

THE PERFECTION OF JUSTIFICATION

**Maintained against the Pharisee;
the Purity of Sanctification
against the Stainers of it; the
Unquestionableness of a Future
Glorification against the
Sadducee.**

In Several Sermons.

By John Simpson,

**an unworthy publisher of
Gospel-truths in London.**

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BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Reader, the Author preached and printed the Works out of which this is extracted, nigh an hundred years ago, and by them, he, though dead, yet speaketh. And however strange the Doctrine herein contained, may be, {to those who build their hopes upon inherent righteousness,} yet it is none other than the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Doctrine of the Reformation, and the only Doctrine that tends {contrary to the judgment of carnal reason} to uprightness of heart and life, and whoever conceives otherwise of this Doctrine understands it not. It is founded upon this principle, that we must discover God's Love to us in Christ Jesus, that he has already saved us, before we can truly love God or our Neighbour. This our Saviour inculcates to Simon the Pharisee in the Parable of the two Debtors, Luke 7:41, and in many other Places of Scripture. May he sprinkle this with his Blood; and explain it by his Spirit to the Heart of every Reader. So wishes your Servant in the Lord Jesus Christ, William Cudworth. {*A Brief Foreword to a 1745 Reprinted Edition, of the First Sermon, entitled, Man's Righteousness, No Cause or Part of his Justification.*}

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Simpson, who was born about 1615 in the Parish of St Dunstan-in-the-East of London, was an Independent Minister of the Gospel, and struggling Fifth Monarchist. Simpson was admitted to Exeter College, Oxford, age sixteen, and graduated {Master of Arts} in 1638. In 1642, whilst England was in the midst of its Civil War, he was appointed lecturer at St. Dunstan's, where John Childerley was Rector, by the House of Commons. Only one month later he was also appointed {to the satisfaction of many parishioners} the minister of St Botolph-Algate {one of the largest parishes just outside the then existent London Wall} in the East End of London, {where he maintained an open-membership congregation of Independents and Baptists,} when the curate Thomas Swadlin, {incumbent of St Botolph's since 1628, a staunch Royalist, and considered as one of Laud's favorites,} felt compelled, {after a short imprisonment, and to prevent further confinement,} to flee the district. During the English Civil War, Simpson served as a Major in the Parliamentary Army, and by 1647 became a close friend of Henry Jessey, {a Fifth Monarchist, and Particular Baptist,} though maintaining an open fellowship throughout his life, with all that embraced the Gospel of Christ.

Simpson's passionate zeal for the proclamation of the Gospel of God's Free Grace in Christ, along with his unwavering stand for what he embraced as Gospel Truth, soon brought him into conflict, as complaints were made to the House of

Commons, {being dominated at this time, by the Presbyterian faction,} to the effect that Simpson differed in certain points from the Westminster Confession, which cultivated in his removal from St Botolph, along with cautions against his preaching anywhere without their approval, thus suspending him from preaching until the latter part of 1646.

After being accused, {along with the Particular Baptist Hanserd Knollys,} of embracing Antinomian tenants, and having to defend his principles, Simpson's next appointment, {now under the Commonwealth of Oliver Cromwell,} was at All-Hallows-the-Great, where he succeeded Walter Cradock. {Interesting side note, although its creditability may be questioned, is that according to Thomas Edwards, who belonged to the heresy-hunting wing of the London Presbyterians, and whose often unreliable and fabricated tales can be found in his three volume work entitled Gangraena, 1646, says in regards to the charge of the Antinomianism of Simpson & Knollys, that they co-authored a book concerning the Ten Commandments, which if they did, has been sadly lost to the ages.}

Both the All-Hallows-the-Great, and All-Hallows Lombard Street Congregations were at this time considered as rather radicalized by religious formalists and puritanical legalists, as its ministers emphasized the free grace of Christ, and the Spirit's work apart from the Law for both justification and sanctification, being motivated by a primary concern for Christ's glory in the work of salvation, whilst also

refusing to congregate along denominational ties, embracing saints as saints, wherever they were found.

Though the Allhallows Congregation practiced a mixed communion under Simpson, its nevertheless recorded that over two hundred adult baptisms took place between the years 1650 and 1653. During the Commonwealth, All-Hallows-the-Great also became a center for the Fifth Monarchy Movement, an extraordinary religious and political movement, active from 1649-1660, and brooding upon the then great political crisis, whilst seeking the key to it in the prophetic Scriptures. These Fifth Monarchists took their name from their belief that the time of the fifth monarchy, that is, the monarchy that - according to their traditional interpretation of the book of Daniel - should succeed the Assyrian, Persian, Greek, and Roman Monarchies and during which Christ should reign on earth with his saints for 1,000 years, was at hand.

A small sample of Simpson's messages were published in 1648, entitled THE PERFECTION OF JUSTIFICATION MAINTAINED AGAINST THE PHARISEE. These were printed in response to accusations leveled against him by fifty-two London ministers, accusing him once again of Antinomianism. Throughout these messages, this Ambassador of Christ, endeavored to set forth the glory of God by the proclamation of an accomplished redemption, through the sole merit, righteousness, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. As one who was instrumental in republishing these messages one

hundred years after their initial debut, {William Cudworth, in 1745,} said, "however strange the Doctrine herein contained may be to those who build their hopes upon inherent righteousness; yet it is none other than the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Doctrine of the Reformation, and the only Doctrine that tends {contrary to the judgment of carnal reason} to uprightness of heart and life, and whoever conceives otherwise of this Doctrine understands it not."

The execution of King Charles I in 1649, truly intensified Millenarian hopes and expectations, which brought such outspoken prophetic preachers, such as Simpson, to the forefront. Next to Christopher Feake, {1612-1683, vicar of Christ Church, Newgate, weekday lecturer at Allhallows the Great, opponent to the Westminster Assembly, and amongst the first and most outspoken critics of the Protectorate,} Simpson was the second most influential Fifth Monarchist leader, until he toned-down his views and removed his congregation from the hardliners, {like Feake, and Vavasor Powell,} during the summer of 1656.

In March of 1651, Simpson, along with the Independent John Owen and the Presbyterian John Leigh, were nominated to preach a sermon to the Rump Parliament, which caused quite a commotion, seeing that he felt compelled, as did William Dell and John Webster a few years following, to set up the infallible work of the Spirit of God in opening the Scriptures to a believer's understanding, against human learning, which during that time, was being

elevated to measures beyond Scriptural precedent. One of his remarks was that he believed that the LORD had more eminently blessed the preaching of the Gospel by the Parliamentarian Soldiers of the Army, than all the endeavours of all the so-called clergy combined, arguing that worldly scholarship was essentially irrelevant to the training of a true minister of the Gospel, and denouncing the notion that such achievements were of any value as a means towards the better understanding of Scripture, whilst asserting time and time again the essential work of the Holy Spirit in opening Gospel Truths. With such a hostile position against the established clergy, it's no wonder that his sponsor, Major-General Thomas Harrison, {Harrison, one of the most powerful religious zealots of the day, who was at one time a close friend and supporter of Oliver Cromwell, and in 1649 signed the death warrant of Charles I, which resulted in Harrison being hanged, drawn and quartered, shortly after the restoration of the King in 1660,} was implicitly rebuked and criticized for recommending him.

When Cromwell dismissed the Rump Parliament, and took the oath as Lord Protector in 1653, things began to get harsh for many of the Fifth Monarchists, as they had envisioned a different course of events, and felt betrayed by Cromwell, {not truly grasping the fact, that there was no sword like that of the Protector, I Sam.21:9, in all the world,} who they felt had not carried out many of their mandates, in attempting to turn the Commonwealth into a more 'godly' nation.

Simpson's outspokenness soon got him into trouble, as one of his predictions was that the Protectorate would fall within six months, which, amongst other expressions, landed him in Prison, namely at Windsor Castle, in order to preserve the peace of the Commonwealth. Whilst Simpson deteriorated away in prison, his congregation at Allhallows also began to deteriorate, to the extent that Cromwell himself was informed that Allhallows, without Simpson and Feake, {who was also imprisoned,} was "a dull assembly," as they "were the men that carried it on with heat." So many of his parishioners flocked to Windsor to see Simpson that the Council felt necessitated to order a confinement, in order to prevent more dissent.

From Windsor Prison, Simpson wrote a series of letters to his flock at Allhallows, from which we extract a few sentences. Lashing out against schools for the manufacturing of Gospel ministers, he says, "Universities as now they stand upon an Antichristian foundation must be tumbled down, antichrist hath set up those cages of unclean birds, that they who go thither may learn to sing the whores song, but not the songs of Zion." He exhorts his brethren to "pray down those things, persons, and places, which are anti-Christian, and yet standing in England. Come out, and be separated from the wisdom and spirit of the world, and come up with me into the spirit of the Lord Jesus." He acknowledges that "a faith of my own working will not remove a molehill, power must be given in by Jesus Christ, for the glorifying of his name," and

further urges his flock to “abstain from all appearance of evil, abhor Jezebels fasts, pray down the anti-Christian clergy, and their nasty nests the universities; believe down antichrists high commissioners, with patrons, parsons, vicars, curates, lecturers, and their tithes, and all things belonging to that new hierarchy.” Regarding the present form of government he states, “I had an impulsive spirit, in which I was strongly carried to believe, that that bastardly government, in the setting up of which, the mouths of God’s enemies were open to blaspheme, should die, and not live, though in itself it might be good enough, and too good for us, unless we did walk more worthy of our mercies; yet considering it, as set up by them, who declared so much for the liberty of the freeborn people of England, and the interest of Christ, it is a bastard begotten and conceived in a night of hypocrisy, and brought forth in the day of boldfaced impiety, and the Lord will make a grave for it, for it is vile. I did apprehend that great Oliver was set up by God permissibly, by the dragon voluntarily, by himself ambitiously, by the army cowardly, by willing saints treacherously, and by unwilling saints passively and mournfully.”

Upon his release from Prison five months later on July 4th, 1654, Simpson was prohibited from preaching within a 10-mile range of London, and barred from the City itself altogether. Despite his banishment from London, Simpson returned to the Allhallows pulpit in December of 1654, and after preaching two sermons, Cromwell himself requested

that he consult with him "as a Brother and a Christian," inviting three or four members of the assembly at Allhallows to accompany him. {Remarkably indeed, in the light of Simpson's hostile remarks regarding Cromwell.} Accompanied by these brethren, Simpson spent an entire day at Whitehall. When Simpson questioned Cromwell regarding his wrongful imprisonment, the Protector responded that unless he had imprisoned him, he would have been tried under the Treason Ordinance, with the probable penalty of death. After more than six hours of discussion between them, Cromwell dismissed Simpson, and his friends, urging them "to carry soberly, as that should be best for them."

During the next few months a number of verbal altercations were directed at the Protectorate from those aligning themselves with the Fifth Monarchy Movement, and the Allhallows pulpit was often used as a launching pad for such radical outbursts, though not so much by Simpson himself, as his zeal for a governmental reformation seemed to be beginning to quench, whilst those in high places marvelled at Cromwell's patience in dealing with Simpson, and others identified as political insurrectionists.

The government finally apprehended Simpson once again in January of 1656, though his imprisonment was of a short duration, being freed only a month later. The next year, {January, 1657,} began with a widespread fall-out in matters relating to the Fifth Monarchists, especially Feake, whose preaching at this time became more and more

virulent in its attacks on the existing government of Cromwell, denouncing him on many occasions, whilst claiming that the present government was "as Babylonish as ever," and that there existed "as much of Babylon in the civil state, and the old popish laws, and clergy-state, as ever." Henry Jessey, William Kiffin, and Simpson being present on one such occasion at Allhallows, stood in protest against the harsh tones being echoed forth, more especially in Feake's use of the terms Babylonish and Antichristian to define the Protectorate. In the ensuing confusion Kiffin was denounced as a person seeking royal favour by using flattery, whilst Simpson was labeled as a traitor for once preaching "the same things in the same place." Shortly thereafter, Simpson, again wavering in political matters began praying for Cromwell's government, and now preaching against the Fifth Monarchist movement, which no doubt created further division in his congregation.

Upon the death of Oliver Cromwell on September 3rd 1658, Simpson's troubles intensified, for as the restoration of the Monarchy approached, Simpson, Kiffin, and other 'radicals' were denounced as extremists and fanatics. In April of 1660, the Royal Coat of Arms were exhibited at Allhallows, which must have sunk the hearts of the people, as many associated the reinstatement of the Monarchy with the restoration of Popery. Simpson himself, as late as October of that year {preaching at Bishopsgate} defended the regicides {those responsible for the beheading of King Charles I} in

a sermon, reiterating his belief that "they were justified before God, and had acted conscientiously."

Throughout, Simpson remained faithful to his convictions, and was allowed to continue his preaching at Allhallows, {which seems somewhat remarkable, in and of itself,} though denounced repeatedly, as his messages were carefully monitored by those that would extinguish his zeal for the truth. Consequently, a warrant was issued for Simpson's arrest for seditious and dangerous speech, and he was once again arrested and cast into prison, most likely at Newgate, where he was kept for several months. Upon Mr. Simpson's release from prison, he took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, for which he was severely censured by many of his brethren, alleging that by not doing so "he would have sinned against God, against the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer, against his family, and against himself." It was only shortly thereafter, and much to the disappointment of his adversaries who wanted him tried for treason, that death intervened, and the LORD took him in June of 1662.

From an account taken from the author of his funeral sermon, to his bereaved congregation, we have these words, "God took him away immediately upon his release from prison, when you had some hopes of the further enjoyment of his labours; at a time when there is the greatest want of such faithful and zealous labourers; especially of such as are enlightened in, and are zealous for church-work; such as have a heart and abilities to encourage the

people of God in their separation from the world and antichristian defilements. - He had love for all the saints. He had room in his heart to receive every one whom Christ received. He held communion with the saints, not on account of their names, or forms of worship, but on account of their union to Jesus Christ. He loved no man on account of his opinions, but his union to Christ, as he often declared in his congregation. - He had a great insight into the doctrines of grace. Having cast anchor within the veil, he understood well the great mystery of the mercy-seat. It was the glory of his ministry to hold forth the riches of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. In preaching this doctrine he was a mystery to a blind world, for they could not understand him; and, therefore, they hardly knew by what name to call him. When he spoke of the unsearchable riches of the grace of Christ, he was carried beyond himself; he was a master of words, yet seemed to want words to express what he knew and enjoyed of divine grace. - He was a faithful servant of Christ. Whatever the Lord made known to him, he made known to his people without reserve, whether it pleased or displeased. He did not shun to declare all the counsel of God, so far as it was revealed to him. Also, if at any time he was convinced that he had delivered anything not consonant to scripture, he would openly and publicly confess his error, and trample upon his own name and honour, rather than deceive the souls of his people by leading them to imbibe false doctrine. While he thus ingenuously and openly confessed his mistakes, it shows how

eminently faithful he was to truth and to the souls of his hearers. - His ministry was very successful, and attended by the abundant blessing of God. He was instrumental in the conversion of many souls; and he left behind him many seals to his ministry. Every faithful preacher was not so remarkably blessed. God blessed him above scores, nay, hundreds of preachers, in the great work of conversion, by turning souls from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. His happiness is unquestionable. Your loss is his gain. He is taken up into glory, and there hath communion with God. He is out of the reach of all his enemies. They can now imprison him no more. He will never have anything more imposed upon him contrary to his conscience. He will never suffer there for nonconformity. There God will be forever served, adored, and glorified with one heart, and with one consent."

Mr. Simpson's funeral sermon, entitled, "The Failing and Perishing of good Men a matter of great and sore Lamentation," was preached June 26, 1662, the day of his interment.

***To the man truly spiritual in the
knowledge of JESUS CHRIST.***

Whereas I intended to have presented these plain and simple sermons to the patronage of some of my friends who were pleased to own and favour me and my sufferings, without any apology for myself, or any vindication of the truths which I have delivered. I am now by weighty reasons enforced to alter my resolutions, and my second thoughts do appear better unto me than my first.

I have been lately aspersed by the hands of two and fifty who profess themselves the ministers of Christ, as a man heterodox and unsound in my principles, concerning the Law and Justification by Free Grace. Wherefore it seems probable unto me, that if I should bring my friends upon the stage to patronize me in a public way, whilst I lie under the reproach of so many, I should wrong those whom I desire in thankfulness to respect and honour; and if I should send forth these sermons into the world without any apology for myself, I might prove more injurious to myself, than these can be unto me. Besides this, I do apprehend that some tenderhearted Christians when they shall read the name of the abused author, now made infamous unto them by the hands of so many subscribers, may either be afraid to read what I have printed; or if they shall read it, an uncharitable prejudice may rob them of the fruit and harvest of their reading.

For these and other reasons, I have ushered in these sermons into the world with a short

apologetical answer to their charge, and have made a choice of thee as an umpire and judge between my accusers and myself. And truly thou art the fittest man that I should single out from the men of the world, to do me this service of love, whether I look upon myself, or my antagonists.

First, if I look upon my antagonists, thou art not within their gunshot or censure, and so thou canst not be damnified by me. "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." I Cor.2:15.

Secondly, if I look unto myself, thou art the fittest and only man for me. For thou wilt judge me by the law of love, liberty and clemency. And when I seriously consider what weaknesses, frailties and infirmities have discovered themselves in my flesh, even in those things {whether in praying, preaching, or writing} wherein I desire to be most spiritual, I dare not think of any other judge. Thou wilt be more favorable than the Synod at Westminster unto my way and manner of preaching and expressions, which I made use of five or six years since, considering that I then had not been many months in the school of Christ. Thou wilt be more indulgent unto this book which now shows itself to the world, than the whole Assembly of Sion-College divines, considering, that at this time I have been but the time of an apprenticeship in the school of my Saviour. I need not make an apology for myself before thee, to tell thee, that these sermons were never intended for the press by the deliverer of

them, but brought thither by the skillful hand of one professing the art of short-writing. Thou wilt willingly of thyself pardon the method and unmethodicalness of them, and repetitions in them, delighting thyself with the naked truths of Christ contained therein.

I need not excuse the plainness of speech and want of worldly rhetoric which is in them; for in thy judgment, plain preaching needs not to plead for a pardon, but doth deserve commendation. The fanatical preaching of some men of our times, with their bombastique phrases, metaphysical terms, chymical words, excellency of speech and wisdom cannot please thee, because they are displeasing to Christ, and derogate from the glory of his cross. I Cor.1:17; I Cor.2:1. Thou knowest that these things are more useful for the spreading of the mysteries of ungodliness covertly and subtly than for the publishing of the soul saving truths of the Lord Jesus; and a fitter dress for the whore of error and falsehood, than clothing for the chaste virgin of truth. That I may speak my heart to thee, I know that thou wilt in all things be so favorable unto me, that I may rather willing to humble myself at thy feet, than to justify myself before men. I do therefore willingly confess, that I who am rather confident of thy favour, than desirous to implore it, do look upon myself as the vilest of those who ever made any address unto thee; when I consider my sinfulness, before I was convinced of sin, my unrighteous righteousness before I came into the light, and my provocations and aversions from God, since I received his light. Augustine composed a

small book, which he called his Confessions, in which he doth spread forth his follies unto the world before his conversion, but should I set down all the follies, vanities and wickedness of my youth, a great volume would not hold them; and it is easier to write large volumes of them, than to bring them within the narrow limits and borders of an epistle.

That I may therefore pass these by as God hath passed them by in his grace, never to call them to his remembrance against me anymore; I do now acknowledge, by the reason of variety of inward temptations, since I have looked towards religion, I have been in my own apprehension a mere Proteus therein. I've been zealous for the works of the Law, that I might be made a righteous man, being ignorant of him who is the end of the Law for righteousness for everyone that believeth, and was then as loathsome a sinner to the eye of God, as was a righteous man to the eyes of the world. I had suddenly leapt from Pharisaism to the profession of the Gospel in a carnal way, and had then been ready to think that I could never be a true Gospel professor, unless I did take some liberty beyond the allowance which I now apprehend the Gospel affords. I have been so ignorantly inquisitive after the knowledge of ordinances, that I have doubted whether ever I should be saved, dying ignorant of the ordinances, and church government of the Lord Jesus Christ; and looking for a light, and finding darkness and confusion in these things, I have been afterwards as spiritually mad and foolish in the undervaluing of them. There is scarce an error to be

thought of, but by the folly and curiosity of my nature, I've been tempted to reach forth my hand unto it. I've run over the bogs of Familyism, but have not been swallowed up in them; yet that I may not be mistaken in this relation notwithstanding all this, by the grace of God I am what I am.

And though the world hath looked upon me as an heretic, I have seen myself so fast in the arms of God, that I'm confident that neither men, devils, errors, sins, nor temptations shall ever be able to pull me thence. I have been dead by the Law to the Law, and am alive by the Gospel. I have ceased from works, and yet am created to good works. I am not under the Law, and yet in my mind I serve the Law of Christ. I can do nothing, and yet can do all things in Christ which strengtheneth me; and though I can do all things, I am an unprofitable servant; I care not much what men can say of me, seeing that God doth daily assure me in the Spirit of Christ, that I am his son. It doth not too much afflict me if any man refuse to have fellowship with me as a saint, seeing that I have fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, and thyself, and have liberty in my conscience to have fellowship with all Saints.

My greatest sorrow and most delightful grief at this present is this, that I am not more holy, being so strongly assured by truth that I am happy. I hope that thou wilt further this work of purity in me by thy spiritual prayers presented to the throne of our Father's grace on my behalf, where I do desire that thou wouldest know me one with thyself, being one spirit with Christ Jesus, though I cannot but

subscribe myself, the greatest of sinners, and less than the least of all Saints.

John Simpson.

To the two and fifty parish ministers within the New Province of London, who have subscribed unto that pamphlet, which is wickedly and unjustly called by them, "A Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ, and to our Solemn League and Covenant."

Sirs, when I read your un-scripture-like terms, what you make use of in presenting your new modeled government to the world, as the government of Jesus Christ, I wonder with what faces in these times of light, ye should dare to hold it forth as the unquestionable government of Christ by divine right, and should so uncharitably censure all men as schematics, or superstitious persons, who do express their dislike of it, or refuse to be conformable unto the same.

Now to run far from an instance of one of these terms, it seems that the strange and hidden virtue of your Presbyterian Government hath suddenly turned our famous city into a province, and made you ministers of this Presbyterian province. Did ever Christ or his Apostles turn free cities or countries into provinces by bringing in any ecclesiastical government upon those who are converted to the faith? What is any province to speak properly, but a region or country subdued by

force of arms, and kept under jurisdiction by a lieutenant sent thither with commission to govern; as the schoolboys know very well, who know the meaning of that phrase in Caesar's Commentaries, "to turn such a free country into a province to the Romans." I know that it is the design of some to turn our cities and countries into provinces, and to wrest power from the civil magistrate, by which they may set up their lieutenants to enslave the magistrates and all the people of the kingdom to their Presbyterian command and dominion; but I cannot yet remember when London was turned into a province, unless some of you did secretly and cunningly contrive the plot with some of the Army, that the Army should march throughout the city for the bringing of London into the condition of a Presbyterian Province.

Friends, find words in Scripture for your government, by Parochial, Classical, Presbyterian, Provincial, and National Assemblies or else the People of England will not believe that your government is by divine right, until you shall make captains over them, and enforce them to return again into Egypt, where this shall be all the liberty of the King, Princes, Nobles, Parliament, and people of England to believe, that everything is schismatic or heresy, which doth oppose that as error, which the children of the adulterer and whore, I mean the sons and posterity of the Pope and Popish Bishops, shall enjoin them to receive as the truths of the Lord Jesus.

But I touch now upon an displeasing string, I shall therefore leave it with a sad aposiopsis, and shall entreat you seriously to consider some things which I shall acquaint you with, in relation to myself, and your dealings with me, willingly acquainting those among you, and as far as I may, who having subscribed to those articles against me, and yet never read or heard of my name in the book, among whom Master Downham doth acknowledge himself to be one, who doth profess that if he had seen me there among the impeached delinquents and heretics, that he would rather for what he hath heard and known of me, have pleaded my excuse, than having subscribed to my censure; and shall leave it to yourselves, to inquire amongst yourselves concerning the miscarriage in this particular.

In the first place I do suppose that some of you upon mature deliberation, may apprehend that you have been too rash to censure me upon Master Gataker's testimony, if it shall appear unto you that I was freed by Master Marshall, whom I name in thankfulness for his love unto me, and to let men know that I have found more of the spirit of Christ, sincerity, and love in him than in any who have been saviors of the Presbyterian Government. To show my willingness and readiness to free myself from misapprehensions which men had entertained concerning these things which I held, I did voluntarily go unto him, and discourse with him concerning my judgment in these things, with which I had been charged; who did receive such full satisfaction from me, that upon my request he was

willing to write unto Master White the Chairman, that though I did differ from him in my phrases and expressions concerning the Law, Justification and Free Grace, yet that I held nothing, but what was maintained by many godly and faithful men concerning these points; and this was done many months before Master Gataker did fling his firebrands at me, to charge me with those things in which in his judgment I had cleared myself. And lest any should make nothing of this; uncharitably supposing that I might hold one thing in my heart, and write another thing to him, I am willing if he please, that he shall print what I have delivered unto him and make it public. If this be considered by men of tender consciences, {if that character of a good man be not odious unto you,} some of you, who know of this, may read your maliciousness, and all of you your rashness, who have condemned me by your censures. When Constantius desired Liberius to subscribe to the proscription and excommunication of Athanasius, he made him this answer, "Oh Emperor, ecclesiastical censures are not to be passed without a great deal of justice."

Let me speak plainly unto you, not to shame you, but to convince you of your fault; when I am most serious and free from all turbulence of passion, I have apprehended that I should have found more justice in the High Commission Court than among my brethren. The civilians say that we must not pass our judgment upon a Law by one line thereof, and Christian justice and equity will teach us not to censor Gospel sermons by one line maliciously or

ignorantly taken out of it, knowing that a spiritual man now, as well as Paul formally, may have some things hard to be understood which they who are unstable and unlearned may wrest, as they do the Scriptures to their own destruction.

Secondly. Give me leave to inquire of you, whether spiritual prudence would teach you to be so violent against godly men who differ in some notions, expressions, and circumstantials from you, when there are so many sepulchers wide open against you and them, ready to devour you both. It was the policy of some barbarian people, when Alexander came to contend with them for a conquest, as Curtius doth relate, to put an end of the wars and differences which were amongst themselves, so that they might be strengthened against the common enemy. And the like policy was used by the ancient inhabitants of the land, when Caesar came to invade them, and whether Christian wisdom will make us less prudent and sensible for our own preservation, I shall be willing that it may be determined by the man, who lives in the clear light and liberty of the Gospel. In the meanwhile I hope that you will not reject the Apostle's caution, "if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Gal.5:15.

Thirdly. Let me tell you one thing which hath been revealed unto me by the Lord. If you shall deal with tenderhearted Christians {who cleave to Christ, and are part of his mystical body, though they differ from you in some opinions} in the way of Bonner and Canterbury, leaving the example of Christ and

his Apostles, the Lord will blow upon you, and lay your honour, credit, and greatness in the dust, whilst the heavens shall rejoice saying, "thou art righteous O Lord, who hath judged thus."

Fourthly. Let me beseech you to suffer your uncharitable practices, to give the lie to your zeal and professions for the maintenance of the Law. Walk not contrary to love, professing yourselves to be for the Law, because love is the fulfilling of the Law. Labor to be such as Rufinus doth report Gregory Nazianzen was, who did those things which he taught, and condemned not himself by doing things contrary to what he taught. Remember who they are who make a man an offender for a word, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought. Isa.29:21. And let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. Zech.7:10. Be not so uncharitable towards me as you have been, who do assure you that I am able to speak it to the glory of God's grace, that though I may err, I shall never be an heretic. Endeavor not to persuade the world that I am a patron of Libertinism; for if you do, I hope that I shall be able by the power of grace to give you such an answer as an old man of Alexandria did to some, who said that he was no Christian, because he could work no miracles. This saith he doth prove me a Christian, that I am not moved with the injuries which you have done unto me. So I hope the free Spirit of Christ will so dwell in me, that it will sufficiently prove that I am no patron of libertinism or looseness, who at this present notwithstanding all

the wrongs done unto me, am able to subscribe myself,

Yours, as far as you are for Christ, his ways, and the liberty of his saints, John Simpson.

TRUTH BREAKING FORTH THROUGH A MIST AND CLOUD OF SLANDERS.

SECTION I

The first error which is charged upon me is this. That the Moral Law is of no use at all to a believer; no rule for him to walk by; and that Christians are free from the mandatory power thereof. Delivered by Mr. Simpson, witness Mr. Gataker.

This article doth consist of four branches. The first, that the Law is of no use at all to a believer. Answer. When some either through ignorance, mis-apprehending, or through malice mis-report what I had delivered in opening the doctrine of the Law and the Gospel, had spread this abroad; to wit, that I denied the use of the Law, to stop the mouth of lying shame, I preached at Algate {where I was then an unworthy steward of the mysteries of Christ} upon these words of the Apostle, "we know that the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully," I Tim.1:8, and did entirely disavow this tenent, proving the usefulness of the Law and showing what use believers, and the preachers of the Gospel might make of it. A believer is a creature spiritually intelligent, and rational, and by the helps and the light of grace can make a good use of everything, and so consequently a good use of the Law. So that to my best remembrance I was never so much as tempted to think that the Law is of no use unto him. And what I then delivered concerning the Law and the usefulness thereof, might have prevented this charge, if my Father had

not seen it good for me for a time to lie under a cloud of slanders and reproaches, so I might be made conformable unto my Head. It is common with ignorant and malicious hearers of the Gospel to draw wild and loose conclusions from false premises and sound truths, which they hear from the mouths of their teachers, and then to fasten them upon them, as though they were their own tenents. Thus some did slanderously report concerning Paul, that he affirmed that men should do evil, that good might come, Rom.3:8, and thus the Papists have charged the Protestants {and first instruments which God did make use of, to bring us out from under Popish and anti-Christian darkness} as men who opened a gap to all looseness and licentiousness of life and conversation, because they asserted that Christians might be, and ought to be assured of their salvation; and denied the falling away from grace, and thus some have been too bold with me in this particular; and when I have proved the Law to be useless unto us in many particulars, they have concluded that I did totally deny the use of the Law, which hath been the ground of these groundless assertions, unto which I think it needless to give any larger answer.

Concerning the three other branches in this article, to wit, that the Law is no rule for a Christian to walk by, nor to examine his life by; and that believers are free from the mandatory power thereof, I can either affirm, or deny them all; for I do acknowledge that in a sense we may be said to be under the rule and power of the Law, and in a sense it is true, that we are not under the rule and

power thereof; which if it be well weighed by the balance of right reason, whether these who have charged me with this, not stating the question as I did when I delivered my judgment, and suppressing my meaning in their article, may be justified in this action, I leave it to any man truly rational, and unprejudiced concerning me, yea to themselves when God shall awaken their consciences to judge. Wherefore that the truth of God, and my meaning may be more evident, I shall present to the view of the reader the distinctions which I made use of in the handling of this controversy.

The Law may be considered as delivered in Sinai and Zion, "which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar." Gal.4:24. As the Covenant of Sinai, or as a part of the Covenant of Zion. "For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." Isa.2:3. As delivered by the hand of Moses or by the hand of Christ. And though this distinction hath been branded by some of the learned teachers of our times in their pulpits and presses, with the infamous mark of Antinomianism, yet I do not doubt, but that I shall easily prove it to be a Scripture distinction. This is the meaning of that speech of John, "for the Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ." Jn.1:17. By Moses, that is, by the hand of Moses; as it is plain by Leviticus 26:46, "these are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the LORD made between him and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai by the

hand of Moses." So grace and truth is given by the hand of Jesus Christ. Christ is called the Mediator of the better Covenant, Heb.8:6; and as he is the Mediator of this better Covenant, he doth give the Law to the Saints by his hand in this Covenant.

This distinction is frequently used by Zanchius, "the Law, saith he, is translated from Moses to Christ, out of the hand of Moses, into the hand of Christ, the true Mediator; as the priesthood is translated from Aaron to Christ, the true and eternal High Priest." For the priesthood being changed, it is needful {saith the Apostle} that there be a change of the Law." And in the same book he hath afterwards these words, "we say that the Law as it was in the hand of Moses, is now abrogated to believers by Christ; but as it is in the hand of Christ, it is confirmed and established." Brethren give me an answer in the spirit of love and meekness to this question, why should you censor me to be an Antinomian for making use of this distinction, seeing that ye account Zanchius to be a sound and Orthodox writer, who maintains the same thing?

Having premised of these distinctions, I shall answer plainly to these several branches, and not be afraid to own what I have delivered, because I'm still confident, that it is the truth of Christ. The Law as delivered by Moses is not the rule by which a believing Christian doth walk, but as it is delivered unto him in the Covenant of Grace by the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ. I shall prove this by this argument. A Covenant of works is not the rule by which a believing Christian doth walk.

The Law as delivered in Sinai by the hand of Moses is a Covenant of works. Therefore the Law as delivered in Sinai by the hand of Moses is not a rule by which a believing Christian doth walk. I do suppose that you will not deny the major proposition, for you will not say, that a Covenant of works is the rule of a believer, for then a Christian should work, that he might live; whereas a true believer doth work because he doth live, and hath life without works.

If you shall deny the minor or second proposition, I shall prove it by these reasons which are drawn from Scripture.

Reason 1. The Apostle doth frequently distinguish between the righteousness of the Law, and the Law to the Righteousness of Grace, and the Covenant of Grace, which he could not do if the Law were a Covenant of Grace. He opposeth the righteousness of the Law and Gospel, "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the Law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them; but the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise &c." Rom.10:5-6. Observe the Apostle's words well, Gospel righteousness is the righteousness of faith; he doth not say that the Law requireth doing and working for justification, according to the false glosses, and interpretations of the Pharisees, as some writers of late with the Papists of old have asserted. But Moses describeth the righteousness of the Law so.

Secondly. He opposes the Law and the Covenant of Grace. "For sin shall not have dominion

over you, for ye are not under the Law, but under grace." Rom.6:14. What sense can you make of these words, if you shall assert the Law to be a Covenant of Grace, for then this will be the meaning of the words, sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the Law or Covenant of Grace, but under Grace.

Reason 2. The Apostle doth affirm, that no flesh shall be justified by the Law, because by the Law is the knowledge of sin, Rom.3:20, but if the Law were a Covenant of Grace, a man might be justified thereby; and therefore I conclude that it is not a Covenant of Grace.

Reason 3. The Apostle affirms that if righteousness comes by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain, and shall we say that that is the Covenant of Grace by which righteousness cannot come unto us.

Reason 4. The Apostle plainly saith, that "the Law is not of faith, but, the man that doeth them shall live in them." Gal.3:12. From whence I frame my argument thus. That Covenant which requires works and provideth not faith unto justification is not a Covenant of Grace, but the Law requireth works and not faith unto justification; and therefore the Law is not a Covenant of Grace. But that I may not be mistaken in what I have here spoken, I shall lay down such cautions which were laid down, when I handled the point more largely.

First, though I deny the Law to be a rule as it was delivered in the letter upon Mount Sinai, yet I do not deny the matter and substance of it in the

spirit, as it is delivered unto us by the Mighty Counselor, and Great Lawgiver, our Lord Jesus Christ. "For the LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King; he will save us." Isa.33:22. I do subscribe unto that as a truth, which is delivered by Zanchius, that this difference of divine laws is not so much from the various substance of the laws, or diversity of times, as from the various reasons, with which they were promulgated by God and exhibited to the church.

I acknowledge with Paul, that in the mind I myself do serve the Law of God, not only by believing in the grace of God through Christ for justification; but by loving God and my brother by a sanctifying work of the Spirit of grace within me. I confess that the Law is old for the matter and substance thereof, as it commandeth love to God and our neighbor; and yet it is new in us and to us, as it is delivered in the Covenant of the Gospel. "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." I Jn.2:7,8.

Secondly, I do not deny, but that this Law written or preached, may be called the external rule of the Spirit, as the Law of the Spirit in us is that internal and powerful rule; and that I may not now be censured, as I have formally been by some, when I've spoken unto them, concerning the Law of the

Spirit, I shall speak in the words of another, whom you acknowledge to be sound in the faith, and not in my own. "The Law of the Spirit in the substance thereof, is nothing else but the will of God, but imprinted in the vivified hearts by the Spirit of God, by which we do not only truly know God, and piety and equity; but we are so moved to serve Him, to trust in Him, to love Him, to worship and adore Him, and to love and serve our neighbor, and to mortify ourselves, and to bear valiantly all persecutions for God, and to lead a life in Christ, that we willingly run to the doing of these things." Zanchi.

Thirdly, I do grant, that Moses did acquaint the people with Jesus Christ, after he had delivered the Law of works unto them, which is evident by that passage in Deuteronomy chapter 18, when the people being terrified at the giving of the Law, desired that they might hear the voice of the Lord no more; and the Lord doth affirm in the 17th verse that they had spoken well, and in the 18th verse doth give them a promise of Christ. "And the LORD said unto me, they have well-spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him," Deut.18:17-18, which is sufficient to wipe away the dirt and filth which is thrown upon me by some scurrilous pamphleteers, with whose names I will not burden the page, who have asserted that I denied that there was any Gospel or Covenant of Grace in the times of the Old Testament, and that men were then saved

by the Covenant of Works. Though I can in truth profess, that by my best remembrance at the present, I cannot remember that ever I was tempted to think any such thing, since I received any spiritual light for the knowledge of the Gospel, and thus much in answer to the second branch of this article.

I shall not need to speak much to the third, it being easy for any rational man to gather my meaning of it from what hath been delivered in the opening of my mind concerning the second branch. The Law in the New Covenant is that by which a Christian doth examine his life, he lives under one Covenant for Justification and Sanctification, when he lives as a spiritual man ought to live. He hath not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption by which he cries Abba Father. Rom.8:15. But if he should examine his life by the Law as delivered in Sinai, he would fear again, for that Law worketh fear and horror in those who are under it. Suppose a man should command his son and his slave the same thing for substance, and withal should inform his son that if he should not obey his command, he should displease a loving father; but if the slave should not obey his command, he should lose his life by his disobedience. Would not any man affirm that these two did examine themselves by the same rule of their obedience? Thus it is in the point in hand, God commandeth love in the first Covenant, with threatenings of death and condemnation for disobedience; and in the second Covenant we are assured that we are passed from death to life, and

shall not come into condemnation; and that nothing shall separate us from the love of our Father in Christ Jesus. Yet this is made known unto us, that though by sin we shall not totally fall from grace, and fall under condemnation, yet we may offend our Father, and grieve his Holy Spirit, by which we are sealed unto the day of redemption. Whether these two have the same rule given unto them for the examination of their lives, I will leave it to those who shall have spiritual eyes in their heads to judge? To whom it will be evident, that Saints do not fall from Grace to the Law when they examine themselves, but they examine themselves how they keep the commandments of the New Covenant, which are summed up in few words by the Apostle John to wit, to believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he gave us commandment.

I shall now fall upon the fourth branch of this article, and shall desire my reader to carry in his eye those distinctions and cautions, which I have already laid down, while we shall more largely prove, that a believer is not under the mandatory power of the Law of the Old Covenant, but under the mandatory power of the Law in the New Covenant of Grace. It is impossible that a believing Christian should live under the Covenant of Grace, as it is delivered unto us in the clear light of the Spirit, and should at the same time be under the mandatory power of the Law as it was delivered in Sinai. It is impossible that a man should in the spirit do good works freely, because he is justified, and yet do good works that he may be justified. But the Law of Sinai doth

command me to work that I may live and be justified, and in the Covenant of Grace I am informed that I am freely justified, and therefore it is impossible that I should be under grace, and under the mandatory power of the Law, as delivered in Sinai, at the same time.

Again it is impossible that I should do good works because I see myself free from condemnation, and do good works, for fear of condemnation. But the Law commandeth me to do good works for fear of condemnation, and the Gospel, because I am free from condemnation, and therefore it is impossible that I should be under the Covenant of Grace in spirit, and under the mandatory power of the Law as delivered in Sinai. I shall draw the strength of these two arguments into a few words.

God's justified children are not under the commands of a Covenant of Works. But the commands of the Law as delivered on Sinai, are the commands of a Covenant of Works. Therefore they are not under the commands of the law as delivered in Sinai.

Secondly. It is a contradiction to say that a man is under the commands of the law of Sinai, but not under it for justification or condemnation. For the law as it was there delivered, doth not command without promises of life to the obedient, and threatening of death to the disobedient, for that it ceases to be the law as there delivered, if you take from it the promises and threatenings.

Thirdly. Laws are distinguished by their rewards and penalties; and though the same thing

is commanded in several laws, yet we say they are several laws, because they have several rewards and penalties annexed to them. Suppose the punishment of death which is due to thieves should be changed into the penalty of restoring of what hath been stolen fourfold. We should say that the old law is repealed, and that there is a new law made concerning theft; and he that after all the Gospel light which hath broken forth, is not able to see a change of the rewards and penalties of the law of Zion from those of Sinai, doth for his willful and affected ignorance, deserve to be more blinded.

Fourthly. The covenant of which the prophet prophesied, Jeremiah 31:31, is new in reference to the commands of holiness which appears by Hebrews 8:10, "behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." Jer.31:31. "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." Heb.8:10. And therefore Christians are not under the commands of the old covenant of Sinai as they were there delivered, but under all commandments as delivered in the new covenant of Zion. Wolfgang Musculus and Girolamo Zanchius all do both make use of this place for the proving of this point.

Fifthly. A believing Christian is commanded to do all good works in faith of his free justification; but the law does not command him to do good works in

faith of his free justification; and therefore a believing Christian is not commanded to do good works by the law. I suppose that the first proposition will pass without an exception. For the second, it is evident by Gal.3:12, that "the law is not of faith; but, the man that doeth them shall live in them."

Sixthly. The Apostle plainly saith that "if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Gal.5:18. But if we are under the mandatory power of the law, as delivered in Sinai we are under it, according to that of the Apostle, "now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Rom.3:19. You cannot put a man under the condemning power of the law as delivered in Sinai, but you must put him under the commanding power.

Reason Seven. The approved distinction between legal and evangelical obedience in point of sanctification will be found unsound, for all the obedience of the saints which they yield unto God by their holy walking will be by legal principles, and not evangelical, if we place them under the mandatory power of a covenant of works. I hope by this time that the judicious and spiritual reader doth begin to see that I am no enemy to the law, by establishing it for justification by believing, and sanctification by holy walking; and that my expressions are justifiable by the Scripture of truth; and if I am to be blamed for anything, it is because I have been so bold in these anti-Christian and anti-Scriptural days, rather to keep close to Scriptural expressions, than to tie

myself up to the forms and methods of men in speaking of these covenants, which I hope will be further made manifest by what shall be delivered in answer to the second article.

SECTION II

The second thing which Mr. Gataker doth charge upon me, are these exclamations in the pulpit. "Away with the law, away with the law." This is such a strange and heretical speech to one that professes himself a teacher in Israel, that with all his learning and love he cannot possibly make a favorable construction of it? Might not love which thinketh no evil, but beareth all things, and hopeth all things, I Cor.13:7, have suggested this unto the spirit of a conscientious believer, that something which either preceded or followed it in my discourse, had such an influence upon it, to free it from the poison and venom of false doctrine and heresy? What an easy thing were it to gather many such speeches out of the books of ancient and modern writers, which may be found as harsh to a tender ear as this doth; and do yet make a delightful sound to the ear of truth, as they lie in their books. To instance in a few, Ambrose upon the seventh of the Romans hath these words, "he is not an adulterer by the law, but by the Gospel, the law being dead, doth return unto the law, for the law is dead when its authority ceases." And the little after this, "to die to the law is to live to God." Luther upon the fifth chapter of the Galatians hath these words, "thou hast the fairest

and best book of all laws in thine own heart, thou dost need no other teacher in this matter, only take counsel of thine own heart, for that will sufficiently teach thee, that thou shouldest love thy neighbor as thyself." And in the same book upon the second chapter, "is a pleasant sight to behold, how he bringeth forth the law as a thief or a robber adjudged to death; for he painteth forth the law by a prosopopeia, as a captive whose hands and feet are bound, and all its power taken away, so that it cannot exercise its tyranny anymore over us; that is, it cannot accuse and condemn. And by this pleasant picture he maketh it contemptible in the conscience, so that he that believeth in Christ doth not dare to insult the law by an holy kind of pride after this manner, I am a sinner, if law thou canst do anything against me, do it, so far is the formidability of the law from a believer." The like speech is that of Zanchius, in his book of the law of God, "it is manifest that the law was given only to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles." A parallel place to this we have in Musculus, "it is evident {saith he} that the law of Moses, written with letters is abrogated, not among the Christians only, who by faith have received the Son of God and Saviour of the world, but among the Jews, who glory in the law." I could likewise produce speeches out of the Scripture which may sound harsh to some ears, and may seem to be very dark to some, if they should be taken out of the places where they are set by the Holy Spirit, from which they receive light, that they may be more easily and plainly understood by us.

But leaving this, grant me liberty to prove by spiritual Reason and holy Scripture, that in some cases it may be lawful for a minister of the Gospel to make use of such an expression as this is, "away with the law," &c.

Reason One. If we speak of the law as it is a legal covenant; so I speaking unto believing Christians may say, away with it. Put not yourselves under the Jewish Covenant, and the Apostle will justify this expression by his own, "cast out," {saith he,} "the bondwoman." Gal.4:30. Will you know what he meaneth by the bondwoman, and he himself will inform you, and tell you that it is the Covenant of Sinai, verse 24, which expression is most harsh, to compare the Law or Covenant of Sinai to a bondwoman, and to command us all to cast her out, or else to say, away with the Law.

Reason Two. When we speak of the Law in opposition to the Covenant of Grace as the Apostle doth, Hebrews 8, so I may say, away with the old covenant, that God may glorify himself by revealing the new covenant of grace unto you, will not the word of truth likewise hold me guiltless in this expression, if we consider what is spoken in the last verse of that chapter were the Apostle saith, "that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Heb.8:13. From which words Mr. Dickson doth draw this conclusion, that in the times of the prophet Jeremiah, the Legal or Levitical covenant was near to death, and vanishing away; and by consequent after the coming of Christ, under whom all things are become new, it is expired. If I thus

spoke of the Law, is there any greater absurdity to say, away with it, than to say that it is vanished away?

Reason Three. When justification is preached, and an experienced servant of Christ knowing that men naturally seek righteousness by the Law, and the works of the Law, it is necessary for the ministers of the Gospel to persuade their hearers, not to look to that Law for justification, but to the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Paul speaking of saints, saith, "that they are dead to the Law by the body of Christ." Rom.7:4. May not a man bid people to put away the Law in the point of justification and salvation, as well as to inform them that they must be dead unto it, that they may live unto Christ. Luther hath many expressions higher than mine in this point, and yet you do not look upon him as a heretic. Will not the Spirit of God teach us to be as favorable to the living, as dead servants of Christ in our censures? Will not grace teach us to be as loving to those who are present with us, as to those who are absent from us? I shall for the satisfaction of the unpreingaged reader set down a few of his speeches. "Paul is here the most heretical of all heretics, his heresy is unheard of heresy, because he saith, that he who is dead to the Law, doth live unto God. The false apostles taught, unless you live to the Law, you cannot live to God." And afterwards Luther saith, "if thou wilt live to God, it behooves thee to die altogether to the Law. Reason and human wisdom cannot receive this, and therefore always teaches the contrary unto it." Again he hath these words,

“when sophisters do apprehend that the ceremonial law is only abrogated, do thou believe that Paul and every Christian is abrogated to the whole Law.” Then, “I am dead to the Law, that is, I have nothing to do with the Law. To be dead unto the Law is not to be held by the Law, but to be free from the Law, and not to know it.”

Reason Four. If we preach consolation, and do exhort people to expect comfort from God, we may bid them put away the Law, and any confidence of expecting comfort thereby. “The Law worketh wrath,” Romans 7, and therefore it does not work joy. The spirit of joy is not received by the works of the Law, but by the hearing of faith. “We might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Gal.3:14.

Reason Five. Though the Law requireth holiness, yet it doth not make us holy. A man that will be truly sanctified must not live under the Law, but under the Gospel. This is the argument of the Apostle, Romans 6:14, “for sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace.” Must not the Law in some sense be put away, that we may not be under it? Let my arguments be well weighed, and I am contended to be censored. In the meantime I shall comfort myself in this, but I am not the first of saints, who have been reproached and persecuted as an enemy to the Law. The false witnesses which were set up against the proto-martyr Stephen did bring in this against him, “this man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the Law.” Acts

6:13. And it is probable that some such thing was charged upon Paul by the Jews, as we may gather by his defense for himself before Festus, where he professes that, "neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended anything at all." Acts 25:8. His proposing and clearing objections so frequently in his epistles, when he speaketh of the Law and the Gospel, lest he should be traduced as an enemy to the Law, doth sufficiently prove what was in the hearts and tongues of men who were opposers of that doctrine of free grace which he preached. I shall shut up my reply to this article with the words of this chosen vessel, spoken by him in the like case, "but this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets." Acts 24:14.

SECTION III

The next article which these subscribers do bring against me as a matter of error, which they have received from the pen of the same witness, is that horrid speech of mine, {as they were pleased to call it,} the Law cuts off a man's legs, and then bids him walk. Reply. When these articles were brought against me, it being demanded of me, whether I would own them as my tenents and opinions, I do well remember that I gave them this answer, after I had read them over, that I had made use of some phrases and expressions which were in that paper,

and that some things which were therein being understood in a right sense might pass for the blessed truths of the Lord Jesus Christ. But as they lay in the paper which was given unto me, so I did not own them as my tenents and opinions, because those things which were in my sermons and discourses, which held forth light for the understanding of them, were not conjoined with them in that paper; and that answer may more specially reach these particular words, as I am not ashamed to acknowledge, that in a sermon I did make use of these expressions, speaking of the impossibility of our fulfilling the Law for justification, the irritating power of the Law, by which sin is stirred up in us, we by consequence being made worse by it, and whilst the Law commandeth men who are under it, to yield personal and perfect obedience thereunto, though it giveth us no power to do that which is commanded us; and I do not doubt but in the strength of grace, I shall free the expressions from that horridness which the subscribers following Mr. Gataker have put upon it, or else I shall willingly acknowledge, that it was a rash, inconsiderate, yea horrid expression which fell from me. But before I come to defend the innocency of the expression, I cannot but stand still a little and pause upon it, wondering that so many men who by their profession are tied and engaged to the study of the Scriptures should be so little acquainted with the language of the Scriptures, that they should not be able to remember one Scripture expression among

so many which are like unto it, to free it from that horridness which they would put upon it.

Friends, consider what you do, for if you censor my expressions as horrid, which the Holy Spirit will justify by the like expressions of his own in Scripture, take heed that you do not censor the Spirit as well as me, and strike at the truth through my sides. It is the speech of Plutark, "the thick clouds do often darken the sun and the cloud of passions the light of reason." And thus I'm apt to think it is with you, for your passions are certainly high, or else how could you be so low in your reasons, so unadvisedly to condemn that as an horrid speech, which by warrant from Scripture I shall prove to be harmless. But in the first place, let us inquire where this horridness doth lie. I am ready to believe that ye are not such enemies to the Law, to assert that the latter part of the speech hath anything horrid in it? You will not say that it is horrid, to say that the Law bids men to walk? The horrid reason then of the speech must lay in the former part thereof. Is it horrid to affirm that the Law doth cut off a man's legs? Let us bring it to the bar of truth to be tried, and if it cannot bring speeches in Scripture, like unto it, where the Apostle is speaking of the same points, which I handled when I delivered it, let it be still branded with the hot iron of the subscribers, and pass for an horrid error.

1. Let us compare this speech with that of Paul, II Cor.3:6, "the letter killeth," which expositors with one consent do expound to be meant of the Law, and which the words following of the Apostle

do so plainly prove, that it is useless and in vain for any man to deny it. We shall take it therefore for granted, that "the Law killeth," and this is Paul's, or rather God's assertion, who gave this Law. Now let the indifferent reader judge, whether it be more horrid to say, that the Law killeth a man, or cuts off his legs?

Friends, I am persuaded that some of you have experimentally found, as I have done, that the Law killeth; and when ye were slain and killed by the Law, were you freed presently from the mandatory power thereof? I am persuaded that some of you can profess in truth with me, that you were not. The Law then did command you to do, and walk. What horridness is more in this {if I may make the comparison} to affirm that the Law cutteth off a man's legs, and then bids him to walk, than in this, to affirm that the Law killeth a man, &c., doth yet bid him to do it and walk.

Objection. But some may say, that Paul saith, that the letter killeth, because it giveth not strength to fulfill it; to which I answer, if I speak it in this sense too, and is it not lawful for me to imitate Paul's expressions? Unless the ignorant world must be made to believe that my speeches and exclamations are horrid and blasphemous, I might multiply arguments from this chapter, if I should run over all the expressions of the Apostle, especially these were he calleth the Law a ministration of death, a ministration of condemnation, and a thing to be abolished, or abolished and done away; and whatsoever is spoken by any of the godly for the

making good of these expressions, I might make use of the same for the justifying of mine, seeing I spake them in the same manner as Paul did. But that it may appear that I speak not this for the reproaching of you, but the vindicating of wronged and abused truth, and knowing that a word is sufficient to a wise man, when a thousand stripes will not enter into a fool, I shall not insult over your weakness, but rather cover it, as far as I may without injury to the truth. Let me only leave this word to your consideration, which in this place is very seasonable, to wit, that it is the mind of God that we should be as favorable in interpreting the expressions of spiritual men in their writings and speakings now, as in interpreting the expressions of those spiritual men, who are now with the Lord, knowing that they both speak by the same spirit, which Spirit doth retain his liberty to speak in us, as it did in them.

2. Compare this speech with that of the Apostle, Rom.7:5, "the motions of sins, which were by the Law," which will sound as harsh as to affirm that the Law doth cut off the legs of sinners. But if some say this is only occasionally and accidentally, men running the more into sin, by how much the more they are forbidden to commit sin. According to that of the poet, "we have a tendency in us to that which is forbidden." I answer, that the same expression will sufficiently qualify my speech to take away from it the least appearance of evil. The Law doth cut off a man's legs occasionally and accidentally; a man by reason of the corruption which is in him, findeth by experience that he is of

less strength to run in the ways of God, the more he doth endeavor to get strength by the law of works. Musculus compares it in this respect to a chaste matron in a brothel house, which by her good advice doth prove an occasion to some imprudent whores to be more bold and shameless in their impiety. Had the spirit of love {without which we are nothing} taught you something concerning this speech, you would have been favorable in its interpretation, and not rigidly censorious in condemning it. Oh, that you who seem to be zealous for the Law, would consider that this commandment, to wit, that we should love our neighbor as ourselves, is one of the great Commandments, upon which all the Law and Prophets do hang. Matt.22:40. And then how would you dare to be so rigid and uncharitable in your censoring of your brethren? If indeed you have received the Law from Moses, may I not say as my Saviour did to the Jews, "did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?" John 7:19. And then remember what the Apostle saith, "for not the hearers {or preachers} of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified." Rom.2:13.

Brethren, I am not such an enemy to the Law, but I can with freedom of spirit make use of that pertinent portion of Scripture unto you, "if ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well; but if ye have respect to persons, {as in censoring and judging them, and the same thing in effect, delivered by one man shall be accounted sound by

you, and shall be a horrid error if delivered by another man,} "ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors." Jas.2:8-9.

Thirdly. Look seriously upon those words of Paul, "moreover the Law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rom.5:20. And then tell me whether there be not the same figure in my expression, which is found in that of Paul? And why may I not make use of a figurative expression, as well as Paul, expounding my meaning more plainly afterwards, as he doth, which I also did in my discourse. Calvin saith, "that by these words Paul doth simply signify the increase of knowledge and pervicacy." And another saith, "that it is said that it aboundeth by the Law, because it aboundeth in our knowledge thereof." And will not this which is usually spoken upon this place by expositors, make our speech passable too? And as Paul saith, "the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." Rom.7:10. So may not I say, that the Law which was for holy walking I found to cut off my legs, because being under it, I was no more able to walk in the way thereof, than a man is able to walk without legs. I leave it to the spiritual man who judges all things, I Cor.2:15, to judge of this thing between us. And that you may not any further to the dishonor of God and your profession, the prejudicing of the works of the Lord in my ministry, vent forth slanders and reproaches against me. I do profess that I am not conscious to myself of denying the use of the Law in any way, in which it is held forth in the

New Testament; but know that "the Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine." I Tim.1:9-10. And am likewise persuaded that he who loveth Christ, will keep his commandments, John 14:15, and will follow things honest, pure, lovely, and of good report in the spirit, Phil.4:8, desiring holiness as well as happiness by Christ, and as much longing to be in heaven, because it is a place of holiness, as because it is a place of glory and happiness. And am also confident, that if we speak with the tongues of angels, and have all faith, so that we could remove mountains by the name of Christ, and have not that faith which worketh by love, it will not advantage us at all, for our Justification and Salvation before that God, who doth justify us, to whose grace alone, let salvation to be ascribed forever, Amen.

SECTION IV

Master Gataker's fourth article unto which he is brought in as a witness by the subscribers in the seventeenth page of their book, is this, "that God doth not chastise any of his children for sin; nor is it for the sins of God's people that the land is punished."

Some few weeks for want of experimental knowledge I was a little clouded in my spirit concerning the doctrine of affliction; and though God did shine into my soul at that time to give me a wonderful light concerning the doctrine of free grace, yet I had not such a clear and truly spiritual knowledge of this point, as God did afterwards in the house of trial, temptation and affliction give unto me. But though there was some hay and stubble in me in this particular, and some mis-apprehensions concerning a place or two of Scripture, which I have publicly to my shame and God's glory acknowledged, {though my mistake was never charged upon me by my accusers,} yet in my darkest and most cloudy discourses, I held forth enough to charitable and loving hearers to free me from this charge, and more fully to inform them of the difference between legal punishments and fatherly chastisement. I then did preach that afflictions were God's furnace, in which he did take away that dross out of our lives and conversations, which he had taken away before by his grace through faith in our justification; and afterwards while I yet continued my preaching at Algate, before I was ejected from thence by the potency and prevalency of my opposers in the City, {that I may speak favorably of them.} To satisfy those, whom I did conceive did mis-apprehend me; I did speak from those words of our Saviour, "as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore, and repent." Rev.3:19. In the handling of which words

for the better clearing of my meaning, I took liberty to handle two propositions seemingly contradictory.

First, that God doth not chastise his people for sin, or from sin. Secondly, that God doth chastise his people for sin and from sin. And this was the reason of my action. Not long before this I had preached, that God doth not punish his justified people for sin, from whence some concluded that I denied fatherly chastisements to be for sin. Wherefore that it might appear unto them, that they had not drawn good consequences from my premises, I proved that these propositions seemingly contradictory, might stand well together as two blessed truths of the Lord Jesus Christ, which thing I then proved by many witnesses, and by some who did take the same sermons verbatim in shorthand. And I shall observe the same method in clearing of this thing, which is here charged upon me for my reproach.

And that my meaning may more plainly appear, this article having two branches in it, I shall speak of one of them severally. The first branch is, that God doth not chastise any of his children for sin. The word which I did usually make use of was 'punish,' and not 'chastise;' but if the word be taken in a large sense, as sometimes it is in Scripture, in which it signifies as much as a legal punishment, properly so-called, according to Isaiah's acceptance of it, "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed," Isa.53:5, I am willing to let it pass, and in this sense hold it for truth, that God doth not punish

or chastise his people for sin, which I shall further briefly prove for the satisfaction of the reader by these arguments.

Argument 1. The chastisements or legal punishments due unto us for our sins, cannot be laid upon us, which are laid upon Jesus Christ for us. But these chastisements or legal punishments due unto us for our sins, are laid upon Jesus Christ, and therefore they cannot be laid upon us. The first proposition is evident, because justice doth not twice require satisfaction for the same fault, as the learned Davenant doth well prove against the Papists in his determinations. Upon this position, that the sin being forgiven, the punishment is also forgiven, where he affirms that if God should punish sin after it is pardoned, he should not exercise an act of justice, but severity, or his absolute power. The second proposition is plainly proved by Isaiah 53:4-5. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Isa.53:4-5.

Argument 2. God hath sworn, that he will not be wroth with us, or rebuke us. "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me, for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." Isa.54:9. And therefore he doth not punish us with a legal punishment, for a

legal punishment or chastisement is an effect of his wrath.

Argument 3. When God doth remember sin no more, he doth not punish sin with a legal punishment properly so-called. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isa.43:25. And therefore he does not punish us with any legal punishment properly so-called.

Argument 4. God doth not punish us for those sins from which we are cleansed and purged by grace. We are purged and cleansed from our sins by the blood of Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." I Jn.1:7. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb.1:3. "And from 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. And therefore we are not punished for our sins.

Argument 5. Believers when they are without fault, blame and reproof in the sight of God, cannot be punished with any legal punishment. But believers are without fault, blame and reproof in the sight of God. "In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight." Col.1:22. And therefore they cannot be punished with legal punishment.

Argument 6. Believers cannot be punished by God in his justice, as under the Law when nothing can be charged upon them. But nothing can be charged upon them. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Rom.8:33. Therefore they cannot be punished by the justice of God, as under the Law.

Argument 7. When God is fully appeased and satisfied for the sins of believers by the sacrifice of the death of Christ, he cannot then punish them with any legal chastisement properly so-called. But God is fully appeased and satisfied for the sins of believers by the sacrifice of the death of Christ. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Rom.3:25. And therefore they cannot be punished with any legal punishment properly so-called.

Argument 8. They for whom Christ is made a curse, and hath freed from the curse of the law, are not liable to any punishment as a curse. But for believers Christ was made a curse. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Gal.3:13. And therefore they are not liable unto any punishment as it is a curse.

Argument 9. Sin, the cause of legal punishments being taken away, the effects of it are taken away. But Christ hath taken away sin which is the cause of legal punishments. And therefore he

hath taken away the effects which are legal punishments; and therefore one speaking of the afflictions of saints, saith, that they are medicines, not punishments. The truth of this argument is built upon the known axiom, the cause being taken away, the effect is taken away.

Argument 10. That being taken away, which doth bind over a man to legal punishment, the legal punishment is taken away. But guilt which bindeth a man over to legal punishment is taken away. And therefore the legal punishment is taken away.

Argument 11. God doth as fully forgive us our trespasses, as he would have us to forgive the trespass of men against us. But when we do forgive their trespasses, we are not afterwards to inflict any vindictive punishment upon them. And therefore God doth so fully forgive us our trespasses, that he does not afterwards inflict any vindictive punishment. This is the argument of a learned writer, God says he, "doth no less freely and fully forgive us our debts, than he would have us to forgive our debtors."

I might multiply sentences of writers, who with one consent do underwrite to this truth. Pelanus saith, that they who are temporarily punished for sin here, are to be punished to eternity; and that chastisement is not so much for the purging of sins past, as to teach to avoid sin for the future. Willet hath many speeches to this purpose in his Synopsis. Davenant riding on this point against the Papists, saith, "what is it to remit the sin or the fault, than not to punish a man anymore for it." But I study

brevity, knowing how distasteful long controversies are to the pallets of men of these times. And therefore in a few words to put a period to what I intend to speak concerning the first branch of this article, I conceive that man may be considered two manner of ways.

First, as he is in the first Adam, and so all afflictions are properly punishments, and curses of the Law unto him. Secondly, in the second Adam; and thus the nature of afflictions and chastisements for sin are charged upon him. The sting is taken out of death, and every affliction. Afflictions are benedictions to him; not curses, but blessings unto him. And therefore secondly, God will chasten his justified people in his fatherly love to them, and displeasure against sin, that they may be partakers of his holiness, Heb.12:10, by the Spirit of sanctification; as they are partakers of Christ's righteousness in their justification, which maketh true saints not only to bear afflictions patiently, but to glory in tribulations. Rom.5:3. And though in a sense they are afflicted neither for sin, that it is not to satisfy God's justice, which is already satisfied by Jesus Christ, not from sin, {as some speak,} for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. Yet God doth afflict us, that in the afflictions he may pour forth his Spirit upon us, for the removing of sin out of our spirits, which doth grieve his Spirit; and out of our conversations, which doth dishonor his name. And for the preventing of sin for the future, the prodigal will take heed how he doth run from his father's house, when he hath been among the swine.

And the soul beloved of Christ, when she is forsaken of all lovers, and in misery, will resolve to return unto her first love, and say, "for then was it better with me than now." Hos.2:7. And thus much briefly by way of answer to the first branch of this article.

The second branch of this article is this, that the land is not punished for the sins of God's people. What hath been spoken concerning the precedent branch of this article for the clearing of this, as no legal punishment properly so-called, can be afflicted upon the person of a believer for his sin, so no punishment can be inflicted upon the land in which he liveth for his sins. Yet I do not deny, but that God who punisheth the unjustified persons of a land in his wrath, for their rebellions and transgressions, may chastise some of his people by a national calamity and affliction for their humiliation and reformation. But though in a national visitation, the same affliction, if it be materially considered, may be laid upon a believer, which is laid upon unbelievers; yet the affliction which is laid upon a saint is formally distinguished from that which is inflicted upon unjustified persons; the one flowing from the love of a Father, the other from the wrath of an enemy. The least of these is properly, materially and formally a legal punishment, the other materially a judgment or punishment; but formally a fatherly chastisement, and a pledge of God's love to a saint.

SECTION V

There is yet one article more which the subscribers have taken out of Mr. Gataker, page 16, that "if a man by the Spirit know himself to be in the state of grace, though he be drunk, or commit murder, God sees no sin in him."

If I should but name the man who brought in this article against me, it were enough to acquit me from the charge, in the judgment of those who know him; but I am resolved that the world shall see, that I study not revenge, but the clearing and vindication of truth in my answer.

When one in the Star-chamber demanded of me, whether an article something like unto this were my tenent, and whether I had delivered it in such words, I did reply, that I might affirm of it, what Martiall did of his poem, that it was his, as made, composed, and delivered by him; but that it ceased to be his, and became the repeaters, when it was evilly repeated by another. So the truth contained in this article, to wit, that God sees no sins in his justified children in the sense in which I delivered it, it is my tenent, or rather God's truth.

But while it is repeated with some words of the accuser, to bring an odium upon the truth, and that being not mentioned which was largely laid down in my discourse to give light unto it, I do affirm that it doth begin to be the accuser's own.

The ground of this article was my preaching plainly of this truth, that God doth not see any sin in

is justified children, which is a truth which I hope to maintain unto death. I shall therefore acquaint the reader with my sense of the words, and secondly, with some reasons which I have laid down to demonstrated it to be a truth. Thirdly, in what sense I do conceive it to be an error, which I hope will abundantly satisfy the intelligent reader, and cleanse me from the filth and guilt, which is cast, and charged upon me by the subscribers.

1. When I preach that God seeth no sin in his justified children, my meaning is in reference to justification. God seeth his sin, guilt and punishment laid and charged upon Jesus Christ, and therefore cannot see any sin in him, according to that sweet and elegant speech of Hierom. "That," saith he, "which is covered, is not seen; that which is not seen, is not imputed; that which is not imputed, shall be punished." And the same truth is laid down by Mr. Ward of Ipswich, whom you all will acknowledge to be a faithful and sound writer, by whose treatise, entitled, "The Life Of Faith," the Lord was pleased to beam in at my first conversion, some Gospel light into my soul, even whilst I was endeavoring to establish my own righteousness. The words following are to be found in the ninth chapter of the Life Of Faith, page 85, "what," saith he "if God look upon the handwriting against us, doth he not see the bills canceled with the precious blood of his Son and our Surety; which for matter of guilt, defilement and punishment is sufficient to expunge, cover, nullify, abolish and wholly to take away our sins in such sort, that he neither sees, will see, nor

can see them as sins, and debts, bearing action against us, obliging us to any penalty.

I might heap up places out of the books of the faithful which have subscribed to the same truth, in the same or the like words; as there is no phrase so commonly used by Luther in his Commentary upon the Galatians as this; that God seeth no sin in his children; but because the testimony of man to truth is of no authority with myself, considering that we should not consider so much who it is that speaketh, as what is spoken. Therefore I shall not burden the page with quotations out of writers; but shall rather present unto you some grounds from Scripture; by which it will appear that in a Scripture sense God may be said to see no sin in his children.

Argument 1. Christ hath redeemed us from all iniquity, Tit.2:14, and therefore God seeth no sin in us, from which we are not redeemed.

Argument 2. God hath forgiven us through Christ all our trespasses, Col.2:13, and therefore there is no trespass in us which God can see as not forgiven. Eph.4:23.

Argument 3. He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, Rev.1:5, and therefore can see no sin in us from which we are not washed. When spots are washed out of a cloth, they do not remain in it still. God hath washed away the spots of our souls, and therefore they do not still remain upon our souls.

Argument 4. Christ is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, John 1:29, and

therefore God doth not see any sin which is not taken away.

Argument 5. Christ hath made an end of our sins, Dan.9:24, and therefore God in this respect doth not any longer see them.

Argument 6. God hath removed sin as far from us as the East is from the West, Psal.103:12, and therefore he doth not see them, or us as unjustified from them.

Argument 7. God hath blotted them out of his debt book, Isa.43:25, and therefore he doth not see them as chargeable upon us. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

Argument 8. God is pacified towards us for all that we have done, Ezek.16:63, and therefore he doth not see sin in us.

Argument 9. God by his Son hath removed the iniquity of his people in one day, Zech.3:9, and therefore he doth not see them as not removed away.

Argument 10. Christ Jesus doth save his people from their sins, Matt.1:21, and therefore God doth not see any sin in them, from which they are not saved.

Argument 11. All that believe in Him are justified from all things, Acts 13:39, and therefore God doth not see any sin in them from which they are not justified.

Argument 12. God hath covered the sins of his people, Rom.4:7, and therefore God doth not see them.

Argument 13. Believers are not in their sins, I Cor.15:17, and therefore God doth not see them as yet in their sins.

Argument 14. Christ is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, I Cor.1:30, and therefore God doth not see sin in us.

Argument 15. Christ is made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, II Cor.5:21, and therefore God doth not see sin in us.

Argument 16. Christ hath given himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, and our Father, Gal.1:4, and therefore the Father doth not see sin in us.

Argument 17. We are holy, unblameable and unreprouceable in the sight of God, Col.1:22, and therefore he seeth no sin in us.

Argument 18. The conscience is purged from sin by the blood of Christ to serve the living God, Heb.9:14, and therefore God doth not see sin in us.

Argument 19. Christ hath borne our sins, I Pet.2:24, and therefore God doth not see them upon us, but knoweth where he hath laid them. Isa.53:6.

Argument 20. We have an answer of a good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, I Pet.3:21, and therefore God doth not see sin in us; for a conscience guilty of sin is an evil conscience.

Argument 21. Nothing can be laid to our charge, Rom.8:33, and therefore God seeth no sin as chargeable upon us, or to be imputed to us.

Argument 22. He that doth deny this, doth in essence deny the coming of Christ, and is an antichrist. For "he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." I Jn.3:5.

For these and many other reasons which might be produced, it may be truly said, that God seeth no sin in his justified people; and therefore Christ speaking of his justified Church saith, "thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." Song 4:7. Also, "the King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold." Psal.45:13. And in these terms and expressions or the like, I have formerly acquainted those who have heard me, concerning my judgment in this point.

But thirdly, though I affirm all this concerning God's not seeing sin in his children; yet I do not deny but that in a sense God may indeed be said to see sin in his justified children. God, though he seeth us perfectly justified from all sin, yet he seeth and knoweth that we are not perfectly sanctified; and in this respect he may be said to see sin in us; and I do apprehend it to be a gross error, and destructive to the power of godliness, to maintain that God in no sense may be said to see sin in his people.

Reason 1. It is by the light of the Spirit, that we do behold the sin which is in our flesh, when we do believe that all our sins are pardoned, and not seen by God in reference to our justification; and therefore it is contrary to spiritual reason, Scripture, and the experience of all those that are truly faithful to assert, that God in no sense may be said to see sin in his justified children.

Reason 2. If God did not see sin in any sense, he could not help us against our sins, lusts, and corruptions, against which we go unto Him in the name of Christ for strength; but he doth give us help against particular lusts and corruptions, {as true Saints have found, and do find by experience,} and therefore in a sense he may be said to see sin in us.

Reason 3. His Spirit doth mortify sin in us, and what an absurd thing it is for a man to affirm that God in no sense may be said to see that sin, which he doth mortify in us by his own Spirit?

Reason 4. Saints may grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption, Eph.4:30, and therefore in a sense God may be said to see sin in them; for how can we imagine that the Spirit of God in a saint should be grieved by sin; and yet that God should not see it?

Reason 5. God doth inwardly check us in the spirit for many frailties and infirmities, which will sufficiently evidence the thing to every man, who will not be captivated to error in his understanding; that God in a sense may be said to see sin. Though God doth not rebuke us in wrath as an enemy; yet he doth rebuke us in love for walking unworthy of his grace and favour in Christ Jesus.

Reason 6. God doth work in us evangelical sorrow, and humiliation for sins which we do commit after our justification through faith; and therefore it is evident that he seeth and knoweth the sins which we commit after our justification.

Reason 7. God doth chastise his justified children for their profit, that they may be partakers

of his righteousness, Heb.12:10, and therefore it must be granted, that God in a sense doth see sin in them.

Reason 8. The flesh lusteth against the spirit in God's justified children, Gal.5:17, which is a sufficient demonstration of God's seeing of sin in a sense in his justified children.

And by this you may perceive, that by making use of distinctions grounded upon plain Scripture, it is warrantable to say that God doth see sin in his children, and that he doth not see sin in his children; which if it be well weighed, may teach us not to censure our brethren in such points and controversies, until we have received their tenants from themselves; which if it had been granted unto me, it might have prevented many reproaches which I have lain under, and prevented many sins in those who have rashly censured me.

I shall put a period to my reply to this answer, with acquainting you with a story which I have read concerning that renowned servant and martyr of Jesus Christ, John Huss, who coming to the Council of Constance, to answer to what was brought against him, it is said, that by the outrageousness of the Council against him, so many interrupting him at every word, and some mocking, and making gestures at him, it was impossible for him to make a perfect answer to anything. Let it not be reported abroad for the shame of religion, that ever any man or men were so used in this Kingdom. But let this be known, that when I endeavored to acquaint the Committee fully concerning my mind, I was so

interrupted, that it was impossible that any man should clearly know my mind or judgment. And that this was frequently added by my brethren, that that day was a day in which I was to hear the charge against me. And that there would be a day appointed wherein I should have liberty to bring in my answer to the Committee of Parliament; and why there is not such a day yet to be found, will be a good query, when Astrea {ancient Greek goddess of justice} "leaving the heavens, shall again return to the earth for to do justice to the oppressed." In the meanwhile, though I am thoroughly acquainted with the carriage of things against me, I shall endeavor not to overcome evil with evil, but overcome evil with good, forgiving those who have wronged me, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven me.

SECTION VI

Thus far in answer to the subscribers of the New Province. I might here make an end, but that I find something yet behind in their witness, which they have not published, upon what grounds I know not. It may not be supposed, that they are more afraid of this testimony in these things, than in those articles they have borrowed from him, which he received from his fellow subscribers of the Synod; which may discover what an excellent and fit witness Mr. Gataker is in this business. But to let that pass, the next thing which I shall desire you to take notice of, is that passage of his against me in the 25th page

of his book, were speaking of Psalm 40:12, and other typical prophecies, he hath these words.

“One thing I am sure of, that those who grossly abuse them, who taking their rise from Luther’s application of them, with some harsh expressions unto Christ, strain them so far, as to dissuade Christian people from troubling themselves about confession of their sins, as being enough for them to believe, that Christ here hath confessed them for them already. Master Simpson preaching on that text.”

Sir, if God had given you grace to have seriously thought upon that place in the Proverbs, 25:18, “a man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow,” you would not so suddenly and rashly have come forth as a witness against me in print concerning this thing, when you yourself do presently acknowledge, that it is not so clear or certain as those others which are before alleged. Do you walk according to the rules of purity, to publish flying reports against the servants of Christ, before you give them any notice of it, or inquire fully concerning the truth of them? Can you justify your practice before the Lord Jesus Christ, before whom you and I must appear, to defame me so much in print, before you did endeavor to cure me by one word of your mouth, or line of your hand, if I have been infected with error. The Apostle commandeth us who are spiritual, “if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou

also be tempted." Gal.6:1. The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah was great and grievous, the Lord went down to see whether they had done according to the cry of it; and when this cry came unto you concerning me, you might have done well according to the will of God, to have imitated God, and to have queried whether it were according to the cry, and I could have sent you divers godly people at that time, who would have taken an oath of it, if it had been lawfully given them, that I delivered things opposite and contrary to what you have presented to the world, rather than what you affirm that I said. I shall therefore crave leave to give a true report unto the world of that which I've delivered concerning this thing, not seeking your discredit, but endeavoring to free myself and the truth from the discredit which you have brought upon us by your false relation.

1. I do acknowledge that at Wapping, I spake from these words of the Psalmist, "for innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me." Psal.40:12. And in the opening of them I did affirm that if any should ask me as the Eunuch did Phillip, "of whom speaketh the prophet this; of himself, or of some other man," Acts 8:34, I should answer that it would be plain that he did prophetically speak of Jesus Christ; if the Holy Ghost might be heard as an Expositor, and if we did interpret Scripture by Scripture, which is the best way of interpreting Scripture.

The place which I made use of for the proof of this is in Hebrews 10:5, where the Apostle does apply the precedent words unto Jesus Christ. "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." And whereas you say that I did take my rise from Luther's application of them with some harsh expressions unto Christ; I do affirm that this is all together false; for it was then unknown unto me, that Luther had ever expounded them so. God hath taught me better, than that I should make Luther my rule for interpreting the Scriptures. I have learned to call no man master but Jesus Christ. Luther is not of greater authority with me then Master Gataker, further than I do apprehend that he speaks according to the truth of God, and meaning of Scripture. If I had had a desire to have persuaded the people that I preached the truth of God unto them from the authority of expositors, it had been an easy thing to have stuffed my discourse with quotations drawn from them, and not to have made use of Luther's only. Ancient and modern writers have usually expounded the words, as I did. Musculus saith that all the ancients do expound this of Christ, not that our sins are properly his, but by dispensation, as he was a Mediator between us and the Father. Pomeranus, {Johannes Bugenhagen,} "that iniquities take hold of Christ, not which he himself had committed, but which he had taken upon himself." And thus I then expounded the words, according to that of Fulgentius, "he that had no sin of his own, did bear ours." Christ did

acknowledge that they were his sins, not because they were inhesively in him, but because they were imputed unto him. He was content that they should be charged upon him, that we might be discharged from them. I am not the first who has asserted that Christ hath confessed that our sins are his, Isaiah 53, &c., but whereas you would make your reader believe, that upon this account I would wholly take away confession of sin, this I do deny; and I can prove that the main use of this sermon was to teach believers how they should in an evangelical way confess sin over the head of the scapegoat, Lev.16:21, to wit, in faith, beholding them laid and charged upon Jesus Christ, that being the best confession of our sins, in which we do confess and acknowledge to the glory of God's grace, and Christ's goodness, that our sins are laid upon Jesus Christ. But you are not the first who has endeavored to persuade the world that I am against the confession of sin; though about the same time I preached publicly at Coleman Street upon these words, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I Jn.1:9. And in Gracious Street and at Algate upon the same text, which sermons are not out of the memory of many who heard me; who therefore will not believe you, if you should get the whole province to swear that you have spoken truth. And that I may declare myself to be no enemy to confession of sin, I do beseech you in the bowels of Christ, to confess your own sins and faults, in faith and sincerity to your own shame and God's glory.

Confess them not only as Pharaoh, Exod.9:27, who confessed his own sin, and the sin of his people; and Saul, I Sam.26:21; and Judas, who went from his confession to an halter, and so to his own place. Acts 1:24. But confess them with the belief of this truth in your heart, that Christ with one offering hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Heb.10:24. Confess them for your own humiliation, and for the elevation of free grace. "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth anymore because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD." Ezek.16:63. "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:6. And as you do profess yourself a friend to confession of sin in your judgment, to show yourself to be a friend to confession and forsaking of sin by your practice. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Prov.28:13. Or else you may lay a stumbling block in the way of the weak, who may be apt to look upon you as one of the Pharisees, who say and do not.

SECTION VII

Sir, I am constrained to begin again with that exhortation with which I did shut up the former section, beseeching you, that in the confession of your sin, you would not forget to confess this great and horrid sin of yours, and charging me for exhorting people to sin as fast as they will; namely,

because there is a fountain opened for them to wash in. I do not think that if the devil himself should get up into a pulpit to preach, {who doth often preach by his Vicars and Curates,} that he would not make use of any such exhortation. Neither did ever any man but yourself, aver the same thing against me. I do confess that this article was brought in against me, that I had delivered in a sermon these words, let believers sin as fast as they will, for there is a fountain open for them to wash in. But it being demanded by some, whether I did deliver it by way of exhortation, the accuser was so ingenuous to acknowledge that it was not delivered as an exhortation; and therefore it is probable that your brethren of the new province, have had so much grace to leave out in their charge, {though it be in the same page in which they have taken out the other articles,} and it will be for your credit more than for mine, to leave it out in your next edition. You may as well take out that part of a verse in Revelation, "he that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still," 22:11, and conclude that God in Scripture exhorts men to be unjust and filthy, as to draw out scraps and fragments out of my discourses, to persuade the world that I in my preaching exhort people to commit sin, which I do desire to destroy in myself, and those who hear me, by preaching the grace of God in Christ. Your learning, if not love, might have taught you to have put a more favorable

construction upon these words. The word "let" is not always used by way of exhortation, as appears by those words, Rev.22:11, but sometimes by way of supposition, and doth frequently signify as much as the word 'though' does. And taken in this sense it is as seasonable a truth, as I can desire for your good, leave upon your spirit. Though you, who profess yourselves a believer, have sinned as fast as you can in my apprehension, against the laws of love, and the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ; yet there is a fountain opened, in which, if God give you faith, you may wash yourselves from these sins. In the meanwhile, I shall comfort myself, that there is nothing charged upon me, but the same hath been charged upon those who were more filled with the Spirit for preaching than I am. They were charged with the same thing by some ignorant or malicious hearers, as appears by Romans 3:8. "And not rather, {as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,} let us do evil, that good may come? Whose damnation is just." And not rather as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we likewise say, "let us do evil that good may come." You may now expect, that before I put a period to my answer, I should speak something to your reproachful and railing speeches against me; but you know who said, that men have learned to reproach me, and speak evil of me, but I to suffer reproaches. And shall I learn of the Angel to say this to all my defamers, "the LORD rebuke thee." Zech.3:2. And shall entreat God for his Son's sake

to give grace and patience, to his afflicted and oppressed servant. Amen.

SERMON I

MAN'S LEGAL RIGHTEOUSNESS, IS NO CAUSE OR PART OF HIS JUSTIFICATION.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph.2:8-9.

Here are two things which men ought chiefly to know, their misery by sin; and their happiness by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. And by the wicked unfaithfulness of our memories we are more apt to forget these two things, than to forget any other points whatsoever. Know thyself, is a lesson as difficult, as it is old and common. How hard a matter is it for a man to remember himself, as to know what he is in himself? The king of Macedonia thought it needful, that his Page should every morning put him in remembrance, to put him in mind that he is a sinful man. So likewise it is an impossible matter, without the power and assistance of the Spirit, always to know the rich, full, and free grace of God, as it is held forth in the Gospel to poor sinners. The last of these, as it is the most sweet and excellent lesson, so with the greater difficulty it is retained in our memories. This is a doctrine which if it were preached unto us every day, we should forget it every day. The daily teaching and hourly learning of

it cannot wholly free us from the ignorance of this truth. But as far as we are carnal and fleshly, we are strangers to the knowledge thereof. So that he that thinks he perfectly knows the doctrine of justification, I dare profess to that man, that he knows nothing of this doctrine of justification as he ought to know. As long as we live upon the earth, we may be learners of this doctrine. Paul after he had been a scholar, and an aged teacher in the school of Christ many years, did then profess, that he endeavored to forget his own works, and legal righteousness in reference to his justification, and pressed forward to know more of the mystery of Christ, labouring to be found in the righteousness which is of God by faith. Phil.3:10.

Therefore though I have formally spoken of the chief point that lieth in these verses; yet I know that it is needful and necessary for me to speak of it again, that you that have heard it opened, may hear more of it, as well as for those, who have not heard the point so clearly and fully unfolded unto them; to whom God may make my discourse beneficial, if he accompany me with his presence. Wherefore I have pitched upon this subject at the present, in which, the sum of all divinity is comprised. For faith and love is the sum of all that we preach; faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, and love towards God, and all those that are united to him in the same spirit with ourselves. And that the Apostle laying down both these in these verses, showing first clearly the doctrine of justification through faith alone without works; and then showing that though we are

justified without works, yet how in the Spirit we are carried forth to perform all good works; for, he saith, "for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph.2:10.

In these words, these particulars present themselves to your best attentions. First, that salvation and justification is by grace, that is, by the free favour of God, "ye are saved by grace."

Secondly, he shows how we are saved by grace; in a way of believing, not working, "ye are saved by grace through faith." Many pretend that they look on grace, but it is through the spectacles of their own works, but he that doth truly eye grace, he looks on grace in an act of believing, and not through working.

Thirdly, the Apostle discovers the nature of true faith, which is the unfeigned faith of the elect. First, negatively he informs us that this faith is not of ourselves; there is not a fountain in ourselves from whence a true and lively faith springs; it flows not from the natural, carnal or rational principles of the first Adam, but from the power of the Spirit of grace.

Secondly, affirmatively he informs us concerning the nature and original of it, as it proceeds from God, and is bestowed upon the creature as a free gift. It is "not of ourselves, it is the gift of God."

Fourthly, he shows that as it is by grace, so it is not by works; as it is by believing, so it is not by working. "Not of works."

Fifthly, he gives the reason why it is not by works, "lest any man should boast." If a man could say that God hath justified and saved him for his endeavors, labors, pains or good works, then a man might boast. When he meets with one that is without Christ, he may say, I have done this good work, and the other good work for Christ, I shall be saved, and thou shalt be damned. But the true child of God, if he meet with a reprobate, he sees no cause to boast; for it is by the grace of God alone that he is saved, when the other is damned. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." It is the design and intention of God, in justifying a sinner by grace without works, to keep men from pride in boasting. Man did fall from happiness by pride; and there is no way to attain happiness, but by humility and faith; the true way to humility is by believing; for believing empties the creature of all works, and righteousness, and shows that he is nothing in himself, and that all his treasure, glory, happiness, riches and perfection lies treasured and laid up in another. Faith brings a man in a poor and beggarly condition to Christ, that he may be enriched by Christ.

Lastly, the Apostle declares, that though we are saved by faith without works, yet we shall not be unfruitful in bringing forth good works. We are the workmanship of God by a new creation, and the end of our creation in Christ, is this, that being in him we may be active to love and good works.

First, I shall endeavour to prove negatively, that there is no justification by works. And then show how it is by grace; and then how it is in a way

of believing; and so come to distinguish true faith, which is given by the Spirit, from the false faith of hypocrites, and libertines, which flow only from a principle of human wisdom, and not from the powerful operation of the Spirit of God.

At this present, I shall observe this method. First, I will show that we are not saved by works, I mean, by the works of the Law. Then I shall show that we are not saved and justified by works, which are the fruits of faith, or done under the Covenant of Grace. Thirdly, I shall show that we are not saved by works, in which we yield obedience to any Gospel Ordinances, though they be ordinances appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ himself to be practiced by the saints. I take in this, because I have found in my own spirit, and in many that I have dealt with, a secret and subtle kind of Popery, by which we are apt to attribute something to the practice of ordinances, in reference to our justification. And hence it is that people are ready to run into every new way of worship, which is brought to light, thinking that unless they find out the right discipline, and government of Jesus Christ, the right Baptism, and Ordinances, they are not true Saints, nor sufficiently justified. Therefore I shall take in this too, to show, that as we are not justified by more inward, and spiritual works; so neither are we justified by any outward observation of ordinances, or submitting to any command of the Lord Jesus Christ, but only by our obedience to the first and principle command of the Gospel, by which we

believe justification is grace through Christ without works.

For the first of these heads, I shall briefly show, how it is not by works, passing by many things that I have formerly spoken of, and I shall only lay down four or five considerations for the confirming of this, that we are saved, and justified before God, and in the court of our own conscience, without any works whatsoever.

The first consideration may be this. We cannot be justified by works, or by the Law, because there was never any man had a legal righteousness, but the Man Christ Jesus. This is Paul's undeniable conclusion, laid down in Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." The devout Jew as well as the profane Gentile, as brought in before the tribunal of God, is a guilty sinner, coming short of such a glorious righteousness, which the Law doth require of him, that he may be justified under it. The Gentile never walked according to the written law of nature, which is written in his heart, nor the Jew, according to the law of his Maker, written in tables of stone.

All the works of the Law may be reduced to two heads. The first are those works that we do in obedience to God, to show our love to him. Secondly, the works that we do, to show our love to our neighbor. Now, if we take works, in either of these two respects, I shall show that all the men and women in the world, come short of such a legal righteousness, and perfection, that the holy, just, and pure law of God requires.

It will be clear, that no man ever loved God as he ought. God doth command us, that we should love Him with all our heart, and with all our strength, with the whole stream of our affections. But what man did ever love God in that manner? Suppose a wife should entertain many thousand lovers besides her husband, could any say that that wife loved her husband? So many sins we have, so many lovers we have, so the Scripture calls them, "but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD," Jer.3:1, that is, thou hast followed many sins and lusts, base and vile corruptions. Now, it is thus with all the men in the world; we have all gone a whoring from our God; so that though all men, yea, even Turks and Heathens pretend to love God, the great God that made them, yet there is no man that ever loved God as he ought. That man that thinks he ever loved God as he ought, and as the Law requires, he is very blind, and not enlightened to this day, to see the purity, and spirituality of the righteous Law of the just and high God.

Suppose a subject should always contrive rebellion, and conspire against the person of his King, as desirous to take away his life, and to pull the crown from his head; will any say, that this subject loves the King; thus it is with all men; we are all traitors and rebels against the King of Heaven; if we had strength, we would take the crown from the head of God, and set it upon the head of the Devil. If it were in our power, Christ should not reign, and be King in the world, but the

Devil. This is in the heart of wicked flesh, it brings forth nothing else; it loves itself and the devil, but hates, loathes, and abhors God, and had rather that the devil should sit on the throne, than God the Father, and the Lamb at his right hand. So that a man being unable to obey the law of God, God cannot justify him by his law, but must pronounce him a rebel; for sin is rebellion, and spiritual high treason against God. In Ezekiel 2, when God sent the Prophet to teach the people, he tells him what people he should meet with, he saith they were such as would not hear him, such as would slight him, and would not endure to hear sound and good doctrine, and calleth them rebels. "And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me; they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day." You see, sin is called rebellion in the word of God.

But some will say, certainly, I was never such a rebel as you make me; I apprehend not that I ever hated God in such a manner. Answer. If thou dost not see how thou abhorrest God, and how in the flesh thou lovest the devil more than God, thou hast not to this day, a sight of the just and pure will of God. For it is not enough that thou abstain from gross sins and prophaneness, that makes a man scandalous to the eye of the world; but thou must abstain from every sin, from every vain thought, or else the Law will pass the sentence of condemnation on thee as a rebel. If it were possible that a man could so live on earth, that he should never

dishonour God in any action; that he should never dishonour God by any word of his mouth; but all his words should be to the glory of that God that made him, and to the glory of that wisdom of the Father, by which he made all things; yet if this man should have but a sinful ungodly rising in his heart against God, the Law would take no notice of all the good deeds of this man, and all the good words that he hath spoken to the glory of God, but the Law would condemn him for that sinful thought in his spirit. Therefore you shall find that not only sinful words and actions are called traitorous words, and rebellious actions in Scripture, but evil thoughts concerning God, are treason against God. The Law of God reaches the heart and spirit of a man, so that if there be a sinful thought, the spiritual and holy law of God, condemns a man as a rebel for that thought. "But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone." Jer.5:23. The Law doth not condemn a man only for rebellion in words and action, but for rebellion in the heart. It is not enough for us outwardly to conform to what the Law requires, but we must have obedient hearts; if there be any rebellion in the heart, we are condemned as though we had sinned against God in words and actions.

The Law doth not only condemn a man for adultery, by which he defiles his neighbor's wife. A man may be an adulterer, and yet an eunuch; if a man hath but an adulterous glance with his eye at the sight of a woman, if he hath but a sinful thought arising in his heart, the glorious Law of God thunders

in the face of that man, and lightens in the countenance of that man, and will utterly destroy him for his sin. The Law is like the Priest and Levite, Luke 10, that passed by the man that was robbed and wounded by thieves. It is Christ alone who pours in the oil of his Gospel into the wounds of sinners, for to heal and refresh them. The Law rightly and spiritually understood is a ministry of death. It is the Gospel which is the ministry of life and salvation. And if we thus look upon the Law of God, and rightly understand it, it is clear and evident, that there was never any man that loved God. Sin is a hatred of God, so many sins as thou committest, so much hatred of God thou discovereth. Our love is showed by keeping the commandments of God; so by breaking the commandments of God, we discover and manifest that hatred that is in us against the most holy God. So that if you consider this, that you never loved God yet, you cannot comfort yourselves in your love to God; but must abase yourselves for your neglecting of the doctrine of justification. When God shall give you light to see himself and his Son, you will find, that that which you call love to God, {in your blind ignorance,} is hatred of God, and rebellion against him.

Secondly, confider, that there is no man that ever loved his neighbour as he ought. The Law of nature, and the written Law of God require, that every man should do to others, as he would that they should do unto him, but there was never any man that did so. If it were possible for a man to live so, as that he should never wrong his neighbour, or

his brother, by any unjust action, or by any word spoke against his brother. But where is the man that can stand forth, and truly affirm it? Yet he may be charged by the Law, if he hath had any evil thoughts against him in his heart. For the Law is spiritual, the Law reaches the heart; and the Law will condemn this man, as a man that hates his brother; for the Law takes notice of this in particular; as you shall find. "And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart." Zech.7:10. The Law forbids imagining evil against our brother in our hearts. So that if once in all the days of thy life, thou hast had but one uncharitable thought of any man, when thou hadst no ground at all for it, thou hast imagined evil in thy heart against thy brother, and art a transgressor of the Law; for thou walketh contrary to thy rule and light.

I appeal to thee, wouldest thou have a man think evil of thee, when he hath no just cause? Thou wilt say, I would have no man think evil of me, or harbor an uncharitable thought in his breast against me; so then if thou hast an uncharitable rising in thy spirit against any man or woman in the world, thou comest short of the righteousness, holiness, and perfection of the Law, and so there is no salvation for thee by the Law. If a man consider what the Law is, he shall find no comfort in the world by looking upon himself and his best performances in the glass of the Law; but he shall find that all have sinned, are haters of God, fighters against God, haters of his children, and enemies to their neighbors. That as

Christ said to the Scribes and Pharisees, "did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law," John 7:19, so I may speak to all men and women in the world; the just and righteous God, as the Creator that will require obedience from his creature, hath given us a just and holy law; all that he commands is consonant to reason and equity, thou canst not deny; but that it is equal thou shouldest do to all men, as thou would that they should do to thee. But we have all sinned, and have broken this just and righteous law of God; therefore by this it appears that there is no justification for a man by the Law or his own works.

Thirdly. Another consideration may be drawn from this; it is not any whit necessary that any man should have any works at all to bring with him unto God for his justification. There is fulness and sufficiency in the grace of God, and in Jesus Christ, so that there is no need of any works that we should bring for our justification.

The robe of Christ's righteousness, is such a complete garment, that there needs no patches of our own to be sewed to it. You shall find God speaking of his own grace in Isaiah, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isa.43:25. It is not for our works sake, if it be only of his grace. He saith, "thou hast a mighty arm; strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne, mercy and truth shall go before thy face." Psa.89:13-14. As the arm of God's justice, is a mighty arm, by

which he crushes and breaks in pieces all wicked and ungodly men; so his arm is mighty to bring salvation. And he hath "laid help upon one that is mighty," Psa.89:19, seeing the mightiness of God's arm is to bring salvation to his people, he is mighty to save. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save," Isa.63:1, and he will save to the utmost, the worst and chief of sinners, without any righteousness, or holiness of their own. Therefore it follows, that it is not needful, nor necessary, that a man do good works, that he may be justified and saved.

We have a rule in philosophy, that it is vain and frivolous to do that by many things, that may be done by few; seeing God hath discovered an all-sufficiency in his own grace, it is vain therefore to seek justification by many things. "Let Israel hope in the LORD, for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption." Psa.130:7. Mercy and plenteous redemption. No need therefore of man's righteousness!

If thou hast been a slave to many sins, to vile lusts, and base corruptions; pride, vain-glory, hypocrisy, swearing, uncleanness, &c., there is plenteous redemption. God can redeem thee from all thy sins, that thou hast been accustomed unto many years. He is able to redeem thee out of the hands of all thy corruptions that hold thee fast in bondage and slavery. Wherefore there being such a

sufficiency in grace, it is not needful or necessary, that a man do good works, that he may be justified.

The fourth consideration may be this, that Almighty God doth not require us to do good works that they should justify or save us. I confess in the letter of the word, God seems to require them. When he speaks in the language of the Law, he saith, "do this, and live, &c," but in the ministry of the Gospel, which is the only ministry of salvation, God doth not require thee to do anything that thou mayest be saved, or justified. The Law sets thee to work, and is never satisfied; but the Gospel bids thee do nothing at all. This is the tenor of the Gospel, believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and be confident to be justified only by his Name. The Apostles when they preached, endeavored to beat men off from their own works and performances, in the point of justification. When the jailer said, "what shall I do to be saved," Paul bids him not to work, but to believe in the Lord Jesus. So in Isaiah, "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. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not, hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Isa 55:1-3. God reprehends men that spend their time for that which is worth nothing,

laying out so much time in acting, and doing, for justification and salvation, and in the meanwhile, neglecting the glorious and precious Gospel of grace by his Son. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." Heb.2:3. Wherefore do you spend money for that which it not bread. Wherefore do ye spend the strength of your bodies and spirits in working, labouring and trying out your days under a spirit of bondage, that ye may be justified, and saved? You spend your money for that that is not bread; you shall never have a piece of bread from the law for this; you shall never satisfy the Law, it will not give you a crumb of comfort, work, and do what you can. "Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness," saith the Lord. Foolish and ignorant people, they take pains to satisfy their spirits, and to get comfort, by making long prayers, and observing fasting days, and giving alms to the poor, endeavoring to love God and Saints, that they may be saved; but they labour for that which will not profit, for that, that is not bread.

If duties could satisfy, why did Christ die? If we could be saved by the Law, why was the Gospel made known? Therefore he points them to the Gospel, "hear, and your soul shall live," that is, hear the word of God's grace, believe that God will pardon your sins for his name's sake, and not for any works or righteousness in yourselves. Believe that Christ came to save sinners, ungodly sinners, the worst of

sinner, the chief of them; believe this, and your souls shall live. If any bid thee work, that thou mayest be justified; to get love to the brethren, to get a good conscience to God and men; he setteth you upon a labour that will not profit you. The voice of God is, "hear, and your soul shall live;" believe that which is reported concerning this Christ, who was born of a woman, though the eternal Son of God, and was manifested in the flesh, and hath borne the sins of sinful flesh; and hath made an end of all iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. In believing this doctrine, we are assured of his love. And this God bids us preach, and nothing else for justification, ceasing from ourselves, our works, our righteousness, our performances, resting on his love, setting foot on his grace, disclaiming our doings, not coming to him in the sight of our works, and our love, but of his goodness, as it is displayed in Christ.

Fifthly, it is positively forbidden, and God reproves men for it; he shows them that they undo their souls to eternity, if in a secret way they rest upon their own works. "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." Rom.9:31-32.

He doth not say, that they did directly seek salvation by the Law, but indirectly, as it were by the works of the Law. Works are not only not required, but forbidden. God doth not bid us to work, but he forbids us to work for justification. It is not he that

worketh, that is justified, "but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom.4:5. When the Apostle presseth men to believe, and persuades them to entertain the doctrine of grace that he preached; in those exhortations there is a virtual forbidding of working for life. When he bids them only to believe, Acts 16:31, it is as much as if he had bid them not to work. Consonant to that speech of his, "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Gal.2:16. He excluded works, that he may establish men in the doctrine of faith, and prohibiteth working for justification.

Lastly, we are not to desire the presence of good works that we may be justified. A man is not only to go thus far, to be convinced that he is not justified by works; but he is to be convinced of this, that the presence of good works are, not needful and necessary to him when he comes to God for justification. I am not only to profess that my works have no influence into my justification, or are the cause of it, but that good works in the presence of them, are not needful and necessary to justification.

Good works are inefficacious to justification, and not needful to be present, in the person that is to be justified. Here some fly off from the truth, they acknowledge that we are not justified by works, yet they require the presence of good works in the

person who is to be justified. But God when he efficaciously works upon us, convinces us, that not only our good works have no causality in justification, but likewise convinces us, that there is no necessity for the presence of good works in us before justification. And this is clear, because when the Spirit comes, he shows us that we are to come to the throne of grace, not as men already made righteous, and holy, but as men unrighteous, and unholy, to be made holy by Jesus Christ. So that good works are not necessary as a qualification, or disposition in the person to be justified.

This is that glorious Gospel, which carnal reason cannot apprehend, man's learning cannot reach, which the world's wisdom accounts foolishness, and which the devil and worldly men will always oppose and persecute. What saith the zealous Pharisee, will the God of love justify him that hates him? Will the God of justice sitting upon the throne pronounce the sinner guiltless? Yea, Pharisee, he will. What saith the scripture, "he justifieth the ungodly." What is an ungodly man, but he that hates God, that is an enemy to God, that doth not for the present love God? And when a man looks to his grace, he must look on himself as an unrighteous, as an unholy, ungodly man; he is not bound to come as the Pharisee, but as the Publican; he is not to come thus qualified, I love God, and the people of God, I desire to obey God, I am thus qualified, therefore I shall be justified, and no sinful man, that hath not these qualifications to fit him for justification. God bids sinners whilst they are in their

blood, to live. "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." Ezek.16:6.

Christ comes to call sinners to repentance or changedness of heart by the discoveries of grace. For God doth not command us, to come as men loving him, or loving his people, that we may be justified; but when we see ourselves sinners, ungodly, and the chief of sinners, then he commands us to come to the throne of grace, and proclaims justification and salvation to us freely without works; as Paul saith, "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. I am the first of sinners, for so it is in the Greek, the first not in time, but in sin and malignity. This is the truth, which Paul preached, and which he accounted, not only worthy of acceptation, but all acceptation, for the sweetness and excellency of it. If other truths are worthy of acceptation, this is worthy of all acceptation. If a man seeth that he hath a heart that will not suffer him to love God, that he hates the people of God, yet heareth the Gospel preached, that there is grace opened to sinners, to the chief of sinners; if this man believe, if he come and trust the grace of God, he hath as good an assurance for heaven, as heaven can give, as God gives to any that he intends to save, and make happy with himself to eternity.

By this we see, that we are not to bring good works, because their presence is not necessarily

required. Though we see all evil present with us, and all good absent, we may rest upon the promises of grace for justification, which is the plain direct way to true and perfect holiness.

Now in the next place, I shall give you considerations, to prove that we are not justified by works that are done after conversion. This will appear as clearly as that which I have delivered concerning the needlessness of the works of the Law, for our justification before our justification.

The first reason which I shall lay down is this; those things are not the cause of justification which follows justification and true faith, but good works follow justification and true faith; therefore good works are not the cause of justification. The cause precedes the effect; good works are the effect of justification; right reason therefore will teach us, that they cannot precede justification. The work of the justification of a sinner is done and completed, before works are done, and therefore works can have no hand in our justification. That old rule is as old as the doctrine of justification, and as true as it is old, "good works do not precede in the person who is to be justified, but follow the person that is justified." From which it will follow, that a man is not justified for good works that follow faith, because he is justified before he hath those good works; good works in order of nature, following true faith; true faith working by love. Gal.5:6. I am not to love that I may believe, but I must believe God's love, that I may love God. "We love him, because he first loved us." I Jn.4:19. We are first purged from dead works

by believing, and then we serve the living God. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Heb.9:14. God hath sworn that justification shall go before good works. Luke 1:70-80. He first delivereth us from our sins, our soul's deadly enemies, and then we serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness, as Zachariah, being filled with the Holy Spirit, doth sweetly pour forth the holy water of this soul-refreshing truth. Luke 1:74-75. He hath redeemed us from all iniquity, to purify us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Faith which looketh upon the grace of him who is invisible is the root, good works are the fruit, and there must be the root before the fruit.

But some men may say, may we not see the fruit before we see the root, as we see some fruit upon trees, while the root lies hid; and from the beholding of the fruit, may we not very rationally conclude, that there is a root; so from the beholding of our good works, the fruit of true faith, may we not conclude, that there is faith, though it be not in itself visible to us.

To this I answer, that this similitude proves not the thing; for though it be a truth, that good works may appear first to men, yet faith is first visible to us in our own spirits; and it is impossible that I should see the truth of good works, except I first see the truth of faith. Evident sanctification doth evidence unto us the truth of our justification, but

sanctification is not evident, our justification being evidenced to us in the first place. If it be manifested in our spirits to us, that our works are good, it will presently be manifested unto us, that we have true faith. But this is not manifested in our spirits, that our works are truly good works, and such which cannot be done by an hypocrite, until the truth of our faith be manifested unto us.

I will make this evident by this reason; a man must see his good works, as done either under the Law, or under the Gospel, and look upon them, either in the glass of the Law, or the glass of the Gospel; if a man look upon them in the glass of the Law, and do rightly and spiritually understand the Law, he shall be so far from drawing an assurance of his justification from them, that he shall behold himself cursed and damned, with all his good works. For the Law curseth every man that continueth not in the doing of all things which are commanded by God, but it will sentence us to death for the least spot or wrinkle which it doth discover; so that it is impossible, that a man should see himself justified in the glass of the Law.

But thou wilt say, he may look upon his love, sincerity, and works, in the glass of the Gospel. And to this I answer, that if he look upon them in the glass of the Gospel, which is Jesus Christ, then he must put himself under the Gospel, and look upon himself, as a man in Christ, that so he may see his works good by Jesus Christ; which he will never be able to see without the eye of faith, which seeth things invisible, Hebrews 11, and by which we look

upon Christ, I Jn.2:1, dwell in Christ, Eph.3:17, live in Christ, Gal.2:19, and do living works, acceptable to God by the life of Christ. Heb.11:4. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," II Cor.3:18, and see that our good works are the effects of Christ's love, discovered in himself and in his Gospel to our souls. And therefore when John doth inform us, that we shall know that we know him, if we keep his commandment, he doth propose believing, as the first commandment of God, without which we cannot assure ourselves, that we are obedient to his other commandments. "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ," I Jn.3:23, good works after a man hath faith, are not the cause of justification, but the consequent; they follow a man's justification; they do not precede the act of justification; they neither precede the act of God's grace, by which he justifies a sinner, neither do they precede justification in the court of conscience. But being justified by faith, we have peace, Rom.5:1, in our consciences. This was the doctrine which was frequently preached by those heavenly carpenters, which did first strike at the horns of the beast. It is necessary, saith Melanchthon, "that faith, which is a confidence of God's mercy, does precede love." And another place, "faith is not grounded upon our love, but the promised mercy of God; so that it is manifest, that there cannot be true love, unless remission of sins be first apprehended."

Another reason is from the imperfection of works wrought by a man after he is justified; if any man that is justified, look on his works, and do not behold them in the glass of the Gospel, he shall read his own condemnation for his works. There is an imperfection in all our works, seeing we do not love God so perfectly as we should, with all our heart, all our mind, and all our spirit, but while the regenerate part, through the power of the Spirit runs after God, and loves God, the fleshly part runneth after sin, and hates God. Therefore seeing there is such imperfection in the works that we perform, that the best of us are unprofitable servants, and that the most holy amongst us, do that for which he may be damned every day, if God should not deal with us in the Gospel, but in the Law; it will follow, that a man cannot be justified by the works that he doth after he hath faith, and is converted, and doth works which are wrought by the Spirit of grace.

It may here be objected, that the good works of saints are perfect. For an answer to this, I refer the reader to what shall be delivered from those words that "he which is born of God sinneth not."

I come now to the next consideration, which is this, that we are not justified by the practice of any Gospel-ordinances, which are commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ. There are some, who it may be, are convinced that they are not justified by works, yet I know not what new kind of Popery they have found out; for they think to please God by submitting to ordinances, and finding out the true discipline and government of Christ's Church;

therefore you shall find a kind of spirit of bondage in them, if they be not satisfied concerning the true discipline, government and ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Wherefore I shall endeavour to demonstrate this, and show clearly, that as we are not justified by works before, or after conversion, so we are not justified and saved, by the submitting to any ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is not in these, there is nothing to be found in these available to justification. Forms of government and ordinances do not make men Christians, but a lively faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When Gaius Marius Viclorinut told Simplician, that he was turned from heathenism to Christianity, and he replied, that he would not believe him, unless he saw him in the congregation of Christians; he wittily thus reprehended the rashness of his speech, "do your walls then make Christians?" So to those that say, men are of the world, until they are under this or that form of government and ordinance, I may thus speak; do these things make Christians? Episcopacy, presbytery {all government} is nothing! Independency is nothing, dipping is nothing, but faith which worketh by love. The Apostle clearly proves this point, "for I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Gal.5:3-4. We know that Paul circumcised Timothy; after he was a preacher of the Gospel, and submitted himself to many of the rites

and ceremonies of the Jews; shaved his head, and put himself under a Jewish vow; yet here he saith, if a man be circumcised, he is a debtor to the whole Law. His meaning is this, that if a man submit to circumcision, as thinking it will any whit avail him to his justification, and salvation, that man shall not be saved by Jesus Christ, but he is a debtor to the whole law; he is not under grace, but under the curse of the Law.

When some preached that there was a necessity for men to be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, that they might be justified; see how the doctrine was disrelished by the Apostles; Peter calleth it a tempting of God, and laying a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which they nor their fathers were not able to bear. Paul, though as a spiritual man, he could become all things to all men, to the Jew, as a Jew, to the Gentile, as a Gentile, I Cor.9:20-22, that by all means he might save some; yet how doth he thunder and lighten in the face of those that laid too much upon the practice of outward tilings, denying unto them any salvation by Christ. And as he said, "if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing," so if any man be baptized, I may say, Christ shall profit him nothing. If any man to satisfy his conscience, desire one to dip or sprinkle him, or join himself as a member to any congregation, thinking by pleasing God, and Christ, to further his salvation in this way, he is a stranger to Christ, and unacquainted with his Gospel.

Faith is inconsistent with anything in this sense; faith will not suffer anything to be joined with

it in point of justification; and if we will join anything with faith for justification, that faith is nothing worth at all. If we will do anything that we may be justified, we must do everything. If thou wilt be a member of a church, as they speak, that thou may be comforted, justified, and saved, thou art bound to fulfil the whole Law.

The Law is well compared by one to a chain, which is linked together, and if we take one link of it, the weight of the whole chain will be upon us; so if we do anything that we may be justified, we lay ourselves under all the bondage and slavery of the Law, and are tied to do everything in the Law, that we may be justified. He that is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law, Gal.5:3, "for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." Gal.5:6. By circumcision, he means all the outward privileges of the Jews; these do nothing avail to salvation and by uncircumcision, the privileges of the Gentiles, Baptism, and the Supper. All outward privileges and prerogatives do not avail to justification. The kingdom of Heaven is not in these things, not circumcision, or uncircumcision, or any outward ordinances. The kingdom of Heaven is within you.

Another reason may be drawn from the consideration of the nature of ordinances, and our submitting ourselves to them. There is not so much in that outward obedience that is given to outward ordinances, as in that obedience that is given to the moral precepts of the Law. Mark 10:19. Our Saviour

commends the young man for acknowledging that obedience to God, loving God and his neighbour, were more than all burnt offerings and sacrifice; there is more in internal obedience, than in obedience to external ordinances. From which conclusion, thus I argue; if those things that are of a more excellent nature, as, love to God, and love to our neighbour, and relieving the poor, be altogether unprofitable, inefficacious, and unavailable to justification, and salvation, then these outward works of obedience, in submitting to outward ordinances, are much less available. If the greatest works advantage nothing for justification, and salvation, then certainly the doing of inferior works, the suffering a man to dip me, and to make me a member of his church, cannot advantage me. These things are works in their own nature far inferior to the great works of the Law, love to God, and to the people of God, and to the poor saints of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore if these works be altogether unavailable, if they can nothing further my justification; nay, if they hinder me in point of justification, if I lay any weight upon them; then certainly these inferior works can nothing further towards my justification and salvation. And if a man does not practice them, according to the command of Christ, through ignorance, it is no way prejudicial to his justification and salvation. It did not prejudice the thief that he died without baptism, that he did not receive the supper of the Lord, that he was not admitted a member of the visible church; it did not prejudice him that he had no fellowship with the

saints. A man may be justified and saved, not only without the works of the law, and works after conversion, but he may be saved, though he do not submit himself, to the practice of outward ordinances.

Therefore if any man say unto you that you must be baptized or you cannot be saved, I cannot look unto you as a saint, except you be baptized; you must be members of the Church, or else you cannot be members of Christ, I cannot acknowledge you as a brother; rather pity their ignorance than yield to their exhortations. What a sad thing is it for men to place saintship and religion in these things when the Scripture plainly and punctually in this respect overthroweth them? "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, {concerning which there were many controversies and janglings in those times,} but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom.14:17.

Since the Scripture necessitates nothing to make a man an heir with Christ, but faith, what abominable Popery is it to say, that a man cannot be a saint, if he does not submit to outward ordinances?

I cannot but commend what I find in Luther, who was zealously carried forth against some in his time that made a rent from him in a legal way, because they differed from him about external things and ordinances, which are no just ground why Saints should divide themselves from one another. Luther said that they "had brought in another kind of Popery, and more dangerous than that which he

had overthrown by his preaching; for as for gross Popery," saith he, "men's eyes began to be enlightened to see the absurdities of it. But these men come in a subtle way, and pretending a necessity of submitting to forms, institutions and ordinances do pervert the pure and simple Gospel of Christ, labouring to persuade men that if they do not submit to the ordinances of the Lord Jesus, he would not acknowledge and confess them before his Father."

Therefore we are to be rightly informed concerning these things, and if we do submit to outward ordinances, we should not do it from legal principles, for it were better not to practice them, than to practice them from these principles, to the ruining of our souls. And they that draw disciples after them by such rigid and Gospel destroying principles, will find to their shame, that those that they have brought in by these principles will fall away from them to their shame and infamy, for God is dishonored, Christ is robbed of his grace, and the free Spirit loses his glory.

Suffer me now to make a little use, and so I shall commend you, and what hath been delivered to the blessing of God. You see that we are saved exclusively by the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ in believing the Gospel, without any works going before justification, or any submission to the ordinances of the Gospel, which may follow it. This doth bring four sorts of people under a just reproof.

First, such as are grossly Popish, maintaining justification by their own works and righteousness,

or affirming that a man is not justified by Christ only, but by an admixture of grace and works together. These deny justification by the grace of God, and the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ through faith, and set up a justification by inherent righteousness in themselves, holding that we are then justified from sin, when it is removed out of our sight, sense, feeling, lives, spirits and conversations.

The strongest argument, which they bring for the confirming of their assertion, and in which they do most triumph, as though they had obtained a victory over the truth of God's grace, is in James, "ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Jas.2:24. Doth not James, say they, lay down our assertion in so many words, joining faith and good works as co-causes of justification. Some to escape the edge of this argument have denied this epistle to be Canonical, like him who being unable to untie the Gordian knot, did cut it in pieces. Thus Lucas Osiander proposing this objection of his antagonists doth think that he hath forever cut it to pieces by their answer.

But secondly, others, yea most of those, whom we call Protestant writers, for the reconciling of James to Paul, and his fellow apostles, with one consent give in this answer to this objection, distinguishing of a twofold justification. First, a justification before God; and secondly, a justification before men. Paul, as they apprehend, doth speak of the former of these, James of the latter; supposing this to be the genuine sense and meaning of James,

that we are justified by works, that is, declaratively before men.

But with respect and due reverence to the piety and learning of these men who give in this answer, give me leave, being not sworn or obliged to justify what any man, or many men, though godly and learned, have apprehended to be the meaning of a place, to show my reasons, why I dissent from them; and secondly, to give in mine own answer to the place.

First, I apprehend that James doth not speak of a justification before men, because his proof is from Abraham's being justified by works, when he offered up his son Isaac, as it is evident by the preceding words; which action on Abraham's part would not have justified him before men. They would have looked upon him rather as a cruel malefactor, than a saint in offering up his only son.

Secondly, this business was so transacted between God and Abraham that it was not visible to men, that they should justify him for it, when he went to perform this act of obedience to his God, he left his servants behind him, and carried no man with him, but his son who was to be sacrificed.

Thirdly, if we view the place, Genesis 22:11-12, out of which James doth prove his argument, it will be evident that it proves not a justification towards men, but towards God. And the angel said, "lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." Gen.22:12. This angel was

Christ, as it doth appear by his calling of himself God; and he is justified by him, as a man that feared him. And in the 16,17 & 18 verses, "by myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." It is clear by this, that the justification spoken of, is not a justification before men, but before God.

Lastly, I shall therefore give in what I do conceive to be the meaning of the Holy Spirit in these words. James doth not speak of justification, as it is taken properly, and used by Paul, but doth speak of justification as it is taken improperly. He speaks not of it as an act by which we are reconciled, and our iniquities pardoned, but he speaks of it as an act by which God doth declare a man to be justified by his works which he doth after his justification. Abraham was a justified man by faith, before Isaac was born; and now God doth bear witness to the works and fruits of his faith, and doth justify him by his works in this sense, that is, he doth make manifest that Abraham is a man that fears and loves him. And this is the answer which is given by the learned Melanchthon, "the word justification is not to be taken for reconciliation, but approbation, man is justified by his works, that is, having a

righteousness of works, God doth approve him, his works do please God." And as when we see good fruit upon a tree, we are prone to saying, this is a good tree; not that the good fruit doth make the tree good, but the tree being good doth bring forth good fruit; so God, having made us good trees by justifying us by his grace, doth enable us to bring forth good fruit, and speaking after the manner of men to us men, doth approve us to be good trees, bringing forth good fruit; and thus much for this reproof of these men, and in answer to their objection.

Secondly, this doth serve to discover and reprove such, who would seem to be no Papists, who yet in a more refined and subtle way, do preach forth the same doctrine which the others do maintain, and prefer some Popish books, which are wrought with a fine and curious thread, before any books which have been published, by any who have been eminent for the knowledge of God's grace in Christ through faith for justification. These are they who, if it were possible, would deceive the very elect, laying siege against the Gospel, and the doctrine of justification, while they pretend that they are fighters for it. And these preach that we are not to look so much upon a Christ without us for justification, as a Christ within us. And that we are not justified by a Christ that is in Heaven, but by Christ within us; which Christ of theirs is nothing else, when ye are well acquainted with him, but the workings of their own spirits in zeal and love to God, and when they have high thoughts of God, their will

is conformable to the will of God, and they think the same things that God thinks, and submit to God in their ways. They look upon these workings, as their perfection and justification; and this is Christ within them. Such kind of doctrines as this is, are the first rudiments and principles by which the politique and civilized Familists do leaven their pupils, leading them from the plain and simple doctrine of the Gospel. The spirit of error and delusion which was in Hendrik Niclaes, {the first father of the Familists, which have lived of late, or are yet living,} did work mightily in him to pervert the Gospel, and to bring in Anti-Christianity in this way of flaming zeal, love, and holiness. And if he were now alive, he would wonder at his numerous offspring, and progeny, which he hath now amongst us. But that you may avoid this first rock, before ye be engulfed into the deep and bottomless pit of Familistical Atheism, and Anti-Christianity, let what hath been spoken to reprove them, establish you in the truth of the Gospel, and look upon the best peace of Familism but as upon refined Popery.

But we are not saved by Christ working in us, and making us obedient to his Father's holy will, but we are saved by the righteousness of Christ, who hath shed his blood for us. And though we deny not, but that we have Christ within us, and the Spirit of Grace to subdue our sins; yet, this is denied, that the workings of the Spirit are our justification; for we are justified before we have these workings, which we feel within us. We are not justified because we love God and Christ, and desire to walk in

sincerity to glorify God, but because we apprehend the Grace of God in Christ; and therefore we love God and Christ, and desire in sincerity, to walk in all the ways that God hath made known to us in Christ. We are not justified by the conformity of our will to God's will, or the oneness of our will with his; but we are justified by the merits of Christ, before any of these works are wrought in our hearts by the Spirit of grace. He that denies this, is ignorant of Christ and the Gospel, and is not an honourer of Christ, but a minister of Satan and Antichrist, and a deluder of the people.

Thirdly, this is for the reproof of the hypocritical Protestant, who professes the doctrine of justification by faith without works with his tongue, but denieth it with his heart; not daring to trust his soul in the arms of a Saviour, unless he brings good works along with him to procure his welcome and entertainment.

This man stumbles at the threshold of the door of grace, being never able to enter into the house of love; because he will not adventure his salvation upon the promises of grace which are made to sinners, that have no works or righteousness inherently in themselves. He will not go to God, or close with a promise of grace, unless he has the sight of righteousness in himself in the first place. He will tell you, that good works are not the matter of our justification, and yet he will not conclude that he is a justified man, until he see good works in himself. This man following the law of righteousness, doth not attain to the law of

righteousness, because he seeketh it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the Law. Rom.9:31-32.

The Apostle speaks against this pharisaical opinion when he saith, we are justified by Grace through believing, not through working. I am not bound to love God and the brethren, that I may be beloved of God; but I must believe, that I may love God, and my brother.

The preposterous preaching of sanctification before justification for the evidencing of justification, is that which keepeth many poor creatures in bondage for many years, and ruins many souls.

How many are gone to Hell, who thought they were going to Heaven, deceiving themselves with false and unsound assurances. And fetching their comforts from the sight of their own works, and not from the grace of God in Christ, by a pure act of believing. If this were the right path to justification, we should not be justified in believing, but in loving, and working. For I seeing my love to God, should conclude God's love to me, "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." I Jn.4:10. And true love is obtained by the sight of God's free love to us in an act of believing.

Therefore if thou hast no assurance of the love of God, but that which thou hast gotten from the sight of thine own works, and from the conclusions of thine own base and deceitful heart; as the ordinary way of some hath been, thou hast no assurance at all.

When thou shalt lie under a great temptation, thou wilt find no comfort in this assurance, and thou shalt find at the great day, when thou shalt appear before God and Christ, that this assurance will not be worth a rush.

This building upon thy love to God, and not upon God's free love to thee, is to build upon a sandy foundation, and not upon Christ by faith. And if the Lord convince thee of thy folly, thou wilt lay a better foundation of joy and comfort than this can be unto thee. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." I Cor.3:11.

Though a spiritual man can make a good use of marks and signs, as of love to God and saints, when he seeth them in the light of the Spirit, as fruits proceeding from faith, as the root; yet by drawing a conclusion from the sight of such things, which we apprehend to be in ourselves, of our happiness and good estate before God, we shall not so truly comfort, as certainly deceive ourselves.

Fourthly, this is for the reprehension of blind and ignorant formalists, who place religion rather in conformity to outward forms of government, and submission to external ordinances, than in the faith of the Gospel, which is operative by love. Justification doth not lie in our obedience to the ordinances of Jesus Christ, but in Jesus Christ. We are not made Saints by being made members of any Church or Congregation but by faith in the Head of the Church. Woe to him that maketh his obedience and submission to any ordinance the ground of his comfort, as so many zealous formalists do, who run

from congregation to congregation, from one ordinance to another, to get solid comfort to their souls, apprehending that they are undone creatures, and cannot be true Saints, unless they be under the true practice of all ordinances; whereas it is a plain truth, revealed in the Gospel of truth, that neither submitting to an ordinance can make one a true Saint, nor the want of ordinances un-saint any man that is made one with Christ. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Rom.2:28-29. So he is a true saint, who is not necessarily a visible member of a congregation, but he whose life of faith is hidden in Jesus Christ. He is baptized, not whose body is washed with water, but whose soul is washed in the blood of Christ. I Pet.3:21. He is a good communicant, and breaks bread, who doth not break bread outwardly, but by faith doth inwardly feed upon the Bread of Life. We are not justified by works of the Law done before or after justification, nor by yielding obedience to any command concerning outward ordinances, but by our submitting in our judgments to the truth of God's grace in Jesus Christ for justification without these. I would not here be mistaken, as though I did speak against any Saints, or any who are spiritual and faithful in the observation of any external ordinances; but against zealous formalists, who do make saintship and fellowship to depend upon these

things, and are not spiritually acquainted with the truth of God's grace, but are perverters of the Gospel.

In the next place, here lieth consolation for all that hear me this day, in that which I have delivered, if God shall give unto them believing hearts. Hast thou never done any good work? Hast thou hated the ways of God, and his people? Hast thou ever looked after the discipline, government, and ordinances of Christ? Yet here is a ground for thee to come in unto Christ; we are justified by grace through believing, not through working. Therefore let it be supposed, that thou art without works, yet thou hast good ground to take comfort in that which hath been delivered; believe and thou art in a happy condition, though thou hast never done a good work. Thou art not to come to Jesus Christ as a righteous man, but thou art to come unto him, that thou mayest be made a righteous man. If thou seest thyself a vile sinner, cast thyself into the arms of the grace of the Father by Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be made the righteousness of God in him.

Promises of Grace are left by God upon record in the scripture of truth for sinners, for ignorant sinners, "they also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding," Isa.29:24, for sinners that murmur against him, his ways, truths, and prophets, as it followeth in the same verse, "they that murmured shall learn doctrine." For backsliding sinners, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him." Hos.14:4. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him

that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Jn.6:37. Here are two negatives in the Greek, which do strengthen the negation, by which speech our Saviour doth assure poor sinful creatures, that if in truth they come unto him, they shall not be rejected by him; or ejected from the arms of his love and mercy. Christ's invitation is to all sinners, all that will, may lay hold of him, not only the righteous, but the unrighteous.

If thou canst not love God, thou mayest look upon the free grace of God, and take comfort that God is love, Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, the chiefest and vilest of sinners to repentance. Therefore come as a sinner, as the chiefest of sinners, come I say, and welcome to Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus keeps open house for all comers, the blind, the lame, shall not find the doors shut upon them. They shall be welcome as sinners that cannot be entertained as saints.

It is reported of the first founder of Rome, that wanting subjects, he sent forth some to make known his will to all people, who lived about him, that if any malefactors, or such who were oppressed in the places where they lived, did come in unto him, they should live peacefully in his kingdom, and he would protect them against any that should pursue them, and by this means he became suddenly the king of a numerous people. So Christ doth send forth his proclamations to assure sinners, and vile malefactors, that if they will come under his scepter, they shall live peacefully under his government, and that he will safeguard them from all their enemies,

which shall pursue them, and by this means his dominions are enlarged from sea to sea, and sinners do rejoice in the King of Zion. This doctrine if it were received, would answer all the objections which are raised in the hearts of men against their happiness by Jesus Christ.

Is there any sad, comfortless soul, which would not be comforted if this truth were received? What canst thou object against thyself to bereave thyself of peace, which would not be removed if this were thoroughly believed? Are thou indeed a sinner? Christ died for the ungodly. Rom.5:6. Art thou an old sinner? An old sinner is still but a sinner. Hast thou been a Pharisee like Paul, persecuting Christ and the doctrine of Grace? A persecuting Pharisee is still but a sinner. And Paul was received to mercy, that such might not be without hope of mercy. I Tim.1:16. Art thou an hypocrite? An hypocrite may come as a sinner to Christ. Bring what objection thou canst, and a persuasion concerning the truth of God's grace shall answer it, and if thou dost believe, thou hast as good an assurance as any, which assurance will hold good, when the hope of the hypocrite will come to nothing.

Let no objection keep thee from comfort, but believe what thou hast heard. If thou art a sinner conclude not that Christ belongs not to thee, because thou art a sinner; but say, I am a sinner, therefore Christ belongs to me, Christ came to save sinners. As the bright beams of the sun dispel all mists and clouds, so the truth of this doctrine, if thou understand it in the light of the Spirit, will dispel all

thy doubts and objections of unbelief. They will vanish, and thou that didst come here under a spirit of bondage, shall go away with a spirit of adoption and assurance. The true Gospel believed will quickly bring true comfort to thy soul. And if any of you lack comfort and assurance, it is because you believe not. Christ doth abide at the threshold of our hearts, and if in believing the door is opened, he will indeed banquet our hearts with the riches of his grace. It is unbelief which doth bolt the door, doth keep him out, and doth keep enjoyment from us. The gates of heaven are shut upon workers and opened to believers; shut to those who come with money in their hands, but open to those who are content to enter without paying anything for their entrance. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom.6:23. Whoever will, may drink of the waters of life freely. Rev.22:17. But if we will not drink without money, we shall not drink one drop of the water of life. We see that at a playhouse, that they will not open the doors and let people in without getting their money; but it were a disgrace for a king, if none should see his palace but such who would give money. If we think to enter into heaven by doing good works, that we may be saved by what we do, we make heaven like a playhouse; but if we look upon heaven as the palace of the great King of Heaven and Earth, let us know that we may enter without money. It were a disgrace to the King of heaven if he should suffer none to come within his doors, to come into his palace, but those that would give something to come into it. If we have nothing

to give for heaven, we have as much as God demands; if we do nothing, we do as much as God requires!

It is plain that they are blessed, unto whom without any labor or pains, sins are remitted and iniquities covered. No works of repentance are obligatory on their parts, for this is only necessary, that they do believe these tidings of great joy. Luke 2:10. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom.4:5. So much for this time.

SERMON II

SALVATION IS ONLY BY GOD'S GRACE.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph.2:8-9.

I proved the last day that there is no salvation for any man by any works, or righteousness of his own, I shall now proceed in the next place to prove that we are saved by grace only.

By grace, in this place we are to understand the free favour of God to his poor undeserving creatures. That which is translated grace here, in other places is translated favour; so it is said that our blessed Lord and Saviour "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke 2:52. So it is said, that Joseph found favour in the sight of Pharaoh King of Egypt, Acts 7:10, and it is

said that David found favour before God. Acts 7:46. The grace of God is the same with his favour, this grace, or free favour of God to poor creatures, is held forth to us in the Scripture.

First, as it is in God, and so it is set forth to us, as that grace and favour of his which is as eternal as himself. And in this respect we are said to be saved from eternity, in this eternal grace and favour of the Lord, as the Apostle sets it forth, II Tim.1:9, where he saith that we are saved "not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." This grace is the primary cause of our justification. God justifies, and saves none in time, but those who were justified and saved before him from eternity. It is said of Abraham, that he was the father of many nations, Rom.4:17, he was not then the father of many nations, if we look upon his progeny and posterity, for he had not a grandchild then, but he was the father of many nations before him whom he believed, even God that quickeneth the dead, and "calleth those things which be not as though they were." So we were saved before God in the eternal grace of God, before we had a being among the creatures. In the same sense that God is said to determine the times, and the bounds of all mens habitations from eternity, Acts 17:26, so we are said to be saved by the grace of God, because God from eternity loved us in Christ, and saw us in his own eternal grace and favour; otherwise we should make God like unto the creature, which seeth things when they are done, and are visible among

the creatures, but God foresees all things from eternity. He speaks of things as being, when indeed they have not a being among the creatures, but have a being in his own eye. And so we had a being in the grace of God, and in the eye, and sight of God, before we had a being in ourselves, and a being among the creatures.

And we are in this grace of God from eternity, not for any works that God foresaw would be done by us. God did not love us from eternity because he foresaw that we would be industrious, painful and zealous to glorify his name. There was nothing at all in the eye of God from eternity that moved God to set his grace, and favour upon us but his grace. It is contrary to truth which is affirmed by some, that God foreseeing that some men would be industrious, painful, do good works, and live holy and righteously, did therefore make choice of them and set his grace on them; and that likewise foreseeing the idleness, slothfulness, profaneness, ungodliness and impenitence of others, he rejected them. God, as he loves us in his grace from eternity, so this grace was placed upon us without any foresight or prevision of our own works. The Apostle doth clear this plainly to us in the aforementioned place, where he saith, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, intimating thus much to us, that it was only the eternal grace of God which moved God to be good and gracious to us in Christ. And so the Apostle saith, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of

regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life," Tit.3:5-7, "according to his mercy," that is, according to his eternal mercy and grace he showed favour and compassion to us and pardoned our sins. And the expression of the Apostle is worth observing, Eph.1:4-5, where speaking of the eternal grace of God, he saith, "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." He doth not say that God elected us, because we would be holy, and without blame, but he elected us that we might be holy, and without blame before him in love. Good works are not the cause but the consequence of grace.

Nay, I add more, that as God did not foresee our good works; so, not our faith either; for faith is not the cause of grace, but grace is the cause of faith. God therefore enables us to believe in time, because God loved us from eternity.

The Apostle speaking of them of Achaia saith, "believed through grace," and that Apollos "helped them much that believed through grace." Acts 18:27. It is by grace that we believe, it is not by faith that we are made partakers of grace. Thus, we are saved by grace and the purpose of God from eternity, in the eye and sight of God, who seeth all

things absent as if they were present, and speaks of things before they are done, as if they were done.

In the next place, Grace in Scripture is considered, not only as it is in God, and as it is as eternal as God himself; but the Scripture speaks of the grace of God, as it is manifested forth to us in Jesus Christ; and so we are saved by grace, God discovering his grace to us in his Son Jesus Christ. So the Apostle speaking of grace saith, "but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." II Tim.1:10. He speaks first of grace, as it is in God, and as it is as eternal as God himself; then he speaks of eternal grace, manifested to us in the Gospel of his dear Son. It is by the preaching of the Gospel that the eternal grace of the Father in the Son is made known to us; and this grace is called sometimes the grace of God the Father; sometimes it is called the grace of Jesus Christ; and sometimes the grace of them both, because Jesus Christ is God, one God, in one divine essence with his Father.

And as God in his grace is said to forgive sins, "who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage," Mic.7:18, saith the prophet. So Jesus Christ is said to forgive sins, the Apostle bids us to forgive one another, "even as Christ forgave you." Col.3:13. As there is grace in the Father to forgive sins, so there is the same grace in the Son. The apostles doubted not but believed "that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved,

even as they," Acts 15:11, and by this grace we are saved. God discovering now his grace to us in his Son Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the eternal Father.

This grace in Scripture is made known unto us as the sole cause of our justification and salvation. Grace is so held forth for justification that all things besides grace are excluded. We are justified by grace exclusively; all other things being shut out. When God justifieth a man, he eyes that man only in his own grace; and when God justifieth a man in the court of his own conscience, he strips him of all his own works, of his own love to him, and to the brethren; and gives him only a sight of divine grace.

This grace doth exclude all merit; if there were any merit in the creature, man could not be saved by grace. The Apostle clears it to us by that passage, Rom.4:4, "now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." If a man could work or merit anything toward his justification and salvation, then it were not of grace, saith the Apostle, the reward is not of grace, but of debt. If a man work, then he expects wages as due unto him, he may by right and justice claim what he deserves; so if we did work for salvation we might require God to bestow and give us what we had wrought for. But true grace shuts out all merit and works in the creature; for if we could bring any merit of the creature to join with his grace, grace should be no more grace, as saith the Apostle. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no

more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." Rom.11:6.

If we look upon grace as it is in God; so, before God we were saved in his eternal thoughts; he in his own purpose and grace, having elected us to justification and eternal salvation in glory by his Son Jesus Christ. Yet he never holds forth his grace to us, but in the countenance of his Son Jesus Christ; in whom the glory of his justice shines bright, with the glory of his grace. He shows us that he hath laid all our sins on his Son; that his justice hath received full satisfaction from the sufferings of his Son for all our sins, and so comes to discover his grace to us in the pardon and forgiveness of our sins.

Thus Christ, and the apostles constantly in their preaching discovered the grace of the Father in the Son. As our Saviour to Nicodemus, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish," Jn.3:16, and the Apostle to his Corinthians, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." II Cor.5:19.

God doth not make known his love for the forgiveness of sin, but by Jesus Christ. I confess that we are saved by grace in respect of God, before we know the grace of God in Jesus Christ; but we cannot see this grace, until we behold it in the face of the Lord Jesus. We behold the love of God in giving the Lord Jesus to be the atonement, sacrifice, and propitiation for our sins, before we can read the everlasting love and favour of the Father to us in his Son. Eternal love is the primary cause of our

salvation and justification; but it cannot be apprehended by us, until we apprehend in the first place our redemption in Jesus Christ; and when Christ is embraced as a Saviour in the arms of faith, we rise higher in our thoughts, by the power of the Spirit, and are brought to look upon the eternity of love; and have liberty to read every line in his eternal volume, which doth concern our eternal life and salvation; and are fully confirmed in the point of God's eternal election, without the prevision of good works, which should be wrought by the creature. As the Apostle doth prove at large in the ninth to the Romans; and if any man will dispute or rather cavil against this truth, I shall say with the Apostle, "nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" Rom.9:20-21. And though men, unacquainted with this truth, may account this rather a shift or evasion, than an answer to their carnal objections against election and reprobation, yet I shall not be ashamed of my answer. Far be it from us to be ashamed to give the same answer, which was given by the Apostle, who art thou that repliest against God.

In the next place we are to consider that in Scripture, salvation is taken either negatively or affirmatively. And take salvation in either of these considerations, and it will be evident, that we are saved by grace.

In the first place, if we take salvation negatively, as it is a deliverance or freedom from all evil, and in this sense we are freed from evil, only by grace. It is a true rule that nothing in man doth precede or prevent the grace of God. The light and beams of grace do dispel the clouds of our sins. Not for our sakes, but for his Name's sake he covereth our sins. It is God's prerogative to free us from sin by grace, and to remove them far from us. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Psal.103:12. He only can remove sin against whom it is committed. He only can cast sin into the depths of the sea, who hath an ocean of grace in himself, in which he swalloweth them up. Micah is spiritually transported beyond himself in admiring this incommunicable prerogative of the God of Grace, "who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage &c.," Micah 7:18, and who can think that he will part with this privilege, which is his delight? For so it followeth in the same verse, "he retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy."

Secondly, if we take salvation affirmatively, for the instating of men into a condition and enjoyment of all happiness and felicity, so we are saved by grace. We are made happy, brought from a cursed condition, into a blissful condition, from sorrow to joy, from hell to heaven, from the state of nature to the state of glory, only by the grace of God. It is only by grace that we are what we are. By grace our sins are pardoned, by grace we have an

inheritance with the Saints, by grace we are the highborn sons of the great King of heaven and earth, by grace we are blessed and loaded with all spiritual and temporal blessings in Jesus Christ, and are brought to the enjoyment of eternal felicity, happiness and blissfulness. Thus we are saved by grace, and by grace alone.

One of the ancients doth speak excellently to this purpose, "let no man boast of himself, for of a man's self he is a devil, and only by God a man is made happy. What is a man of himself, but sin?" We are saved by grace.

Again, salvation in Scripture is taken for salvation before God in the court of heaven; and it is taken for the saving of a party, in his own spirit and conscience. If we take it in the first sense, a man is saved in the court of heaven, only by grace. What is the reason that {the accusing mouth of the Law being stopped} no bill, no indictment can be brought against the elect in the court of heaven? Is it not this, because God in his grace justifieth them? This is the Apostle's argument, "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Rom.8:33. Who can implead or bring an action against them before God for breaking his Law? He that is the Judge of the elect is their justifier. Grace hath cast out of heaven the accuser of the brethren, which accused them before God night and day. Rev.12:10. The accuser can bring no indictment, complaint or accusation against the saints there. There is no sin in our consciences that can be heard to accuse us in heaven, because there is grace for

our justification. God beholds his Son Jesus Christ before his eye, upon whom he hath laid all our sins. The blood of Christ doth, with powerful and undeniable arguments plead for those for whom it was shed. The straying and straggling sheep which are within the reach of God's Eternal Grace cannot be condemned, because "the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." John 10:11. God knoweth that he hath received satisfaction beforehand for their sins, by the hand of the Lord Jesus, who is not now to pay anything, but hath already made payment for all their debts, and is become the Mediator of the New Covenant of Grace, which is sealed in his own blood; under which covenant upon this consideration there can be no remembrance of sin, Heb.10:14, God beholding his elect in their Propitiation, which is Christ, and always hearing the sweet voice of their wrath appeasing Advocate, making a heavenly melody in his ears; and always beholding our happiness before himself in heaven, lying wrapped up in his own grace, doth acquaint us in his word of truth, that we are saved by grace.

Secondly, if we take salvation in the other sense, for salvation in our spirits and consciences, and in this sense we are saved by grace. There can be no salvation brought home to our hearts but by the sight of grace. If we had the sanctification of all the saints which have lived since the fall of man, and should look upon it all as ours, to give comfort to our souls, and to assure us that we are in a state of salvation; and should not look above it, to behold the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and our

sanctification in him, and from him, it would not give us any solid comfort or assurance of our salvation. Nothing can shine in the heart to give it any comfort but what doth shine and give light, in the light and beams of this grace. We never come to see ourselves in a condition of safety, until we see the grace of God. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." Isa.45:22. None but God can save us, and nothing but the sight of God can bring salvation to us. Still we have some objection or other against salvation and justification, until God doth silence all objections by the sight of his own grace. There is that only in God, and in Jesus Christ, that will silence all objections.

If our conscience flies in our faces and tell us that we have committed many thousands of sins more than we can reckon or number up, yet once God gives us the sight of himself, his Son, and grace, the mouth of conscience is stopped, and we see all our sins swallowed up in his love. "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Jn.14:8. "And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee." Exod.33:18-19. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." II Cor.4:6. "And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" John 1:36. When God shows us himself, our spirits are at rest.

When grace is discovered, and God's light doth shine upon the soul, sin, death and damnation cannot terrify the soul. But they are filled with a spirit of joy in believing their free justification, who before through fear of death were subject to bondage. Heb.2:15. Grace appears greater and stronger to bring salvation, than sin powerful to bring damnation. Our sins, and the sins of all the men of the world, being the acts of creatures are finite, but grace that justifies us, is the grace of an infinite God, and is boundless and infinite. Men are unassured of their salvation unless this grace be presented to the eye of their spirits; and men and devils cannot prevail against us, to enforce us to question our justification and salvation, when we look upon it. That peace which the world cannot take from us, nor give unto us; that joy which neither the Law, nor the works of the Law can convey unto us, nor bereave us of; that salvation which damned fiends can never rob us of, is communicated to us by the beholding of God's grace in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, we have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole, and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." Num.21:7-8. "And 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." John 3:14-15. That soul, when it has a sight of this grace, it stands with boldness at the throne of grace, and though it feels hellish sin in itself, yet, it is able to dispute with all the devils in hell, and to maintain the freeness, fullness and completeness of its own justification from all sin by the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

If the devil shall then suggest this to a man, that he is a sinner, the believing soul will make this answer. It is true, I am a sinner, but I am not terrified to desperation, because I am ungodly, but I rejoice in this, that God justifieth the ungodly by his grace. Rom.4:5. If the devil shall reply, but thou art a great sinner, and there is a great damnation, the believing soul will return, I am not tormented by the great damnation prepared for great sinners, but comforted by the great salvation, Heb.2:3, which is for the greatest and chiefest of sinners by God's grace in Jesus Christ. I Tim.1:15. If the devil shall still assault a man, to persuade him that he is a damned soul, having misspent his time and strength in the service of sin, having no good works to commend him unto God, that he may find favour from him, the believing soul shall be enabled in the strength of the Lord, when it is upon the mountain of his grace, to silence the accuser, by lying down in the lap of that gracious Lord, who maketh him the object of his grace, who worketh not for justification, but believeth in God who justifies sinners in his grace, without works. And because we are justified and comforted in the court of our own consciences

by grace, the spirit which is given forth in the ministry of the Gospel is called a spirit of grace, it being the work of the Spirit to reveal the grace of the Father for the comfort of his children, according to that of the Apostle, "now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work." II Thes.2:16-17. Here the Apostle shows us that the saints have consolation, and that this consolation is everlasting, and that this everlasting consolation is only by grace. Go to all the true Saints in the world, and ask them how they received the Comforter, whether by the observation of moral precepts, or by the doctrine of grace, and they will inform you that they received him, by the Gospel of grace, and not by the Law of works. Some Saints are able to acquaint you with their own experience, and can tell you, how they labored for holiness to bring them to happiness, to love God, and that they might assure themselves, that they were in the love of God, and that they found darkness instead of expected light, death instead of life, horror and bondage instead of joy and liberty, until they were enabled to come unto God as sinners, without works, disclaiming their own righteousness, desserts and endeavors, and laying the head stone of their peace and happiness in the free favour of God, "crying grace, grace unto it," Zech.4:7, exalting the free grace of God in their justification, and overthrowing and overturning their own works and legal righteousness. It is grace, and

grace alone which bringeth salvation, Tit.2:11, and therefore not our works. Grace and works are inconsistent in this point of justification; they can no more stand together than the ark of God and Dagon. Let Grace stand up in its glory and works will quickly be overthrown; and set up works, and you destroy the doctrine of grace. By eternal grace we were elected and made vessels of mercy from eternity; by grace we are saved before God in heaven in the presence of the Lord Jesus; by grace we were saved in the person of Christ before faith. By the revelation of grace unto us through faith we are saved in the court of our own consciences. By grace salvation is begun here, and completed, and perfected hereafter. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom.6:23. The word 'gift' here signifies a gift flowing from grace, or free favour. In these several acceptations of the word grace, we are saved by grace.

I might now lay down many reasons, for the proof of this point, but those, which I gave to prove, that we are not justified by works, will be sufficient for the confirmation of this. And when I shall handle the doctrine of believing some reasons will fall in which will more fully illustrate this truth. I shall therefore for the present only present unto you a reason or two, and hasten to the use.

Reason. First, it being supposed that man is a sinner, it is impossible that man should be saved by anything, but by the knowledge of grace. The Law in this particular would not deal with us, considering what good has been done by us, but what evil. And

therefore when the Apostle had proved, Rom.3:23, that devout Jews, as well as profane Gentiles, had sinned and come short of the glory of God, he takes it for granted, as a thing undeniable and unquestionable, that we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. And if we could bring ourselves into a state of perfection, after we have once sinned, we could not be justified by that perfection in us, which is required by the Law, but should be condemned for our sins and imperfections in breaking of the Law.

If a man hath done good service for the Commonwealth, and yet be found guilty of high treason against the State, the Law will condemn him for his treason, his good service not being available to make satisfaction to the justice of the Law for this treason. So if it were possible for us to keep the Law for a time, we should be condemned, if it can be proved that we have broken it at any time. Acts of obedience will not make satisfaction for acts of disobedience. We cannot satisfy the justice of the Law, by doing what the Law requires, if we have once broken it. If we could sometimes do what the Law requires us, we should not be able to free ourselves from the guilt and punishment for doing that, which it forbids us at all times, because it requires obedience from us at all times. And it is unreasonable to think that God, if he deal with us as under the Law, and not under Grace, should give us a pardon of our disobedience, in consideration of our obedience.

If a wife live honestly, as becomes a wife, some few years; and if her husband find that she committed adultery some years before the time of her honesty and obedience, the Law takes no notice at all that she hath lived in her latter time as it became a wife, but condemns her, and she must be divorced from her husband for her adulterous act committed before her obedience.

So if it were possible that we could keep the Law, and do what is required therein, and live under the obedience thereof in every branch and point of it, yet if we have once broken the Law, the Law, taking no notice of our obedience would condemn us for our disobedience. What the Roman historian saith of the Roman Law, that it is severe and inexorable, the same is true of God's Law. The Law hears no cry or begging for mercy; no man shall find favour or pardon from the Law, by any acts of obedience to the Law, who hath once disobeyed the Law.

The paying of a new debt will not make satisfaction to a man to whom an old debt is owing; so if we could pay the debt that the Law requires for the present, it makes no satisfaction at all for our breaking it before, for our old debt.

By this consideration, in the first place, it will be evident to every man who hath any spiritual knowledge of the purity, and justice of the Law, that it is impossible for sinful man to find out anyway, but the good old way of grace, to happiness and salvation.

Secondly, we are justified by grace, that God may have the glory of his grace. Man fell by pride, therefore God will not estate him in happiness but by humbling him, by bringing him upon his knees to the throne of grace, that the Lord may have the glory of his grace. Naturally we are full of pride, and would rise by that, by which we fell; we would be made happy by works, as we are made unhappy by works. Every man that sees himself, sees how that the whole stream of corrupt nature runs this way, man will be doing, working, and acting that he may be justified. But God will not suffer sinful man to glory, before him in his own works, lest he should lose the glory of his grace, Rom.4:2, and therefore there is no salvation for us, unless we lie down at the door of grace. If God enter into judgment no man living shall be justified in his sight. Psal.143:2. God doth stop up all other ways of salvation, but the way of grace, that he may have the glory of his grace in justifying the objects and vessels of his grace. God doth not so much intend man's salvation by grace, as his own glory and praise. He forms his people for himself, that they may be happy in himself, and with himself, and that they may show forth his praise. "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise." Isa.43:21. It is the mind and pleasure of God that every man should glory in himself; therefore he justifies and saves us only by that grace which is in himself. "In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Isa.45:25. And the Apostle when he had discoursed of the grace of God in our election, predestination

and adoption, doth sweetly acknowledge that grace doth stream forth unto us in all these particulars, that it may be to the praise of the glory of his grace. "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, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Eph.1:4-6. He makes us objects of grace that he may receive from us, and we be enabled to give unto him, the glory of his grace. All the Saints are brought forth standing before the throne, and singing forth this truth, "salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Rev.7:10. They ascribe salvation not to their own works, merits, deservings or worthiness, but to the grace of God and blood of the Lamb.

As earthly and gross bodies cannot mount up to heaven, which is a place of purity and perfection, but they shall fall down by their own weight to the earth, unable to ascend thither; so our works, fall down to the ground, as unable to ascend up to the place of God's purity and glory to justify us in his sight, that salvation may be attributed only to his own grace. And he will not justify us in the court of our own consciences, we shall not read our names written in heaven, until he bring us from our own works, righteousness, performances and endeavors, to rest upon the strong arm of his grace, that we

may give him the glory of his grace, in our free justification and salvation.

Thirdly, God saves us by grace, because if it were not by grace, it had been needless that the Lord Jesus Christ should have been given to us. If it had been possible for man to have wrought out his own salvation by his own works, there had been no need that the Son of God should have disrobed himself of his glory, and been made like unto man. Why should he have lived a life of sorrow, and died a death of shame, had it been possible for us to have gotten salvation by our own works? Therefore the Apostle concludes, "that if righteousness had been by the Law, then Christ had died in vain." Gal.2:21. And thus have I opened to you, and showed you the reasons why we are saved by grace. In a word now to make a little use of it, and so I shall conclude for the present.

In the first place, that which I have delivered concerning the Eternal Grace of God sufficiently confutes that error which is in the spirits of many men, who think that works and actings of the creature is the cause of God's love to the creature. God doth not love us, because we first love him; but we love God, because he first loved us from eternity. God doth not begin to love us, when we are made new creatures; but God loveth us that we may be new creatures. Faith is not the antecedent cause, but consequent of election. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Tit.3:5. By this passage it is evident, that mercy doth precede regeneration, and is the cause of spiritual renovation. Vocation and justification do follow Predestination, if Paul spake the truth. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom.8:30. God loved us when we had no beings in ourselves, or among any creatures to assure us that he did not love us for anything in this, there being nothing at all in us when God first loved us.

The love of God is not like the love of man, man loves something which he sees lovely, but God sees nothing in the object which he loves, but all the motives and arguments lie in the bosom and breast of God, which move him to love his creature. Man cannot love before he have some lovely object proposed to him, but God loves before we have either being or holiness. We believe in God, love him, and are made lovely before him in time, because he loved us before all time. The man spiritually wise doth see his happiness wrapped up in the eternal bowels of grace, and laid up in the everlasting bosom of unchangeable love for him. Fond therefore is their conceit, shallow their apprehension, and understandings dull, who believe that anything done, or believed by the creature in time, can be the primary cause of the creature's salvation, to whom grace was given for salvation from eternity. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Tit.1:2.

This doctrine of free grace doth overthrow and annihilate the wisdom of the wise, the learning of the learned, the righteousness of him who is most righteous, and a stranger to grace. The natural man with his best sights seeth not a righteousness beyond the righteousness of his own righteousness. As the wisdom of the Spirit is foolishness to the natural man, so the wisdom of the flesh is foolishness with God. Though there be a spirit in a man by which he may have great knowledge and understanding in the things of nature and reason, yet it is the Spirit of the Almighty which giveth understanding. Job 32:8. Until this spirit and power from above come upon us, we call light darkness, and darkness light; sinfulness purity, purity imperfection. But when this doth enter into us, all our righteousness appears as filthy rags, and we are made willing to rest upon that grace for righteousness, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." II Tim.1:9. Then we clearly see the wisdom of God in showing mercy on whom he will show mercy, and having compassion on whom he will have compassion. Then we cannot but acknowledge, that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that shows mercy. Then the objections of carnal reason are fully answered, the acute arguments of the worldly wise and learned, against free grace, are dissolved; the fallacies of all

work-mongers are sufficiently confuted, and we are saved and satisfied with the glorious discoveries of God's eternal grace in Christ Jesus.

Again, this should engage us all that know this saving grace to exalt and extol this grace of our heavenly Father. Grace apprehended by us doth oblige us unto thankfulness. It is fit that they should glorify God for his grace, who see themselves glorified by grace. The prophet Isaiah sets forth this unto us, "in the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Isa.45:25. He that is justified in the grace of God will certainly glory in the grace of God. Let us therefore glory, not in ourselves, not in our labors, sufferings, actings or endeavors but in this grace of the Father, according to the advice of the prophet Jeremiah, "thus saith the LORD, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." Jer.9:23-24. Let our holy boasting be in this righteousness alone, let the resolution of the sweet singer of Israel be the resolution of every one of us, "I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD, I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." Psal.71:16. God forbid, saith Paul, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal.6:14. So let every good Christian say,

God forbid that I should glory save in the grace of God; let Pharisees and Hypocrites boast of their own works and legal righteousness; but let true Saints boast only of the grace of the merciful and favorable Jehovah. What is ingenuously acknowledged concerning himself, by Paul, "by the grace of God I am what I am," I Cor.15:10, will be acknowledged by all Saints. By grace we are what we are, and therefore glory is to be given to grace alone. God's gracious love was placed upon us before we were lovely, "for he hath loved us with an everlasting love," Jer.31:3, indicative of the fact that he loved us when we were unlovely, when he saw us polluted in our own blood, then was the time of his love. Ezek.16:6-8. His grace and love hath made us lovely; what cause then is there, that we should glory in this grace and love? It is an excellent speech of Bernard to this purpose, "take thou all the glory, it is enough for us, that we have the peace." In Psalms 130:3, the psalmist professes that if the Lord should mark iniquities, no man should be able to stand before him. "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" The interrogation is equivalent to a negation, "who shall stand," that is, no man shall stand! We would quickly fall to ruin, had we no better ground to stand upon than our own works, what reason have we to bless God for grace, who only stand by grace!

If we could stand before the judgment seat of God, standing clothed in the mensturous rags of our own works, righteousness and performances, there were found grounds for us to glory in our own works;

but seeing it is thus, that if God enter into judgment, and deal with us by the Law, we cannot stand before him; therefore, let us glory only in him. With heart and tongue give him praise for what he hath done for thee by his grace, who hast cause to be ashamed for what thou hast done against his grace. A king of France though himself bound to praise God, that God had made him a king and not a beggar, what cause have we to praise him for his grace, who of sinners hath made us Saints. If devout Bradford, when he saw a blind or a lame man, took occasion to bless God for the use of his limbs and eyesight, is not consonant to reason, that we should publish forth the praises of God's grace, who hath bestowed spiritual life, light and operations upon us.

The Apostle hath an high expression to raise our spirits to this purpose, "now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." II Cor.2:14. When men triumph there is great joy, rejoicing and triumphing. We are not only to rejoice in his grace, but we should triumph in it. A Christian may ride in a chariot of triumph every day, he may see his sins, curse, hell and damnation subdued and overcome, when he beholds Christ, in the looking glass of his own grace. What though we have many sins, yet for all this we may triumph, because the grace of God hath saved us from our sins by Christ. What though we have no works, yet we may triumph if we know grace, for there is enough for us in the fullness of grace. There is no way to peace here or glory hereafter, but by

grace. Let grace therefore be thy glory; as the Apostle does double his exhortation when he exhorts them to rejoice, that they might double their diligence and care and practice of their duty. "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice." Phil.4:4. So suffer me to double and triple my exhortation. You have nothing to boast in but grace, boast therefore, and again I say boast in the grace of Christ.

God seems, in the prophet Isaiah, to speak to an hypocritical proud people, and he bids them to bring forth their arguments, and put him in remembrance, if there were anything to be brought before him, for which they should be justified. "Put me in remembrance; let us plead together; declare thou, that thou mayest be justified." Isa.43:26. As if he should of said, if you have any works, bring them out. Use all your arguments, skill and rhetoric, say what you can for yourselves to plead for your justification. But, to convince them that they could not stand before him with their works for justification, he puts them in mind of their sins, "thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me," verse 27, to this end and purpose, that they should believe what was promised in the 25th verse, that he would blot out their sins for his own namesake. So it is with us brethren, as we have heard; we cannot bring forth sufficient reasons and arguments to make good our salvation by our works. If we have nothing to comfort us but our own works, we shall have no comfort at all in his presence. Let us therefore as we

are engaged, trumpet out the praise of God for the manifestation of his rich and precious grace to us in the face of Jesus Christ, for justification and salvation.

Thirdly, let me exhort you to abide in the profession of grace to the end of your days. Hypocrites may profess grace for a time, but true Saints shall hold fast the doctrine of grace to the end. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Jn.8:31. Paul and Barnabas exhorted the religious proselytes of Antioch, "to continue in the grace of God," that is, continue or abide in grace, look up to God for grace and power according to his promise to enable you to hold fast the truth of his grace. Let not the wise and learned of the world cried up for godliness, religion and devotion draw you away from this grace of God in Christ Jesus.

We live in dangerous and perilous times, and there were never such underminors of grace, as have appeared in these sinful days, some that deny the Lord that bought them. But let us not be discouraged, because some, who have professed grace have fallen from their profession, to fancy frothy notions, anti-Christian absurdities and Familistical speculations. Consider rather what the Apostle affirms, "for there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." I Cor.11:19. The devil hath his chaplains, as well as God his ministers and ambassadors. As some shall be sent of God to hold

forth grace for the conversion of sinners, to the righteousness of the just, so some will vent their blasphemous conceits and cursed impostures to pervert men to destruction. If the Son of Man sows good seed, the wicked one will inevitably sow tares among the wheat. Matt.13:24.

When the Gospel is preached with power there are multitudes that come to the profession thereof, but after a while many of these fall to philosophical fancies, foolish dreams, vain fables and idol speculations, loathing the plain Gospel, the heavenly manna, as the Israelites did the manna that came down from heaven, and this we begin to find by painful experience. But let not this shake us from our steadfastness in the profession of the Gospel, for God hath appointed it to be so. Paul was confident that after his departure from the congregation in Miletus, that "grievous wolves" would "enter in among them, not sparing the flock," and that of their own selves should men arise "speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts 20:29-30. If the Apostle were confident in his time that it would be so, when he saw them under the pure discipline and government of Christ, under the charge of those ministers, teachers and officers, whom the Lord Jesus Christ appointed over them, filled with those gifts of the Spirit, which were the fruit of his ascension, what wonder is it, if we meet with devils, he-apostles, and she-apostles in these sinful times, who vomit forth boldly to their own shame and God's dishonor, hellish and pestererous doctrines, for the most high

spiritual truths of the Lord Jesus Christ? If we consider what confusion and disorder is among the best of Saints now, and are enlightened to see our want of many spiritual gifts, and favors which they enjoyed, which for the present God doth not bestow upon us.

Again, let not the abusers of grace cause you to dislike grace, or the doctrine of grace. By this the devil may take great advantage against thee for thy hurt, for thou mayest have injurious thoughts of the grace of God, when thou eyest some who abuse grace, but continue thou in grace, fall not from thy profession, nor dislike the preaching thereof, because thou observes some who abuse the grace of God, turning it into wantonness.

Remember that in the times of the Apostle, some Gospel professors did walk so contrary to the Gospel, that tender-eyed Paul could not speak of them without tears in his eyes, "whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." Phil.3:19. Yet these vile wretches would talk of grace, and the doctrine of Christ, knowing nothing rightly of grace, or Christ; and Jude doth acquaint us with some in his time that were crept in unawares, "ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," Jude 1:4, and he saith that they were "ordained to this condemnation," written down long before to this condemnation, for so the word signifies; for as God hath appointed some to salvation, so he hath

appointed some to damnation, and these ungodly men are of the number of the damned. We wonder to see a generation of men sprung up amongst us, that make nothing of Christ or the Father; we wonder to see men undervaluing and vilifying the grace of God, neglecting all Christian duties, and denying the word of God to be the word of God. But it was so in the times of the apostles, for there were such crept into their congregations; and why should it seem a strange thing unto us, that it is so now in these days of Babylonian confusion and Egyptian darkness, seeing that it was so in the bright days of light, in which the apostles lived, who prophesied that in these latter days perilous times should come, and men should depart from the faith. I Tim.4:1. That we may not stumble in our Christian race at these abusers and scandalizers of grace, let us know that grace is grace though men abuse it. Think not, that grace is not grace because it is abused, but know that the true doctrine of grace may and must be abused by wicked and ungodly men. As the spider sucks poison where the bee sucks honey, so where the saints suck sweetness and honey, the wicked and ungodly men suck poison. Where the godly fetch all their joy and comfort, delight and refreshment, there wicked men meet with their ruin and destruction.

The ways of God's truth and grace are right, and the just and faithful shall walk safely in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein. Hos.14:9. Mark the place and what God speaks. In the same

way in which the saint doth walk to salvation, the wicked shall stumble and fall into condemnation.

A Libertine hearing of the doctrine of grace sucks nothing but his bane from it. Though the word be the savour of life unto life to them that believe, yet it is the savour of death unto death to others. II Cor.2:16. I remember one saith of medicaments, that if they be given by a skillful physician, they are the 'helpful hands of God,' but if by one that is unskillful, they are poison. So the doctrine of grace, when it is skillfully applied, when the Spirit of God teaches us to make a right use of it, it is the power of God to salvation, as the Apostle saith, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." Rom.1:16. But when it is unskillfully applied, when the flesh only makes use of this doctrine of grace, and there is not the Spirit of God to teach us to make a right use thereof, we turn it into venom and we are poisoned to our destruction. But let us not be offended at the doctrine of Christ for this. It has been so formally, it is so and will be so; nevertheless let us continue in the grace of God, and look up to God that we may continue therein.

I have one word now to speak unto those who for the present are not apprehenders and partakers of this grace, and shall conclude for this present. You see that it is only by grace that you are saved; it is only grace that brings salvation to the sons and daughters of men; therefore, if God hath convinced you that you are sinners, now is the day of grace, now is the day of salvation. I will show a short and

compendious, but a true way to happiness, for happy are all you that believe what is brought to your ears this today concerning God's free grace. God hath promised to meet his people at the mercy seat, {"and thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee; and there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel," Exod.25:21,22,} which was a type of Christ, and we can never meet with God to the salvation of our souls but by meeting with this grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Law is the ministry of death; it is the Gospel of grace which is the ministry of life and salvation. Look therefore beyond the Law, which is a ministry of condemnation; beyond thine own righteousness, which is impurity to the eye of Justice, beholding thee under the Law; beyond thyself, who art an object of misery, horror and confusion, and by a spiritual eye of God's own making behold his grace in Christ for lost and undone sinners. Harken to what God speaks to thee, he invites thee, he exhorts thee, and beseeches thee to be reconciled; he tells thee that thou canst not be justified by thine own works, but only by his free grace; that thou art not to be saved by what thou hast done, but by what Christ hath done and suffered. Though thou hast broken the Law, Jesus Christ hath kept it. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone

that believeth." Rom.10:4. Behold God standing at the door of thy heart in the ministry of the Gospel of grace and salvation. May that door of thy heart be opened unto him by believing, and thy soul shall be feasted in the fulness of all Gospel blessings in Christ. As Christ said to Zacchaeus, "this day is salvation come to this house." Luke 19:9. God is the God of grace, therefore think not to please him by anything but by eyeing of his grace, Christ is the Son of grace, as he came to reveal the grace of his Father. If thou wouldst with Simeon take Christ and salvation in thine arms, grasp not thine own works for justification, but believe what is proclaimed forth to the world concerning salvation only by grace. The Spirit is the Spirit of grace, and if thou believe thou shall be assured thereof, and sealed to redemption by grace. There is no salvation but by grace, and no apprehension of grace but by believing, which is the next thing presented in the text to our consideration. Salvation is not by working but believing; ye are saved by grace through faith. But we must be enforced to let alone the fuller enlarging of this point, until God shall give us another opportunity. For the present I have done.

SERMON III

SALVATION ONLY BY BELIEVING.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph.2:8-9.

It hath already been proven unto us that good works cannot save us. And likewise, the grace of God for the salvation of sinners without works hath presented itself unto us, with the strength, sufficiency and glory thereof. It may now be questioned by some, by what means the grace of God in Christ may be applied unto ourselves, and apprehended by us? Our Apostle doth fully satisfy us concerning this, affirming that it is not through working, but believing. "Ye are saved by grace through faith."

The Apostle doth not affirm that we are saved for our faith, for the worth, merit, dignity or excellency thereof, but through faith; faith being the gift of grace by which grace is revealed, and applied unto us. Grace is the principal cause of our justification, whilst faith is the organ or instrument given unto us by God, for the discovery and application of his grace unto our own souls. As no rational man {when he reads of those words of our Saviour to the woman, who was diseased with an issue of blood, Matt.9:22, "daughter be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole,"} would conclude, that because our Saviour saith that her

faith did make her whole, that therefore she was not made whole by Jesus Christ as the principal cause. So no spiritual man should conclude that we are not saved by grace as the principal cause, because the Apostle saith that we are saved through faith. Desiring therefore that the crown may stand fast, which God hath set upon the head of his own grace, I shall endeavor to show you, how that we are saved by faith or through faith. We are not saved in the way of working but believing. Thus God saved and justified, the Father of the faithful, to teach his children in what way they are to expect salvation. God in a vision informed Abraham that he was his shield, and exceeding great reward, "and he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Gen.15:6. This was the Oracle of truth which Habakkuk, standing upon his watch, received from the Lord, "behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith." Hab.2:4. It is by believing, and not by working, that we are declared justified. Truth doth make a difference between the just and the unjust, not by the law of works, but by the law of faith. The natural man knows no righteousness but that which is by his own works. The spiritual man doth see himself righteous in believing. Thus our Saviour directed the ignorant Jews to the right way of righteousness when they asked him what they should do that they might work the works of God, "Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Jn.6:29. If any inquire after salvation let him know

it is not by works. The plain way to salvation and justification is only by believing. For the "grace of God that bringeth salvation," teaches us to deny all "ungodliness and worldly lusts." Tit.2:11. He doth not say that grace in the first place teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, but in the first place it conveys justification and salvation through believing, &c., and then secondly the same grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. After we have believed for salvation, the Holy Spirit is given, Eph.1:13, and in believing we enter into our rest, Heb.4:3, keep the year of Jubilee, and see ourselves instated in happiness. Keep a Christian Sabbath indeed. It is only in believing that we are brought to the enjoyment of that felicity, which is by the grace of God, and in Jesus Christ.

The apostles, in their epistles, do not hold forth any truth more frequently than this. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love," Gal.5:6, and Rom.5:1, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." When the keeper of the prison asked Paul and Silas, what they should do to be saved, supposing salvation was only attainable by working, they did at once discover unto him his error and blindness, and acquainted him with the soul saving truth of the Gospel, assuring him, that if he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ he should be saved. Acts 16:31. We find not rest in our spirits by the sight of our works, love, sincerity, labors and endeavors, but by the sight of God's grace in Christ alone.

Having by these places of Scripture, confirmed to you this truth, I shall now amplify it by showing unto you more fully, how it may be in truth affirmed, that we are saved through faith. In the first place, it is by faith, and by faith alone, not by faith joined with works, but by faith without works. I deny not, but where true faith is works will follow; yet salvation is through faith without works. When we are brought into the bosom of the Lord Jesus Christ, we enter not into the bosom of his love, by our love and faith together, but by faith which produces love. Our eyes are shut to the beholding of all things in ourselves, and the eyes of our spirits are enlightened, to behold what is in God's grace, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Consonant to this is Paul's sweet and comfortable conclusion, "we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Rom.3:28. Love to God and his people is a work commanded by the Law, but according to Paul's conclusion of truth, we are justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law; therefore we are justified by faith, without love to God, or his people.

When God discovers his grace to a man, for his justification, he shows him, that, as his evil works cannot bring damnation unto him, so his good works cannot be available for his justification. That assurance of God's love, which some professors have got, by the sight of their own works, being never illuminated in their understandings to behold God's grace, in the light and beams of grace, is not the true assurance of the Gospel. But the deceit, and lying divination of their own spirits, concerning their

own happiness; for salvation is by faith without works. God does not require us to do good works for salvation in the conscience, but doth positively and absolutely exclude them, as things, which have no influence at all upon that first assurance, which he doth give unto his people of his love, which is by a pure, simple and unmixed act of faith.

The spirit of grace is never given to comfort us until God hath stripped us of our own righteousness, works and performances, and has brought us to the throne of grace, to be justified by free grace, without anything in ourselves, that may make us fit for justification and salvation.

The Apostle does lay down this, as a truth seconded by his own experience, and the experience of all true Saints, asserting that "a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we, {saith he,} have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Gal.2:16. It is not, as the Papists say, that faith, which hath love joined with it, which they make the form of faith, by which we are justified, but it is by faith without any works at all, by which we are justified and have peace of conscience. Augustine doth plainly lay down his judgment in this point according to truth, "presume not upon thy works done before faith, because faith findest thee a sinner, faith hath made thee just, it found thee wicked, whom it should make just."

The second reason why it is thus by faith alone, is, because it is by grace. Unless we were justified by faith, we were not, we could not be justified by grace. This reason the Apostle lays down, "therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace," Rom.4:16, as if he should have said, unless you hold, that there is a justification by faith alone without works, you deny grace; if you will be justified by faith and works conjoined, you destroy grace. Therefore it is by faith alone that it may be by grace. When we have a true sight of grace, we see a sufficiency in that grace, to do us good for our justification and salvation, so that there is nothing needful and necessary besides grace. In which respect Luther saith, that works are not necessary to justification, but pernicious to salvation; the Gospel requiring faith only, according to that of the Apostle, "the Law is not of faith," Gal.3:12, the Law hath nothing to do with believing, that doctrine which bids a man to believe that he may be saved, that is the doctrine of the Gospel, the Law bids us not to believe, but the man that does it, {with a view to salvation,} shall live in it. The Law bids us work, but the Gospel bids us believe, not work and believe, but believe only.

We confound the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace if we press an absolute necessity of doing good works for justification. This was the divinity of the bloodsucker, Bishop Bonner, who in a sermon propounding this, how grace is to be applied to us for justification, doth answer, by believing rightly and living uprightly, joining faith and

holiness, for justification by grace; whereas by the Scripture of truth, it is manifest that faith alone doth lay hold of Christ, and doth appropriate him unto us; and that holiness doth flow and stream from the apprehension of our free justification by grace, through faith alone; though faith is not alone, but is accompanied with other fruits of the Spirit which follow it. This must be well understood or else we will nullify the grace of Christ; wherefore God enables true believers to see this truth plainly and clearly. Redemption by the blood of Christ would be vilified; the prerogative of man's works would not stoop to God's mercy, if justification, which is by grace, were due to proceeding works.

A man that truly believes, he sees not any holiness or qualifications in himself, that makes him more worthy of salvation than another man, he sees that he hath deserved damnation as well as anyone, who is now in the place of torment, and yet, he sees that such is the grace, the unspeakable grace of God to his poor soul, that though he deserve to lie as low in hell as Judas for his sin, yet he shall be raised as high as heaven, by the grace of the Father, made known to him in Jesus Christ.

Brethren, if upon examination, you find that your joy, comfort and assurance, have in the first place, proceeded from any works, which you have in yourselves, which make you conclude that you shall rather be saved than another man, your assurance is not a right assurance; but if your assurance be right, it is by believing that which is reported

concerning the grace of Christ, that so salvation may be by grace.

It is possible for men to deceive themselves in obtaining an assurance of God's love, and their happiness, therefore I will a little deviate to open this to the ignorant. It may be that thou takest comfort to thyself by looking on works wrought by thyself, and not by looking exclusively on Christ. It may be thou dost conceive, that thou lovest God, and from thence conclude that God loves thee, though thou hast not seen his free love to sinners. This is a bastardly assurance, brought forth by thine own lying spirit, and not the true assurance of the Spirit of grace in believing. In a true assurance by faith, God hath the glory of his grace; but in this kind of assurance, God hath not the glory of his grace, therefore it is not a true assurance. Another deceives his soul, and thinks that he is in a good condition, because he rests upon the promise of God. Christ saith, "come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt.11:28. A man doth apprehend himself to be heavy laden, and from the sight of his burden, doth conclude he hath rest, and is in a good condition, but he deceives himself with a false persuasion, for the promise is not made to the qualification of weariness, but the promise is made to those who come to Jesus Christ. Cain was heavy laden with his sin, and it lay so heavy upon him that he concluded that the punishment was greater than he was able to bear, or else that his sin was greater than it could be forgiven, and yet died miserably without mercy.

We find that the sin of Judas lay so heavy upon him, that he repented that he had shed innocent blood, yet for all this he went to his own place.

Therefore if thy comfort and assurance come from a sight of what is in thyself, and not from the discovery of free grace, as it is laid forth in the Spirit of grace, thy assurance will not advantage thee in the day of wrath. Though God have convinced thee of sin, and there may be some legal repentance and reformation wrought in thee, and something which thou mayest miscall a true love to God, thou canst not from the sight of these things rightly conclude that thou art in the love of God, before a discovery of free love be made forth to thee a sinner. For God doth not apply his Grace or his Son to any man for justification but through believing, that justification may evidently appear to the sons of men to be by his own grace. Which will appear, if in the third place, we do more fully consider, that God doth save us through believing, that he may have the glory of his grace.

God, as he is glorious in his grace by which he justifies sinners, so he will be glorious in the hearts and consciences of those who are justified by grace, that he may have the full glory of his grace, when he hath justified them. There is no room for the glory of God's grace, where the worthiness of our works hath filled up the place. Where the creature may have glory in his own works, there God loses the glory of his grace. Where God doth anything for the creature by grace, there it is not of our works, "otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of

works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work." Rom.11:6. Therefore God will not justify us in doing the works of the Law, in giving us a sight of anything, that may make us more worthy of justification than other men, but he makes known his grace to us in a way of believing.

The property of faith is to empty the creature and to discover the fullness of the Creator. Our own works, they puff us up, but faith empties us. If we could be justified and saved by that which we have done, we might boast and rejoice in it before God, Rom.4:2, but because God will humble us, bring us low, lay us upon our backs, and tumble us in the dust, that we may see ourselves nothing, and see his grace all and all to us for our justification, therefore God justifies us only in believing. Faith lays the creature low and sets the grace of God on high, that we may go to heaven admiring the grace of God to such sinners, such base and vile wretches as we are; therefore God will not justify and save us in the court of our own consciences by the sight of our own works, but only by the sight of his own grace; thus it is said of Abraham, that "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Rom.4:20. When God comes down upon us, and works faith in our hearts, and we stagger not at the promises of grace by unbelief, but give credit to what he hath spoken and promised, God hath that glory from us, that he will have from all those whom he intends to save. Unbelief robs man of his comfort and God of his glory. By faith the creature is comforted and the

Creator exalted, through faith man is emptied of self-confidences, and filled with God and his praises; therefore for this reason are we saved through faith.

Again, fourthly it is by faith, because it is only by believing that we behold the grace that is in God, by which he forgives sin. Man's happiness for the present doth not lie in the not having of sin, but in the grace of God not imputing sin. God's favour and indulgence is our righteousness. Thus the psalmist doth describe the blessed man, "blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Psal.32:1-2. That which is covered is not seen, that which is not seen is not imputed, that which is not imputed, shall not be punished. But by what is it, that man beholds himself in this happiness? It is only by believing and therefore we are saved through faith. We cannot see a non-imputation of sin by the grace of God, but by the work of the Spirit, in an act of believing, by which we are assured, and it shall go well with our souls to all eternity. And the great controversy is decided and determined in the spirit of man, whether he shall be saved, or whether he shall be damned. No other foundation can be laid than the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. I Cor.3:11. And we cannot see this foundation, that we may be built upon it, but by believing. Moses by faith saw him that was invisible. Abraham by faith saw the day of Christ, and was glad. As by the eye of the body we see material objects, so by the eye of faith, we see spiritual objects. The philosopher

saith, that prudence is the eye of the moral man, so faith is the eye of the spiritual man, by which alone God, and the things of God are beheld.

The sun was not changed when the blind man in the Gospel that never saw it before received his sight and beheld it. It was the same before, and after his blindness; so Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness, is the same, yesterday and today and forever in himself, and unchangeable in his love, in reference unto us. The change is only in us by faith, whom now we see, though formally we beheld not his beauty, and because the righteousness and salvation of God is revealed by faith, Rom.1:17, therefore we are saved by faith.

Fifthly, we are saved by grace, through a work of believing, because if it were not only in an act of believing, the people of God could not have that firm, constant and unquestionable assurance of their salvation which now they enjoy in a way of believing. When a man is to go unto a place by many several ways, which are not found out without some difficulty, he doth often doubt whether he is in the right way, or whether he is out of his way; but when he is to go in one plain way, he is confident that he is not out of his way; so when a man goeth by the way of the Law, and works for justification, he is in doubt whether he is in his right way for justification, the Law pointing out many ways, and requiring many duties of him, that would be justified under it, but the Gospel points only at Christ, and faith in him for justification, so that those who walk in this way for justification are confident that they are in the

right way. The Apostle doth lay down this plainly, where he saith, "therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." Rom.4:16. God hath not made the promise of salvation to the seed under the Law, or that do any works of the Law, but he has made the promise to be gracious to poor sinners in believing without the works of the Law, to the end that the promise might be sure. If there had been anything else required besides faith, the soul would be always restless and unsatisfied. If God should tie justification to works, men would be unsatisfied, because they would doubt whether some works were not undone, and then they would doubt of their justification. Therefore God hath not promised justification to any man who doth good works, or submits to any outward ordinances, but only unto him who closes with his grace in a pure act of believing. For God knows, that, so long as there is anything joined with faith for justification, we shall be ready to question our justification. We may observe that such professors who are not acquainted with the Gospel, are unsettled in their spirits, when they doubt which is the true government or external ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ. If they doubt whether they are baptized in the right way, or manner, they doubt whether they are justified; their comforts and assurance do vanish away when they are not fully assured, that they know, and are

obedient unto all the commandments of the Lord Jesus.

The cause of this legality in their spirits is because they do not see salvation firmly settled upon Christ. The spiritual man beholdeth justifying grace in believing, without his obedience to commands for external worship, and good works; and doth live joyfully and comfortably in the sight of his justification, though he knoweth that it is possible, that he may be ignorant of many things which other Christians may have the knowledge of; and in these days of darkness, contention, confusion and disorder, what man can have solid and lasting joy who is ignorant of Free Grace for Justification? If it were necessary to the assurance of justification to know whether the Episcopal, Presbyterian or Independent Government of the Church were the Ordinance of the Lord Jesus; whether sprinkling of children, or dipping of professing believers were the institution of Christ in the labyrinth of the controversies of our times; how few would attain to an assurance of their justification? How would poor creatures be perplexed, and disquieted in their consciences; not certainly knowing in which of these ways they should walk for their justification and salvation. But that the promise might be sure to all the seed, Rom.4:16, to those, who lived in the times of the Law, as well as to those, who live in these times of the Gospel, salvation is promised not to workers but believers, to all true believers in all ages, and places; to us who live in the time of the Babylonian apostasy, as well as to those who were

hearers of the apostles, and members of those Congregations which were gathered and governed by them.

Sixthly, by faith the grace of God in Christ is applied unto us, and we are justified by it, as the spiritual instrument, formed by God in the Spirit, for the application of Christ's benefits to our consciences. A man that lived in the time of the Law, looking upon the blood of his sacrifices, did behold himself purged, purified and sanctified in his flesh thereby, Heb.9:13, and thus a sinner looking upon the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, being applied unto him, his conscience is purged from dead works to serve the living God. Heb.9:14. Faith though it be called a work, II Thes.1:11, yet we are not justified by it, as it is a work, or gracious quality, but as it is the hand of the Spirit, by which we receive and are made partakers of those treasures of grace, which are freely given unto us in Christ Jesus. Christ hath already done what is to be done by way of satisfaction to the justice of his Father, and hath already made peace by the blood of his cross. Col.1:20. What he doth in us now is to satisfy our consciences concerning our full redemption by him, that you in believing may be filled with peace of conscience, being persuaded that we are of the Father in the Son, who by the Father is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." I Cor.1:30. Faith being nothing but a light, coming from God and Christ, discovering God and Christ to our spirits, and uniting our spirits to God in Christ. By faith we believe what is recorded

concerning the grace of God in Christ; as the prophet, to our apprehension holds it forth, in those expressions of his, "who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" Isa.53:1. In the latter part of these words, the prophet doth interpret the former part, he believing the report of God, to whom the arm of God, that is, his Son Jesus Christ, is revealed; and when a man believeth in Christ, Christ is revealed to that man; faith being the first thing that is wrought in the spirit of a man, whom God doth justify in his own conscience, by which the grace of God in Christ is revealed unto him for his justification. Justifying faith, when it is wrought by the powerful operation of the Spirit in the heart, doth remove prevailing doubts concerning our justification; the faithful beholding the all-sufficiency of free grace, and applying to his conscience the cleansing virtue of the blood of the Lord Jesus. Faith is a gift of the Spirit establishing the soul, Isa.7:9, "if ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." The soul can never be firmly settled and quieted, but by believing. Unbelief doth question and doubt of the promises of free grace for justification; but when, in the power of faith, we are carried above it, with Abraham, Rom.4:20, we stagger not at the promise through unbelief; but the spirit is fixed, and stands immovably upon the truth of grace. God saith in the Covenant of his Grace, "for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Heb.8:12. He that believes doth set his seal to the truth of God, in

believing the promise, John 3:33, he is confident that God is faithful, who hath made this promise to the children of men, and by believing the great and precious promises of grace, he is made "a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." I Pet.5:1. By a heart of unbelief, we depart from the living God, Heb.3:12, but by faith we draw near to God, and apply Christ to ourselves, faith being contrary to unbelief, as in the nature thereof, so in its operations. An unbeliever doth not give credit to the truth of the general promises of God's grace, and so remains unjustified in his conscience; a believer in faith, nothing wavering, Jam.1:6, doth give credit to what is reported, and the Gospel comes to him not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance. I Thes.1:5.

Objection. But some may be ready here to object against what I have delivered, that though I do acknowledge that by faith, grace in Christ is applied unto us, yet in effect I say no more, than what I delivered before, when I proved, that by faith, the grace of God in Christ is first manifested and made over unto us. Answer. They misapprehended me, when they concluded that I make faith, only an assurance of, because I do maintain that it is the first evidence and witness of our justification. Faith doth assure, but it does not only assure us of Christ, but doth apply Christ, and makes a difference between assurance and application, which I illustrate by the similitude. Suppose one should lie imprisoned for debt, his debts being paid and he not knowing it, and

afterwards knowing that his debts were paid, he should rejoice in the news and enjoy his liberty. This man doth not by the news, which he hears, enjoy only comfort, but his liberty; and so it is with us, before we believe, we lie in prison, and yet our debts are paid by Jesus Christ, when the news is brought by the Spirit to the ear of the soul, we rejoice in hearing the news, but besides this, presently we enjoy our liberty, and all those riches which our Surety, who have paid our debts, hath bestowed upon us, so that by faith, though we are assured of God's love in the first place, yet we are not only assured, but likewise, Christ is applied unto us, and we are united unto him, and do enjoy all things in him, and receive all good things from him.

Seventhly. We are saved by faith which is so to be understood, that by the misunderstanding thereof, we may not detract from the glory of God's grace, and from that everlasting righteousness which we have in Jesus Christ, who is Jehovah our righteousness. Jer.23:6. Abraham when he believed, and his faith was counted unto him for righteousness, had a vision of God, and his word did inwardly appear unto him, Gen.15:1, and he beheld God as his shield and exceeding great reward, and supreme righteousness; so a believing man doth look upon faith, as his Righteousness, that he doth then behold God in Christ, as his supreme righteousness, for his justification. "In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Isa.45:25. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and

righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." I Cor.1:30-31. As Adam when he was justified by his righteousness, and true holiness, did so look upon his own righteousness for justification, that he did at the same time, behold God as his chief good and righteousness; and thus a believing man doth so look upon faith as his righteousness, by which he is saved, that he doth at the same time, behold God in Christ as his chief righteousness. Though he acknowledges faith his righteousness in its place, yet he accounts it as nothing in comparison of that righteousness which he hath in God, and in his Son Jesus Christ, and saith with the psalmist, "I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD, I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." Psal.71:16. He doth not by this undervalue the righteousness of faith, he prizes that above the world and all things therein, which carnal men do value at so high a rate. But according to the mind of him whose gift faith is, he sets the gift in his heart and esteem below him, who is the giver of it; he sees salvation to be more from the Giver of faith, than faith itself. He looks upon faith, not as the cause of justifying grace, but looks upon justifying grace through Christ, as the cause of that faith by which he is justified and saved, and doth know, that his justification is perfected by grace, and in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, before it is completed and effected in him by faith. He well understands that Christ and the soul are betrothed by faith, and yet he is not ignorant that he is

betrothed to God forever, in righteousness, and in loving kindness, and in mercy. "And I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies." Hos.2:19. He is enlightened to see a reconciliation by grace in the person of Christ before God, before his reconciliation by faith in his spirit.

He considers that when he was an enemy, he was reconciled to God by the death of his Son, Rom.5:10, which reconciliation was accomplished before his faith, and yet denies not reconciliation by faith. He knows that what he believed concerning God's grace and his redemption, and justification by the blood of Christ was true before he believed it, and yet he believes that faith is his righteousness unto justification. He confounds not the righteousness of faith, with the righteousness of God in Christ by whom he is justified, but gives unto God and Christ what is to be attributed to God and Christ for justification, and likewise attributes to faith what is due to faith, not looking upon faith as his righteousness without the object thereof, but always looking upon faith for his justification, as it hath reference and relation to its object, which is the favour of God in Jesus Christ. And if he shall be asked, whether he be more righteous by grace and Christ, or by faith, he will acknowledge, that he is rather justified by grace, and the blood of Christ, Rom.5:19, seeing all righteousness for him in the object of faith, than in faith, by which he beholds the object, and yet still maintains that faith is his

righteousness for justification, according to the mind of the Apostle, we are saved by faith.

Eighthly. We are saved by faith, not for the purity, and holiness of it, as it is a gift of the sanctifying Spirit; for then, upon the same ground, we should take in love, and other fruits of the Spirit, which the Apostle doth shut out, as having no influence upon us, for our justification. Which also the Apostle doth prove in the following words, where he saith that we are saved, not of works, because we are God's workmanship, created unto good works. Good works are not the cause of our new creation and justification, but the consequence of our new creation through faith; so that it is clear, that we are justified before sanctification is wrought in us, or good works done by us. We are justified by faith without them, by which it is evident, that faith, as a holy gift or quality, doth not save us. We are saved therefore by faith, as that righteousness by which we do at the first lay hold upon his grace in his Son for justification, by which we are united unto God, and are made one with him, "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me," Jn.17:21, and are purified from the guilt of sin in our hearts, Acts 15:9, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom.5:1, whom we see and embrace by faith, as the Apostle sets forth the nature of faith, Heb.11:1, thus "he that believeth" shall be saved; but he that "believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:16.

Ninthly. We are saved by faith, because by faith we are not only enabled to believe the general truth of the Gospel concerning his grace to those who believe in him, but because through faith we are enabled, to give credit to God's word, and to rest upon it, in reference and in relation to ourselves. Thus Abraham, who for the excellency and exemplariness of his faith, is worthily styled the father of the faithful, did believe what God did speak unto him, not only as a truth which might be beneficial unto others, but he looked upon Christ in reference to himself, and saw his day, and seeing of it was glad, for he looked upon God not only as a shield and great reward, but his shield and great reward.

By true faith we receive Christ and his benefits for ourselves. Paul doth inform us, that his life in the flesh was by faith in the Lord Jesus, who loved him and gave himself for him. Faith's sweetness doth lie in this, that by faith we do not merely believe Christ to be a Saviour, and righteousness, but our Saviour and our righteousness. Therefore Luther affirmed that the sweetness of Christianity lay in pronouns. When a man can say my Lord and my God, and my blessed Jesus, this was the faith which the apostles preached, which will be manifest unto us, if we consider their intentions, when they exhorted men to believe. They did not intend that their hearers should believe in general, that Christ was the Saviour of the world, but that he was a Saviour to them in particular. Thus Paul preached to the keeper

of the prison, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Acts 16:31. As when they preached the doctrine of repentance {or changedness of the mind} their meaning was, that every man ought to be changed; so when they urge believers for salvation, their meaning is that we should believe for our own salvation in particular. The general truth of faith and repentance is to believe, by a power enabling us in particular for ourselves, to believe and repent.

Lastly, we are saved through faith, because by faith we hear the inward word of salvation. The word which sounded to the outward ear, without this inward word brings no salvation. As the philosopher told him, who reprimanded him for publishing and divulging a book of philosophy, that he had published it, and he had not published it, his meaning was this, that it was so dark and mystical, that though it were published, yet it was not published to the ignorant and unlearned; and so the Gospel in the letter is published to men, and not published; these men hear, but they do not hear, they see and do not see; but by faith we so hear, that our souls live by hearing. "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Isa.55:3. "But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." Matt.13:16. The dead, saith our Saviour, "shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." John 5:25. The Spirit is an eye to a believing man, by which he sees and enjoys spiritual

things. We receive not the Spirit, by hearing the Law, or doing the works of the Law, but by the hearing of faith. Gal.3:2. Eternal life and salvation is by hearing the inward word of life, salvation and grace. God bids the prophet, "to prophesy over the dry bones, that they might live." Ezek.37:4. The Lord Jesus is the great invisible Prophet, who prophesies over dry bones, and dead-hearted sinners, and by hearing inwardly the inward word of this Prophet, they live in hearing and believing, and therefore it is said, that we are saved by faith.

Having by these particulars acquainted you with my judgment concerning our salvation through faith, I shall now by the same assistance of God's grace, draw some useful conclusions from the premises, and so put a period to my discourse for the present.

First, this doth discover unto us the usefulness and excellency of the unfeigned faith of God's elect. As Noah was preserved from the destruction which came upon the old world by going for his safety into the Ark, so by the foot of faith we walk into our Ark, Christ Jesus, for the salvation of our souls. The world of sin is a dismal wilderness, full of fiery serpents, by faith we eye Jesus Christ, as our brazen Serpent, and set footing in the heavenly Canaan of God's free grace, whilst this sinful Sodom of the world is destroyed with the rain of fire and brimstone; by faith like righteous Lot, we escape out of it. When with Peter, we are ready to sink and perish in the sea of sin, by faith we touch the saving arm of the Lord Jesus, and are preserved

when we drink the deadly poison of sin; for by faith we take in Jesus Christ as our Antidote, and the deadly poison doth not hurt us, but we are miraculously preserved. Faith beholdeth Christ crucified before us, Gal.3:1, and evidently set forth, who hath nailed the law of works, our sin and death to his own cross, and we who deserve damnation are saved through grace. Christ is the Man who is a hiding place from the wind, and covert from the tempest. Isa.32:2. Sin is a noxious and a destroying wind; and as wind in the caverns of the earth is the cause of an earthquake, so sin is the cause of destroying earthquakes in the earthly hearts of men, but Christ is our hiding place, in which through believing we are safe. The devil's infernal winds and blasts destroy many a soul, with which he fills it with hellish errors and impieties to its destruction. Acts 5:3. Christ fills his people by breathing upon them in the Spirit of grace for their salvation, he is a shelter from the infernal blasts of Satan; and while carnal and unbelieving men are, as a ship under sail, and the devil unto them, is as a powerful wind, violently blowing them to destruction, Christ by enabling his people to believe, doth blow them with the pleasant gales of his sweet Spirit, to the haven of peace and safety. "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Acts 26:18. Though there are infectious and destroying winds upon the earth, yet there are none in heaven, so though the

men of the earth are infected with the winds of sin, and Satan to their ruin, yet they who live in the sanctuary of God's grace by faith, Jesus Christ is a defense unto them. When darkness and tempests are in the spirits of men, from the Law which they have broken, Christ, who rebuked the tempest of the sea, Matt.8:26, doth rebuke the tempests of our troubled minds and consciences; and by believing there is a great calm in the soul. Sin in the soul is like Jonah in the ship, which brings a tempest with it, but Christ through faith, doth cast this tempest-raiser into the sea of his Father's grace, and the soul is quieted, and filled with joy and peace in believing. The philosopher saith, that logic to a rational and learned man is the instrument of instruments, without which he shall make little proficiency in other arts and sciences. So faith is the organ or instrument to the spiritual man, by which he is made a partaker of the Wisdom and Spirit of the Lord, in which he is to do all things and without which he can do nothing.

Secondly, this discovers the reason why the devil and his agents do so much to oppose the doctrine of faith and the preaching thereof. He is an enemy to man's salvation, and therefore he is an enemy to the doctrine of faith, through which we are saved. The devil doth what he pleases to those who are without faith, as being unable to resist him. Unbelieving men are like the Israelites without a shield or spear to defend themselves; and the devil doth lead them captive at his will, II Tim.2:26, as wild beasts are mastered, and ruled by those who

have taken them in a snare or net, {for so the word signifies,} but when we believe to salvation, we are furnished with power to oppose him who seeks our damnation; when we believe we are armed against his encounters and fitted against his opposition. Faith is the souls defensive shield, by which all his fiery darts are quenched, Eph.6:16, and therefore it is that he doth always raise opposition, persecution and reproach against the doctrine and professors of faith.

First, seeing that salvation is by faith, examine thyself concerning thy salvation, by trying thy faith. Men that are not in the faith, who have not Christ in them, are not approved Christians. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" II Cor.13:5. The word is, except ye be unapproved. It is possible that a man may be in a state of unbelief, and yet no reprobate; but he, that cannot prove that he hath faith, cannot prove himself to be a believer, or in a state of salvation. Query it in thy soul, whether thou hast such a faith, as we have spoken of. You have heard that we are saved through faith, which is a supernatural gift of the Spirit of God, by which those things, which the natural man cannot apprehend concerning salvation, are made plain to the soul. Supernatural things cannot be known, but by something which is supernatural; as the things of nature are known by the light of nature, things of reason by the light of reason; so the things of eternal life and salvation, by

the supernatural gift of faith, which is the evidence of the supernatural things of the Gospel, which are invisible. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb.11:1. Abraham believed against hope, Rom.4:18, so a spiritual man believed the things of God, and eternal life, which the short line of natural reason cannot reach or fathom, and which naturally he cannot hope for, or expect. Is thy faith, who dost profess thyself a child of Abraham, such a faith as Abraham's was, who is the father of the faithful?

Secondly, true believers see their salvation by faith alone. Though a man have many seeds together in his hand, yet he may know the various and diverse natures of those several seeds, so though a justified man have many precious seeds of the Holy Spirit in his heart, yet he knows the several natures of them all. Though he hath love to God in his heart, as well as faith to Christ, yet he knows the nature of faith, which alone is available to justification. Examine whether thou hast been enabled to flee to the strong tower of God's grace for safety; against hell, sin and the devil, by the silver wings of faith, without the help of works for justification.

Thirdly, a believer seeth justification cannot be by grace, if works and faith were to be conjoined for justification. Grace is not grace in any way, unless it be free and undeserved; every way grace is not free and undeserved, unless it be reached forth, without any consideration of our own works, which

is only through faith. Try whether God hath taught thee this lesson of truth.

Fourthly, faith doth take the glory of justification from the creature and give it unto grace. Hast thou learned to sing the new song of the saints, and redeemed ones before the throne crying, salvation only to God, who sits upon the Throne of his Grace, and to the Lamb.

Fifthly, art thou fully persuaded of God's power and faithfulness, who hath left promises of grace upon record, for the salvation of poor sinners? Art thou with Abraham fully persuaded of the truth of God's promises of grace in reference to thyself? I remember what one of the ancients saith, that to profess Christ without assurance, is to be without faith, though living in the household of faith. A spiritual man is that which he believes himself to be. He believes that he is positively and negatively righteous in Christ, freed from sin, and made a partaker of a glorious righteousness for his justification; and so he is by believing in an instant made whole. He believeth that he owes nothing to his creditor, and his creditor believes so too.

Sixthly, a believing man is bone of the bone, flesh of the flesh, and one spirit with the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a close and near union and application of Christ to the soul by faith. Dost thou in believing see thyself a member of Christ, as thy hand or foot is a part of thy body? Is Christ the quickening Spirit of thy spirit, to enliven that as thy spirit, is the spirit which he doth enliven thy body.

Seventhly, dost thou live by faith, that thou dost look upon Christ as thy life and righteousness more than faith? Not suffering any persuasion which thou calleth thy righteousness, to sit in the uppermost rooms of thy heart, to the prejudice of God's glory in Christ. A spiritual heart is the throne of the Deity, were God in Christ is exalted as the chief righteousness of the soul, is it so in thine?

Eighthly, hast thou by faith as an instrument touched the hem of Christ's garment for the healing of the bloody issue of thy own soul? He that is wise and good, is wise and good for himself; and if thou art truly wise and good, thou art wise in applying Christ to make thyself wise and good.

Lastly, is thy faith such a faith, through which Christ hath inwardly discovered himself unto thee, formed and created himself in thee? Gal.4:19. The inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding. "But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." Job 32:8. If thy faith is true, it is by an inward inspiration.

Question. But must we have such a faith, if we will be the children of believing Abraham? Answer. Every true believer hath such a faith, for the nature thereof, though not for the perfection of the degrees of it. There is a perfect and fair copy of faith in those who have been presented unto thee. Thou art to have the same copy written forth upon thy heart, though it may not be so fairly written forth at the first; but if it be a true copy of faith, thou hast no cause to question thy assurance, though thou dost find it very weak at the present. A palsy-shaken

hand may receive a gift, and a weak faith may receive the grace of God in Christ Jesus. A dwarf is a man as well as a giant, though not so tall, and one who is but a dwarf, and low in Christianity by the weakness of his faith, may be a Christian as well as those who are of a taller stature in the school of Christ.

This which hath been delivered, may be for the strengthening of the faith, and increasing the comforts of those who have laid hold of salvation by a lively faith in Jesus Christ. Comforts are increased by the same means by which they are wrought at the first; and therefore the Apostle prays for the Romans, that the Lord would fill them with all joy and peace in believing. Rom.15:13. Our comforts are low because our faith is weak. Comfort flows in by renewed acts of faith. Satan would rob us of our comfort by wresting faith, which is our shield from us. Eph.6:16. And this is one way in which he doth labor to weaken the faith of the saints, by suggesting this unto the saints, that salvation is not only by grace through faith. But against this temptation, and all his other fiery darts, we may hold forth this buckler of truth, that we are saved by grace through faith. Answer him therefore from this truth, and he must be silenced; resist him in believing this truth, and he will flee from thee. James 4:7. And the Spirit will fly into thy soul to comfort thee. So long as Abraham lived, he lived as a justified man by faith. So long as Paul lived, he lived by faith in the Son of God. We die rather than live, when we are not under the power of the Spirit, enabling us to believe. We

lie down either in the bed of carnal security, or fanatical anti-Christianity, or fall under the bondage of the Law, when we step aside from the plain doctrine of salvation by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore the flesh and the devil, the great enemies to a saints comfort, do join themselves together to oppose the doctrine of faith. Satan knows that faith and works are inconsistent in the point of justification; and when he observes that we are in some measure convinced, that salvation is by faith, he endeavors to persuade us, that it is by faith and works, and thus would divide our justification between faith and works. As the harlot cried out concerning the child, "neither mine nor thine, but divide it," I Kings 3:26, so the devil would have us divide our justification, and attribute half of it to faith, and give the other part to works. But the believing man sees that there is salvation in Christ, and not in any other, and that no other name under heaven is given amongst men whereby they must be saved. Acts 4:12. And there we rest upon this name for salvation only by faith. In Christ we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him, Eph.3:12, "who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." II Cor.1:10. We are guided and led by the hand, as it were, with a firm persuasion of Christ's goodness to us by faith in Christ. Continue in that faith by which Paul was justified, who believed that Christ loved him, and gave himself for him, and thy comforts and peace shall be continued unto the end. It is Melanchthon's observation, that

the word which we translate faith, doth most usually signify a firm assent unto a thing, doubting is that which is contrary to faith. James 1:6. Believe therefore as enabled to do so, and thou shalt have a strong peace, believe that there is no remission of sin but by God's indulgence, but believe this entirely, that by him thy sins are forgiven thee. This is the faith which brings peace and consolation to the soul.

By this we are brought from sin to Christ's righteousness, from Mount Sinai to Mount Zion, from the dominion of the Law to the region of Grace, from bondage to liberty, from death to life, from the fear of hell to the assurance of heaven and happiness. Archimedes was so delighted in the study of mathematics, that when the enemy who besieged the place where he lived, broke in unto it, he heard not the noise and shouting of the soldiers, nor the cries of the people. So the soul that by faith liveth in Jesus Christ, shall be carried above the noise and troubles of the world, and shall enjoy peace in Jesus Christ. Let us therefore wait in the heavenly Jerusalem for more of the spirit of faith. This lesson will appear to be very necessary for the saints, if we consider that the spirit of grace may be so quenched in saints, that they may not for the present be able to go into the presence of God as saints, but only as poor sinners. And by the belief of this doctrine a saint doth easily get out of temptation, for he is taught of God in the Gospel to come unto him as a sinner without works, when he cannot come as a saint. And in this way his joy, with all the gifts of God's grace are restored unto him, and when they

are restored he doth keep them, by the resting upon God who saves sinners by grace through faith. And therefore the Apostle Peter, when he exhorted the saints to grow in grace, doth add, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, II Pet.3:18, by which he doth seem to inform them that there can be no growing in grace, unless there be a growing in faith, which is the knowledge of Christ, and the love of the Father in him.

In the last place, here is a foundation of salvation for all that have ears to hear, and hearts to entertain the report, which you have heard of God's grace which is manifested to sinners through faith. Let not any man go away with a heart of unbelief, but may the Lord open your ears and hearts as he did Lidia's, that you may believe what is reported. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Acts 16:14. For truly if you believe what I have it delivered unto you, you may go away rejoicing, and assured of God's grace, beholding your names written in the book of life. The true Gospel believed will remove all objections against your peace, and all doubtings out of your spirit. If as children of Abraham, ye believe as he did, salvation will lie down in your bosom, and the true God and Jesus Christ will give you an answer to whatsoever you can object and bring against your own salvation and justification. It is not the sight of sin that shall take away your comfort, but you shall

rejoice that Jesus Christ did die for sinners. It is not the want of works that shall send you away without assurance or justification, but you shall see, that you have good grounds to lay hold upon Jesus Christ, though you have no works, because he justifies none but those that have no works before justification. The true God is not a justifier of the holy and righteous, but of the ungodly. God knows that the wisdom of the proud flesh doth strongly persuade sinners to seek salvation in themselves, and in their own works. The jailers question, Acts 16:30, what shall I do to be saved, and the rulers question, Luke 18:18, what shall I do to inherit eternal life, is in the heart of every natural man, who is persuaded that there is an eternal life. Man thinks that as he became miserable by his evil works, that so he must be made happy by his good works; and therefore God hath given his Law which requires perfection to bring down the pride of the flesh, and confidence in our own works, and discovers his free favour to the worst of sinners in the Gospel. God hath blocked and stopped up all other ways to life, besides the way of his grace in Christ, and hath left this way open for the worst of sinners to turn in unto it for salvation. So that as good works cannot save us without Christ, {being but glittering and gilded sins,} so evil works cannot prejudice the salvation of him who cometh to Jesus Christ, as David in the cave Adullam, entertained all such who were "in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented," who "gathered themselves unto him," he becoming "a Captain over them," I

Sam.22:2, so Jesus Christ, of whom David was a type, doth entertain all distressed consciences, indebted sinners, discontented malefactors, and becomes the Captain of their salvation. "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb.2:10. He knows how unwilling impurity is to come to him, who is absolute purity; what enemies we are to our own salvation; what fools we are to run to those who cannot help us, like Ephraim, who when he saw his sickness, went to the Assyrian who could not heal him, Hos.5:13, and therefore he publishes proclamations of his Father's grace to poor helpless sinners, and brings sin wounded miscreants out of the wilderness of sin and misery, to the Heavenly Canaan of peace and holiness through faith in his Name. He sees that we are ready to catch hold of the Law and our own works, like unto men who are ready to sink in the water, who will get hold of rushes or straws or anything upon the surface of the water, which cannot save them, and therefore he reaches forth his strong arm of salvation unto our deliverance, and bids us to hold fast by him, and assures us of life and salvation. "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor, therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." Isa.59:16.

The Lord keeps open house, and invites all sorts of sinners to lay hold of the grace of his Father in him. He beseeches us to be reconciled to his

Father, II Cor.5:20, he assures sinners, that whosoever will, may drink of the water of life freely. Rev.22:17. He compares himself to a running river, out of which every poor traveler may drink freely, no man demanding or requiring anything for whatever he takes. He doth set captives free, not for price or reward, Isa.45:13, not for their works; though we have sold ourselves for nought, yet he assures us that we shall be redeemed without money or price. "For thus saith the LORD, ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money." Isa.52:3. He having paid the price or money for our redemption, and assuring us now in his word of truth, that there is salvation for us without our merits by faith in him; therefore let those who want joy and comfort, come to the promises, and take Christ in a promise; such who have been misled, and not set in the right way to salvation and justification; let them be convinced that this is the right way, be assured of salvation by grace alone, Christ dying not for the righteous, but for the ungodly. Be persuaded that Jesus Christ is not a physician for the whole, but for the sick. Matt.9:12. Sin is the souls sickness, thou art a sinner, thou art sick, and thou mayest come to Christ not as one that is well, but as one that is sick. Christ is a surgeon that is able to cure the greatest wounds, therefore he hath set up his bills, and bids all to come, and he will reject none. We may with the woman in the Gospel, spend all that we have upon other physicians, and be nothing profited. There is health for us, only by coming to Jesus

Christ. Therefore if other physicians have been physicians of no value, while they have bid you to seek justification and assurance in the sight of your own works, and not in the sight of God's grace, hear this day what the Lord Jesus Christ saith to your souls, for he proclaims that he calleth not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Hear him, hear I say and thy soul shall live. "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Isa.55:3.

I remember that some physicians have been highly commended that have been able to cure their patients speedily and safely, and without any great torment. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is a most admirable physician in these three respects.

First, he can speedily cure and heal us, whatsoever are wounds are; if there were but one wound and sore, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, if we were but made up of nothing but sin, the Lord Jesus Christ is able to cure us speedily, for he is excellent in this respect. Touch him, and the bloody issue of thy soul is immediately cured. He can say to thee as once he said to Zacchaeus, this day salvation is come to thy soul. If you lay the plaster of his Father's grace upon thy sinful soul, thou shall be immediately cured.

Secondly, Christ cures safely, for there is no danger in taking that which he prescribes. If Christ tells you that his Father justifies ungodly ones, and that he is the Saviour of sinners, you that believe him, and put your life in his hands, he will not cozen

and cheat as some charlatans that give that which kills, when they confidently promise health. If Christ promises to heal, he will give that psychic which shall effectually heal us. He will not give that unto us which would hurt us. If he thought that the doctrine of grace would have hurt men, he would never have commanded the doctrine of grace to have been preached. If he thought that the doctrine of grace would have opened a door to licentiousness, he would not have given his apostles commission to preach the Gospel to every creature. Though men in their carnal apprehensions think there is danger in the medicines of Christ, those who have had experience of him, can assure you that he is a matchless physician; that there is no danger in that which he gives, that there is no way to salvation but by believing without working. Use this psychic of his, apply this plaster to thy soul, and thou needs not to fear, for whom he cures, he cures with abundance of safety. I dare assure this, that he will heal thee.

In the third place, physicians are commended that cure without tormenting of their patients much; and such a physician is Jesus Christ. He comforts our hearts with Gospel Cordials whilst he cures us. There is sweet comfort in the healing of the Lord Jesus Christ; for he so heals thy wounds and diseases, that thou shalt have delight and comfort whilst he heals thy soul, and give a plaster to thy putrefied rotten spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ does not prescribe a tormenting remedy that is worse than the disease, but when Christ heals, he comforts, he so cures, that he ravishes the soul with joy unspeakable and full of

glory. Wherefore come to Christ, you that have spent all, and suffered much, and have lain long under a spirit of bondage, twenty or thirty years. There is healing, look to the physician, the Lord Jesus Christ, for he will cure you speedily and safely, and with delight to you. In brief, it is an easy and compendious way to heaven, when God gives you believing hearts, and yet it is the hardest thing in the world to believe without him, but when God enables us, the work is easy. "When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, with men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Matt.19:25-26. When Christ resolved to be the physician, health quickly will be given in. Some affirm that generation is in a moment, it is unquestionable concerning spiritual regeneration by faith in Christ. Therefore look up to the Father, and to the Son, that this work may be wrought in us. Think not that the work of faith can be wrought by any power which is in ourselves, for it is given to us to believe by the grace of God communicated, and extended to us in the Lord Jesus Christ; and this is the next thing that lies in the words to be handled, "ye are saved by grace through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." But I must leave that to some other time. In the meanwhile look unto the Father of lights, for it is his gift, we cannot bestow it upon ourselves.

SERMON IV

SALVATION ONLY BY BELIEVING.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph.2:8-9.

Faith is a work as difficult as it is glorious, and as much beyond the creature's strength to work it in himself, as his merits to deserve it, of himself. Therefore the Apostle having acquainted us with the excellency of faith, through which we are saved, doth now inform us concerning the power by which it is wrought in us. "It is not of ourselves, but it is the gift of God."

First, he shows negatively that it is not of ourselves, and then secondly affirmatively, that it is the gift of God.

When God doth effectually work upon a man, to make him happy in his Son, he worketh two things in a man, he doth take him from himself and confidence in his own strength, and doth carry him into his own strength and goodness, from whence he receives all strength. And this is expressed here by Paul, when he saith, that faith is not of ourselves, but that it is the gift of God. I shall by the assistance of grace, speak of the first of these, and endeavor to prove this proposition, that true saving faith is not of ourselves.

When the Apostle Peter made a glorious profession of the Lord, acknowledging him to be the

Son of God, Christ answered him and said unto him, "blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Matt.16:17. Here our Saviour bears witness to the truth of his faith, and to show him that he possessed not this only in word and in tongue, but that he professed it from the truth of faith which was in him, therefore he acknowledgeth that it was not from flesh and blood, but by the Father, which had revealed it unto him. Where we may find our position clearly confirmed to you, that those that truly believe, who have the un-feigned faith of the people of God, it is not a faith wrought in them by themselves, it does not flow from any natural principle, but it is the immediate work of the power of God in their hearts.

As we did not, nor could not make our own hearts, so we cannot make our heart new hearts. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Jer.13:23. By which the prophet doth clearly hold forth this truth, that sinners can do no more by their own strength make themselves saints, which is by faith, than a Blackmore can change the color of his skin, or the leopard his spots. An Ethiopian may be painted white, so an hypocritical sinner may be a painted sepulcher, appearing righteous and sound to men, when he is full of rottenness within. But God alone doth change and purify our hearts by his gift of faith, which is not of ourselves.

For the amplifying of this point to you, I shall lay down some subsequent considerations, by which I shall prove this to you, that he that truly believes, doth not believe by any power, strength, or ability in himself, by which he is in any measure fitted and enabled for this great work of true justifying faith.

The first consideration shall be drawn from the nature of faith, as it is held forth to us in the word of God, which faith is the work of God upon the spirit of a saint, by which the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ is discovered unto him, and by which he in his heart, Rom.10:10, is made willing to receive Christ, and to rest upon him and his righteousness alone for his justification, Rom.10:4, for thus the Scripture speaks of faith.

First, it speaks of faith as it is a light of God in the understanding, so we are bid to look to the Lord Jesus Christ, and we shall be saved. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." Isa.45:22. And it is said of the faithful, that by faith they saw the promises afar off, Heb.11:13, they saw Christ, not as we see him, who behold him as he hath been offered up as our sacrifice, and hath made an end of our sins, Dan.9:24, but they beheld him as one that was to come, and was to make a propitiation for the sins of the world; and if we thus look upon faith as it is a beam from God, enlightening us in our understandings, to see God's grace in his Son, we shall find that faith is not of ourselves.

Which will appear if we consider what our own understandings are, before God doth give us the

true knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. I shall acquaint you here with Scripture expressions, which do sufficiently and clearly hold forth this unto us. The first expression is, that men without the Lord Jesus Christ are darkened in their understandings. The Apostle speaking of the Gentiles that knew not Christ, he saith, that they "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Eph.4:18. There is a mist and cloud of darkness upon the understandings of all carnal and unbelieving men. As the Apostle Paul when he had scales before his eyes, was not able to behold the light of the sun, so whilst the scales of natural darkness and ignorance are upon the hearts and spirits of men, they are not able to behold the Son of Righteousness. They may hear Christ preached, they may hear the doctrine of justification freely and fully handled, but they are not able to behold anything of God or Christ, because they have their understandings darkened, being not enlightened by the Spirit of Christ to see Christ.

Secondly, the Scripture does not only tell us that they are darkened in their understandings, but it tells us, that they sit in darkness. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." Matt.4:16. Here indeed is the condition of all men without Christ set forth unto us, that they are men that sit in darkness; and Zacharias in his song, speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, saith that

he is the dayspring from on high, "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." Lk.1:79. Though man have eyes, yet if he sit in a dark dungeon, he can see no visible object. It will therefore be evident, that carnal man cannot see of themselves, because they are not only darkened in their understandings, but they sit in the dark dungeons of their own spirits, being not able to behold the invisible things of God's grace, which are not discovered and made visible unto us, until we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But in the third place, the Holy Spirit speaking of natural men without Christ, doth not only inform us that they are darkened, and have their seats in darkness, but that they love darkness, they are pleased with their present state and condition of darkness; they are unwilling to have any light to break forth upon them. So our Saviour saith, "and this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Jn.3:19. They love unbelief and ignorance, they had rather be the devil's prisoners in dungeons of darkness, than enjoy their liberty in Christ's marvelous light. They are so far from being unable to make themselves happy in believing, that they are in love with their own unhappiness. They will not come to Christ, that they might have life, they are unwilling that Christ should reign over them, though he doth proclaim salvation unto them. They say unto God, depart from us, for we will not have the knowledge of thy

ways. Job 21:14. Like the Gadarenes, they do desire Jesus to depart out of their coasts. Mark 5:17. They are the slaves of sin, and free from righteousness. Rom.6:20. When they are disobedient to the commands of righteousness, they do account it their liberty and freedom. As the service of Christ is liberty to a saint, so the service of sin is accounted liberty by a carnal man. They are like the servant that was to be bored through the ear, upon his profession that he loved his master, and would not go out free. Exod.21:5.

This is the condition of every man out of Christ, he professes that he loves his master; he loves the devil, and the works of the flesh are sweet and pleasing to him; he had rather live as a swine, and wallow in the flesh and mire of sin than taste of those joys and pleasures which are God's right hand. He had rather do the devil's drudgery than to enjoy that perfect freedom that the Lord Jesus Christ hath purchased for the saints. It is against his heart, and the whole bend, frame, stream, strength, and current of his spirit to be desired, entreated and beseeched to give entertainment to Christ. He is rather contented to live as a slave with Satan, than to rule as a king with Christ. He is an evil tree and cannot bring forth fruit to make himself good. As an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit to make itself good, so an evil man, being an evil tree, all his thoughts, words and actions are evil fruits, by which he cannot make himself good. He cannot therefore of himself bring forth the good fruit of faith.

Again, the Scripture rises higher in spiritual expressions, to set forth unto us the sad and woeful condition of an unbelieving man. He is not only a lover of darkness, and seated in darkness, but he is darkness itself in the abstract. The Apostle speaking of the Ephesians before their conversion, saith, "for ye were sometimes darkness." Eph.5:8. Consonant to which words is that speech of John, "the light shineth in darkness," John 1:5, that is, in the dark hearts of unbelieving men, "but the darkness comprehended it not." There doth lie more in this expression than in the former, it is more to be darkness, than to be darkened; now we are not only darkened in our understandings, but our understandings are nothing else but darkness. Men without Christ may think that they have a great deal of knowledge and wisdom, but truly the Holy Spirit tells us that all their light and understanding is nothing but darkness. There is as much contrariety between the Spirit of God and the spirit of a natural man, as there is between light and darkness; by reason of which the natural man cannot of himself obtain the knowledge of Christ. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom.8:7. The Apostle does not only say that it is not subject, but he saith that it cannot be. He makes it a thing impossible; according to that which he himself delivered, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him." I Cor.2:14. The word is very emphatical in the Greek, the man that hath a soul, look upon him in

his best part, in his rational soul, which he hath as a man, and in that, and by that he cannot receive the things of God.

Look upon the rational man with his morality, with his human learning, arts and sciences, with his literal knowledge of the Law and Gospel; look upon him as he is sublimated in his intellectuals, as he hath made the highest improvement of his learning, parts, gifts, and endowments, as he is the world's delight for his worldly wisdom, as he is admired by men for his prudence and eloquence, with all this, he is blind to the all seeing eye of God, and cannot receive or apprehend the glorious things of God's grace in Jesus Christ. He is a fool with his wisdom, and an ignorant man with his learning; a wretched sinner with all his good works and moral virtues; and no more able to open the blind eyes of his soul, than he may see the sun beams of the Gospel, which shines in the fruits of the saints, than a man who is born blind is able to give himself sight and bodily eyes to behold the sun which shines in the world.

He is not able by the acuteness of his reason, the sharpness of his understanding, nor the largeness of his parts, gifts, endowments, natural or acquired, to attain unto the saving knowledge of the things of the Gospel; but they are mere foolishness unto him. So that by this consideration it will be evident, that if we look on faith as it is a light in the understanding, that then a man is not able to bring this light into his own understanding, but whatsoever is in his understanding opposes the glorious light of God's grace, and that therefore it is

impossible upon this account, for a man to believe of himself.

But in the second place, if we look on faith, not only as it is the light of God in the understanding, but if we look on it as it is the work of God upon the will, so we shall find that we believe not for ourselves; and that no man ever in his own power and strength, or improvement of his free will, was ever able to believe what God hath reported concerning his own grace in his Son Jesus Christ. For as a man is darkness in his understanding, so he is nothing but rebellion in his will. As the darkness in his understanding opposes the light of Christ, and the beams of Gospel truth, so likewise the strength, force, and prevalency of the rebellion in his will, fights against all the discoveries, that may be made of Jesus Christ unto him.

This is set forth most plainly to us by John, where speaking of the saints, he saith, "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:13. It is not of the will of the rational man, spiritually and truly, to will his own regeneration. Let a man make the best use he can of his will, let him put forth himself to the best resolutions that he can make, let him resolve to do nothing but seek Christ, and study to know him; yet if a man be only in the strength of his own resolutions, he shall never be able to find out the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul is plain in this point, "so then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Rom.9:16. A man may have some weak resolutions

of himself, and to see Christ, and the things of God's kingdom, but unless he be carried out with a higher principle, and a greater power than his own will to Christ, he will never be able to effect, what he seems to desire to have effected and wrought in him.

Free will is not free, but a slave; for there is not freedom, but slavery in it. It is not free to do good, unless it be freed from sin by grace. If man in the state of integrity could not stand of himself, how shall he of himself in his state of corruption be able to rise now that he is fallen; unless God come down with a mighty power and force us against our natural will to receive Christ we shall never be made partakers of Christ. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:44. When a man is drawn, he is drawn against his will. I need not draw a man that is willing to come after me. If we were willing to go after God in our conversion, we should stand in need of no drawing; but we see that God must compel us to come into Christ, or else we will never come in unto him, nor submit unto his will.

I would not here be mistaken; I do not think that when a man doth take Christ, that he is unwilling to take him, but he receives him willingly; yet it is not by the strength of the natural will that a man is made willing but by the power of grace. God maketh us, who are unwilling to entertain his Son by nature, willing to entertain him by grace; and the will acted by the strength of supernatural grace, doth act in a contrary way to itself, when it acts in

the strength of corrupt nature. By which is plainly proved, that the will of a natural man is insufficient of itself, to bring about the salvation of a natural man. We are "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." II Cor.3:18. From whence one can draw this rational conclusion, that if we are changed by the strength of the Spirit, that then it is not by the strength of free will. And we may draw the same conclusion from the words of Paul, where he affirms that "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil.2:13. If God doth work in us to will what is good, then we do not work it in ourselves. By which it is clearly demonstrated, that if faith be looked upon as a work in the will, by which it is made willing to receive Christ and his righteousness for justification; that then faith cannot be looked upon as from ourselves, but it is the gift of God.

A second argument for the confirmation of this may be drawn from the considering the disability of men, already converted to doing any good of themselves, and thus I frame my argument.

If men already converted are not able to think a good thought, or to put forth one act of faith of themselves; then men unconverted are not able to believe of themselves before conversion; but men already converted are not able to think one good thought, or to put forth one act of faith of themselves, therefore unconverted men are not able to believe of themselves.

There is that strength in the first proposition that I suppose no man pretending to be a scholar in the school of the Spirit will question the truth thereof. For should a man question it, he should by his questioning of it, attribute a greater strength to unconverted than converted men, which is such an absurdity in divinity that I think no spiritual man would be guilty of it. And for the minor or second proposition, it is backed with such plain authority of Scripture, that it is in vain for any man to deny it. How plainly doth Paul deliver himself in this point, for when speaking of saints he saith, "not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." II Cor.3:5. What spiritual act is more easy than to think a good thought? It is easier to think well, than to speak well, or do well; for we often think good thoughts that never come out upon the tongue, or appear in the action. Yet Paul is not afraid to profess that the best of us cannot think anything as of ourselves; which may be a sufficient proof of that which followeth in the same proposition, where we say that he cannot put forth one act of faith. In believing our spirits are placed and fixed upon God, and we are filled with high thoughts of his grace in his Son to his glory; and therefore if we cannot think well, certainly we cannot believe well; and that we cannot believe of ourselves after we do believe will be evident by the petition of the apostles, "Lord increase our faith." Luke 17:5. What necessity was there, that they should have prayed to their Lord for the increasing

of their faith, if by their own strength they could have believed when they had so pleased?

And thus I have at once both proved my argument and the point in hand, that true faith is not of ourselves. This argument is, {as we speak in logic,} from the greater to the less; if the greater can do nothing, the less cannot; if converted men be able to do nothing towards this excellent work of faith, then unconverted men are able to do nothing. Men who have a life in Christ, can do nothing of themselves; therefore such who are dead in sins and trespasses can do nothing of themselves, but God must do all in us by his grace.

The third argument may be drawn from this consideration, that if there were anything in the reason or understanding of man which might further him in this work of faith, then it would follow, that those men who are the most acute men, the most learned men, the wisest and most rational men, would prove the best believers, and the most faithful men, but we find it quite contrary. There are none commonly more ignorant of Christ than they who are most learned. The world's wise man is God's fool.

It were an easy matter to prove this, by running over the several ages of the world. It was the complaint of a good man long since that "the unlearned {saith he} do arise and take heaven by force, while we learned men are cast into hell," but I shall confine myself to Scripture. This is proved from I Corinthians 1:26-29, "for ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." The wise men and great men of the world have not generally embraced Christ, but rather the world's fools have been made wise by the knowledge of him. The learned Pharisees did reproach Christ and his doctrine with this "have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him," John 7:48, but this people who know not the Law are cursed. They looked upon his followers as a cursed company of ignorant people, unacquainted with the Law, which they taught for justification; and supposed that the Rulers and Pharisees had so much wit, wisdom and learning, that they would give no credit to his doctrine. Therefore seeing those who are most learned, wise, and acute by rational parts, gifts and abilities, are commonly most averse and opposite to the knowledge of the Gospel. It follows, that it is not by anything that is in the reason or understanding of man, by which one man is made more capable of faith than another man, but God giveth the gift of faith freely to whom he pleases.

The fourth argument may be drawn from the consideration of persons before their conversion, as they are deciphered to us, and characterized forth in the word of truth. The Scripture calls them dead men, they are rather carcasses than men; they have

the shapes of living men, but they are but dead men, no more than a carcass is a man, no more is an unconverted man a man in the Scripture sense. As a dead man is able to do nothing to regain life, so we, who are dead in sins and trespasses, are able to do nothing towards our own conversion. This phrase we have in the precedent words, "you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins," Eph.2:1, and the same Apostle saith, "and you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Col.2:13. A dead man hears nothing, sees nothing, there is no motion in him at all; so it is with a man that is dead in sins, he hears not the things of grace; he hears, but he hears not; he sees not the things of grace, he sees and sees not; he is not able to move one foot by faith towards heaven and happiness.

Unbelieving men are dead, if we view them in reference to the principle of life, or the faculties of a living man, or the operations of life. Christ is the principle of life. Col.3:3. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Col 3:4. They are without Christ, and therefore without the principle of life.

Secondly, in reference to faculties which are in living men, they are dead. Faculties are known and distinguished by their acts and operations, and therefore we may speak of these two jointly and together. As in a living man there are faculties and operations of life, so there are faculties and operations of life in a man who is spiritually alive.

Such a one is nourished, I Pet.2:2, groweth, Psal.1:3, hears, sees, smells and tastes the sweetness of Christ, I Pet.2:3, and the like; but it is not so with one dead in sin and unbelief, for he hath no spiritual faculties and operations of life, he lies rotting in the grave of sin without these. If we play upon instruments or music, or shoot off the guns in his ears, he hears it not. If God thundered from Sinai in the Law, or came from Zion with the music of the Gospel, he hears it not. Refusing to live by faith in Christ, he is dead. Men without Christ, take them in their best estate, and thus it is with them, with all their moral embellishments and ornaments, they are but like a dead body stuck with flowers, or an embalmed carcass. The whole world of unbelievers is but a Golgotha, or charnel-house of dry bones. "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead." Prov.21:16. Though thou art a professor of Christ, yet without Christ thou art dead. The widow that professes Christ, living in pleasure, is dead while she liveth. I Tim.5:6. As Seneca passing by the house of an Epicurean said, he that liveth here, is dead and buried here. So we may say of all profane men, ignorant men, civilized men without Christ, formalized professors, they are there dead where they live; and being dead, who will so far lay aside his reason, to affirm, that they are able to quicken themselves to a spiritual life.

Again as the Scripture sets them out to us as dead men, so the Scripture presents them to us as men that are in a sleep. We have this expression,

“awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Eph.5:14. The knowledge that a man hath of Jesus Christ before his conversion is rather as the dream and fancy of a sleeping man, than the true knowledge of a waking man. A man may dream he is a king, and thinks that he hath all the riches of the world, but when he awakes he hath nothing, because he did but dream that he was rich. So it is with men that have a knowledge of Christ, but not wrought in their hearts by the operation of the Spirit; they may be in a dream, and have false persuasions that Christ is theirs, and that heaven is theirs, with all the glorious things of eternity, but they are but beggars and poor slaves all the while. They are likewise compared to mad men, who may think that they are monarchs, and in the palace, when they are miserable creatures chained in a bedlam. So carnal man may have false persuasions concerning their happiness, but true faith is only wrought by the Spirit of truth. And as men out of their wits cannot restore to themselves the use of reason, so men spiritually mad cannot bring themselves to the light of grace. By which expressions it is plain that faith is not of ourselves.

My last argument to prove that true faith is not of ourselves is derived from the word, in which it doth acquaint us with the wickedness and deceitfulness of man’s natural heart. Our hearts are deceitful and hypocritical, and therefore unfeigned faith cannot come from them, and no credit is to be given to the persuasions of them; our spirits they

will deceive us, therefore we are not to give any credit to any persuasion that comes from them; a persuasion that is a persuasion merely of our own spirit, is not a true faith or persuasion. Who will believe a common cheater, cozener, liar or imposter that cares not what he saith. The heart naturally is like unto such an imposter or deceiver, according to that of Jeremiah. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" Jer.17:9. That faith therefore cannot be true which proceeds from a natural heart, and that comfort cannot be sound which springs from such a faith. By which, and the proceeding arguments, it doth appear, that the true faith of the Gospel is not of ourselves.

Give me leave now in a few words to make some deductions from this, and so I shall commend what I have delivered, and you to the blessing of the Almighty.

In the first place, this may confute the doctrine of Papists, Arminians, and Popish Protestants that conceive that a man is able to do something to the furtherance of his own justification and salvation. This that hath been delivered, being seriously weighed in our spirits, is sufficient to overthrow this lying doctrine, which would attribute anything to man, or to the strength, wisdom, understanding, will or affections of the natural man in point of conversion, justification and spiritual renovation.

One of the ancients, who was more enlightened by the Spirit than any of his fellows, for

the beholding of the truth of God's grace, doth as boldly, and truly assert that whosoever shall pull down the doctrine of free grace by exalting man's free will is deceived with an heretical spirit. And who will suffer himself to be so far blinded, as not to see that magnifiers of free will do overthrow the doctrine of God's grace and mercy, which Paul preached; when they shall hear him plainly concluding against all the free-willers in the world, "that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Rom.9:16. The free grace and mercy which the Scripture acquainteth us with is inconsistent with man's free will to do good of himself. As Dagan was tumbled down when the ark, which was a type of Christ, and God's grace in him, was brought into the place where Dagan was set up, so when God's grace by the power of the Spirit appeareth, it tumbles down, and overthrows the daganish conceits and idolatrous apprehensions which men have of their own supposed strength, by which they delight themselves with. The spirits of men truly persuaded of the strength of grace, and their own weakness, disclaim their own strength and self-confidence, and cry out with those in the prophet, "turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned." Lam.5:21.

But that these men may not say that we deal unjustly with them in condemning them and not hearing what they can say for themselves; let us hear what they do usually bring for themselves, that so their mouth may be stopped by the truth of God; and thus light may shine more gloriously by the

dispelling those mists, fogs and clouds of error which would darken it.

The Scripture that some of them object against this truth, is, Revelation 22:17, "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," from whence they conclude, that there is a power in free will to take Christ, and that if a man will he may take the water of life freely.

To this I thus answer, that they draw more from the words, than the words do hold forth. The words say, "whosoever will, may take the water of life freely," but the word doth not tell us, that any man is able to will this of himself. It is true, whosoever will may take the water of life freely, but it is as true, that a man of himself is not willing. God alone enabling us to be willing and to take this water of life freely. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil.2:13. And thus you see, that if this argument be well weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, it will be found too light to prove that for which it is alleged.

But they are ready to reply again, and to demand of us the reason why God doth find fault with men for unbelief, reproving them for not coming unto Christ, if they are not able of themselves to believe, and come to Christ?

Answer. Why should these men thus cavil against the goodness of God? May not God with good reason, and without offense, inform us of our sin, though we are not able of ourselves to forsake it. It

is a conclusion spiritually irrational to say that we have power to amend our fault, because God doth reprove us for our fault. In these reproofs and the like, God shows unto us his goodness, in reprovng us for our conviction, he doth not inform us of our ability, savingly to believe for our conversion.

But methinks I see them returning upon us again, and making a new assault by another argument, with which they thus oppose us, or rather the truth and power of God's grace. Why does God command, entreat and beseech the creature to believe, if the creature has no power of himself to believe?

Answer. Passages to this purpose which we find in Scripture do acquaint us with God's goodness to the creature in his revealed will, and the creature's duty towards God; they do not acquaint us with the secret, effectual, and irresistible will of God concerning the salvation of a creature, nor of the creature's power in himself, to believe of himself. The conclusions of these men from such precepts, exhortations and entreaties, are very absurd and irrational. If we should seriously weigh them in the scales of right and sanctified reason, God say they, doth command, exhort, and entreat men to believe, therefore men are able of themselves, by some power in themselves, to believe. May they not upon as good grounds conclude that a carnal man may fulfill the whole Law, and be saved by doing of the Law, seeing that he is commanded in Scripture to fulfill the whole Law, and exhorted and entreated to do so. I shall shut up this use with the sweet speech

of a devout and spiritual man, "seeing man without the grace of God could not keep that salvation which he received, how shall he be able without grace to regain that salvation which he hath lost."

Secondly, it may be for the convincing of men of their disability to will their own justification and salvation. What God accounts wisdom, that when man looks on it by the eye of reason, he accounts it nothing but folly and madness. How can a man be desirous of Christ, who apprehends that the things of Christ are nothing but foolishness? A profane Pope sporting himself, and rejoicing in the great riches which he had gotten by professing the Gospel in a carnal way, uttered these words, "what great riches have we gotten to ourselves by this fable of Jesus Christ." So men that are not enlightened by the Spirit of truth to behold the word of truth, do conceive the truths which men preach concerning Christ as mere fancies, fables, madness and that foolishness, and that there is no truth at all in that which is spoken in the word of truth.

I will instance but in one or two particulars to show you how carnal reason opposes grace. Grace tells us that God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens. Rom.9:18. Consider how carnal reason opposes this truth of God; suppose, saith carnal reason, that a king would hate some of his subjects, because he would hate them, and love others, because he would love them, and should give no other reason of his actions, but his own will. Were not such a king more fit to live among beasts than to reign over men. And

shall we indeed then think that the wise God doth love and elect some because he will love them, and hate and reprobate others, because he will hate them. Thus carnal men measuring the actions of God by the rule of their own reason see nothing but folly and madness in that, by which God discovers his greatest wisdom to those that are enlightened to behold the riches of his grace.

Secondly, God in Christ doth present himself as having a sufficiency of grace for the salvation of the greatest of sinners without works, but how doth carnal reason strongly and vigorously fight against God's goodness, concluding that if there were any truth in this doctrine, that the law and good works would presently be destroyed. A natural man cannot believe that God is so gracious as Gospel ministers would persuade the world that he is. As the unbelieving lord, when the prophet told him of the great plenty in Samaria, said, "if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be," II Kings 7:2, so a natural man, when Christ is proclaimed to sinners without any works, {unless God gives grace to believe,} he is ready to say, if the windows of heaven were opened, and all the grace and mercy in heaven should come down upon us, if God should let out all the bowels of his pity and compassion to poor sinners, it cannot be so as you say, and speak concerning free grace to sinners and ungodly ones. So that if a natural man should do nothing but hear sermons, and although Angels or Christ himself should come down from heaven to preach unto him, he would be as able of himself to

keep the whole Law for Justification, as to believe truly and savingly in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But some will say, that if it be thus that a man may as easily in his own strength keep the Law as believe the Gospel, why does not God then rather enable us to keep the Law that we may be saved, then bid us to believe the Gospel?

To this I answer, that God saves us {that is, imparts salvation knowledge unto our enfeebled minds, to the end that we might be brought to a saving perception of his grace in Christ} by enabling us to believe the Gospel, and not by enabling us to keep the Law for justification, because God will have the glory of his grace in our salvation. God will not save us in a way of working, but in a way of believing, that all the glory may be given unto him. The Apostle gives us as the reason, why it is by faith and not by works "lest any man should boast." Eph.2:9. By which argument he proves that the father of the faithful was not justified by works. Rm.4:2. If Abraham were justified by works {saith he} he hath whereof to glory, as we may observe it in some people, who are built upon legal principles like the Pharisee, boasting, "that they are not as other men," Luke 18:11, as though their good works had made the difference between them and others. This frame of spirit doth rob God of the glory of his grace, who will not that any flesh should glory in his presence; but that he that glorieth should glory in the Lord. I Cor.1:29. And therefore we are saved by grace through faith in the Word made flesh, and not by the works of the Law.

But secondly, some will object, why does God take these pains with men in the ministry of the word, if they are able to do no more to their own conversion, than a dead man to his own resurrection?

To this objection I have already given an answer, yet give me leave to add this to what hath been already spoken for the fuller satisfaction of those that are weak. Though we are able to do nothing of ourselves, yet God entreats, exhorts and beseeches us to be reconciled to him in Jesus Christ, because in exhorting, entreating and beseeching us to believe, he puts forth his power and his own strength to enable us to do so. Whilst Paul exhorted the jailer to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ that he might be saved, God enabled the jailer to believe. Life and power is conveyed to the soul in Gospel Commands and Exhortations. When Christ raised the son of the widow of Nain to life, Luke 7:14, he speaks to him, "young man I say to thee, arise." No man who hath not lost his reason, will conclude from hence, that it was by the power of the young man that was dead, by which he was raised from the dead, but by the power of the Lord Jesus, who did bid him arise. So, though God speak in the ministry of the Gospel to those that are dead in sins and trespasses, and bids them to arise from the dead that he may give them light, yet we cannot conclude from thence, that it is by the power of men by which they do believe, but it is by the power of the Spirit conveyed in the preaching of the word. Christ commanded Lazarus to come forth, but he came not

forth in his own strength, but in the power and strength of him that commanded him out of the grave. So we command men to come forth out of the grave of sin, but they come not forth in their own strength, but in the power and strength of that Spirit that commands them from the grave of sin to the land of the living. While Ezekiel prophesied over the dead bones, Ezek.37:10, so while the prophets of the Lord do preach unto their sinful impotent hearers, who are like the prophet's dry bones, the breath of heaven, the Spirit of the Most High in the ministry of the Gospel enters in unto them, and not by working, but by believing they are made new creatures, and see the kingdom of God.

In the next place, you see faith is not of yourselves, it is not in anything in man, or in man's wisdom that man is enabled to believe what is reported concerning God's grace in Jesus Christ. Therefore this may convince us that the faith which is of ourselves is a false faith, and not the true faith of the saints. The good fruit of faith cannot grow out of a wicked heart, and the heart of a man naturally is wickedness, as every imagination of the thought of his heart is vanity, and only evil continually. Gen.6:5; Psal.94:11. When God looks down from heaven upon the children of the first Adam, he sees that there are not any that do understand and seek God. "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Psal.14:2-3. And the Lord Jesus died for us when we were enemies unto him, and without strength to do anything for our own salvation.

Rom.5:6. That faith therefore which is wrought by the strength of nature is not that true faith of the Gospel which is only wrought by the Spirit of the Gospel. According to that of the Apostle, where he affirms, that the saints are justified by the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. I Cor.6:11. Therefore if thy faith be a working or persuasion of thine own spirit; if it be framed and hammered by thyself upon the anvil of thine own spirit, it is a counterfeit persuasion, and will not be able to advantage thee in the great day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we read in the prophet Jeremiah of the visions of a man's own heart, and the visions of God; so there is a twofold faith, there is the faith or persuasion of a man's own heart, and a persuasion of the Spirit of God. And as the visions of a man's own heart are false dreams, lies and deceits, and art justly reprimanded by the prophet, Jer.23:26, so the persuasion of a man's own heart, they are false dreams and lying persuasions, we are not to give any credit to them. As we should not believe a common liar, so we are not to believe the persuasions of our own hearts.

The same Prophet in the 28th verse compares lying prophets to chaff, and the prophecies of truth to wheat, what {saith he} is the chaff to the wheat. So true faith is like unto wheat, and the faith of ourselves is like unto chaff. As the wind drives away the chaff, Psal.1:4, so the blast of God's wrath, and the winds of temptation will blow away the chaff of a false faith, whilst true faith shall be preserved by

God, and we through it shall be preserved unto the day of redemption.

Wherefore brethren, we are to try whether or not we do truly believe. "Examine yourselves," II Cor.13:5, {saith the Apostle,} whether ye be in the faith." As we have a touchstone to try gold, so God hath left a spiritual touchstone by which true faith may be tried. As there are counterfeit pieces of gold which can be hardly distinguished from true gold, until they are brought to the touchstone, so there is a counterfeit faith, which can hardly be distinguished from true faith, until it be brought unto the spiritual touchstone. Therefore it will be the wisdom of every one of you to try what faith you have. It is not enough to be persuaded that you shall be saved, and that Christ is yours, and that your names are written in the book of life. Alas, there are false persuasions as well as true. There are multitudes of Libertines, who turn the grace of God into wantonness, "whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things," Phil.3:19, and yet have strong persuasions that they are in the grace and favour of God. There are Pharisees who are persuaded that they are in the love of God. The Pharisee had an assurance, and gave God thanks for it too. "God I thank thee that I'm not as other men are," Lk.18:11, and yet he was but a hypocrite all the while, deluded with the proud conceits of his own righteousness. The unbelieving Jews professed with a great deal of boldness and confidence that God was their Father. "We have one Father, even God," John 8:41, and yet our Saviour

tells them plainly, that though they had these strong persuasions that God was their Father, yet in truth the devil was their father. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." John 8:44.

A man may be persuaded that Christ will save him, and go to hell and be damned with that persuasion. We see by experience that many apostates, who have made a profession of Christ, and have had strong persuasions of the love of God, have fallen from the Gospel to profaneness, Arminianism and diabolical Antinomianism.

Our blessed Emmanuel doth plainly prove this truth unto us, by acquainting us with some, who, when they shall be brought before his judgment seat shall be confident of their interest in him, whom nevertheless he will not own to be his. "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works." Matt.7:21-22. Yet you see what Christ will profess unto them, "I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity." As if he had said, it is true, you had a strong persuasion that you should be heirs in my kingdom; it is true, you thought that you should be saved if any in the world were saved, but I tell you for all that, "depart from me, I know you not, depart ye workers of iniquity." Wherefore it concerns all men to know whether their faith to be a right faith.

Selfish faith is no right faith, if it arise from no higher fountain than our own natural reasons, wisdoms and understandings; our faith is from ourselves, and we carry it to hell with us, and find as good faith there in the devils, as this is.

Though this which I have spoken concerning the trial of faith, doth chiefly concern such who are deceived with a false faith of their own making; yet it will be very advantageous for the true Saints likewise to try their faith. Wherefore, before I press this further upon such who are under a spirit of delusion, I shall speak a word unto the saints for this purpose. Consider that that man who hath true faith, may likewise have false faith. There may be a great deal of dead faith in him, who hath a living faith. Where there is true gold, there may be much dross; and in that professor in whom there is the golden faith of the Gospel, there may be a great deal of dross faith, which is nothing worth. A Christian has two contrary natures in him. He hath flesh as well as spirit; and as there are persuasions in him flowing from the spirit, so there may be persuasions flowing from the flesh. Saints sometimes, when they are in a lukewarm and backsliding condition, are apt to please and content themselves with the workings and persuasions of their own spirits; and they may find that much of their joy and comfort doth not proceed from true faith wrought by the operation of God, but from the lying, cheating, counterfeit working and operation of their own spirits. Will you know one principle ground and reason why some true saints are so unfruitful, dead-hearted, formal

and lukewarm in the profession of the Gospel? It is because the devil cheats them with the workings and persuasions of their own spirits.

When God persuades the heart of his loved ones, our hearts are inflamed with an holy love to God, and are willing to do or suffer for the glory of Christ, but when we content ourselves with the workings of our own spirits, there is idleness, sloth, neglect of Christian duties, coldness, formality and lukewarmness; so that there is little difference between us and others. Again it concerns you all to try your persuasions, for if any of you cozen and cheat yourselves with the persuasions of your own spirits, the time will come that you, that kindle these sparks, and walk in the light of your own fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled, shall receive from the hand of the Lord, a lying down in sorrow. Isa.50:11.

When you expect heaven, you will be cast down to hell; when you shall be confident that Christ is yours, and shall be ready to plead the goodness of your cause in the face of the Lord, you shall find that you were deceived by the false persuasions and workings of your own human spirits. A faith of yourselves, by which ye have been persuaded of those things, which you have received by the relation of things to the ear, will not save you; but that faith which is wrought by the Spirit, giving an heavenly revelation of Christ to the heart. Therefore try whether your faith be from your own human spirits and natural understandings, or whether it proceed from the power and spirit of the Most High

God Almighty working in you for the salvation of your souls.

But you will say, how shall we be resolved in our own spirits that our faith hath not proceeded from our own spirits, but that it is a work of God in us?

When God works faith, he gives an evident light by which we see the truth of our faith; and thus the faithful are in the first place assured of salvation in believing. The just doth live by faith, Heb.10:38, and hath his life and righteousness by faith. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." II Cor.5:17. The special presence of Christ in the soul doth make a man a new creature, and by faith the new creation in us is discovered unto us, and therefore Christ is said to be formed in us by faith. Gal.4:19. So many as receive him by faith, are born not of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, and have power to be the sons of God, John 1:12, by faith we are the children of God, Gal.3:26, and know that we are the children of God, I Jn.5:19, he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself, I Jn.5:10, by which words it appears how true faith differs from a wavering opinion. It is the office of faith to bear witness to the certainty of our salvation, and to give in a testimony of our happiness by Christ Jesus. The blood of Christ doth purge our conscience from dead works. Heb.9:14. By faith we drink this blood of the Son of God, John 6:53, and look upon him who is invisible to the eye of reason, by this eye of faith which is the evidence of things not seen. Heb.11:1. Christ is set forth as a propitiation and object of our

justification by the Father. Rom.3:25. And by faith we look upon him who is set forth unto us to be looked upon. It is life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, John 17:3, and true faith is nothing else but the true knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "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," John 3:36, in which words our Saviour doth seem to put a difference between a believer and an unbeliever. The unbelieving man seeth not eternal life, but the believing man seeth eternal life, and hath eternal life abiding in him, by which he knoweth that he is freed from the death of sin, and from the temporal and eternal death for sin, and shall not come into condemnation. For when a man truly believes, heaven is opened unto him, and he hath a spiritual discovery of Christ made unto his soul. But it is not so with a man, who hath a persuasion formed in himself by himself. As John said, "that which we have seen, we have delivered unto you," so every spiritual man may say that he hath seen Jesus Christ. With Stephen by faith we see God and his Son Christ standing at his right hand. Christ is so perfectly presented to the eye of faith, that the believer doth by faith look upon a crucified Christ, as though he were present before him. The Apostle to prove the effectual calling and justification of the Thessalonians doth affirm that the Gospel came unto them in much assurance. I Thes.1:5. Inquire now in thy own spirit, whether thy faith is such a faith as

this, which the Scripture doth call the unfeigned faith of the elect, and if it be such a faith, it is not of thyself, but it is the gift of God.

The kingdom of God being not in word, but in power, thou that dost truly believe hast found the word of salvation to come unto thee with a mighty power. This was an evidence to Paul of the truth of the conversion of the Thessalonians, "for our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." I Thes.1:5.

Thou that has trusted to a persuasion of the grace and favour of God to thee in Christ, wrought in thee by thy own spirit, thou hast had no heavenly power in this persuasion; but he that hath faith wrought by the Spirit of God, there is a mighty power of God that comes down upon him when he is enabled to believe. Thou that hast a false faith apprehends it an easy thing to believe, because thou didst never feel a power from above coming upon thee to enable thee you to believe, whereas the true believer knows that it is a difficult thing to believe. The work of faith is the work of omnipotency, according to the words of our Savior, "this is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." John 6:29. Therefore if upon examination you do find that you are only persuaded concerning the mysteries of Christ, and the grace of God as you are persuaded of natural things in a natural way, and have not felt the power of heaven in enabling you to believe, your faith is a false faith; for where there is true faith, a man feels the power of God enabling

him to believe the testimony that God gives of his Son Jesus Christ. I will give you a plain place to confirm this, Eph.1:19-20, where the Apostle Paul is praying for them that they might see the mighty power, by which they were enabled to believe, doth make use of many very emphatical expressions, that you may know saith he what is, "the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." There he speaks not only of a power, but the greatness of power, and not only the greatness of power, but the supereminent greatness of his power; and as though he had not spoken enough to set out the almightiness of the power by which we are enabled to believe, he doth inform us that such an operation of the power of the virtue of God, {for so the words may be translated,} by which Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, is put forth for the enabling for us to believe. Thou that hast not this power in thy soul, thy persuasion is wrought in thy spirit, not by the spirit of grace and truth, but it flows from thy own natural and carnal spirit, and it is a persuasion that will never do thee good, it will never bring thee true comfort, for a man that hath not a better persuasion than this, shall never see the face of the Lord with joyfulness.

That faith which is not of ourselves, doth carry us out of ourselves. A faithful man hath his life not in himself, but in Jesus Christ. He liveth not by the

principle of the first, but the second Adam. He hath his spiritual being in the Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ. He is joined to the Lord, and is one spirit. I Cor.6:17. He sees the Father in the Son, and the Son in him, and the Father in him through his Son, according to the promise of our Saviour, "at that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." John 14:20. Paul speaking of the spiritual Thessalonians, affirms that they are in the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. I Thes.1:1. By faith we enjoy the glory of union. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." John 17:22. Though we have not the glory of equality, yet we have the glory of likeness. Though we are not united to the Father so immediately as Christ is, by himself, and in himself; yet we are united to him by the means and mediation of Christ Jesus. This is the honour which is given to those who trust by a lively faith in the name of the Son of God.

Faith which is not of ourselves, doth carry us beyond the world. A believer looking upon Christ overcoming the world for him, doth through faith overcome the world by him. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." I Jn.5:4. Therefore the saints are said to be clothed with the sun, and to have the moon under their feet, Rev.12:1, because being through faith clothed with the righteousness of Christ who is called the Sun of righteousness, Mal.4:2, they trample upon all

sublunary things as worth nothing in comparison of Jesus Christ.

He that truly believes in Christ, is anointed with the Spirit of Christ, and assured of his abiding forever in Christ. "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." I Jn.2:27. God should lose his earnest if it were possible for us to miscarry to the losing of our souls after we have this earnest from him, which binds him to bring us to heaven and happiness. This Spirit persuades us that we are the sons of God, and that God will lose none of his sons. He that hath this Spirit, knows that no man that hath the Spirit can speak what he feels from the work of the Spirit of adoption in his own heart. He admires grace when he looks on God reconciled in Christ to sinners, and looks on himself reconciled to God in believing; and when he perceives the Spirit of God witnessing with his spirit that he is a child of God, he can go boldly to the throne of grace, knowing Christ as his elder brother, and God his Father in him.

Self-deceiving hypocrite, dost thou begin to be convinced that thy faith is not the true faith of the Gospel, by that which hath been spoken concerning this faith which is not of ourselves, but the gift of God?

As I told you even now, there is never true faith, but true love follows it. Love is an indispensable companion to faith. Therefore such as

have faith, and never have love accompanying of it, may be confident that their persuasion concerning the grace and goodness of God and Christ is but a carnal, and not a spiritual persuasion. True faith worketh by love, therefore if my work is not by love, it is a false faith, and this is an undeniable argument.

Brethren, mistake me not in this point unto which I am now speaking, misapprehending my meaning, as I bid you to love God, and the brethren, that you may believe, and be justified; no, but I tell you now that where true, lively, and justifying faith is, there love will follow. When we do in the light of the Spirit apprehend God's love unto us, and the love of Christ in giving himself for us, we cannot but love God, and love Christ who hath loved us, and given himself for us. So that where there is no true love, there is no true faith. If it be truth, that where fire is, there will be heat, it will necessarily follow, that where there is no heat, there is no fire; so if where true faith is, love will follow, it will necessarily follow, that where true love doth not follow, there true faith did not precede. "We love him, because he first loved us." I Jn.4:19.

He that loves not God hath not apprehended God's love unto him. As far as thou believest in a spiritual way, the love of God shall constrain thee to love God. Love is answerable to the measure of our faith or knowledge. He that hath Paul's faith shall have his love. We say that love is the lodestone of love; so God's love doth draw forth our hearts in love to God. God in Christ, when he is presented unto us for our justification, doth appear to us as such a

lovely object that we cannot but love him. The Greek proverb is, that loving is wrought by seeing, so when by faith we see the love of God in Christ Jesus, we cannot but love God. And therefore John saith, "he that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." I Jn.4:8. Wherefore that faith, by which thou art persuaded of the love of God to thy soul, which carries thee not back again in love to God, I dare speak it in the presence of the Lord, that that persuasion is not wrought by the Spirit of grace, but is the work of thine own carnal and natural heart. "If any man," saith the Apostle, "love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." I Cor.16:22. Let him not be accounted as one in the list of the faithful. Let him be excommunicated, look not upon him as a true believer. Peter though he had denied Christ not long before, yet he was confident that he loved that Christ whom he had denied, when Christ asked him, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these," he saith unto him, "yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." John 21:15. When Christ the second and third time proposed the same question unto him, he remained still confident of his love, and appeals to Christ the searcher of all hearts, as to one who knew the truth of his love, for he saith unto him, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." I shall but add one thing more, because I shall, {God willing,} have an opportunity to enlarge myself in this point, when I shall prove unto you affirmatively, that true faith is the gift of God.

Lastly, where the grace of the Father in the blood of his Son is apprehended for the covering of sin, there is a forsaking of sin. When God doth discover this, that he will heal backsliding, love freely, and turn away his anger, "Ephraim shall say, what have I to do any more with idols?" Hos.14:8. When God pardons sin by his grace, he will subdue sin by his grace. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Mic.7:18-19. That man who hath true faith wrought in his heart, he shall feel the power of grace apprehended for his justification, engaging his spirit to deny ungodliness, according to that of the Apostle, "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.2:11-12. First, soberly, in reference to ourselves; justly, in relation towards men; piously or religiously in reference to God. Grace will not suffer us to live gracelessly, because we are justified by grace, but will thoroughly acquaint us with our duty towards God, towards men, and towards ourselves. If that grace which thou dost profess, teach thee not to deny ungodliness, but live in a graceless way, dishonoring Christ, discrediting the Gospel by thy wicked,

scandalous and evil life, thou dost not indeed and in truth apprehend the true Gospel.

If God discovers himself to Abraham as the Almighty God, he will command him to walk before him, and be upright. "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect," Gen.17:1, and "sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Rom.6:14. Christ will present himself unto us as the pattern for sanctification, if he reveal himself as the object of our justification. Every man who hath a sure and lively hope of salvation by Jesus Christ, "purifieth himself, even as he is pure." I Jn.3:3. He that truly expects happiness hereafter, studies purity here. True Saints do desire, not only to know, but to do the will of God. "Teach me to do thy will, {saith the man after God's own heart,} for thou art my God, thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness." Psal.143:10. The spirit of the Gospel will not lead us into the land of profaneness, but into the land of uprightness. God's goodness to us will make us in love with holiness. "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them, and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness

and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it." Jer.33:8-9. The golden chain of mercy, let down from heaven to draw us up unto God, doth bind us and oblige us to the service and obedience of the Lord.

If thou art an old professor of the Gospel and the Doctrine of Grace, and dost live gracelessly, unacquainted with the sanctifying work of the Spirit, and yet hast a strong persuasion that God is thy Father, and Christ thy Saviour, thy persuasion is not worth one farthing, for it will do thee no good. Where there is no desire of purity, there is no work of true faith, for when thou hast a true and a lively faith, and thou seest God gracious, loving and merciful, believe it, thy spirit will be carried forth in desires to be made like unto Christ in holiness. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." II Cor.3:18. If thou by the lively operation of the Spirit hast seen the glory, grace, beauty and holiness in Christ for thy justification, thy spirit will be so enamored with the beauty of holiness and perfection in Christ, that thou wilt desire to see the image, and picture of holiness and perfection which is in Christ, to be drawn forth upon thine own heart and spirit. There may be some that may think that this is strange doctrine which I have delivered, to wit, that a man may have strong persuasions concerning his interest in God and Christ, and boast much of it, and yet be but a hypocrite and reprobate all the while. I shall therefore add one place of Scripture to those

which I've delivered for the proof of this, and so for the present I shall conclude. You shall find it in Micah 3:11, "the heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money; yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, is not the LORD among us, none evil can come upon us." See here a base, vicious and covetous people that sell justice and the word of God, and yet are confident that they belong to the Lord. They would not preach without money in their hand, like many of our priests, no penny, no paternoster; no money in hand, no sermon, no preaching, that will not open their mouths further than it is opened with a key of gold or silver, yet they profess they are the people of God, and make a great show of religion, and blind the eyes, a poor ignorant people that conclude they are the only zealous holy men in the world, though their covetousness, baseness and vileness and running after living and great preferments, may appear evidently to children. You see by this that people may lean upon the Lord, desire to be accounted his people, and be confident that he is their Father, and yet they have no true faith, but may be self-imposters, deceiving themselves with the persuasions of their own spirits, whereas true faith is only from God, bestowed upon us by him as a free gift, by which the Lord works in our hearts by his grace through Christ. Amen.

SERMON V

FAITH IS THE GIFT OF GOD.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph.2:8-9.

There is nothing which doth lay the creature lower in the presence of God than a clear apprehension of the Creators savor and goodness in giving all things freely to the creature. The Apostle to beat down the pride of man in spiritual gifts, doth make use of this query, "for who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" I Cor.4:7. As if he had said, if thou dost but seriously consider, that thou enjoyest no spiritual gift, but that which hath been freely given unto thee, thou wilt not see any cause why thou shouldest be proud of it. And in these words, for the humbling and abasing of man, and for the exalting of God's grace in Christ Jesus, he doth set down this in the last place, that true faith is the gift of God.

I shall illustrate this two manner of ways. First, I will show you that it is the gift of God's power, for this the Apostle drives at here, when he proposes faith as the gift of God, to what he had said before, maintaining that it was not of ourselves. Man being not able to believe of himself, it will necessarily follow, that it is only the power of Almighty God

which is able to enable a man truly to believe in his grace through Christ.

In the second place, I shall show you, that faith is the gift of God's grace. As God alone by his Almighty power is able to enable a man to believe, so God alone can give us this excellent and precious gift of faith, by which we are made partakers of the divine nature, and carried to Heaven, to behold the glory of our God in the face of Jesus Christ.

First, faith is the gift of the power of God, and therefore in Isaiah 53:1, we read of the arm of God, which is to be put forth, for the enabling of men to believe the Gospel. "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" The strength of a man doth usually lie in his arm, wherefore God to show that few do believe, doth prove it by this, because his arm or strength is revealed to few. "That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" John 12:38. The arm, power and strength of God must be put forth and revealed to men, or else men will never be able indeed, and in truth to believe what God hath related, and reported concerning his glorious grace in Jesus Christ. This will appear by some few considerations.

First. It is the prerogative of God's powerful will to show mercy, by giving faith for salvation to whom he will, and therefore it is not in the power of sinful man, effectually to will his own salvation. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have

mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." Rom.9:18. "Of his own will begat he us." James 1:18. God is the God of salvation, and therefore the creature cannot be a saviour to himself. "Save me," saith the Psalmist, "for thy mercy sake." Psal.31:16. Why should the Psalmist have prayed unto God, to save him, if he had been able to save himself, by working faith in his own heart. We are all sinners, saved by obtaining a psalm of mercy; and it is God that grants us a psalm of mercy for the saving of our lives, and giveth us learning, by which we are enabled to read it. The will of God is the supreme ruler, and governor in all things; and therefore in this, for the giving of faith unto whom he pleaseth for salvation. Man lies under unbelief many years, when God comes and speaks the Word to command light to shine, then immediately we are enlightened. He created light by the Word of his power, and made the heavens; so by the same omnipotent Word, and Power of his, he is pleased to create, and set up new light in the understandings of those whom he intends to save, giving to them the knowledge of the sweetness of his grace and glory in the countenance of Jesus Christ.

Secondly. This is the gift of his irresistible power, for his will and power cannot be resistant. If there were not such an irresistible power in grace, no man could ever be made a partaker of grace; for the strength of the natural man doth fight against grace, and taketh up arms against Jesus Christ; so that if God did not work irresistibly, there would never be wrought the work of grace in the heart of

any man. If God shall persuade Japheth, he shall dwell in the tents of Shem. Gen.9:27. "I will work," saith God, "and who shall let it." Isa.43:13. That is, none shall hinder it. All the devils in hell cannot hinder the work of faith, when God intends to work it. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts 13:48. All Christ's sheep shall hear his voice, Jn.10:16; and "the gathering of the people" shall be on to Shiloh. Gen.49:10. God hath determined the thing to be done, before it is done. "Thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth." Isa.25:1. He would be unfaithful, if his determinations should not come to pass. The Apostle saith that the saints, "have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Eph.1:11. And if we consider the eternal counsel and determination for giving faith to some particular person, we shall find, that it is impossible, that these men should not believe, in that moment in which God hath appointed to work faith in their heart, and therefore the Apostle doth acquaint us with the immutability of this counsel. Heb.6:17. And James saith, that with God there is no "variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17. Wherefore seeing God doth dispense the gifts of his grace unto his people, according to his unalterable decrees, and unchangeable counsels, it will be evident, that he worketh upon men irresistibly. God should err in his prescience or fore-knowledge of things, if you should foresee and determine that a man should believe,

and that man at the same time should remain in unbelief. As an astrologer would be deceived, if he should foresee and foretell, that a thing should come to pass, and the thing foretold should not come to pass. It must be granted therefore that God's decrees are certain, irrevocable, and immutable, and that God working according to these decrees, doth work irresistibly, and therefore faith is his gift, because it proceedeth from his irresistible power according to that of our Apostle, "it is the gift of God."

Thirdly. Darkness cannot create light. Faith is a spiritual light, and therefore it cannot come from our darkness, but must have its birth and beginning from some heavenly light; and God is that powerful light, from whom faith is beamed into our hearts. Five things are required to seeing. 1. A visible object. 2. The organ of sight. 3. A light to discover this object. 4. A medium through which this object is to be seen. 5. That the organ be in a living and waking creature. And these things are likewise requisite to seeing a thing spiritually by faith, which all are from the power of God. 1. It is God doth present unto us the spiritual object, which is to be looked upon for salvation. 2. It is God that gives us spiritual organs or eyes. 3. Spiritual light to discover spiritual things. 4. A medium, Jesus Christ, through whom we look upon him. 5. A spiritual life and being. It is a thing proper and peculiar to the Lord to create a thing out of nothing, and it is his prerogative and power in believing, to make us a new creatures. By

which it will appear, that true faith cannot be of ourselves, but it is the gift of God.

Fourthly. That which establishes saints in the faith, that power doth at the first, work faith in them, but it is the Lord alone by his power which doth establish the Saints. "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began." Rom.16:25. The Apostle doth make it a privilege proper to the power of God to establish saints in the faith, and therefore it is proper to his power to bring us to the faith.

Fifthly. The promises of God in giving Christ to open the blind eyes, Isa.42:6-7; his engagements to teach us to know him, according to that of the prophet, "all thy children shall be taught of God." His covenant in Christ that we shall know him, Heb.8:11, doth sufficiently demonstrate, that nothing below the omnipotent power of God is sufficient for the enabling of us to rest upon his own grace for salvation. I need not spend many words in proving this, because the argument laid down to prove the negative part of the text, will teach the affirmative. For if not of ourselves, it will unquestionably follow, that it is of God that we are enabled to believe.

In the next place I shall prove, that as it is the work of his power, so it is the work of his own free grace. When the Lord enables a man to believe, he puts forth not only the power of his omnipotency, but the power of his grace; he does not look upon

anything in the creature to move him to give faith to the creature, but he looks upon his own grace, and he sees no other motive or argument to move him to give faith to men, but those that lie in the bosom of his own grace from the days of eternity.

I shall prove this first by Scripture, and then by some considerations. First, you have it proved by Scripture. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Phil.1:29. Hence I gather, that it is the gift of God's grace to enable a man to believe, as it is the free gift of God's grace to call forth a man to suffer for him. So in II Timothy 2:25, the Apostle bids Timothy with meekness of spirit to endeavor to recover those that opposed the doctrine and truth which he held forth and preached, "if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." You see then that God must give repentance, or changedness of mind, by which he is enabled to believe truth to the glory of God. Now as I have cleared it by Scripture, so I shall clear it by some considerations.

The first shall be drawn from the promises of God. The promises as they do prove, that man cannot do anything by his own power, but that all is done for us by the power of God, so they prove that all is done for our spiritual good by grace. For the promises of the New Covenant do not only acquaint us with the power, but the grace of God.

If Adam had been preserved in his obedience, and never had fallen, he had been preserved by the power of God, but not by the grace of God, as grace

is strictly taken in the Covenant of Grace, so that as we have proved, that faith is not of ourselves, but from the power of God by leading you to the promises; so, now we shall prove, that we are saved by grace through faith, by bringing you back again to look upon promises, as they are the streams and flowings forth of God's grace unto us. What need God promise to do that which we are able to do of ourselves? Therefore, seeing that we have the promise of grace for it, we may conclude that it is by grace, and not by any power in ourselves. We have a promise for faith, "in him {speaking of Christ} shall the Gentiles trust." Rom.15:12. Likewise in Jeremiah 24:7, we have a promise of God, that he will give us the knowledge of himself, "and I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." Here God hath promised to give us a heart that we shall know him.

Now seeing that God hath promised to give us a heart to know him; therefore I conclude that we are not able to give such a heart to ourselves. God hath promised to circumcise our hearts, to take away the foreskin of our spirits, therefore we are not able to circumcise ourselves. God hath promised to turn us, therefore we are not able to turn ourselves. "Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old." Lam.5:21. Intimating thus much, that we cannot come towards him until he turn the face and countenance of his favour towards us, answering to that in Jeremiah

31:18, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God." And therefore God doth usually mix promises with exhortations, that man should not conclude from God's exhortations unto him, that there is a sufficient power in him to do what he is exhorted to do, as in Hosea 14:2, where the prophet had exhorted Israel to return unto the Lord, he presently adds, verse 4, "I will heal their backsliding." All the prophets do subscribe to this truth that salvation is of the Lord by promise, Jonah 2:9, that the Lord will teach us his ways, and that we will walk in his paths. Micah 4:2. "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD." Zep.3:12. God will fill his spiritual house or temple with glory. "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts, and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts." Hag.2:9. God will be the glory in the midst of his spiritual Israel, Zech.2:11, and will remove the iniquity of the land in one day. Zech.3:9. All these promises are plain demonstrations of God's powerful grace, and man's utter weakness.

Secondly, we have not only the bare promises, but the Covenant of Grace, and this Covenant confirmed and bound by an oath. "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." Mic.7:20. Therefore it is not

by any power or work in ourselves. If it be the fruit of the Covenant of Grace, and God hath covenanted in his grace to do it for us, then certainly we are not able to do it ourselves. But God hath covenanted to do it for us, he hath covenanted to write his law in our hearts. The Law of faith, as the Apostle calls it, Rom.3:27, therefore we are not able to work faith in our spirits. Why should God tie himself in a covenant, and bind this covenant with an oath to do this for us, if we were able to do it ourselves? Why should God do anything for his own namesake, if the creature can do enough to make itself happy by his own strength. In vain is a covenant of grace promulgated for man's salvation, and for the discovery of this salvation, if man can find out the way of salvation by his own wisdom. Why must Christ guide our feet into the ways of peace, Lk.1:79, if of ourselves we can find out these ways of life and peace? God hath made it his work, and therefore it is not our work wrought by our own strength. God hath promised faith as a gift freely to be disposed upon undeserving man, therefore man by the improvement of his parts and labor cannot purchase it as the reward of his endeavors.

Thirdly, God works faith in time according to his eternal purpose and decree before time. But the eternal purpose of God is the purpose of his grace; therefore God works faith according to his purpose of grace. The first of these propositions has been already proved, the second is evident from II Timothy 1:9, "who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but

according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." So that it is evident that faith flows from eternal grace, and therefore it is not of ourselves, but it is the gift of God.

Fourthly, there is nothing that can merit or deserve faith in man, before faith is wrought, and therefore it is given as a free gift. This is plain by Romans 9:16, "so then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." There may be as much in one that shall be damned, as in him that shall be saved before his conversion. Peter did no more to merit or deserve his first faith, than Judas did. God's grace is his rule by which he works in giving faith unto any man. And therefore faith is the gift of God.

Fifthly, God's design in justifying a sinner, as hath been formally proved, is the magnifying of his own free love unto the creature in Christ; and therefore he doth acquaint us, that faith is the free gift of his grace, that so he may divest the creature of glorying in himself or in anything from himself. If the Father should justify us by grace through faith, and we should apprehend that our faith were of ourselves, there should be some glorying in ourselves. And therefore he doth justify by grace, through faith, as a fruit, effect and free gift of his own grace. So proud we are naturally, that though we were convinced that we were saved by grace, as a gift given unto us, {as alms unto a beggar,} yet we would be proud, if we knew that of ourselves we had a hand to receive it, and therefore God doth not

only in his grace give us the gift of eternal life, but the hand by which we receive it. Thus we are saved by grace through faith, which is the gift of God.

Sixthly, the Apostle saith, "that no man can say that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Spirit," I Cor.12:3, and by faith we confess that Jesus is the Christ, and therefore it doth plainly follow, that it is from the Holy Spirit of grace. The Spirit does set forth, "that all things are freely given us of God," I Cor.2:12, and therefore faith is freely given us of God. If everything, then faith, for "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Jas.1:17. And therefore we must grant that faith is given unto us of God, or else deny it to be a good and perfect gift.

Objection. But some may say, if faith be a gift, why doth our Saviour bid us to buy gold tried in the fire that we may be clothed, that the shame of our nakedness may not appear? Rev.3:18.

Answer. This word buying if taken properly, signifies the purchasing of something, by some considerable price which is given for it. There can be no buying of a thing without some price, and in this sense we cannot buy faith or Christ, having no considerable price to pay for Christ, before we enjoy Christ.

Secondly, buying may be taken improperly, "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," Isa.55:1, and if faith is to be bought, it must be thus bought by us, as we have no money or price to part with for faith. And what is thus bought by us, is freely given unto us; so that this objection is too weak to weaken the truth which hath already been delivered. It stands still unshaken and immovable upon its own basis, faith is the gift of God.

Having proved it sufficiently by these considerations, that faith is a gift of God, I shall draw some useful conclusions from them, and put an end to my discourse.

First, this overthrows the meritoriousness of the righteousness of our own works, qualifications or preparations before faith for the deserving anything at the hand of God to engage him to give us faith. What we receive as a free gift cannot be given us in consideration of our merits or deservings.

I shall but touch upon this, because I have formally taken pains to beat down the anti-Christian monster of free will, and merit of works, which like two twins in the same womb do live and die in the same moment. It is the Lord Jesus which must seek us, before ever we can find him; and we cannot as we ought desire faith, until faith be freely bestowed upon us. God's free grace doth prevent man's free will, and if God leave us to ourselves, and to our own labors, endeavors, actings, duties and performances, and does not come in by the power of his grace upon us, we shall never be able truly, and spiritually to understand anything of free grace. Away then with the foolish conceit of those who cry

up the strength of man's will, and his precedent qualifications of righteousness and holiness, for the making of some men worthy to close with Christ in a promise of free grace, rather than great sinners.

Secondly, this may inform us, that all shall certainly believe, whom God will enable to believe through grace. Acts 18:27. An infinite power is of such strength, that a finite power is not able to resist it, but whatsoever power there is in the creature, by which it may resist the work of God's grace, it is but finite, and the grace whereby we are enabled to believe is infinite; therefore we are not able to resist the infinite power of the grace of God, by which we are enabled to believe. Take the devil, and all the powers of hell, with all that is in the heart of man, all his sins, ignorance, and corruption, conjoining their forces to hinder the work of faith in the spirit of a man, all these together are but finite power, but when the Lord descends, he comes with an infinite power, to enable us to believe. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts 13:48. Therefore I conclude, that we are not able to resist the power of God, when he is determined to give us faith. Faith being the gift of his Almighty power.

But some may here with the Arminians resort to that place where Stephen reprov'd those who essentially put him to death saying, "ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did, so do ye." Acts 7:51. Here {say they} you see that men have

resisted the Holy Spirit, therefore God doth not so work upon men by the power of his grace, that he leaves them altogether unable to resist. To this I answer, that there is a twofold power that God puts forth. An ordinary power in the preaching of his word, when by entreaties, beseeching and promises, and the like, he allures and entices men in the preaching of the word, and knocking at the door of their hearts for entrance. This common work of the Spirit may be resisted, and so all wicked and ungodly men in this sense resist the Spirit of God, and reject the Lord Jesus Christ.

But there is another power of the Spirit, and that is that inward spiritual power, by which God comes on those whom he intends to save; thus he comes, not only in the preaching of the word in the language of man, but in the power of heaven; and though the former work of the Spirit may be resisted, this latter cannot be resisted. Though we may reject the word of God preached in the letter, and some common workings of the Spirit in our own hearts, and not give entertainment to Jesus Christ when he knocks at the door of our hearts in the preaching of the word, yet when he comes down with power to open the heart, as he did Lydia's heart, Acts 16:14, we are not able to prevail against him, for when the Lord intends powerfully to open the door of our spirits, we are not able to keep it locked; for he will freely force us to open the door, and by his Spirit in grace break in upon us, and not suffer us to shut him out of our hearts, and we are bound to bless God that it is so, for unless it were

so, no man in the world should ever be saved, no man in the world should ever receive Christ, unless God did come with an infinite power, and pleasing violence force him to believe.

If it were not thus that God did work this irresistible way in those whom he intends to save, there must of necessity be an uncertainty, whether any man or woman should ever be saved by the Lord Jesus Christ, for if every man and woman in the world had power to resist the grace of Christ, and not to believe it all, then this must follow, that it might be possible after the fall, that never a man or woman in the world should ever be saved by Christ. And this absurdity will follow from it, that God after man's fall, could not be certain that any man should be saved by Christ, and so it would take away the foreknowledge of God, because he could not know, but that every man in the world might resist and reject Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, this may give in some support to some trembling hearers, who are convinced by the spirit of unbelief, and are not able to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thou art ready to despair, when thou apprehends, that it is impossible for thee truly to believe of thyself, but let thy spirit be upheld with this consideration, that God is able to give thee faith, even whilst I am speaking of faith, and showing thee the effectual worker thereof. It may be thou thinkest that thou shall never have joy, comfort, and assurance of salvation, but by believing, and yet thou art not able to believe; but trembling soul,

comfort thyself in this, though thou canst do nothing, God is able to enable thee to do all things. Phil.4:13. As the martyr when some told him that when he came to suffer, he would rather deny his tenants than burn, it is true, said he, I of myself should do so, but God is able to enable me to suffer for Christ's sake. So though thou knowest that thou of thyself canst not believe, know that God is able to enable thee presently to believe. Thou that hath had experience of thy unbelieving heart, and of that mountain of infidelity that lies upon thy spirit, and that thou art able to say, I shall never be able to believe of myself whilst the world stands, know that God is able in this moment to give thee faith.

Fourthly, this may inform us concerning the nature of true faith, by which it may be distinguished from the faith of hypocritical formalists. The hypocrite not being acquainted with his own disability, for the working of faith in his own heart, doth apprehend that he can do the work of God by himself and his own strength, {like the carnal hearers of our Saviour, "what shall we do, that we might work the works of God," John 6:28,} and when he apprehends that he doth believe, then he glories more in his own actings, laborings and endeavors, {by which he conceives that he hath obtained faith,} than in the grace of the Lord Jesus, having no spiritual knowledge of that faith which is wrought by the almightiness of God's powerful and irresistible grace. But if it is otherwise with a true son of Abraham, his faith is of another nature,

having a spiritual and heavenly tincture in it, from that spirit by which it is wrought.

He prizes not his faith of the natural spirit, but the faith of his heavenly spirit. He can set his seal to that truth, of our Saviour, John 6:65, "therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." He is not proud of his faith, because he looking upon it in the glass of God's free grace, doth account rather God's work than his own. According to that of our Saviour, "this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." John 6:29.

Upon which words one of the ancients hath this observation, "he said not, this is your work, but the work of God." Our Saviour speaking to his disciples saith, "unto you {saith he} it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables." Mark 4:11. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is a mystery and parable unto many, until the Lord doth give us the glorious gift of faith, by which we understand these mysteries of God, so that he that truly understands the mysteries of the kingdom, doth look upon his spiritual knowledge as a gift. What is complete and perfect faith, but the gift of God, by which we believe, that all our spiritual good things, and faith itself is freely given unto us by God.

Fifthly, this may convince those of their error, who being convinced of sin, do refuse to turn into the true way of salvation by believing, supposing in the pride and ignorance of their hearts, that this is too short and near a way to justification and

happiness. These will first do good works, get strength against all their corruptions, be made holy and sanctified men, and then they think that they may safely make bold to lay hold of some promise of grace for justification and salvation. It was thus with me, when God did at first begin to awaken my conscience with the dreadful sight of my sins, and course of profaneness, in which I had lived, and some months I went in this way, never in the spirit considering that the object of God's justifying grace was an ungodly man and a sinner, and not knowing that spiritual regeneration is not by the works of the Law, but the doctrine of the Gospel, though I could then in a carnal way {as many blind Protestants now can} have spoken and preached more gloriously with rhetorical words and flourishing expressions of justification by faith, without works, than now I can, or will. But as God, who from all eternity, had singled me out unto salvation by Jesus Christ, was pleased to convince me of my ignorance, and to bring me to rest upon his grace in his Son, as a poor wretched sinner, enabling me to believe that my sins were blotted out for his own namesake's alone, though my sins did testify against me. So these who were in the same condition, in which I then was, if they are in the number of those, whom God has given unto his Son Jesus Christ, shall be convinced, that by faith through Christ we have access to the throne of grace with boldness, and that faith is not given in consideration of any preceding act of holiness or sanctification, but as the free gift of our heavenly Father. "They also that erred in spirit shall come to

understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine." Isa.29:24. Give me leave briefly to lay down some convincing considerations, which may bring to our remembrance those things which we have more fully handled.

First consideration. The word and promises which we do enjoy are free gifts of God's favour. What reason can we give, why we should enjoy the outward means of grace, rather than those in Egyptian darkness, but his own free grace. "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel." Psal.147:19. It is the Lord that brings the external means and word of grace as a gift {more worth than the whole world} unto a people, according to that sweet promise of God, "in that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am the LORD." Ezek.29:21. The great and precious promises by the believing of which, we are made partakers of the divine nature, are freely given unto us. II Pet.1:4.

Second consideration. The power of God doth make the difference between men who do enjoy the outward ordinances. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." II Pet.1:3. If God did put forth that omnipotent power in all, which he doth in some, who hear the Gospel, all as well as some should believe. "So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God

that giveth the increase," I Cor.3:7, upon which words one gives is this observation. As all things which are planted and watered do not spring up, thrive, and prosper, but those whom God doth bless, so all men who are planted in the Church of Christ, and watered by the preaching of the Word, do not truly believe, but only those upon whom God bestows faith. But I've touched upon this before.

Third consideration. God's good grace doth prevent man's good works in his justification. God in his grace must give us a new creation and heavenly being in his word made flesh before good works can be wrought by us. John 15:4. As it was necessary that we should have a Creator to give us beings as creatures, so it is necessary that we should have a Saviour to make us new creatures through faith.

Fourth consideration. God's grace doth not only prevent our works, but faith itself, as faith is an effect of God's grace, and therefore God is gracious before we believe. It is a blessing of the New Covenant, and therefore in this respect it may be truly said, that we are under the New Covenant before we do believe. By which we may plainly see that faith is a free gift. Mercy is showed unto the faithful, and it is showed unto us to make us faithful. One saith that mercy was showed unto Paul, not on account that he was faithful, but that he might be faithful. The Apostle to prove the freeness of grace in the bestowing faith as a gift upon us, has these three expressions within the limits of three verses, calling faith a gift, and a gift of grace, and gift of grace for righteousness. "But not as the offence, so

also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift, for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Rom.5:15-17.

Fifth consideration. There is no way to happiness for thee, but by grace, and no closing in any sure or comfortable way with grace, but through faith. We are all condemned by the Law, and there is no escaping for us, but by that pardon which the King of Heaven in the prerogative of his grace doth give unto us, and no way for us to be able to read our pardon, unless God teach us. And therefore God hath promised, "and it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve," Isa.14:3, with grace, Psal.84:11, knowledge, Ezek.29:21, faith, Rom.11:26, strength and peace. Psal.29:11. Wherefore let us be willing to receive Christ by faith, and to receive faith as a gift. God must clothe thee with his Son, and give thee faith to put him on. Refuse not this glorious garment, because God will give it thee freely; but be contented to be made a partaker of Christ and faith, according to God's own pleasure. Think not with Simon Magnus to buy the

gifts of the Spirit, for faith is a free gift. God will not sell a diamond for dung. Faith is a precious diamond in a believer's crown, works before faith, but dung. Phil.3:8. Cease then from thinking that by thine own works to purchase that faith which God doth intend freely to give unto men, because men can give no considerable price for it. Make no more words in bargaining with God for faith. "And he said unto me, it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Rev.21:6. Let no man be kept back by his old age, or sins, from hoping to obtain salvation by grace. Whilst we are in this world, no repentance is too late, there is a way to mercy.

Objection. But if faith be such a free gift, why does not God give the same measure of faith unto all believers. Answer. He may do what he will with his own. He may give one the greatest measure of faith, who deserves faith least. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Eph.4:7. As a man that gives measures of wheat freely to beggars, may give one more, and another less, without doing any wrong, so God may measure forth faith unto us largely, according to his own will, without wronging those who have done more for him, and yet receive less. We have no cause to complain or murmur against the Lord, because he is abundantly gracious to whom he pleases, but should rather admire his free grace. And seeing faith, with every act and degree of it, is a gift of unmerited grace, let us who do

believe, wait for the increase of faith, as a gift, ceasing from our own works, understanding and abilities. Yet here lest I should be mistaken let me add this caution, that we should not neglect Gospel duties, by hearing of Gospel promises. Promises should not prove occasions of sloth to the faithful, but should be arguments and incentives to spiritual activity. "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.

Sixth consideration. Let us prize faith as a gift. We prize gifts, because there is usually some preciousness and goodness in them, or else for the giver's sake. Faith is precious in itself. II Pet.1:1. God's gifts have something of his own goodness in them, and faith is to be prized because it is from him. It is said of Elkanah that he gave portions to Peninnah, and her sons and daughters, but unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion, for he loved her. I Sam.1:4-5. So God doth give portions to the men of the world, but his worthy portion of love only to the saints, through faith, and therefore prize it. Imitate those blessed souls, who have showed unto us by their good examples, how they prized faith, who were contented to part rather with their honors, pleasures, riches, preferments, yea their own lives than the faith of the glorious Gospel of Christ. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Rev.12:11.

Seventh consideration. Faith is a great gift, which if thou hast it, thou knowest that thou hast freely received it; and therefore look up unto the Lord, for wretched, unbelieving creatures know that they must receive faith as a gift which they will never be able to deserve as a reward. This may strengthen faith much when we are before the throne of grace, begging faith for poor sinners, if we consider that faith is a free gift. Jeremiah made use of such an argument to strengthen his own faith, "O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake, for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee." Jer.14:7. Oh the happiness of those who are acquainted with free grace, they may expect all things for themselves and others, as free gifts to be given unto them, though they can expect nothing as deserved wages.

Lastly. Give glory to God for his unspeakable grace and giving faith unto thee. My faith O Lord, says one, has called upon thee, which thou hast given unto me, in which thou hast inspired into me. So bless God with that faith, and for that faith which God hath freely given thee. The Son of God hath given us an understanding to know God, I Jn.5:20, and this knowledge is the gift of faith; and therefore bless God in the Son for this faith. Thou mightest have lain in the dark dungeon of an unbelieving heart to this day, and thou art brought into the powerful light of the liberty of the Gospel through faith. The Son hath made thee free, and thou art free indeed by believing. Be free in rendering largely the tribute of praise unto him, who through faith

hath knocked off the shackles and fetters of bondage from thy soul. Give thyself to him who hath given himself and his Son to thee through faith; and begin to live the heavenly life of glory, in giving glory and praise unto him, who hath given thee the glory of union with himself in his Son through faith. Give praise to the King of Zion, who hath redeemed thee to God by his own blood, and made thee a king and a priest, and hath assured thee that thou shall reign upon the earth. Say of faith, and all the gifts of his Spirit, as Jacob of his children, these are children which God hath graciously given unto his servant. Ascribe nothing to thyself, but all to him from whom are all things. Cry with a loud voice, "salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb," Rev.7:10, and sing in faith with all the saints who love Christ in sincerity, "blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." Rev.7:12.

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