made sin appear and abound more; for which, such sacrifices were prepared. And thus the whole frame of the Old Testament was in great measure a draught of God's anger against sin, the Law revealing sin, and Jesus Christ suffering for sin; and so God in this time of the Law, appeared only as it were upon terms and conditions of reconciliation; and all the worship then, and acts of worship, as of prayer, fasting, repentance, &c., went chiefly under that appearance, and according to God under that appearance; and everything of worship seemed to bring something of peace and atonement in relation to the great atonement to come by Jesus Christ. And in this strain runs all the Ministry of the Prophets too, in their exhortations to duties and worship; as if God were to be appeased, entreated, and reconciled, and his love to be had in the way of purchase by performing duty, doing, and worshipping; so under this Old Dispensation, the efficacy and power was put as it were wholly upon the duty and obedience performed; as if God, upon the doing of such things, was to be brought into terms of peace, mercy, and forgiveness; so as their course then, and the service then seemed as it were a working for life and reconciliation.

But now under the New Testament, God appears in Christ, and reconciliation is finished. Peace is made by the blood of his Cross; and now the Ministry of the New Testament, is not a priesthood of any more offering Christ to God in sacrifices, but of bringing the tidings of a fully reconciled God in Christ to man, and of a sacrifice already accepted for sin. So now there are no priests, but ministers, or stewards, or ambassadors for dealing out and dispensing the love of God to man, and for publishing the glad tidings of peace; so all worship now and spiritual

obedience is to run in the channel of this dispensation, not for procuring love or peace from God, nor for pacifying, but of love procured, reconciliation accomplished and peace purchased by Jesus Christ.

If these things thus stated, were more fully and spiritually opened, there would be more Gospel teaching and obeying; for man's obedience towards God is not so clearly set forth, nor consistently preached as the Gospel calls for, but men run in a legal strain, and would work God back into his old and former way of revealing himself as under the Law, when he seemed to be only in the way to reconciliation and peace, rather than pacified; and thus in prayer, and fasting, and other acts of obedience, they want to deal with God as they did under the Old Testament, not considering the glorious love revealed in Christ crucified, and how all Gospel Ordinances are only ways and means for God to reveal this love and grace by the Spirit of adoption, and not ways and means of ours for working up love in God, that being already fixed in Christ.

XLV. God and His in reconciliation.

They that have received the word of reconciliation are in a very precious, comfortable and peaceable condition; they are lovers of God and Christ, they are no more such enemies in their minds by wicked works, they oppose not the will of God as they once did, they resist not the word of the Gospel, they slight not the communion of the Spirit of God; they are tender of God's honor and Christ's glory in anything that is God's; they count not anything their own but leave all at the Lord's disposal, he shall be welcome to all; if he call for their credit, he shall have it; for their bodies, he shall have it; for they know they have a spirit of glory resting on them;

if he call for their possessions, shall they not leave father, and mother, and brethren, and sisters, and lands, for his Name's sake; they know these are not to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed, and they shall have an hundredfold in this life; if he call for their life, he shall have it, for they know, he that will lose his life for Christ's sake, shall find it.

And being thus reconciled to God, they are friends with everything that belongs to him; every Gospel Mystery, they know, and receive; and everything of his they know not, they wait till he reveals it to them; and what they do not entirely understand, yet because they know it comes from God, they do not reject it, because it comes in the likeness of his word, lest they be found fighters against God, and crucify the Lord of glory in ignorance, like the Jews.

Being thus reconciled to God, they love both Christ, and all those that are his; they love the brethren, and if there be a naked disciple, they cloth him; if a hungry disciple, they feed him; if an imprisoned disciple, they visit him. "I was naked, and ye clothed me, &c." {Mt.25:35-36} And being thus reconciled, they behold God reconciled to them too; they are now in the way of his love; for now God freely communicates to them, and meets them in Christ; he shines on them in the face of Jesus Christ. Now God and the soul thus reconciled, are in possession of each other, as the husband and the spouse, the father and the son; there is no parting rights and proprieties; God hath not anything in Christ, in Heaven, or Earth, but it is theirs. "All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's," I Cor.3:23, and everything of theirs is his. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." {Rom.8:16-17}

***XLVI. The fears of weak believers;
and the remedies.***

Weak believers are like melancholy people, who often think things far otherwise than they truly are; or like smoking flax, where there is more smoke than light, more ignorance than true discernment.

Their fears are of these sorts: 1. They cannot, oft times, be persuaded that their sins are pardoned indeed; they would believe, but oft cannot do so; they cannot, from the spirit that is in them, but embrace Christ, and clasp about him for salvation; yet again they are not sure they have him; as they may be deceived they think at last.

2. Though faith carry them on to believe a little more or better of their condition in Christ; yet the threats of some sins still dash them down again. Some of their sins which they have made their darlings more than others, and cherished themselves in; Oh, these they think are either too great, or too often committed to be all forgiven at once. The fragments of these sins lie like dregs in the bottom, and often their conscience cannot be satisfied that God hath fully pardoned them, because they cannot pardon themselves.

3. They frequently look not upon God in the pure simplicity of his word and promise through the Mediator, but they suspect and are fearful that God hath some reckoning still behind, because they are sinful, and "God is purer than to behold iniquity;" and so they cannot believe that God will bear with all those corruptions and transgressions yet in them.

4. They fear that though God may be reconciled with them in Christ, and so love them at times, {for they, poor souls, only reckon the seasons of the Spirit's comforting and breathing for the times of forgiveness;} yet God may be

provoked again, and be angry again for new sins and failings, and then they are as much troubled how to come at any peace again as they were before; and then it must be only another experience of grace of the like former comfort, that must warm them into peace and believing.

5. They cannot persuade themselves how they can transgress as they do daily, without being accountable to justice for all the breaches; and so set up new scores of sins against themselves in their consciences, and keep reckoning for God, and disquiet themselves in vain.

6. They think that every affliction or trouble that befalls them, is a punishment for some sin they have committed, and they look on them as messengers of wrath from God, sent upon them in terrible judgment; as if God were satisfying himself upon them, and pouring out some wrath to appease this Justice for such sins.

7. They often mistake the Gospel in the doctrine of it; and Scriptures which threaten for sin, they interpret as belonging to them, because they have committed such sins.

In a word, these are the fears summed up: 1. They are and yet they are not persuaded their sins are pardoned. 2. They are persuaded some sins are pardoned, but not some others which they have most offended in. 3. They fear still God may not intend them such grace as he promises, and thereby are tempted to suspect the Gospel. 4. They think if God does pardon them, yet they may provoke him again sooner or later to revoke the change. 5. They suppose they cannot transgress as they do, and yet not be accountable to God's wrath; for they cannot but be sinners in God's sight as well as their own. 6. They think that afflictions are sent upon them in wrath for their sins; and they cannot consider God in them but as angry, and so help the afflictions to afflict them. 7. They interpret every

curse in the Law or New Testament against sin, as their own, if it be against their sin.

XLVII. The remedies.

First, we are directed to believe the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ thoroughly, and not in part. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." {Acts 10:43}

2. We are to consider that one sin cannot be forgiven but all must be forgiven; it was one complete body of sin that Christ removed; thus Jesus Christ hath done away all sins. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God... for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." {Heb.10:12-14}

3. We are to believe God according to the plainness and simplicity by which he speaks, in Gospel promises and words of grace to our souls, as if he spoke out to us by name from heaven. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son; and this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." {I Jn.5:10-11}

4. We must know that God is not as man, that he should be angry and pleased, as we thrash ourselves about in our ever fluctuating state. "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." {Mal.3:6} "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." {Heb.8:12}

5. We must remember our sins are no more ours, but Christ's; they were all laid upon him, and his righteousness becomes ours; as God reckons and accounts us as one; so, though we transgress continually in many things, yet every

sin was accounted for in him. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." {Rom.8:1}

6. And, as for afflictions, though they come in with sin, and for sin, and are the wages of sin; yet, to the righteous and believers, they are no wrathful judgments for sin; for everything of justice against sin was spent upon Christ himself; so as to us they are trials and chastisements. "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." {I Pet.1:6-7} Temptations and chastisements are sent in love to prevent and weaken sin. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent." {Rev.3:19} They are in a word, a mysterious way or dispensation of love and grace, love working by that which is in itself evil. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." {Rom.8:28} We are to consider, that though the Scriptures do often set forth the righteousness of God against sin, and his justice against sin; yet that righteousness and justice being satisfied by Jesus Christ, it hath no power of condemnation against those that are in Christ; no more than the pursuer had with the murderer in the city of refuge. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." {Rom.8:33} "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." {Rom.6:14}

XLVIII. Legal Conversion.

There is much mistake in the business of conversion or regeneration. For while it is looked upon merely as a change in affection or conversation, there may be much deception; there being many means which can work that, and yet that may not be the Spirit's work; such as pressing things legally, and as mere commands from the word, for there is something of the Law in the heart beforehand, and a natural conscience disposed to side with the commandments in the word, and, if possible, so to work something within as well as without; and so there may be a legal obedience or conformity of the spirit of man, and yet no spiritual obedience nor conformity by God's Spirit working subjection to Christ, and obedience to the word. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." {Jn.14:21}

2. There are Gospel terrors, as well as legal fears, as hell and hell-fire, and the worm that never dies, and condemnation, and Jesus Christ, the Judge of the quick and dead, &c., and all these in the word carry such an image of wrath, as they work fear and bondage, and moves the passions, &c., which may force the soul to a reformation, and yet but a form of godliness, destitute of the power. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." {II Tim.3:5}

3. There are certain ends nature propounds to itself for conforming or reformation; as life eternal, reputation, and men-pleasing, &c., there are exhortations, persuasions of preachers, friends, or acquaintance; there is education; there is examples of judgment upon sinners, godly society, &c., all these carry in

them a power to make men do something, and but something in the way of Religion. All these being of an operative and working nature, may bring forth something like conversion; which indeed is but a restraint at best, or a more purely natural or refined condition. Cultivated nature may of itself be of an exceptional disposition; for we see how temperate, meek, just, wise, liberal, merciful many have been; and even amongst Papists, how self-denying, contemplative, attractively practical and morally excelling; and amongst formalists in religion, how severe, strict, professing and practicing in religious duties. But the way for pure conversion and spiritual life is by Jesus Christ alone. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." {I Jn.5:12} "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." {Jn.3:36} Christ, and not works, quicken the heaven-born soul.

XLIX. When the Spirit of adoption works not freely.

First, when they put something of satisfaction towards God upon anything they do, upon any performance or obedience, as if God were prevailed with by anything of their own.

2. When they take in Christ for a Mediator, but by the way, not resting entirely upon him, and in him; but as it were to make up all sure with God, they look rather on his intercession as coming in by the bye.

3. When they are narrowed as to some outward circumstances of worship, such as time, or place, or persons, that they cannot pray, but at such hours, or in such places, &c.

4. When they do things merely as commanded, from the power of an outward commandment or precept in the word, that

brings forth but a legal, or at best but a mixed, obedience and service of something like a refined hypocrisy.

5. When they perform what they do because of some vow, or covenant they have made, &c., it being more properly the service of the Old Testament, and of bondage; for, lacking the power and fulness of the spirit of adoption to work them to obedience freely from within, they are under the power of outward principles, and are ever looking for the influence of formal precepts to work upon them from without.

6. When they come to God in any act of worship, as prayer, &c., as to a Creator rather than a Father; and as an absolute God rather than a God in Christ; without whom they, as it were approaching infinite Glory, Purity, and Justice, can neither have access with faith nor boldness.

7. When they have recourse to any outward thing to move them, rather than apply to Christ for strength, life, and spirit; for the more any motion or obedience is caused from things without, the more forced and carnal is all such obedience, and the less from a spiritual power operating within.

8. When they measure their forgiveness by their sin, or sanctification, and can believe no farther than they receive comfort; and that upon something of their own performed, and not from believing on him who hath performed all. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind," II Tim.1:7, or of a mind not corrupted with any of these false notions.

L. Opinions which make men legal.

There are certain principles by which some who are religious, are carried off much from the Gospel way of obedience.

1. Men naturally think it impossible that they should be accepted of God, and justified, and do nothing themselves for it, and in it; and hereupon flesh and blood can hardly be brought to believe the forgiveness of sins, nakedly and freely for nothing in themselves. But to take away this, consider that forgiveness of sins is of mere grace, mercy and gift. "By grace ye are saved; it is the gift of God," Eph.2:8, and through Jesus Christ; through the Redemption of his blood, Rom.3:24, as a Prince raises up a beggar, and Pharaoh's daughter brought up Moses; so are we raised up freely, and in mercy.

2. Men think that whatsoever they perform in obedience to the Law, that God cannot but approve it, because they themselves approve it for good; hereupon men come to look on themselves as doing something for life and salvation. But to take off men from any such self-love and opinion in the work of salvation, consider there is sin in everything they do, I Jn.1:8, "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves;" "and there is none righteous, no, not one." {Rom.3:10} Neither doth God judge as man judgeth; for God seeth not as man seeth; man looketh on the outward appearance, but God beholdeth the heart, I Sam.16:7, God hath balances to weigh thy thoughts as well as thy actions; and when laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity. {Psal.62:9}

3. Men naturally think it impossible to be damned for sincere actions or good works, as they call them, or serving God in a man's own fashion; and surely none are condemned simply for good, but because what they think is good, is evil in some kind or degree; and hereupon men raise up false hopes and comforts to themselves from such a course of life as they live in towards God. Thus from something they fancy good in their own way, and from something they fancy in

God, of mercy and forgiveness to sinners, upon this they venture themselves.

But to take away this, consider, though God be merciful, yet he is only merciful in his own way, not ours, not in the way we may corruptly think of him. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." {Psal.50:21} "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD." {Is.55:8} God's love and grace have ways and fashions of their own to move in; and if we be not in that way, we shall not receive of his salvation. The Jews were very zealous after God, yet not in God's fashion, but went about to establish their own righteousness. The Papist is a follower after God; and the legal, formal, poor ignorant Protestant runs on in a course of obedience, serving God as he thinks; yet not in God's way of righteousness; and so they miss of salvation for not seeking it purely in Christ alone. "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." {Jn.14:6}

LI. Jesus Christ preached to sinners as sinners.

The Apostle hath a precious doctrine, and it is this, "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." {I Tim.1:15} As if he should say, doth any of your hearts tell ye that you are sinners? Let not that be any ground at all to discourage you or to keep you from Christ; let not any despair because of that; I myself was thus and thus, a blasphemmer, a persecutor; nay, as if that were not enough, I was the chief of sinners, or the sinner in chief; the grand and supreme sinner, as if there could not well have been a greater; and I {says he} obtained mercy; so hereby the Spirit hath laid in answers to the objecting or doubting soul. If the

soul should object, if I were not such a sinner as I am I could believe; the Spirit answers, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;" as if he should say, to save even just such as thou art. If the soul should object, but there is not such a sinner as I am; the Spirit answers, yea, but here is one greater than thou; here is the chief of all sinners, the prince of sinners, obtaining mercy; "of whom I am chief." So as none can be such sinners, to whom Christ, and the blood of Christ, may not be effectual; and that upon the following grounds.

1. From the order of God's decree, he loved us, and gave Christ for us, when we were sinners. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Rom.5:8, "for Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." {I Pet.3:18}

2. Preaching the Gospel and Jesus Christ to a sinner as a sinner is but displaying this glorious love of God in time and dispensation; which had been hid in the bosom of the Father from everlasting; neither is it any more to set forth Christ to a sinner, than to manifest God in his first love, when he gave Christ for sinners, in his own purpose and counsel.

3. It exalts and shows grace more, as a free gift indeed; for what can be more of grace than that Jesus Christ should receive sinners who have no money, nor price, no works, nor righteousness to bring with them.

4. It is right when we lift up Jesus Christ as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness; not for the healed to look upon, but the stung and wounded.

5. It leaves men without excuse, and brings the greater condemnation on them; for when Christ is preached home to the very soul, he is evidently set forth as crucified before them, his blood then appears before every one's door,

for then there can be no objecting; Lord, had I been thus and thus fit or prepared, then I should have received thee, but I was a foul sinner at that very time, so and so guilty. To the sensible sinner the Lord answers, I come to pardon thee, and to wash thee in my blood, because thou wert so foul; and that is no excuse. There is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness.

6. It is most agreeable to the Gospel dispensation, and Christ's own preaching, viz., that the whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick. "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." {Mk.2:17}

7. All that ever received Christ in the Gospel, received him in a sinful condition; as many of the believing Jews did, under conviction for the sin of crucifying Christ; so all the Churches of Corinth, Ephesus, and Colosse. "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." {I Cor.6:11} "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light." {Eph.5:8} "And you, being dead in your sins and the un-circumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." {Col.2:13} So to preach Jesus Christ to sinners as sinners, is but, 1, to hold him forth in time, as God gave him before all time; God gave him to us because we were sinners, wherefore he is to be preached as he was given. 2. It is much to the glory of grace to lift Christ up to a sinner as a sinner, that where sin hath abounded, grace may abound much more. 3. There is a clear lifting up Christ as Moses did, for the wounded to look on as well as the whole. 4. Hereby men are left without excuse, because when he is held up to sinners as sinners, all are on a level for him, and such a

Saviour is suitable to all cases. 5. It is as Christ himself did, who both called sinners, and conversed with sinners; with Mary Magdalene a harlot, and with the Publicans, and with the woman of Samaria, who lived in uncleanness when the pure Messiah preached himself to her. 6. Just so were all that ever received him, both in Jerusalem, Corinth, Ephesus, &c., who had they not been foul, they had never been washed; had they not been darkness, they had never been light in the Lord.

But you will tell me of conditions in the Gospel, such as faith, and repentance, &c., and certain legal preparations necessary before Christ should be held up to the soul. Yea; but that ye may not be puzzled as many are, observe that, in the Gospel way or dispensation, faith and repentance are to be preached, but Jesus Christ with it, as the author of it, when it is said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;" you are not to separate repentance from believing, nor believing from repentance, nor either from Jesus Christ, nor Jesus Christ without them; yet for the sake of neither of them does Christ come to the soul, but Christ brings them in, and works them more and more in the soul, and that upon these grounds.

1. Christ is not ours by any act of our own, but God's, God giving, imputing and accounting him to the soul. To make Christ ours, is an Almighty work, and not the work of anything created; though Christ was ours before, and consequently without faith, by a power more glorious and infinite; yet we cannot here know him to be ours but by believing; nor partake of him as ours but by faith.

2. If faith should give us our interest in Christ, then, when our faith began, our interest began, and as our faith increases, our interest should increase, and we should be more and more justified and forgiven; which none allow, but call strong faith the faith of assurance, and

manifestation; and, if faith thus hath degrees of working, why not a beginning? "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." {Heb.11:1}

3. If Christ should be ours by faith in such a sense, then, if faith should cease, shall we cease to be justified. Shall faith begin our interest here, and not be able to continue it hereafter? "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." {Phil.1:6}

4. Can a sinner be too foul for such a Saviour, or too wounded for such a Physician to heal, and too filthy for a fountain to cleanse? "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." {Zech.13:1} "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." {Mk.2:17}

5. He that holds up Christ, holds up all the conditions in him, both of faith and repentance; for Christ is exalted to give repentance, &c., and faith is called the faith of the Son of God. {Acts 5:31, Col.2:12}

6. It is no more to preach Jesus Christ, than the grace of Christ, or gift of Christ, to a sinner; for a sinner is as unprepared and unfit for the one as the other, equally in sin and pollution as to both.

7. Spiritual work is of a new creation; and so works of preparation are not so proper in that; "we are," saith the Apostle, "his workmanship created in Christ Jesus." {Eph.2:10} And now, why shall any servant of Christ refuse to show forth that blood of his Master's which runs so freely to sinners? And any sinner refuse to receive it, because their vessels are not clean

enough for it, when it is such a blood as makes the vessels clean of itself, and for itself?

***LII. The simplicity of Gospel Salvation,
easy and plain.***

Jesus Christ, and forgiveness of sins in his Name, and redemption through his blood, is the first and principal thing held forth in the Gospel to sinners; though other mysteries of righteousness are revealed to believers; forgiveness of sins is first taught, that they may believe; and other glorious Mysteries are taught, that they may know what they do believe. They are first to feel God's love, and afterwards behold his glory. Jesus Christ crucified is the best story for sinners, and Jesus Christ exalted for Saints; and therefore it is, that in all the sermons of the apostles, the story of blood and redemption was first preached; and, when they believed that, then they wrote Epistles and Revelations of greater things unto them; so as they spake of Christ only to make them believe, and wrote to them of him when they did believe.

Salvation is not made any puzzling work in the Gospel; it is plain, easy, and simply revealed; Jesus Christ was crucified for sinners; this is salvation, we need go no further; the work of salvation is past, and finished; sins are blotted out; sinners are justified by him that rose for their justification. And now if you ask me what you "must do to be saved," I answer, "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." All that remains for the manifestation of salvation, is for you to believe there is such a work, and that Christ died for thee; if thou believest thou shalt be saved, amongst all those other sinners he died for.

To believe now is the work of the Gospel; "this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent," Jn.6:29, "and this is his

commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." {I Jn.3:23} That is, that ye be persuaded in your heart of such a thing, that Christ was crucified for sins, and for your sins; and we are called on to believe, because they only that can believe evidence that they are justified; "by him all that believe are justified." {Acts 13:39}

Salvation is not a business of our working or doing; it was done by Christ with the Father and the Holy Ghost; sin, and Satan, and hell, were all triumphed over by Christ Himself, openly, for us; and all our work is no work of salvation, but in salvation; in the salvation we have by Christ, we receive all, not doing anything that we may receive more, but doing because we receive so much, and because we are saved; therefore we work not that we may be saved, and yet we are to work as much as if we were to be saved by what we do; because we should do as much for what is done already for us, and to our hands, as if we were to receive it for what we did ourselves.

This is short work, believe and be saved; and yet this is the only Gospel work and way. Christ tells you in few words, and his apostle in as few, for "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." {Jn.3:14-15} Paul tells you, "say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven; that is, to bring Christ down from above; or, who shall descend into the deep; that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead; but what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the

mouth confession is made unto salvation." {Rom.10:6-9, &c.} So look but upon Jesus Christ for life and salvation is in thy soul, believe with thy heart, and thou art saved; because thou wert saved by Christ before, but now in thyself.

There are yet these reasons why salvation is so soon wrought in the soul. 1. Because it was done before by Christ, though not believed on before by thee till now. 2. Because it is the Gospel dispensation, to assure and impute salvation by Christ, to all that believe it. 3. There needs no more to warrant salvation to us, but to be persuaded that Jesus Christ died for us, because Christ hath suffered, and God is satisfied. Now suffering and satisfaction is that great work of salvation. 4. Because they, and they only are justified, who can believe, "the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith;" and all that believe are justified. {Rom.1:17, Acts 13:39} 5. That it may be by grace, and not of works. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." {Rom.3:24}

LIII. Christ and every part of Christ, to be studied, unfolded and believed in.

There is not anything of Jesus Christ, but it should be matter for a believer's faith to be exercised in, from his divine nature to his incarnation, and so to his exaltation; that they may be able to comprehend with all saints, the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of God; for this was infinitely influencing into every passage of his birth, his growing up, his infancy, his circumcision, his baptism, his preaching, his praying, his temptations, his fastings, his obedience to the whole Law; his sufferings, his reproaches, his poverty, his humiliation; his bloody sweating, his judgment, his condemnation; his crucifixion, his piercing, his

nailing, his drinking vinegar and gall, his strong cries and tears, his crown of thorns, his blood flowing out from his feet, hands, and side; his giving up the ghost, his death, burial, resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and sitting on the right hand of God; his priesthood, mediation, intercession and everlasting dominion. There is infinite virtue in all these, and the Gospel is made up of those unsearchable riches of grace, love, and redemption.

These truths are to be the subjects of every believer's meditation, and he is to seek and dive into the spiritual extent of these heights and depths. By these the Spirit works strength, and the believers draw power, love, holiness, spiritualness, regeneration, mortification, new obedience, faith, repentance, humiliation, meekness, temperance, &c. Christ and everything of Christ is to be matter for him, and meditation for him. These are the ministerial and instrumental means of grace and life to sinners; not in an historical or tragical use of them, but in an application of them, a relying, resting, comforting, spiritualizing use. These were all but parcels of the work of redemption, but parts of the whole; and to all these, there is an infinite depth of sin and temptation opposed; and therefore the more we are exercised in these wondrous things of Christ, the more spiritual and richly provided shall we be against the opposite. It is not enough to look on Jesus Christ in his human nature alone, though glorified and exalted, but to study, ponder and examine every part, parcel and passage of Jesus Christ; and thus to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

**Several notions respecting Free
Grace, and the general point
searched out.**

The doctrine of Free Grace is conveyed to us under several notions in these days; and I shall in few words gather up the several conceptions into a display of them as follows; intending a larger draught of it hereafter.

*The first and Scriptural account of Free Grace,
which is free without any condition.*

The first and purest conception of the Mystery is thus. That God the Father for the manifestation of his mercy and love, purposed some to glory, whom he loved freely, and gave his Son to be a way to them from death to life, from sin to righteousness, knowing that they would fall under sin and condemnation in the first Adam {where he might justly have left them, as the rest, in their blood and pollution} had it not been for that Free Grace in himself; and therefore the Son is called the Second Adam, or Quickening Spirit, and this mystery of salvation is free, infinitely free; the Father loving freely, and giving his Son; the Son loving freely, and giving himself freely; and the Spirit working from them both freely, for the manifestation of this salvation in the souls of his elect, and through the ministry of a free Gospel, even to sinners as sinners, and children of wrath considered in themselves.

*A second notion of Free Grace, held by some,
free only with conditions.*

The second notion held, which is called Free Grace in the Reformed opinion, and is the more general is that God did freely decree or purpose some to salvation in Christ, but through the

interfering and instrumental assistance of faith, &c., and that none are actually justified in God's sight, nor partakers of this free salvation before faith, but by faith; and that the Gospel is a ministry of conditions or qualifications towards this salvation.

A third notion of Free Grace, free only upon the performance of certain conditions.

The third sort held is that God did freely purpose some to salvation, and therefore gave Jesus Christ; but it was only to those whom he foresaw through the help of a Gospel ministry, and other spiritual sufficiency's, would believe and embrace Christ, so given; who nevertheless was given for all, if all should but embrace him.

A fourth notion of Free Grace, free merely in the extent.

The fourth sort hold, that God purposed some to glory and salvation in Jesus Christ, without respect to anything but the interfering of faith, &c., or the chance of believing or not believing; that he gave this Jesus Christ to die for all, not that all should have salvation by him, but only the elect who only are brought to believe, while all others are left to themselves and perish; and that the Gospel ministry reveals such a kind of general Redemption, otherwise the Gospel could not justly be preached to all, nor any be condemned for not believing, nor could unbelief be a sin.

Observe that some speak thus by way of interpreting the general Scriptures; as these of God's loving the world, &c., interpreting the world in opposition to the Jews, and by that understanding the Gentiles who were called the world. And so of sending Jesus Christ to be a propitiation not for ours, but the sins of the whole

world, &c., and so wherever the word all is, that God will have all saved, &c., they interpret it with restriction to some of all, &c., and so for the general proclamations of the Gospel, they interpret that by way of dispensation for the better gathering up the elect from all sorts and places. "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." {Mt.24:31} As for not believing, they say men are not damned for not believing simply, but from the condemnation they are left under, though their not believing may make their condemnation greater.

Some answer it by showing forth the contradiction in this of Christ dying for all, and saving some, that it is as much as Christ died for all, and not for all. Some answer, by turning it into immortality for all, but not salvation for all. Some answer, by revealing God's love, and Jesus Christ as the effect of this love, as it were the instrument and minister of this love; and this love of God going out only to the elect, for whom Christ is given; and this way they conceive takes off general Redemption. But we must take heed of making Christ more instrumental and ministerial than the Father hath made him, and will stand with the honour of the Son, who is the first born of the elect, the Head of the body; and men will soon be lost in defining too curiously on Jesus Christ as Son and Mediator, and we must be spiritually wary in distinguishing too curiously, unless it be but only in a Scripture-way; for Christ is but one, and salvation is one.

Thus far some go in opposing the general point, but we must go a little further in finding out the mystery of the general point, and meet with it there. Now I humbly conceive the mystery lies only in a rational way of justice, by a Gospel dispensation; that is, that God will not arbitrarily damn any man merely because he may, but

justly, under a dispensation of salvation; as they are, from their own will, found fighting against God's will, in his dispensation of salvation, as well as his disposition of condemnation in the Law. Thus go the deepest and most notional of that way.

And the other part of the mystery, which is lowest, and most argued for, in these times, and by most, is only, that the Gospel cannot rationally be proclaimed but upon some such a general ground as Christ dying for all.

Thus I have opened, though weakly, the mystery; and the opening it may be enough to convince all whose eyes God hath opened, that the whole building of a universal scheme, is all upon a rational notion, founded and strengthened on some general terms in the Scripture; now let them examine whether mere reason is a principle high enough for a spiritual mystery to be established on; and if bringing salvation down upon such a sandy foundation, be proportionable to so glorious a work as that of Redemption, besides all the intervening it hath with Free Grace, and Free Justification and Election by grace, &c.

Now let the Mystery be looked on in their way, which is this, Christ died for all, or else the Gospel cannot be preached to all. And in the other way, which is this, Christ died only for his elect sheep, and yet he is preached to all, that his elect, who are amongst this all, might be brought to faith; and though he died not for all, yet when lifted up, he will draw all, though none accept it, but they that believe, and none believe but they to whom it is given. And in this way of salvation there lies much mystery, which is more suitable to a divine work, than their rational scheme of human notions. Great is the mystery of godliness!

And this ground is as clear and spiritually rational, that the Gospel is to be preached to all;

as their fabricated assertion that he died for all. Seeing some only are saved, and not all, and a decree of mere grace implies an impossibility of all to be saved; and therefore why is it so contended for that all are redeemed?

Some Truths of Free Grace sparkling in former writers, and in some famous approved men of our times, in Testimony to what is in this Discourse in part asserted, and in these times, by others Assertors of Free Grace.

No conversion by the Law or the preaching of it, but only by preaching Christ and Grace.

Dr. Preston, {Sermon on the New Covenant} "If I should only preach to you the Commandments, &c., I might preach long enough ere you could keep them; do you receive the Spirit by the preaching of the Law? No, but by preaching the promise of pardon and forgiveness. {Pg.347} "If a man would desire to change his course, to be made a new Creature, the way is not to consider the Commandments, as to what he ought to do; but my beloved, the way is to get assurance that thy sins are pardoned, is to consider the Covenant of Grace. Heb.9:14." {Pg.333}

No preparatory works necessary before Christ.

Mr. Rogers, {Right way to be Saved} "Divers mistake, and look for something to ground on in themselves, and so are woefully bewildered and in great perplexity; for it is as if one should not set a young tree, but let it lie above the ground till they see what it will bear. Free Grace hath many enemies. We should stand for Free Grace. {Pg.54}

Excellency of the Gospel above the Law

Dr. Sibbes, {Excellency of the Gospel above the Law} "Do ye wonder why the Free Grace of God hath found such enemies, &c., the heart of man is in a frame of enmity against God, and sets itself most against that which God will be most glorified in. Let us vindicate nothing so much as Free Grace. We must live by grace, and die by grace, and stand at the Day of Judgment by grace; not in our own righteousness." {Pg.241}

*Faith is no condition of the
New Covenant of Grace.*

Mr. Perkins {Commentary on the Galatians} "The Gospel, called by Paul the Promise of life, gives life freely, without the condition of any work, and requires nothing but the receiving of that which is given. It may be objected, that the Gospel promiseth life upon the condition of our Faith. Answer: The Gospel hath in it no moral condition of anything to be done of us; indeed faith is mentioned after the form and manner of a condition; but in truth, it is the free gift of God as well as life eternal, &c." {Pg.157}

We have all in Christ.

Mr. Perkins {Commentary on the Galatians} "Thou must not receive the Promise immediately of God, but Christ must do it for thee; though thou be unworthy, yet there is dignity sufficient, and worthiness enough in him. If thou say that thou must at the least receive the promise at the hand of Christ; I add further, that he will not quench the smoking flax, &c., and that our salvation stands in this, not that we know and apprehend him, but that he knows and apprehends us first of all." {Pg.184}

Christ is everything to us.

Mr. Calvin, {Institutes of the Christian Religion} "We must take heed of drawing any part of Salvation but from Christ; if we seek Salvation, let it be in the Name of Jesus Christ; if the Spirit, or any gifts or graces, let us seek them in his unction; if strength, let us seek it in his power; if purity, in his conception; if mercy, in his nature, which was touched with our infirmities; if redemption, in his passion; if forgiveness, in his condemnation, or being made a curse for us; if satisfaction, in his sacrifice; if cleansing, in his blood; if mortification, in his sepulcher and death; if newness of life, in his resurrection; if immortality, in the same; if an heavenly inheritance, in his entering into heaven; if all good things, in his kingdom and dominion here. All treasures are in him, and they who are not content only with him, shall have no rest anywhere; although too they may look half-heartedly at him. Nor can there be any unbelief, nor doubtings, while his fulness is thus known." {Pg.167}

God was never an enemy to his elect.

Calvin quoting Augustine {Institutes of the Christian Religion} "Incomprehensible and unchangeable is the love of God, not that love which we obtain from reconciliation by the Blood of Christ, but wherewith he loved us before the foundations of the world; therefore when it is said, Christ reconciled us, it is not to be understood as if then he begun to love those whom he hated before, but that he reconciled us even to that love wherewith he loved us; therefore in a wonderful manner he loved us when we were enemies. Rom.5:8." {Pg.106}

That the Orthodox, and those commonly called Antinomians, differ little.

Mr. Gattaker's, {God's eye, &c.} "The matter in controversy between us and these men is not how far sin is removed or abolished in Believers, or how far it is by Justification abandoned, or in what sense God is said to see or not see sin, or to take notice of it in believers and justified persons, &c., as if all these things were granted on both sides. Men of learning, you see, and judgment, do not cry out Antinomianism, or Free Grace, or Free Justification, as others do, &c., but acknowledge a consent in all these, &c." {Pg.10}

Why Luther is not quoted here.

Luther I could quote, but he is now looked on by some, as one that is both over-quoted and over-writ Free Grace, and bending himself against works, which was the Popery and Anti-Christianity of those times. He raised up grace, rather in opposition {as some think, to whom I dare not so fully agree} to the excess of works, than to the just advantage of grace; and yet they can allow him in other things; thus we can pick and choose from a Reformer what fits to the standard of our own light and reformation, and cast the other by; I shall therefore quote some later.

Concerning our not resting on sight, or our own graces for assurance.

Mr. Goodwin, {Christ Set Forth} "An immoderate recourse unto signs, though barely considered as such, is as unwarrantable, when thereby we are diverted, and taken off from a more constant actual exercise of daily thoughts of faith towards Christ immediately, as he is set forth to be our righteousness, &c., and yet the minds of many

are so wholly taken up with their own hearts, that as the Psalmist says of God, Christ is scarce in all their thoughts; but let these consider what a dishonor this must needs be unto Christ, that his train and favorites, {our graces,} should have a fuller court, and more frequent attendance from our hearts than himself, who is the King of glory; and likewise, what a shame also it is for believers themselves, who are his spouse, to look upon their husband no otherwise but by reflections, and at second hand, through the intervention and assistance of their own graces, as mediators between him and them. Now to rectify this error, the way is not wholly to reject all use of such evidences, but to order them, and think properly of them, &c." {Pg.2}

*We are justified in Christ's Justification,
when he rose again.*

"Christ's resurrection was the original act of God's justifying us in Christ, we were virtually justified then, in Christ his being justified, as in one person." {Pg.202}

God remembers not our sins.

"As, by reason of his Intercession, God remembers not old sins, so likewise, though he will punish the sins of his children with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes, yet his loving kindness he will not take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail, notwithstanding their continual transgressions." {Pg.207}

*The Law as given by Moses,
is no Rule to Christians.*

Mr. Bolton, {True bounds of Christian Freedom}
"Others say we are freed from the Law as given by Moses, and are only tied to the obedience of

it, in and by Christ; and as Christ renews it, and as it comes out of the hand, and from the authority of Christ; and we have it immediately from the hands of Christ. I shall not much dislike this, &c." {Pg.74}

Believers and God are never at enmity.

"As none of our sins shall condemn us, so none of our sins shall put us into a state of condemnation more; none of our sins shall ever put us under the curse, or under wrath again." {Pg.14}

God doth not punish Believers for sin.

"We are freed from all miseries, afflictions and punishments, which were justly due to us as the fruits of sin, as they may be conceived to be fruits of wrath, or have wrath in them, and that by Christ's once offering himself for us." {Pg.14}

Works done before Justification not of Grace.

Mr. Rogers, {On the Articles} "Works done before Justification please not God, before men they may please; nothing that they do can please him; hereby the vanity of him is perceived, who thinks before man's justification, that his deeds do please God. What, is faith then to be accounted before Justification, according to this principle?" {See the 39th Article of the Church of England.} {Pg.57}

*God was never an enemy to his elect,
not even while in their sins.*

Mr. Palmer, {Character of a Christian in Paradox} "He believes the God that hates all sin is reconciled to himself, though sinning continually, never making, nor being able to make him satisfaction." {Pg.10}

We are justified, though ungodly.

"He believes the most just God, &c., to have justified him, though a most ungodly sinner." {Pg.11}

We are not saved by anything we do.

"He knows he shall not be saved by his works, and yet doth all the good works he can." {Pg.58}

A believer sins not.

"A believer cannot sin, yet he can do nothing without sin." {Pg.68}

A believer believes against hope.

"He believes, like Abraham, in hope against hope." {Pg.74}

God freely pardoned in Christ.

"He believes himself freely pardoned." {Pg.12}

Believers are pure in God's sight.

"He believes himself to be pure and precious in God's sight." {Pg.13}

Christ promised to sinners as sinners.

Mr. Goodwin, {Christ Set Forth} "There are absolute promises made to no conditions, as when Christ is said to come to save sinners, &c., now in these it is plain, Christ is the naked object of them; so that if you apply not him, you apply nothing; for the only thing held forth in them is Christ." {Pg.30}

We are justified in Christ's Justification.

"Even so it is in the matter of our justification; it was done virtually in Christ; and afterwards when we believe it is actually passed in, and upon ourselves. So by Christ's being justified, we are all virtually justified, and in Law, through a secret, yet irrepeatably Covenant between God and Christ, who only did then know who were his." {Pg.122}

A Believers Law is Christ and his Spirit.

Mr. Perkins {Commentary on the Galatians}
"They which are true Believers are a free and voluntary people, obeying God as if there were no law to compel them; they have Christ to live in them; the Spirit of life, that is in Christ, is in them, and that is their Law. It is the property of a child of God to obey God, as it is the nature and quality of the fire to burn, &c." {Pg.128}

Thus, in the quoting or citing these divines concerning some precious truths of Christ, I have done as Paul said to the Athenians when he would prove a fact, "as certain also of your own poets have said;" so the truths which are abroad, mistaken by many, are truths, as also some of your own divines have said.

FINIS.