

HEAVEN OPENED

THE RICHES OF GOD'S COVENANT



Richard Alleine



In *Heaven Opened*, Richard Alleine discusses the nature and blessings of God's gracious covenant with His people. He outlines in great detail the roles in this covenant of God, Christ, the Spirit, the earth, the angels of light, the powers of darkness, death, and the kingdom. Furthermore, he explains and admires the fruits of the covenant in the believer's life as it manifests itself in a renewed heart. The book ends with an equally moving exhortation to sinners and saints. See how God graciously opens the vaults of heaven to bless the souls of all those who come to Him in faith.



“In *Heaven Opened*, Richard Alleine appeals to God's covenant of grace to enrich the spiritual lives of God's people. Do you understand covenant theology? Read Alleine to see how it ought to shape your heart.”

—Stephen Myers, associate professor of historical theology,
Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids

RICHARD ALLEINE (1611–1681) was an English Puritan who served as a gospel minister at Batcombe, Somerset, for twenty years. He was removed from the ministry in 1662 with other Puritans for nonconformity and served as a preacher in Frome Selwood for the remainder of his life.

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Heaven Opened

The Riches of God's Covenant

Richard Alleine



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. . . for instruction in righteousness . . .

Heaven Opened

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To the Reader

Reader,

The providence of God has led me to the publication of the ensuing treatise, much beyond my first intentions.

There came into my hands a synopsis of the covenant of grace on God's part, with a soliloquy annexed (both penned by my brother, Joseph Alleine, and inserted in my book *Vindiciae Pietatis*), attended with the author's desires, and of various other Christians, that this also might be incorporated into the same book.

These desires, neither being able to resist nor willing to deny, I prepared some meditations to be premised, with a purpose to have put forth another edition of that book with this addition; but, finding it to grow into too great a bulk to be there inserted, both this on God's part, and the former on man's part, come into your hands in this distinct treatise, followed with my prayers—that the good land, whereof some clusters are here presented to you, may be your inheritance. See and take.

Yours, because I am the Lord's covenanted servant,

Richard Alleine
July 8, 1665

Introduction

Good news from heaven! The Dayspring from on high has visited this undone world! After a deluge of sin and misery, behold the bow in the cloud! The Lord God has made and established a new covenant, and this is it which has cast the first beam on the dark state of lost and fallen man, and has brought life and immortality to light. This covenant is the hope of sinners, the riches of saints, the *Magna Charta* of the city of God. The forfeited lease of eternity is now renewed; this is God's deed of gift, wherein He has, on fair conditions, granted sinners their lives, and settled upon His saints an everlasting inheritance.

Hear, O you forlorn captives, who have sold yourselves into eternal bondage, spoiled yourselves of all your glory, and sealed yourselves up under everlasting misery: you are dead in your sins, guilty before God, under wrath, under a curse, and bound over to eternal vengeance. But, behold, there is yet hope in Israel concerning this thing. The Lord God has taken compassion upon you. He has opened a way for you to escape out of all this misery and bondage. Lift up the hands that hang down; comfort the trembling knees. God has prepared an ark, in which there is salvation from the flood. He has made and established a new covenant which, if you lay hold of it, will recover all you have lost, ransom you from death, redeem you from hell, and advance you to a more sure and blessed condition than the original state from which you have fallen. This is

the hope of sinners; this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.

Glorious tidings! Good news indeed! But what is this covenant? What is there that is given and granted therein? Why, there is all that heaven and earth can afford, all that can be needed or desired, and this, by a firm and irrevocable deed, is made over and made sure to all who will sincerely embrace it.

Particularly, God has in His covenant granted and made over:

1. Himself
2. His Son
3. His Spirit
4. The earth
5. The angels of light
6. The powers of darkness
7. Death
8. The kingdom
9. All the means of salvation.

Chapter 1

God in the Covenant

The Lord God has made over Himself in this covenant. That is the great and comprehensive promise of Jeremiah 31:33: "I will be their God." It is as if God had said, "I am God, and what I am is all yours: Myself, My glorious and incomprehensible essence, all My glorious attributes—My omnipotence, My omniscience, My wisdom, My righteousness, My holiness, My all-sufficiency, My faithfulness. I will make Myself over to you to be henceforth and forever yours. I will be your Friend, your Portion, your Sun, and your Shield."

1. Our Friend. "I was angry, but My anger is turned away. I was an adversary. I had a controversy with you, but I am now reconciled. I have found a ransom; the quarrel is composed; My wrath is appeased, and I am friends with you. Jeremiah 31:34: 'I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.' I will take away your iniquity and receive you graciously. 'I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for Mine anger is turned away from them' (Hosea 14:4). 'Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, goodwill towards men' (Luke 2:14). Fury is not now in Me. Favor and friendship, love and goodwill, is all that you may henceforth expect from Me."

Sinners, what is there to fear? What is dreadful but an angry, provoked God? From thence is sorrow and anguish; thence is famine, pestilence, and sword;

thence is death and hell. He does not know what the wrath of God means who does not see in it all the plagues above ground and all the vengeance of eternal fire. Whatever terrors or torments have seized upon your body or soul; whatever losses, crosses, vexations, or afflictions plague you upon this earth; whatever horror and anguish, whatever amazing, confounding torments are likely to meet you and feed upon you in the lake below, you may say of all, "This is the wrath of God." The day that the Lord says to you, "Fury is not in Me," He also says, "Fear shall be no more to you." The hour that the Lord says, "I am your Friend," that same day death and hell vanish. The day is broken; the shadows fly away. And this is one thing included in the promise: "I am your God, I am your Friend."

2. Our Portion. Fury ceases, fears vanish, friendship, favor, and life are granted. But what shall man have to live upon? He was never intended to be self-sufficient; he was created under a necessity of dependence on something outside him, not only for the continuation of his being, but for the comfort of his being. He cannot live upon the air, even though he has escaped the fire. The soul of man is too big for all the world. Like Noah's dove, it can find no rest below. And where shall it find it, or on what shall it subsist?

Why, God will not starve His friends. He who has saved our lives will find a livelihood for us. Because there is no other to be found, He Himself will be a livelihood to us: our portion, our maintenance, and our heritage forever. As our deliverance is from Him, so our dependence shall be on Him. He is our substance, and on Him is our subsistence. He calls Himself "the Portion of Jacob" (Jeremiah 10:16), and His saints accept

Him as such. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance" (Psalm 16:5). He is our bread and our water, our stock and our store. The Lord gives portions to His enemies. Not only the young ravens, but the old lions and tigers, the worst of men seek their meat from God. They "have their portion in this life, whose bellies Thou fillest with Thy hid treasure" (Psalm 17:14). They have their portion: some have their portion in the city, others a portion in the field. To some He gives a portion of gold, to others a portion of worldly glory, to others a portion of pleasures. With all these He deals as the father of the prodigal did: He gives them their portion and sends them away. But while He gives portions to these, He *is* the portion of His saints. He makes over and settles Himself upon us as our inheritance forever. We shall never be in want while there is in Him matter to supply us. We shall never be in straits while there is in Him resource to relieve us. All our wants are laid upon Him.

The Lord is our Portion, and He is a sufficient portion. "With Thee is the fountain of life" (Psalm 36:9). "In Thy presence is fullness" (Psalm 16:11). The Lord God is all things to us, and with Him there is enough, and still some to spare. Luke 15:17: "In My father's house there is bread enough, and to spare." He who has all things below God, but not God, has nothing. He who has nothing besides God, but has God, has all things—enough and to spare, filling up and running over. There is still more to be had if more could be held. The soul never has enough until it has more than enough. It is never full until it runs over. While it can contain and measure and number all that it has, it judges itself to not have enough.

But in God is enough for filling up and running over. There is enough in Him to fill up all our faculties, all our understandings. There are infinitely beautiful perfections where we may gaze and fill our eyes with unspeakable delight. But when we have looked the farthest into them, when the most searching eye, the most intense thoughts have searched and run their utmost, they do not come near the end. They shall look and look and see and see and, when they can reach no farther, then they shall wonder at those treasures of light and beauty that are still beyond them. Admiration takes place when the understanding is full and running over; when it is non-plussed, and can reach no further, then it wonders at what it perceives still beyond it. The apostle tells us in Ephesians 3:18 that the gospel, which presents God in flesh, has in it a height and depth and length and breadth. And I can tell you that it is a height without a top, a depth without a bottom, a length without limits, and a breadth without bounds. In a word, it is immensity immeasurable, and therefore it has unspeakable, unsearchable glory. While the blind world derides and despises the portion of the saints, looking on God and all the things of God as shallow things that have no depth in them, they will be found by those who search into them to be deep things that have no bottom. 1 Corinthians 2:10 calls them "the deep things of God." All the raptures and ecstasies of glorious joys of the saints in the other world are the running over of their eyes upon their hearts, and they break in upon them from their vision of God.

There is enough to fill up our wills and affections. There is infinite goodness, incomprehensible love, marvelous lovingkindness, unspeakable delights, and

glorious joys. "Oh! How great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for those that fear Thee" (Psalm 31:19). How great is Thy goodness! It is the voice of exultation, an admiring word great beyond expression, great beyond imagination. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). This is the sound of a heart leaping for joy, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God which is laid up for His saints. Laid up? Where? Why, laid up in Himself; that is the fountain, that is the treasury; there is love, there is joy, there is satisfaction—our life is hidden with Christ in God.

Oh, love the Lord, all ye His saints. Oh, bless the Lord, all ye His saints. He who is mighty has done great things for you. "Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him" (Isaiah 64:4). Or, as it is in the margin, "There hath not been heard or seen a God besides Thee, which doth so for him that waiteth for Him."

There is enough to fill up our time. There is admiring and praise work forever; there is matter for love and joy to live upon and feed upon forever—endless praises, eternal pleasures, everlasting rejoicings, "everlasting joy" (Isaiah 35:10), and "pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11). There is enough to reward all our labors and repay all our expenses; there is a full reward. "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1).

Christian, you shall not serve the Lord for nought. He will reward you, and it is a small matter in His eyes

that you should serve Him for corn and for wine, for sheep and for oxen; yea, for the crowns and kingdoms of this world. These shall not be your hire, the everlasting God will be your reward, your exceeding great reward—exceeding not only your work, but your very thoughts also. A little is too much for your earnings, but the whole world is too little for His bounty. Less than nothing might satisfy for your labors, but less than Himself will not satisfy for His love. The eternal God will be your reward. Oh, the unsearchable riches of the poorest of saints! Poor? What, and yet you have God! In want? What, and yet you have all things! Is this God yours, and are you still in straits! Would a few sheep and oxen, some vineyards and oliveyards make you a rich man, and can having God leave you a beggar? Is not a pearl more than a pebble? Are not milk and wine more than mud and water?

Men used to say that money was everything—meat, drink, clothes, friends, land, virtually everything. And is God not more than money? Surely he has said to his gold, “You are my god,” who cannot say, “If God is mine, then everything else can go its way.” Do you have God, and yet feel poor?

Nay, farther, would the fatness of the earth and the fullness of heaven, if you had both, be enough for you? Would corn, wine, houses, lands, pleasures here and eternal life hereafter suffice? And is not God alone as much as all this? Do you lack starlight when you have the sun? Is the ocean more full for the rivers that run into it? Or would there be any want there if all these were stopped and dried up? Does the almighty God have a self-sufficiency, and does He not have enough to satisfy a poor worm? Is He blessed in Himself, and may

you not be blessed in Him? He who thinks anything less than God will suffice does not understand the soul; and he who wants anything more than God does not understand God. God alone is as much as God and all the world. And this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord: God is their Portion.

If enough has not been said, look awhile and consider from whence you are taken up into this blessedness. What have you left? What an exchange have you made? You were taken with the prodigal from the trough, with the beggar from the dunghill, yea, as a brand out of the burning; there your lot had fallen. Oh, where have you left the rest of the world? They are blessing themselves in vanity, pleasing themselves with shadows and apparitions, feeding on ashes, warming themselves at their painted fire, sporting themselves with the wind, and rejoicing in things of nought—their crackling thorns, their glazing pleasures, their drinking, dancing, and roaring, their horses, dogs, hawks, and harlots—trying to make merry with these things while they are hastening to the pit, to that fire and brimstone which is the portion of their cup.

Consider, O man, what is the chaff to the wheat? What is a comet to the sun? What is the night to the day? What are bubbles and children's toys to these durable riches? What are things that are not to Him whose name is "I AM"? But, oh, what is death and wrath and the curse, which was once all your heritage, to that life, love, peace, joy, and glory which you now possess in that God who is your Portion? What a poor wretch you were once when you had nothing but sin, shame and misery that you could call your own! These things were yours: sin was yours, woe was yours, death and the grave

were yours, the curse and the pit were yours; but that was all you had. The good things you lived upon, had they been of ever so great a value, were not yours. Your house and your land are not yours, your gold and silver and substance are not yours; they are all borrowed, and you are but a steward of them, all to be given up upon demand. And what you have spent of them you must reckon for. You were a poor wretch who had nothing; all that you have is not yours.

But now God is yours. All that He is, all that He has, is yours. You could never lay such a claim to anything you possessed, not to house, or wife, or child, or body, or soul, as now you may to God. God is as surely yours as you are yourself. As surely as you are a man, you have God.

Come, Christian, here is now your portion, the light of your eyes, the lifting up of your head, the joy of your heart, the strength of your bones, your stock, your treasure, your life, your health, your peace, your rest, your all. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desires beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever" (Psalm 73:25-26). Here is your Portion. Know it for your good, take it for your own; live upon it, and live up to it.

Live upon your Portion. Here you may feed; herein you may rejoice; herein you may bless yourself forever. "Let him that blesseth himself on the earth bless himself in the God of truth" (Isaiah 65:16). Let him who rejoices on the earth rejoice in the God of truth. Let the strong man live upon his strength, let the wise man live upon his wits, let the rich man live upon his lands, you live upon your God. Come, enjoy God and your soul; en-

joy God in your soul; enjoy your soul in God. You have possession, what should hinder your fruition? In fruition the scholars tell us there are three things which go to making it up: knowledge, delight, and satisfaction.

Knowledge. According to the clarity or cloudiness of our apprehensions of any good, we more or less take the pleasure or comfort of it. And therefore the full fruition of God is not had until the end, when we shall know as we are known. Here we see but as in a glass, and darkly; we know but in part, and, while we know but in part, we love but in part and joy but in part. The dimness of our sight makes an abatement upon our joy. When the veil shall be taken away, when we shall come to see face to face, then we shall fully feel what it is to have a God. Christian, know the God of your fathers. The more you know, the more you have.

The carnal world does not enjoy God at all. God is not known in their tabernacles; it is in Judah that God is known. His name is great in Israel; at Salem is His tabernacle, and His dwelling is in Zion. But what of God in Edom, Ammon, Amalek, or Egypt, those dark regions wherein neither sun nor star appears? Leave them to their dunghill gods, to the gardens which they have desires, and the oaks which they have chosen. The Lord is before you; know it for your good. Study your God, Christian. Roll His sweetness over in your mind as you do the sweet morsel in your mouth. See what He is and what you have laid up in Him. Read over His glorious names daily; walk through those chambers of His presence, His glorious attributes. Look into the chamber of His power and see what you have laid up for you there. Go into the chamber of His wisdom and see what

that will afford you. Look into the chambers of His goodness, mercy, faithfulness, holiness, and behold what treasures are laid up for you in each of these. Enter into these chambers; they are all yours. Enter into these chambers; let your eye be there; let your meditation be there; let your soul be there every day. There is your portion; search it out and know it for your good.

Delight. Fruition is taking pleasure in what we have. We cannot enjoy what we do not love, and love has delight. We cannot enjoy that wherein we do not joy. "Delight thyself in the Lord" (Psalm 37:4). "I sat me down under his shadow with great delight" (Song of Solomon 2:3). If His shadow is so pleasant, what will His sunbeams be! "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8). Our senses help our understandings. We cannot, by the most rational discourse, perceive what the sweetness of honey is; we must taste it to perceive it. His fruit will be sweet unto your taste. Dwell in the light of the Lord and let your soul be ravished always with His love. Get out the marrow and fatness that your portion yields you. Let fools learn by beholding your face how dim their blazes are to the brightness of your day.

Let your delights in God be pure and unmixed delights. Let your spirit be so filled with God, and so raised above carnal joys, and the matters of them, that it is no discouragement to you to have nothing but God. Your wine is the more sprightly when it is not mixed with water. Live above in that serene air which is not defiled with earthly exhalations. Sick bodies and sick souls cannot live in too pure an air. Be so wholly spiritual that spiritual joys and spiritual delights may be suited to you and sufficient for you. Do not say, "I lack

the joy of the vintage and the harvest. I lack the joy of the bridegroom and the bride. I need the sound of the millstones and the light of the candle to make my comfort full." Let the joy of the Lord be your strength and your life. Say with the prophet, "Although the figtree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:17-18).

Satisfaction. Satisfaction is the quiet resting of the soul in its portion. Therefore the scholars say that it is only the last end that is the proper object of fruition. Whatever the carnal world possesses, yet it cannot be properly said to enjoy it. A man's flask may be his god, his yarn may be his god, his plow, his plenty, and his pleasure may be his god, but he cannot enjoy these things. There is no rest for him in his god. "What man is he that feareth the Lord? His soul shall dwell at ease" (Psalm 25:12-13). In the original it is "his soul shall lodge in goodness." The soul is never at ease while it is in want, for every want wrings. It can never take up its lodging where it cannot take its rest. His soul shall be at ease, shall lodge, that is, shall take up its rest in the goodness of God. And when we find rest in our beds, then it is that we enjoy them. Is your soul lodged in God? Oh, enjoy your lodging! "Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years. Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

As it was said to the church, so let it be said by the church, and by every saint, "This is my rest, here will I

dwell forever" (Psalm 132:14). Here you may find rest when you have no other rock to lean upon. You may be at rest in your God in your most restless state, in a weary land, in a barren wilderness, and in a tempestuous ocean. However it was in the vision of the prophet, yet you may say, "If the wind rises, the Lord is in the wind; if after the wind an earthquake, the Lord is in the earthquake; if after the earthquake a fire, the Lord God is in the fire." And wherever you find God, you may find rest. If you find God in a wilderness, you will find rest in the wilderness; if you find God in the earthquake, the tempest, or the fire, even there also shall your soul find rest. When you cannot rest in your bed, in your house, or in your land, you may still rest in your God. Christian, say again, "Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with me. Though my helps fail me, though friends fail me, and though my flesh and my heart fail me, God is the strength of my heart and my Portion forever. This is my rest, and here I will dwell forever."

And to these three I will add a fourth thing wherein fruition stands:

Making use of our portion. He enjoys what he has who uses what he has. We then enjoy our portion when we have a power and heart to make use of it on all occasions. God is saying, "I am yours, soul, come and make use of Me as you will; you may do so freely. I have nothing but what is for you. You may freely come to My store, and the more often you come the more welcome you are." You do not have God lying by you for no purpose. Do not let your God be as others' gods are, serving only as a show. Do not have a God in name only, and, since He allows you to do so, having such a Friend,

use Him daily. Did not Paul say, "My God shall supply all your wants"? Never want while you have such a God; never fear or faint while you have such a God. Go to your treasure and take whatever you need. There is bread, clothes, health, life, and all that you need. O Christian, learn the divine skill of making God all things: make bread of your God, water, health, friends, and ease. He can supply you with all these, or, which is better, He can be, instead of all these, your food, your clothing, your friend, and your life to you. All this He has said to you in this one phrase: "I am your God."

And hereupon you may say, "I have no husband, and yet I am no widow; my Maker is my husband. I have no father or friend, and yet I am neither fatherless or friendless; my God is both my father and my friend. I have no child, but is He not better to me than ten children? I have no house, but yet I have a home. I have made the Most High my habitation. I am left alone, but I am not alone; my God is good company for me. With Him I can walk, with Him I can take sweet counsel and find sweet repose. At my lying down, at my rising up, while I am in the house, as I walk by the way, my God is ever with me. With Him I travel, I dwell, I lodge, I live, and shall live forever."

Live up to your privilege. Live according to your rank and quality, according to the riches laid up for you in God. The rich men of this world live like rich men: they sort themselves with persons of their own quality, attend the courts of princes, and are employed about the palace. You may read their estates in their whole way of life; they wear them on their backs and spread their tables with them. They live sumptuously and fare delicately.

Christians, do not feed on ashes or husks; you have better meat. You have milk and honey, marrow and fatness; you have the hidden manna, the bread that comes down from heaven, and you have the water of life. You have blessed privileges, precious promises, lively hopes, living comforts, glorious joys, the fountain of life to feed your souls upon. Come eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O my beloved. Outfare the rich man in Luke 16, who fared deliciously every day. You have enough to maintain it, so let every day be a glad day, a feastday with you.

Let your clothing be according to your feeding. Be clothed with the sun. Put on the Lord Jesus. The King's daughter is, and so let all the King's sons be, all glorious within; let their clothing be of wrought gold. Be clothed with humility; put on love, bowels of compassion, gentleness, and meekness; put on the garments of salvation.

Let your company and conduct be according to your clothing. Live among the excellent, among the generation of the just. Get yourself up to the "general assembly and church of the firstborn, to that innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23). Live in the courts of the great King; behold His face; wait at His throne; bear His name; show forth His virtues; set forth His praises; advance His honor, and uphold His interest. Let vile persons and vile ways be condemned in your eyes; be of more raised spirits than to be companions with them. Learn hence a holy elevation of spirit. Do not regard their societies, nor their scorns, flatteries, or frowns. Do not rejoice with their joys; do not fear their fear; do not care for their care; do not feed on their dainties.

Get yourself up from among them, to your country, to your city, where no unclean thing can enter or annoy. Live by faith in the power of the Spirit, in the beauty of holiness, in the hope of the gospel, in the joy of your God, in the magnificence—and yet the humility—of the children of the great King.

3. Our Sun. God will reveal and make manifest to you the riches and glory of your Portion. He has granted you Himself as your Portion, and He will reveal and make manifest to you what a Portion He is. He will make manifest both the blessedness they shall enjoy in Him, and the way to it, as well as the dangers that lie in the way. "The Lord God is a sun" (Psalm 84:11). The sun is the light of the world: it reveals itself and all things besides. We cannot see the glory of the sun but by its own light; the moon, the stars, the firmament, and all this lower world, would all disappear if the sun withdrew its light. Beauty and deformity, safety and danger, the right way and the wrong way, are all brought to view by the light of the sun. The sunlight makes it day; night is spread all over the world when the sun has set. God is glorious, but who would ever be the wiser if this glory did not shine? "In Thy light we see light" (Psalm 36:9). Why is the glorious God apprehended, understood, and admired by so few among the sons of men? Why, it is because He is out of their sight. The sun has not risen upon them, nor does it shine into them. They have moonlight or starlight, some dimmer reflections of this glory coming secondhand from the creatures, but they do not see the sun.

What is the reason that truth and falsehood, good and evil, substances and shadows, things perishing and things permanent, are no better distinguished? What is

the reason that men are so mistaken and misguided in their judgments, in their choices, and in their ways? Why are they at such a loss, such wanderers from their own bliss? What is the reason that men's own sparks, the light of their own fires, their candlelight or torchlight, their fleshly imaginations, their carnal prosperity, their pleasures, their ease, their earthly glory, and their carnal joys that hence flash up to them are so adored and admired by them. Oh, they do not see the sun! God is out of sight, and from thence come all their dotages and foolish mistakes and miscarriages.

God will be a sun to His saints, their sun. "Thy sun shall no more go down" (Isaiah 60:20). We shall have both the propriety and the comfort of this glorious sun. He will show us His face. He will cause His glory to appear. He will lead us to Himself by His own beams. He will show us our end and the means to get there, the goal and the way to it. He will show us the good part and the right path. Good and evil, duties and sins, realities and delusions, helps and hindrances, dangers and advantages, our snares and our succors, will all be revealed to us by the light of the Lord.

Hearken, you poor and dark soul who has chosen, but you know not what; who is going, but you know not where; who are wandering and stumbling on, but you care not how; who complains that you cannot see, you cannot value, you cannot be affected with all the glory and joy of the invisible world; who finds your husks and your trash to be a greater pleasure to you than all the riches of immortality; who would fain mind and choose and love and relish and seek God and things above, but you cannot—you see so little of the beauty of them that they do not entice your heart after them. And, when you

are seeking, you are at a loss and in the dark as to the way that you should take. Harken, soul, your God calls to you: "Come unto Me, look unto Me, and I will be your sun. I will show you all that glory, and the right way that will bring you to it. I promise you I will. Trust Me, for I will be a light unto you."

4. Our Shield. "The Lord God is a sun and a shield" (Psalm 84:11). The gods of the earth are called "the shields of the earth" in Psalm 47:9, much more the God of glory. Faith is called a shield in Ephesians 6:16 ("Above all taking the shield of faith"). It means that God is a shield. Faith is to the soul whatever God is. This is the grace that entitles the soul to God, and applies God to the soul. "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield" (Genesis 15:1). What is promised to the father of the faithful stands sure to all the seed (Romans 4:16).

The state of Christians in this life is a militant state, a state full of hardships and hazards, by reason whereof as richly as they are provided for they are subject to fears of being undone and spoiled of all. They are in fears about eternal things; they have spiritual adversaries who lie in wait for their souls, who fight against their souls, who are tempting them and enticing them from their God, who watch their opportunities to steal away their God by stealing their hearts away from Him. And such dangerous attempts of this kind they meet with that they are often in great doubt as to what the issue may be.

Christians are in fears about temporal things. Their names are shot at, their liberties are invaded, their estates and all the comforts of their lives are in danger. Today they are a praise, tomorrow they are a scorn; today they are full and abound, but tomorrow they may

have nothing left. They die daily and are killed all the day long. But whatever their dangers and their fears are, here is sufficient provision made against all: God is their Shield.

Christian, you have enough, and all that you have is in safety. You are compassed about with a Shield, secured on all hands; there is no coming at you. Whatever assaults are made, your God is a wall of partition between you and harm. They are not shields of brass and iron with which you are furnished; the strong God is your defense. Why do you doubt, O ye of little faith? Are you a Christian, and yet afraid? Are you shifting for yourself? Are you taking care for the asses, oxen, and sheep? Are you vexing and loading and losing yourself in your cares and fears from day to day? Where is your God, man? Does not God take care for oxen and asses and all that you have?

But, oh, what do you mean by this, shifting yourself from danger by shrinking back from your God, securing yourself from affliction by taking sanctuary in iniquity! What are you doing but throwing away your Shield to save yourself from harm, making a breach in your wall to keep yourself safe! "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1). It is as if He were saying, "Follow Me; stick to Me." And then "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield" (Genesis 15:1). This is the first and great promise of the covenant: "I am thy God." And the second is like it.

Chapter 2

Christ in the Covenant

God has put Christ into the covenant, and made Him over to His people. "I will give Thee for a covenant" (Isaiah 42:6). He who is promised as the chief matter—the Mediator, Surety, and scope of the covenant—is called "the covenant" by a figure of speech. "I will give Thee for a covenant," that is, "I covenant to give Thee to the people." Whatever glory and blessedness there is in the fruition of God, woe is me, there is a great gulf fixed between me and it, over which there is no passing. There is a partition wall raised over which there is no climbing; there is handwriting against me so that, while it stands, all that is in God is nothing to me. Were this God mine, I would have enough. Let me be put to labor or suffering, let me dig or beg or starve and die, whether I am rich or poor, have something or nothing, be a praise or reproach, it does not matter so long as God is mine.

But, oh, how may I obtain Him? Who shall bring me to God? Why, the Lord God has given you His Son to undertake for you, and to be your way to the Father (Hebrews 10:19–20).

Jesus Christ, who is the Morning Star, the Sun of Righteousness, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, by whom are all things, who is before all things, the Head of the body (the Church), who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, in

whom dwells all fullness, even the fullness of the Godhead bodily, who has made peace by the blood of His cross (Colossians 1 and 2), whose name is “Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6), this Jesus is granted to you in the covenant, to bring you to God. And to this blessed and glorious purpose He is exhibited as:

1. The Light of Life
2. The Lord our Righteousness
3. Our Lord and King
4. Our Head and Husband.

1. The Light of Life. “A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel” (Luke 2:32). “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). “He that followeth Me shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). There is a light that serves to kill and destroy, to bring death and condemnation to light, and that is the light of the law, that killing letter, concerning which the apostle says, “When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to bring death” (Romans 7:9–10). But Christ brings life and immortality to light; heaven, glory, the invisible God, which are lost, out of reach, and out of ken, are all discovered in the face of Jesus Christ. “To give us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). He is the image of the invisible God, the brightness of His Father’s glory, the glass in which, by reflection, we see the sun. “Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us,” said Philip. To which Christ replied, “Hast thou known Me, Philip, and yet sayest, ‘Show us the Father’? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father, and this is the light

of life" (John 14:8–9). "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

2. The Lord our Righteousness. This is His name: "He shall be called 'the Lord our Righteousness' " (Jeremiah 23:6). To this end He is given to us:

(1) As our propitiatory sacrifice. "He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:2). He is "Christ our Passover" (1 Corinthians 5:7). He is "a lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). He is our price, our ransom to satisfy justice, pacify wrath, and discharge us from the curse, to blot out the handwriting, break down the wall of partition, finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness, and so to bring us to God. Whatever difficulties appear in your way, whatever doubts arise in your hearts—whether from your sins, your guilt, your poverty, or your impotence—whatever objections your fears may hence put in, there is the blood of the Lamb that will answer all. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

(2) As a merciful and faithful High Priest (Hebrews 2:17). He has made an atonement for us on the earth and appears for us in heaven. He has made reconciliation for us and makes intercession for us, "to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24). We read in Exodus 28:12 and 29 that Aaron, as the type of Christ, was to bear the names of the children of Israel, engraved in stones, upon his shoulders and upon his breastplate when he went into the holy place for a memorial before the Lord continually. Our Lord has entered into the heavens to appear in the presence of God with our names upon His shoulders and upon

His heart for a memorial before the Lord. There is not the least of saints but has his name engraved.

It is as if Christ were saying to the Father, "Here is My ransom, and behold My ransomed ones. Here is My price and My purchase, My redemption and My redeemed. Whatever accusers there are, whatever charge is laid upon them, here are the shoulders that have borne all their due and paid all that they owe; and upon these shoulders and in this heart Thou mayest read all their names. And when Thou readest, remember what I have done for them, and acquit, absolve, and let them be accepted before Thee forever. Remember the tears of these eyes, the stripes of this back, the shame of this face, the groans of this body, the anguish of this soul, the blood of this heart; and when Thou rememberest, whatever name Thou findest engraven upon this heart and upon these shoulders, they are the persons whose all these are. And whatever these are, whatever acceptance they have found with Thee, whatever satisfaction Thou hast found in them, put it upon their account. Never let Me be accounted as accepted if they are rejected; never let Me be accounted as righteous if they lie under the imputation of wickedness. If they are not righteous in My righteousness, I must be guilty under their guilt. Whatever I am, whatever My satisfaction is, is all theirs. For them they plead, for them they pray. My tears, My stripes, My wounds, My groans, My anguish, My soul, My blood, all cry and say, 'Father, forgive them. Father, accept them.' "

Of all cries, there are no such strong cries as the cry of blood, and that whether it is against or for the guilty; its voice shall be heard on high. "Thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10). And

what followed? Woe to those persons against whom blood cried. But where blood, such blood as this, cries for pardon and for mercy, blessed are those souls.

Christian, this blood is for you. It “speaks better things than the blood of Abel” (Hebrews 12:24). It pleads, sues, and presses for your discharge from all that is upon you. You have many cries against you: Satan cries, your sins cry, your own heart and your conscience cry against you; and you are amazed at the dreadful noise they make. But behold! The blood of the Lamb, who is God, cries *for* you. You have an accuser, but you have an Acquitter; you have adversaries, but you have an Advocate. You have “an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, who is the propitiation for thy sins” (1 John 2:1–2). “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:33–34).

Nay, further, you have not only a righteous, but a merciful High Priest who has provided a sacrifice, and has a heart to offer it to you. Your name is in His heart as well as on His shoulders, in His bowels as well as on His back. He has blood for you, precious blood; and He has bowels for you, tender bowels. He can have pity and compassion on the miserable (Hebrews 5:2). If He can find no other arguments, He can find arguments enough from your woe and misery to draw forth His soul towards you. He is merciful, and His mercies are tender mercies. He has pity, and His compassions are tender compassions. You are not as tender towards the wife of your bosom, towards your own child; you are not

so tender towards your own flesh, towards the apple of your eye, towards your own soul, as your Lord is towards you. His Spirit is moved for you; His soul melts over you; He bleeds in your wounds; He suffers in your sorrows; His eye weeps; His heart breaks over your broken and undone state. Do not fear that He will forget you.

He is a merciful and faithful High Priest. No dignity to which He is exalted above you, no distance to which He is removed from you, can make Him forget His friends. He has gone into the heavens, and is there exalted far above all principalities and powers, and has sat down at the right hand of God. He has gone, but He has carried your name with Him as a perpetual memorial for you. You are unfaithful, and that is a shame to you! You forget your Lord at every turn: every business that comes, every trouble that comes, every pleasure that comes, every companion that comes, makes you forget your Lord; you forget His love and you forget your duty. Oh, how small a matter will steal your heart from Him, yea, stir up tumults and rebellions against Him! Your comforts, your hopes, your needs, you have daily of Him. Will not all these prevail to hold Him in remembrance with you? You forget your Lord, but He will not forget you. Though you have been unfaithful in many things, yet He is unfaithful in nothing. "Yet He abideth faithful. He cannot deny Himself" (2 Timothy 2:13). He would not be true to Himself if He is not faithful to you. His interest lies in you: you are His, His possession, a member of His body. Fear not; if He should be unfaithful to your soul, He would therein be unfaithful to His own body. If your case is such that He can help you, if there is anything wherein He can succor you; if all that He has—His blood, His righteousness, or

His interest with the Father—will be sufficient for your help, then He has undertaken to procure it for you and secure it to you. Faithful is He that has called you, and He will do it.

This now is that Jesus who is given unto us as our propitiatory Sacrifice, as our merciful and faithful High Priest. This is He who suffered on the earth and has gone into the heavens for us, standing in His red robes, garments rolled in blood, with those glorious white places on the red garment: pardon, peace, absolution, and acceptance; with the names of His ransomed ones engraved upon His heart and His shoulders. This is that Jesus who is “the Lord our Righteousness.”

3. As our Lord and King. The Scriptures tell us that a king shall reign in righteousness, and in Him shall the Gentiles trust. “Shout, O daughter of Zion, behold thy King cometh” (Zechariah 9:9). “The government shall be upon His shoulder” (Isaiah 9:6). God has more care of His saints than to leave the government of them on their shoulder. Is not her King in her?

He is a King to gather them, a King to govern them, a King to defend and save them: to save them from their temporal enemies, the sons of violence, the men of this evil world; from their spiritual enemies, to save them from their sins. “Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). It is a mercy to be under government and to be under protection. What would become of us if there were no king in Israel? When there is no king, all are kings; there are more kings than men. Satan will be a king; every lust will be a lord, and there will be as many kings as there are devils and sins. Where would our unruly hearts carry us? How easily would our wily and po-

tent enemies ruin us! What tyranny would sin exercise within! What cruelty we would suffer from without! Where we would wander! What peace, what order, what stability! Where would counsel, protection, and salvation come, were there no lord over us?

It is a mercy to be under any government; but to be under such a government as this, to be under such a King? Such a wise and potent King, such a meek and merciful King, such a holy and righteous King? Oh, what a wonder of mercy! "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass's colt" (Zechariah 9:9). He is just, having salvation. As a Priest He has purchased it; as a King He bestows it. He comes not to get, but to give; not to give laws only, but to give gifts unto men. And He gives like a king, palms, crowns, and thrones. He gives salvation to His people by the remission of their sins. Oh, how unthankful, how foolish is this rebellious world! We are impatient of subjection! We shake off the yoke! We groan under duty and under discipline! We will not have this man to rule over us! But then who will save you?

"It is hard to be a Christian! There are strict laws, severe discipline, and no liberty! Woe is me. I am so limited and hedged in on all hands that there is no liberty left me to be miserable. If I will be His, I must be happy."

Is this your complaint? Let fools inherit their own folly, but let Israel rejoice in Him who made them; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King, for the Lord takes pleasure in His people and will beautify the meek with salvation. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates,

and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts" (Psalm 24:9–10). Yea, the Lord our righteousness, He is the King of glory. The Lord is our Judge; the Lord is our Lawgiver; the Lord is our King—He will save us. Praise ye the Lord! Come, all you Nimrods, you mighty hunters on the earth; come, all you sons of Anak, you seed of the giants; come, all you sons of Belial, you seed of the adulterer and the whore; come, all you Ishmaelites and Ammonites, you Moabites and Hagarenes. Associate, confederate, take counsel together, smite with the tongue, bite with the teeth, push with the horn, kick with the heel. Come, all you gates of hell and powers of darkness; come, you king of terrors with your fatal dart. The virgin, the daughter of Zion, has despised you all; she has laughed you to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head at you. Her King is in the midst of her; the Lord is her King, and He will save her.

4. Our Head and Husband. He who is given to be Head over all things to the Church is given to be the Head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22–23), and of every member in particular (1 Corinthians 11:3). Believers are joined to the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:17). They are united in Christ as fellow members, united unto Christ as their common Head. "From which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Colossians 2:19). They are married to Christ. "I have espoused you to one Husband" (2 Corinthians 11:2).

From this union follows a communication of influences and a complication of interests.

- A communication of influences. We have nour-

ishment ministered, as Christ our Head is our Fountain of Life. Our Head is our Heart also, and out of it are the issues of life. From Him we live and are nourished and maintained in life. He is our Joseph, and all the treasures of the holy land are with Him. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell" (Colossians 1:19). He is the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.

Here note what grace there is in Christ. The scholars tell us that in Him there is a threefold grace:

The grace of union. The human nature of Christ has received the high grace or favor to be personally united to the second Person in the Godhead. By virtue of this union the fullness of the Godhead is said to dwell in Him bodily, that is, personally or substantially, as opposed to the types and shadows of the Old Testament, in which God, in a figure, is said to dwell. God is said to dwell in the tabernacle, in the ark of the covenant, in the temple; but in these He dwelt only as figures and shadows of the human nature of Christ. In Christ He dwells not as a figure, but personally and substantially. As Christ is called the body (Colossians 2:17), in opposition to the types of old which were but the shadow, so bodily here notes not a figurative, but a personal inhabitation. Christ is the body, not a shadow; and God dwells in Him bodily, that is, substantially, and not in a shadow.

Habitual grace. This is comprised of all those moral perfections wherein stands the holiness of His nature: the love and fear of God; His humility, meekness, and patience; in sum, His perfect conformity to the image and whole will of God. "Such a High Priest became us,

who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26).

That honor which is given to Him to be Head of the Church. Also observe how that Christ is said to be full of grace. There is a twofold fullness of grace. First, in respect of grace itself, he is said to be full of grace who has all grace, and has it in the greatest excellence and perfection of it. Second, in respect of the person who has it, a person is said to be full of grace who has as much grace as he is capable of. Christ is full of grace in both respects: that grace which is in Him is grace in its highest perfection, and is as much as His vessel can hold.

Observe also that this fullness of Christ's is ours, and is for us. "Of His fullness do we receive grace for grace" (John 1:16). "Your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). Your life, that is, both your spiritual life, grace, and your eternal life, glory. "This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John 5:11). Our life is said to be in Christ in three respects:

First, our life is hidden in Christ, as the effect is hidden in the cause. As the life of the branches is hidden in the root, so the life of a Christian is hidden in Christ. He is our root.

Second, our life is deposited with Christ. It is laid up with Him and committed to His trust and custody. With Him our life is secure and in safe hands.

Third, the dispensation of it is committed to Him. From Him it is at His pleasure to be derived to us. Of His fullness we receive. The Son has life in Himself, and He gives it to whomever, whenever, and in whatever manner He pleases.

Christian, are you nothing in yourself? You have

enough in your Jesus. Are you dark? He is a Fountain of light. Are you dead? He is a Fountain of life. Are you poor and low, weak in knowledge, in faith, in love, and in patience? He is a treasure of all grace, and what He is, He is for you. Is He wise? He is wise for you. Is He holy? He is holy for you. Is He meek, merciful, humble, and patient? He is so for you. Is He strong? Is He rich? Is He full? It is for your sake. As He was empty for you, weak for you, and poor for you, so for you He is mighty and rich and full. While you bewail your own poverty and weakness, oh, bless yourself in your Lord, in His riches, righteousness, and strength.

- A complication of interests. As the head and the body, as the husband and the wife, so Christ and the saints are mutually concerned. They are rich or poor together; they must stand and fall together, and they must live and die together. As the husband conveys to the wife a title to what he has, as the wife holds to the husband, so it is between Christ and His Church: we have nothing but through Him; our whole tenure is in the Head, and whatsoever is His is ours. His God is our God. His Father is our Father. His blood, His merits, His Spirit, His victories, all the spoils He has gotten, and the revenue and income of His life and death are all ours. For us He obeyed, suffered, lived, died, rose, ascended, and is set down in glory at the right hand of God. He obeyed as our Head, died as our Head, rose, ascended, and reigns as our Head. And He has, in our name, taken possession of that inheritance which He purchased for us. This is that Jesus who is given to us, and thus is He granted and made over to all His saints in this covenant of God.

Chapter 3

The Spirit in the Covenant

God has put His Spirit into the covenant—the almighty, eternal Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of glory and of God.

This Holy and eternal Spirit is first poured forth on our Head, the Lord Jesus, to anoint Him as our Redeemer, and to furnish and qualify Him for that great undertaking. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek” (Isaiah 61:1). “The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, and of the fear of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:2).

This Spirit is promised to each member. “I will put My Spirit within you” (Ezekiel 36:27). To each Christian He is granted as:

1. A Spirit of wisdom and revelation.
2. A Spirit of holiness and sanctification.
3. A Spirit of truth and direction.
4. A Spirit of comfort and consolation.

1. He is a “Spirit of wisdom and revelation” (Ephesians 1:17–18), to enlighten us, to open our blind eyes, and shine into our hearts to give us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ so that we may know what the hope of His calling is, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, to counterwork the spirit of this world,

whose work is to blind men's eyes "lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine unto them" (2 Corinthians 4:4-6).

This is He by whom the Father has "called us out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). The light that the Spirit brings in is a marvelous light, and that in three respects:

(1) It is a marvelous thing that ever light should come into such dark souls. That those who were born blind, and upon whom the god of this world had, for many years, been trying his skill to thicken their darkness, to increase and seal them up under it, that ever such eyes should be opened and the light of life should shine in upon such hearts is a marvelous thing. When our Lord Jesus, in the days of His flesh, had opened the eyes of those who had been born blind, the people ran together and wondered at the sight. If you should see stones live, if you should see dead animals or dry bones walking up and down the streets, if you saw trees, houses, or mountains full of eyes, this would be no more full of wonder than to behold blind sinners receiving their sight. You were once darkness; are you now light in the Lord? Stand and wonder at your cure.

(2) This light reveals marvelous things. It is a wonder that such eyes should ever see, and they see wondrous things. The gospel is a mystery full of wonders: there are heights and depths and lengths and breadths. We have seen strange things today: strange love, strange grace, wonderful wisdom, wonderful pity, wonderful patience and mercy, wonderful providences, wonderful deliverances, incomprehensible excellencies, unspeakable joy and glory. It is a wonder that there should be such things every day before our eyes, and yet

we could not see them till now; and it is a wonder that, when we did not see them before, we should ever see them now, that those things which we despised, derided, mocked at, and stumbled at as mere foolishness and fancy, we should now see and admire, even to astonishment; that that Jesus, who was to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, should be to the same men, when called, "the wisdom and power of God." Oh, the deep things of God! Oh, the unsearchable riches of Christ, which He, who searches all things, reveals unto the saints! Oh, the hidden treasures they now discover in this deep mine! To you who believe He is precious, a praise, an honor, all fair, all glorious. And you have seen His glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.

Again, there are marvelous evils as well as good things which, by this light, are brought to light. It reveals sin, with all the hidden things of darkness, that lie below in those chambers of death, the secrets of the evil heart of man. Sin appears as a wonder to the savingly enlightened soul, exceedingly sinful, a world of wickedness.

There is death, hell, and the devil in every sin, unkindness, unthankfulness, folly, enmity, rebellion, spite, and the blackness of darkness. What once appeared as a pleasure, a delight, a beauty (or, if it did appear as something evil, it was but a trifle, a matter of nothing) has become a plague, a terror, a burden, a bondage, bitterness, shame, and sorrow. And it is such a high provocation that, whereas once a man swelled, murmured, and cried out about the rigor, severity, and cruelty in the least punishment of it, now he wonders at the clemency, patience, and forbearance of God, that

such an affront and provocation had not long since turned the whole world into a hell.

Christian, you complain that you cannot see, that you cannot feel, that you cannot mourn, that you cannot break under all the guilt that lies upon you; your heart is hard, your eyes are dry, and not a tear, a groan, or scarcely a sigh will fetch all this evil out of you. "Oh, this blind and sottish mind! Oh, this dead and senseless heart! What would I not do to get me a melting, mourning, broken spirit! But I cannot, I cannot! I cannot see, I cannot bleed, and I cannot break."

Oh, beg the Holy Spirit for this light! And if the sight He presents you with of this wonderful evil does not rend your heart and turn you, open all your sluices, and let out the sighs and groans of your heart in shame and sorrow, then you may well be a wonder to yourself. But do not be discouraged; do not be dismayed. Do not say, "This rock will never break; this iron will never melt. I may go sighing for sighs, mourning after tears, and groaning after groans, but all in vain; it will never be. I am past feeling; sorrow flies still from me; repentance is hidden from my eyes."

Do not thus discourage yourself. Wait for this Spirit, open to it, and you shall see flowing in such streams of self-shaming, self-confounding light as shall flow forth in self-abasing, self-abhorring streams of tears.

(3) These marvelous things are revealed with marvelous clearness, that is, in comparison to what they are to the purblind world, and in comparison to what they themselves once saw. They come to see the glory, the beauty, and the reality of the wonderful things of God. "We have seen His glory," said the apostle in John 1:14. The kindness of God our Savior ap-

peared, "but we all, with open face, behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). Out of Zion He has appeared in perfect beauty.

It is prophesied in Isaiah 53:2 that the unbelieving world, when they saw Christ, would see no beauty in Him. Strange! Though He was all beauty, yet they saw Him and saw no beauty! They saw Him, and yet did not see Him. They did not see wood for the trees. What is your Beloved more than other beloveds? What is Christ more than an ordinary man? What is the gospel more than an ordinary story? What is the Spirit? What is truth? What is there in this faith and love, in this holiness and righteousness, in this peace of conscience and joy of the Holy Ghost? What substance is there in them? Where is the glory, and wherein is the excellency of them? Which way did the Spirit of the Lord come from me to you? You shall know in that day when you shall call to the mountains to fall on you, and for the rocks to hide you, from the face of God and the Lamb. We know whom we have believed. We know that we know Him. We speak that which we know and testify what we have seen. We have an unction from the Holy One, and we know all things. God has revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. We have a clear and certain sight. We do not see men as trees walking, with our eyes half open, but we see men as men, Christ as Christ, and truth as truth, in its full luster and evidence. This we have seen and to this we do testify, neither deceiving nor being deceived. We thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth,

that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes.

And as we see truth, holiness, and goodness in all their wonderful glory and beauty, so also we see folly, falsehood, and sin in its wonderful ugliness and deformity. Sin appears to be sin to us (Romans 7), folly to be folly, and falsehood to be falsehood. We see men as men, Christ as Christ, truth as truth, and holiness as holiness; and we see beasts as beasts, fools as fools, sin as sin, devils as devils, and hell as hell. We see all things as they are: temptations as they are and delusions as they are. We see what is under them, the hook under the bait, the sting in the locust's tail, the war in the devil's heart, carried on under his fawning face. We are not ignorant of his devices.

Sinners, cease wondering at the saints; let them be no longer for signs and for wonders in Israel; cease wondering *at* the saints and come wonder *with* them. Do not wonder that they do not speak as you, live as you, or run with you after the same follies and vanities. Oh, if you once come to see what they see, you will be a wonder to yourselves. Do not mock at their blessedness; blessed are their eyes, for they see. The blind envy, but do not disdain those who see. Do not say, "These men are either in a dream, or drunk, or mad." Take heed, and do not blaspheme the Holy Spirit; do not call His light darkness; do not put your darkness for light. Would you know, when these men testify what they have seen and heard, whether they are sober or beside themselves? Come and see. I do not say, "Stand and see." For you cannot see from the distance at which you are standing. Come near; come in and you shall see; you must see your blindness before you ever will see the

light. Oh, bewail your darkness and seek light! Seek and you shall see it.

“Son of David, have mercy on me!” said the blind man.

“What do you want Me to do for you?” replied Jesus.

“Lord, that I may receive my sight.”

Shall this be your cry? Oh, pity your blind soul! Oh, pray for eyes! Those of you who see, pity the blind. We have a little sister who has no breasts, a poor brother (yea, a world of them) who has no eyes. What shall we do for our poor brethren in the day that they shall be spoken for? Oh, be eyes to the blind; be a light to dark souls; let those who dwell in darkness see your great light. Sinners, those whom you persecute both pity you and pray for you. They pray to the Lord that your eyes might be opened. Will you say “Amen” to their prayers? Or will you say, “Lord, regard not their word; we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways”?

Christians, be marvels. You who have seen marvelous things, be marvelous persons; set the world a wondering about something. Let your light shine; let the light which has shone into your hearts shine forth in all your paths; let the Spirit of light within you be a Spirit of glory resting upon you. Once you were darkness, “but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light.” Be holy, harmless, the children of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

Beclouded Christian, you go on bemoaning and bewailing yourself, complaining that you are still blind. The light has shone into your darkness, but your darkness does not comprehend it; your eye is yet tender, and you can see but little. You see little of Christ: the sun is

but as a spark to you. You see little of sin: that mountain looks but as a molehill; it is neither clear nor dark, neither night nor perfect day. You hoped that long before this your scales would have fallen off and the veil would have been removed; but they abide upon you—you wait for light but behold nothing but obscurity! You wait for brightness, but walk in darkness; you go on, adding darkness to darkness—the darkness of sorrow to the dimness of sight. You fear that the gospel is hidden from you; you doubt that it is still night because it is not yet noon with you. But hearken: as little as you see of Christ, do you see so much that you prize, love, and cleave to Him above all? As little as you see of sin, do you see so much that you loathe and shun it above all things? Do you walk in that little light that you have? Do you love, long, wait, and cry for the light? Do you cry out, “Send forth Thy light and Thy truth; lift up the light of Thy countenance! Sun of righteousness, shine upon me. Why are the wheels of Thy chariot so long in coming? When, Lord? Make hast, my Beloved! Oh, that I might once see Thy face as the sun looking over the mountains!” Is this your voice? Are these the breathings of your soul? Be of good comfort, for these are the glimmerings and groanings of that Holy Spirit within you who has already delivered you from darkness and will bring you forth into His marvelous light. You shall know if you follow on to know the Lord. Arise, shine, your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Though yet, as to your sense, it is neither clear nor dark, neither night nor perfect day; in the evening it shall be light.

2. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of holiness and sanctifi-

cation. He is given as a Holy Spirit and as a sanctifying Spirit; therefore sanctification is called the “sanctification of the Spirit” (2 Thessalonians 2:13). He comes to change us into His own nature, to make us partakers of His holiness. He is a refiner’s fire and fuller’s soap (Malachi 3:2), to purge and work and wash off the filth and corruption of our natures. This is what is said He shall be to the Church in Isaiah 4:4: “. . . a Spirit of judgment, and a Spirit of burning,” to wash away the filth of the daughters of Zion and to purge the blood of Jerusalem, from the blood thereof.

He is a Spirit of judgment (Isaiah 32:15–16), that is, in the rulers of Israel, stirring them up to do justice and execute judgment so that the guilt of blood may be taken away. And He is a Spirit of burning, that is, in the hearts of the people of Israel, to consume and destroy the inward lusts of their hearts, that no more such wickedness be committed among them. This He is to every saint: a Spirit of judgment to give sentence against their lusts and to condemn them with the fire. These must be cast out. To the fire with them; away with them! Get ye hence, ye sons of the bondwoman; ye may not be heirs with the sons of the freewoman! The Spirit of the Lord first reveals and convinces of sin, judges between light and darkness, grace and sin, and then gives the sentence: “Away with these lusts; they must not be allowed to live.”

He is a Spirit of burning to execute this sentence, and to consume these lusts in the fire. The Spirit of sanctification is a Spirit of mortification. “If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body” (Romans 8:13). It is the Spirit that kills; the flesh profits nothing.

The Spirit implants the soul into Christ, gives it an

interest in His death, and brings it under the influence of His death. It is the death of Christ that is the death of sin; these thieves are crucified with Him. "Our old man is crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should no longer serve sin" (Romans 6:6). Hell did not know what it did when it crucified Christ; death, with all its armies, was put to death with Him.

The Spirit raises up another party in the soul, a party against a party, an army against an army; it brings grace in to take up arms against sin. Grace not only fights against sin, but is in the very nature of it the death of sin, just as the generation of a new form is the corruption of the old one. Humility is dead pride; meekness is dead sinful passion and frowardness; and patience is impatience slain.

The Spirit excites and stirs up the soul against sin; it sets it a praying against it. The Spirit of grace is a Spirit of supplication; it fetches down hail stones and thunderbolts from heaven to destroy these Amorites; it sets a watch against it, presses the soul to deal wisely with it to keep it low by cutting off all provision from the flesh, restraining and keeping it short of all those fleshly objects which would keep it in heart—and so it is starved to death.

It is true, our own greatest wisdom, watchfulness, abstinence, self-denial, and all external means alone will fall short of killing one lust. It is the Spirit who kills; without it, the flesh profits nothing. All external attempts for the mortification of the flesh are but a fleshly mortification. But if you, through the Spirit, mortify the flesh, pray in the Spirit, watch in the Spirit, curb and keep this body under control, still taking in

the assistance of the Spirit, then the flesh shall die.

Christian, you live in a weary land, and you have but a weary life in it; briars and thorns are with you; the Canaanite is yet in the land; you sojourn in Mesech and have your habitation in the tents of Kedar. And you have a Mesech and Kedar within you; you have armies of fleshly lusts within you which fight against your soul. You go mourning daily because of the oppressor, those spiritual wickednesses which lie in your heart and war in your members. You often groan and cry out to God, "Liberty, liberty; redemption, redemption! Oh, this proud heart! Oh, this vain heart! Oh, this earthliness! Oh, this fleshliness, this slothfulness, this enmity and rebellion against the law of my mind and my God! When I would do good, evil is present with me. I cannot do the things that I would do. I can with no peace serve or enjoy my God and my soul. My duties are either prevented or polluted, my comforts are either wasted or made to quite vanish and disappear. When I would serve my God, I instead serve my belly, my back, or my friends; when my soul is a little upon the wing and soaring in the upper region, it is immediately checked and pulled down to earth again. Oh, my pinioned, imprisoned soul! Woe is me, wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

Why, yet comfort your heart; the enemy flies upon you like a flood, but the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. You complain that your gold has become dross, that your wine is mixed with water, yea, with mud and dirt; yet the Spirit will turn His hand upon you and purely purge away your dross and take away all your tin. Though these briars and thorns are set in battle against you, yea, and against Him also, yet

He will “go through them, He will burn them together” (Isaiah 27:4). You complain that your garments are defiled, your glory is stained, your beauty is marred, and that the image of your God is so defaced that there is but a spot of it here and there left on you. You say that you are not comely, yet your Lord says, “Thou art all fair, O My love” (Song of Solomon 4:7). You cry out, “I am all foul, O my Lord.” You would be holiness to your Lord, but you are an offense to Him. Holiness is still your love, your desire, and your longing, but it flees from you; it is your wish rather than your hope. You can weep over your deformity, but you cannot weep out your deformity; your iniquity is marked before the Lord. If there is a little grace in you, yet there is such a weakness in its sinews, such a paleness in its face, that it is not likely to live; or, if it does live, how little hope there is that it should ever thrive or flourish!

Thus you complain; thus you go mourning, sighing, sinking and fainting in your mind. And every now and then you venture out a despondent prayer: “Lord, pity me. Lord, look upon my sorrow and my sin. Lord, wash me. Lord, help me.”

Why, the Lord God has sent you His help out of His sanctuary, and His strength out of Zion. The eternal Spirit has come down on purpose to give battle to the flesh, to subdue your iniquities, and to bring all those who rise up within you under your feet. You mistake yourself and your enemies if you think that they will be conquered by one blow of your arm. This kind does not go out from you this way. It is “not by might nor by power,” much less by weakness and by flesh, by any weak attempts of your own, “but by My Spirit,” says the Lord.

It is God's work to relieve and cleanse such a heart, to turn such a hell into a heaven. What you cannot do, being weak through the flesh, behold, He comes down to do it for you. You have proven your own weakness, now try everlasting strength. He stands at the door and knocks; hear His voice at the door: "Will you be made clean? Will you be made whole? Will you be delivered?" Open to Him, and with Him comes in deliverance. He stands at the pool stirring the waters for you; put in your crippled soul and be healed of all your diseases. If you say to Him, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," you shall soon have this answer: "I will, be thou clean."

3. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of truth and direction (John 16:13). He shall guide us by His counsel, and He shall lead us in the way that we should go. "They shall hear a word behind them, saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it,' when they are turning to the right hand or to the left" (Isaiah 30:21). He shall lead His people into all truth (to prevent mistakes) and into all righteousness (to prevent miscarriages). Nay, more, He shall not only be their star, but their strength too. He shall guide His people on and help them on. They shall be led by the Spirit, bound in the Spirit, and pressed in the Spirit. They shall be excited, assisted, and carried on in the power of the Spirit in the way that they should go. He will cause them to walk in the statutes of the Lord. Whatsoever your waywardness and your wanderings have been, whatever your feebleness and fickleness are, whatever false lights and false ways are before you, whatever temptations you meet with to turn you aside out of the right way, whatever doubts hence rise in your

heart, if you think, "I shall one day or another perish from the way and be a lost sheep at last," yet His conduct shall be prosperous and the event shall be sure. He shall so guide you by His counsel that He shall bring you to glory. He shall gather His lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom, gently leading those who are with young.

4. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of comfort and consolation. He is called the Comforter in John 16:7: "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you." He shall come unto them and abide with them to supply the absence of their Redeemer, to support them under their affliction, to witness their adoption, to seal them up unto the day of redemption, and to be the earnest of their inheritance (Ephesians 1:13–14).

"He shall take of Mine, and show it to you" (John 16:15), that is, "He shall show you not only the truths, those treasures of wisdom that are in Me, though that is especially intended, but of My love, My righteousness, My holiness, and all those treasures of grace and mercy that are laid up in Me. Whatever there is in Me that may stand you in any stead, yield you any relief or support, the Comforter whom I will send you shall bring it down to you. He shall take My blood and the pardons it has purchased for you, my prayers and intercessions that I am offering up for you; He shall take all those treasures of grace and everlasting consolations which are laid up for you with Me; He shall take what is Mine and show it unto you. As much as you have in the world to afflict and amaze you, as little as you have of your own to comfort you, either in your hearts, in your houses, or

among your friends, He shall show what I have for you to refresh you.”

O Christians, a sight of Christ in our sorrows, in our fears, in our thickest darkness—what daylight it would bring in! When you look into your heart, and are astonished and confounded at what you find there, at the blindness and the hardness, the poverty and the emptiness, the guilt and the guile, the pride and the peevishness, the evil thoughts, the vile affections, the filthy lusts that are swarming and working in you; when you look into the world and tremble at what you behold there, the malice, the craft, the power that is engaged against you, the furious spirits, the fiery tongues, the fierce looks, the violent hands that are flying upon you, and the little relief that the earth will afford you; when your heart faints and dies within you at the sense of your woeful and forlorn state, then take sight of what you have in your Lord, presented to you by His Spirit.

Look here, soul, at what your Jesus has sent down to you—a glance from His eye, a drop from His heart, a crumb from His table—and all to tell you, “I have not forgotten you. Behold the care I take of you, the treasures I have for you, to encourage your love and to reward your faithfulness.” Oh, how this will make all your darkness to depart, and will turn the shadow of death into the morning!

Thus is the Holy Spirit given to the saints to be the light of their eyes, the death of their sins, the guide of their ways, and the stay of their hearts. He is given to them to uphold their grace and maintain their peace, to subdue their enemies or their fears, to secure them from temptations or succor them when they are tempted, to wipe off their reproach or make it their

crown, to heal their diseases or make them their cure, to help their infirmities, work their works, make their yoke easy and their burden light, to turn their sighs into songs, to form their groans into prayers, to send them up to their Lord and bring down their returns, to comfort their hearts, and to establish, strengthen, and settle them so that they are neither offended at their chains nor moved from the hope of the gospel.

Chapter 4

The Earth in the Covenant

God has put the earth into the covenant. Though the saints do not have their reward in this life, their portion in this world, yet this world also is theirs. "The meek shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). "Things present, and things to come, all are yours" (1 Corinthians 3:22).

1. The good things of the earth.
2. The evil things of the earth.

1. The good things of the earth are theirs: "Houses and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, now in this time" (Mark 10:30). "Length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor" (Proverbs 3:16). Houses, lands, riches, and honors? Where are they? Who are the poor of this world, the homeless, harborless, and friendless? Who have woe, want, shame, and sorrow? Who are strangers and pilgrims, dwelling in tents, driven into corners, into dens and caves, hunted up and down upon the mountains of this earth? To whom is hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, but to the meek of the earth? Is this to inherit the earth? How can all be theirs when nothing is theirs? Yet the meek do inherit the earth, for:

(1) They shall ever have as much as will suffice them, and that is as much as all. They shall not want

anything, but what they may want “your Father knoweth that you have need of these things,” and He knows how much they need. More than need is more than enough; and more than enough is a prejudice. Many men have too much: too much money, too much esteem, too many friends, more than they can bear; so much as to sink them and drown them in perdition and destruction.

Christians shall have enough; they shall never be in such a needy state, but whatever is necessary for them in all the earth they shall have. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof”; and He has said that those who seek Him shall not want anything that is good (Psalm 34:10). If the whole world can supply them out of all its store, they shall be supplied.

(2) What they have, they have a better and further title to than any others in the world. Though the dominion is not founded in grace, yet, by grace, it is established. What they have descends upon them not barely by providence, but by promise (Hebrews 1:2). Christ is heir of all things, and they are fellow-heirs with Christ. A little coming from the promise has more in it than the greatest abundance that is only handed down by common providence; that which comes in from the promise comes in with a blessing. If you have but a handful, you have a blessing in your hand; if you have but a corner, you have a blessing in your corner. A little from love is a great blessing. You have God in every morsel you eat and in every drop that you drink. A drop from heaven will turn your bran into the finest flour and your water into wine.

Oh, what serene and quiet lives, how void of distracting care might the saints live in the world! What

are the burdens that gall our backs? What are the briars that tear our flesh? What are the thorns that pierce through our hearts ordinarily, but the cares of this life? What shall I eat? What shall I drink? Wherewith shall I be clothed? Where shall I dwell? How little have I for today? What about tomorrow? What about hereafter? How shall I secure what I have? When this is gone, how will I be supplied? Thus we go on, piercing ourselves through with many sorrows. Our cares for supply eat up what we have; our thoughts cut deeper than our wants; we cannot at so cheap a rate fear, as we often bear the want of all things.

And why do you take thought? "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." And He has said, "All this is yours, and you shall lack nothing." You have not only your providence to live upon, but you also have the promise before you, and this has all things in it: all is yours. What about tomorrow? What about the hereafter? Well, what does the promise say? It says that you shall lack nothing, neither you nor yours. "I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor their seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:25).

Do you have two worlds made sure to you, and can you want? You may as well whine and make a pitiful cry at a full table—"Oh, where shall I have my next morsel"—as under such a full promise cry out, "Where shall I have my next meal?" Oh, how much beneath the spirit of Christianity are the carking, anxious lives of too many Christians. The truth is that you do not believe! You talk of your covenant rights, of your part in the promise, of living by faith; but where is any such thing? Can you trust God for your souls, and can you not trust Him for your bodies and for your children?

Believe, and you will make as much, and be satisfied as well, with a penny in the promise, with a meal in the promise, with house in the promise, as with a penny in your purse or a meal in your cupboard.

And what do you get from all your cares? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature, one farthing to his store? If you lose nothing by them, you may surely put all your gains into your eyes; tears and trouble are all they will add to you. Be quiet, and nothing will ail you; let no straits sting you before they are; want not before you want; let not the winter's frost nip you while it is yet summer.

Know when you are well and be content. All is yours. If you inherit from God, you inherit the earth; nothing of all its store shall be kept back that is necessary for you. Only you must not look to be your own carver. Your God will carve out what you need. Let enough suffice you and you shall never have too little. You shall never have so little but you may say, "This little bit is enough."

What if what you lack in water is made up in wine? What if you have but little in bran, but more in flour? A short meal with a smile from heaven you may account as no fast but a feast; a little oil in the jar, how far will it go with a smile, the blessing of the covenant? If the upper spring runs freely, you may abate a lesser spring.

Let my Beloved comfort me with His apples and stay me with His flagons, and let the rest be as little and as coarse as it will. Let the promise be my portion; let the pipes be kept open to my soul, and then the least pittance for this carcass shall suffice me. Oh, my Lord, let me feed with Thee, and I will not quarrel, whatever my fare is. Let my portion be from Thy table, and then, be it much or little, I will not care. Let me hear Thy voice

say, "I am thine, and with Me all things," and I am content to be at Thy allowance. Let Thy deed of gift stand sure to me; put in my children's names there, and I ask no more for myself or them. Hold your peace and keep silent, O my anxious soul; know when you are well off. In nothing be anxious, for the Lord is at hand.

2. The evil things of the earth are theirs. The cross is in the covenant. "If his children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes" (Psalm 89:30-32).

(1) The covenant has its cross. The doctrine of the gospel is the doctrine of the cross; the preaching of the gospel is the preaching of the cross (1 Corinthians 1). The mysteries of a crucified Jesus, and of His crucified saints, fill up the whole New Testament. The cross is not only imposed upon the saints as their burden, but bequeathed unto them as a legacy. It is given unto them as an honor and a privilege. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29). It is joined with the most glorious gift, the gift of faith. Yea, and it is a greater gift than this. To suffer in faith is more than to barely believe.

(2) By virtue of the covenant, the cross is a blessing. The Word is now changed from "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" to "blessed is every one that hangeth on this tree." Our Savior said, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My name's sake" (Matthew 5:10-11).

QUESTION. Where is the blessedness? Wherein does it stand?

ANSWER. It stands in these things:

In the separation of the cross from the curse.

In the sanctification of the cross to its ends.

In the proportioning of the cross to their needs and strengths.

In the special comforts of the cross.

The cross is separated from the curse. It is something to be able to say under the sorest of afflictions, "This scourge is no scorpion; it is no curse, but a cross." Our Lord bore both the cross and the curse together, and that made His cup so bitter. But now He has divided them. The curse He has left upon sinners, and laid only the naked cross on His saints. The crosses of reprobate sinners are all curses. Every affliction is a curse; there is wrath in all their sufferings; there is venom upon every arrow; there is vengeance in every dart; every rod is a serpent to them.

You who are of the number of Christ's implacable enemies, when He comes to fall upon you and to grind you under His hand, would have a word of comfort spoken to you in your sorrow. No, no, there is no comfort that can be spoken. You may say of every dart with which He smites you, "This is sent of God to revenge Himself upon me." The crosses of the impenitent are all curses, but the saints' curses all come to be only crosses. Though men curse you, the Lord will not curse you; whatever troubles come upon you, though there is vinegar in them, yet there is no venom in them; though there is anguish in them, yet there is no wrath in them; though they are "ill-looking," there is no ill-will in them: they come upon no ill intent, nor shall they have

any ill issue. The smitings of the wicked are to you as the smitings of the righteous were to the psalmist, a precious balm. "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness, it shall be an excellent oil; it shall not break mine head" (Psalm 141:5). And you may say, "Let the wicked smite me; let them smite me with the tongue, with the fist of wickedness, or with whatever they will, it shall not break my head, much less my heart. It shall be a kindness to me, an excellent oil."

The cross is sanctified to its ends. It has many holy and excellent ends, and it shall prosper; it shall accomplish its ends. The cross is laid on the saints, sometimes to prove them, sometimes to reprove them, to humble and purge them; and whatever it is sent to them for, it shall not return in vain. As the Word, so the rod, shall accomplish that for which He pleases who sent it. "By this the iniquity of Jacob shall be purged" (Isaiah 27:9).

The cross is proportioned to their needs and strength. "I will correct thee in measure, but I will not leave thee altogether unpunished" (Jeremiah 30:11). Just so much as will serve shall suffice. The wise physician has respect both to the need and to the strength of the patient. "I will not contend forever, neither will I always be wroth; lest the spirit should fail before Me, and the souls which I have made" (Isaiah 57:16). The apostle tells the saints in Hebrews 10:36 that they have need of patience; and their experience tells them that they have need of something to exercise their patience.

Their needs are different: some are knotty pieces and need more; others are tender, and upon them less will serve. The stubborn child must have more stripes; the shaking of the rod will do more on some spirits than the smart of it will do on others—but all need

something. Let him only who is without sin say, "I have no need of shame and sorrow." The Lord will neither overdo nor underdo. Every one shall have his load and no more; no more than they can bear, and no less than their need requires.

The Lord does not delight in His children's tears. He does not willingly afflict, nor grieve the children of men; but He would rather that they cry than that they perish. Do not wonder, Christians, that your tender Lord puts you to pain, and that your pains are so sharp and so many. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things." It is a mercy that He will chastise you; you may list your corrections among your mercies. His breaking you is a blessing; His wounds are your cures; and by your own, as by your Lord's stripes, you are healed.

And someday, when you review and read over all His darker providences, and behold the wisdom and tenderness which is tempered with His severities, evidences in His laying so much on you, yet no more than was needful, you will then write down with the psalmist: "Thou in very faithfulness hast afflicted me."

O my Lord, let me not lack Thy staff or Thy rod, neither a friend nor an enemy, neither a calm nor a storm, neither food nor medicine. If my disease is too strong for my medicine, let me have a stronger portion; if my wanton heart will not yet be tamed, put on more fetters, a heavier load. Put load upon load, weight upon weight, and, till Thou sayest that it is enough, let me never say that it is enough. Let me never be sick of my remedy till I am cured of my disease. Let me rather suffer by the hand of a devil than perish by the hand of a lust. Spare me not, Lord. Cease not to smite Thy servant till Thou

hast thereby smitten down all my enemies. Peace, plenty, ease? What? That I may have more to spend upon my lusts! To wax wanton against my God! Such peace I will not have!

Pain, trouble, want, anything rather than peace, upon such terms. Correct me, O Lord, yet in judgment, but not in fury, lest I be consumed and brought to nothing.

The cross has its special comforts. “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings, which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation: and our hope of you is steadfast; knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation” (2 Corinthians 1:3–7).

The comforts of the cross are often the sweetest and the fullest that the saints will ever taste on this side of the crown. The first draught is often bitter. Green wood is heavy, and necessarily so. Some medicinal waters work by their weight; it must be a heavy yoke that will tame an unruly neck; if it does not gall, it will not heal. It is the sting of the rod that stills the child. Do not think your burdens will lie easy when first laid on, and do not think much of them if they do not. The first conflict with temptations may put you to a harder brunt than you are aware. It must be so that it may be for your

good afterward. If my medicine will work, I am content if it makes me sick for awhile. Tribulation works patience, and it cannot do that unless it hurts. It is observable that it does not say that the cross works patience, but tribulation, the pinching of the cross, or the pain the cross puts us to, this is patience: quietly bearing that pain which the flesh, when touched, puts us to. When we feel the thorns and the nails, when the iron enters into our souls, when it pricks and smarts, then it will work.

The green tree is heavy. A prison or a wilderness will look uncouth at first, but when your Lord comes in and visits you, then the sweetness and the pleasure comes too. The more frowns at the threshold, the more kisses you may expect afterwards. Christ does not always meet His saints on the porch. The devil's parlor, the inner prison, is his banqueting house; the dungeon is His wine cellar; there the saints drink and are satisfied. The stocks and the racks are the organs that make the sweetest music. Many a saint has been sadly disappointed at first, hoping to meet Christ at the door; but, behold, a dreadful sight! Sin lies at the door. All their sins, all that they ever did against Christ, all their unthankfulness, unfaithfulness, unkindness, and rebellion against their Lord stand and stare them in the face.

Christians, beware of sin now; it will meet you in the day of adversity; the cross will tell you all that you ever did. "I remember my faults this day. I remember all my pleasant things: my sabbaths, my ordinances, my liberty, the dear society I once enjoyed but then trifled and wasted away. Oh, my pride and my wantonness, my idleness, my earthliness, my hypocrisy; why have you

come to frighten and torment me! Lord, where have I come? Oh, how dreadful is this place! Is this my prison? Are these my prison comforts? Oh, what a hard lodging I am likely to have with such companions! Oh, the wormwood and the gall! A dark habitation, a bitter cup indeed is now given to me. Is this the comfort of the cross? Are these the sweets I hear so much about?"

Do not be dismayed; as roughly as you are handled at the door, it is better within. The devil is going out in this storm. Your sins meet you now, but it is only to shake hands and part; after this agony, expect the angels to come and minister to you. Do not complain if you find no sweetness; you have not drunk deeply enough. The sugar may come in the next draught. In the next room you may meet your Lord, and then tell me if it falls short of all that has been told to you.

But shall I give you a more particular view of some of the special comforts of the cross, or our sufferings for Christ? I shall only premise a few words to let you understand what I mean by the sufferings of Christ. We suffer for Christ when we suffer for Christ's cause; when we suffer because we would be Christians who are holy and righteous; when we suffer because we will not sin. We suffer for Christ when He cuts out a cross for us and lays it on us. Christ calls us to suffering when He gives us a choice either to suffer or to sin, when our backs or our consciences must suffer, when we must suffer for Him or He must suffer by us. "If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross." Christ is not, and Christians must not, be prodigal of their blood. Their blood is His; their estates, their names, their liberties, all are His, and to Him they must be accountable how they part with them.

We cannot call every cross our cross. We must not leave our way to seek a cross. When Christ has laid a cross in front of a Christian's way in which he should go, and he must either make a stand, torn aside, or submit his neck unto it, then He says, "There is your cross; take it up and begone." Whatever cross is before you, if you have a way open to avoid it without sin, that is not your cross; you may not take it up, or, if you do, you will have no thanks for your pains.

Christians should be wary here. Though it is an argument of a gracious spirit to be always of a ready and forward mind to suffer for Christ; and when He demands, "Who will go with Me? Who will bear My cross?" cheerfully to answer, "I will go, Lord; let me bear it"; yet we should take heed that, as we do not hang back when Christ says, "Go," neither do we run ahead before He sends us. Though it is a high honor to suffer for the gospel, yet no man takes this honor upon himself but he who is called of God. I would not go to a prison without a warrant from heaven, lest, if my suffering is of my own doing, I am left there to shift for myself. If Christ were to meet me in prison or in banishment, and demand of me, "What are you doing here? How did you come to be here?" what would I say if I could not say, "Lord, Thou hast brought me here"? Or at least that my conscience or my duty has brought me here?

But understand me here with this caution about a situation where the cause is mainly Christ's, but the call seems doubtful. If the sufferer has carefully inquired into the mind of God, truly follows the dictates of conscience, sincerely desires the honor of Christ and His gospel, though he might err in some circumstances of his case, and for fear of iniquity should

choose affliction, when possibly he might have avoided both, God will surely wink at his mistakes, own his sufferings and greatly accept and reward his readiness of mind.

But take heed of careless or willful errors; take heed of preparing nails for your own cross, of gathering thorns, scourges, or spears for your own head or heart. Take heed both how you shun, and how you embrace a suffering state.

Do not go into suffering due to heedless mistakes; do not go into suffering for the sake of good company, much less upon any carnal designs. Do not let your pride, your ostentation, or the bias of any fleshly respects lead you into the house of correction, lest you find these to be the rods to lash you with when you are there.

Christians, consider if there are not sometimes some uncomfortable miscarriages in this matter, and whether it has not been the lot of some of Christ's people (with how much justice or charity let the Lord be the Judge) to be censured and reproached as unfaithful or fearful on no other account but for walking by this rule: not to go to prison without a warrant, that is, not to cast themselves into a suffering state while God has left a way open to escape without sin. I confess that the more dangerous and more ordinary error is on the other hand, however: we are more apt (especially when afflictions are more sharp, and bite in earnest, and then will be the great trial) rather to sinfully shift ourselves away from them than unwarrantably to run ourselves toward them. But let it be considered whether we are not in error on this hand also.

It is true, where the cause is the same in the main,

different circumstances may make that to be one man's sin which is another man's duty; yea, that may be a duty to the same man at one time which, supposing him to be in different circumstances, might have been his sin at another. And it is not infrequent, through the unavoidable difference of our apprehensions and the difficulty of discerning our cases, that Christians who are equally careful to know and do the will of God, when the case and the circumstances also are most the same, judge differently about their call to suffering. Here let no man be so tyrannical to others as to expect that they should go cross to their own consciences to comply with their brethren's judgments and consciences. Let us not put one another on this unmerciful necessity, either to break our peace with God or our friends. Let it be sufficient for us faithfully to follow our own light, without judging or quarreling with those who are otherwise minded. Beware of bitterness. Be not cruel to consciences; smite not with the tongue, nor let an evil thought arise in your own heart upon any such account as this. Your arrows will recoil and fly back in your own face. Do not blemish your own sufferings by blasting your brother's liberty. Do not let the wariness of some be condemned as cowardice, nor the forwardness of others as pride or hypocrisy, but let us be clothed with humility. Let us put on a spirit of self-suspicion and charity to our brethren, and let this Christian frame be the more studiously maintained by how much the more our differing practices, according to the variety of our apprehensions, seem to condemn each other, and so provoke to uncomfortable schisms and contentions. And be aware of how much more pernicious such schisms are likely to prove than the matter at hand.

These things premised, I shall now show you what the special comforts of the cross are. You may expect your suffering state to be sweetened with:

- A more plentiful diffusion of special grace. Grace is a comfort; it is never better with the saints than when that flourishes. The joy of the harvest is howling to the joy of grace. He is not a Christian who cannot say, "It is summer," when these flowers appear in their beauty. Flourishing faith and love have their glorious joys (1 Peter 1:8). The springs of grace are a resurrection from the dead; and there is no such spring as after a shower. Oh, how green the herbs then look! The withering flowers then lift up their heads; never do so many stars appear, nor with such luster, as on a frosty night. Grind the spices and their fragrance flows out. Saints are never more saints than in the house of bondage or in the land of their pilgrimage. Our winter weather makes us warm at heart. "As our outward man perishes, our inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16). Persecution is the time of life. "We are persecuted to death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Corinthians 4:11). Decayed soul, comfort your heart. The cross comes, and now you shall live; now you shall recover. This weakness will strengthen the things that remain and are ready to die. Now come faith, love, patience and courage, that have so long hung on the wing; lift up your head; the day of your redemption draws nigh; this night is your day of hope.

- A more clear revelation of special love. "Dost Thou love me, Lord? That is enough. Let me hear Thy voice; let me see Thy face. Kiss me with the kisses of Thy mouth. Thy lovingkindness is better than life; send

forth Thy light and Thy truth, and let these tell me that Thou lovest me. Thy love-sick spouse is sick for love. Oh, when wilt Thou say, 'Thou knowest that I love thee'?"

And hear Christ say in reply, "Come up with Me on the cross; that withered tree bears more blossoms of love than all the green trees of the field." The whole gospel is hung upon the cross. Where our Lord hung is where sin is nailed, the curse vacated, death vanquished, and where pardon, peace, joy, and glory are shown forth in open sight. There is love with all its tokens; go up and take. Fear not to be baptized with your Lord's baptism, nor to drink of His cup; this cup also is the communion of the blood of Christ. He says, "Come with Me into the wilderness; there I will speak comfortably to you. When you most want it, where you will most value it, there I will show you My love."

Our Lord loves it when His love is not slighted. The full soul loathes the honeycomb. You have too many lovers to bid your Lord welcome. He keeps His best wine till all your own has soured; then it will relish, and then you shall have it. His oil is for your wounds. The child never knows so much of the parent's heart and compassion as when it is sick or in distress; then every look is love, every word is pity and compassion. Oh, the compassion of Christ's heart towards His afflicted children! When you know hatred, then look to know love. When you are persecuted, when you are cast out and trodden under foot of men, then He will take you in and cherish you.

- A more full manifestation of glory. There is no prison into which the saints are cast but has a window in the palace. Calvary becomes a Tabor, where they have

a sight of their Lord in His glory. Golgotha becomes a Pisgah, where they may look over Jordan into the land of promise. Have you known but little of heaven? You have not yet been in the deep.

Of Stephen, the first gospel martyr, it is said, "He looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55). And 6:15 says: "All that sat in the council saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel." He had such an admirable splendor and serenity in his countenance that he appeared more like an angel than a man. Oh, what a heaven was there within that cast out such a divine luster on his face! His joy was too big for his heart, so much so that his face must have its share. Yea, his very adversaries beheld the glory of God.

He looked up and saw heaven opened. Looking down he might have seen hell opened, and all his tormentors around him, the jaws of death ready to devour and swallow him up. But, looking up, he saw heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Oh, there He is, for whose sake all this is! My Beloved, my Beloved is yonder. Behold the region of light, where this dark temptest is wafting me." His hell and his heaven met, but the light swallowed up the dark. Hell ceases to be hell where heaven appears to be heaven. This is the portion of suffering saints.

When you read what is written of those armies of martyrs who have gone before, of their unspeakable joys, of their undaunted courage, of their admirable boldness, of their cheering their friends, confounding their foes, rejoicing in their stripes, singing in their stocks, leaping in their chains, boasting of their bonds, kissing their stakes, embracing their flames, riding up

in triumph in their chariots of fire, not repenting of their faith nor accepting their deliverance—what does this say but that their eyes as well as their anchor are within the veil, where Christ, their Forerunner, has gone before them? Oh, who would not stand with them! Who would fear sufferings?

Soul, what are you afraid of? Where are you running? From what are you hiding yourself? What is your ease, your liberty, or your quiet? Why are you so loath to be loosed from this shore? Launch forth into the deep. Fear not transportation into your house of bondage. Once you are there, look up and you are in paradise.

Such are the sufferings of Christ; this is the cross of the covenant.

- A more manifest exhibition of Christ's special presence. This comprehends all the rest. "I am with thee to save thee" (Jeremiah 30:11). "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isaiah 43:2). Through fire and water we must go, but wherever we go, He will go with us. When the bush was on fire, the Lord was in the bush; when the three children were in the furnace, the Son of God was there with them. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted, He saved them by the Angel of His presence; in His love and His pity, He redeemed them, and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old" (Isaiah 63:9). Though "all men forsook me . . . the Lord stood with me and strengthened me" (2 Timothy 4:16–17). The saints shall never have this charge to lay against the Lord: "I was in prison, and Thou visitedst me not."

He is ever with us, to bear our burdens and ease our shoulders, to plead our cause and maintain our innocence, to wash our stripes, to wipe away our tears, to heal our wounds, to bind up our broken bones, to revive our weary spirits, to perfume our prisons, to lighten our dungeons, to lead us in our wanderings, and to converse with us in our solitudes. He is ever with us to give down from above in divine smiles, in lapses of spiritual joys, assurances of dearest love, tenderest care, melting sympathy, gracious acceptance, or whatever may be lacking here below—to preserve us from falling by the presence of His grace till He presents us faultless before the presence of His glory. Oh, it is good being with Christ anywhere!

Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest and causest Thy flocks to rest at noon; yea, where Thou art, whether feeding or fasting, rejoicing or mourning; where dost Thou cause Thy flocks to rest? For wherever Thy flocks are, Thou art not far away. Tell me where Thou feedest, where Thou art. My Beloved that feeds among the lilies feeds sometimes among the thorns. When His love is a lily among thorns, there He feeds. He feeds among thorns. He feeds with His sheep. He feeds with His lambs wherever they feed. When darkness, desolation, devils, and death feed upon them, even then He feeds them, and takes His feeding with them.

Oh, wherever my Lord is, there let my lot fall. Let me dwell among the thorns, so my dwelling is with my Lord among the lilies. Let me wander among the mountains while He is with me telling all my wanderings. Let me be scourged, so that He will wash my stripes; let me weep, so that He will wipe away my tears. I

would not do without wounds while I have such oil to pour upon them. Come, all you thieves and robbers, I fear you not; my dear Samaritan comes by. Come, you bulls of Bashan, you boars of the forest; let my Beloved kiss me with the kisses of His mouth and I will not regard it if you kick me with your heels. O my Lord, bring me where Thou feedest; let me live in Thy face; let me feel Thy smiles upon my heart; let me love Thee. Tell me that Thou lovest me; remember, pity, accept, and take care of me, and then choose my condition, my dwelling, and my entertainment for me.

Fainting Christian, lift up your eyes and comfort your heart. Here is what you fear and torment yourself with. Here is the inside of that formidable cross, the light side of those dark clouds, the sunny side of that shady, thorny hedge that so wounds and afflicts your heart. Fear not, be strong and of a good courage. You still say, "Woe is me; I can find no such thing." And I say, "Why are you in covenant?"

Believe and all is yours. I believe, and therefore I have spoken. Believe, and you shall see the salvation of God. As sure as the cross is yours, all the comforts of the cross are settled upon you. Read over all the gracious words you have before your eyes; view all the instances of suffering saints who have gone before you, on whom these good words have been made good—in conspicuous increases of divine grace, in the signal discoveries of divine love, in the clearest and fullest revelation of divine glory, in the intimate sense of the divine presence, quickening, enlarging, encouraging, supporting their spirits in the darkest dens, in the sharpest conflict, with reproaches, mockings, bonds, banishments, torments, and deaths—and know that all

these things are written for your learning, that you, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.

Read Isaiah 51:7-8, 12-13: "Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings; for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but My righteousness shall be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation. I, even I, am He that comforteth you; who art thou that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass? And forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? And where is the fury of the oppressor?"

Where is the fury of the oppressor? Where is it *not* rather? Is it not in the house and in the field? Is it not in the city and in the villages? Is it not upon my cattle, my purse, my body, my children, and upon my friends? But when you remember the Lord your Maker, the oath, the promise, and the covenant of God, the presence, protection, and comfort of your God, then, in truth, where is the fury of the oppressor?

Chapter 5

The Angels of Light in the Covenant

The angels of light are in the covenant. “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Hebrews 1:14)? While our Lord Himself was sent down to minister, behold, His servants are to be ministered unto; the angels are made their ministers. “He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways” (Psalm 91:11). They have received a charge, and they have great advantages for keeping the charge of the Lord.

1. They are mighty. “Bless the Lord, ye His angels that excel in strength” (Psalm 103:20). An angel is more than an army. What slaughter they angels have made in the armies of the aliens! A hundred fourscore and five thousand Assyrians are slain by one angel of the Lord, when encamped against Judah (Isaiah 37:36). It is hard service indeed that is too hard for an angel!

2. They are numerous. There are great multitudes of them. “Thousands of angels” (Psalm 68:17), “a multitude of the heavenly host” (Luke 2:13). An angel is more than an army; but what, then, is an army of angels!

3. They are faithful. They can do much for the saints, but will they do it? Yes, they are faithful. “They do the commandments of God” (Psalm 103:20). God bids them keep, and they are faithful; they will keep His sheep. We are taught to pray that the will of God may be

done on earth as it is in heaven, that men may be as faithful as the angels of God.

4. They are favorites; they behold the face of God; they dwell in His presence; they are admitted to stand before His throne; they can be heard; they have favor in heaven, and therefore such power on earth. "Take heed ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10). It is as if Christ is saying, "Touch not My anointed; let My little ones alone; take heed how you offend them, for their angels are before My Father, and are mighty with Him to engage His power for their aid and deliverance."

Oh, the great security of the least of saints! These mighty ones, these multitudes, these faithful ones, these favorites of heaven, the holy angels of God, have all received a charge from the Lord to preserve and defend them. "Lord, open their eyes that they may see. Behold, the mountains full of chariots and horses of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings 6:17).

Suppose a mighty prince should commit any subject of His to a potent and faithful lifeguard with this charge: "Look after this man; keep him in safety; see that he comes to no harm; whoever offends him, you defend him. Wherever he goes, you go with him; wherever he lodges, stand guard about the house; while he sleeps, you keep watch. See that he lacks nothing, and that no hurt comes to him." If this were your case, in what great security would you count yourself? But, oh, what is a lifeguard of men to a guard of mighty angels! Fear not, little flock; in heaven your angels behold the face of God; on earth they have pitched their tents round about you.

Chapter 6

The Powers of Darkness Delivered Over in the Covenant

The powers of darkness are delivered over in the covenant, Satan and all his instruments. We are all naturally in bondage to Satan, held “captive by him at his will” (2 Timothy 2:26). We were his prisoners, his slaves, and his vassals. By the blood of the covenant, the Lord has brought forth his prisoners and redeemed his captives (Zechariah 9:11). He has also spoiled principalities and powers, and led captivity captive. In this covenant there is deliverance of the prisoners, and a delivery over of them by whom they were held; a jail delivery, and a delivery of the jailers too into their hands; and they are delivered over bound, the god of this world in chains, limited, spoiled, banished, and cast out. “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). The gates of cities were anciently their special strength, and in them their great councils were held for contriving and managing all their concerns. Here “hell” is understood the whole infernal corporation, all that belongs to that dark region, Satan and all his instruments, the dragon with his armies, the serpent and all his seed. By “the gates of hell” is understood the power and policy, the combination and counsels of Satan and his whole party. These gates of hell shall not prevail against it, that is, the Church; neither against

the Head or any member of it. That they shall not prevail denotes two things:

1. They shall fight against it. They are all combined and listed against the Church, making a war upon it. Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof. Down with it, root and branch; let it not have a being; let it not have so much as a name under heaven. Particular quarrels there may be between devil and devil, Herod against Pilate and Pilate against Herod, yet the tails of these smoking firebrands are united against the Lord and His anointed ones, against their profession, against their religion, against the soul of every saint. Whatever veils or specious pretenses they varnish their quarrel with, this is what lies at the bottom of all their counsels and machinations, wherein all the aims are concentrated: to root out godliness and the professors of it from the earth, to deceive and destroy souls forever.

2. Though they shall fight against them, yet they shall not overcome. They shall not prevail against it, that is, not finally; in the end, the victory shall be the saints'. Jerusalem shall be "a burdensome stone to all people" (Zechariah 12:3).

(1) Such a stone they shall not be able to lift or move out of its place. It shall stand as a rock, against which the impetuous waves may dash themselves, but they cannot move it.

(2) They shall not be able to bear it. It shall crush those who burden themselves with it. Those who shake the church are pulling a house down upon their ears, a rock onto their loins. It shall break the backs of those who contend against it. They shall be cut in pieces, says the text, who burden themselves with it,

even though all the earth, yea, and hell too, are gathered together against it. It is a vain design that Satan and his partakers are driving on. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing" (Psalm 2:1)? It is a vain design, and it is a fatal design to themselves. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psalm 2:9).

In the first dawning of this glorious daylight, it is promised that the seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15). "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). Cast out? From where? Why, cast out of his kingdom, out of his hold, cast down from his throne and dominion. His prison is broken, and now the prey is taken from the strong; the captives of the mighty are taken away.

But how was this done at the death of Christ, to which these words refer? Does not Satan still reign? Is he not still the god of this world and the prince of the power of the air? Yea, what hold he still has of the saints who are on the earth! What a tyrant he is to them! How he entangles and ensnares them! What havoc he wreaks on their conscience, lording it over them, leading them captives by lusts and temptations! What a strong party he still has within them, bearing arms against their Lord, fighting against their souls! What sad spoil he makes upon their grace and upon their peace! They cannot rest because of him day or night, abroad or at home, alone or in company; he is ever following them; wherever they go, the devil is at

their backs; they cannot pray, read, spend a thought, cast a look, or dispatch a sigh towards the Lord without Satan standing by to resist and hinder them.

What a yoke he has upon their necks! What clogs and weights he still has upon their loins! How they mourn in their souls while he vexes them from day to day! How they groan and travail in pain, sighing in themselves and waiting for their redemption! How is it then said that he is now cast out? Because he has received his judgment. "The prince of this world is judged" (John 16:11). Now is the fatal blow given; now is the serpent's head broken, though he still may bruise and hang on the saints. The blow he leveled at our Lord has rebounded on his own head. Though he is as Gad, a serpent in the way, yet you may now tread upon the serpent and it shall not harm you. The strong man is now bound; if he is a god still, he is a god in chains, a prince in fetters. He must ask leave of your Father before he can touch one hair on your heads. He cannot tempt you, nor cast a stone at you, nor shoot an arrow at you, without a commission from heaven. The devils are subject to you. He is cast out, and in your Lord's name you may cast him out. "In My name shall ye cast out devils," out of possessed bodies, out of possessed souls. You may be instruments to bring many a soul to repentance, so that they may recover themselves out of the snares of the devil, who are held captive by him at his will. Every sinner who is converted by you, have cast a devil out of that soul.

Though he is an adversary still, yet he is such an adversary as may be resisted. "Whom resist steadfast in the faith" (1 Peter 5:9). And if you will resist, he shall flee from you (James 4:7). Stand, and your enemy will run.

Nay, more, he is not only a conquered enemy, but he has been made your servant. This viper shall yield you medicine against his own poison. His smittings shall be an excellent oil; the messengers he sends to buffet you, the thorns he sticks in your flesh, shall prevent greater evils. The very destruction he intends to bring upon you shall promote your salvation. "Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:5). Behold, the devil is the Church's servant, and such a servant as in their present state they cannot well do without. A commonwealth may as well want a jailer or hangman as the church a devil. Behold, Satan divided against Satan; the devil without against the devil within; the destroyer of souls becomes the destroyer of sin. "Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh." Though much against his mind, his hand is against his own party. He is made to kill his own friends, which otherwise would kill the soul. Whether he will or not, the very tormentor is made a savior, "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Christians, as much as you feel of the devil's malice, you could ill do without his service. There is many a soul lost and undone by sleeping that might have been recovered and roused by a raging devil. His winds shall blow away your chaff; his floods shall wash away your filth; his earthquakes shall open your prison doors; his tempests shall drive you to harbor. Some men need a tempest to save them from a wreck.

Nay, once more, he is not low enough yet, he shall be yet brought lower. You have assurance of his total and final overthrow. "The God of peace shall bruise

Satan under your feet shortly” (Romans 16:20). “The devil shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone” (Revelation 20:10). It is but a little while and, when he has done his work, he shall be sent to his place, where he shall be shut up and a seal set upon him, when he shall come out no more forever. He shall tempt no more, vex no more, deceive no more, destroy no more, and torment you no more; he shall be thrust out; he shall be chained up; the tormentor shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Stand, Christians; stand your ground a little while; follow your work; hold up your holy profession; hold to your holy course; keep your hearts; keep your garments; keep your armor on; keep corruption under; resist temptation; bear affliction; hold on to faith and patience; fight against your adversaries; watch with your Lord this one hour, and, behold, He who shall come will come. He comes quickly, and he who is in the world shall be consumed with the breath of His mouth and destroyed with the brightness of His appearing. He shall be cast out; he shall be cast down, and rise no more forever.

Chapter 7

Death in the Covenant

God has put death into the covenant. "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, all are yours" (1 Corinthians 3:22). "Death? There is a great purchase!" you will say. "What advantage is that?"

Yes, death is an advantage. To die is gain, for:

1. The commission of death is changed. It was once, "Take him, jailer; away with him; carry him down; to prison with him, there to be reserved for the judgment of the great day." Now it is, "Take him, janitor; take him, porter; take him in; give him an entrance into his Master's joy."

Death does but take the bride when she is ready and lodges her in the chamber of the bridegroom; and it was this that made death the apostle's desire: "I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Philippians 1:23).

2. Death is conquered. What does this mean? It means that your enemy is yours; other than this, your enemy is conquered to you. A conquered enemy is made a tributary. Death is disarmed; it has lost its sting. When a serpent has lost its sting, you may take it into your bosom.

He who can say, "Death, where is thy sting?" may go on and add, "Thanks be to God, who hath given me the victory." A signet sent from heaven with a death's head

is a precious token. Come, Christians, be of good courage; set your feet on the neck of this king of terrors.

3. Death is at once the destruction of all our enemies. Once death has done its office upon us, then farewell Edom, Ammon, Amalek, and Egypt; farewell, pricking the briar and grieving thorn. They Egyptians we have seen and feared and felt, we shall never see again forever. Death destroys our last enemy by destroying itself; it has its welcome and farewell at the same moment. Death dies with us, for once we are dead we die no more forever. Mortality is swallowed up by life; death is cast into the lake of fire, for that is its region. Those who are there die and die and die again, over and over, forever and ever. But as for the saints, death only sets them on the banks of that good land where it cannot follow. Our Lord, by death, His as well as ours, has delivered those who, for fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Christians, you may now not only with patience, but with desire, expect the assault of this king of terrors. What! Shall tribulation, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, sorrows, fears, and mortality die with me? Yea, shall sin die with me? Then I welcome death! Lord, strengthen me this once; let me die with the Philistines. Would it be good for you to be with your Father, in the bosom of your bridegroom, in the chamber of your Lord and love? Would it be a mercy to you to weep no more, fear no more, suffer no more, be tempted no more, and sin no more; to be unclothed of corruption, and be clothed with immortality and incorruption? Then bid death welcome.

Blessed souls, when you come ashore, and see the

light, the love, the rest, and the glory that is on the other side, then you will more fully understand what this means, "Death is yours." He knew a great deal who said, "I cannot tell you what sweet pain and delightful torments are in Christ's love. I often challenge time, that holds us asunder. I have for the present a sick life, much pain, and much love-sickness for Christ. Oh, what I would give to have a bed made for my wearied soul in His bosom! Oh, when shall we meet? Oh, how long is it to the dawning of the marriage day? Oh, sweet Lord Jesus, take big steps; come over the mountain in a single stride! Oh, my Beloved, flee as a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of separation! Oh, if He would fold the heavens together like an old coat, and shovel time and days out of the way, and come away!"

Chapter 8

The Kingdom in the Covenant

God has put the kingdom into this covenant. “Theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou city of God. I might here enlarge in describing the glory of this kingdom, but when I have said all, I must at last leave it within the veil, and therefore shall only tell you what the apostle said, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). When, by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, the eyes of your understanding are opened, you shall know “what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Ephesians 1:18).

Chapter 9

All the Means of Salvation in the Covenant

Last, God has put into the covenant all the means of salvation, and all things necessary to obtaining the everlasting kingdom.

All the outward means of salvation: ordinances, the Word, the sacraments, and prayer; church officers: prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Ephesians 4:11–12; 1 Corinthians 3:22).

All the inward means of salvation: Every grace, every duty; our obtaining the one and performing the other, and perseverance in both—these are all comprehended in the second part of that great promise: “They shall be My people.” This, though it is properly the matter of our own stipulation, also the Lord Himself undertakes.

When God says that we shall be His people, He is signifying and saying two things:

First, “I will account you and reckon you as Mine. You shall have the privilege and the blessing of My people. I will set you apart and separate you to Myself out of all the tribes and kindreds of the earth. I will avouch you as My portion and peculiar possession. I will set you as the apple of My eye, as a seal upon My heart and upon My arm.

“I will mark you out for the people of My love. Of you I will take care; for you I will provide; with you are My delights; over you I will rejoice; with you I will dwell, and you shall dwell with Me forever.”

Second, “I will not only reckon you for My people, but I will undertake for you that you shall consent to Me, accept Me, own Me, follow Me, and cleave to Me as My people. I will not only separate you to Myself, but I will fashion you for Myself. I will sanctify you, guide you, teach you, and help you. I will fulfill in you all the good pleasure of My will. I will work all your works in you. I will avouch you for My people, and you shall avouch Me for your God. You shall love Me, fear Me, and obey Me. I will keep you from falling and preserve you to My heavenly kingdom.”

Particularly, the Lord has promised to give us eight things: a new heart, a heart to know Him, one heart, a heart of flesh, a heart to love the Lord, a heart to fear the Lord, a heart to obey the Lord, and a heart to persevere to the end.

First, a new heart. “A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you” (Ezekiel 36:26).

This new heart is the genus of the following graces, and therefore the less shall suffice to be spoken of it here. This new heart is not physically new in regard to substance, but only morally new in regard to qualities.

This new heart signifies both another heart and a more excellent heart. Numbers 14:24 says that Caleb had another heart. And this other heart is declared to be a more excellent heart than was in the rest of the people. While they either did not follow the Lord, or only followed haltingly, he followed the Lord fully. “A man of understanding is of another spirit” (Proverbs 17:27).

There is another heart that is not a new heart. Nebuchadnezzar had another heart, but not a new one; the heart of a beast for the heart of a man. An evil heart

grown worse is not a new heart, but the old heart grown older.

We read in 1 Samuel 10:9 that when Saul was anointed king God gave him another heart; this was a more excellent heart than he had before, and yet not the heart promised here. He gave to him another heart, that is, the spirit of government; the heart of a king to replace the heart of a private person; a more public, raised, heroic heart; the heart of a king, one fitted to the station and office of a king.

The excellencies of this new heart are not natural, but spiritual excellencies, as will appear more in the handling of the particular graces promised, and are such as fit us for our new state, our new work, and our new reward.

- For our new state. Christians are made the children of God, vessels of honor, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; and God gives us a heart answering to the dignity of their high calling.

- For our new work. A Christian has other work to do than other men. While the work of other man lies all here below, on this earth, in their fields and vineyards, and so on, the work of a Christian lies above, with our God and our Jesus, and within us regarding our nobler and immortal part. Our work is spiritual, and such is the heart that is given to us.

- For our new reward. God intends better things for us: a better portion, a better hope, better comforts, joys, and delights here, and a better inheritance hereafter. He will not put His new wine into old bottles.

The excellencies of this new heart may be reduced to these three:

1. A new light, revealing the dignity of our state, the

spirituality of our work, and the glory of our reward.

2. A new law, or frame, or bent of spirit, inclining, disposing, and fitting us to all that which we are made for. And this is the meaning of God's writing His law in our hearts. The law written in the heart signifies not only the law made known in the heart, but the heart made suitable to the law, and adapted to obedience to it. There is a kind of connaturalness between the new heart and all that the law requires.

3. A new power, enabling us for our new work. We have all this mentioned in one Scripture, 2 Timothy 1:7. God has not given us a "spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." A sound mind is the new light; a spirit of love is the new law or frame; and with these He gives us a spirit of power.

In summary, this new heart is the divine nature, the image of God renewed, the life of God begotten, and Christ formed in us. It is a new heart after God's own heart, containing in it all those graces of the Spirit wherein stands our likeness to God, and our capacity of serving and enjoying Him. This is the heart the Lord will give us. "A new heart will I give unto you."

OBJECTION. Against all those glorious things promised before, I can hear this objection: "A kingdom promised? Glory, honor, and everlasting blessedness granted? Alas, what is all this to me? To whom is it promised, and upon what terms? When I consider what is required, it is all the same to me as if there had been nothing promised! The way to this blessedness is too narrow; the gate is too straight for me ever to hope to enter. Whatever the price is, the strictness and severities of a Christian course, the very foresight of them amazes and confounds me: live a new life, deny myself,

take up my cross, follow Christ, spend my days in fasting, praying, and mourning! Live by rules, look out for every step, every word, and every thought. All these things are against me!

“A new life, a new course! If this is it, I will never make it. No man who has tasted the old life will endure this new way. He will say that the old one is better. It is all the same to me as if there had been no Christ, no gospel, no kingdom promised, if it cannot be obtained upon any other terms than these. I might as well sit down just like I am and run the risk of what might follow as to feed myself with hopes of that which I see I can never obtain. If I move heavenward, the stream carries me down; if I take up a thought, make an essay, or set a foot forward towards this new course, I find my old things hanging on my heels. My old customs, my old companions, my old pleasures, eases, and liberties quickly pull me back.

“Oh, what shall I do? I must be undone. I must be a lost and condemned wretch! Yes, I would be happy, but I cannot be holy. I dread and often tremble to think of losing Christ and the blessings of His gospel, but this wretched heart is too hard for me and will not come towards Him. I am ashamed and plagued when I think of what I am likely to lose, and for how little; but I cannot help it. The way is such that this foolish heart will never endure it!”

ANSWER. Hearken, soul; the Lord who has called you to this new course will give you a new heart. And there is nothing required in a holy life that is so irksome and contrary to you but this new heart is so fitted and suited to it that it will become easy to you. Its pain will be pleasant; its severity will be liberty; its very

drudgery, as you count it, will be a great delight. "I delight to do Thy will, O God, Thy law is within mine heart" (Psalm 40:8). And of the renewed soul it is said, "His delight is in the law of the Lord" (Psalm 1:2). In the original, his will, his heart, is in the law. The law is in the heart, and his heart is in the law. God's will and his are the same. Whatever God bids him do, his heart bids him do, and his hand will never say no to his heart. He who delights in the law, and as it is a law commanding such things, will never grudge to do what it commands.

Where it is a pleasure to be commanded, it is no pain to obey. Whatever work the law cuts him out is work he loves. Bid him pray, bid him watch, bid him walk humbly with his God, and it is work he loves; it is in his heart to do it. Bid a saint draw nigh to God in any duty, and it is as if you bid the hungry to eat, the thirsty to drink, the naked to be clothed, the beggar to come for alms, or the poor laborer to do a day's work. Bid a Christian deny himself or crucify his flesh, and it is the same as if you bade him deny his enemy or revenge himself on his enemy. Such revenge is sweet, but, oh, how pleasant it is to him to be called to a life of praise! To live above in the light, in the love, and in the joy of the Lord! To be searching, studying, looking into, and admiring those everlasting treasures of spiritual and heavenly delights laid up in God; to behold His face, live in His presence, and dwell in the light of His countenance!

It is true, there is some remaining difficulty and irksomeness in the sweetest works of religion since the heart is unrenewed and is still carnal. "Deny myself? Mortify lust? Forsake my companions? Withdraw from

iniquity? Why, what is this but to cut off my hand, to pluck out my eyes, or to tear my flesh?

“Walk with God? Seek His face? Dwell in His presence? That is all the same as if you bid me feed on air, wander on mountains, or dwell in the wilderness! I can find as much pleasure in the one as in the other.”

Yes, it is so indeed, so far as you remain carnal. The Lord God and all His ways are a wilderness, a land of darkness to you; but as much as you have of this new heart, so much ease and pleasure you will find in them.

Despondent soul, you say that you are yet ignorant, and have little knowledge of the way of the Lord. But behold a new light to lead you. You are yet carnal, and your heart is contrary and ever quarreling at it; but the new nature will end the old quarrel. You are weak and impotent and the work is too hard for you. But what will it be like when you are endued with power from on high?

O friend, would you indeed live this new life? Then get this new heart. “But there lies the difficulty,” you say. “How or where shall I get it?”

Why, have recourse to the covenant; there it lies for you.

“But how shall I get it there?”

Why, has the Lord promised to give it to you? Take the word from His mouth and put it in your own; turn the word of promise into a prayer. Does He say, “I will give?” Then let your soul answer, “Give, Lord, give this new heart. I am weary, Lord, and you are weary also of this wicked heart. Ease Thyself and me. Take away this heart and give me a better one.”

Turn the word of promise into a prayer, and then turn the word of prayer into a word of faith. He says, “I

will give," so let your faith say, "If Thou wilt give, then I shall have it. Since Thou hast said so, Thy servant may also boldly say that Thou wilt do it. Thou wilt give me a better heart. So farewell to my old sins, lusts, and companions; farewell to my old pleasures and ways."

Now seek for heaven in earnest; now welcome the straight gate, the new and living way. Old things are passed away, all things shall become new. Turn the word of promise into a prayer; turn your prayer into a word of faith, and God will turn the word of faith into a word of command.

"Be it according to Thy word, O Lord. Let there be a new light; let there be a new law; let there be a new power; let there no more be a spirit of fear in this heart, but rather a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind."

When God said in the creation of the great world, "Let there be light, let there be a firmament, let there be a sun and moon," it was so. So when He shall say in the new creation of this little world, "Let there be light; let there be love; let there be power; let Us again make man in Our image and after Our own likeness," it shall be so. The Lord has said, "I will." Let your prayer say, "Do it, Lord." Let your faith say, "Thou wilt do it," and God will say, "Amen. So be it."

Chapter 10

A Heart to Know the Lord

“I will give them a heart to know Me” (Jeremiah 24:7). The knowledge of God is the first excellence of the new heart. As in the old creation, so it is in the new, as was said before, the first word is, “Let there be light.” There is not so glorious a preeminence of day above night as the knowledge of God is above the ignorance of God. As the firmament is without a sun or the body without an eye, so is the soul without knowledge. What this knowledge of God here promised is will appear if we consider its object and its act.

The object of this knowledge is God, not only the nature or being of God, manifested in His essential perfections, His glorious attributes, His infiniteness, eternity, omnipotence, in His personal relations, and the subsistences in the Godhead, but God in Christ, God in covenant—yea, the whole mind and will of God, all that which God has revealed to us as our duty or happiness.

God known in the heart is the whole Bible opened: the law opened, the gospel opened, duties, comforts, and privileges made manifest. God known in the heart is Christ opened in His sufferings, in His satisfaction, in His Spirit, in all the riches of His glory—the whole mystery of godliness revealed. God known in the heart is the heart opened: man made known to himself, all the depths of the heart, all its deceits, and all its facul-

ties and powers, with their motions, operations, inclinations, and their rectitude or obliquities. It is heaven opened, the crown and the kingdom known, everlasting rest, glory, honor, immortality brought to light. It is hell opened, sin known, the devil known, wrath, temptation, the curse, and eternal fire known. All this, all that God is and all that He has revealed in His word and works, are the object of this knowledge of God.

The act of knowing God is to apprehend or understand God, and the things of God. "Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me" (Jeremiah 9:24). "That ye may comprehend with all the saints, what is the height, and length, and breadth, and depth, that ye may know the love of Christ" (Ephesians 3:18–19). This apprehension of God does not barely note our having received some natural or metaphysical notions of God and the truths that are in Him, but further it notes:

An approbation of Him, approving or liking the things that are excellent. "That your love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment, that ye may approve the things that are excellent" (Philippians 1:9–10).

An appropriation of Him. This is knowing God as a reconciled God. He is God, and God to me; good, and good to me; wise, and wise for me; my Lord and my God. To know God in Christ, reconciled through Christ, propitious through Christ, is saving knowledge. To know and not possess, to see and not eat, to know an angry God, a wrathful God, a God lost; to know goodness, mercy, lovingkindness, compassion, all-sufficiency, and to have your heart pull back—this will not help you; the damned know these things and die.

An affection for God. As "those that know Thy name

shall trust in Thee” (Psalm 9:10), so those who know Thy name will love Him, fear Him, rejoice in Him, and bless His name. To know and hate God, to know and condemn God, to know and flee from God, to know and blaspheme and curse God—the devils know these things and tremble.

But that which especially distinguishes this saying from common knowledge is its power and its savor.

- Its power. The knowledge of God is mighty. Paul said that his “preaching was not weak, but mighty in you” (2 Corinthians 13:3). It has a transforming power and a fructifying power.

The knowledge of God has a transforming power. “We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image” (2 Corinthians 3:18). “Be ye not conformed to this present world, but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your minds” (Romans 12:2). By the renewing or the renovation of the mind this change occurs, and works it further upon the whole soul; this new light is the new creature. Old things pass away and all things become new where the mind is savingly enlightened.

God known in the soul is God united with the soul. Christ revealed in the heart is Christ formed in the heart. There is life in this light, which is no other than the light of life. The knowledge of God comprehends, is involved in, and spirits and animates every grace and duty. As the same soul in the eye sees, in the ear hears, in the palate tastes; as the same juice which is in the olive fatness, in the figtree sweetness, in the oak strength, in the rose fragrance, and in the lily beauty, so the same grace which in the mind is light, in the heart is love, holy desire, holy fear and holy joy. One

man has said that as feeling is inseparable to all the organs of sense—the eye feels and sees, the ear feels and hears, the palate feels and tastes, the nostrils feel and smell—so knowledge is involved in every grace. Faith knows and believes, charity knows and loves, temperance knows and abstains, patience knows and suffers, humility knows and stoops, repentance knows and mourns, obedience knows and does, compassion knows and pities, hope knows and expects, and confidence knows and rejoices. Therefore we believe, love, obey, hope, and rejoice because we know.

God gives us this knowledge as the eye of our souls, and by that eye He enters with all His power and glory. “That ye may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:19). Daylight is not that light we receive by reflection from the moon and stars, as secondhand. When the sun rises and comes in among us, then it is day; when the Sun of Righteousness rises in the heart, there is the light of life. God is, and dwells in this light; and where God dwells, every unclean thing vanishes.

Can darkness dwell with the sun? Can death dwell with life? According to the measure of the manifestation of God in us, so far forth is sin necessarily vanished. You are but the carcass of a Christian; the light that is in you is darkness, the life that is in you is death, if you are not renewed in the whole man after the image of Him who created you. If Christ is not formed in your heart; if the love, humility, meekness, patience, compassion, and holiness of the Lord Jesus is not begotten in you; whatever you know, you know nothing as you ought to know. If you have all knowledge and have no charity (and so, if you have all knowledge and have

not humility, meekness, and holiness, you are nothing), you are but as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

Doubting Christian, who complains of and bewails your ignorances, and fears that you do not know God, look upwards where His glory dwells. Lift up your eyes and see; or, if you cannot see, lift up your heart for eyes. "Lord, where dwellest Thou? Let me see Thy face; show me Thy glory. Thou pitiest the blind; let the eyes of this blind person be opened, and the tongue of this dumb person shall be loosed and speak forth Thy praise."

Look upward, and if you do not see your God, look inward. Can you see His face in your soul? Can you see His image on your heart? Can you behold in this glass the glory of the Lord, and find yourself changed into His image? Comfort your heart: however short-sighted you seem to be, however dim your candle burns, however weak in the knowledge of God you complain you are, you have seen God; you have seen His face in peace. That God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has shone into your heart, and has given you the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

The knowledge of God has a fructifying power. This sunshine makes a fruitful soil. My desire for you, said the apostle, is "that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful unto every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness" (Colossians 1:9-11). And, "being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and

praise of God” (Philippians 1:11). Full of light and full of love, faith, patience, humility, and fruitful in every good work, “a good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things” (Matthew 12:35). A good man has a good treasure within him: a treasure of heavenly wisdom, of divine truth, a treasure of light. God has shone into his heart, and he is filled with all the fullness of God. And what is laid up within, he brings forth without.

An evil man has an evil treasure. Satan has been filling his heart. Acts 5:3: “Why hath Satan filled thine heart?” The treasures of darkness are there, a treasure of lust and lies. Falsehood and folly are found with him; these treasures of darkness within bring forth darkness. Dark souls lead dark lives; their way is dark and their deeds are darkness. Oh, how fruitful sinners are in their unfruitful works! They are “filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity,” and so on (Romans 1:29–30). Their hearts are full, and thereupon their mouths are full, their eyes full, their hands full. Their mouths are full of cursings, their eyes full of adultery, their hands full of violence—they are fill with all unrighteousness. “O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil [having such hearts] speak good things” (Matthew 12:34)? All is evil that comes from you, and how can it be otherwise? Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

And, in like manner, O generation of believers! How can you, being good, but bring forth good things? Or how can you say or think there is a treasure of grace, a fountain of light within, when no streams spring

forth? Penury in the life speaks no great plenty in the heart. The truths of God within you are the seeds of God, the good seed that He sows in His field. Where there is good seed sown in good ground, you will expect a fruitful harvest. A barren crop says that either this is barren soil or that no good seed has been sown there.

“Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments” (1 John 2:3).

“We know God.”

Oh, are you sure of it? Are you not mistaken?

“No, we are not mistaken; we know that we know Him.”

How do you know it?

“Why, how are trees known? It is not by their fruits? How can a person know that this is indeed the tree of knowledge? You see what fruits are hanging from it. We keep the commandments. Here is obedience growing; here is holiness, righteousness, and mercy. Doubtless this is the right tree, for behold all the commandments, the two tables hanging upon the boughs of it, not broken, but kept and observed.

“We may as well say that obedience is not obedience, that duty is not duty, that faith, love, humility, and patience are not what they are, as say that the tree that brings forth this fruit is not the tree of knowledge. We know that we know Him because we keep His commandments.”

Where these fruits are not found, where there are nothing but shows, sounds, and painted fruits; where there are nothing but the fruits of unrighteousness, contention, strife, covetousness, sensuality, and the like, he is very ignorant indeed who is not able to say,

“Whatever I am ignorant of, this one thing I know: I do not know God.”

Christian, do not boast of what you have, but consider what you do; try your head by your heart and your heart by your hand. Judge your light by your love and your love by your life. Do not say that God has shone into your heart unless your light shines, unless your works shine before men. “The path of the just shineth” (Proverbs 4:18). It is but a form of knowledge that brings forth but a form of godliness. He who holds the truth in unrighteousness does not have the truth in him. You say that you know the Lord, but what do your ways say? Do these say the same things? Action is the best interpreter of the inner man. Feel the pulses of your heart; what watchfulness, what holiness has your knowledge brought forth? Have you received the Spirit who yet walk in the flesh? What! Heaven in your heart, and nothing but earth in your hand! Holiness in your heart, glory in your heart, and nothing but filth or froth on your tongue! What! A heart so full and a life so empty! How can these things be? Has the light in your heart given laws only to your heart? Or does your heart submit while your tongue rebels, and you kick with the heel?

Woe to us, Christians, that sinners should be so full and saints so empty; that they should speak what they have seen with their father, and we should speak no more of what we have seen with our Father; that oaths, lies, blasphemies, scoffs, and cursing should be so rife in their mouths, and that truth, goodness, holiness, blessings, and praises should be no more in ours; that there should be so much guile on their lips and so little grace on ours; that the shade should be more fruit-

ful than the sun; that the good should be only the barren ground; that their habitations should be so full of violence, oppression, and wantonness, and that there is no more mercy, righteousness, and sobriety in ours.

Woe to us, that we know so much to so little purpose; that we should be bushels that hide, and not candlesticks that hold forth the candle of the Lord which He has lit up in us! Oh, how many dark souls might our candle lead onto the sun! The light that is in Israel might do much to turn Egypt into a Goshen. Speak, Christians; speak what you have seen, and testify what you believe; bring forth out of your treasure; pity the blind world, or at least be more helpful to one another. Instruct as you have been instructed; convince as you have been convinced; comfort as you have been comforted by God.

Outdo sinners; do not let their mouths be as full of cursings as yours are of blessing. While their mouths are so full of blasphemies, let it be said of you as was said of your Lord, that your lips are full of grace. Good words are not wind; you may reckon them not among the leaves, but the fruit. While you are speaking of the things of God, you are therein doing the will of God. I agree with the proverb that says, "The greatest talkers are not always the greatest doers." But it is also true that he is seldom a good doer who has nothing to say.

There is a speaking which is our doing; there is a speaking in a way of boasting, to magnify and set up ourselves—beware of that. And there is a speaking used to edify, to build up our brethren. When we are speaking to instruct, to convince, to awaken, and stir our spirits and the spirits of others to work, we are then doing our work.

Speak, Christians, and speak the things you know. But let me add this: let your lives speak also, and not only your lips. If you would not be vain talkers, all tongue, let your lips speak, yes, but let your hands and your feet speak also; let your works and your ways speak the wonderful things of God. Bring forth what you have received. He who is all inside and he who is all outside are equally nothing. The one is a shadow without substance; the other's substance is but a shadow. The one is a deceiver, the other a deceived soul. The one boasts himself, the other thinks himself something, but neither one of them is anything.

Christians, be full of good fruits, and you will make full proof that your wisdom is from above. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

Weak Christian, who knows little of God, and calls that little nothing, while you doubt that the light has even shone into you, do you walk in that little light that you have? Do you shine as a light in the world? Do you know how to be holy, humble, harmless, and honest? Do you live under the power of those truths you know? Do you fear the Lord and obey the voice of His servants? Trust in the Lord, and throw yourself on your God. You are a child of light, though, through your trembling heart, you walk in darkness. Having not seen, yet you love; and, believing, you shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

- Its savor. 2 Corinthians 2:14: "And maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place." The knowledge of God is sweet-scented; it casts forth a fragrance wherever it comes. It brings a gratefulness to the heart and leaves sweet impressions on the senses of the saints. They taste that the Lord is gracious. As their

breathings go up as sweet incense, so His beams come down with similar sweetness to them; as it was said of Christ, so of God. The name of the Lord is “as ointment poured forth” (Song of Solomon 1:3). Why, what is His name? This is His name: “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin” (Exodus 34:6–7). Oh, what a bundle of myrrh, what a garden of spices is here enclosed! What a sweet-smelling savor it sends forth to those who have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil!

The name of the Lord is a precious ointment, and the knowledge of God is this ointment poured forth. Where God is known in the soul, there His sweet savor is shed abroad. The thoughts of God are precious; the ways of God are pleasant to those who understand them. His fruit will be sweet unto your taste. Oh, the ineffable pleasures of religion! The carnal world counts it as a jejune and insipid thing! They cannot taste, and no wonder, for they do not see the things of God; nor can they, because those things are spiritually discerned. Let God be savingly known, and then you will find that the savor of His knowledge is. This light is sweet; it is a pleasant thing to behold the sun. O my soul, let your walks, let your dwellings be in the garden of the Lord. Let the sun shine, and the smell of His spices will flow unto you. O my Lord, shed abroad Thy sweet ointment; let the smell of Thy garments refresh my soul. Let me taste and see; let me see, and I shall taste that the Lord is gracious.

Vanish, all you carnal pleasures and sensual delights; your rosebuds rot, the flowers of your garden

wither, and dead flies are in all your ointments. The light of the Lord has turned all your glories into darkness. The waters of the sanctuary have made all your waters bitter; there remains no pleasure in them.

He who has known the Lord has, more or less, according to the measure of His knowledge, received also the relish and sweetness of it. And what he has taken in, he sends forth before men. He has received, and he is a sweet savor. As are the preachers, so the practitioners of piety are a sweet savor of Christ unto God, and hand down the sweetness of God unto men. They are of savory lips and savory lives; the savor of their graces is shed abroad in the churches of Christ.

Carnal hearts send forth a stench instead of a sweet smell. They are all rottenness, and the savor of a sepulcher is all they have: their ways stink; their breath smells of a rotten heart. Yea, the very best they have stinks: their pleasures stink; their garments, their galantry, their powers, perfumes, and sweet odors stink of their proud, vain, and sensual hearts. But, oh, what a scent their oaths, curses, scoffs, and lies send forth! Sinners, learn to know the Lord, and this will quickly change your savor. And you who know anything of God, do not think that your knowledge is saving until your souls have received in His knowledge, and your ways send for the savor of it.

The last of these, the savor of this knowledge and the pleasure that it brings to the soul, is of uncertain significance. There may be some pleasure and joy that arise from the common knowledge of God; and there is sometimes but little taste where there is true religion. But, taken in conjunction with the former, where is found both the power and the savor, the evidence of its

soundness will be more full. Find all together—this transforming, fructifying, and savory knowledge—and you may rest satisfied that this is the saving knowledge of God. And of this is the promise, “I will give them a heart to know Me.”

Oh, how much need we have still to wait, and beg for the accomplishment of this promise! How little sound knowledge is found among us! Some are weak in knowledge who have been long taught of God, and yet are not taught of God. God has been teaching them, but they have not learned of Him. They have had a good master, but have been bad scholars. We call a man of low understanding a weak man. Oh, how many weak souls there are, even among professing Christians, who, for the amount of time they have had should be teaching others, yet need to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God! “Some men have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to their shame” (1 Corinthians 15:34).

Others are men of knowledge, but it is weak knowledge; they know much, but to little purpose; their great knowledge has little power in them; their lusts are too strong for their light. “I spake unto thee with a strong hand, and instructed thee” (Isaiah 8:11). If God has spoken to these men, yet His hand has not instructed them. The nail has not been struck deeply enough; it dwells in the head only, and has not reached the heart. They have an eye, but they are far from having a heart to know the Lord. Their knowledge does not lead them on to religion, but must serve them instead of religion. It takes all the religion they have just to know what it is. It is made to serve, and not suffered to guide and govern; to serve their turns, their interests, their pride, and

their covetousness. Their knowledge of God makes them devils; it helps them to play the hypocrite, to be deceivers of others, and even their own souls. It will seek out acceptable words for them, put prayers into their mouths, praises on their lips, spiritualize their language, furnish them with savory discourses, and carry them plausibly through duties, but, though God has the name, though souls have the name, yet they are all but sacrifices to their lusts. The knowledge of God humbles, but this knowledge puffs and lifts up; it puffs them up in their own thoughts, and lifts them up in the thoughts of others. And, when it has done this, it has done them all the service they have for it to do, unless, it may be, they have some worse work for it, such as to make rents and divisions in the Church of Christ, to maintain disputes, to cavil and quarrel, to divide and make parties, or to make twenty religions out of one, till at length they make that one to be none.

So while the apostle says, "Some men have *not* the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame," I say, "Some men *have* the knowledge of God; I speak this to their shame!"

What? The knowledge of God and no more humility! The knowledge of God and no more charity! I speak this to your shame. Can you have the faith of Christ and have respect for persons, the knowledge of God and respect for parties! Can you know God, and yet divide, scatter, and confound those who are of God! Yea, and contend and quarrel about such small differences, as we have seen some do—"Here is God, and not there. He is with us, and not with you"—when, it may be, a little charity would tell you that, for the most part, He may be with both. So much uncharitableness makes it ques-

tionable whether He is with either! The more such men pretend to the knowledge of God, the greater is their shame.

Friends, beware that you are not undone either by your ignorance or your knowledge. Love not darkness, and do not call darkness light. Do not call that the knowledge of God which is not; misuse not that which is.

Have you no knowledge? What! And such a promise before you as "I will give them a heart to know Me . . . they shall all know Me?" What! And such a gospel before you, the work whereof is to open blind eyes and turn sinners from darkness to light! Open your mouth, sinner, and God will open your eyes. "Ask, and thou shalt have; seek, and thou shalt find." See, do not wink, at the light that shines round about you. Do not love darkness if you do not love death. It is the essence of eternal life to know God in Christ (John 17:3). What, then, is ignorance? There is death in your heart if there is no light in your eye.

Have you knowledge? Be thankful and be humble; be not high-minded, but fear; prize it, but do not abuse it. Have you received the knowledge of the truth? Live under the power of the truth you know; resign yourself up to it and to its transforming power. Give it leave to work, and to change you into its own image. Let this new light make you into a new man with regard to its governing power; let it teach and rule you; let it teach as one who has authority; let it rule till it has put all your enemies under your feet, till every thought and imagination, is brought into captivity to Christ, and every high thing is made low.

Do not let the light of the Lord help you to do the

devil's work; let it not be fodder for your flesh lest it be fuel for your flames; let it not repent God or you that ever you had such a talent committed to you; let it neither be loss to God, nor the eternal loss of your own soul. He who has appeared on earth in beams of light will be revealed from heaven in flames of fire, rendering vengeance to all who do not know God, and who do not obey the gospel of Christ. Woe to those who neither know nor obey! But, oh, what of those who do not obey though they know!

Christians, know the Lord, but know and fear; know and serve, know and honor your God. Know God and know yourself, your sin and your misery, your dangers and your temptations; know and mourn; know and be ashamed; know and fear; watch, fight, and overcome.

Know God, and know His will. Know your duty and your way, your privileges and your opportunities, your race and your crown. Know and do, run, suffer, wait, hope, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Know God, but God in Christ: God reconciled, God pardoning, absolving, and accepting through Christ. Know and believe; accept, adventure upon, resign, and commit yourself to Him. Know your God and behold Him; look upon your God in His power, in His wisdom, in His holiness, in His goodness, in His lovingkindness, and in His mercy. Behold Him in His Word, in His works, in His providence, in His saints, in your soul, and in His Son. Set Him before your eyes; look upon your God, and never stop looking till you are changed into His image and satisfied with His likeness. And, when you are brought up to this, then He has done for you what He promised: "I will give them a heart to know Me."

Chapter 11

One Heart

“I will give them one heart” (Ezekiel 11:19). We read in Hosea 7:11 that “Ephraim is like a silly dove, without heart.” He has no heart at all; none for his God, that is, as good as none. And in Psalm 12:2, we read that Israel had a double heart, a heart and a heart, more hearts than one. But, says the Lord, “I will give them a heart, and it shall be but one, and no more.”

I will open this as respects each particular Christian, letting the significance it has for Christians collectively pass. This one heart may be taken as being opposed to a wavering heart, a divided heart, and a double heart.

This one heart is opposed to a wavering, unstable heart (James 1:6–8). Wavering-minded men have almost as many hearts as they live days or meet with situations. They have hearts that change with the weather, that tack about with every wind that resolve and repent, that choose and change, that, like a wave of the sea, is tossed about with every wind. You may call this either many hearts or no heart, as you will. Thus this one heart is a fixed, established, resolved heart. “It is good that the heart be established with grace” (Hebrews 13:9). Grace fixes and establishes the heart, and brings it to a consistency in itself, which before was anything or nothing.

This one heart is opposed to a divided heart (Hosea 10:2), a heart cut in two, as it were. Some say that the

devil has a cloven foot, but whatever the devil's foot is, to be sure his sons have a cloven heart—one half for God, the other half for sin; one half for Christ, the other half for this present world. God has a corner in it, and the rest is for sin and the devil. Thus this one heart is an entire heart; all the powers of it are united within itself, and go the same way. God has the whole heart. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name" (Psalm 103:1). All its springs are in Him, and for Him all its streams bend their course.

This one heart is opposed to a double heart, or a hypocritical heart, properly so called in Psalm 12:2–3. That is what is called "a heart and a heart," a heart in the breast and another in the tongue. Our outside is presumed to be an expression of our inside; what we say, we pretend to be our very hearts. It is the very heart in the tongue that speaks, the heart in the eye that weeps, the heart in the hand that works, and the heart in the foot that walks so. It is not so with the hypocrite: he shows another heart in his tongue, in his ways, than that which is within him. He has a heart and a heart; one in his tongue or life, and quite another in his breast. His course speaks him to be another man than he is. And this one heart signifies a single or a plain heart.

To sum it all up, this heart is such as (1) pitches on one end; (2) has but one thing to do; and (3) does what it does.

1. This heart pitches on one end, and God is that end. There it wholly bestows itself. "I am Thine" (Psalm 119:94), and there alone it takes up its rest. "And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee" (Psalm 39:7). God is both its work and its wages. To please God is its

whole business, and to enjoy God is its happiness. This is the mark it has in its eye; this is the scope of all its motions: to honor and enjoy God. This it wills, this it loves, this it desires, and this it designs, hopes, and labors for: that the Lord may possess, and be the possession of it. Particularly, it gives God the place of the end and the power of the end.

It gives God the place of the end. God is its first and last end. He is first in the eye, and it looks no further. It makes Him not only the chief, but, in a sense, its only aim. It will have no other God, and, therefore, no other end but the Lord. It makes all other things not only to stoop and stand by, but to serve Him. "Get you hence; stand off," is its language to all that stands in His place or stands in His way. Whatever honor evil men pretend to have for the Lord, they merely make Him a servant to their other gods. They will take up religion, but it is only to serve their own turns, to bring about their carnal ends. "They serve not the Lord, but their own bellies," said the apostle in Romans 16:18 and Philippians 3:19. Nay, they make the Lord their fellow servant; they serve, and their religion must serve, their sensual appetites. He who will have so much religion only as he may live upon (which is the measure of most) makes the Lord no longer his God, but his servant. A sincere Christian will set God upon the throne, and make all other things his servants or his footstool. Whatever will not be serviceable must be trodden in the dirt. Nothing will be loved and embraced but what will set God higher, or bring God nearer to his heart.

It gives God the power of the end. The end has a fourfold power: it draws, it directs, it governs, and it re-wards.

(1) The end draws the heart to it. God, who is a Christian's end, is also his beginning. Our first step heavenward we owe to the influence of heaven upon us. "Draw me, we will run after thee" (Song of Solomon 1:4). "No man can come unto Me unless the Father which hath sent Me, draw him" (John 6:44). Nothing but God will do it, as nothing will draw the soul another way. The pleasures of sin, the wages of unrighteousness, are poor and low baits to entice a soul away from God, that is, so far as it is renewed. And nothing but God draws the soul on its way, and He will do it. God draws the soul not by an act of power only, but by moral persuasions; that is the proper casualty of the end. Not by efficiency only, but by sympathy, just as by the water the thirsty soul is drawn to the water brooks.

It is God who draws hearts after Himself. There are instruments, such as His Word and His ministers, and there are arguments by which God draws, but whatever the instruments or arguments are, it is God who does it. What is the work of either the Word or the ministers but to set God before you? And this draws. Instruments can do nothing unless God is the preacher by them; arguments can do nothing unless He is the medium of them. As it was said concerning the people's following Saul, so much more concerning those who follow the Lord.

Those only follow God whose hearts He has touched. It is not man's touching, but God's touching the heart that draws it heavenward. The tongue of man may touch the ear, but God alone touches the heart. And when He touches, then the heart follows. When the needle is touched with a magnet, then it follows after it. The magnet is no more naturally attractive to the

needle than God is to that heart which He has touched. "My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved within me" (Song of Solomon 5:4). He merely touched the door, and her heart felt him and moved towards him.

O Christians, when you have been waiting upon God in prayer, hearing, or any other spiritual duty or ordinance, ask yourself, "Has my heart been touched this day? My tongue has been touched; my ear has been touched; my heart has been treated, but has the Lord touched it? Has virtue come from Him, which has enticed and drawn my soul after Him?" Sometimes, by a message or a visit from heaven, the Lord has drawn a good word from the lip or a tear from the eye, but, oh, for touches upon souls, for turning of the inward parts, for hearts that flow out after the Lord! He is the only magnet that prevails on gracious souls.

Others who have many hearts have many things that attract them. Every heart has its peculiar god; there may be twenty gods in one man because he has that many hearts. Their pleasures are their gods; their profits are their gods; their bellies are their gods; their wives or their children are their gods, and there are as many gods as there are ends. And every end is a magnet to draw them after them.

Every heart will go after its god. A Christian who has but one heart has but one God, and this is what draws it on its way. You say that the Lord is your God; you acknowledge and own that you have chosen Him as yours. But what does this God whom you have chosen do upon your heart? What will the sight of God, your love for God, or your hope in God do upon you? How far will it carry you? Which way does your heart run? Which way

do you bend your course? Do you feel your God drawing you? And is your heart running after Him? Running denotes motion, and a swift or violent motion.

I shall lay before you these seven expressions used in Scripture to note the running of those hearts after God whom He has drawn:

- The desiring of the soul after God. “The desire of our soul is to Thy name. With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early” (Isaiah 26:8–9). Desire is the soul in motion Godward. Towards Him are our desires, and they come deep, from the bottom of the heart. “With my soul have I desired Thee, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee. Lord, all my desire is before Thee” (Psalm 38:9). It is not “all my desires,” but “my desire.” It is as if the psalmist had said, “Thou seest all, and it is all but one desire.” He desires pardon, he desires peace, he desires help, and the healing of his wounds, but all this is but one desire: God is all. “One thing have I desired” (Psalm 27:4).

- The thirsting of the soul. “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God” (Psalm 42:2). Thirsting is the extremity of desire; hunger and thirst are the appetite of desire heightened, violent and painful appetites. My soul thirsts, and is in pain until that thirst is satisfied.

- The longing of the soul. “O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee; my flesh longeth for Thee in the dry and thirsty land, where no water is” (Psalm 63:1). Longing causes languishing and pain if it is not satisfied. “My soul breaketh for the longing desire it hath to Thy judgments” (Psalm 119:20). “My heart panteth, my flesh faileth, the light of mine eyes is gone from me” (Psalm 38:10).

- Calling after God. “Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness” (Psalm 4:1). Calling upon God is the voice of desires. The desiring soul will not keep silent; the tongue, the eyes, the ears, the hands, and the knees must all be orators once the flame is kindled within.

- Crying after the Lord. This is an expression answering the thirsting of the soul. Crying is a passionate and importunate praying. “I cried unto the Lord with my whole heart” (Psalm 119:145).

- Crying out after God. This is the manner of the longing soul. Crying out denotes more than bare crying; these are loud cries, strong cries, forced out by a paroxysm of love or an agony the soul is in. “My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living Lord” (Psalm 84:2).

- Following hard after the Lord. “My soul followeth hard after Thee” (Psalm 63:8). This expression is more comprehensive; it denotes all the workings, breakings, and breathings of the soul within, and its diligent pursuit of the use of all outward means, and pressing on after the Lord. All those laborings, watchings, and runnings, and all that holy violence wherewith a saint presses into the kingdom of God.

Put all this together and you will see the power and influence the Lord has on holy souls to draw them after Himself. They are in motion heavenward, desiring, thirsting, longing, calling, crying, crying out, and following hard after Him. What ails these souls? What is the matter with them? What do they want? “What aileth thee,” said the Danites once to Micah, “that thou comest thus after us? What aileth thee?” Micah’s reply was, “Why, you have taken away my gods, and what have

I more?" (Judges 18:23). What ails these crying, longing, running souls? Why, it is their God they cry after; it is their God they run after. The prophet once said to Elisha, when he had cast his mantle on him, "Go back, for what have I done unto thee?" (1 Kings 19:20). What have you done? Enough to hold me from going back. There went virtue with the mantle; the mantle fell on his heart as well as on his back, and drew it after the prophet. Should you say thus to these, "Go back, soul, from following your God, for what has He done unto you?" Your answer would be, "Oh, He has gotten my heart. No, no, I cannot go back. He is my God, and what have I more?"

(2) The end guides and directs to means. "Whither shall I go from Thee? Thou hast words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

(3) The end governs. I shall put these both together. What is it that governs sinners but their ends? This points them to their work and their way; this holds them to their work and keeps them in their way. Whatever fetters and chains their lusts are to them, it is their carnal ends to which they are in bondage. These are what lord it over them, and hereupon it is impossible to persuade a sinner to make a thorough change of his way till he has changed his ends. Herein stands the conversion of a sinner, in changing his ends. When he ceases to be any longer to himself, to his flesh, to the world, and for a worldly happiness, and is brought about to pitch on God as his portion and happiness, to whom he devotes and dedicates himself—there is conversion. Sin is our turning away from God, and conversion is our turning back to God.

Beloved, consider not barely how you live, but to

what ends; not only what you do, but what you would have; and never count yourselves truly godly, whatever of God is in your way, until God is in your heart and eye. He who has first chosen God, and therefore a godly life, whose godliness of life springs forth as the fruit of his choice of the Lord—that is a godly man.

God governs as our king and as our end: as our king by His sovereignty, as our end by His excellence, worthiness, and goodness; as our king by laws, as our end by love. Love will find out our way; it will tell all our wanderings, check us for our sins, sweeten our labors, quicken us on our course, cut out our way through dangers and difficulties, and keep us in our way till we come to the fruition of our end. Therefore it is said by the apostle, “The law is not for a righteous man” (1 Timothy 1:9). Love will save the law a labor. “The law is not for a righteous man” so much, at least, as it is for sinners; not as to the coercion of it, though still as to its obligation. The constraint of love will greatly supersede the coercion of laws.

(4) The end rewards. “They have their reward” (Matthew 6:16), that is, they have their end; the reputation for devout and charitable men was the end of their devotion and charity. They prayed, fasted, and gave alms for no other end, and obtaining that reputation was their reward. “Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.”

God is the reward of His saints. “I am thy exceeding great reward” (Genesis 15:1). “My judgment is with the Lord, and my reward with my God” (Isaiah 49:4). God is the reward they shall receive, and He is the reward they look to receive. Moses had “respect to the recompense of reward” (Hebrews 11:26).

And therefore the argument is weighty which Christ used to dissuade His disciples from being in their devotions, in their almsdeeds, as the Pharisees and hypocrites were, who disfigured their countenances in their fasts, and who sounded a trumpet to proclaim their alms. "Be ye not like them, for they have their reward." The argument was strong for the disciples, who, being men of another spirit, could not be satisfied with such a reward.

In these two things saints greatly differ from the men of this world: they are not willing to defer their duties till hereafter, and they dread to have their reward here. They would dispatch their work, and they are willing to go upon trust for their wages. Sinners would have their wages in hand, and be trusted for their work till hereafter; they would be happy here, and can be content to wait for holiness till hereafter; it is soon enough to be saints in heaven. But, oh, it would be a dreadful thing to say to true saints, "There are your good things; take them, for they are your reward." These are not their ends, and therefore they cannot take them for their rewards.

Poor, foolish worldlings, how you are disjointed! How your weary hearts are scattered through the ends of the earth! How many masters you serve! How many matters you have to mind! You weary yourselves in the greatness of your way, and what is your reward? What the fields can give, you have; what your sheep or your oxen can give, you have; what your beds, your tables, your houses, or your clothes can give, you have. Here a little, there a little; you get up, your beds give you ease, your houses give you shelter, your sports and companions give you pleasure, your parasites give you honor,

and that little you can pick up here and there is your reward. Verily I say unto you, you have your reward. Unhappy souls! You are troubled and careful about many things for nothing. One thing is needful, and if you will be wise, choose that good part which shall not be taken away from you.

2. This heart has but one thing to do. "This one thing I do" (Philippians 3:13). There are all things in that one thing, all things needful. However many things his hand finds to do, all is but one. He intends God in all. A renewed heart designs God, and is making Godward in all that he does. Wherever he goes, God is his home; whatever race he runs, God is his mark and prize; whatever battle he fights against flesh and blood, against principalities and powers, it is that he may cut his way through all to his God. Whatever he does, he does it for God; whatever he suffers, he suffers for God. Whether he hears, fasts, or prays, it is all for God. "When you fasted, did you fast for Me?" "Yes, for Thee," a Christian is able to say.

He has many things to pray for and fast for. He has bread, clothes, friends, health, safety, and liberty to pray for; but in all he prays for God. He entitles God to all he has, and marks it up for Him; he sees and enjoys God in all he has. He will not own that for a mercy that does not have God in it, and is not a foot or wing to carry him on to God. And, therefore, whatever he begs to himself, it is that he may have it for God. What he gives, he gives to God; whom he forgives, it is for the Lord's sake; whether he eats, drinks, works, buys, sells, or whatever he does, he does it all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). For Him he prays; for Him he waits; for Him he labors; for Him he suffers; for Him he

lives, and to Him he dies. "To me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21). "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ may be magnified in my body, whether it is by life or by death." This is the one thing he intends; this is the one thing he seeks in all. Take his whole course together, and he can say with the apostle, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

3. He does what he does, and that not feignedly, but really; not faintly, but heartily.

He does what he does really. He pursues his end in a plain and honest way. He who has this one heart has but one way. Heart and life go hand in hand. He makes straight steps to his heart, and his heart makes straight steps to his feet. As he looks straight on, so he walks straight on to his mark. He does not look one way and row another. He is a Jacob, a plain man, a plain-dealing man. He is a Nathanael, in whom there is no guile. He turns his inside outwards; his life is not a cloak, but a commentary on his heart, the expositor of his inward man. His end is in his heart, and his heart is in his face, in his tongue, in his duties, and in all his ways. He is no politician, not in fleshly wisdom (2 Corinthians 1:12). His religion is not a blind or a device to delude the simple; he is downright and in earnest in all he does.

He does the same thing he seems to do. His praying is praying indeed; his fasting and his alms are such indeed; his very profession is his practice; he would not

believe, nor make others believe, but that he is what he is. He does not seek commendation from men, but approbation with God. His design is not inordinately to commend himself to good opinions, though he would be made manifest in the consciences of others. He would not be a lie or a cheat. He abhors all lying, but most of all a religious lie. He would not lie for God, much less against Him; such a lie would be blasphemy to him. He does not love images; he would have a soul in all his practices. A prayer without a soul, a sacrifice without a heart, a religious carcass is an abomination to him. He would not make such a noble medium as religion serve to base an end as serving the flesh.

He has other work to do than to serve times or tables, than to please himself or men, than to serve wills, temperaments, or lusts. He has a soul, a conscience, and a God to look after. He has but one business to do, and one master to serve. If he is a magistrate, he rules for God; if he is a minister, he preaches for God; if he is a parent, he educates for God; if he is a master, he governs for God. To God he dedicates himself and his house. He writes on his doors, "This is BETHEL, none other than the house of God." If he is a child or servant, he obeys in the Lord and for the Lord. He knows he has to do with God in all that he does; when he is dealing with men, with his friends, with his family, in his calling, in his recreations, in all of these he has to do with God; and he can take comfort in nothing but what God will take pleasure in. You can have no pleasure in iniquity. You love truth in the inward parts. And there is no truth in the inward parts but when there is truth also in the outward parts; when the heart, tongue, and ways agree. It is vain to say, "My heart is good," when

the ways are not. A false tongue and deceitful ways will pass the lie on to the heart. He cannot subsist longer than he has smiles from heaven. Communion with God is his life; his all is in God. His heart dies when that fountain is stopped. If he cannot have clarity and boldness in the presence of God, he can no longer look himself in the face, but blushes and hangs his head down with shame. He values neither the applause nor the scorns of men, so that he may have a witness of his acceptance with God.

“O Lord, dost Thou regard me? Wilt Thou accept me? That is enough. Let all the world call me a fool, a Pharisee, or a hypocrite, as long as my Lord says to me, ‘My child, all is well.’ The world will cry out, ‘It is falsely spoken; it is foolish; it is weakly done; it is pride, singularity, and scrupulosity.’ Let them alone, O my soul. I will hearken to what the Lord God will say, if He says, ‘You have been faithful.’ I will hearken to what conscience will say, if it says, ‘Well done.’ Let everyone else say what they will. This is my rejoicing, my only rejoicing, the testimony of my conscience, that in all simplicity and godly sincerity—not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God—I had my conversation in the world.”

He does what he does heartily. Whatever he does for God, he does it with a good will. He has cast up all his business into one thing, and he is intent on it. He works righteousness as sinners work wickedness, “with both hands earnestly” (Micah 7:3). He is religious in good earnest; he prays in good earnest; he hears in good earnest; he runs in good earnest. The power of his soul, all united in one channel, runs more strongly; his many springs, falling into one stream, make a river that

bears down all bays before it. The psalmist prayed, "Unite my heart to fear Thy name" (Psalm 86:11). It is as if he had said, "Unite my heart to Thee, and unite my heart in itself, that it may all run towards Thee. Unite my heart to fear, and so unite my heart to love Thy name; unite my heart to serve, follow, and live to Thee. O my God, my heart is divided and discomposed, scattered up and down, I know not where. My pleasures have a part, my estate has a part, my friends have a part, my family has a part, and there is little or none left for God. I have too many things to fear, too many things to love and care for, too many things to serve and follow, to follow the Lord with any strength or intention of mind. Call in all, Lord, all my parts, all my powers; command them to be jointly and unitedly in attendance upon Thee."

1 Peter 1:13–15: "Gird up the loins of your mind and be sober, and hope to the end [in the original it is "hope perfectly"] for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." Gird up the loins of your minds; gird and be sober; gird and hope perfectly; gird and be obedient; gird and be holy. This girding is gathering in the strength of the heart to do its work. "Stand with your loins girt" (Ephesians 6:14). Stand; do not gird and ungird; stand always gird. Call in your hearts and hold them in; be always ready for every duty, ready against every temptation.

Oh, how loose we are! What loose praying, loose hearing, loose meditation, and loose walking we satisfy

ourselves with! Our hearts are to seek, and instead our thoughts and affections are gadding abroad; we know not where to find them, and our work is done thereafter. We excuse our non-proficiency in religion by our many hindrances, by the difficulties of our work; but the great hindrance lies in that our loins are unguarded, and our hearts are neither united in our work nor intent upon it. When God and the things of eternity get so deep into the heart; when there is such a deep sense of the weight and importance of the things that are eternal abiding upon us, such as can overpower carnal objects and loose the heart from them; when we feel the evidence and consequence of these things commanding our entire souls after them, then there is religion in earnest; then we go on and prosper.

And thus it is with this one heart.. There are not some light touches upon it. God has gotten deep into it; eternity has gotten deep in to it, so that the soul says, "This is all I have to mind or do. My hope, my comforts, my life, my soul, all hang upon this one thing. If I do well here, I am made forever. What have I to do in the way of Egypt, or to drink the waters of Sihor? What have I to do in the way of Assyria? What have I to do in the way of pleasure? What have I to do in the way of the world, to build tabernacles for myself here below, or to drink the waters of my one cistern? How little I am concerned with the interests of the flesh! What does it matter what becomes of it, or which way it goes? My God, my God, my soul, my soul, therein lies my concern. Let my care be only for these.

"Get thee behind me, Satan. Hold your peace, sinful flesh; keep silent, worldly cares. Do not hinder me; speak no more to me of hearkening to you, and away

from me, you evildoers. I will keep the commandments of my God. Let others do what they will, run where they please, choose whom they will serve and what they will follow after; come, my soul, follow the Lord; gird up your loins and come away for the other world. Make haste; linger not; let others loiter as they will, escape for your life. Do not look behind; get up to the mountain and live.”

OBJECTION. One heart? Why, it is always two: two men, a new man and an old one; two nations, two selves. There are twins in the womb of every saint. The ungodly seem more one than the saints; they are all for sin and hell; they are all dark, all hard, and all stone.

ANSWER. Yet it is true that the saints, and they only, have this one heart, for:

1. The old heart is not a heart, and the old self is not the self; this old man is not the man. It is the heart which has gotten the dominion and the rule in the man. The new heart has the dominion. Though sin, like Esau, is the firstborn, yet the elder must now serve the younger. The old man is but a dead man (Colossians 3:3). You are dead, that is, your old man is dead; your sin is slain and crucified with Christ; and when it is dead you may say it is not.

2. The meaning plainly is “I will give them one heart, that is, a single, sincere, upright heart. They shall no longer be a hypocritical people. If there is something of hypocrisy in them, yet they shall no longer be hypocrites; their hearts shall be upright before me.”

Sincerity stands in pitching upon, choosing, and giving up our hearts to God as our chief good and last end. When God is our all, there is perfection; and when

God is our chief end, there is sincerity. I say, when God is our all, when the world has nothing left in us to entice or draw out our souls after it, but God carries them wholly without any the least liking or lusting after sinful objects—there is perfection.

This is not attainable here. The heart cannot be this perfectly one till corruption has put on incorruption. But though it is not perfectly one yet, it may be sincerely one. And then, when the flesh has too great an interest in it and influence on it, and often pulls it aside and puts it back, yet it still bends its course heavenwards. And whatever way the stream and strength of the soul is running the flesh will be putting in for its part and would have all; it would not take its turns with God. God will not take His turns with the flesh. He will have all or none.

Nor will the flesh take its turns with God. It is not content with now and then; it will not be served in the fields, in the shop, at the table, or in the bed only, but it must be in the church, in the chamber, and in the closet. It would carry all away from God; but, if it cannot have all, it will divide with God. Wherever God is served, the flesh will be putting in for its share.

The best of Christians feel too great a truth in this. Their frequent humblings, mournings, breakings, and self-shamings before the Lord are mostly upon this account. This is the voice of their deepest groanings and bitterest tears; it is the burden of their mournful groans. "I cannot do the things that I would. When I would do good, evil is present with me; with my mind I serve the Law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin! Woe is me, my soul, how I am straitened! How I am divided! With what do I come before the Lord? Oh, what

halting, heartless, and distracted duties do I serve my God! This flesh of mind eats up the fat and the best; and only the lame, the lean, and the sick are left for a sacrifice to the Lord. Woe is me! My leanness, my leanness! My God, my God, how poorly Thou art served! How Thou art robbed of Thy due! These strangers have gotten into Thy sanctuary and eaten up all Thy pleasant things; and what have they left Thee?"

Such are their complaints, and their very complaints are their comfort and the witness of their sincerity. Yet, with all this, they can still, with openness of heart, make their approach and appeal to God. "Yet Thou art my Lord. Thou art my God, and I will serve Thee. I have chosen Thee as my heritage forever, and I will wait for Thy salvation. Hear the sighing of Thy prisoner; deliver Thy captive. My heart is with Thee; let not this flesh entrench upon Thy right; let sin no longer reign in my mortal body; let me have no more to do with the throne of iniquity; untie the cords; loose the fetters; bring my soul out of prison. Search me, O Lord, and know my heart; prove me and know my thoughts. Is there any way of wickedness in me? Do I willingly go after the commandments? Do I regard iniquity in my heart? Wickedness lies within me, it is true; it wars, and raises tumults and insurrections against Thee. But do I resign myself up to it? Is it a pleasure to me? Am I at peace with it? O Lord, Thou knowest.

"I cannot get rid of it. I cannot do the things that I would. I cannot pray as I would, hear as I would, think, speak, or live as I would. Wherever I go, sin goes with me. Where I lodge, it lodges; if I sit still, it abides with me; if I run from it, it follows me. I can neither rest nor work. I can do nothing to fight it. Yet, blessed be Thy

name, this one thing I do. What I cannot attain, I follow after. I cannot conquer it, yet I fight against it. I wrestle with it, though so often it wins. I do not trust it, though it flatters me. I do not love it, though it feeds me. My heart is with Thee, Lord; my foot is walking after Thee. I groan, I travail in pain, waiting for Thy redemption. Till I die, I will not give up. I will die fighting, I will die hoping, and I will die praying. Save me, O Lord. Do not tarry long, O my God."

And thus you have the description of this one heart. It pitches on one end, and God is that end. It gives Him the place of the end. He is its first and last. It gives Him the power of the end; this one thing, obtaining God to be ours, draws us on; it guides and governs us in our whole course, and is accepted by us as our only and exceeding great reward. This instructs us, rules and encourages us, calls us off from sin, calls us on to duty, and carries us in our sufferings. All our powers are united in this one business; all our arguments are resolved into this one argument; all our rewards are summed up in this one reward: "God shall be glorified, and therein my soul shall be satisfied. God shall be mine, and glory shall be His."

In all this we see what this one heart means, but, oh, how little of this grace have we received! How many hearts we have! How many gods we have to divide these hearts between! How small a corner we give Him!

How low a place the Lord must have with us, if He has any place at all! How often He is made to stand aside, or stoop to a lust! God is made to give place to the devil! Is God our all indeed? Have we really no one else to please, no one else to serve? Have we really no portion, no inheritance, no other God but the Lord? Is

He our Alpha and Omega, our first and our last, our spring and our ocean, our sum and our scope, the rise and the rest of all our motions? Whatever our tongues speak, do our hearts and our lives also say, "To me to live is Christ"? Can we say, "None but God, none but Christ, and nothing but heaven and glory"?

When we are driving so hard for our flesh, for our pride, for our ease, and for our gain; when we are so busy this way, and so hearty and zealous that way; when these must have so great a share in our religion, is this still the voice, "To me to live is Christ"? Oh, how little power the Lord has with us! How far will the single interest of God carry our souls! How little is done purely for God!

We often have many strings on our bow. There are some services wherein there is something coming to the flesh as well as to the name of God: some credit or honor, some outward advantage to be gotten by religion, but when all the other strings crack but this one, when there is nothing to move us but God, oh, how weak our motions grow! The flesh often goes partnering with God: there is a double trade driving in the same actions, a trade for heaven and a trade for earth together. There is something to be had by our religion besides what is coming to God. There are fields, vineyards, oliveyards, friends, honors, and preferments, as is sometimes the case when godliness is on the rise. And when it is so, we go smoothly and vigorously on. "Come, see the zeal that I have for the Lord of hosts."

But, when the interest of God and the flesh divide and part asunder; when the flesh is likely to be a loser by our religion; when God puts us on such duty as will spend upon the flesh, and eat out and devour its inter-

est; when our hearts tell us, as Deborah did Barak, "This will not be for thine honor" (Judges 4:9), or "this will not be for your ease or your safety," then what becomes of our zeal? Oh, how heavily do we then drive on! How seldom is it that this phrase, "Yet God shall be glorified," will balance all the prejudices, confute all the cross reasonings of the flesh, and carry us on our way, without and against it!

How little the Lord has government of us! If He governs as a king, yet how little as our end! How little goodness governs! How little love will do with us! We must have rigor and severity; we must have spurs, goads, rods, stripes, and scorpions too. And all that is little enough to drive us back from those other gods which we have chosen, and bring us on after the Lord. If the law is not made for the righteous, if they need no law, then what are we for whom a law will not suffice? If commands, threatenings, terrors, penalties, and judgments can do no more upon us; if we are yet so loose, so carnal, so earthly, so froward, so false, and so formal under severe discipline; if we will not be whipped into more humility, spirituality, self-denial, watchfulness, care, activity, and zeal, but are such drones and such sleepers, such earthworms and such sensualists still, under all the corrections and compulsions of the law, oh, what would we be if we lacked the law? What would we be if there were nothing but love to restrain us from sin, and constrain and quicken us to duty?

Christians, we have but one thing to do in all that we do. Sometimes we are busy doing nothing. Though there is a prayer in our mouths, the praises of God in our mouths, Christ, heaven, holiness, glory, a new heart, and a new life upon our tongues; there is noth-

ing within—no prayer, no praise, no Christ, no heaven. What have we been doing in the closet, in the family, or in the congregation when we seemed to have been praying? Nothing but sowing wind and good words. Sometimes we have too many things on our hearts; what a world of carnal devices and fleshly projects we have wrapped up in the garment of our religion. Peter's sheet had no more heterogeneous miscellany of creatures ("four-footed beasts, wild beasts, creeping things, and fowls of the air," Acts 11:6) than our religious duties have of designs and ends. We have men to please, our pride and our bellies to sacrifice to; we bring our farms, our oxen, and our trades before the Lord. Are not our hearts, which should be the houses of prayer, now the houses of merchandise? Are we not talking, pursuing, on a journey, asleep, or driving bargains? O Christians, if we were privy to one another's hearts, as God is privy to them, what abominations would we see brought into the most holy places! What monsters would our most sacred services appear to be! And these, while only the outside is in view, are applauded and admired. Is this our singleness of heart? Oh, for shame, for blushing, and confusion of face! Oh, for a veil to hide such hearts from the jealous eyes of the holy God! A varnish, a fair exterior, hides all from men; but nothing but a dark veil of shame, sorrow, tears, and repentance, a veil dipped in the blood of Christ, will hide them from the eyes of the Lord.

Oh, how little plainness and singleness of heart there is in our ordinary course, in our dealings and conversings with the world! How little faith or truth there is in us! How little trust there is in us! What doubling, what deceitful dealing, defrauding, over-reach-

ing, and undermining we are guilty of! How false we are in our promises! How insignificant are our words! What an uncertain sound they give! Our “yea” may often stand for “nay,” and our “nay” for “yea.” “They speak vanity every one with his neighbor, with flattering lips and a double heart do they speak” (Psalm 12:2). Scripture tells us to not put our trust in a friend, nor confidence in a guide (Micah 7:5).

Blessed be God, the Lord has a generation on whom this cannot be charged. He has children who will not lie or deceive. Though Satan and this evil world bind up all in a bundle, they are all naught; they are all false, vain boasters, and deceitful workers. There is none upright, no, not one. But, thanks be to God, Satan is a liar; the accuser of the brethren is a false accuser. God has His children who will not lie. But woe to those professors of religion, by reason of whom the offense comes.

Christians, has God promised to give you one heart? Let it be said, then, “This day is the Scripture fulfilled.” Oh, may you be the accomplishment of this good word.

Has God promised to give you one heart? Do not say, “But I will not take it; two are better than one. I have found so much in the sweet of deceit that there is no life like it.”

Has God said, “I will give you one heart”? Then let none among you say, “But I fear He will not.” Do not make the promise of God to be of no effect, either by your impiety or unbelief.

Does God promise to give this one heart? He who promised also requires it. Be yourself, Christian. Let it be said that you are what you are; be true, be one, have but one heart, and let that one heart have but one tongue, one face, and one thing to do. Beware of

hypocrisy and carnal policy. Do not make God serve your flesh. Do not call serving your flesh serving God, and do not make serving God to be serving your flesh.

Do not be divided between God and the world. Oh, how easy our lives would be if we found our souls running one way, taking up with God as the adequate object of all our powers, the mark of all our motions, and the rewards of all our labors; if all our streams emptied themselves into this ocean, and all our lines met in this one center! If God alone drew and allured our hearts, and the sincerity of our hearts gave motion to all our wheels; if God alone guided our eyes, governed our tongues, ordered our steps, animated our duties, and directed and quickened us in all our goings, oh, how sweet, how beautiful such a life would be!

When there is agreement between our hearts and our ends, there is sweetness; when there is harmony between our hearts and our ways, there is beauty. Oh, how sweet are the drawings of love, the free and full closure of our spirits with God, dissolving themselves into His will, acquiescing and resting satisfied in His goodness—this is a sweetness which no man knows but he who tastes it. The harmony of the power of the soul within itself, of its motions and actions in our lives, is the beauty which will eclipse the glory of the world. Christian, let it be so with you, and you have the blessing, that covenant blessing which the Lord has promised in saying, “I will give them one heart.”

Chapter 12

A Heart of Flesh

“I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26). The old heart is a stone: cold as a stone, dead as a stone, and hard as a stone, but “I will take away the stony heart, and give you a heart of flesh.”

A heart of flesh is a soft and tender heart; flesh can feel anything that is contrary to it and puts it to pain. Sin makes it smart; it cannot kick, but it is against the pricks; by its rebellion and resistance against the Lord, it receives a wound. It cannot hit, but it hurts itself. A soft hand gets nothing by laying itself on a hedge of thorns. When a soft heart has been meddling with sin it is sure to smart for it. It can neither escape the pain, nor yet endure it; and what it cannot bear, it will take warning to avoid.

Flesh will bleed. A soft heart will mourn, melt, and grieve while nothing moves a hard heart. Flesh will yield. It is apt to receive impressions. The power of God will awe it. His justice will alarm it, His mercy melt it, and His holiness will humble it and leave the stamp and image of it upon it. And as the attributes do, so the Word and works of God will make a sign upon it. Who sets a seal upon a stone, or what print will it receive. But upon wax the print will abide. God speaks once and twice, but hardened man will not regard it. Neither His Word, nor His rod, nor His speaking, nor His smiting

will make any sign on such hearts. It is the heart of flesh that hears and yields. And with such hearts the Lord delights to be dealing. "The heart of this people is waxed gross" (Acts 28:27). "They will not hear, and they will not understand." And the next verse says, "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, they will hear it." He will no more write His law on tables of stone. He will write in flesh; therefore the impression will take and go deeper. And therefore wherever He intends to write, He prepares His table, makes this stone flesh, and then engraves upon it.

Particularly, this tenderness admits of a double distinction respecting the object of it and the subject of it.

1. Respecting the object of it, there is a tenderness regarding sin, duty, and suffering.

- There is a tenderness regarding sin, and that is twofold: such as reveals itself before the commission of it and such as reveals itself after the commission of it.

This tender heart will reveal itself before the commission of sin, while it is under a temptation or feels the first motion to sin. A tender heart startles and pulls back at the sight of a sin as it does at the sight of a devil. "How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God" (Genesis 39:9)? The manner of the speech presents Joseph as a frightened man, startled at the ugliness of the motion. When David had an opportunity and a temptation to slay Saul, he rejected it with a "God forbid." "The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed" (1 Samuel 26:11). And a tender heart not only has this reaction to the higher and greater sins, but it resists the little ones, the smallest of sins. "Is it not just a little one?" is no plea with it. Little or great, it is a sin, and that is enough.

This tender heart will reveal itself after the commission of sin; if it has been brought on upon sin, yet it cannot go out with it. The skirt of Saul's garment was too heavy for David's heart to bear. His heart smote him immediately (1 Samuel 24:5). Sin, in review, looks dreadful. Its pleasant flowers quickly turn to thorns; it pricks the heart, no matter how much it pleased the eye. It ordinarily enters by the eye, and often runs out the same way it came in, in tears. When David thought thereupon, he wept. At least it warns and makes more watchful afterwards. When you see what it is, take heed; take that as a warning and do no more. If the pain of sin does not force a tear, it will at least set a watch.

- There is a tenderness regarding duty. A tender heart will neither slight a sin nor neglect a duty. It is loath to grieve or offend, and it is careful to serve and please the Lord. It would not that He should suffer by it, nor so much as lose His due. It watches against sin and for duty. It cares how to please the Lord, and its care is tender. It would not displease by its neglects or performances; all must be done that ought to be done, and as it ought to be done. It will neither stand out with its offering, nor will it offer an unclean thing. It considers not only what, but how. Both matter and manner, substance and circumstance, all must be right, or a tender heart is not at ease. It will keep time with, and, as much as may be, keep touch with the Lord in every point. It is not satisfied that it prays sometimes, for it would not lose any praying time. God will not lose a duty, and a tender heart cannot. It would neither lose by non-performance, nor lose what is performed. It would neither leave undone, nor do amiss; it will not allow for failing not only in the matter, but in the principle, the end,

the affection, and the intention.

- There is a tenderness regarding suffering. A soft heart will not be careful what or how much it suffers, but why and upon what account; it will neither sinfully shun the cross nor run upon it unwarrantably. It waits for a call and then follows. It is patient under the hand of the Lord, but not insensitive; it can be touched with an affliction, but not offended at it. It says, "The hand of the Lord has touched me." A tender heart suffers more than its own share; it suffers a brother's sufferings; its brethren's burdens all lie on his shoulders. It weeps in their sorrows, bleeds in their wounds, and is bound in their chains. Like Paul, the trouble of all the churches comes daily upon it. "Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" A tender heart espouses all the sufferings of Christ as its own; in all His afflictions, it is afflicted.

2. Tenderness may also be distinguished in respect of the subject of it; and so there is a tenderness of the conscience, the will, and the affections.

(1) Tenderness of conscience stands in these three things: clearness of judgment, quickness of sight, and uprightness or faithfulness.

Clearness of judgment. This is when the conscience is well-instructed and understands the rule, and can then discern between good and evil (Hebrews 5:14). There is a tenderness that proceeds from cloudiness. This is a scrupulosity that fears everything, stumbles at straws, jumps at shadows, makes sins, picks quarrels over duties, and so sometimes dares not please for fear of offending God. This is the sickness or soreness of conscience, not its soundness. It is the sound conscience that is truly tender.

Quickness of sight and watchfulness. I sleep, but my heart wakes. It can spy out the least sins and smallest duties. It can see sin in the very temptation; it can discover the least sin under the fairest face, and the least duty under the foulest disguise. Call it singularity, nicety, and cloud it with reproaches, yet conscience can discover light shining through all the clouds; conscience can discover duty within, whatever unhandsome face it is presented in.

The truly tender conscience has his eyes in his head, and his eyes are open to discover and discern all that comes, be it good or evil, little or great. If a thought comes in, conscience says, "What comes there? What are you, a friend or an enemy? Whence have you come, from God or from beneath?" It will examine whatever knocks before there is any admission. Oh, what a crowd of evils thrust into loose and careless hearts; the devil comes in the crowd and is never discovered. If the eye is either dim or asleep, there is entrance for anything. Little do we think, oftentimes, who has been with us, what losses and mischiefs we have sustained, while our hearts have been asleep, which, had they been wakeful and watchful, might have been prevented.

Uprightness and faithfulness, which reveal themselves in giving charge concerning duty, giving warning of sin, and in giving check for sin when committed.

- Giving charge concerning sin. Look to it, soul, there is a duty before you which God calls you to. Do not say that it is no great harm to let it alone; that it is no great harm to do it; that it is questionable whether it is a duty or not; or that many wiser than you think otherwise. Do not say that it is a nicety, that it is but a small

sin, that it is mere folly and preciseness, and that, if you look to this one, there will be no end of standing upon such small matters. See to it, for it is your duty; beware that you do not neglect it. Balking at the least duty is neglecting the great God of glory.

- In giving warning of sin. Take heed to yourself; sin lies at the door. You are under a temptation, and the devil is entering upon you. Do not say that it is a little sin; as little as it is, there is death and hell in it. Look to it; it is sin, and have nothing to do with it. Keep yourself pure, and, though it runs after you, shake it off.

- After commission, it gives a check for it, reprov- ing, judging, and lashing the soul for it. "Where hast thou been, Gehazi?" (2 Kings 5:25). Do not say that you have been nowhere. Did not your heart go with you, and see you running after your covetousness, gadding after your pleasures, feeding your pride, dandling your lusts, playing the hypocrite, playing the harlot from your God, pampering your flesh, and pleasing your appetite? What have you done, soul? Do not think to excuse or mince the matter; it cannot be excused. You have sinned against your God, and now you must bear the shame. This is our heart smiting us (2 Samuel 24:10), our heart condemning us. "If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things" (1 John 3:20).

(2) Tenderness of the will stands in its flexibility and pliability to the will of God. And this is that tenderness wherein chiefly stands the blessing of a soft heart. A hard heart is stubborn and obstinate. Your neck is as an iron sinew, and your brow is like brass. You will not be ruled; there is no bending or turning

you out of your course. Your iron is too hard for the fire; it will not be melted; the hammer will not be broken. There is no dealing with you; you are an untractable piece: you will be neither led nor driven; your heart is set in you to do evil; your will is set upon sin and you are set upon your own will. "The word which godly ministers have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not do, but we will do whatsoever proceeds out of our own mouth; we will do what we will do (Jeremiah 44:16–17). 'Who is Lord over us' (Psalm 12:4)? And Jeremiah 2:25: 'Thou saidst, "There is no hope" '; no, for we have loved strangers, and after them we will go come what will of it, say what you want against it. Be silent, Scriptures; hold your peace, conscience. It is to no purpose to speak more; there is no hope of prevailing. We are at a point and will take our own course." These are hard, stubborn, obstinate hearts.

When the iron sinew is broken, when the rebellion and stubbornness of the spirit is subdued and tamed, and made gentle and pliable, then it becomes a tender heart.

There may be some tenderness in the conscience, and yet the will may be a very stone. And as long as the will stands out, there is no broken heart. Conscience may be scared and frightened. Conscience may fly upon the sinner. "What do you mean, soul? Where are your rebellions carrying you? Look to yourself; hearken, or you will be lost ere you are aware." But however God has gotten conscience on His side, yet the devil still rides the will; and there sin takes up its rest. There is a double resting of sin in the soul: in peace and in power.

- In peace. This is when it dwells and rules in the

soul without disturbance or contradiction, when it carries all smoothly before it. When God lets it alone, and conscience does not speak a word against it; when, notwithstanding those armies of lusts fighting against the soul, there is not so much as one weapon lifted up against them; not a prayer, nor a tear, nor a wish for freedom, nor the least fear concerning the issue—this is the most dreadful hardness of heart.

- In power. This is when conscience, though it can have no peace, still has a place in the heart. Though it can have no quiet, conscience still quarreling with the heart and warning it away, yet it still holds its power over the will. The master of the house is content to be its servant. Oh, how many persons there are, even among the professors of religion, who cannot sin in quiet; they are proud, passionate, intemperate, covetous, or false in their words and in their dealings; they are formal, hypocritical, and slight in their duties, but they cannot go out with it with any quiet. Conscience smites them for it; they feel many a pang and deadly twinge in their heart, insomuch that sometimes they cry, groan, and roar in their spirits: “Oh, for redemption! Oh, for deliverance from this false, proud, covetous, and wicked heart!”

And yet, after all this, the will remains a captive still. Sin holds its power there. Though it cannot carry it on in peace, though it cannot be proud, play the hypocrite, be covetous or an oppressor without some galls and gripes in the soul, yet it goes on; the same trade is kept up; the same course is held on. God commands, “Cast it out, cast it out; come off from all your wickedness and evil ways, and I will receive you.” And though conscience would, the will cannot come. Whatever rend-

ings and tearings; whatever terrors, torments, and worryings such souls are under at any time; whatever stings, plagues and fires, they find their sins to be in their souls and bones. Whatever "wishings" and "wouldings" these wring forth, wishing that they were rid of these plagues, while the will is still from them, there is a desperately hard heart, and nothing of this heart of flesh.

Once the will is broken loose from sin, once it is content to let all go and give itself up to the dominion of the Lord, there is a broken heart. "Speak, Lord, and I will hear. Call, Lord, and I will answer. Command me; impose what Thou wilt, and I will submit. None but the Lord; none but Christ; no other Lord nor lover. I am Thine, Lord, Thine own; do with Thine own, demand of Thine own, whatever Thou pleasest. What God will have me be, what God will have me do, that will I do and be. No longer is it what I will, but that the will of the Lord be done." When it has come to this, there is a tender heart; there is the blessing of a broken spirit. He has taken away the heart of stone, and He has given a heart of flesh.

Christians, never trust tears; never talk of terrors, trouble of conscience, of the passionate workings and meltings which at any time you feel upon your spirits. Though there is something in these, as you shall see more by and by, yet these are not the things you are to look at. A subdued, tractable, willing, and obedient heart is the tender heart. " 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be slain with the sword'; the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 1:19-20).

(3) Next I shall speak to tenderness of the affec-

tions. I shall instance only three: love, fear, and sorrow.

First there is the tenderness of love. This is seen in its benevolence and its jealousy.

- In its benevolence. Our goodness does not extend to the Lord, but our good will does. Our love can add nothing to Him. "Can a man be profitable to God" (Job 22:2)? "If thou be righteous, what givest thou to Him" (Job 35:7)? Yet though it can add nothing, it would not that anything be detracted from Him. While He can have no more, it would that He should have His own, all that is due, His due praise, His due honor, homage, worship, and subjection from every creature. It would have no abatement, nor the least spot or stain upon all His glory. What is an affront to God is an affront to love. "Love beareth all things," says 1 Corinthians 13:7, all things from God, all things from men. And yet there are two things the love of God cannot bear: His dishonor and His displeasure.

His dishonor. Love would have God to be God, to live in the glory of His majesty, in the hearts and eyes of all the world. His reproach is grievous to him who loves, for this is the cloud that takes God out of sight. He loves and honors, and wishes that God would be loved and honored by all. He fears God, and wants the whole world to fear Him. He would receive in his own breast every arrow that is shot against his Maker. He would that his own name and soul might stand between his God and all reproach and dishonor. He would be vile so that the Lord may be glorious; so that God may increase, he is content to decrease. He is not so tender of his own heart and feelings as he is of the holiness of God. He would rather suffer and die and be nothing than that God should not be all in all. He would rather

never think, speak, or be than not be holiness to the Lord in word, thought, and life. But, oh, what or where would he be rather than that his own hand should be lifted up against his Lord!

To see the Lord robbed of His holiness, wronged in His wisdom, truth, or sovereignty; to see sin, that devil, to see the world, that idol, set up in the throne, and the God of glory made to stand aside as insignificant; to hear the blasphemy that God is not worth this lust, nor worthy of this labor (and what is said less in every sin?), is a sword in his breast. "The reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me" (Psalm 69:9). Love has tasted God; it has fed on His fullness; it has its nourishment from His sweetness; it has been warmed in His bosom; all His goodness has passed before it. Upon this it lives and feeds, and, having found and felt what the Lord is, it is impatient that all His goodness should be clouded or belied. Love kindled from heaven is keen, and the keen is a tender edge; the least touch of what offends will turn it. "I am in distress, my bowels are troubled, mine heart is turned within me, for I have grievously rebelled" (Lamentations 1:20). "My tears have been my meat continually, while they daily say unto me, 'Where is thy God?' " (Psalm 42:3).

Sinners say, "Where is that care, help, and salvation of that God you trust in? Your God is not such a one as you boast of Him to be." And when I remember, when I hear such things, my soul is poured out within me.

Love is large; he who loves has a large heart. He can never receive or do too much; he would have all he can, and he would give all he has to the Lord. He is tender how anything is withheld that is due, how anything is wasted elsewhere, that might be useful to the Lord.

His displeasure. The displeasure of men love bears and rejoices; the wrath and rage of Satan it bears and triumphs. Though all the world and hell to boot is displeased and provoked, as long as God smiles, it is well enough. "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon me, and my heart shall be glad" (Psalm 4:6). "Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled" (Psalm 30:7).

Let God correct me, but not in fury; let Him smite, but not frown; let Him kill me, as long as He loves me. And, though He smites, though He kills me, yet I will love and trust in Him. O my God, let me rather die in Thy love than live in Thy displeasure; there is life in that death; this life is death to me. Let me not be dead while alive; turn away Thine anger which kills my heart.

Love is impatient of divine displeasure, and thence it is grievous to it that it displeases; thence it quarrels with sin, and falls so foul with itself for it. "Is this kindness to your Friend? Do you love God, soul? What, and yet provoke Him so daily! Love, and yet neglect to seek and follow your God! Love, and yet be so lame, so slow, so heavy, and so sparing in your services to Him! Is this all your love will do? Can you not deny your ease, your pleasure, your liberty, your appetite, or your companions for the sake of the Lord? Will you choose to pleasure your friend or your flesh rather than please God? Is this your love? Is this your kindness to your Friend? Oh, false heart! Oh, unworthy spirit! How can you look your God in the face? How can you say, 'I love Thee' when your heart is no more with Him?"

- In its jealousy. He who loves the Lord is jealous, and jealousy has a tender edge. He is jealous for the

Lord, not jealous of Him. He is not jealous of His God, but of himself, lest anything should steal his heart away from God. Love would be chaste, would not bestow itself elsewhere; and yet it is greatly concerned that it might be enticed and drawn away. He who loves the Lord, there is not anything—whether it is wife, child, friend, estate, or esteem—that gets near his heart; he is jealous of them lest they steal it away. “Get down, keep lower; this heart is neither yours nor mine. O my God, it is Thine; it is Thine, Lord; take it wholly to Thyself; keep it for Thyself; let no other lovers share it with Thee.”

Second, there is a tenderness of fear. The tender heart is a trembling heart. The tenderness of fear is manifested in its suspicion and in its caution.

The fearful are suspicious; they look further than what they see. He who is in dread will be in doubt what may befall him; he suspects a reprisal; every bush is a thief; every bait, he fears, has a hook underneath. There is a foolish and causeless fear, and there is a prudent and holy fear. The latter is a principle of wisdom (Psalm 111:10). “The prudent man foreseeth the evil” (Proverbs 22:3), but fools go on; the snare is never nearer than to the secure. Bold, venturesome sinners never lack woe; the devil may spare his cunning when he has to deal with such. Nothing that looks like sin offers itself to a tender heart but he immediately suspects it. Every pleasant morsel, every pleasant cup, every pleasant companion that comes, anything that tickles and gratifies the flesh, he looks through it before he will touch it lest it betray his soul from God. There may be a snare in the dish, a snare in my cup, or a snare in my company; and what if there is? He feeds himself

with fear; he dwells, walks, converses, works, and recreates himself with a trembling heart and a jealous eye.

The fearful are cautious. Fear is wary; some commanders set their lookouts unarmed so that fear might make them watchful. A fearful Christian will take heed whom and what he trusts; he dares not trust himself in such company as may be a snare unto him. He dares not trust his heart among temptations; he will keep the devil at a distance, and will not come near where his nets lie. "Blessed is the man that feareth" always (Psalm 112:1). Oh, the unspeakable mischief! Oh, the multitudes of sins that we run upon because of our secure hearts!

"I never thought of it. I never dreamed of any such danger. Oh, I am undermined. I am over-reached. I am surprised. My foot is in the snare; the gin has taken me by the heel; my soul is among lions; sin has gotten hold of me; my heart was gone before I was aware; the enemy has come in and carried it away; he has given it to lust, to the world, and to pleasure, to divide it among themselves. My faith has failed; my conscience is defiled; my love has grown cold; my grace is withered, my comforts wasted, and my peace broken! And as for my God, where has He gone" Woe is me. The evil that I did not fear has come upon me; had I feared, I would not have fallen. Oh, that I had been wise, had kept my watch, had stood upon my guard. Had I thought, I would have escaped all this danger."

O Christians, be wise in season, and take heed of the fool's cry, which is always too late, "had I known it."

Third, there is a tenderness of sorrow. Sorrow is the melting of the heart, the stone dissolved; sorrow is the wound of the heart. A wound is tender, love is tender,

and therefore you have godly sorrow, which is called the sorrow of love; you may call it a love-sickness. Love is both the pain and pleasure of a mourning heart; it is love that wounds and love that heals; it is both the weapon and the oil. This sorrow has its joy; the melted heart is the most joyful heart. It is love that makes it sad; it therefore weeps because it loves. And it is love that makes it glad too; therefore it joys because in its sorrows it sees it loves. It is love that makes the wound, the matter of this sorrow being love abused. "What have you done, soul? Whom have you despised? Against whom have you lifted yourself up? You have sinned, you have sinned, and have thereby smitten and grieved your God who loves you, and whom you love. You have but one friend in heaven and earth, and Him you have abused. To pleasure your lust, you have pierced your Lord. You have transgressed His commandments and trampled upon His compassions; you have broken His bonds and kicked at His greatness and goodness. His law and His love have been despised by you. You have smitten the One whom you loved. Is this your kindness to your Friend? Oh, vile, ungracious, unkind, unthankful, unnatural heart; what have you done?"

Now put all this together and you have the heart of flesh which the covenant promises. It is a tender heart, a heart that is tender of sin and duty, that carefully shuns sin, or is sure to smart for it. This heart slights neither sin nor duty, and will never say of either one, "It is only a little one." This heart can feel sufferings, but not fret at them. It is a tender conscience that will neither wink at sin nor excuse the sinner; that will not hold the sinner guiltless, nor say unto the wicked, "You are righteous"; that will not be smitten, but it will smite

again; that will give due warning and due correction. This heart is a flexible, tractable heart, that will not resist and rebel. It says unto the Lord, "What wilt Thou have me to do? and will not say of anything He will have it do, "Anything but this." It is a willing, ductile heart, stiff against nothing but sin. A word from heaven will lead to anything; it is a heart of love that bears goodwill to the Lord and all that He does or requires. It is a heart in which goodwill lies radically for every good work. This heart will not say of any duty or suffering, "This is too great," or of any sin, "This is nothing." It would be anything or nothing so that God may be all.

This heart would rather be displeased than displease; it is not displeased when God is pleased. It is a trembling heart that fears more than it sees, and flies from what it fears, whom fear makes to beware. It is a melting heart, a mourning heart, that wounds itself in the wounds it has given to the Lord and His name; that can grieve in love, and can love and grieve where it cannot weep. In summary, it is a heart that can feel, bleed, and weep; or at least it can yield and stoop where it cannot weep, nor feel but little; it is a heart that will be easily commanded where it is not sensibly melted. This is a soft heart; this is the heart of flesh. "I will take away the stone, and give them a heart of flesh."

Oh, what a blessing is such a heart! What a plague is a hard heart! Oh, what prisoners are the men of this world, in prison under Satan, in prison under sin, bound under a curse, shut up under unbelief and impenitence. The hard heart is the iron gate that shuts them in so that they cannot get out (Romans 2:5). Oh, what a hospital this world has become full of blind, lame, sick, crippled, and wounded creatures! Whence

are all the calamities and distresses that befall them but from the hardness of their hearts? The stone in their hearts breeds all their diseases and brings all their calamities. It has blinded their eyes, broken their bones, and wasted their estates. There is not one misery that befalls sinners but they may write over it, "This is the hardness of my heart."

Oh, what a Sodom this world has become for wickedness as well as for wrath! What drunkenness, what adulteries, what oaths, what blasphemies, and all sorts of monstrous sin abound everywhere! Whence is all this but from the hardness of men's hearts? If you say that it is from other causes, such as unbelief, ignorance, impotence, or temptations, then let it be granted; yet it is still from hardness of heart. They are willfully ignorant, willfully weak, and they willfully run into temptations. They shut their eyes and stop their ears; they will neither see nor believe. Oh, what losses they sustain! How many sabbaths are lost! How many sermons are lost! How many reproofs, counsels, and corrections are lost! The gospel is lost, and souls thereby are likely to be lost forever! Oh, what prodigies they have become under all this sin and misery! And yet they are merry, jolly, laughing, singing, sporting, feasting, and braving it out as if nothing ailed them. They feel nothing of all that has come upon them, and they fear nothing of all that is coming. Warn them, reprove them, and beseech them, and it is the same as preaching to a stone.

It may be that you have sometimes wondered to see a company of thieves in prison, drinking, carousing, and making merry, when they know that in a few days they must be brought out and hung. When you wonder at

this, wonder at yourselves. What bitter complaints we sometimes hear, even from the best of saints! “Oh, this hard heart; oh, this stubborn spirit! I cannot mourn. I cannot stoop. I cannot submit. ‘Why hast Thou hardened our heart from Thy fear’ (Isaiah 63:17)? Why hast Thou left us or given us up to a hard heart? Why hast Thou not softened and humbled and broken us? Thou hast humbled us, and we are not humbled. Thou hast broken us, and we are not broken. Thou hast broken our land, our peace, and our backs, but the stone is not yet broken. Oh, for one more breach, Lord! Our hearts, our hearts, let these be once broken! Our streets mourn, the cities of our solemnities mourn, the waves of Zion mourn—oh, when wilt Thou give us a mourning spirit?”

Oh, what sorrow-bitten souls are the saints for lack of sorrow! “I mourn, Lord, I lament, and I weep, but it is because I cannot mourn, lament, or weep as I should. If I could mourn as I ought, I could be comforted. If I could weep, I could rejoice; if I could sigh, I could sing; if I could lament, I could live. I die, I die, my heart dies within me, because I cannot cry. I cry, Lord, but not for my sin, but for tears for sin. I cry, Lord; my calamities cry, my bowels cry, my bones cry, my soul cries, my sins cry, Lord, for a broken heart; and, behold, I am not yet broken.

“The rocks rend, the earth quakes, the heavens drop, the clouds weep, the sun will blush, the moon will be ashamed, and the foundations of the earth will tremble at the presence of the Lord, but this heart will neither break nor tremble. Oh, for a broken heart! If this were once done, my soul might have its wish, and therefore God might have His will. What would be hard

for me if my heart were tender? Labor would be easy, pains would be a pleasure, and burdens would be light. Neither the command nor the cross would be any longer grievous; nothing would be hard but sin. Fear, where are you? Come and plow up this rock. Love, where are you? Come and thaw this ice; come and warm this dead lump; come and enlarge this straitened spirit. Then shall I run the way of His commandments.”

Oh, brethren, how little, how very little of this tenderness is there to be found among most Christians! The sacrifice of God is a broken heart. Oh, how far must the Lord go to find Himself such a sacrifice! We do but cast stones up to heaven when we lift up our hearts. It is a wonder that such hearts as we carry do not break themselves, that our marble does not weep, that if nothing else will do it, our hardness does not make us relent; that we should so labor under and complain of, and yet not be sick of the stone.

Broken hearts, yielding and relenting spirits, tender consciences, oh, where are they! Afraid of sin, tender of transgressing, or mourning under it? When shall it be? Our lusts are no more broken; our pride, our passion, our envy, and our earthliness are no more broken. So venturesome on temptation, so bold to sin, such liberty taken to transgress, such mincing, palliating, and excusing sin as we find—is this our brokenness?

We are tender, it is true, but of what? Of dishonoring God, of abusing grace, of neglecting duty, of defiling conscience, of wounding our souls? No, it is of our flesh that we are so tender: tender of labor, tender of trouble, tender of our carcasses, of our credit, of our names and reputations. A tender shoulder, a tender hand, or a tender foot can bear nothing and do noth-

ing. Nothing can touch our flesh; nothing can touch our idols, our ease, or our estates but we shrink and smart and are put to pain. God may be smitten and we feel it not; the gospel may be smitten, the church may be smitten, conscience may be smitten, and it moves us not. We fear afflictions and reproaches; oh, did we so much fear a temptation or a sin!

We cannot lack bread without feeling it; we cannot do without clothes, a house, or a friend without feeling it; we cannot lack sleep, quiet, pleasure, or respect from men without feeling it; anything that pinches our flesh pierces our heart. We cannot pine or languish in our bodies but we feel it; a fever, an ague, a consumption, dropsy, or a bodily sickness makes us sick at heart! A froward yokefellow, an unthrifty servant, a bad neighbor, a scoff, or a slight we cannot bear. But, oh, how much sin we can bear! While our flesh will bear nothing, oh, how can conscience bear, and never complain!

Christians, consider, when our flesh must be this tendered (whatever comes of it), must be tenderly fed, must have soft raiment, soft loding, soft usage; must be gently dealt with (though to maintain it, conscience must be racked and wasted); when our wills cannot be crossed, our appetites cannot be denied, but a tumult follows, the soul is in an uproar, and conscience, meanwhile, must be denied and go away in silence; when the Word no longer works, when the imprints of it are not received and the power of it is resisted; when the rod no longer works; when our stripes make no sign; when the lashes on our backs fall beside our hearts; when we remain so vain, wanton, willful, carnal, and earthly after the Lord has been preaching and whipping us into a better frame; when we stand upon

our terms, keep our distances, our animosities, our heats and heights of spirit, our censurings, our quarrelings with one another, Christian with Christian, professor with professor, after the Lord has been beating us together to make us friends, and all to teach us more humility and charity—is this our brokenness? Is this our tenderness? When upon the Lord's rougher dealing with us, smiting our faces, throwing us on our backs, trampling us in the dirt, we are yet no more brought to our knees—is this our brokenness? When the Lord has been awakening us out of sleep, putting His spurs and goads in our sides to quicken us on our way; calling to us, "Arise, sleepers; put on, sluggards; stir up your spirits and mend your pace. I will not be put off as I have been. No more such loitering, idling, trifling, and halting as has been. I must have another manner of service, another manner of praying, hearing, walking, and working than has been. Be zealous and amend; let Me see more labor, more care, more watchfulness, more activity, more of the spirit and soul of what you profess"; when the Lord has been thus goading and spurring us on, and though our flesh feels, yet our hearts will not feel, nor answer the goad or spur—is this an argument of tenderness?

When great duties are little and lesser are none; when great sins are infirmities and little ones are nothing; when lying and defrauding, when false weights, false wares, and false dealings; when defaming, backbiting, talebearing, railing, and reviling stand for little more than ciphers; when fellowship and familiarity with evil men in their sins; when compliance with or connivance at their wickedness; when sinful courtings and complimentings of such, to the fleshing them and

hardening them in their ways, pass for virtues and civilities; when frothy, wanton discourse and communication; when scoffing and making sport at the sins or infirmities of others; when sinful, vain jesting, wherein rather conscience than wit must be denied; when all these pass for our ornaments rather than our evils—where is our tenderness?

When, upon the auditing of our accounts, the examining of our books, and the reckoning up of our scores, where a talent is owing we bid conscience take the bill and write down a shekel; where twenty or a hundred sins are to be reckoned for, and we say, “Take that bill and write down ten; no, make that one, and a little one at that”; when we are so free in multiplying and so false in numbering our iniquities—where is our tenderness?

Well, Christians, the Lord has promised a tender heart to make these stones flesh; and possibly something is already done upon you towards it. Oh, let this sad sight laid before you now, this view of what is lacking, have some influence upon making it up. Let the sense of no more done work what is yet undone; as is said before, let your unbrokenness break your hearts; let the stone that yet remains make your flesh to bleed. If you yet feel no more, may you at least feel that you do not feel!

Chapter 13

A Heart to Love the Lord

“The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thine soul” (Deuteronomy 30:6). Love is the soul of the new creature, the closure of the soul with God. He who has most of God is most a Christian, and he who has most of love has most of God. God is love.

In opening this love for God, we shall consider its object and its act.

The object of divine love is God. God is good, and good is amiable. God is all good; there is none good but one, and that is God. God is essentially good, goodness in the abstract. He is infinitely excellent, He is all perfection. In this one attribute all the rest of the attributes of God are included, and this in each of them. However, the Scriptures, speaking to our capacities, describe God and His glorious attributes in several and distinct notions; yet in each one all are included; each one is infinite, and infinite perfection is essentially all perfection. God is originally good, the fountain and pattern of all that moral good which is in the creatures. He is bountiful and gracious, ready to do them good, and He is the felicitating end, or the blessedness of the soul. The goodness of God to His creatures, according to different respects to them, has its different and various appellations. As it is freely

bestowed, it is grace; as it respects them as needy, it is bounty; as it respects them in misery, it is mercy and compassion; as it respects them as provoking, so it is patience; as it intends their good, it is love; as it answers both their necessities and capacities, it is all-sufficiency. All these—His bounty, mercy, compassion, patience, love, and all sufficiency—are, in a word, His goodness; and goodness calls for love.

The object of this love is God, particularly God in Himself, God in Christ, and God in all the things of God.

1. God in Himself. He is infinitely excellent, and so worthy of all love. God is to be loved in Himself and for Himself, for His own worthiness. God is good in Himself, and is therefore to be loved for Himself.

2. God in Christ. In Christ alone, considering us as sinners, can He be said to be good to us.

There is a fourfold incentive of love: perception, proportion, propriety, and possession.

- Perception, or the apprehension or understanding of the object to be loved. We must know before we can love. Now God cannot immediately be seen by mortals. He dwells in light, but that light is invisible to us. Christ is the glass in which this glory may be seen. We cannot see God but through a veil of flesh, in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6). No man has seen God at any time but the only Begotten of the Father, who is in the bosom of the Father, has revealed Him (John 1:18).

- Proportion. There is a double proportion required. In respect of quantity, there must be sufficiency. In respect of quality, there must be suitableness. God Himself is proportioned to us, considering us as ratio-

nal creatures and in our state of innocence. And He is both a sufficient and suitable good. But God in Christ only, considering us as lapsed creatures, sees us in a state of sin.

God in Christ is a God of pity and compassion to us, a God of patience, a God of mercy, with whom is plentiful redemption. He is a God pardoning iniquity and passing by transgression, loving us in our lowly estate, loving us and pitying us, loving us and pardoning us, loving us and washing us, loving us and saving us from our sins and the wrath to come. And such love is the great flame that kindles love; it is a love breaking forth out of a cloud of wrath, fury and displeasure; it is abused love, provoked love, and yet forgiving love. To whom much is forgiven, they will love much.

- Propriety. What is good, good for us and our own good, is what carries our hearts. We must love our own good because we most love ourselves. Our love to God is heightened from our due self-love.

There is a sinful self-love: when either we love that for a self which is not ourself (when we love our flesh and fleshly interest), or when we love ourselves inordinately, more than God, and God only for ourselves.

And there is a lawful self-love: when we love ourselves in the Lord and for the Lord. And the more we thus love ourselves, the more the Lord is loved by us; and the more He is our own, the more love He has.

Now in Christ, the Lord is our God, our own God. "O God, Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee. Thou art my God, and I will love Thee" (Psalm 118:28).

The Lord is God, and therefore we love Him; the Lord is good, gracious, and merciful, and therefore we love Him, yea, and ought to love Him whether He is

ours or not. But when both meet, He is God, and our God. He is good, and our good. He is gracious, merciful, and all-sufficient, and He is all these things to us. Hence is our love made perfect in us.

- Possession. We can love a distant good, an absent good, a good that is only possible. There is love in hope, but my how much the nearer good is to us that is really so, by so much more it is attractive and acceptable to us. It is most in our hearts when it is most in our hands. Indeed, those things which are fancied good, or those things that are finite good and overrated good, that are judged better than they are, are loved most at a distance because when they come to our hand, we see our mistakes. But that which is what it seemed, much more, that which is above our thoughts, beyond our expectations, infinitely good, by how much the nearer, it is ever the dearer to us.

All worldly good is most valued, at least by carnal hearts, at a distance; they promise themselves more contentment in it than it has to pay them; their possession is their disappointment. While they lusted, they idolized and adored; but when they have tasted and eaten, it comes out at their nostrils. Or else they sit down with the shame of the disappointed: they are either surfeited or hungry still. "Is this all you can do for me? Have all my expectations of delight and satisfaction come to no more than this? Miserable comforters are you all!"

Possession and fruition is the proof of all things. And vanity proved is the less loved. But God, being an all-sufficient, incomprehensible good, by how much the nearer to us, how much the more He is ours, by so much the more we prize and love Him, because now we

find (when we have Him we enjoy Him) that before, the other half was not told to us.

Now in Christ we have not only a propriety in God, but in some degree a present possession. He who has the Son has the Father also. We see His light, we feel His love, we taste of His goodness, we enjoy His presence, we have God with us, we have God in us, we have fellowship with Him, He dwells in us and we in Him; and hence we love, and herein we rejoice.

3. In all the things of God: His Word, ordinances, sabbaths, saints, graces, and duties. In all His ways, the saints love God and they love His Word. It is God in the Word they love. They love God and they love ordinances, sabbaths, and saints. It is God in all these they love. They love the ways, the works, and all the dispensations of God; and it is God in them all that they love. They see God in everything, and they love God wherever they see Him. They look on all these things with another eye, and therefore embrace them with another heart than other men do.

The saints' love for the things of God is their love for God; for it is God in them, as was said, that they love. Their love for them is founded either on their participation of God or relationship to God.

Or else you may say that they love the things of God because they are the offspring, the images, and the chariots of God.

(1) The things of God are the offspring of God. As the saints are born from above, so all the things of God come down from above, and, therefore, may be called, as does the apostle, things above. "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above; set your affections on things above" (Colossians 3:1-2). Things

above and the things of God are all one; whatever is from God and belongs to His heavenly kingdom is divine and heavenly. And he who loves Him who begets therefore loves those who are begotten, and whatsoever proceeds from Him.

(2) The Word and the saints are the images of God; the character and impression of God are upon them. The grace in the saints and the holy truths in the Word are the very face of Christ, who is full of grace and truth. And this is their rule: love God and love His image.

(3) The things of God are the chariots of God. He who makes the clouds His chariots also makes His Word, His ordinances, and His ministers His chariots, wherein He rides down into those lower parts to give the world a meeting. When ministers come, and the Word comes down from them, God comes down in them to visit His people. As it was said of Paul, so it is true of Apollos, Cephas, and all the dispensers of the gospel: they are chosen vessels to bear His name before the sons of men; and as they are the chariots in which God comes down, so they are also the wagons which He has sent them to fetch them up to Himself. The saints send up their hearts in their duties, in their prayers, and in their praises unto God. Old Israel's heart leaped when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent. Oh, what love the psalmist expresses to the house and court of the Lord: "Oh, how amiable are Thy tabernacles! I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord' " (Psalm 122:1). The psalmist was glad to go there because from there he hoped to be carried higher, from the mountain to the mansion, from Mount Zion here below to Jerusalem above.

It is the duty and delight of the saints to be ascending heavenwards; they are dead with Christ, and they are risen with Christ; and it is not as they wish it was with them but when they are ascending up with Christ. They are dead with Christ by repentance and humiliation; they are risen with Christ by faith and sanctification; and they ascend with Christ by love and holy affection. This is their chariot of fire, a chariot within a chariot, that, through duties and ordinances, rides up in its own flame to the God of love.

Or, if you will, the ordinances of God are our Jacob's ladder reaching from heaven to earth, by which angels descend and souls ascend. God comes down and hearts go up; praises go up and blessings come down. You have not proved what an ordinance is, what prayer means, what preaching means, or what sacraments mean if you have not seen God coming down, nor felt your heart ascending by them. He who has felt this way will say, "Let me dwell here; let others be where they will, among their flocks, among their herds, upon their beds, at their cups, their pleasures, or in their houses, it is good for me to be here."

No wonder, Christians, that carnal hearts are such strangers to the Word, can so well set out at duties, and can go without ordinances. Preaching, praying, and sabbaths they can spare and not feel their want. And no wonder! What is heaven and earth? What is God to flesh? These chariots would carry them away from their goods, carry them out of their own country into a strange land where they have neither possession nor acquaintance. But, oh, what a sad wonder it is that saints should go up so often into these chariots and yet get no nearer home; that they should be still so much

on earth who have been so often mounted for heaven; that those hearts should still be on the dunghills whose feet are so often on the mountain of the Lord; that the wagons should be so often sent down and go up empty, scarcely a heart sent up on them; yea, that they should be so far from God when God is among them.

Where is your love, Christians? How is it that it is still below? What have you here? Your city is above, your home is above, your God, your Jesus, your treasure is above. How is it that where your treasure is your hearts are not also? How can you hear from God, and not hear God in the messenger? How can you send up to heaven your eyes, your hands, your prayers, your complaints, and your promises, and still leave your hearts below? How can you send up hearts to heaven and let them return again down to this earth? How can you remain earthly, fleshly, filthy, and vain after so much converse—or at least the pretense to it—with the holy God of spirits? How can you say that you love God when you can so often go where He is and not care to see Him? Or, if you meet with Him, how can you let Him go without a blessing? Or, if He blesses you, how can you go immediately and exchange your Father's blessing for a mess of pottage? How can you lose a duty in a dinner, the comforts and reviving of a sermon, a sacrament, or a sabbath, in an hour's carnal contact with the world? If we loved God more, certainly we would be more with Him, and to better purpose. His meetings would be more precious, and the fruits of them more lasting. We would neither go away without His blessing, nor throw it away once we had received it. And this ends my treatment of the object of love.

Next, we shall address the act of love. Love is a natural affection. The love of God is the soul's clasping or closing with the Lord. It is the expansion or going out of the heart in its strength after God, the uniting or knitting of the soul with God, with a complacency and acquiescence in Him. There are three things included in this love:

First, there is the strength of the heart making out after God. This is what is commonly called our love of desire, the breathing, thirsting, or panting of the heart after God (Psalm 42:1). This is the heart's working Godward with all its might, loving Him above all things, desiring Him above all things, and that both intensive with the greatest vigor and intention, and adequate as its complete and adequate object. God is its all. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee" (Psalm 73:25).

Second, there is the uniting of the soul with God, our cleaving to Him. By love, heart cleaves to heart and soul cleaves to soul. It is said of Shechem in Genesis 34:3 that his heart clave unto Dinah. He loved her with his heart; she had gotten into his heart, and there his heart held her. Barnabas exhorted the church that, with purpose of heart, they might cleave unto the Lord (Acts 11:23). It is the knitting of the soul with God. It is said in 1 Samuel 18:1 that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. To express his tender love to Benjamin, Genesis 44:30 says that Jacob's life was bound up in his life. Of the multitude of believer in Acts 4:32, we read that they were all of one heart and one soul. Their love had them knit up all into one. By love we are one with

God and He with us. It is the soul's willing of God to itself, and willing itself and all to God, all praises, all honor and all blessedness to Him.

"Be Thou mine, Lord, nothing less, nothing else. Be Thou mine; I need no less and I desire no more. Let me be Thine. Let me be to Thee and for Thee: Thy servant, Thy sacrifice, or whatever Thou wilt; and let all mine be Thine: my heart, my hand, my tongue, my time, and my interest. Let all Thine be to Thee: Thy heavens and Thy earth, with every person and with every creature in them. Let every heart, every mouth, every limb, every creature, be a praise to the Lord. Let the Lord live, and blessed be my Rock; let the God of my salvation be exalted. Let every knee bow, let every tongue confess unto God."

This is our "love of union," as it is called. And it is the heart, the very essence of saving love, wherein are included both our accepting God and our surrender or resignation of ourselves unto God, as well as our wishing and willing all glory, dominion, and blessedness to Him.

And so here also is our love of benevolence. All these may be included in that opening of the heart mentioned in Acts 16:14. It is there said that the Lord opened Lydia's heart. The heart is then savingly opened when it freely lets itself out upon God, when all its streams run into the Lord, and when it takes in and takes down God into the depth of the soul. The heart thus opened to the Lord, when God has come in, will close upon Him: "Abide with me. Thou hast entered upon Thy habitation. Oh, let this be Thy dwelling forever!"

Only this must be added further, that with God it

takes in all things of God: His Word, His ordinances, His ways, and all His dispensations, with His love, His laws; with His comforts, His counsels; with His counsels, His corrections. "I accept all that is Thine, both Thy yoke and Thy cross. Thyself, Lord, is what I desire. Bring Thy love, Lord, and whatever else Thou wilt with Thee."

Third, there is the soul's taking pleasure, and taking up its rest in Him. This is called our love of complacency. Where we love, there will be a delightful stay of the mind upon God. The object dwells in the eye; we are still looking where we love. "When I awake, I am still with Thee" (Psalm 139:18). His thoughts are with God; of Him is his meditation all the day long.

The soul's meditation of Him shall be sweet. He who loves dwells in God. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever," said the psalmist. Why there? Because it is there his God dwells, and therefore his soul takes up its dwelling there.

There is also an acquiescence of the heart in Him. "Return unto thy rest, O my soul" (Psalm 116:7). But this is not felt till love has obtained, till the soul feels itself to love, and to have what it loves; to love and to be beloved; to accept and to be accepted by God. When it comes to this, then we have enough. "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine" (Song of Solomon 6:3). And here is the sweetness of religion, the marrow and fatness of godliness, the pleasure of love. When I love, I can rest; when I can rest, I can rejoice; when I feel myself to love, I know I am beloved. And what is then wanting? Where love is a stranger, joy is not known. We can never take comfort in anything but in that which we love. When do we take pleasure in eating

but when we have meat that we love? What is a friend, a wife, or a child if we do not love them? What is society or communion where love has not first made a union? Can two walk together unless they are agreed? With little comfort, sure; they would be better pleased were they parted asunder.

It is love that is the pleasure of our lives. It is love that makes heaven sweet. There we shall have our fill of joy because there we have our fill of love. Heaven would not be heaven, God Himself could not be the joy if He were not the love of His saints. What bitter drafts love will sweeten!

Sin, lusts, and all the filth of the flesh are sweet morsels to carnal hearts; that is the meat they love. God and Christ are nothing to them. "What is thy beloved more than other beloveds" (Song of Solomon 5:9)? Religion is a bondage to them, holiness a weariness; not the labors only, but the joys of the saints are empty and unsavory things.

There are no feasts but lovefeasts. Love is both the best dish, and the only sauce for every dish. It is the best dish, and he who feeds on divine love will never complain of a short meal. And love is the sauce for every dish; it is but unsavory meat that is not seasoned with love. Be the meat ever so excellent, it will not relish if it is not loved. Love will make anything relish. When it puts such a sweetness into sin that even death and hell will go down with carnal hearts for its sake, oh, what a feast will love make of holiness and glory! Get love for Christ, love for religion, and you will never demand, "Where is the blessedness? Where is the sweetness?"

Love will sweeten both the comforts and the exercises of religion. It will make both duties and sufferings

sweet. There are two things that are naturally sweet to love: to please and to praise.

First, he who loves will please and observe whom he loves. How careful are such to watch themselves that they do not grieve their friend! What study loves puts them upon to find out what is grateful and acceptable! "Acceptable looks, acceptable language, acceptable entertainment; what wilt Thou have, Lord? What wilt Thou have me to be? A servant? A doorkeeper? A servant of servants for Thee? I will be nothing but what Thou wilt have me be. What wilt Thou have me to do, Lord? Let me know Thy will; appoint my work for me. Oh, that my ways were so directed that I might keep Thy statutes! What wilt Thou have of me? Wilt Thou have my idols, my ease, my honor, my pleasure, my house, or my estate? Wilt Thou have my Isaacs? Is there anything dearer to me than another that might be an offering to Thee, Lord? Wilt Thou have my liberty or my life? Behold, all is at Thy feet. I can keep back nothing that Thou callest for."

Hence love is said to be the fulfilling of the law; there is in this good will, radically every good work. Love would walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work. Love is generous; it would do great and noble things. "What shall I do for Him whom my soul honors? Oh, for a gift that might be worthy of Him! But I have nothing; my goodness extendeth not to Thee." Love would give more than it owes; but where it cannot do so, where it cannot be generous, yet it would be just; it would level all accounts and pay all debts. Love would have nothing owed but love itself. It would give to all their due. It would not die in the debt of a servant or a stranger, and much less

(could it help it) would it take away from the God of glory. This is the daily charge of love: pay what you owe. Its receipts and returns are a pleasure to it; anything that comes down from heaven, and every present it has to send there, is a joy to love. This is the message that both speak: "Happy soul, you love and are loved."

Love catches all opportunities to send up messages of love, and knows of no more fit messenger to send by than the hand of duty. Every duty is dispatched with this superscription: "The tribute of love."

Love is the spring which sets all our wheels a going, the womb in which all our works are formed, the fire in the heart that vents itself in our words and ways. "The fire kindled, then spake I with my tongue" (Psalm 39:3). Love is to a saint what malice is to Satan; it is that which gives force to all his actions. Satan's temptations are called fiery darts, and this not only because they are headed and barbed with fire (as poisoned arrows, they burn where they hit; they set sin on fire; they set the soul on fire, burning with lust and wickedness), but because they are winged with fire and forced with fire. The bullet is fired out of the gun, and thence it flies so fiercely. It is the malice of Satan's heart that fires out all his darts. What malice does with Satan, that love does with saints. It sets the heart in a flame of holy zeal and activity for God. "Thy word was in me as fire [literally, it has kindled a fire there], I was weary with forbearing" (Jeremiah 20:9). A heart of love is weary not of action, but of idleness; weary with forbearing, not with doing; never weary of doing much, but ever weary of doing nothing. "O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed," said the psalmist. "I will sing and give thanks" (Psalm 57:7). Love will add, "O God, my heart is fixed; my heart

is fixed; there is a flame kindled; my heart burns in holy desires and zeal for Thee.” And where love has set the heart a burning, the heart will set the hand a working and the feet a running.

Second, he who loves will praise him whom he loves. Praise is comely, and praise is a pleasure to the upright in heart. It is the delight of love to be speaking of the perfections, the virtues, the beauties, and the excellencies of the one who is loved. The heart of the spouse in Song of Solomon, whose whole language is love, is so full that her lips overflow with the mention of the excellencies of Christ: “My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand” (5:10). She says that his head is fine gold, his eyes are dove’s eyes, his cheeks are a bed of spices, his lips are lilies, his hands are gold rings, his legs are pillars of marble, his countenance is excellent, and his mouth sweet. Yea, “He is altogether lovely; this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem” (5:16).

“Who is a God like unto Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders” (Exodus 15:11)? Combining numerous Scriptures, “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God. Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; Thy faithfulness reacheth into the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains, Thy judgments are a great deep. How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O Lord! Therefore the sons of men will put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. I will speak of the glorious honor of Thy majesty, and of Thy wondrous works. The Lord is gracious, full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. Let all Thy works praise Thee, O

Lord; let the saints bless Thee; let them speak of the glory of Thy kingdom and talk of Thy power; let them abundantly utter the memory of Thy goodness and sing of Thy righteousness.”

O my God, Thou art all love, all goodness, all grace, and all glory. Oh, let Thy servant be all praise! Let this heart be an altar, and every service a sacrifice. Let this mouth be a trumpet and every word a psalm. Let my breath be as incense and every member a censer. Let all that is within me, my soul, with all its powers; let all that is outside me, my body, with all its members, shout for joy and sing forth the high praises of God. This is the voice of love.

And now you have another excellence of the near heart laid open to your view: love, and a heart to love.

Christians, prize this precious grace; prize it, and you will write down this word also among the great and precious promises. And if you would prize it aright, take your estimate of its worth and its want, as we prize jewels from their excellence and scarcity.

Prize love according to its worth and excellency. What is its worth? “If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would not be condemned” (Song of Solomon 8:7). The whole world is not of that value to be a price for love; no, it must come by gift; it is not to be bought for money. Love is worth as much as a soul, and that is more than all the world. “What shall it profit a man to win the whole world, and lose his own soul” (Mark 8:36)? Love is as much worth as all religion; all the graces, duties, and exercises of it are only valued according to the love that is in them. What is knowledge, faith, hope, or patience without love? What is prayer, fasting, or alms without charity?

They are worth nothing. Shall I say, they are nothing. If I have all knowledge, all faith, all prayer, all labor, and all suffering, and have not charity, I am nothing.

Love is worth as much as heaven is worth, as much as Christ and God are worth to us. God is love, and He does not exist in us if love is not in us. Do you prize your substance? Is your house, your money, or your lands anything to you? Do you value your soul? Is religion, is heaven, is Christ, is God Himself of any account to you? Then prize the love of God. Without love, God is no God to you, Christ is no Christ to you, and heaven is no heaven for you. It would be better if you had no soul or being than no love. Oh, prize the love of God; prize it and seek it; prize it and pray for it. As you would pray for your life, pray for your soul: "Lord, let me love Thee." Get love and you get all. Love and you will be holy; love and you will be humble; love and you will be fruitful; love and you will please, praise, and enjoy your God. Love and you will fear, serve, suffer, and die for Him; love and you will live. Prize love; prize it according to its worth.

Prize love according to its rarity. Excellent things are rated higher for their scarcity; scarcity raises the market. 1 Samuel 3:1 tells us that "the Word of God was precious in those days," that is, when there was a famine of the Word, when there was no open vision. Oh, were the love of God as precious as it is rare! What a spiritless carcass the religion of many professors is! What has become of the soul of it? Oh, we freeze in our duties, we freeze in our devotions, and we are almost frozen out of them all. If we have a sacrifice left, what fire is there to offer it up? "The God that answereth by fire, let Him be God," said Elijah in 1 Kings 18:24. The

heart that asks by fire, that ascends in fire, let that be the heart for God. "Behold the wood and the fire, but where is the lamb for sacrifice?" We may say, behold the wood and the sacrifice, but where is the fire to offer it up? Our spirits have taken a cold; the chill of them appears in all our duties. Love, where do you dwell? Zeal for God, where is your abode? How many houses must we search! How many hearts must we walk through before we find your habitation!

The apostle told the Romans that they "have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:2). We have the knowledge of God, but, oh, where is the zeal! The psalmist said, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up" (Psalm 69:9), but is not that eater eaten? The house has burned up the fire, or, if there is any fire left, is it not strange fire? It is not the fire of love, but of lust, pride, covetousness, or that wildfire of envy and contention that heats our spirits. Jehu was also on fire against the house of Ahab. "Come, see my zeal for the Lord of hosts" (2 Kings 10:16). That fire was fury, not love; or, if it was love, it was self-love, not the love of God that made all that flame. Such hearts are like the evil tongue that is "set on fire of hell" (James 3:6). Such heats are not from above, but are earthly, sensual, and devilish. We freeze while we fry; our preternatural heats have extinguished the supernatural.

Oh, how little kindly warmth we find in our spirits! Do we feel our hearts working upwards, ascending in our flames? We all pretend to love, but, consider, are our hearts making out in their strength after God? We wish well to His name and interest; we wish He were ours; we wish ourselves His. Oh, if wishing were doing, what Christians we would be! But does the kingdom of

God suffer violence? Who are they who so run as if they would take God by force, take heaven by force? The kingdom of heaven may offer violence if it will, and take us by force, but how little violence does it suffer? We say that we love God, but is there not something else we love more? We desire to be holy, but is there not something else we desire more?

Oh, how few hearty friends Christ has in the world! And how little love He receives from these few! So little that we cannot tell ourselves whether it is anything or nothing. How hard we are put to it! What a narrow search we must make! How many arguments we must consult! How many marks we must consider before we can prove that we love Him! And yet at last we are still in doubt whether we love Him or not.

When we love our carnal friends, our wives, or our children, we can feel that we love them. When we love our ease, our estates, or our liberties, we can feel that we love them. But we cannot tell whether we love our God or not. How few of us can boldly make this appeal to Him: "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee"?

Oh, how many wounds Christ receives in the house of His friends! How many slights He must put up with! How often, when He has sat down in His own room have we said to Him, "Give this other man, this friend of mine, or this business of mine Thy place," and so have made Him take a lower place?

How has He, when He has come to our doors (and how often His love has brought Him there!), stood and knocked and called, "Open to Me, My love, My sister"? Yet there He has been made to stand and wait, while strangers have gotten in and taken up all the rooms. The world can never come out of season, but Christ is

fain to wait His seasons, when He can find us at leisure; if there are any other guests with us, our Lord must wait. We say to Him, "Go Thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season I will send for Thee" (Acts 24:25). How often we have agreed and appointed to meet the Lord at such an hour in our chamber or in our closet, to have conversation and communion with Him in duty, and if anything comes in to carry us another way, then immediately we say, "I pray Thee to have me excused." Or, if we do keep our time and shut ourselves in the Lord, if we sit down to duty, what a multitude of thoughts fall a knocking at our doors. And then away our hearts go with them to the ends of the earth, leaving nothing but our carcasses behind with the Lord.

Oh, were our love stronger, our cries would be louder, and would drown the noise of these knockings so that they would neither be heard nor heeded; it would command silence to every impertinent thought. I charge you, O daughters, that you stir not, that you disturb not my Beloved and my soul. More love would command their attendance upon the work of the Lord, would gird up the loins of the mind and gather in all its scattered messengers. Come, all you powers of my soul; come and do your homage; come and help in the service of my God.

Oh, at what a distance we are content to live from the Lord, sometimes for many days together! Our souls and our God have become strangers, and yet we can be merry and quiet. We can be without the presence of God and never miss it; not a smile from His face nor a look of love from us to Him, and yet no trouble follows. The sun may be eclipsed or under a cloud, and yet there

is no darkness upon our spirits; we do not walk in darkness when we have no light. Sorrow and sadness is as far from us as God is from us. We can warm ourselves at our own fires and rejoice in the light of our own sparks, as if these were the sun. We can do as well in a mist as in the sunshine; day and night are both alike to us. The children of the bride chamber do not fast, but can feast and make merry when the bridegroom is taken from them; they can make a shift with their carnal contentments to supply the room of the Lord.

Can we not sometimes go where our Lord feeds and never find Him? Can we not go to pray, to hear, to receive a sacrament, and the Lord never meet with us there, and yet we can return well satisfied? When we thus lack communion, and are content to lack it, where is our love? What love is that which can so well bear the absence of her beloved. Call me no more Naomi, pleasant, but call me Marah, bitter. "I went out full, but I return empty" (Ruth 1:21). She said, "I was full of grace, full of joy, because I was full of the Lord; but, behold, all is gone: my husband is lost and my God has departed from me. Therefore, call me no more Naomi, but call me Marah, for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me. He has hidden His face from me; and for these things I weep. My eyes run down with tears because the Comforter, who should relieve my soul, is far from me." Such are the tears of love for her absent Lord.

Oh, how little conscience is made of bestowing that on the Lord which we have bestowed on Him! We give and take; we pretend to have given all to God; but are we not often taking away what we have given and bestowing it elsewhere? Love would have all we have running into God, and would have nothing run besides.

But, oh, what waste there is made of our time, our parts, and other talents, which, if they were well-husbanded, would come to much and be given to the Lord! When so many days and hours run out, and no account is taken of them,, on what or on whom they are consumed; when our eyes, ears, hands, and tongues, which were made for God, are so often used by the devil and our lusts; when back, belly, friends, and companions carry away what should be spent on God and souls; when what should be spent on religion and charity is at the disposal of pride, prodigality, and gluttony; when our prayers, our fasting, our preaching and hearing, and all our duties become sacrifices to our lusts, and our idols are allowed to devour the sacrifices of the Lord; when our pride and fleshly ends must have the offering and eating of our sacrifices, this must make our prayers, preach our sermons, keep our fasts, give our alms, and wear the credit and honor of them as its own crown; when God is thus robbed, and we let the thief run away with all, without ever pursuing or questioning him—Oh! where is our love?

Oh, how little pleasure we take in the Lord! What a weariness it is to us to wait upon Him! How glad we are when we come back from the house of the Lord, when we come off of our knees, or come out of our closets; when the sabbaths are gone and the new moons over, and we make our returns from heaven to earth! How much work we have to do to keep our hearts near the Lord! How they sling away before we are even aware!

And, while we are in His presence, how seldom we rejoice in that presence! What hungry meals, what je-june feasts we make before the Lord! We do not relish His dainties: His wine is but dregs to us. His marrow

and fatness are but leanness to our souls. A little love would sweeten every drop, would season every morsel that comes from His table, and would make our very fasts to be pleasant bread. We feed upon the dish, and not the meat; on the bone and not the marrow. Ordinances, and the external exercises of religion are but the bone, the shell, or the dish; it is God that is the kernel, the marrow, and the fatness.

How little communion we have with the Lord in our approaches to Him. And how little sweetness do we find in the little we have! Communion is the pleasure of love, and love is the sweetness of communion. "Now I am where I would be. Oh, how amiable are Thy tabernacles! Very pleasant art Thou to me, O Lord." That is the voice of love. Had we more love, we would be more spiritual; and spiritual things would be more grateful to spiritual hearts. Divine love is like the fire; it rarifies and changes hearts into its own likeness, and then there is sweetness. Oh, we are carnal! And that is enough to evidence that there is little of the love of God abiding in us.

Consider these things, and you will see that love is a rarity; there is but little true love in the world. Oh, prize the love of God. Let its want make it prized. Shall it be so rare and yet so cheap? Prize it, and press on after it.

What about these hearts below? Are they not still below? Can they be so cold, such clods of clay, and yet be from above? Can they be so carnal, so sensual, and yet in heaven? So hungry and so greedy in sucking the juice of this earth, in taking in its pleasures; so busy in digging out the wealth of the earth and searching for its treasures, hearts so busy this way and yet not here? How can you say, "I am walking with the God of glory"

when you are still worshipping the gods of the earth? How can you say, "My heart is risen above; it is no longer here below," when it may still be said to you, "Behold the place where it lies! It is still in the field, in the ridges and furrows thereof. It is still in the mines, in the heart of the earth." We sow our hearts with our seed; we send them down to dig in the heart of the earth.

But why are these hearts below? Get them up, get them up! Leave nothing but the mantle here, your bodies; earth to earth, dust to dust. Come, heave your souls heavenward; let them take the wing and be gone. Oh, that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly up and be at rest! Be lower than ever with regard to humility, but let love be ever on high.

Behold those cords of love that are let down in every ordinance, in every providence. There is a cord let down to gather up hearts. Harken to those calls of love, "Come up here! Come up here!" Let your reply be, "We are coming, Lord. Thou hast bid us come. Now, O Lord, lend us Thy hands and lift us up."

Come on, Christians; come, let us be happy. If we love, we are happy. Come, let us rejoice; if we love, we joy. Come, let us live; we die while we linger on this earth. If we love, we live; let us live, and let our life be love. Let our works be labors of love, our wounds love's scars, our prayers the cries of love, our praises love songs to our Lord and God. Let every duty, every exercise, let every member, every power, let our bodies, let our souls, be love's sacrifices. As we see love in all of His ways, so let the Lord see love in all of our ways.

Can you not love? Look till you can; look up to your God and send your thoughts up there. Let your medita-

tions be of Him, and they will not be long before His throne before they fetch up your heart. Look on your Jesus; behold His hands and His feet; come and put your finger into the print of the nails and thrust your heart into His side; and there let it lie till you feel its warmth. Look up to your Jesus, and lift up a prayer: "Lord, let me love Thee; if Thou lovest, let me love Thee. I will seek till I can see; let me see till I can love. What have I here, Lord? My all is with Thee: my help, my hope, my treasure, my life is hidden with Christ in God. And yet all this is nothing to me while my heart is no more with Thee. Take it, Lord; take it up. Where my treasure is, there let my heart be also."

Doubting Christian, who, because you love so little, fear that you do not love at all, cry for more, but be thankful for what you have. Be ashamed that you love no more, but do not be dismayed. You complain that you cannot love God, but do you love His image, His saints, His Word, His works, or His ways? While you say that you do not love God, do you love godliness? If you cannot love, can you grieve? Can you lament after Him? Have you chosen? Do you hang upon and trust in the Lord? If you cannot love, can you fear and follow the Lord? If He is not sensibly in your affections, is He at least in your thoughts, in your mouth, or in your eyes? Is He your aim and your scope? Does your course bend towards Him? Comfort your heart in these things. You may see that you love Him, though you cannot feel that you do.

Chapter 14

A Heart to Fear the Lord

“I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me” (Jeremiah 32:40). In order to open these words, I will show that (1) the Lord God is a dreadful God; (2) that the Lord has put the dread of Himself upon the hearts of all the earth; (3) that yet by sin the heart of man is greatly hardened against the fear of the Lord; (4) that God will recover His honor, and again put His fear into the hearts of His people; and (5) what this fear of the Lord is that He will put into them.

1. The Lord God is a dreadful God. He is dreadful in the excellence and glory of His majesty. “Shall not His excellency make you afraid, and His dread fall upon you” (Job 13:11). His power is dreadful. The Lord says, “Do you not fear Me? Will you not tremble at My presence, who has placed the sand to bound the sea by a perpetual decree, so that it cannot pass; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet they cannot prevail; though they roar, yet they cannot pass over it? Do you not fear Me?” He who did that, what can He not do? His wrath is a dreadful wrath. “At His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation” (Jeremiah 10:10), and the same is true of His holiness, His truth, His righteousness, and all His name. “That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God” (Deuteronomy 28:58). The

Lord God is a dreadful God.

2. The Lord God has put the dread of Himself upon the hearts of all the earth; not the best only, but the worst of the sons of men. "I am a great King, and My name is dreadful among the heathen," says the Lord in Malachi 1:14.

This dread of the Lord breaks forth upon them from the impress of God upon the natures of all men. As the law of God is written in their hearts, so is the being of God. He has His witness in their consciences. The atheists of the earth can answer all the arguments for the existence of God, but they can never confute their own consciences. If the works of God do not instruct them, their reins shall; if they will not see, they shall feel that there is a God; and wherever God is felt, He is feared. Even when their mouths speak proud things, their hearts shall meditate terror; and when nothing else is, they shall be a terror to themselves.

The dread of the Lord is increased by the great works of God, the wonders that He does in this world: His thunder and His hail, His wind and His waves. His earthquakes make an earthquake in hearts.

The dread of the Lord is further heightened by His judgments which He executes on earth. The judgments of God are God revealing Himself from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. These strike the most terror:

- When He smites suddenly and makes quick work of sinners, such as when Herod was smote by an angel of God, when Nadab and Abihu were consumed by fire immediately upon their sin. Sudden strokes shake secure hearts.
- When He executes strange judgments and makes a

new thing, such as in the case of Korah and his company. God made the earth to open her mouth upon them and swallow them up. Just so He made flies, frogs, and lice to be the executioners of His wrath upon Pharaoh.

- When He executes great wrath for little sins, as men account them, such as in the case of Uzzah, whom He struck dead for but touching the ark when it shook.

- When He exercises great severity on His own, on those who are near to Him. If He spared not His Son, what will He do to His enemies! If these things are done on the green tree, what shall be done on the dry!

Yet further, the dread of the Lord is heightened by their conscience of guilt, and their binding over to the judgment to come. The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with the point of a diamond it is graven upon the tables of their heart. The sin of Judah is written, yea, and the sin of the Gentiles also. "Their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing" (Romans 2:15). And where their sin is written, there their judgment is written, which even nature itself will teach inevitably follows upon sin. This is the great dread that has come upon them. The very mention of judgment to come made Felix tremble at the face of a poor prisoner. This is the terror of the Lord mentioned by the apostle: "We must all appear before the judgment seat. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord we persuade men" (2 Corinthians 5:10-11). Death is said to be the king of terrors; the terror of death is that afterward immediately comes judgment.

All these—the impress of God upon their hearts, the wonders of God in the world, the vengeance of God executed on sin, the sense of guilt, and of a judgment to

come—preach to the consciences of sinners that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

3. Yet by sin the heart of man is much hardened from the fear of the Lord. Sin blinds the eye and hardens the heart; it brings the soul into danger and puts it out of fear. Who is in such danger, and yet who so bold as the blind sinner? When the understanding has been darkened, the next words we read are “past feeling” (Ephesians 4:19). There is included in the very nature of sin a slighting of God; and, having slighted Him once, we learn to slight Him more. Slight the command and you will quickly slight the curse. Laugh at duty and it will not be long before you laugh at fear. And when sin has thus hardened, God will also harden. He lets the sinner alone, suspends his judgments, smites the sinner with judicial blindness, and gives him up to a reprobate mind (Romans 1:28). And once they come to this point, then hell has broken loose; for what follows? “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, and what not” (Romans 1:29). Psalm 36:1: “The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, ‘There is no fear of God before his eyes.’ ”

When Abraham had such a thought (“Surely the fear of God is not in this place” Genesis 20:11), what did he think of that place then? Murder, adultery, and all manner of villany. “What sawest thou amongst us that thou hast done this thing?” What hurt, what evil, did you see among us? “What evil? Enough to make me afraid. I thought the fear of God was not here, and I need nothing more than that to make me afraid.”

If any of you say that the fear of God is not in this man or that man, and you are really saying that the

devil is in him; here dwells sin, and all manner of wickedness. Say that the fear of God is not in some place, and if you find it to be an Egypt or Sodom, as far as abominations go, you will not wonder at it.

“The fear of the Lord is clean” (Psalm 19:9), that is, not only formally, but effectively it cleans. Where this is not, every unclean thing may dwell. The reason why this world is such a world as it is—such a wicked world, such a treacherous, deceitful, and ungodly world, why there is so little faith, truth, mercy, charity, or sobriety—is because there is so little of the fear of God. Sin has cast out fear, and this has brought forth sin in abundance. The law is nothing, threatenings are nothing, conscience is nothing, and God is nothing to men because He is not their fear. Wickedness is as righteousness; villany is as honesty; prodigality and debauchery are as temperance and sobriety. Wickedness faces the sun and lifts up its head; it wears the garland; it paints itself brightly. Where the fear of God has departed, wickedness paints itself as virtue, generosity, gallantry, and the beauty and ornament of the world.

God may promise, threaten, or command: “Hearken to My voice; turn at My reproofs; cast away your transgressions. Awake from your wine; be chaste, sober, and humble. Let your merriment be turned into mourning and your jollity into heaviness. Remember your Creator; remember your souls; why will you die? Turn and live.” God may speak thus once, twice, even ten times, but He is not regarded. His words have no weight; His counsels have no credit; His warnings are of no value with hardened, fearless hearts.

If the devil speaks but once, he is heard; if lust speaks but once, it is obeyed; if a proud companion

speaks but once, he is followed, while the Word of the God of glory is made a reproach and a scorn. Oh, the intolerable contempt that is poured out upon the Most High by men who do not fear God! Make your promises, and give your gifts to whomever you will; give grace and glory where you please: "The world for me; my pleasures, my honors, my liberty for me, this world for me, let whoever will look after others. Let the Lord threaten; let the day of the Lord come; let it hasten that we may see it; let the Almighty do His worst, I will not hearken nor turn." This is the blasphemy of hardened, fearless hearts.

4. God will recover His honor in the hearts of His people. He will put His fear in their hearts. While others are hardened, they will tremble; while others kick, they will stoop; whoever despises God, of these He will be had in honor.

5. What is this fear of the Lord that He will put into their hearts? It is taken in Scripture sometimes more largely so as to comprehend all religion. In Job 1, Job was said to be a man fearing God, that is, a godly man; but I will not speak of it here in that sense. Sometimes it is spoken of more strictly, as a distinct grace distinguished from faith, love, hope, and other graces of the Spirit. And, taken in this sense, there are these two things included in it: (1) a reverence for God, and (2) an abhorrence of evil for God's sake.

(1) A reverence for God. To fear God is to have the awe of God abiding upon the heart, to be under a sense of the majesty and glory of the Lord shining forth in all His attributes, especially in His holiness and omniscience; the glory of His holiness, and the sense of such a holy eye upon the soul strikes it with

dread and consternation. This is expressed in Scripture by the term "sanctifying the Lord in your heart." Leviticus 10:3: "I will be sanctified by them that draw nigh Me." Isaiah 8:13: "Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself, and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread."

There is mention in Scripture of sanctifying God and of justifying God. As God justifies and sanctifies His people, so they are to justify and sanctify Him. These two, the justifying and sanctifying of God, though they are much the same, yet there is some difference between them. To sanctify God is to reverence Him in our hearts, and to represent Him in the glory of His holiness before men. To justify God supposes a sinful judging and foolish charging of God in the hearts of men, and our vindicating Him from such charges.

"God is righteous? How is it then that He is so partial in His dealings with the righteous and unrighteous? How is it that He deals worse with those who fear Him than with those who fear Him not?"

"God is good? How is it then that He is so hard not only in imposing, but in inflicting such hard things upon His own?"

"God is true? How is it then that He fails His people so often when He has said that He will never fail them nor forsake them?"

"Our flesh has failed, yea, and our heart has failed, and our God has often failed us too. We have often called and had no answer; we have often trusted and have had no deliverance. Yet God is righteous; yet God is good; yet God is true. He has not been unrighteous, He has not been a hard Master, nor has He failed or forsaken us." This is to justify God.

Our justifying God has some kind of resemblance to God's justifying us. God's justification of man stands in His not imputing sin to us, and accepting us as righteous; and our justifying God stands in our not imputing evil to Him, and our acknowledging Him to be true, just, and good. God has justified me from my sins, and that is enough to proclaim Him to be good and faithful whatever His other dealings are. Let Him afflict me, let Him chastise me, since He will neither judge nor condemn me with the world. God has justified Himself in my conscience. I have found that the Lord is gracious. I have found that God is faithful. He has said that He will not forsake me, and I must say that He has not done so. He has not failed when He has most failed me; when He has been farthest off from my help, He has even then been a present help in trouble. He has answered when He has been most silent. He has been most good when He has been most hard. I have never found more sweetness than in His bitter cup. I must judge myself, not my God. I have sinned against Him, and therefore I must justify Him when He speaks and clear Him when He judges. Hold your peace, querulous heart; be silent, all the earth, before the Lord, for truly God is good to Israel, and to those who are of a clean heart.

There are few among the worst of sinners but, if conscience would allow them to speak, would justify God. It is lust that quarrels, not conscience: "It is vain to serve the Lord, and what profit is there in keeping His ordinances? His ways are unequal and hard. His promise fails more often than they are made good. Who is it that plagues, disappoints, crosses, and vexes us? This evil is of the Lord. Why should I wait on the

Lord any longer? Nay, whom does He punish more than those who are nearest to Him? Who has sorrow, who has trouble in the flesh? Who are reproached, scorned, hunted up and down in the world but these? This they may thank God for, and their following Him. It is better being the servant of sin than the servant of Christ.”

This is how lust blasphemes. But speak, conscience. Is God unrighteous? Is God false to His Word? Are the pleasures of sin really better than the gain of godliness? Have the children of this world made a wiser choice than the children of light?

Speak, sinner; let your conscience speak as to whether this is true or not. God has not left Himself without witness in the hearts of sinners, much more with His saints, when they speak their hearts, speak good of His name.

To return to the matter in hand, to sanctify God is especially to reverence Him in the heart, to have such a high, holy, and honorable esteem of Him as commands an awe upon the heart; and that:

At all times. “My son, be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long” (Proverbs 23:17). It is not only for slaves, but for sons to fear. “Be thou in the fear of the Lord”; it is not only “let the fear of the Lord be in you, habitually in your heart, but actuate and stir up this holy fear; keep up a holy awe, a deep sense of God always upon you. Let the fear of the Lord be before your eyes; be possessed and swallowed up by this fear “all the day long.” Wherever you are, with whomever you have to do, remember that you still have to do with God. A Christian should stand always as if before the tribunal; every day should be as the last day, the day of judgment

to him. "So speak ye, and so do as those that shall be judged" (James 2:12). The Judge stands at the door, yea, and you may see Him through every window, yea, through every wall. Every wall is a window through which God may see and be seen. When a Christian is as he should be, he cannot wink God out of sight. He can look nowhere without seeing that eye which strikes an awe upon his spirit.

What an influence this abiding reverence of God will have upon the whole course! We shall then serve God acceptably; when we fear, we shall please God. "That we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). We shall then serve God universally, in everything. When we fear we shall watch unto every duty and against every sin. "This do and live, for I fear God" (Genesis 42:18), said Joseph to his brethren. It is as if he had said, "Do not fear of finding falsehood or any evil dealing from me, for I fear God. I dare not be false to you; you may trust me and take me at my word, for I fear God."

We shall then walk before the Lord steadily. When we fear we shall fix and hold in an even frame and course. Fear will be our ballast. When love fills our sails, fear will ballast our vessel. How slight and frothy spirits are tossed up and down! How they wander! How many hearts, faces, and frames they have every day! What contradictions they are to themselves! The reverence of God upon them would fix them, and hold them in a more even and equal poise. We would then serve the Lord more honorably. When we fear, we will show forth the virtues of God to the world. As much as there is of the reverence of God, so much will there be of the holiness of God upon us. The presence of a Christian

walking in the fear of the Lord is as the presence of God. The reverence of God upon a Christian's heart casts a beam of divine majesty into his face, and oftentimes begets an awe and reverence of Him in the hearts of the worst of sinners; they reverence Him even while they revile and persecute Him.

It is said of John the Baptist, who was a man of a just, holy, and austere life, that Herod feared him and observed him (Mark 6:20). The austerity and holiness of his life commanded respect from Herod's heart. The ways of like Christians are a conviction, and their very countenances are a rebuke to the wanton world; they speak with authority, they exhort with authority, and they reprove with authority. And sin often hides itself from them even as from the face of God.

Especially in our drawing nigh to God. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him" (Psalm 89:7). "I will be sanctified in them that draw nigh Me" (Leviticus 10:3). He who fears God trembles at the Word of God, and God loves that he should. "To this man will I look, that trembles at My Word" (Isaiah 66:2). That which makes him tremble is that he sees the Word carrying upon it the holiness and authority of God.

He reads the Word as the epistle of God sent down to the world, His commendatory epistle that sets forth the excellency and the glory of God, and His mandatory letters that charge subjection and obedience upon him. He takes every word as coming from the mouth of the Holy One of Israel. He lies prostrate before his Lord; his soul bows the knee; his heart falls down at the feet of the Almighty. The Word, by how much the more it is considered as the Word of God, by so much the more

awe it works upon him. Every look he casts upon his Bible is a look into heaven. He who fears God fears when he comes to worship; he reverences His sanctuary. "In Thy fear will I worship" (Psalm 5:7). That which works this fear is that he looks upon the duties and ordinances of worship as the institutions of God and his application unto God.

This is that which the Lord has sanctified; behold His image and superscription; here He has appointed me to wait for Him; here He has appointed to meet my soul. Now I am going up to the mount of God, which is everywhere the worship of God is.

My soul, where are you? "I am before the Lord of the whole earth." Then "put off my shoes from thy feet; the place whereupon thou standest is holy ground."

"I am before the high and holy One, the God of all the earth. I am upon transactions of eternal consequences, to do my homage to the everlasting King, to kneel before the Lord my Maker, to kiss the golden scepter, to beg for my life at His hands, to behold His goings in His sanctuary. His wisdom, His mercy, and His goodness are all passing before me. How dreadful is this place! 'This is none other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven' (Genesis 28:17). How dreadful is this Word! This is none other than the Word of God! How dreadful is this ordinance! This is none other than the door of glory. Tremble, my heart, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob."

(2) Abhorrence of evil for the Lord's sake. And here we shall consider its object and its ground.

The object of this abhorrence in general is evil. "Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good" (Romans 12:9). God is the object of love; evil is the ob-

ject of fear. Evil is twofold, either present or yet to come. The former is the object of grief, the latter of fear. Particularly, the object of this abhorrence is the wrong of God and the loss of God.

- The wrong of God. The great and only wrong of God is sin. Sin is the turning away of the heart from God. The great thing in all the world which God respects and requires as His own is the heart. "My son, give Me thine heart. Keep thine heart with all diligence" (Proverbs 4:23). Keep your heart, that is, keep it for Him. Keep it clean for God and keep it safe with God. See that it is not defiled or carried away. When the heart is gone, all is gone with it. "If the world has gotten hearts, if Satan has gotten hearts, let them take all," says God. "Let Me have either a heart or nothing."

Wherever the heart goes, it carries all with it. Where we bestow our hearts, we bestow all that we have. Sin is the turning away of the heart. This is the very nature of sin: the heart's departing from the living God (Hebrews 3:12). And therefore this is the great wrong of God. There is but one thing in the world that God respects, and sin steals it away.

Sin is the insurrection and rebellion of the heart against God; it turns from Him and turns against Him; it runs over to the camp of the enemy and there takes up arms against God. Sin is running from God and fighting against God; it would spoil the Lord of all the jewels of His crown. Sin opposes the sovereignty of God. A sinful heart would set itself up on God's throne; it would be king in His place and have the command of all. Sinners would be their own gods. "Our tongues are our own; who is lord over us" (Psalm 12:4)? God will not be God where sin has risen up as Lord.

Sin assaults the wisdom of God. Vain man would be wiser than his Maker. Sin charges the Lord with folly and proclaims itself as the only wise one. Sinners pretend to know how to choose for themselves, and order themselves to their advantage, better than God. "If God would let me alone to myself, to be at my own finding, at my own ordering, it would quickly be better with me. If everything might be as I would have it, my case would be well-mended from what it is now, when everything must go as God would have it." All our quarrelings at Providence, all our murmurings and discontents at our lot, are our hearts charging the Lord with folly. It casts dirt on the holiness of God; it disparages the goodness of God; it abuses mercy, violates His justice, and despises His power. In summary, sin disgraces the throne of His glory and lays His honor in the dust; it sets the Almighty below the lowest of His creatures.

Every companion is respected more than God; every pleasure is loved more than God; the devil is feared more than God. Where is His love? Where is His fear? Where is His honor? Nay, where would the Lord be if sin had its way? Sin is the wrong of God, and this wrong is the special object of this abhorrence.

A gracious heart would do no wrong; he would not wrong his neighbor; he would not wrong his servant, his enemy, or his beast. But, oh! "Should I wrong my God? Has He ever done me any wrong? Has He not been just to me? Yea, has He not been ever good to me, kind, pitiful, patient, and bountiful? Who has fed me, clothed me, kept me, succored me, and comforted me? What other friend do I have in all the world? What father, what portion, what hope have I but in the Lord? Where would I be? What would I be but vanity, woe, and

misery, if I did not have God? I cannot wrong my God without wronging myself. 'He that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul' (Proverbs 8:36).

"It is God whom I wrong. He is holy; He is righteous; He is good; He is glorious; He is excellent. He alone is God, and shall I be injurious to Him? He is worthy of all that I have, of all the service I can do, of all the respect I can give, of all the praise I can offer up. If I had a thousand tongues, if I had a thousand hands, if I had a thousand lives, if I had a thousand souls, if I had all the earth for an offering to the Lord, all would be nothing to show forth the praise that is due unto His name, since He is God and I am His creature. And when I owe so much and have nothing to pay, shall I steal from Him? Shall I rise up against Him? 'Wast thou not afraid to lift up thy hand against the Lord's anointed' (2 Samuel 1:14)? Shall I not be afraid to lift up my hand against the Lord Himself? To kick against God? Oh, the Lord forbid! What are you, my soul? What purpose do you serve if you cannot tremble, if you do not turn within me, if you do not pull back at the very thought of such wickedness!"

- The loss of God. As was said before, "He that sinneth against God wrongeth his own soul." His loss is your loss, and it is more your loss than His. No thanks to you, but the Lord will be no loser at the end. When sinners have done their worst, He can get His honor out of dishonor. He can recover His spoils out of the ashes; if He lost all the world, He has lost nothing, for He is all things in Himself. When earth and hell have spent all their malice, God will be God, holy, wise, glorious, and blessed forever. Though such is the malignity of sin, that it will not give over until God ceases to

be God, yet God is above, too high for sin to reach; its darts fall short of its mark. God cannot, God will not, sit down a loser by all that sin can do.

But what you suffer, what you lose who sin against God! The carnal world does not understand what they lose (nor would they make much of it if they did understand it). The loss of two pence often strikes them nearer than the loss of God. But a Christian knows no other fear and fears no other loss; let God be secure and all is well. Sin will be the wrong of God and the loss of God. It may be a total and eternal loss for all he knows, at least if not assured. God lost is the soul lost, the kingdom lost; this is hell: the loss of God. Better to have no being, better to be a dog or a toad than to be a man without God. Or, if he is not utterly lost, yet to his present senses it will all be as if he had no God. His peace is lost, his comfort is lost, and his soul is often given for lost, from whom God is departed, though but for a season. He can take pleasure in nothing; he can find rest nowhere whose God is out of sight.

He does not know what God means who can spare Him till death or judgment. A Christian cannot live a day without Him; it is night and all is dark; he knows no day while the sun is set upon him. How grievous do they find this loss who have proven what it is? "What wilt Thou do for me whilst I go childless?" (Genesis 15:2), said Abraham. A Christian cries out, "What can be done for me while I go Fatherless? Here is my house; here are my friends and my lands, but where is my God? My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Now I see what this earth is without a heaven; now I see what ease, pleasure, and carnal friends are, and how little they can do for me! Yea, what are sabbaths? What are

sermons, sacraments, or promises if God does not look down? Oh, I was wont to meet with God here! These glasses were my windows into heaven, and how pleasant they were to me then! Sabbaths were a delight, the Word was a treasure, and the sacraments were the clusters of Canaan.

“But now, all is dark and dry: ordinances are wells without water; promises are breasts without milk; ministers are stars without light. Oh, the stars are but clods while the sun is clouded to me. Woe is me! I had a God. I am pained, I am pained: my head is sick, my heart is faint, my bowels are turned, my liver is poured out, and the light of my eyes has gone from me. I am weary of my groanings. I am full of tossings and turnings; there is no soundness in my flesh, no rest in my bones, while my soul says daily to me, ‘Where is your God?’ ”

Now if the sense of this loss works such grief, why is it a wonder if the hazard of it works fear? Sin divides, breaks the peace, and makes God and the soul two rather than one; sin alienates and produces a distance and estrangement between God and the soul. That soul can either not see Him at all, or not as a friend, whom sin has drawn away. Sin will either cloud the face of God or clothe Him with fury; sin will cause Him either to turn His back upon the soul or set His face against it. He who knows what it is to enjoy God will dread His loss. He who has seen His face will fear to see His back. He loves God, and therefore would not lose God.

Now the ground and reason for this abhorrence of sin for the Lord’s sake is twofold: God’s jealousy and His people’s ingenuousness.

- God’s jealousy. “The Lord thy God is a jealous God” (Exodus 20:5). The same arguments which the

Lord uses to keep up and enforce His authority upon the consciences of His people, the same arguments they ought to make use of, and do, to press it upon themselves. "I am a jealous God," says the Lord. It is true, conscience tells us, the Lord is jealous. And therefore take heed to yourself, soul, how you fall into His hands. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

The jealousy of the Lord includes in it His tenderness for His honor, and His terribleness in case of His being dishonored.

God's tenderness for His honor. The honor of God is very important to Him, and He will not lose a jot or tittle of it. "My glory will I not give to another, nor My praise to graven images" (Isaiah 42:8). It is as if God were saying, "I will not give My glory to another, and look to it that you do not give it away to another." What was the reason why God dealt so severely with Eli and with Herod? What was Eli's sin? It was that he gave away the honor of God to his sons. "Thou honorest thy sons above Me" (1 Samuel 2:29). He was so tender towards his sons that, though they had become sons of Belial, and dealt so wickedly with the Lord, he felt he must deal gently with them. "Nay, my sons, it is no good thing that I hear of you." Such a slight reproof will not serve in so dreadful a case, but he was afraid to displease his sons by a sharper reproof. And the Lord interpreted this as Eli honoring his sons above Him.

Indulgent parents, stand and tremble, you who can see your children sin, and then let them go out with a "Nay, my sons, this is not good," or some other slight or cold reproof. This is none other than your honoring your children above God.

What was Herod's sin? Acts 12:22-23 says that it was that he did not give God the glory. He made an eloquent oration, and thereupon the people made him a god. They said that he was "the voice of God and not of man." And he accepted the applause, and thereupon the angel of the Lord smote him so that he died. Eli sinned in giving the honor of God to his sons, and Herod sinned in taking it for himself; but God taught them both how dear His glory is to Him.

His terribleness in case of His being dishonored. The instances mentioned speak of Him as being both tender and terrible. "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God" (Deuteronomy 4:24). The jealousy of a man is the rage of a man (Proverbs 6:34), and the jealousy of God is the rage and fury of God. "Our God is a consuming fire," that is, the fire of His jealousy. The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion: when the lion roars, the beasts of the field tremble. What, then, are the terrors of the Lord? The threatenings of the Lord are terrible. "Consider this, ye that forget God, lest He tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver" (Psalm 50:22). "I, even I, will tear and go away" (Hosea 5:14). Tearing, and tearing in pieces; the very expectation of it is enough to tear the heart in pieces. "I will tear them," says God. "I Myself will do it. I, even I, will tear."

It is terrible to be torn in pieces by men or by wild beasts; but take heed of God's tearing. "I will tear in pieces. I will not tear off their hair, their garments, or their ornaments. I will tear their flesh from their bones, limb from limb, yea, soul from body. I will tear them in pieces. I will tear them and go away; tear them and leave them; wound and not heal. I will tear them,

and then deliver them who can. Yea, I will tear them and trample upon them." Isaiah 63:3: "I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury." Trampling denotes contempt and indignation. "I will make them as the dirt in the streets, the mark of My scorn and fury."

God's judgments are terrible. He does terrible things in righteousness. Go to Jerusalem and Mount Zion, and behold there the monuments of His fury. "Go to Shiloh," said God, "and see what I did to it" (Jeremiah 7:12). But if you go down to Sodom, or look down to Tophet and behold the terrors of the Lord there; if you look on particular persons, then let Nadab and Abihu, or Korah, Dathan and Abiram, Uzzah, Uzziah, Ananias and Sapphira, or Herod be instances of His dreadfulness and severity.

This jealous God, this terrible God, is the God whom His people fear; and they fear Him because He is such a jealous God: "Who would not fear Thee, Thou King of nations? Who can stand before Thee when Thou art angry? My flesh trembles for fear of Thee, and I am afraid of Thy judgments."

Christians, let none say that this fear is not the fear of His children. Let none say that this fear is for His enemies and slaves, but not His children, and that our fear is not the same as their fear. Are not all these things written for our learning? Is this written only for the sake of unbelievers? "For our sakes, no doubt this is written," said the apostle in another place. Consider that full Scripture to this purpose: "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted; neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them, as it is written, 'The people

sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’ Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:6–12).

Mark it, these things are for our examples. Are they examples to us, and are they not warnings too? Are they warnings to us, and must we not learn from them to fear and beware? “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” We might be tempted to say, “My soul stands in a sure place; my mountain is so strong that I shall never be moved. I am safe enough. I am in Christ and shall not come into condemnation.” But whatever you think, as surely as you think you stand, take heed lest you fall; that is, not only into the same sins, but into the same condemnation—that is the sense of the passage. “Because of unbelief, they are broken off; thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear” (Romans 11:20).

But you will say, “We have no need of fear! We have no need of threatenings!” What? Would you have us burn half our Bibles? Can we spare so great a part of what is written? Have we outgrown the use of judgment as soon as ever we are partakers of mercy? Have we outgrown the use of the scourge as soon as ever we are entered into Christ’s school? Do we find all too little—mercies, threatenings, judgments—to keep our hearts

in order? And yet is it more than needful? There are two parties in us: we are flesh as well as spirit, and must not the flesh be frightened? Will love prevail with lust? The slave, this son of the bondwoman, surely must be kept in awe. Has God no disobedient children, no rebellious children? And must these have no other discipline but strokings and dandlings?

Believe it, Christians, God will not have His terrors lost, nor lost to you. God will sometimes make His children feel that He is a terrible God. He is terrible out of His holy place. Beware that you are not presumptuous children. There are three kinds of presumption: a presumption upon temptation, in confidence of strength; a presumption upon sin, in confidence of mercy; and a presumption upon sin, in contempt of mercy and justice.

First, there is a presumption upon temptation, in confidence of strength. Some unwary souls, not knowing of what spirit they are, suppose themselves too hard for the devil and venture within his reach. It is as if they would dare him to try his skill and power. Having forgotten this prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," they put themselves into the tempter's hands. The falls of such people will teach them to understand their folly.

Second, there is a presumption on sin, in confidence of mercy. That confidence of mercy may be in mercy already obtained: "I am in Christ, and my sin shall not separate me from Him. Whatever I do, I have a pardon in my hand." Or it may be in hope of mercy at the end: "I have to do with a merciful God, and therefore may venture on a little further. Hereafter I will repent, and then I need not doubt of remission."

Third, there is a presumption on sin, in contempt

of mercy and justice. "I will have my sin, though I never find mercy. I will have my will and my way, and will run the danger of what may follow. I will take my course, and let come upon me what will."

This last sort, those who presume to sin in contempt of mercy and judgment, who are so drunk with their sensual delights, and are so given over to the hardness of their hearts that they neither value mercy nor fear wrath, speak like this: "Why do you talk to me of mercy and judgment to come? Give me my pleasure, my liberties, my mirth, and my money. Do not think to make me such a fool as to let go of the pleasures and comforts of my life for I know not what, uncertain fears and hopes." Such as these have one foot already in hell.

If it is not yet so with you, you dare not condemn either mercy or judgment; also beware that you are not presumptuous in the former sense. Do not be bold upon temptations; do not think that you are so strong as to overcome a temptation, when you are so weak as not to fear it. He who does not fear a temptation does not understand it or himself.

But especially beware that you do not presume upon sin in consequence of mercy. Do not grow overly bold upon love or patience. "God loves me, therefore I may boldly take more liberty, less care, less watchfulness, and less fear because of such love!" What! Spit in your Father's face because He weeps on your neck? Smite Him on the face because you hope He will not strike you back? Tear His insides out because they are so tender towards you? Be froward, stubborn, wanton, and idle because you have found Him to be so indulgent?

Christians, consider whether such wickedness has not sometimes been found in some of your hearts. But

take heed; you will find that, though He is a tender Father, yet He will not be an indulgent or foolish Father; where He loves, He will be feared. Some who are as bold and as confident as you have felt (to their cost) what it is to abuse patience and kindness. His arrows in their hearts, His terrors in their souls, have made them know that the God of love is a terrible God. And if you will still adventure on, if you will be a wanton still, forward, idle, or heedless still, He will either lash you into better manners or cast you out as no child of His, but rather a bastard and a rebel. If you will not take warning from others, take heed lest He makes you a warning to those who will come after you.

Christians, know that, though God is tender of His saints, yet He is jealous for His name. He tenders them as the apple of His eye, but not above the least tittle of His honor. As God will have us love our neighbor, so He will love His child, but first Himself and then His child. He will not abate an iota of His glory to save a world. As little offenses done to His little ones are as millstones around the offender's neck, so are little sins allowed by them. If they allow it in themselves, yet heaven and earth shall pass away and fall to nothing before He allows it in them. God will not, and therefore His children dare not, indulge themselves in little sins. They therefore fear, because He whom they serve is a jealous God.

- His people's ingenuousness. This fear is from love and good nature, and is most properly the fear of children. Children fear because God is jealous, and so do slaves; but only children fear because God is good. Children fear because they love; slaves fear although they hate. Children fear to be unworthy; slaves only fear

being unhappy and miserable. There is nothing more contrary to an ingenuous nature than to abuse goodness and kindness; to abuse goodness has as black an aspect with him as to provoke wrath. "They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days" (Hosea 3:5). But how can goodness be the object of fear, you ask. "We fear evil, not good." The meaning is that they shall fear to wrong or abuse goodness. They shall fear to wrong the Lord in the latter days because He is good. These latter days that this promise refers to shall be days of more grace, wherein there shall be not only a more clear revelation of the goodness of God (they shall know the Lord and His goodness), but a more plentiful communication and diffusion of the goodness of God. They shall love the Lord and His goodness. They shall see themselves more obliged by goodness and shall feel themselves more seasoned with goodness.

By grace they shall be better natured. Religion does not make morose, but more generous, free, and ingenuous. There is nothing more abhorrent to an ingenuous spirit than to be base and unworthy. Abuse of goodness is an unworthiness which an ingenuous nature abhors like death to be guilty of; it is its destruction; it is disingenuousness. The abuse of the goodness of God is great unthankfulness, and unthankfulness is great disingenuousness.

Call me unthankful and you call me all that is bad. Call me anything else but unthankful. Indeed, were I all thanks, I would still be unthankful. I would still be behindhand with the goodness of the Lord. My debt is greater than I can pay, yea, greater than I can acknowledge; but shall I return evil for good? If I cannot pay,

should I deny my debt? He who is unthankful, whatever God requires of him, says wickedly, "This is more than I owe Thee. God, I owe Thee nothing, and I care not for Thee." Oh, this is dreadful to a gracious heart!

If this is in sin (for all sin is unthankfulness), if this is sin, if this is the signification of all my neglect of God and my duty to Him, the Lord forbid, whatever I suffer, that I should yield to sin. How shall I do this wickedness? How shall I neglect this duty and sin against God? How shall I look my God, or my own soul in the face, should I be so unworthy? For Thy sake, Lord, let me not sin against Thee. Thou art good; Thou art kind; Thou art gracious; Thou art holy. Oh, let me not be a devil! Shall I sin? Shall I rebel? For Thy sake, Lord, I will not do it. I will not do it for my own sake, for where then shall I appear? In sinning against God, I sin against my own soul. I fear for my life; sin and death and sin and hell are linked together. And even if it were not so, if I might sin and escape, sin and not die, yet, for Thy sake, Lord, I will not do it. Thou art good, good in Thyself, and good to me. Thou art my God; Thou art my Father. Love, care, tenderness, compassion, and kindness are all that is in Thy heart towards me. What I am, what I have, what I hope for, that I breathe, that I live, is all Thy goodness, Thy bounty to me. Oh, let me not rise up against the womb that bare me and the breasts that gave me suck. I would not to my child, to my servant, or to my friend, but, oh, never let me to my Father, to my God, return evil for good, and hatred for His good will. Let not this evil which I fear ever come upon me; put Thy fear into my heart, O Lord, that I may not sin against Thee.

Chapter 15

Obedience in the Covenant

“I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes; and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:27). Obedience is of the heart or the life, and in this verse God undertakes for both.

The obedience of the heart. The obedience of the heart God undertakes in the words “I will put My Spirit within you,” or “in the heart.” Where the Spirit dwells, He rules; where Satan dwells, he rules; and where the Spirit of the Lord dwells, there God rules. The Spirit in the heart is the law of the heart. Those two promises (“I will put My Spirit in your hearts” and “I will write My law in your hearts”) signify the same thing. The law in the heart is the will of man melted into the will of God. The law of God may be in the mouth and the heart still be a rebel; its reception into the heart notes the heart’s subjection to it.

The obedience of the heart includes two things: the opening of the heart to the Word and the resolution of the heart for the work of the Lord.

First, the opening of the heart to the Lord. “What wilt Thou have me to do, Lord?” That is the voice of an obedient heart. “Speak, Lord; command, Lord, whatever Thou wilt.” And when God speaks, whatever it is, the word is embraced and accepted by the heart. “Let my counsel be acceptable to thee” (Daniel 4:27). The acceptance of the Word by the heart is signified by its

hearkening to it. To hearken is more than to hear; though they sometimes denote the same thing, yet, ordinarily, hearing is by the ear, hearkening by the heart. "Israel would not hearken; My people would [have] none of Me" (Psalm 81:11). They heard what the Lord spoke, but they would not hearken; that is, as it is there interpreted, they would have none of the Lord. They rejected the word of the Lord which He spoke unto them. When the Word is let in with authority, and allowed to rule in the soul; when the heart gives itself up unto it, then it is accepted; there is its hearkening to it.

Second is the resolution of the heart for the work of the Lord. "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep Thy righteous judgments" (Psalm 119:106). It is as if the psalmist had said, "I have vowed and I will perform. I have covenanted, and I am determined to keep Thy statutes."

"The word which Thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not do." That is the rebellious heart. "Whatsoever the Lord shall speak, we will do." That is the obedient heart.

Where the heart is thus resolved to obey, there will be that obedience which shall be accepted unto salvation. Where this resolution is, as there is opportunity, there will be practice; and where there is not opportunity in God's account, this willingness is accepted as the practice itself. This is praying; this is hearing; this is giving, feeding, clothing, and visiting; this is walking circumspectly, working righteousness, showing mercy, exercising faith, patience, and repentance; this is keeping the commandments of God and walking in His statutes. A heart to obey is our obeying; a heart to do is our doing; a heart to suffer, in God's account, is

our suffering for His name.

But it must here be carefully noted that, though sincere resolution for obedience is obedience, yet every resolution is not that resolution. Resolution for obedience is then sincere where it flows from an inward and rooted inclination; it is founded on a firm belief of Scripture revelation; it is built on the highest and weightiest reasons; and it is the result of the most mature and deep deliberation.

1. A sincere resolution flows from an inward, rooted inclination. "I have inclined mine heart to perform Thy statutes" (Psalm 119:112). Our new purpose is from our new nature. It is not produced by some sudden fright or sense of danger, or merely by a present force of argument, but by a divine power working the heart to a suitableness to the will and ways of God, and a habitual propensity and inclination thereto. Resolution for holiness without a holy inclination is a blade of grass without a root; as fresh and as green as it looks, it will wither and come to nothing—no root, no fruit, no lasting. The heart is the root of action, and grace is the life of the root. When our resolutions are the blade, sprouting forth from this living root, then they will abide and bring forth the ear and a harvest.

2. A sincere resolution is founded on a firm assent to the truth of Scripture revelation. A Christian resolves for godliness because he believes that God is what He has said He is, the Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. He is built upon the Scriptures as his hopes; so his purposes have the foundation of the prophets and apostles on which they stand. Whatever resolution does not have this foundation is but as a house upon the sand.

3. A sincere resolution is founded on the highest reason. Where we resolve without reason we will quickly find a reason to change. Where we resolve we know not why, we shall change we know not how soon. To resolve we know not why, and to resolve on we know not what, will be equally unstable. Though there is reason for religion, yet religion may be taken up without reason. Whatever reason there is for it, yet, if it is not understood or considered, it is all the same as if there were no reason at all. And if there seems some reason for it, yet, if it is not the highest reason, when a stronger one comes we will quickly change our purpose.

The reasons we have for serving and following God are the highest of all reasons, and that whether we respect it as our duty or our happiness. For:

(1) There is none who can lay such claims to us as God. Whose am I? Who has made me? Who has bought me? "Glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, which are His" (1 Corinthians 6:20). "Serve the Lord with gladness; for the Lord is God, it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture" (Psalm 100:2-3). What reason have you to serve men, to serve sin, or the world? Men think they have reason for it, but what is that reason? Are any of these gods? Are men your gods? Is sin or the world god? Do you owe yourselves to them? It is He who has made us, and His we are. As the apostle said concerning obedience to parents, much more may it be said here: "Children, obey your God, for this is right." This is His due and your duty; if anyone can lay as good a claim to you, let him carry you away as servants.

(2) There is no one who can be better to us than God. None can requite, none can reward our obedience

like He can. Where can you be better than with God? He will require no more than that you serve Him till you can find a better master. Whoever said that it is best to serve sin and the world is a fool, and has said in his heart, "There is no God." If God is God, He is the chief, yea, the only good. If anything in the world, upon whatever account, is thought better than the Lord, then that is set up as god in His place.

(3) Whomsoever we serve, it is God who must pay us our wages at last. God is Judge, and He is the Rewarder of both the evil and the good; both of those who serve Him and those who serve Him not. If you serve the Lord, He will be your reward; if you serve Him not, He will reward you—but what will your reward be? "Those, Mine enemies, which will not have Me reign over them, bring them, and slay them before Me" (Luke 19:27)—there is their reward. Sin has its rewards, but what are they but vanity and vexation? Or, if they were better, how long will they last? But when sin has paid the most it can, oh, what a reward God has to give you! "This shall ye have of Mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow" (Isaiah 50:11).

(4) The wages which God will give shall certainly be blessed or dreadful, according to our obedience or disobedience. The reward that God gives is an eternal reward: eternal salvation to those who obey Him and everlasting destruction to those who serve Him not.

I have a soul. This carcass is the least part of me. There is another world, a world to come; a few years is the most I have to spend in this one. I must abide eternally in the other world.

Of how little consequence is it what I have here, whether little or more, better or worse? In a short time,

that will come all to one. But, oh, my eternity! What is that likely to be? Why, it is God who must determine it, and He will certainly reward every man according to his works. "To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life. But to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, tribulation and anguish" (Romans 2:6–10). There is glory and shame, mercy and wrath, life and death set before me. There is no third state, so one of the other two must be my lot; and this is what determines my state: if I obey, I live; if I disobey, I die forever.

Now, when my resolution is founded on such reasons as these, than which none can be imagined higher or more weighty; till eternity becomes of less regard than time, and an immortal soul is set below a perishing body; when the question is put to the soul, "Shall I follow God or not? God or the world? God or my lust?" and when the answer the soul gives is, "Why, there is none who can lay such claim to me as God; there is none who can be as good to me as God; whomsoever I serve, it is God who must be my Rewarder. My everlasting blessedness depends on Him, and must be infallibly determined according to my obedience or disobedience. This is the plain case: obey and live; obey or die forever. And therefore what can I say more or less but that I am the Lord's and will be His servant. Let others choose whom they will serve; as for me, O my soul, serve the Lord"—this resolution, thus founded, is likely to stand.

4. A sincere resolution is the fruit of mature deliberation. Deliberation gives reason its full weight, and makes the strength of it appear; it lays all things in the balance; it is the comparing of reasons for and against,

the weighing of arguments and objections, encouragements and discouragements; counting the cost as well as the gain, particularly. In this deliberation there must be a consideration of what there is in this obedience, and what it is attended with that may encourage.

There must be a consideration of what there is in this obedience, or otherwise we resolve upon we know not what. Now there are five things in this obedience: subjection, activity and industry, integrity, circumspection, and spirituality.

- **Subjection.** Servants must be subject; they must not be at their own wills, but at the will of another. The heart of man naturally affects dominion; that is the great controversy of sinners with God: who shall be Lord? “We are lords [we would be, at least], we will come no more unto Thee” (Jeremiah 2:31). Obedience yields that God should be Lord, yea, and all others also whom He has made lords over us. The servants of Christ must not be, and yet must be, the servants of men; they must not serve their lusts, but must be subject to their righteous laws and commands. God must be obeyed, and magistrates, ministers, masters, and parents must be obeyed in the Lord and for the Lord; yea, and they must be, when God will have it so, the servant of servants.

While they must not serve the temperaments of the greatest, they must serve the necessities of the meanest, must stoop to the lowest of offices, even to the washing of the feet of the least disciple. All this the Lord expects of them, and they must be subject. They must not dispute, but do His will.

But here it must be considered that there is a double disputing of the will of God, and that is regarding

whether something is fit to be done or safe to be done. For some will say, "Is it not better to let it alone? What advantage is there in it? What reason is there for it?" No, people must not dispute so; it is reason enough that God will have it so. God's will is ever reason, and it must be our reason. It is enough for you to say, "This is what the Lord has commanded, and I must be subject; that is the only thing that must be considered. I will obey, and must be subject to God."

- Activity and industry. The servants of the Lord must be active and industrious. Whom He sends into the vineyard, He sends to work and not to sleep. The life of a Christian is laborious; while others are in their beds, the Christian must be on his knees; while others take their pleasure, he must take pains; while others take their times, now a little and then a little, he must be ever about his Master's business. An active spirit is an excellent spirit, and it is necessary in a Christian. An active spirit is an excellent spirit; sluggards are the refuse of the earth.

But it must here be considered that there is a double activity: gracious and natural. Natural activity is that which arises from an innate vigor and vivacity of some men's spirits. Industry is not needed in such to bring forth action; it is but leaving nature to its course, and that will fly high enough of itself. It requires more industry to regulate, and sometimes to restrain, than to put forth into action. It is more labor for them to rest than to be doing.

Gracious activity is either natural activity which is managed and improved for God, turned into a right course and running in a right channel, or it is a naturally inactive spirit, raised and quickened by grace and

religious industry. This gracious, holy activity is the excellency; it is the extract of the spirits and life of all our parts and graces, and will go no further, and do more high honor and abundant service to God and His gospel, than is done by a thousand others.

An active sinner is by accident the worst of men; how much service for the devil will he dispatch in a little time? An active sinner is life and death met together. He is all life, and yet dead; and he has more of death, because of so much life. Like poison in wine, he destroys the more effectually. Yet the evil is not in his activity, but in the matter wherein he is employed. The good metal, as keenness of a weapon, is its excellency; but in a madman's hand, better a wooden sword than an iron one. An active spirit is so excellent that it is a pity that sin should ever have the use of it; it would be well for religion if the devil were a drone and had no other servants but the sluggards of the earth. But activity, when set right, is of great price in the sight of God because it sets a great price upon God.

Slothfulness puts a slight upon God; when the Scriptures have set forth the great and deep things of God; when the Lord Jesus is evidently set forth as crucified before our eyes, as the propitiation for sin; when the preciousness of His blood, the tenderness of His compassion, the riches of His grace, the sufficiency of His righteousness, His satisfaction and pardons, are all held forth in open sight; when the beauties of holiness, the joys of the Spirit, and that peace which passes all understanding, are laid forth to view; when the most glorious things are spoken of the city of God, Jerusalem, which is above; when God in His Word calls to us, "Awaken, sleepers; arise, sluggards; see what is be-

fore you. All this may be yours if you will." But slothfulness puts this slight upon all: "Tush! All this is not worth my breaking my sleep for; it is not at all worth my labor to seek after; my ease and my quiet is better to me than God and all His glory."

We may best understand the value we put on things by the pains and cost we are content to be at to purchase them. When sinners bestow themselves so upon the world, will bear such labor and travail, are so constantly, indefatigably industrious in the pursuit of it, and, withal, run such hazards and dangers for it—they make it evident enough what value they put upon it. He whose time and strength, whose days and nights, yea, whose soul and hopes must all be laid out in a purchase, must all go for a piece of land, or a little money or pleasure—we need no other proof of what a bargain he thinks this world to be.

You might say, "I do not care much for this world; it is a vanity, a shadow, and the fashion of it passes away. I hope it is far enough off my heart, however I am charged with greediness after it."

But then what is the significance of all the expense of your time, your strength, and your spirit that you daily lay out upon it? What does so much hunting after and heaping it up for yourself mean? What! Have you been hunting all this time after shadows and heaping up vanities? No, no, you fool yourself; these shadows are your substance; these vanities are the god whom you adore. If you did not prize them, you would not venture so deeply for them.

And so, on the other hand, when so little is done for God; when anything must suffice to be spent on souls or eternity—what cheap things do we count them!

You might say, "I love God above all, with all my heart and with all my soul. He is all my hope and all my desire. What a miserable creature would I be if it were not for my hope in God! What would all the world be to me if I should lose my soul!"

But do you speak in earnest? Do you think about what you are saying? What! When you are such a drone in seeking God! What! And so indifferent, so cold and spiritless in your inquiries after Him, and in your motions towards Him! So sparing of your labor, so negligent of duty, so seldom at it and so soon weary, with so many delays and so many excuses! How many times has God called you to Himself, and all your answers have been excuses! Excuses instead of ordinances, excuses instead of prayers, excuses instead of action, excuses instead of alms, excuses instead of admonitions or reproofs. If God wanted to be served with excuses, He would have service enough, but little else besides. "I am weary," or, "It is too late." "It is cold." "So short and hasty a prayer must serve, or none at all. I have much business to tend to: a family, a farm, and the cares and troubles of it; so I cannot have so much time or freedom to attend upon God as others have." And so a sermon is lost and a sacrament lost.

Or you might say, "I live among bad neighbors, and if I were so forward and active for God, so zealous and spiritual in my discourse or in my way, I would only be a scoff and a reproach, and, it may be, a prey to evil men. I lack the ability to speak to the edification of others. I do not have the boldness that others have to reprove or admonish. I pray, let me be excused." An excuse instead of a duty! When the Lord calls to you to come and be saved, then rightly your answer should be, "I pray Thee,

excuse me. I must hasten to the devil and be damned.”

But is this your love? Is this your zeal? Is this your valuing God above all?

Tremble, you sluggard; whatever excuses you find to substitute for duty, you can never excuse or acquit yourself of slighting God. The very excuses will accuse you and reveal you to be a slothful servant and a slighter of God. The apostle said, “I reckon that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed” (Romans 8:18). But you say that all the glory to come is not worthy to be compared with the present labor.

But activity and industry put a great price upon God. This is written upon all our labors: “He is worthy for whom I do all this.” Some of the most humble, watchful, laborious Christians sometimes complain, “Oh, I fear that I do not love God! His favor and honor are little regarded by me.” But look at your care to please God; look at all your labors of love. Do you not watch, pray, work, and run? Can you spend and be spent for God, and yet not love Him? Do you live for God? Can you die for God, and yet not prize Him? What greater proof can you give of your love than such labor?

Activity is also necessary. It is vain to think of making anything of religion without it; the work of it is too great to be done by lying still; the comforts of it lie too deep to be gotten out by a wish. A man may as soon wish himself into wealth as you might wish yourself into grace and comfort. Men’s not being able to bear the labor of religion is a rock at which many a soul has split and suffered eternal wreck.

He who has some love to holiness, and yet not so much as will carry him through the work of holiness, is

short of sincerity, and, being short of sincerity, he is short of salvation. He who does not stick at labor will not stick at suffering; he who slugs at doing will shrink back from suffering. Do not say, "There is a lion in the streets." Overcome the lion and you will not fear the bear. Get over difficulties and there is but one turnstile more between you and glory, distress. Holy activity will be a witness to your sincerity; carry this witness in your heart, and then whichever way the world goes, and whatever storms may fall, you will have this to uphold you. Integrity and uprightness shall preserve you, and eternity shall reward you. Where sincerity is the root and holy activity the blossom, an eternal weight of glory shall be the fruit. Lie idle and all will be lost. Take heed of saying to yourself, "Soul, take thine ease," lest the next words you hear be, "This night shall thy soul be required of thee."

- Integrity. The obedience which God expects must be entire obedience, not only the obedience of the whole man, but to the whole will of God. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all Thy commandments" (Psalm 119:6). "As obedient children, be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Peter 1:14-15). "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). But since I have spoken more largely elsewhere, it will suffice to give some short hints of one comprehensive duty wherein all the rest are included, and on which they depend—holding up and maintaining God's authority in the soul. As God has set up His authority over the soul, His Word, which is to have the government of it, so He has set up an authority in the soul, the understanding and the conscience. As these powers are under the authority

of the Word, so they are set in authority over the subordinate and inferior faculties, the will and the passions or affections. But sin has made a mutiny and insurrection; the will rises against reason and will not be guided; the passions rebel against conscience and will not be governed. Nay, they not only resist, but take upon them to command and impose upon conscience. What the will would have, conscience says it is reasonable that it should have; conscience finds arguments to prove will to be reason, and to determine that what the will would have done ought to be done. We easily bring our opinion to our affection, and bring ourselves to believe that to be right which we are unreasonably willing to have to be right. But if it cannot prevail this far, to gain conscience to say that is right which it would have to be right, then it will push for it to carry it whether it is right or wrong. And this rebellion of the will, and so of the passions against the reason, is the great cause of the soul's rebellion against God.

When conscience has lost its authority, God's authority is gone. While the understanding and the conscience are maintained in their due authority, where the will and affections are held in their due subjection, there the Lord reigns. When a rightly-informed conscience has its due, God shall have His due. Where the will and the passions have no more than their due, He shall have His own. God shall be willed the more where nothing else is willed too much. God shall be loved and feared the more where nothing else is loved and feared too much. The more anger, the more hatred, the more grief will be spent upon sin if it is not inordinately spent elsewhere. Oh, how much service might be done, and how much quiet would be enjoyed in the heart,

were this authority maintained and held up!

We may say of our affections as men say of fire and water: they are the worst masters, but the best servants. How much would the Lord have of us were these only the executioners of His will! If conscience is commanded by the Word, and the will and affections commanded by conscience, what would there be lacking! We would not only be abundantly serviceable then, but all would be serene, sweet, and comfortable within us. If nothing were willed but what *should* be willed, we would ever have our will. If nothing were desired but what should be desired, and no more than it should be loved or desired, we would ever have what we love. If we were not angry, grieved, or afraid but where we ought to be, and no more than we ought to be, what a calm there would be upon our spirits, even in such cases wherein the spirits of others are like a troubled sea that cannot be at rest, whose waters cast forth mire and dirt. But where there is such disorder, such rebellion of the inferior against the superior faculties, there we are at a perpetual loss, both in point of duty and comfort. This, therefore, is necessary, if we will be obedient; and those who have proven what there is in it understand that this is hard work.

I shall instance a few particular duties that are harder than others. He who will be entirely obedient must reject nothing that God will have. There is scarcely anything that God requires but lust will be quarrelling at as being too hard; but there are some duties that are harder than others. It shall suffice merely to name them: denying ourselves, disobliging our nearest friends, loving our enemies, disobeying all the world in their unrighteous commands, obeying God

rather than men, returning good for evil, reproving men for sin (especially if they are superiors, or such on whom we have some dependence), and sacrificing our Isaac, yea, parting with all we have.

- Circumspection and care. “See that ye walk circumspectly” (Ephesians 5:15). A little labor will go far with care, but will be nothing without it. It is not he who is hot, busy, and active at all adventures, but he who keeps to his line and rule who is the obedient Christian. It is not so much action as regular action wherein the life of Christianity lies. He who lives by rule, peace and mercy be on him. Activity without care is extravagance; it is care that keeps all within compass. He who is all action has more need of caution. A Christian must have his eyes in his head as well as a soul in his body. He who resolves well in general things, and does not come off in particulars, merely builds castles in the air. What we ordinarily are in particulars will best prove what we are. He who is for anything but this, or any time but now, is for nothing.

Circumspection notes two things: taking notice and taking heed. He who will be circumspect must eye and observe what is before him; he must have his eye upon his end, his rule, and his goings; he must eye duty and sin, opportunities and temptations, and his times and seasons. He must take heed as well as take notice; he must keep a strict eye on himself, and hold a strict hand on himself, so that he does not leap over a duty nor turn aside to inquiry; he must set a guard upon himself, upon his tongue, upon his eyes, upon his appetite, upon his company, upon his habits, upon his thoughts, upon his passions, upon all the motions of his soul and the actions of his body.

This will require something. "What! Not a word but what must be weighed? Not a look but must be looked to? Not a thought but must be examined" Not a sin to be allowed? Not a duty to be abated? Not a circumstance to be neglected? Must all be in weight and measure, by line and rule, and always too? If 'something' might serve, if 'sometimes' might suffice, it might be borne, but to keep this engagement in every point, and that every day, this is a hard saying indeed!"

But it must be so. To live as a Christian, and to walk exactly, accurately, and precisely, are all the same thing. Duty and sin, though they are as far apart as heaven and hell, yet there is but a hair between them. The least latitude is a transgression; it must either be all this (that is, as to the purpose of the heart) or nothing.

- Spiritually. This must be the obedience of faith (Romans 16:26). It is the very life of Jesus made manifest in our mortal flesh: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Christians' obedience is their walking in Christ (Colossians 2:6). All the acts of it are exercised and performed in the strength of Christ. Without Him we can do nothing, but we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Paul said, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." That is, "I work, I wrestle, I run, yet not I, but Christ in me." The apostle said of his sins, "It is no more I who does it, but sin that dwelleth in me." It is sin that sins. And so it may be said of duty: "It is no more I who obeys, but Christ who dwells in me." Though both are the act of the person, both the sin and the duty, yet the principle of the one is lust while the power of the other is from Christ. Christians cannot go through duty, and

they dare not set upon it, without looking up to Christ and leaning upon Him for assistance. They cannot go through, and therefore they will not set forth, but in the strength of the Lord. All their acts of obedience are exhibited and offered up in the name of Christ. Their services are their sacrifices to God, and Christ is their altar. What is a sacrifice without an altar? Christ is our altar, which sanctifies our gift. God looks on all, and so do they, as worth nothing without Christ. God will not accept, and therefore they will not offer, anything other than the Lamb for their sacrifice. All their acts of obedience are acknowledged to the praise of Christ. It is no longer I who does it, but the grace of God which was with me. Grace does the work, and grace shall carry away the praise. Christ is all in the race, and therefore on His head the crown is set. "Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name be the praise." It is not from us, and therefore not unto us; it is from Him, and therefore it is to Him. If I am anything that others are not, if I have done anything more than others, it is no thanks to me, and therefore no praise belongs to me. To Him be all who is all in all to me. The obedience of Christians is their walking in Christ.

The obedience of Christians is their walking in the Spirit. They have received the Spirit and they walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). They have not received the spirit of this world; their spirit is not flesh, but the Spirit which is of God (1 Corinthians 2:12). They are dead to carnal things; the spirit of the world is departed; they have given up on this. It is the Spirit of the living God who lives in them, and in this they live and walk. They walk in the light of the Spirit and in the power of the Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord steers their

course and fills their sails. He is their pilot, their star, and the wind that carries them on. When they pray, they pray in the Spirit; when they hear, they hear in the Spirit; through the Spirit they mortify the flesh and are crucified to the world; they obey, they suffer, they fight, and they overcome through the Spirit of the living God who is in them. They live in fellowship with the Spirit, and, by Him, with the Father and the Son. They dwell in the invisible world; their acquaintance and converse is in heaven; there they have access, and there they have acceptance; there they have their recourse, and there they have their returns. Duties and comforts are the tokens that are passing between heaven and earth. Their life is love, joy, and praise; these are the most noble acts of their obedience, and these give wings to their hearts, and carry them on more swiftly and sweetly through all their course.

Oh, how heavily we drive on; how slowly our wheels move when the Spirit of the living God is not in the wheels! How dead our duties are, how lame our walkings! What low and poor-spirited creatures we are! How weak are our hearts, how unripe our fruits! We do what we do half-heartedly; there is no heart in our life; we are as bodies without souls while our soul is without a spirit. How sad it is with many of us on this account!

By our estrangement from God, we have even lost ourselves. We are not what we should be because we are no longer where He is. By our distance from heaven, we are even choked with the damps of the earth. We are fit for little; we prosper in nothing; God takes no pleasure, and we take no comfort, in anything we do. Our spirits are so chilled and numbed within us that we neither make speed in our work nor riddance of our way. And

what are we in our societies! To how little profit do we meet! How little heat do we get! Yea, how much we lose at our brethren's fire! We serve often but to dampen and cool each other's spirits. It might no longer be said, "Woe to him who is alone," but, "Woe to him who is in the midst of company." Alone he would be more warm.

Christians, I solemnly profess that I am ashamed of myself, and my heart is pained within me to observe how insipid, how spiritless, and how carnal our conversations are. How often we may meet, how long we may sit, Christian with Christian, before anything that savors of the spirit of a Christian comes from us! Oh, how hard we must strain for a few gracious words! How little comes! How heartless it is when it comes! How very few of us there are whose ordinary conduct speaks us to be men of another world whose business and delight lies above, and who are in good earnest pressing on towards heaven! How seldom and how short-breathed are our spiritual discourses! How little must suffice! How quickly we are diverted to carnal and sensual things! Surely it is our little communion with God that has thus debased the communion of saints.

Oh, let us live more in the fellowship of the Spirit, and we shall have fellowship one with another to better purpose. Let us warm ourselves at the sun; let us dwell more in His beams, and we shall get and give more light and heat. Thus must it be considered before we resolve what there is in this obedience.

Further, it must be considered what it is likely to be attended with from without, what suffering it may cost us, what scorn, contempt, reproaches, and persecutions of all sorts. It is likely to set earth and hell upon our

backs. If carnal counsels and fleshly policies, if all the powers of darkness, if might and malice can do it—this way will be made too hot and too hard for you. You must expect tribulation, great tribulation, and you cannot escape it. And the more strict and circumspect you are, the hotter you must look for your assaults to be.

Professors of religion, which is the largest group, who are not so strict but can dispense with duty, nor so forward in point of zeal and activity, but they can remit and abate, as occasion serves, may escape this persecuting world more easily. But he who will be faithful, whoever escapes, is sure to be made a prey. This also must be well considered: "I will follow Christ, but can I drink of the cup that He drank of? Can I be baptized with the baptism of blood that He was baptized with?"

There are persons who sometimes take up the profession of religion, and resolve suddenly to follow Christ, not understanding what there is in it, or what Christianity may stand them in. These, by the time they have looked a little further, will find it much more difficult than they first imagined; and withal will find the armies of the aliens to fall on them, the dogs to tear at them, the wolves to worry them, the eagles, the vultures, and all the birds of prey, to pitch upon them; they will begin in earnest to feel the smart of religion in the persecutions that are brought upon them for it, and will immediately make their retreat and go back: "Where am I? What have I chosen? Is this to be a Christian? Does Christ look for all this from His followers, and will He leave them to such violence and rapine as the reward of their faithfulness to His name? I never thought that it would be such hard service, and if I cannot be a saint at a cheaper rate than this then let

others follow Christ, but not me; let those who have nothing to lose, or who can bear so much labor, pains, and violence take it up if they please. For my part, I must look to myself. I must not be undone.”

“Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest,” said the scribe to Jesus in Matthew 8:19. To this Jesus responded, “Man, you do not understand what you are saying! Do you know where I am going, where My dwelling place is, or where I will lodge.” Matthew 8:20: “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.” And, behold, there is the end of the scribe’s Christianity; we hear not one word more about it.

But now he who both knows what it is to be a disciple, who has looked through the length and breadth of religion, who has duly weighed all that can be said for or against his taking it up, has examined the grounds and reasons he has for it, what weight there is in them, who has considered the objections, who has cast up the cost and charges of it, and, as the result of the most serious debate, stands settled in his judgment that, all things considered, it is indisputably the best, wisest, and safest course he can take, thinks this way: “It is, beyond all controversy, without any dispute, incomparably better for me to hearken to the Lord in all that He shall require, and to run all risks with Him, and that immediately, from this day forward to the end of my life.” He who stands this settled in his judgment, and thereupon feels his soul fixing itself in this peremptory resolution, will reason: “Well, through the grace of God, I will be His servant. I give myself up to the government of His will, to follow Him in righteousness and holiness all my days. I am sensible that it is no light thing to be a

Christian. I see that I must be subject, that I must be circumspect, that I must be active, that I must retain nothing that God will have. I see that this flesh will be pained and put hard to it, and will fling and groan under so severe a yoke. I see the devil and this evil world will be upon me, laying on more load to make my obedience as costly as they can. But be there in it what there will be, let it cost me never so dear, I am resolved. I will venture all upon it. The Lord is my God, and I will follow Him in all things that He shall speak. I put myself into the everlasting arms. I trust upon everlasting strength. I will go forth in the name of the Lord, and so speak, Lord, for I will hear.”

This sincere resolution will hold out. When our holy inclinations are so rooted and strong that they bear down all fleshly inclinations; when our assent to Scripture is so firm that it overbalances all objections against it; when our reasons for religion are so high and weighty that they weigh down the highest pretenses against it; when we have thoroughly considered what there is in it, and compared all that can be said for or against our following the Lord, and upon the whole matter we judge it to be our best course, and accordingly resolve for it—this is sincere resolution; this is the obedience of the heart.

The obedience of the life. This is the decree bringing forth, or holy inclination and resolution springing up into, action, and is a necessary proof of the soundness of the resolution.

Though sincere resolution is obedience in God’s account, yet that resolution which (supposing there is time and opportunity) does not break forth into action is undoubtedly unsound and deceitful. There are two

things infallibly included in spiritual life: a will and a power. Grace is the disposing and enabling of the heart for a holy life; and where there is both a will and a power, performance will certainly follow. This sincerity of actual obedience is that which the prayer of the psalmist looks to in Psalm 119:80: "Let my heart be sound in Thy statutes, that I be not ashamed."

There is a soundness in the faith and a soundness in the statutes of the Lord. In Scripture, faith denotes either the doctrine of faith or the grace of faith. And, accordingly, soundness in the faith signifies both receiving and entertaining sound doctrine as well as a sound and sincere embracing of that doctrine. Soundness in the statutes of the Lord especially notes the practice, living or walking uprightly under the power of that doctrine, under the government and obedience of the statutes of the Lord. What this obedience of life is is easy to gather out of what has been said regarding the obedience of the heart. I shall only add that this obedience is then sound and sincere when:

1. Generally, the whole course of life is the issue of the aforementioned sincere resolution; when the life is the birth of the purpose, the fruit growing up out of that holy root. There may be actions that are materially good and holy that yet are not gracious actions, because they do not arise from a right spring. When the soul has devoted itself to God in Christ, and believingly, understandingly, and deliberately decreed and determined to keep His Word in His strength; and when this decree or determination goes into the performances of the life, and is the root and soul of that holy course we walk in—there is sincerity.

Some persons may be found who have taken up the

profession, and go far in the practice of godliness—abstaining from gross sins, yea, and making attempts to mortify the inward lusts, applying themselves to the duties of religion, praying, hearing, reading, meditating, discoursing of God and the things of God, exercising themselves in the works of righteousness and mercy, being meek, temperate, and patient—and if all this arises only from the advantages of a good nature, good education, good society or acquaintance, a powerful ministry, or the workings of a natural conscience, as it possibly might, and does not spring forth from such a fixed, well-founded resolution, it is short of sincerity. Whatever the blades are, they have no root and will certainly wither away.

2. Particularly, when they are done in simplicity and singleness of heart unto the Lord; when whatever sinful mixtures there may sometimes be of carnal respects that may have an influence upon exerting and bringing them forth, yet the great poise that moves the wheels, the swaying motive that brings us on, is God, and our respect to His will and honor.

Now for this also the Lord undertakes, promising not only assistance, but success; sufficient grace as well as efficacious grace. “I will cause them to walk in My statutes, and they *shall* keep My judgments and do them” (Ezekiel 36:27). “I will not only teach them My statutes, I will not only incline their hearts to My testimonies, I will not only strengthen them for My work, but I will cause them to walk in My statutes. The event shall be sure; they shall keep My judgments and do them. My word shall fail and my promises shall be of no effect; let Me be accounted as unfaithful if I do not make them faithful to Me.”

Chapter 16

Perseverance in the Covenant

“I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me” (Jeremiah 32:40).

The perseverance of the saints is founded on the election of God and the immutability of His counsel. The foundation of the Lord stands sure. “Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Romans 8:30). This golden chain will hold, and not a link of it shall be broken. On whomever the first link (election) has taken hold, it will infallibly bring him up to the last (glory). God is not a man that He should repent. But so as not to wade further into the deep, let me get on with the business at hand, which lies in the promise of God.

There are two sorts of promises concerning perseverance. There are promises *to* perseverance and *of* perseverance. The promise of eternal life is made *to* perseverance. Hold out to the end and be saved; overcome and reign. “Be faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). “If thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever” (1 Chronicles 28:9). “If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Hebrews 10:38). Christians, beware of apostasy; beware

of presumption; pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. Let it not be said of you that you did run well. He runs well who gives not off, who does not sit down on this side of the goal. "So run that ye may obtain."

There are promises of perseverance. The covenant of God is an everlasting covenant. He has commanded His covenant forever (Psalm 111:9).

There are two things secured to believers in Jeremiah 32:40, things which secure their perseverance. The first is that God will not depart from them. The second is that they shall not depart from Him.

First, God will not depart from them. "I will not turn away from them."

But you might say, "God is with me, but I fear I shall provoke Him away. I shall weary Him out by my sins and drive Him from me."

"No," says the Lord, "I will not turn away from you, to do you good. I will never fail you nor forsake you."

Second, they shall not depart from Him.

But here you might be tempted to say, "It is true, the Lord will be with me, but it is only while I am with Him. If I depart, He will depart; if I forsake Him, He will cast me off forever. Here is my great fear, that I shall turn away from Him. There is in me an evil heart of unbelief that is ever departing from the living God. Oh, this false and fickle heart! I dare not trust it for an hour! I doubt it will be gone before I am aware; my corruptions are strong, my temptations are many, every day brings new ones, and I am in great fear that by one means or another, one day or another, I shall fall before them and depart from the living God."

"No," says God, "fear not; you shall not depart. I will put My fear in your hearts so that you shall not depart

from me. You shall be kept by My almighty power, through faith unto salvation. My grace shall be with you. My grace shall be sufficient for you, and shall preserve you to My heavenly kingdom.”

And this is the saints’ security: the Lord God will not turn away from them, nor will He ever suffer them to run away from Him. If the promise fails, then may their faith also fail. It is true that there may be gradual declinings and departures of the saints from Christ for a season, but total or final these will never be. The saints shall not be of those who draw back unto perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. Though they fall, they shall rise again; they may turn, but they shall return. As hypocrites will not stay with Christ always, so neither will saints always stay away from Him. And there is a similar reason for both: sinners will sometimes step aside and salute religion and take some turns with Christ; but, after awhile, they must go away again. And there are two reasons for it: there is that within them that will fetch them back, and there is one outside them who will fetch them back.

There is that within them that will fetch them back. Corrupt nature, the power of unmortified lust, is that which bears sway in the hearts; and however, for the time, the stream may be somewhat turned out of its course or bayed up; however by the impetus of some external motives or arguments, by the impulses of an awakened conscience or some sudden heat of affection, they are carried on after, and in some fair compliance with the Lord Jesus, yet, when the bay is removed, when the external force is spent, conscience laid to sleep, and the heat of an affection allayed, which is often almost as soon out as in, their very natures will bring them back

to their old course. What is it that pulls a stone or a lump of clay down again when it is thrown into the air? Why, when the power by which they were forced up is spent, their natures, their innate gravities, will bring them down to their place. Sinners need no other weights to pull them down to this earth than their earthly hearts.

There is one outside them who will fetch them off. Satan, the god of this world, whose they are, and whom they serve; who, though he indulges them with so much liberty for their religion, is as consistent with their captive state, and may possibly secure them the more under his dominion (hypocrites are often brought faster to Satan for being so near to Christ), the very religion they have is but the devil's snare, by which he holds them back from religion. Yet, lest by venturing them too far they should be lost to him at last, he who first tempted them so near to Christ (hypocrites are often beholden to the devil for the religion they have) will quickly tempt them back again.

And so, on the other side, there are the same reasons why saints cannot always wander or stay away from Christ.

There is that within them which will bring them back. The grace of God within them will bring them home. The grace of God is now their nature. Sinners who are walking with Christ and saints who are wandering from Christ are both under a force; they are carried against the stream, and when the winds are down that carried them on they will return to their course. The grace of God is the seed of God. "He that is born of God sinneth not," that is, not unto death; "the seed of God remaineth in Him" (1 John 3:9). The seed of God is

immortal seed; it may languish and be ready to die, but it shall not die; it shall recover.

There is one outside them who will bring them back, though He may allow them to wander from the way for a time. “Of those whom Thou hast given Me I have lost none” (John 17:12). Christ has lost none, and He will lose none. He sends a word of commandment after them: “Return, O backsliding children, for I am married to you” (Jeremiah 3:14). “Where are you running? Whom are you following after? Come back from your lovers; return to your husband. I am married to you and we may not part.”

After the word of command He sends a word of promise: “I will heal your backslidings” (Jeremiah 3:22). “Return from your backslidings and I will heal them. I will forgive your backslidings and I will cure you of your backsliding heart. All the breaches they have made shall be made up. I will pass by all that you have done and be reconciled to you.” And this word of promise is a word of power: “I will bring you to Zion.” “Then she shall say, ‘I will go and return to my first husband’ ” (Hosea 2:7). “Behold we come unto Thee, for Thou art the Lord our God” (Jeremiah 3:22). He who will not leave His Israel after the flesh, with its idols, much less will He leave His Israel after the Spirit. “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

A good work may be said to be begun in a double sense. First, when there is some good thing doing, or when something is done towards it. When the Lord has been plowing upon the fallow ground, making His batteries against the stronghold, shaking secure hearts,

breaking false hopes, awakening consciences, convincing sinners, spreading sin, death, and hell before them, entering upon a treaty with them, and persuading them over to Christ to make an escape. There may be hopes in this, as the pains of travail give hopes of a birth. But this may go back and, after the highest hopes, prove to be an abortion. Sinners, awakened sinners, beware that you do not make a stand at the threshold; beware that your plowed ground is not left to lie fallow. Beware that the womb does not prove the grave of all your hopes. Do not mistake conviction for conversion. Let not your God nor your souls lose the things which have been wrought.

Second, when there is some good thing done; when the rubbish has been removed and the first stone is laid; when the plow has been going and the good seed is sown; when the new creature has passed the birth; when Christ is formed and the light of life has newly sprung up in the soul. If there is but a grain of mustard seed, the least and lowest degree of saving grace broken forth in the heart, the question is not whether it is much or little. If it is grace, there is the immortal seed; there is the good work begun, which shall be carried on till the day of Jesus Christ. Grace is a security for glory. Yet beware, Christians; let not this security make you secure. There is a harvest in the seed, yet the seed must be cherished, watched, and well-looked after so that it may grow up to the harvest. He who lets it die for lack of looking after proves that it was dead while alive. Let not your falling short of glory prove that your grace was not grace.

Christians, lay hold on the promise and lift up your heads. You are now under fears; however it is with you

at present, you are in doubt as to how it may be. Your way is long and dangerous, yet your hearts are deceitful and unstable; you are going on at present, but you doubt that you shall hold out. "I may meet with lions in the way, which might frighten me back. I may lose my way and never recover. I may be weary and faint in the way, and lie down and give up. My Lord and my soul have been often upon the parting point. I have been almost gone, and I tremble to think what may yet become of me."

Yet remember who it is who has said, "I will not turn from you to do you good. I will put My fear in your hearts, and you shall not depart from Me." Rise, soul, take care for today, and take no thought for tomorrow. Mind the present duty; go on your way, though you are weeping and trembling. Go on your way, and then commit your way and yourself to Him, by whose mighty power you shall be kept through faith unto salvation. Faithful is He who calls you, and will do it.

And now you have all. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. God has made a covenant with His people. He has given Himself for their portion, His Son for their price, His Spirit for their guide in the way, His earth for their accommodation by the way, His angels for their guard, the powers of darkness and death for their spoils, and everlasting glory for their crown. And because their way is difficult and their word is contrary to them, He has given them all the grace that is necessary to bring them to glory. In general, they have a new heart, in all things suited to their way, and thoroughly furnished for every good work. In particular, they have knowledge to guide, oneness to fix and intend, tender-

ness to submit to and yield, love to constrain and bring on, fear to fence and hold in, obedience to perform and bring forth, and perseverance to go through and hold out to the end—and there grace and glory meet.

This is the covenant of grace; this is the word which, by the gospel, is preached unto you.

QUESTION. But if God has undertaken all this for us, what is there left for us to do then? Here is a doctrine according to sinner's hearts. If this is gospel, then, soul, take your ease, take your liberty. Cast away care; make much of your body, and God will take care of the rest.

ANSWER. But is there nothing required of us? Let the Scriptures speak. "Yet for all this will I be inquired of," or sought unto, "by the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 36:37); otherwise let them look for no such things. He who will not ask in faith, "let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord" (James 1:7). And can he think to receive anything who neither believes nor prays, who neither prays in faith nor prays at all? "It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do" (Philippians 2:12-13). What does it say then? "Therefore, sit still and do nothing"? No such thing! Therefore, "work out your salvation with fear and trembling," says the apostle. The promise of God was never intended to make the command of God of no effect. God, in promising grace, promises a power for duty; and as He does not give the grace of God in vain, so we must not receive it in vain. While He gives what He requires, He still requires what He gives. God makes this promise: "Ye shall be My people." And though He undertakes to make it good, yet it is also the matter of our stipulation. And in this promise, wherein the Lord as-

sure us what we shall be, is included a precept, wherein we may understand what we ought to be.

In undertaking to give us a new heart, a tender, obedient, and persevering heart, the Lord promises to both make us what we should be and to help us in what we are bound to do, and give us at once a clear hint of both our mercy and our duty. This is the sense and sum of that promise. The Lord will work all that in us, and will help and cause us to perform all that which is required unto salvation. And so the promise on God's part does not make void our obligation, but rather establishes it. Do we then make void the law through faith? Nay, we establish the law.

Though it is certain as to the event, that all which is necessary to salvation shall be accomplished in us, God has undertaken that it is altogether as certain that He has made our loving Him, fearing Him, obeying His whole will, and our sincerity and perseverance herein so necessary that we cannot be saved otherwise.

Christians, do not mistake nor abuse the grace of the gospel. The Lord never meant that His mercy should make void your obligation to duty. Redemption from sin was never intended as a toleration of sin. He does not give His Spirit in favor of the flesh. What He undertakes to work for you was never with a mind to maintain you in idleness. The grace of God that brings salvation teaches us that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12).

Though you are saved by grace, yet you are still, in a sense, a debtor to the whole law. Perfect obedience to the whole law, even to the utmost iota, is still due from you. And if it is not in your hearts to pay all that you

owe, that is, if there is any duty commanded in the whole Book of God that you dispense with, that you will not set your hearts to observe and obey; if there is any one sin that you must be excused in or will not part with; if there is anything—the highest pitch of holy care, activity, industry, zeal for God and holiness—that you are not persuaded to press hard after, then this is an evidence of such an unsound heart as has no part in the gospel or the salvation thereof. Perfection is still due, though sincerity will be accepted. Sincerity shall be accepted, but what is sincerity other than a hearty willingness to be perfect, attested to by a striving and pressing on to that mark which is set before us?

Oh, admire and bless the Lord for grace! But do not turn the grace of God into licentiousness. Shall we continue in sin because grace has abounded? Will you requite the Lord this way? Will you thus deceive yourselves, O foolish and unwise people? Will you slight Him because He has loved you? Will you kick at Him because He has cared for you? Will you shake off His yoke because He has secured the crown for you? Will you serve His enemies because He has saved you from them? Will you nourish your diseases because He has said He will cure you? Will you live and not eat? Reap and not plow? Will you not eat because He has given you meat? Will you not run because He has given you legs, nor work because He has given you hands, nor watch because He has given you eyes? Or will you tempt the Lord and call it your trust in Him? Awake from such madness.

Christians, do not say, "If God will, I shall; whether I take care or not, believe or not, repent or not, be obedient or rebellious; whether I awake or sleep, work or be

idle, my unbelief, my disobedience, my negligence shall not make the faith of God of no effect."

But rather, since God has said, "You shall," let your heart answer, "I will walk in His statutes. Arise, O my soul, get up and be doing." Work out your salvation, because it is God who is working in you to will and to do. Shake off your sloth; set to your work; run your race, since God has said that you shall not run nor labor in vain. And look to it, for even though your idleness or great unfaithfulness will not make void the covenant of God, yet it will make manifest that you have no part nor lot in it.

But to all these glorious things that have been spoken, some will possibly reply, "Oh, if all this is so, then happy are saints indeed! 'Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.' But will the Lord indeed do all these things for mortals? Will He take notice of worms? Shall such dry bones live? Will He set such vile dust as the apple of His eye? Is not this too good to be true, too great to be believed? Are we not all this while but in a dream or a fool's paradise? Oh, that I could be sure that half of what has been told me was true!"

Too great to be believed? As if it must be questioned whether the sun is light because it dazzles our eyes! But what certainty would you have? Is all this too great for the great and Almighty God to do? He has said, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9). Can He not do this, who can do all things? Will He not do it, when He has said that He will? Will the Lord mock? Can God deceive? Shall His Word, yea, and His oath too, fail? These are two im-

mutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie.

If you should hear the Lord Himself speaking to you from heaven with audible voice, "My covenant I make with you, and it is My intent and purpose to perform every word that is written in it, according to the plain import and meaning thereof; there shall not a tittle fail, neither will I alter the thing that has gone forth from My lips. Heaven and earth shall fail, but My Word shall not fail. Trust it; trust everlasting truth, trust everlasting strength. Fear not, for not one word of all that I have spoken by all my servants, the prophets, shall fail."—if you should hear the Lord speaking thus to you from heaven, what would you say? Would not this satisfy you? Why, search the Scriptures, that "more sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1:19). Read them diligently; understand what you read; and then see if you do not there find the Lord speaking fully to you the following words.

Chapter 17

*God Speaking from Mount Gerizim, or, the Gospel
in a Map, being a Short View of the Exceedingly
Great and Precious Promises**

O all you inhabitants of the world dwelling on the earth, come; see and hear; gather yourselves together unto the proclamation of the Great King. Hear, you who are afar off and you who are near! He who has an ear to hear, let him hear. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Let every valley be exalted, and every mountain be made low, for the glory of the Lord is to be revealed." Go through, go through the gates, prepare the way. Cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones, lift up the standard for the people; for the Lord proclaims salvation to the ends of the earth. Tidings! tidings, O you captives!

Hear, all you who look for salvation in Israel. Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. Blessed news! Prepare your ears and hearts! The Lord has commanded me, saying, "Go unto the people, and sanctify them; let them wash and be ready; for the Lord is coming down upon Mount Zion in the sight of all nations; not in earthquakes and

* Chapters 17 and 18 were penned by Richard Alleine's brother, Joseph Alleine.

fire, not in clouds and darkness, not in thunderings or burnings, rending the mountains and breaking the rocks in pieces." He speaks not to you out of blackness, darkness, and tempests. You shall say no more, "Let not God speak to us lest we die." He comes peaceably; the law of kindness is in His mouth. He preaches peace; peace to him who is afar off and to him who is near. Behold, how He comes, leaping upon the mountains. He has passed Mount Ebal (Deuteronomy 11:20; 27:12-13); no more wrath or cursing. He is come to Mount Gerizim, where He stands to bless the people. As Mordecai to his nation, He writes "the words of truth and peace, seeking the welfare of His people, and speaking peace to all His seed."

Behold how He comes! Clothed with flames of love, with bowels of compassion, plenteous redemption, and multiplied pardons.

Hearken therefore, O you children, hearken to me. To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time you hear the joyful sound, the trump of jubilee, the tidings of peace, in the voice of the everlasting gospel, you fall down before the throne, and worship Him who lives forever and ever.

Arise and come away; prepare, prepare yourselves. Do not hear with an uncircumcised ear; you are not looking upon a common thing. Behold, the throne is set, the throne of grace, where majesty and mercy dwell together. From there the Lord will meet you; from there He will commune with you; from the mercy seat, from between the cherubims, upon the ark of the testimony. Lo, the Lord comes out of His pavilion, the mighty God from Zion. His glory covers the heavens, the earth is full of His praise. A fire of love goes before

Him; mercy and truth round about Him; righteousness and peace are the habitation of His throne. He rides on His horses and chariots of salvation; the covenant of life and peace is in His mouth.

Rejoice, you heavens; make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Let the sea roar, the floods clap their hands, and the multitudes of the isles rejoice. Stand forth, the host of heaven; prepare your harps, cast down your crowns, be ready with your trumpets; bring forth your golden vials full of odors, for our voice will jar, our strings will break, we cannot reach the note of our Maker's praise.

Yet, let those who dwell in the dust arise and sing. Bear your part in this glorious service, but consider and attend. Call out your souls, and all that is within you. Lift up your voices, fix your eyes, enlarge your hearts, extend all their powers. There is work for them all. Be intent and serious, you cannot strain too high.

Come forth, you graces, set the way; be all in readiness. Stand forth, faith and hope. Flame, O love! Come, you warm desires, and break with longing. Let fear, with all veneration, do its obeisance. Joy, prepare your songs; call up all the daughters of music to salute the Lord as He passes by. Let the generation of the saints appear and spread the way with boughs and garments of salvation, and songs of deliverance. You stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God, your captains, your elders, your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is within your camp, from the hewer of wood to the drawer of water, that you should enter into covenant with the Lord your God (Deuteronomy 29:10–13), and into His oath, which the Lord your God makes with you

unto Himself and, that He may be unto you a God, as He has said unto you, and as He has sworn.

I have done my errand. The messenger of the morning disappears when the Orient Sun comes forth out of His chambers. I vanish, I put my mount in the dust. The voice of the Lord! The soft and still voice! O my soul, wrap your face in the mantle, bow yourself to the ground, and put yourself into the cleft of the rock while Jehovah proclaims His name, and makes all His goodness to pass before you.

The Voice of the Lord

Hear, O you ends of the earth; the mighty God, the Lord has spoken: Gather My saints unto Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice (Psalm 50:1, 5). Behold, I establish My covenant between Me and you (Genesis 17:7). By My holiness have I sworn that I will be your covenant Friend. I lift up My hand to heaven. I swear I live forever, and because I live you shall live also (John 14:19). I will be yours (Jeremiah 32:38–40), yours for all intents and purposes, your refuge and your rest (Jeremiah 50:6; Psalm 90:1; Psalm 46:1), your patron and your portion (Psalm 73:26; Isaiah 25:4–5), your heritage and your hope, your God and your guide (Psalm 48:14). While I have, you shall never want; and what I am to Myself, I will be to you (Psalm 34:9–10). You shall be My people, a chosen generation, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people (Exodus 19:5–6; 1 Peter 2:9). I call heaven and earth to witness this day that I take you for Mine forever. My name shall be upon you, and you shall be pillars in the

temple of your God, and shall go out no more (Revelation 3:12).

My livery shall you wear, and the stamp of My own face shall you carry (Ezekiel 36:25–26; Ephesians 4:24); and I will make you My witness and the epistles of Christ unto the world (2 Corinthians 3:3). You shall be chosen vessels to bear My name before the sons of men. And that you may see that I am in earnest with you, lo, I make with you an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure (2 Samuel 23:5). And I do here solemnly deliver it to you as My act and deed, sealed with sacred blood (1 Corinthians 11:25), and ratified with the oath of a God (Hebrews 6:17) who cannot lie, who knows no place for repentance (Titus 1:2).

Come, you blessed ones, receive the instrument of your salvation: take the writings, behold the seals; here are the conveyances of the kingdom. Fear not, the donation is full and free. See, it is written in blood, founded on the all-sufficient merits of your Surety (Hebrews 9), in whom I am well pleased (Matthew 3:17), whose death makes this testament unchangeable forever; so that your names can never be put out, nor your inheritance alienated, nor your legacies diminished. Nothing may be altered, nothing added, nothing subtracted, no, not forever (Galatians 3:15–17). Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people (Deuteronomy 33:29)! Only believe, and know your own blessedness. Attend, O My children, unto the blessings of your Father; hear and know the glorious immunities and the royal prerogatives that I here confirm upon you.

Here I seal to you your pardons. Though your sins are as many as the sands and as mighty as the moun-

tains, I will drown them in the deeps of My bottomless mercies (Micah 7:19). I will be merciful to your unrighteousness. I will multiply your pardon (Hebrews 8:12; Isaiah 55:7); where your sins have abounded, My grace shall superabound; though they be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Isaiah 1:18). Behold, I declare Myself satisfied and pronounce you absolved (Job 33:24). The price is paid, your debts are cleared, your bonds are canceled (Isaiah 43:25; Colossians 2:13–14).

Whatever the law, conscience, or the accuser has to charge upon you, I here exonerate and discharge you. I even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My name's sake. Who shall lay anything to your charge when I acquit you? Who shall impeach or implead you when I proclaim you guiltless (Romans 8:33–34)? Sons, daughters, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you (1 John 2:12; Mark 9:2). I will sprinkle your consciences, and put the voice of peace into your mouths (Ezekiel 36:25; Hebrews 9:14; Isaiah 57:19), and they shall be your registers in which I will record your pardon, and the voice of guilt, wrath, and terror shall cease (Hebrews 10:22; Isaiah 27:4–5).

Here I sign your release from the house of bondage (Romans 6:17–18; 1 Corinthians 7:22). Come forth, you captives; come forth, hope; for I have found a ransom (Job 33:24). I proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound (Isaiah 61:1; 42:7). Behold, I have broken your bonds, shaken the foundations of your prisons, and opened the iron gates (Luke 4:18). By the blood of the covenant I have sent forth the prisoners out of the pit wherein there is no water (Zechariah 9:11). Arise, O redeemed of the

Lord; put off the raiment of your captivities, arise and come away.

The dark and noisome prison of sin shall no longer detain you (John 8:34–36). I will loosen your fetters and knock off your bolts. Sin shall not have dominion over you (Romans 7:14). I will heal your backslidings, I will subdue your iniquities (Micah 7:19; Jeremiah 3:12), I will sanctify you wholly (1 Thessalonians 5:23–24), and will put My fear in your hearts so that you shall not depart from Me (Jeremiah 32:40). Though your corruptions are strong and many, yet the aids of My Spirit, the cleansing virtue of My Word, and the medicine of My corrections shall so work together with your prayers and endeavors that they shall not finally prevail against you, but shall surely fall before you (Ezekiel 36:37; Ephesians 5:26; Isaiah 27:9).

From the strong and stinking jail of the grave I deliver you. O death, I will be your plague. O grave, I will be your destruction (Hosea 13:14). My beloved shall not ever see corruption (Psalm 16:10). I will change your rottenness into glory, and make your dust arise and praise Me (Daniel 12:2–3; Isaiah 26:19). What is sown in weakness, I will raise in power; what is sown in corruption, I will raise in incorruption; what is sown a natural body, I will raise a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:42–44). This very flesh of yours, this corruptible flesh, shall put on incorruption; and this mortal flesh shall put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53). Death shall be swallowed up in victory and mortality of life (1 Corinthians 15:54; 2 Corinthians 5:4).

Fear not, O children. Come, and I will show you the enemy that you dreaded. See, here lies the king of terrors, like Sisera in the tent, fastened to the ground with

a nail struck through his temples. Behold the grateful present, the head of your enemy on a platter. I bequeath to you your conquered adversary, and make over death as your legacy (1 Corinthians 3:22). O death, where is thy sting? Where now is the armor in which you trusted (1 Corinthians 15:55)? Come, My people, enter into your chambers (Isaiah 26:20). Come to your beds of dust and lay down in peace; let your flesh rest in hope (Isaiah 57:2); for even in this flesh shall you see God (Psalm 16:8; Job 19:25–27). O you slain by death, your carcasses, now as loathsome as the carrion in the ditch, I will redeem from the power of the grave (Psalm 49:5), and fashion those vile bodies like unto the glorious body of your exalted Redeemer (Philippians 3:21). Look, if you can, on the sun when it shines in its strength; with such dazzling glory I will clothe you, O ye of little faith (Matthew 13:43).

From the terrible dungeon of eternal darkness I do hereby free you. Fear not, you shall not be hurt by the second death (Revelation 2:11; Romans 8:1); you are delivered from the wrath to come, and shall never come into condemnation (1 Thessalonians 1:10; John 5:24). The flames of Tophet shall not be able to singe the hairs of your heads, no, nor the smell of the fire pass upon you. Stand upon the brink and look down into the horrible pit, the infernal prison, from whence I have freed you. Do you see how the smoke of their torments ascends forever (Revelation 14:11)? Do you hear the cursings and ravings, the roarings and blasphemies (Matthew 25:30)? What do you think of those hellish fiends? Would you have been willing to have had them for your companions and tormentors (Matthew 25:41)? What do you think of those chains of darkness? Of the

river of brimstone, of the instruments of torment of both soul and body, of the weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth? Can you think of everlasting banishment, of hearing “Go ye cursed”? Could you dwell with everlasting burnings? Could you abide with devouring fire (Isaiah 33:14)? This is the inheritance you were born to (Ephesians 2:3). But I have cut off the entail, and wrought for you a great salvation. I have not ordained you to wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9), but My thoughts towards you are thoughts of peace (Jeremiah 29:11).

Here I deliver to you your protection. From all your enemies I will save you (2 Kings 17:39). I grant you a protection from the arrests of the law. Your Surety has fully answered it (Galatians 3:13; Romans 5:10). My justice is satisfied, My wrath is pacified, and My honor is repaired (Daniel 2:24; 2 Corinthians 5:19–20). Behold, I am near who justifies you; who is he who shall condemn you?

From the usurped dominion of the powers of darkness I will deliver you. I will tread Satan shortly under you, and will set your feet in triumph upon the necks of your enemies (Romans 16:20). Let not your hearts be troubled; though you are to wrestle with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world (Ephesians 6:12); for stronger is He who is in you than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). He may bruise your heel, but you shall bruise his head (Genesis 3:15). Behold your Redeemer leading captivity captive, spoiling principalities and powers, triumphing over them openly through His cross (Colossians 2:15). See how Satan falls like lightning from heaven (Luke 10:18), and how the Samson of your salvation bears away the

gates of hell, posts and all, upon His shoulders, and sets them up as trophies of His victory; how He pulls out the throat of the lion, lifts up the heart of the traitor upon the top of His spear, washes His hands, and dyes His robes in the blood of your enemies (Isaiah 63:1-3).

From the victory of the world I will deliver you (1 John 5:4; Galatians 1:4). Neither its frowns nor its flatteries shall be too hard for your victorious faith. Though it raises up Egypt, Amalek, Moab, and all its militia against you, yet it shall never keep you out of Canaan. Be of good comfort, your Lord has overcome the world (John 16:33). Though its temptations are very powerful, yet this, upon My faithfulness, I promise you: nothing shall come upon you but what you shall be able to bear. But if I see such trials, which you fear would be too hard for your grace and would overthrow your soul, I will never allow them to come upon you. Nay, I will make your enemy to serve you (1 Corinthians 10:13), and I bequeath the world as part of your dowry to you (1 Corinthians 3:22).

From the curse of the cross I will deliver you (Psalm 119:71). Afflictions shall prove a wholesome cup to you; your Lord has drunk the venom into His own body, and what remains for you is but a healthful potion which I promise shall work for your good (Romans 8:28). Be not afraid to drink, nor desire that the cup should pass from you. I bless the cup before I give it to you (Job 5:17). Drink all of it and be thankful; you shall find My blessing at the bottom of the cup to sweeten the sharpest afflictions to you (James 1:12; Psalm 94:12). I will stand by you in all conditions, and be a fast Friend to you in every change (Isaiah 43:2). In the wilderness I

will speak comfortably to you, and in the fire and water I will be with you (Hosea 2:14). I will be a strength to the poor and a strength to the needy in his distress; a refuge from the storm, and a shadow from the heat, when the blast of terrible ones is as a storm against the wall (Isaiah 25:4). Your sufferings shall not be a cup of wrath, but a grace cup; not a curse, but a cure; not a cup of trembling, but a cup of blessing to you (Hebrews 12:6–8). They shall not hurt you, but heal you (Psalm 119:67). My blessing shall attend you in every condition (Genesis 26:3). I say not only ‘Blessed shall you be in your basket, and blessed in your store,’ but ‘Blessed shall you be in your poverty (Genesis 28:15), and blessed shall you be in your straits’; not only shall you be blessed in your cities and in your fields, but blessed shall you be in your beds and your banishments (Mark 10:29–30). Blessed shall you be when you are persecuted, and when you are reviled and your name is cast about as evil; yea, then doubly blessed (Matthew 5:10–12). My choicest blessings, greatest good, and richest sweets will I put into your evil things (1 Peter 4:13–14; Luke 6:20–22). These happy immunities, these glorious liberties of the sons of God, by this immutable charter I forever settle upon you. And I do, in and with my covenant, unalterably, irrevocably, and everlastingly convey them unto you and confirm them upon you.

Yea, I will not only free you from your miseries, but will confer upon you royal privileges and prerogatives, and instate you into higher and greater happiness than ever you have fallen from. Lo, I give Myself to you, and all things with Myself.

Behold, O you sons of men! Behold and wonder. Be astonished, O heavens! Be moved, you strong founda-

tions of the earth! For you shall be My witnesses. This day I do, by covenant, bestow Myself upon My servants (Genesis 17:7). I will be your God forever and ever (Psalm 48:14; Jeremiah 32:38; Revelation 21:3). Your very own God (Psalm 16:2). Nothing in the world is so much your own as I am. The houses that you have built, or the ones you have bought, are not so much yours as I am. Here you are tenants at will; but I am your eternal inheritance (Psalm 16:5; 73:26). These are loans for a season, but I am your dwelling place in all generations (Psalm 90:1). You have nowhere so great a propriety, so sure and unalterable a claim, as you have here. What do you count your own? Your bodies, your souls? Nay, these are not your own; they are bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). But you may boldly make your claim to Me; you may freely challenge an interest in Me (Jeremiah 3:19; Isaiah 63:16). Come near and fear not; where could you be free if not with your own? Where could you be bold if not at home? You are never in all the world so much at home as when you are with Me. You may freely make use of Me, or of any of My attributes, whenever you need (Psalm 50:15; Jeremiah 49:11; Psalm 145:18).

I will be all to you that you can wish. I will be a friend to you (Isaiah 41:8). My secrets shall be with you (Psalm 25:14; John 15:15), and you shall have free access to Me, and liberty to pour out all your hearts into My bosom (Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 4:16).

I will be a physician to you. I will heal your backslidings and cure all your diseases (Hosea 14:4; Psalm 103:3). Fear not, for never did a soul miscarry that left itself in My hands, and would follow My prescriptions.

I will be a shepherd to you (Psalm 23:1; 80:1). Be not

afraid of evil tidings, for I am with you. My rod and My staff shall comfort you. You shall not want, for I will feed you; you shall not wander or be lost, for I will restore you. I will cause you to lie down in green pastures, and will lead you beside the still waters (Psalm 23). I will gather you with My arm, carry you in My bosom, and will lead on as softly as the flock and the children are able to endure (Isaiah 40:11; Genesis 33:13–14). If officers are careless, I will do the work Myself. I will judge between cattle and cattle. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away. I will bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and will feed them with judgment (Ezekiel 34:16–17 compared with verses 2–4). I will watch over My flock by night (Isaiah 27:3). Behold, I have appointed My ministers as your watchmen, as overseers who watch for your souls (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28). Yea, My angels shall be your watchers, and shall keep a constant guard upon My flock (Daniel 3:17; Psalm 34:7). And if the servants should sleep (Matthew 13:25, 27), My own eyes shall keep a perpetual watch by night and by day (Psalm 34:15; 33:18; 2 Chronicles 16:9). The Keeper of Israel never slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm 121:3–5), nor withdraws His eyes from the righteous (Job 36:7). I will guide you with My eye. I will never trust you out of My sight (Psalm 32:8).

I will be a Sovereign to you. The Lord is your Judge; the Lord is your Lawgiver; the Lord is your King (Isaiah 33:22). Do not fear the unrighteousness of men, for I will judge your cause and defend your rights (Deuteronomy 32:36; Psalm 140:12 and 9:4). You shall not stand at man's bar; you shall not be cast out by their vote

(1 Corinthians 4:3–5; 2 Corinthians 10:18). Let them curse; I will bless. Let them condemn; I will justify (Isaiah 50:9; Genesis 12:3).

When you come upon trials in your lives, such as will decide your eternal state, you shall see your Friend and your Father upon the bench (Psalm 80:9; Ecclesiastes 3:16–17). Into My hands shall your cause be cast, and you shall surely stand in judgment and be found at the right hand among the sheep. You shall hear the King say, “Come, ye blessed; inherit the kingdom” (Matthew 25:33–34).

I will be a husband to you (Isaiah 54:5). In lovingkindness and mercy I will betroth you unto Myself forever (Hosea 2:19–20). I will espouse your interest, and will be as one with you, and you with Me (Matthew 25:40, 45; Acts 9:4–5). You shall be for Me and not for another; and I also will be for you (Hosea 3:3). Though I found you as a helpless infant, exposed in its own blood, all your unworthiness did not discourage Me. Lo, I have looked upon you, and put My comeliness upon you. Moreover, I swear unto you, and enter into covenant with you, and you shall be Mine (Ezekiel 16:4–10). Behold, I do, as it were, put Myself out of My own power, and do here solemnly, in My marriage covenant, make away Myself to you (Jeremiah 24:7; 30:21–22; 31:33–34), and with Myself all things (Revelation 21:7). I will be an everlasting portion to you (Jeremiah 51:19; Psalm 119:57). Now lift up your eyes to the east, to the west, to the north, and to the south. Have you not a worthy portion, a goodly heritage? Can you cast up your riches or count your own happiness? Can you fathom immensity, reach omnipotence, or comprehend eternity? All this is yours. I will set open all My treasures to you, and will

keep back nothing from you.

All the attributes in the Godhead, and all the persons in the Godhead, do I hereby make over to you. I will be yours in all My essential perfections and in all My personal relations.

In all My essential perfections: My eternity shall be the date of your happiness. I am the eternal God, and while I am, I will be life and blessedness to you (Psalm 90:1–2 compared with 48:14; 1 Timothy 1:17 compared with 1 Peter 5:10). I will be a never-failing fountain of joy, peace, and bliss unto you (Psalm 36:7–9; 16:11; Isaiah 35:10). I am the first and last, who was and is and is to come. And My eternal power and Godhead shall be bound to you (Jeremiah 32:40).

I will be your God, your Father, and your Friend as long as I have any being (Isaiah 9:6; Jeremiah 10:10). I have made My everlasting choice in pitching upon you (Psalm 132:13–14; Hosea 2:19). Fear not, for the eternal God is your refuge, and underneath you are the everlasting arms (Deuteronomy 33:27). My durable riches and righteousness shall be yours (Proverbs 8:18). Though all should forsake you, yet will I not forsake you (Hebrews 13:5; Psalm 27:10). When the world, and all that is therein, shall be burned up, I will be a standing portion for you. When you are forgotten among the dead, I will remember you with everlasting lovingkindness (Isaiah 54:10).

My unchangeableness shall be the rock of your rest (Psalm 62:6–7). When all the world is like a tumbling ocean round about you, here you may fix and settle. I am your resting place (Jeremiah 50:6; 2 Chronicles 14:11).

The immutability of My nature, of My counsel and

of My covenant, are sure footing for your faith, and a firm foundation for your strong and everlasting consolation (2 Timothy 2:19; Hebrews 6:17–18). When you are afflicted, tossed with tempests (Isaiah 54:11), and not comforted, put in to Me. I am a haven of hope. I am a harbor of rest for you. Here cast your anchors, and you shall never be moved (Jeremiah 17:13, 17; Psalm 46:1–2, 5; 125:1).

My omnipotence shall be your guard. I am God Almighty, your almighty Protector, your almighty Benefactor (Genesis 15:1; 17:1). What if your enemies are many? More are they who are with you than they who are against you; for I am with you (2 Chronicles 32:7–8; 2 Kings 6:16). What if they are mighty? They are not almighty. Your Father is greater than all, and none shall pluck you (whatever else they might pluck) out of My hands (John 10:29). Who can hinder My power or obstruct My salvation (Isaiah 43:13; Daniel 4:35)? Who is like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rides on the heaven for your help, and in His excellency on the sky? I am the sword of your strength and the shield of your excellency (Deuteronomy 33:26, 29). I am your rock and your fortress, your deliverer, your strength, the horn of your salvation, and your high tower (Psalm 18:2). I will maintain you against all the power of the enemy. You shall never sink if Omnipotence can support you (1 Peter 1:5). The gates of hell shall not prevail against you (Matthew 16:18). Your enemies shall find hard work of it. They must first overcome victory, enervate Omnipotence, corrupt fidelity, or change immutability before they can finally prevail against you; either they shall bow or break (Revelation 3:19; Isaiah 66:24). Though they should exalt themselves as the eagle, though they

should set their nest among the stars, even there will I bring them down (Obadiah 4; Jeremiah 49:16).

My faithfulness shall be your security (Psalm 89:33–35). My truth, yea, My oath shall fail if ever you come to be losers by me (Isaiah 54:9–10 compared with Mark 10:29–30). I will make you to confess, when you see the results and upshot of all My providences, that I was a God worthy of being trusted, worthy of being believed, worthy of being rested in and relied upon (Psalm 34:4–6, 8; 84:12; 146:5; Jeremiah 17:7–8; Psalm 22:4–5). If you do not walk in My judgments, you must look for My threats and frowns, yea, and blows too; and you will see that I am not jesting with you, nor will I indulge you in your sins (Psalm 89:30–32; Amos 3:2; 2 Samuel 12–15; 1 Peter 4:7). Nevertheless, My lovingkindness I will never take from you, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail. My covenant I will not break, nor alter the thing that has gone out from My lips.

My mercies shall be your store (Isaiah 53:7; Psalm 119:41). I am the Father of mercies, and such a Father I will be to you (2 Corinthians 1:3). I am the fountain of mercies, and this fountain shall ever be open to you (Psalm 36:9 compared with Revelation 21:6).

My mercies are very many, and they shall be multiplied towards you (Nehemiah 9:17 compared with Isaiah 55:7); very great, and they shall be magnified upon you (1 Chronicles 21:13 compared with Genesis 19:19); very sure, and they shall forever be sure to you (Isaiah 55:3); very tender, and they shall be infinitely tender of you (Psalm 119:156 compared with Psalm 103:4). Though the figtree does not blossom, nor the vine bear fruit, nor the flock bring forth, fear not, for My compassions fail not (Habakkuk 3:17; Lamentations

3:22). Surely goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your lives (Psalm 23:6). Even to your old age I am He, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you. I have made you, and I will bear you, carry you, and deliver you (Isaiah 46:4). I will make an everlasting covenant with you, that I will not turn away from you to do you good (Jeremiah 32:40). I swear that I will show you the kindness of God (1 Samuel 20:14–17). I can as soon forget to be God as forget to be gracious. While My name is Jehovah—merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth—I will never forget to show mercy to you (Psalm 102:17 compared with 34:6–7). All My ways towards you shall be mercy and truth (Psalm 25:10). I have sworn that I would not be wroth with you nor rebuke you; for the mountains shall depart and the hills removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed. Thus says the Lord who has mercy on you.

My omniscience shall be your overseer. My eyes shall ever be open, observing your wants to relieve them, and your wrongs to avenge them (1 Peter 3:12; Exodus 3:7). My ears shall ever be open to hear the prayers of My poor, and the cries of My oppressed, the clamors, calumnies, and reproaches of your enemies (Psalm 34:5; Exodus 2:24–25; Zephaniah 2:8–10). Surely I have seen your affliction and know your sorrows. And shall not God avenge His own elect? I will avenge them speedily (Luke 18:7–8). I see the secret plots and designs of your enemies against you (Jeremiah 18:23), and will disannul their counsels (Isaiah 8:10 with 29:14–15; Psalm 33:10). I see your secret integrity, and the uprightness of your hearts towards Me, while the carnal and censorious world condemns you as hypocrites (Job

1:8–11; 2 Chronicles 15:17). Your secret prayers, fasts, and tears, which the world knows not of, I observe and record them (Matthew 6:6, 18; Acts 10:4). Your secret care to please Me, the secret pains within your hearts, your secret self-searchings and self-denial—I see them all, and your Father, who sees in secret, shall reward them openly (Matthew 25:34–36; 2 Chronicles 34:27).

My wisdom shall be your counselor. If any lacks wisdom, let him ask of Me, and it shall be given him (James 1:5). I will be your deliverer. When you are in darkness, I will be a light to you. I will make your way plain before you (Isaiah 48:19; 57:14). You are short-sighted, but I will be eyes to you (Isaiah 52:6–7; 29:6)). I will watch over you, to bring upon you all the good I have promised (Jeremiah 31:28 with 32:24), and to keep off all the evil you fear, or at least turn it into good (Psalm 91:10, 14; Jeremiah 24:5). You shall have your food in its season and your medicine in its season; mercies, afflictions, and everything suitable, all in their season (Psalm 23:2–3; 1 Peter 1:6; Isaiah 27:7–9).

I will outwit your enemies and make their oracles to speak but folly (Isaiah 19:11–15). The old serpent shall not deceive you. I will acquaint you with his devices (2 Corinthians 2:11). The deceitful hearts you fear shall not undo you. I will reveal their wiles.

I know how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished (2 Peter 2:9). Trust in Me with all your hearts, and do not lean on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). I am God, who performs all things for you (Psalm 57:2). I will forfeit the reputation of My wisdom if I do not make you to acknowledge, when you see the end of the Lord (James 5:11)—though at present you wonder

at and do not understand the meaning of My proceedings—that all My works are in weight, in number, in time, and in order (Ecclesiastes 3:14); if I do not cause you to cry out, “Manifold are Thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all” (Psalm 33:4; 104:24; 145:10).

My justice shall be your revenger and rewarder (2 Thessalonians 1:6; 2 Timothy 4:8). Fear not to approach; fury is not in Me (Isaiah 27:4). My justice is not only appeased towards you, but engaged for you. I am so fully satisfied in the sacrifice of My beloved Son that justice itself, which was as a flaming sword drawn against you, now greatly befriends you; and that which was an amazing, confounding terror shall now become your relief and consolation (Ecclesiastes 3:16–17; 5:8; Psalm 96:10–13; 97:1 with 99:1). Under all your oppressions, here shall your refuge be (Psalm 6:9; 103:6). Let me know your grievances, and My justice will right your wrongs and reward your services (Psalm 146:7; Hebrews 6:10). You may conclude upon your pardons, conclude upon your crowns, conclude upon reparation for all your injustices, and all from the sweet consideration of My justice (1 John 1:9; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 2:23), the thought of which to others is as the horror of the shadow of death. If you sin, despair not; remember, I am just to forgive you. If you are at any pains or cost for Me, do not count it as lost, for I am not unrighteous to forget you. I am the righteous Judge who has laid up for you, and will set upon you, the crown of righteousness. Are you reviled, persecuted, or defamed? Forget not that I am righteous to render tribulation to those who trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest in Me. Though all your services and sufferings do not deserve the least good at My hands, yet as I have freely passed

My promise to reward them, so I will as justly keep it.

My omnipresence shall be company for you (1 Chronicles 22:18; Joshua 1:5, 9; Isaiah 41:10). Surely I will be with you to bless you. No bolts, no bars, no bonds, nor banishment shall remove you from Me, nor keep My presence and the influences of heaven from you (Genesis 39:21, 23). I am always with you (Matthew 28:20); in your darkest nights, in your deepest dangers, I am close at hand, a very present help in the time of trouble (Psalm 46:1; 34:18). I am not a God who is afar off or asleep or on a journey when you need My counsel, My ear, or My aid. I am always nigh unto those who fear Me.

No Patmos, no prison shall hinder the presence of My grace from you (Revelation 1:9–10; Acts 16:25–26). My presence shall perfume the smelliest wards, and lighten the darkest dungeon where you can be thrust (Acts 13:7; Isaiah 58:10).

My holiness shall be a fountain of grace to you (John 1:16; 2 Peter 1:4). I am the God of hope (Romans 15:13), the God of love (2 Corinthians 13:11), the God of patience (Romans 15:5), the Author and Finisher of faith (Hebrews 12:2), the God of all grace (1 Peter 5:10), and I will give grace to you (Psalm 84:11). My design is to make you partakers of My holiness (Hebrews 12:10). I will be a constant spring of spiritual life to you (Galatians 2:20; John 14; John 8:12; 10:10). The water that I shall give you shall be in you as a well of water, springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14). The seed of life that I shall put into you shall be so fed and cherished, and maintained by My power, that it shall be immortal (1 John 3:9; 1 Peter 1:23; Colossians 2:19). The unction that you shall receive from the Holy One shall

abide in you and teach you all things necessary for you; and as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him (John 14:16–17; 1 John 2:20, 27). Only keep the pipes open, and apply the means which I have prescribed, and you shall flourish in the courts of your God (Proverbs 8:34; Psalm 92:13). Yea, I will satisfy your souls in drought and make your bones fat, and you shall be like a watered garden. Lo, I will be as the dew unto you, and you shall grow as the lily and cast forth your roots as Lebanon. Your branches shall spread and your beauty shall be as the olive tree (Hosea 14:5–6). You shall still bring forth fruit in an old age; you shall be fat and flourishing.

My sovereignty shall be commanded by you (Genesis 32:26–28). You shall be My favorites, men of power to prevail with Me (Hosea 12:4; James 5:17–18). All My attributes shall be at the command of your prayers (Isaiah 45:11).

In summary, My all-sufficiency shall be the lot of your inheritance (Genesis 17:1; Lamentations 3:24; Psalm 16:5–6). My fullness is your treasure (Numbers 18:20; Deuteronomy 10:9). My house is your home (Psalm 91:1, 9). You may come as freely to My store as to your own cupboard (Ephesians 3:12). You may have your hand as freely in My treasures as in your own purses. You cannot ask too much; you cannot look for too much from Me (Ephesians 3:20; Matthew 7:8). I will give you (or will be Myself to you instead of) all comforts (Genesis 15:1; Psalm 84:11). You shall have children, or I will be better to you than ten children (Isaiah 56:5). You shall have riches, or I will be more to you than all riches (2 Corinthians 6:10).

You shall have friends, if best for you, or else I will

be your Comforter in your solitude (Isaiah 51:3; John 14:26; 2 Corinthians 1:3–4), your Counselor in your distress (Psalm 73:24). If you leave father, mother, houses, or lands for My sake, you shall have a hundredfold in Me, even in this time (Mark 10:30). When your enemies shall remove your comforts, it shall be but as letting the cistern run and opening the fountain, or putting out the candles and letting in the sun. The swelling waters shall raise higher the ark of your comfort (Romans 5:3; Hebrews 10:34; Acts 5:41). I will be the staff of bread to you, your life, and the strength of your days (Deuteronomy 30:20; Isaiah 33:16). I will be a house and a home to you; you shall dwell with Me, yea, dwell in Me and I in you (Deuteronomy 33:12; John 14:23; 1 John 3:24). I will stand and fall with you (Psalm 37:17, 24; 54:4; Isaiah 41:10). I will repair your losses and relieve your needs (Philippians 4:19; Mark 8:35; Matthew 19:27–29).

Can you burn out the lamp of heaven, or empty the boundless ocean with your hands? Why, the sun shall be dark and the sea dry before the Father of lights, the Fountain of mercies shall be exhausted. Behold, though the world has been spending upon the stock of My mercy ever since I created man upon earth, yet it runs with a full stream still. My sun diffuses its rays and disburses its light, and yet it shines as bright as ever; much more can I dispense of My goodness and fill My creatures' brim full and running over, and yet have never the less in Myself. And until this self-sufficiency is spent, you shall never be undone. I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and whatever I was to them I will be to you.

Are you in want? You know where to go. I am ever at home; you shall not go away empty from My door.

Never distract yourselves with cares and fears, but make known your requests by prayer and supplication to Me (Philippians 4:6). I will help when all others fail (Psalm 73:26; Isaiah 63:5; Psalm 102:17). When friends and hearts fail; when your eyestrings and heartstrings crack; when your acquaintances and souls leave you, My bosom shall be open to you (Psalm 49:15; 2 Corinthians 5:1; Luke 16:22). I will lock up your dust and will receive your souls.

And My infiniteness shall be the extent of your inheritance. Can you by searching find out God? Can you find out the Almighty to perfection? He is as high as heaven; what can you do? He is deeper than hell; what can you know (Job 11:7–8)? This incomprehensible height, this unfathomable depth, shall be all yours, forever yours.

I am your inheritance, which no line can measure, no arithmetic can value, and no surveyor can describe (Ezekiel 44:28; Ephesians 3:8; 1 Timothy 6:16; Psalm 145:3). Lift up your eyes now to the ancient mountains, to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills; all that you can see is yours. But your short sight cannot perceive half of what I give you. And when you see and know most, you are no less than infinitely short of the discovery of your own riches (Job 26:14).

Yea, further, I will be yours in all My personal relationships.

I am the everlasting Father, and I will be a Father to you (John 20:17). I take you for My sons and daughters (2 Corinthians 6:18). Behold, I receive you not as servants, but as sons to abide in My house forever (John 8:35–36). Whatever love or care children may look for from their father, that you may expect from Me

(Matthew 6:31–32), and so much more since I am wiser, greater, and better than any earthly parents. If earthly fathers will give good things to their children, much more will I give to you (Luke 11:13). If such cannot forget their children, much less will I forget you (Isaiah 49:15). What would My children have? Your Father's heart, His house, His care, His ear, His bread, and His rod? These shall all be yours.

You shall have My fatherly affection. My heart I share among you. My tenderest loves I bestow upon you (1 John 3:1; Jeremiah 31:3; Isaiah 54:8).

You shall have My fatherly compassion. As a father pities his children, so will I pity you (Psalm 103:13–14). I will consider your frame, and not be extreme to mark what is done amiss by you, but will cover all with the mantle of My excusing love (Psalm 78:39).

You shall have My fatherly instruction. I will cause you to hear the sweet voice behind you, saying, "This is the way" (Isaiah 30:21). I will tender your weaknesses, and inculcate My admonitions, line upon line, and will feed you with milk when you cannot digest stronger meat (Isaiah 28:13; 1 Corinthians 3:2). I will instruct you and guide you with My eyes (Psalm 32:8).

You shall have My fatherly protection. In My fear is strong confidence, and My children shall have a place of refuge (Proverbs 14:26). My name shall be your strong tower, to which you may at all times fly and be safe (Proverbs 18:10). To your stronghold, you prisoners of hope (Zechariah 9:12). I am an open refuge, a near and inviolable refuge for you (Psalm 48:3; Deuteronomy 4:7; John 10:29).

You shall have My fatherly provision. Do not be afraid of want; in your Father's house there is bread

enough (Psalm 34:9; Luke 15:17). I will care for your bodies. Do not worry about what you shall eat, drink, or put on. Let it suffice you that your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all things (Matthew 6:25–34; Luke 12:22–32). I will provide for your souls: meat for them, mansions for them, and portions for them (John 6:30–59; Lamentations 3:23).

Behold, I have spread the table of My gospel for you, with privileges and comforts that no man can take from you (Isaiah 25:6; Matthew 22:4; Proverbs 9:2). I have set before you the bread of life, the tree of life, and the water of life (John 6:48; Revelation 2:7 and 22:17). Eat, O friends; drink abundantly, O beloved!

But all this is but a taste of what I have prepared. You must have but smiles and hints now, and be content with glimpses and glances here. But you shall be shortly taken up into your Father's bosom and live forever in the fullest views of His glory (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

You shall have My fatherly probation. I will chasten you because I love you, so that you may not be condemned with the world (1 Corinthians 11:32; Proverbs 3:11–12).

My Son I give unto you in a marriage covenant forever (Isaiah 9:6; 2 Corinthians 11:2). I make Him over to you as wisdom for your illumination, righteousness for your justification, sanctification for curing your corruptions, and redemption for deliverance from your enemies (1 Corinthians 1:30). I bestow Him upon you with all His fullness, all His merits, and all His graces. He shall be yours in all His offices. I have anointed Him for a prophet. Are you ignorant? He shall teach you. He shall be eyesalve to you (Isaiah 49:6 and 42:16; Revela-

tion 3:18). I have sent Him to preach the gospel to the poor and to recover sight for the blind, to set at liberty those who are bruised (Luke 4:18). I have established Him by oath as a priest forever (Psalm 110:4). If you sin, He shall be your Advocate. He shall expiate your guilt and make the atonement (1 John 2:1–2; Zechariah 13:1). Have you any sacrifice, any service to offer? Bring it to Him, and you shall receive an answer of peace (1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:15).

Present your petitions to Me by Him, for He will I accept (John 16:23–24). Having such a High Priest over the house of God (Hebrews 10:19–22), you may come to Me with boldness, you may come and be welcome. I have set Him up as King upon My holy hill of Zion. He shall rule you and defend you (Isaiah 9:6–7). He is the King of righteousness, the King of peace; and such a King He shall be to you (Hebrews 7:2; Jeremiah 23:6; Ephesians 2:14). I will set up His standard for you (Isaiah 49:22). I will set up His throne in you (Psalm 110:2). He shall reign in righteousness and rule in judgment, and He shall be a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land (Isaiah 32:1–2). He shall hear your causes, judge your enemies (Isaiah 11:3–5), and reign till He has put all under His feet (Psalm 110:1; 1 Corinthians 15:25), yea, and under your feet; for they shall be as ashes under you, and you shall tread them, said the Lord of hosts (Malachi 4:3). Yea, I will undo those who afflict you, and all those who despised you shall bow themselves down at the soles of your feet (Isaiah 60:14; Zephaniah 3:19). And you shall go forth and behold the carcasses of the men who have trespassed against Me, for their worm shall not die, neither

shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh (Isaiah 66:24).

My Spirit I give unto you as your Counselor and Comforter (John 16:7; Romans 8:14). He shall be a constant inmate with you, and shall dwell in you and abide with you forever (Ezekiel 36:27; John 14:16–17).

I consecrate you as temples to His holiness (1 Corinthians 3:16–17 and 6:19). He shall be your guide. He shall lead you into all truth (Galatians 5:18; John 16:13). He shall be your Advocate to indite your prayers and make intercession for you; and He shall fill your mouths with the arguments that He knows will prevail with Me (Romans 8:26–27). He shall be oil to your wheels, strength to your ankles, wine to your hearts, marrow to your bones, and wind to your sails. He shall witness your adoption (Romans 8:16). He shall seal you up to the day of redemption, and be to you the earnest of your inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession (Ephesians 4:30; 1:13–14; 2 Corinthians 1:22).

And as I give you Myself, so much more all things with Myself (Romans 8:32): earth and heaven, life and death, things present and things to come (1 Corinthians 3:22).

Things present are yours. Lo, I give you Caleb's blessing, the upper springs and the nether springs. I will bless you with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).

To you pertains the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the service of God, and the promises (Romans 9:4). To you I will give the white stone and the new name (Revelation 2:17), access into My presence (Ephesians 3:12), the acceptance of your persons

(Ephesians 1:6), and audience to your prayers (1 John 5:14–15).

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you (John 14:27). I will undertake for your perseverance, keep you to the end, and will then crown My own gift with eternal life (Jeremiah 32:40; John 10:28–29; 1 Peter 1:5; Philippians 1:6). I have made you heirs of God and coheirs with your Lord Jesus Christ; and you shall inherit all things (Romans 8:17; Revelation 21:7).

I have granted you My angels as your guardians. The courtiers of heaven shall attend upon you; they shall be all ministering spirits for your good (Hebrews 1:14). Behold, I have given them charge over you, upon their fidelity to look after you, and, as tender nurses, to bear you in their arms and keep you from coming to any harm (Psalm 91:11–12). These shall be as careful shepherds to watch over My flock by night and to encamp round about My fold (Psalm 34:7).

My ministers I give as your guides (Ephesians 4:11). Paul, Apollos, Cephas, all are yours (1 Corinthians 3:22). I am always with them, and they shall be with you always, to the end of the world (Matthew 28:20; Ephesians 4:13). You shall have pastors after My own heart (Jeremiah 3:15 and 23:4). And this shall be My covenant with you: “ ‘My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put into your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor the mouth of your seed, nor of your seed’s seed,’ saith the Lord, ‘from henceforth and forever’ ”(Isaiah 59:21).

In short, all My officers shall be for profiting and perfecting you (Ephesians 4:12). All My ordinances shall be for edifying and saving you (Acts 10:33; Romans 1:16). The very severities of My house, admoni-

tions and censures, and the whole discipline of My family, shall be for preventing your infection, curing your corruption, and procuring your salvation (1 Corinthians 5:5–7; Matthew 18:15).

My Word I have ordained for converting your soul, enlightening your eyes, rejoicing your hearts, cautioning you of danger, cleansing your defilements, and conforming you to My image (Psalm 19:7–9; Ephesians 5:26; 2 Corinthians 3:18). To you I commit the oracles of God (Romans 3:2). Here you shall be furnished against temptations (Matthew 4:4, 7; Ephesians 6:17); hence you shall be comforted under distresses and afflictions (Psalm 119:92–93). Here you shall find My whole counsel (Acts 20:27). This shall instruct you in your way, correct you in your wanderings, direct you into the truths to be believed, and detect to you the errors to be rejected (2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105).

My sacraments I give you as the pledges of My love. You shall freely claim them; they are children's bread. Lo! I have given them as seals to certify all that I have here promised you (Romans 4:11); and when these sacred signs are delivered unto you, then know and remember and consider in your hearts that I therein pledge you My troth, set to My hand, and thereby ratify and confirm every article of these indentures, and do actually deliver into your own hands this glorious charter, with all its immunities and privileges as your own forever (1 Corinthians 11:25; Genesis 17:10).

And since I have sown to you so largely in spiritual blessings, shall you not much more reap the temporal? Do not be of a doubtful mind; all these things shall be added unto you (Luke 12:29–31). My creatures I grant for your servants and supplies (Psalm 8:3–9). Heaven

and earth shall minister to you. All the stars in their courses shall serve you, and, if need be, shall fight for you (Judges 5:20). I will make My covenant for you with the beasts of the field and with the fowls of heaven; and you shall be in league with the stones of the field, and all shall be at peace with you (Job 5:23; Hosea 2:18). I will undertake for all your necessities. Do I feed the fowls and clothe the grass, and do you think I will neglect My children (Matthew 6:25–34)? I hear the young ravens when they cry, and shall I not much more fulfill the desires of those who fear Me (Psalm 145:19 and 147:9)? Fear not, you shall surely lack no good thing (Psalm 34:10); and you would not desire riches, pleasures, or preferment to your harm. I will give meat to those who fear Me. I will be ever mindful of My covenant (Psalm 111:5).

My providences shall cooperate for your good (Romans 8:28). The cross winds shall blow you sooner and more swiftly to your harbor. You shall be preferred when you seem most debased, and be the greatest gainers when you seem to be the deepest losers. I will most effectually promote your good when you seem most to deny it (2 Corinthians 4:17; Mark 10:29–30; Philippians 1:29). Things to come are yours: the perfecting of your souls, the redemption of your bodies, and the consummation of your bliss.

When you have glorified Me for awhile on earth, and finished the work I have given you to do, you shall be caught up into paradise and rest from your labors, and your works shall follow you (Revelation 14:13; Luke 23:43). I will send My own lifeguard to bring home your departing souls (Luke 16:22), and will receive you among the spirits of just men made perfect (Hebrews

12:23). And you shall look back upon Pharaoh and all his host, and see your enemies dead upon the shore. Then shall be your redemption from all your afflictions, and all your corruptions (Luke 21:28; Ephesians 4:30). The thorn in the flesh shall be pulled out and the hour of temptation shall be over, and the tempter out of work forever.

The sweat shall be wiped off your brows, the day of cooling and refreshing shall come, and you shall sit down forever under My shadow (Acts 3:19; Hebrews 4:9). For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and lead you to the living fountains of water (Revelation 7:17).

The tears shall be wiped away from your eyes, and there shall be no more sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away, and, behold, I make all things new (Revelation 21:4-5). I will change Marah into Naomi, the cup of sorrow into the cup of salvation; and the bread and water of affliction I will change into the wine of eternal consolation (John 16:20-22; Luke 6:21). You shall take down your harps from the willows, and I will turn your tears into pearls and your penitential psalms into songs of deliverance. You shall change your Ichabods into hosannas, and your ejaculations of sorrow into hallelujahs of joy (Revelation 19:1, 4, 6).

The cross shall be taken off your backs, and you shall come out of your great tribulations and wash your robes, making them white in the blood of the Lamb; and you shall be before the throne of God, and serve Him night and day in His temple. He who sits on the throne shall dwell among you, and you shall hunger and thirst no more, neither shall the sun light upon

you, nor any heat (Revelation 7:14–16).

The load shall be taken from your consciences. Sins and doubts shall no more defile or distress you (Revelation 22:17; Hebrews 12:23). I will make an end of sin, and will knock off the fetters of your corruptions. And then you shall be a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.

Thus shall you be brought to the King all glorious in raiment of needlework and clothing of gold; with gladness and rejoicing shall you be brought, and enter into the King's palace (Psalm 45:9, 13–15). So shall the beloved of the Lord dwell safely by Him, and you shall stand continually before Him, beholding the beauty of the Lord and hearing His wisdom (1 Corinthians 13:12). Then will I open in you an everlasting spring of joy, and you shall break forth into singing. You shall never cease nor rest, day or night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy" (Revelation 4:8; Psalm 16:11).

Thus shall the grand enemy expire with your breath, and the body of death be put off with your dying body. The day of your death shall be the birthday of your glories (Philippians 1:23; Luke 23:43).

Have faith in God (Mark 11:22). Wait but a little, and sorrow shall cease and sin be no more. And then a little longer and death shall be no more (Revelation 20:14 and 21:4). Your last enemy shall be destroyed and your victory completed. Yet a little while and He who shall come will come, and you also shall appear with Him in glory (Hebrews 10:37; Colossians 3:4). This same Jesus, who was taken from you into heaven, shall so come as He went up into heaven (Acts 1:11); and, when He comes, He will receive you to Himself, that where He is

there you may be also (John 14:3). Behold His sign: He comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and every eye shall see Him, and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of Him (Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:30); but you shall lift up your heads because the day of your redemption draws nigh (Luke 21:28). Then He shall sound His trumpet (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16), and make you hear His voice in your dust (John 5:28), and shall send His mighty angels to gather you from the four winds of heaven (Matthew 24:31), who shall carry you in the triumphant chariot of the clouds to meet your Lord. And you shall be prepared for Him, and presented to Him, as a bride adorned for her husband (Revelation 2:2). And as you have borne the image of the earthly, so you shall bear the image of the heavenly; and you shall be fully conformed both in body and spirit to your glorious Head (Philippians 3:21; Hebrews 12:2-3). Then shall He confess you before His angels (Revelation 3:5), and you shall receive your open absolution before all flesh, and be owned, approved, and applauded in the public audience of the general assembly (Matthew 10:32 and 25:32-35). And you shall be, with all royal solemnities, espoused unto the King of glory, in the presence of all His shining courtiers (Revelation 19:7-8; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Matthew 25:31), to the envy, gnashing, and terror of your adversaries (Luke 13:28).

So shall your Lord with His own hand crown you (Revelation 2:10), and set you on thrones (Revelation 3:21; Matthew 19:28); and you shall judge men and angels (1 Corinthians 6:2-3), and you shall have power over the nations (Revelation 2:26-27), and you shall set your feet upon the necks of your enemies (Psalm 49:14).

Lo, I have set the very day for your installment (Acts 17:31). I have provided your crowns (2 Timothy 4:8), and have prepared the kingdom (Matthew 25:34). Why do you doubt, O ye of little faith? These are the true sayings of your God (Revelation 19:9). Are you sure that you are now on earth? So surely shall you be shortly with Me in heaven. Are you sure that you shall die? So surely shall you rise again in glory. Lo, I have said it, and who shall reverse it? You shall see Me face to face, be with Me where I am, and behold My glory (1 Corinthians 13:12; John 17:24). For I will be glorified in My saints, and admired by all those who believe (2 Thessalonians 1:10); and all flesh shall know that I have loved you (Revelation 3:9). For I will make you the examples of My grace (Ephesians 1:5–6 and 2:7), in whom the whole world shall see how unutterably the Almighty God can advance the poor worm's meat and dust of the ground. And the despisers shall behold and wonder and perish (Acts 13:41), for they shall be witnesses to the riches of My magnificence, and the exceeding greatness of My power (Luke 16:23). They shall go away into everlasting punishment, but you into life eternal (Matthew 25:46).

For no sooner shall their doom be past but the bench shall rise (Matthew 25:41, 46), and the Judge shall return with all His glorious train; with sound of trumpet and incredible shouts He shall ascend, and shall lead you to your Father's house (Psalm 45:14–15; Matthew 25:23; John 14:2; 2 Corinthians 5:1). Then shall the triumphal arches lift up their heads, and the everlasting gates shall open; the heavens shall receive you all, and so shall you ever be with the Lord (John 12:26; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

And now I will rejoice over you with singing, and you will rest in My love. Heaven shall ring with joys and acclamations, because I have received you safe and sound (Luke 15:20–27). And in that day you shall know that I am a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Me (Hebrews 11:6), and that I recorded your words (Malachi 3:16), bottled your tears, watched your wanderings (Psalm 56:8), and kept an account, even to a cup of cold water, of whatever you said or did for My name (Matthew 10:42). You shall surely find that nothing is lost (1 Corinthians 15:58), but you shall have full measure, pressed down and running over, thousands of years in paradise for the least good thought, and thousands and thousands more for the least good word. And then the reckoning shall begin again, till all arithmetic is non-plussed. For you shall be swallowed up in a blessed eternity; the doors of heaven shall be shut upon you, and there shall be no more going out (Daniel 12:2–3; Revelation 3:12; Luke 16:26).

The glorious choir of My holy angels, the goodly fellowship of My blessed prophets, the happy society of triumphant apostles, the royal hosts of victorious martyrs—these shall be your companions forever (Matthew 8:11–12; Hebrews 12:22–23). And you shall come in white robes, with palms in your hands, everyone having the harps of God and golden vials full of odors, and shall cast your crowns before Me, and strike in with the multitude of the heavenly hosts, glorifying God and saying, “Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth (Revelation 7:9–12 and 19:5–6). Blessing, honor, glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever” (Revelation 5:13).

In short, I will make you equal to the angels of God, and you shall be the everlasting trumpets of My praise (Revelation 7:10–12, 15). You shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of My house; and I will make your drink of the rivers of My pleasures (Psalm 36:8). You shall be an eternal excellency (Isaiah 60:15); and, if God can die and eternity run out, then, and not else, shall your joys expire. For you shall see Me as I am (1 John 3:12), and know Me as you are known (1 Corinthians 13:12); you shall behold My face in righteousness, and be satisfied with My likeness (Psalm 17:15). And you shall be the vessels of My glory, whose blessed use shall be to receive the overflowings of My goodness, and to have My infinite love and glory poured out into you to the brim, running over forevermore (Romans 9:23; 2 Timothy 2:20; Revelation 22:1).

And blessed is he who has believed, for there shall be a performance of the things that have been told him (Luke 1:45). The Lord has spoken it. You shall see My face, and My name shall be written on your foreheads. You shall no longer need the sun nor the moon, for the Lord God shall give you light, and you shall reign forever and ever (Revelation 22:3–5).

And as I give Myself to you as your God, and all things with Myself, so I take you for My covenant people (Hebrews 8:10; Isaiah 43:1). And you shall be Mine in the day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare you as a man spares his own son who serves him (Malachi 3:17). The Lord shall declare, “Surely they are My children” (Psalm 87:6).

I do not only require you to be Mine, if you would have Me to be for you, but I promise to *make* you Mine (Leviticus 20:26; Ezekiel 36:28), and to work in you the

conditions which I require of you. I will circumcise your hearts to love Me (Deuteronomy 30:6). I will take the heart of stone out of you (Ezekiel 36:26), and My laws I will write within you (Jeremiah 31:33).

Yet you must know that I will be sought for all these things (Ezekiel 36:37). And if ever you expect to partake of these mercies, I charge you to lie at the pool, wait for My Spirit, and be diligent in the use of the means (Proverbs 2:3–5 and 8:34; Luke 11:13).

I am content to abate the rigor of the old terms (Romans 4:6). I shall not insist upon satisfaction (Luke 7:42). I have received a ransom, and only expect your acceptance (Revelation 22:17; 1 Timothy 2:6). I shall not insist upon perfection (1 John 1:8–9). Walk before Me and be upright, and sincerity shall carry the crown (Proverbs 11:20; Genesis 17:1; Psalm 97:11). Yea, both the faith and obedience that I require of you are My own gifts (Ephesians 2:8).

I require you to accept My Son by believing; but I will give you a hand to take Him (Philippians 1:29; John 6:65), and to submit to and obey Him. But I must and will guide your hand to write after Him, and cause you to walk in My statutes (Ezekiel 36:27). I will take you by the arms, and teach you to go (Hosea 11:3–4). I will order your steps (Psalm 37:23, 31). Yea, those things I will accept from you as the conditions of life which, viewed in the strictness of My justice, would deserve eternal death (Ephesians 3:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:10; Hebrews 5:5, 9; Ecclesiastes 7:20). Grace! Grace!

The Voice of the Redeemed

Amen, hallelujah! Be it to Thy servants according to Thy Word. But who are we, and what is our Father's house that Thou hast brought us here? And now, O Lord God, what shall Thy servants say unto Thee? For we are silenced with wonder and must sit down in astonishment; for we cannot utter the least tittle of Thy praises. What does the height of this strange love mean? And why is this unto us, that the Lord of heaven and earth should condescend to enter into covenant with His dust, and take into His bosom the viperous brook, that has so often spit their venom in His face?

We are not worthy to be as the handmaids, to wash the feet of the servants of our Lord. How much less worthy are we to be Thy sons and heirs, and to be made partakers of all those blessed liberties and privileges which Thou hast settled upon us? But, for Thy goodness' sake, and according to Thine own heart, Thou hast done all these great things. Even so, Father, because it seemed good in Thy sight.

Wherefore Thou art great, O God, for there is none like Thee, neither is there any God besides Thee. And what nation on earth is like Thy people, whom God went to redeem for a people to Himself, and to make Him a name, and to do for them great and terrible things? For Thou hast confirmed them to Thyself to be a people unto Thee forever, and Thou, Lord, have become their God (2 Samuel 7:18) to the end.

Wonder, O heavens, and be moved, O earth, at this great thing (Revelation 21:4)! For, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them; and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be

with them, and shall be their God. Be astonished and ravished with wonder, for the infinite breach is made up. The offender is received; God and man are reconciled; a covenant of peace is entered; and heaven and earth are agreed upon the terms, and have struck their hands and sealed the indentures. Oh, happy conclusion! Oh, blessed conjunction! Shall the stars dwell with the dust, or the wide, distant poles be brought to mutual embraces?

But here the distance of the terms is infinitely greater. Rejoice, O angels! Shout, O seraphim! Oh, all you friends of the Bridegroom, prepare a wedding song; be ready with the marriage song. Lo, here is the wonder of wonders: Jehovah has betrothed Himself forever to His hopeless captives, owns the marriage before all the world, and has become one with us and we with Him. He has bequeathed to us the precious things of heaven above, and the precious things of the earth beneath, with the fullness thereof, and has kept nothing back from us.

And now, O Lord, Thou art that God, and Thy words are true. Thou hast promised this goodness unto Thy servants, and hath left us nothing to ask at Thy hands but what Thou hast already freely granted. All we ask is this: the Word which Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servants, establish it forever; do as Thou hast said, and let Thy name be magnified forever, saying, "The Lord of Hosts, He is the God of Israel." Amen, and hallelujah.

Chapter 18

A Soliloquy, Representing the Believer's Triumph in God's Covenant, and the Various Conflicts and Glorious Conquests of Faith Over Unbelief

Yea, has God said, "I will be a God unto thee"? Is it true indeed? Will the Lord be mine? Will He lay aside the controversy and conclude a peace? Will He receive the rebel to mercy, and open His doors to His prodigal? I will surely go to my Father. I will take my words and bow myself down before His footstool and say, "O Lord, I have heard Thy words, and do here lay hold on Thy covenant" (Isaiah 56:4). I accept the kindness of God, and will venture myself upon Thy fidelity, and trust my whole happiness here and hereafter upon Thy promises."

Farewell, deceitful world; get under my feet. I have feared your vain threats for too long; for too long have I been deluded with your flattering promises. Can you either promise or deny me such things as God has covenanted to me? I know you cannot, and therefore I renounce you forever from being the object of my faith or fear. No longer will I lean on this rotten reed; no longer will I trust this broken idol. Away, Satan, with your tempting baits. Vainly do you dress the harlot in her pain and bravery; vainly you tell me, "All this will I give you" (Matthew 4:8-9). Can you show me such a crown, such a kingdom as God has promised to give

me, or that which will balance the loss of an infinite God, who here gives Himself unto me? Away, deceitful lusts and pleasures! I have enough in Christ and His promise to give my soul full content; these I have lodged in my heart, and there is no longer room for such guests as you. You shall never again have quiet entertainment within these doors.

Thou God of truth, I here take Thee at Thy word. Thou requirest but my acceptance and consent, and here Thou hast it. Good is the word of the Lord which He has spoken; and as my Lord hath said, so will Thy servant do. My soul catches hold of Thy promises. These I have taken as my heritage forever. Let others carry the preferments and possessions of this world; it shall be enough for me to be an heir of Thy promises.

O happy soul, how rich you are! What a booty you have gotten! It is all my own. I have the promises of this life, and of that which is to come (1 Timothy 4:8). Oh, what more could I wish for? How full a charter is here! Now my doubting soul may boldly and believingly say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God"! What need is there for any further witness? We have heard His words. He has sworn by His holiness that His decree may not be changed, and has signed it with His own signet.

Rejoice, O heavens; strike up, you celestial choirs. Help heaven and earth. Sing unto the Lord, O you saints of His. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Oh, had I the tongues of men and angels, all would be too little for my single turn. Had I as many tongues as hairs, the sum of them would not be sufficient to utter my Creator's praise.

My Beloved is mine, and I am His. The grant is clear and my claim is firm. Who dares deny it when God

Himself owns it? Is it a hard adventure to speak after Christ Himself? Why, this is the message that He has sent me: "I ascend to My Father, and your Father; My God, and your God" (John 20:17). He has put words into my mouth, and bid me say, "Our Father."

I believe, Lord, help my unbelief. O my God and my Father, I accept Thee with all humble thankfulness, and am bold to take hold of Thee. O my King and my God, I subject my soul and all its powers to Thee. O my Glory, in Thee I will boast all the day. O my Rock on Thee will I build all my confidence and my hopes. O staff of my life and strength of my heart, the life of my joys and the joy of my life, I will sit and sing under Thy shadow, and will glory in Thy holy name.

O my soul, arise and take possession. Inherit your blessedness and cast up your riches. Yours is the kingdom, yours is the glory, and yours is the victory. The whole Trinity is yours. All the persons in the Godhead, all the attributes in the Godhead are yours. And, behold, here is the evidence, and these are the writings by which all is made sure to you forever.

And now, return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you (Psalm 116:7). Say if your lines have not fallen to you in a pleasant place, and if this is not a goodly heritage (Psalm 16:6)! Oh, blasphemous discontent! How absurd and unreasonable an evil you are, whom all the fullness of the Godhead cannot satisfy because you are denied some petty comfort or crossed in your vain expectations from the world! O my unthankful soul, shall not a Trinity make you content? Shall not an all-sufficiency suffice you? Silence, you murmuring thoughts, forever. I have enough, I abound, and I am full. Infinity and eternity

are mine, and what more can I ask?

But I think I feel some secret damp upon my joy. And when I would soar aloft and triumph in the riches of my portion, a secret diffidence plucks me back, and unbelief whispers in my ear, "Surely this is too good to be true!"

But who are you to dispute against God? The Lord has spoken, and shall I not believe Him? Will He be angry if I give my assent, and speak it confidently upon the credit of His words?

O my Lord, suffer me to spread the writing before Thee. Hast Thou not said, "Thy Maker is thy husband" (Isaiah 54:5)? "I will betroth thee unto Me" (Hosea 2:19)? "Thou shalt call Me, My Father" (Jeremiah 3:19)? I pray Thee, O Lord, was not this Thy saying, "I am God, even thy God" (Psalm 50:7)? "I will be a Father unto you, and ye My sons and daughters" (2 Corinthians 6:18)? Why, then, should I doubt? Is not the truth of the living God sure footing for my faith?

Silence, then, O quarreling unbelief. I know in whom I have believed. Not in friends, though numerous and potent; for they are men and not God (Isaiah 31:3). Not in riches, for they make themselves wings (Proverbs 23:5). Not in princes, for their breath is in their nostrils (Psalm 146:3-4). But let God be true and every man a liar. In God I have put my trust; in His sure Word I hope. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of this. I have not built upon the sands of mortality. Let the rain descend, the floods come, and the wind blow; nevertheless the sure foundation of God stands. His everlasting counsel and everlasting covenant are my stay. I am built upon His promises, and let hell and earth do their worst to blow up this founda-

tion (Matthew 7:25; 2 Timothy 2:19).

Now shall my faith triumph, my heart be glad, and my glory rejoice. I will shout with the exulting multitude. The Lord is God (1 Kings 18:39), and He is not ashamed to be called my God (Hebrews 11:16). He is not ashamed of my rags or poverty, of my parentage or pedigree; and since His infinite condescension will own me, will He take it ill if I own Him? Though I have nothing of my own to glory in (unless I should glory in my shame), yet I will glory in the Lord, and bless myself in Him.

For who is like the God of Jeshurun (Deuteronomy 33:26)? Bring forth your gods, O ye nations. Lift up your eyes and behold who has created all these things. Can any do for their favorites as the Lord can? Or if He is angry, who is the god who can deliver you out of His hands? Will you set Dagon before the ark? Or shall Mammon contend with the Holy One? O ambitious Haman, where now is your idol honor? O rich glutton, who made a god of pleasure, where now is the god whom you have served? O sensual worldling, who knew not where nor how to bestow your goods: do riches profit you? Could Mammon save you? Deceived souls! Go now to the gods that you have chosen. Alas, they cannot ever administer even a drop of water to cool your tongues.

But the portion of Jacob is not like them (Jeremiah 10:16). From everlasting to everlasting He is God (Psalm 90:2). His power is my confidence; His goodness is my maintenance; His truth is my shield and my buckler.

But my clamorous unbelief has many wiles, and freshly assaults me with the difficulty of the things

promised, laboring to non-plus and confound me with their amazing greatness.

But why should I stagger at the promise through unbelief, robbing at once my Master of His glory and my soul of her comfort? It is my great sin to doubt and dispute, and yet shall I be afraid to believe? O my soul, it is the highest honor you can put upon your Lord to believe against difficulties, and to look for and reckon upon great and wonderful things, passing all created power and human faith.

Let not the greatness, nor the strangeness of the benefits bequeathed unto you, put you to a standstill. It is with God that you have to deal, and therefore you must not look for little things. That would be to darken the glory of His munificence, and the infiniteness of His power and goodness. Do you not know that it is His design to make His name glorious, and to make you know that He is able to do for you above all you can ask or think? Surely they cannot be any small or ordinary things that shall be done for you, when the Lord shall show in you what God can do, and shall carry you in triumph before the world, and make proclamation before you: "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the Lord delights to honor." What difference does it make that you cannot comprehend these things, if they exceed all your apprehensions and conceptions? This is a good argument for your faith; for this is that which the Lord has said, that it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive what things He has prepared for those who love Him. Now if you could conceive and comprehend them, how would His word be made good? It is enough for you that the Lord has spoken it. Is not the word nigh unto you? Has God not said, "I will receive

you"? You shall be kings and priests unto God, and shall inherit all things; you shall sit on thrones and judge angels, and be forever with the Lord. And shall I dare say "no" to Him? Unreasonable belief! What? Never satisfied? Still contradicting and blaspheming? False whisperer! No more of your tales. I believe God that it shall be as He has told me (Acts 27:25).

And now, thanks be to God, who always causes us to triumph in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14). Therefore, "my lips shall praise Thee, and my soul which Thou hast redeemed" (Psalm 71:23). "For Thou hast made me glad through Thy Word, and I will triumph in the works of Thy hands" (Psalm 92:4). "I will praise the Lord whilst I live. I will sing praises to my God whilst I have any being" (Psalm 104:33).

O my soul, if you could wear out your fingers upon the harp, and wear your tongue to the roots, you could never sufficiently praise your Redeemer.

O my enemies! Where now is your confidence, and where is the armor in which you have trusted? I will set Christ alone against your multitudes, and all the powers, malice, and policy with which they are armed. The field is already won, and the Captain of our salvation has returned, with the spoils of His enemies, having made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in His cross (Colossians 2:15). And "thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Of whom, then, should I be afraid? Behold, He is near who justifies me; who shall plead against me?

O you powers of hell! You are but chained captives, and we have a sure word that the gates of hell shall not prevail against us. Though the world is in arms against

us, and the devil at the head of them as their champion, yet who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God (1 Samuel 17:45–47)? Behold, I have come out to you as David did against Goliath: not with sword and spear, but in the name of the Lord of hosts, in whose strength I am more than a conqueror.

O grave, where is now your victory? Christ has risen, and has broken up your prison and rolled away the stone, so that all your prisoners have escaped. Rejoice not against me, O my enemy; though I fall, I shall rise again; though I lie in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me (Micah 7:8). Do not enlarge your desires, O Tophet, but shut up your flaming mouth; for there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

O deceitful world, you are already overcome (John 16:33), and the conquered enemy has become my servant (1 Corinthians 3:22). I am fed now with the honey taken out of the carcass of the slain lion. I do not fear your threats, nor the enchantments of your siren-songs, for I am kept by the power of God through a victorious faith unto salvation (1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 5:4).

O my sins, you are already buried, never to have any resurrections; and the remembrance of you shall be no more (Hebrews 8:12). I see my sins nailed to the cross; their dominion is taken away, though their lives are prolonged for yet a little season. Awake, therefore, O my glory; awake, psalter and harp, and meet the Deliverer with triumph, for His right hand and His holy arm have gotten us the victory, and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Yet I think my unworthiness flies in my face, and I

hear my caviling unbelief thus upbraiding me and crying out, "O proud presumption! That you who are conscious of your great unworthiness should pretend to have a claim to God and glory! Shall daring dust think to share with the Almighty, and say of His endless perfections, 'They are my right'? Bold sinner, stand off, and tremble at your presumptuous arrogance."

O my God, I lay my hand upon my mouth. I confess to the charge of my unworthiness. My guilt and shame are such as I cannot recover, but Thou canst and dost. Thou hast cast a mantle upon my nakedness, and hast promised that my transgressions shall not be mentioned, and that Thou wilt multiply pardons. And shall I take up what Thou hast buried, and then frighten myself with the ghosts that infidelity has raised? Is it presumption to take the pardon that Thou dost offer, or to receive and claim Thee as mine, when that is what Thou hast promised? I would not dared to have approached Thee but upon Thy call, nor have pretended to have a title but upon Thy grant. I would have thought it diabolical pride to have pleaded an interest in Thee, and claimed kindred to Thee, but that Thou hast shown me the way.

And you, my soul, are you ignorant of God's great design? Do you not know that it is His purpose to glorify free grace? And how should grace appear to be grace indeed were there any worthiness in the subject? Your unworthiness is but a foil to set off the beauty and riches of free grace and mercy.

But I cannot shake off this briar. Alas, what a caviling sophister unbelief is! And it will never be adequately answered. Now it is ready to tell me, "What if the promise is a sure foundation? Yet you may not build

upon another man's ground. What if the grace and mercies of God are infinite? Yet dogs may not catch at the children's bread. You have neither right nor title to the promise; therefore, cease your pretended claim!"

But, O my soul, why should you doubt? Whose image and superscription is this? Do you not bear upon you the marks of the Lord Jesus? I have given up my name to Him, and have taken hold of His covenant (Isaiah 56:4), and therefore may claim an interest.

I have accepted the matter. I have closed with the Mediator and have subscribed to the conditions of the covenant, and therefore cannot question but that it is mine.

The Lord has offered to be my God, and I have taken hold of His offer. I have taken Him as God and have given Him the supremacy. O my soul, look round about you, in heaven and earth; is there any you esteem or value in comparison to God (Psalm 73:25–26)? Is there any you love like Him, or take the contentment or felicity in that you do in Him (Philippians 3:8)? Are not your chief desires and designs to glorify and enjoy Him (Philippians 1:20)? You cannot deny but that it is truly so. I am sure that nothing but God will content me. I am never so well in all the world as when I am in His company (Psalm 26:8, 84:1–3, and 27:4). My soul seeks Him above all, and rests in Him alone as my satisfactory portion (Psalm 119:57). He offers to take me as one of His people, and I have resigned myself accordingly to Him as His. I have put both my inward and outward man under His government, have given up all to His disposal, and am resolved to be content with Him as my all-sufficient happiness (Psalm 119:38; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Romans 6:19; Luke 14:33; Psalm 16:5–6; John 1:12).

Besides, I have taken Him in His own way through Christ, whom He has tendered to me as my Head and Husband, and I have accordingly, solemnly, and deliberately taken Him. O my soul, do you not know of your frequent debates? Have you not put Christ and all the world into the balance? Have you not counted the cost, reckoned upon the cross, willingly put your neck under Christ's yoke, ventured your salvation upon Christ alone, and trusted Him with all your happiness and all your hopes? Have you not resolved over and over to take Him with what comes, and that He shall be enough, though you suffer the loss of all things? You cannot but know that these have been the transactions between Christ and yourself; and therefore He is yours, with all the promises. Yea and amen to you through Him.

And, as for the terms of the covenant, I love and like them. My soul embraces them, neither do I desire to be saved in any other way than by repentance towards God, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and sincere obedience to His gospel.

I am willing to go out of my flesh, and to look unto Jesus for righteousness and strength, trusting my salvation wholly on this foundation. I am content to deal upon trust, and venture all in hopes of what is to come, and to tarry till the next world for my preferment. I am willing to wait till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and have laid up my happiness on the other side of the grave.

And though my sins are many, yet I would belie my own knowledge if I should say that they were not my constant trouble and burden, and the enemies against which I daily watch, and with whom my soul has no peace. My own heart knows that I hate them, desire and

endeavor their utter destruction, do resolve against them all, and am willing to use all God's means that I know of to mortify them. It is too true that I often fail and fall; yet my conscience bears me witness that I confess and bewail it, and do not ordinarily and deliberately allow myself in any sin whatsoever against my knowledge. And though my obedience is miserably lame, yet, O Lord, Thou knowest that I have respect unto all Thy commandments, and do strive to come up to what Thou requirest. The Holy Ghost is my witness, and my conscience is also, that I seek first the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, and that it is my chief care to please God and refrain from sin. Speak, O my soul, is not holiness your design? Do you not thirst for it and follow after it? Do you not, in your settled choice, prefer the holy ways of God before all the pleasures and delights of sin? You know it is so, and therefore let there be no more disputing. You have sincerely taken hold of God's covenant, and, without any controversy, it must be yours.

O my God, I see that Thou hast been at work with my soul. I find the prints and see the footsteps. Surely this is the finger of God! I am Thy servant, O Lord; truly I am Thy servant, and my soul has said unto the Lord, "Thou art my Lord." It must be so. Wouldst Thou ever set Thy mark upon another's goods? Or shall God disown His own workmanship? My name is written in heaven. Thou hast written Thy name upon my heart, and therefore I cannot question but that Thou hast my name on Thy heart. I have chosen Thee, O Lord, as my happiness and heritage, and therefore I am sure that Thou hast chosen me; for I could not have loved Thee except Thou hadst loved me first. O my Lord, discern, I

pray Thee, whose are these, the signet, the bracelets, and the staff? I know that Thou wilt acknowledge them.

And now, blessed be God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, of His abundant mercy, hath begotten me again to a lively hope.

And you, my soul, believe and wait; look through the window, cry through the lattice, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. The vision is for an appointed time; wait for it. It will come in the end and will not tarry (Habakkuk 2:3). Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruits of the earth. You be patient also. He has long patience, and will you not have a little patience? He waits for the fruits of the earth, but you wait for the joys of heaven; he hopes upon mere probabilities, but you upon infallible certainties. He waits for a crop of corn, but you wait for a crown of glory. Were he sure that every corn would bear a crown, how plentifully he would sow; how joyfully he would wait! Why, such is the harvest. As sure as the summer's delights follow the winter's severities, as sure as the wished-for harvest follows the toilsome and costly seedtime, so sure shall your Lord return and bring your reward with Him. Therefore, my soul, love and long for the approaching jubilee. I will wait all the days of my appointed time until my change comes.

Oh, blessed state that my Lord has translated me into! Oh, happy change that He has made! I was a stranger, and He took me in and made me an heir. He transferred me from the dunghill to the throne; from a hewer of wood and drawer of water to attend His court, to know His counsels, and to do His will. I am happy that ever I was born to partake of this endless dignity.

O my Lord, it is no little thing that Thou hast given

me in hand. I have already come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant, and unto the blood of sprinkling. My heart revives as Jacob's did, when I behold the tokens which Thou hast sent me, the spirit of adoption and the pardon of my sins. My patent for heaven is the chain of Thy graces, the Son of Thy bosom, the new testament in His blood, and the letters of His love. My Lord said that He will love me and manifest Himself unto me, and that the Father will love me, and that both will come unto me and make their abode in me. But is it true, indeed? Will the Lord dwell on earth? Or, if He will, shall so foul a stable, so unclean a place as my heart has been, be the place that the Lord of life will take up His lodging and keep His court in? Will He indeed come with all His train of graces, and live and walk in me? How can these things be? But He has said it, and I do and will believe it.

Yet all this is but the earnest of what is to come. Oh, how great is Thy goodness, laid up for those who fear Thee! Yet a little and my warfare shall be accomplished, and the heavens must receive me till the time of the restitution of all things. It is but for a short term that I shall dwell in this flesh in an earthen tabernacle. My Lord has shown me that, where He is, there shall His servant be. Now the living is tied to the dead; and my soul is a stage of strife and a field of war. But it is a little moment and that which is perfect shall come: perfect holiness and perfect peace, eternal serenity and a serene eternity.

O my sins, I am going where you cannot come, where no unclean thing shall enter, nor anything that defiles. I think I see all my afflictions and temptations, all my infirmities and corruptions, falling off of me, as did Elijah's mantle at his translation

O my soul, do you not see the chariots and the horses of fire coming to take you away? Even if you are as poor as Lazarus (Luke 16:22), yet God will not disdain to send a party of angels to conduct you home. How can you doubt a ready reception, who has such a Friend in court who will lead you with boldness into His Father's presence? If there was joy in Pharaoh's court when it was said that Joseph's brethren had come (Genesis 45:16), surely it will be welcome news in heaven when it is told that Jesus' brethren have come.

My soul, do not fear to enter, though the Lord is clothed with terror and majesty; for your Redeemer will procure you favor and plead your rights. I am sure of being welcomed, for the Father Himself loves me (John 16:27). I have tasted and tried His love; and when I had played the wicked prodigal, yet He did not despise my rags, but fell on my neck, kissed me, and heaven itself rejoiced over me. Much more will He receive me gladly, and let out His loves upon me when presented to Him by His Son in His perfect likeness as a fit object for His everlasting delight. Fear not, O my soul, as if you were going to a strange place. Why, heaven is your country and your home. Will you doubt of permission or fear of being welcomed when it is your own home? Why, my soul, you were born from above; and here is your kindred and your Father's house; and therefore you shall surely be admitted. And then I shall see the glorious preparations of eternal love, and the blissful mansions

of the heavenly inhabitants.

Doubtless it will be so. These are not sick men's dreams or the hopes of children. The living God cannot deceive me, and may I not certainly promise myself what the Lord has promised me? I will sooner think that all my senses are deluded, and that what I see and feel and taste is but a fancy, than think that the living God will deceive me, or that His unchangeable covenant will fail. Now I am a son of God, but it does not yet appear what I shall be. But this I know: I shall be like Him, and see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).

I know it shall be so. Why, what security should I ask of God? He has given me all the assurance in the Word. And though the Word of God is enough, yet He, willing to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, I might have strong consolation (Hebrews 6:17). Oh, unreasonable unbelief! What! Shall not the oath of my God put an end to my strife?

O my God, I am satisfied; it is enough. Now I may be bold without presumption, and boast without pride. And no more will I call my duty arrogance, nor my faith a fancy.

O my soul, there is but a short life between you and glory, where holy angels and glorified saints shall be my associates, and love and praise my only employment. I think I already hear how the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy (Job 38:7). Oh, that I could come in for one! But it was said unto me that I should rest yet for a little season, but I shall stand in the lot at the end of the days (Daniel 12:13).

It is well, Lord, Thy Word is enough. Thy bond is as good as ready payment. The Holy Ghost tells me that life and glory abide me, and that whatever day I am loosed from the body, that same day I shall land in paradise. Amen, it is as I would have it.

But this is not all. When my body has slept a short nap in the dust, Christ will call out to it, "Come up here." Ah, true yokefellow, it will be hard parting, but a welcome meeting. I could not leave you but to live with Christ (Colossians 3:4). But He will raise you as a glorious temple, and when He shall appear, He will bring me with Himself in glory. And then I shall re-enter you as a royal mansion, wherein I shall abide with the Lord forever. For as we have served our Redeemer together, so we must be glorified together with Him. And when the Lord has married us both together again, then He will marry us both unto Himself. For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the last day over the earth. And though worms shall destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God—whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins are consumed within me.

My Lord has already told me how it shall be. He has set down the time, and shown me the robes of immortality and the crown of life that I must put on, and the throne of glory and the seat of judgment on which I must sit. He has told me the manner in which I shall be presented to Him and espoused by Him. He has told me where He will set me, what He will say to me, and how He will acknowledge my lowly services, and remember what I have forgotten (Matthew 25:25–37), how He will praise the works that I have been ashamed of, and reward me openly for what I have buried in secrecy

(Matthew 6:4), and not forget the poorest alms that I have given for His name. Then He will confess me before His Father and before the angels of God. "Thus saith the true and faithful Witness, and we know that His testimony is true."

Ah, my soul, see that you do not make God a liar (1 John 5:10).

O my God, I have believed Thy report, and look for all these things according to Thy promise. I know that Thou intendest me but for a very little while in this lower region. This world is but the house of my pilgrimage, and my soul is now but like a bird in the shell; but when the shell has been cracked, then shall she take wings like a dove, and soar aloft to Thee, and fly away and be at rest.

Yet I do not doubt Thy care for my despicable dust (John 6:39). I know that nothing will be lost. I do not know where they will lay me, but Thy wakeful eye observes, and will not be at a loss to seek at what door to knock, nor at what grave to call for me. I believe, and am sure, that I shall come as a glorious piece out of Thy hands, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and crowned with honor and glory. And when my absolution is read, and sentence has been passed upon the world, then I must be taken up to dwell with Thee.

Let not my Lord be angry that Thy dust and ashes speak thus unto Thee. Thou, Lord, hath raised my expectations, and hast made me to look for all these great things from Thee. In vain hast Thou written all these things unto me, if I do not believe them; and a distrustful diffidence would put a high dishonor upon Thy truth.

O Lord, it repents me; it repents me of my jealousies

and my doubtful thoughts about Thee. I know Thou lovest a humble confidence, and delightest in nothing more than to see Thy children trust Thee. I know the building of my hopes does not lie a hair's breadth over the foundation of Thy promises; yea, it is sure, my expectations are infinitely short of what I shall find.

O my God, my heart trusteth safely in Thee, and I here set to my seal that Thou art true (John 3:33). Christ is the cornerstone on which I build (Ephesians 2:20), and therefore my building will challenge the winds and floods.

And now, O Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in Thee (Psalm 39:7). O my Blessedness, let me enjoy Thee. O my Life, let me possess Thee. O desire of my eyes, let me see Thy face and hear Thy voice; for Thy voice is sweet and Thy countenance is comely. I ask but what Thou hast promised; for Thou hast told me that I shall see God, and Thou wilt speak to me mouth to mouth (Matthew 5:8), even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of God I shall behold.

So shall my knowledge be perfected (1 Corinthians 13:9–10), and I shall see the inaccessible light. My tender eye shall not water, nor my sight dazzle, but I shall with open face look steadfastly on the Sun of Righteousness and behold His glory. Then shall faith be turned into fruition and hope into possession, and love shall arise like the full moon in her brightness, and never wax nor wane again.

O Thou God of my hopes, I look for a new body and a new soul, for new heavens and a new earth, according to Thy promise, when my whole soul shall be wholly taken up with Thee, and all my affections strained to the highest pitch, and all the wheels of my raised pow-

ers set in most vigorous and perpetual motion towards Thee, still letting in and still laying out. And thus there shall be an everlasting communication of joy and glory from Thee, and of love and praise from me.

O my soul, you are rich indeed, and increased in goods. You have no reason to envy the glory or grandeur of the mightiest on earth; for their glory shall not descend after them. Like sheep they shall be laid in their graves, and death shall feed upon them; and there is an eternal end of all their pomp and excellency. But my kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; my robes shall never wear; my crown shall never totter; my throne shall never be vacant; my bread shall never decay; my garland shall never wither; my house shall never see mold; my wine shall never sour—but everlasting joy shall be upon my head, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away.

O my God, how happy Thou hast made me! It is better than I could have wished. Thou hast done all things well. Thou hast settled them forever. The whole earth cannot show any such heritage or tenure. The world can declare her possessions but for years, but she cannot make a good title for them. On the other hand, my inheritance is forever, and none can put me out of possession. The thing is established in heaven, and in the volume of the book it is written of me. My evidence cannot be lost; it is recorded in the court above, enrolled in the sacred leaves of the Word, and entered upon the book of my conscience—and herein I do and will rejoice.

Now, my soul, wipe your eyes, and go away with Hannah and be sad no more. What if my house is not so with God, as happy and as prosperous as I would

wish? What if they are increased who trouble me, and my temptations and afflictions are like the rolling billows, riding on one another's backs for haste? Yet my soul shall be as a rock unmoved, and sit down satisfied in the security and amplitude of my portion. For God has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; and herein is my salvation, and all my desire.

And now what remains, O Lord, but that I should spend the remainder of my days loving, praising, and admiring Thee? But wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, or bow myself to the Most High God? What shall I give Thee to express my thankfulness, though not to requite Thy bounty? Alas, my poor soul! Alas, you are so little! How narrow are your capacities! How disproportionate are your powers! Alas, that my voice can reach no higher a note! But shall I do nothing because I cannot do all?

Lord, I resign myself to Thee. With the poor widow, I cast my two mites, my soul and my body, into Thy treasury. All my powers shall love and serve Thee. All my members shall be weapons of righteousness for Thee. Here is my good will. Behold, my substance is Thy stock; my interest is for Thy service. I lay all at Thy feet. There Thou hast them; they are Thine. My children I enter as Thy servants. My possessions I resign as Thy right. I will call nothing mine but Thee. All that is mine is Thine. I can say, "My Lord and My God," and that is enough. I thankfully quit all claims to anything else. I will no longer say such things as, "My house is mine," or, "My estate is mine," for I myself am not my own. Yet it is infinitely better for me to be Thine than if I were my own. This is my happiness, that I can say, "My

own God, my own Father." And what a blessed exchange hast Thou made with me! To give me Thyself, who art an infinite sum, of myself, who is but an insignificant cipher.

And now, Lord, do Thou accept and own my claim. I am not worthy of anything of Thine, much less worthy of Thee. But since I have a deed to show, I bring Thy word in my hand and am bold to take possession. Dost Thou not know this hand? Wilt Thou not own this name? Wilt Thou not confirm Thine own grant? It would be infidelity to doubt it. I will not disparage the faithfulness of my Lord, nor be afraid to aver, and stand to what He has said and sworn. Hast Thou said that Thou art my God, and shall I fear that Thou art my enemy? Hast Thou told me that Thou art my Father, and shall I stand aloof, as if I were a stranger? I will believe.

Lord, silence my fears; and as Thou hast given me the claim and title of a child, so give me the confidence of a child. Let my heart be daily kept alive by Thy promises, and with this staff let me pass over Jordan. May these be my undivided companions and comforters. When I go, let them lead me; when I sleep, let them keep me; when I awake, let them talk with me. And do Thou keep these things forever upon the imaginations of the thoughts of the hearts of Thy people, and prepare their hearts unto Thee. And let the heart of Thy servant be the ark of Thy testament, wherein the sacred records of what has passed between Thee and my soul may forever be preserved. Amen.

Chapter 19

An Exhortation to Sinners

O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. You men of this world, you spirits that are in prison, held captive to iniquity, under the prince of this world; in a covenant with death, at an agreement with hell, without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope, without God in the world; who have said, "We will not have this man to rule over us; let us break His bonds asunder and cast His cords from us"; who are joined to idols, have chosen other gods, and are following after other lovers; who walk after the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience; having your conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and being still, as you were by nature, the children of wrath, in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.

O you sons of death, you children of the night and of darkness, hear and your souls shall live. To you also is the word of this salvation sent; even the strangers, and those who are afar off, who will lay hold on the covenant and choose the thing that pleases God, these also shall have a name in His house, even the glorious name of sons and daughters. The Lord has sent a word into Jacob, and it shall light upon Edom, Amalek, and

the uncircumcised Philistines, even as man of them as the Lord our God shall call (Acts 2:39).

Hearken, O people, you who are polluted in your blood, written on the earth, free among the dead; come in, let your covenant with death be made void, and your agreement with hell be disannulled, strike a league with the Almighty, and your names also shall be written among the living in Jerusalem.

Stand before the Lord; come, let us reason together.

Where are you? What is your portion and inheritance? You are cursed with a curse. Fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest, shall be the portion of your cup (Psalm 11:6). What are you seeking? Where are you traveling? After a few years of your vanity are over, where must your dwelling be? Who can dwell with the devouring fire? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings? Look before you, behold that smoking furnace, that burning lake, that bottomless pit which is gaping for you, and which, at your next step, may swallow you up. Escape for your lives. Why will you die? Turn and live.

Do you believe the resurrection from the dead, the judgment to come, and the invisible world. Is it to the spirit of a man as to the spirit of the beast? Does it perish with his carcass? Does a man die as a dog dies? Does a wise man die as a fool dies? Do all things fall equally to all, just and unjust, good and bad, after this life as well as in it?

Do you believe the Scriptures? Are they but a fable? If you hope that they are, are you sure that they are? Do you dare venture your souls upon it? While the saints venture on the truth, do you dare venture your souls on the falsehood of it? Do you dare stand forth and say, "If this Word is not a lie, let me be damned forever. I am

content that the everlasting worm shall gnaw at my heart, and that the infernal fire shall burn my flesh, bones, and soul forever and ever, if it does not prove at least to be a mere forgery and imposture”?

Do you believe the Scriptures to be true indeed? If so, what do they preach to you? Do they speak anything, if not this, that there is another life and death besides that which is within the ken of mortal eyes; that the other life and the other death are eternal; that upon your being found within or without the covenant of God hangs your eternal judgment, either for life or death; that while you are in a covenant with death and in a course of iniquity, you are outside the covenant of God and can have no benefit by it; that if you are under sin, you are out of covenant; if you are outside of covenant, you are outside of Christ, and if you are outside of Christ, you are under condemnation?

Are there any things which that Word which you profess to believe is true, and to stand as sure as heaven and earth; are there any things which this Word speaks more plainly than these things, and things like them? What? You believe that, and are yet secure in a state of sin! Aliens from God, enemies of all righteousness, and yet at peace! Are you resolved to sell eternity for time, life for death, and your soul for the pleasures of sin? Is this the choice you have made, and are you resolved to stand by it? “Let me have this world, my portion and my good things here, and then let me be damned in the next world. Let me sin here and suffer hereafter; let me laugh here and lament hereafter; let me flourish and prosper and live at ease, in honor and pleasure and at liberty here; and let my prison, my pain, my anguish, and my plagues be beneath. There let me be torn, let

me burn, let me roar, let me die, as long as I may be rich and be merry and rejoice for a while here. Let time be my heaven and eternity be my hell.”

Speak in earnest. Are these your choices? Or, that you may not be put to making a new choice, will you take it upon yourself to make a new gospel? And, dividing what God has joined together, will you join what He has divided? Will you write this for gospel: “Holiness and hell, sin and glory, Christ and the curse, the devil and the crown. Let the wicked go on in his way and the unrighteous man in his thoughts; let him run away from the Lord and he shall still find mercy; and from his God, and He will abundantly pardon. Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads unto death, and few there be that find it; but broad is the gate, and wide is the way, that leads to life, and the whole world is going in there. Blessed are the proud in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who laugh now; blessed are the froward, the merciless, the impatient in heart, the persecutors of righteousness; for great is there reward in heaven. Within heaven shall be the dogs, the swine, the whoremongers, the sorcerers, the drunkards, the ruffians, the blasphemers, the galleys, the idolaters, and whoever loves and makes a lie. And outside heaven shall be the lambs, the doves, the holy, the humble, the meek, the merciful, the upright in heart, the poor in spirit, the peacemakers, those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, and whoever loves truth and makes God their trust. These shall go into everlasting fire, but the ungodly shall go into life eternal”?

Are these the articles of your creed? Is this your gospel? If it is, oh! what is your heaven? If it is not, if

the old gospel must stand, oh, where are your souls! Are your souls lost, and are they not worth recovering? Why will you die? Turn and live! Oh, when shall it be?

As an ambassador for Christ, as one to whom the word of reconciliation has been committed, having hinted to you what is law, so in the name of the eternal God I publish to you the everlasting gospel.

The Lord God entered into a covenant of life with the first Adam, for himself and all mankind in him. This covenant was broken, whereby sin has entered, and death by sin, and all the world is now guilty before God, bound over to the vengeance of eternal fire, and under an utter impossibility of recovery. That God, by all that the covenant can do, has, out of His abundant grace, made a new covenant, on which whosoever shall lay hold, shall be delivered out of the state of death and wrath into a state of life and blessedness. What the law could not do, being weak through the flesh, God did, sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (Romans 8:3), and with Him this gracious grant, "that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). And this is the covenant which has been declared unto you.

This new covenant is a marriage covenant. "I will betroth thee unto Me forever, yea, I will betroth thee to Me in righteousness, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies" (Hosea 2:20). In it the Lord makes an offer, and invites you to accept a husband and a dowry. The husband is the King's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; and with Him comes the lost kingdom, and all that belongs to the kingdom of God for a dowry: liberty for the captives, the opening of the prison to those who are bound, riches for the poor, eyes to the blind, feet to the

lame, healing to the diseased, and life to the dead.

And whoever among you all who are persons under the law, held by the cords of your sins, whose souls are bound fast in fetters of iron, who are willing that your covenant with death be made void, and your agreement with hell be disannulled; you who will join yourselves to the Lord, and be brought within the bonds of this covenant, all the blessings of this covenant are made over, and stand sure to you.

The grant is made; the deed is drawn and sealed. The Lord has set His seal to it. Come in and seal the counter part; set your seal to it and the match is made. Christ, and with Him all things are yours, and you are His. Accept and live; refuse and die forever.

Come on, then, sinner; what do you say? Do you consent? Do you accept? Or, as Laban said to Rebekah, "Will you go with this man?" Let me espouse you to this one Husband; only let me first tell you that the matter is solemn and you must be serious. It is for life, and it is for eternity.

Consider, therefore, and let your heart, lying prostrate before the Almighty, come in and make answer to these demands, which from Him and in His great and dreadful name, I make unto you.

Will you have Jesus for your Husband? Understand before you answer. Taking Christ for your Husband implies intimate union, ingenuous subjection, and total dependence.

Taking Christ for your Husband implies intimate union, by choosing and accepting Him as your own, and resigning and giving yourself up to Him for His own, to live with Him in the dearest conjugal affection forever.

It implies ingenuous subjection, by a free and cheerful putting yourself under Him as the Lord whom you will obey and be subject to in all things. The wife must be subject to her husband, yet not as a slave by constraint, but freely and by consent.

It implies total dependence, holding Him as your Head, expecting nothing, owning nothing but what descends upon you from Him; depending on Him for all things: bearing your debts, discharging you from your bonds, and your whole provision for a livelihood and maintenance.

Consider, then; what do you say? Does your heart choose, accept, and resign itself up to Christ? Do you choose Him as a husband? You can choose Him as a refuge to hide you from danger; you can choose Him as a friend to help you in your need; but do you choose Him for your husband? Will you cleave to Him, love, honor, and obey Him? Do you understand His manner, the law of His house, His family order and discipline? Do you know His commands and expectations, how holy, how spiritual, how strict and self-denying, how humble and submissive He expects your whole carriage should be? Will you be at His bidding? Will you look unto Him, and lean upon Him for all you need? Shall all your desire be for Him, and your dependence on Him?

You are a bondman; who shall be your redemption? You are a malefactor; who shall be your satisfaction? You are a leper; where do you look for cleaning? You are a beggar; from where do you expect an inheritance? Will you lean upon your Beloved for all? Shall He be your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, and inheritance? Will you do Him the honor of

trusting Him for all this; to cast all your burdens, your care, your fears, your sins, your guilt, and your hopes upon Him? Can you say, "O my God, I have sinned, I have sinned. Thy law I have broken; Thy love I have slighted. I have fallen from Thee and run over to Thine enemies. I have fallen under Thy displeasure; wrath is provoked; justice has taken hold of me, and my soul is undone. How dreadful is Thy controversy with me! And I have nothing to answer but this: My Jesus shall answer for me"?

O my Jesus, Thou hast wooed and invited sinners unto Thee. Thou hast sent forth Thy messengers and Thy word into the highways and hedges, into the jails and hospitals of the world; among the poor, the blind, the bound, the diseased, and those who are in debt and distress, to take from among them a wife for Thy bosom. Behold, Thy Word hath found among the captives this wretched adulteress, my poor harlot soul, which has dealt treacherously with Thee, and has followed after other lovers, has fallen among thieves and robbers, is bruised, wounded, and undone, having prodigally spent and wasted all that I had.

But, behold, I come at Thy word. If Thou sayest, "I have no pleasure in you"; if Thou spurn me with Thy foot and trample me in the dirt; or send me back to my prison, and leave me to bear the shame of my sins, I must be silent and speechless.

But wilt Thou receive me? Wilt Thou take me into Thine house? Shall I be called by Thy name? Wilt Thou love me and be joined unto me? Wilt Thou be a surety for Thy servant? Wilt Thou that my debts be upon Thee, my bonds upon Thee, my wants, my sins, my sorrows, my fears, my plagues, my help, my soul be upon Thee?

Wilt Thou, Lord, and can I say “nay” to Thee? Wilt Thou take them, and can I refuse to lay them upon Thee? I consent, Lord; I consent to Thee. Be my husband and my helper; love me, discharge me of this guilt, loose me from these fetters, cleanse me from this filthiness, and then ask what Thou wilt; impose upon me whatever Thou pleasest. Love Thee, honor Thee, obey Thee? Oh! What is my love? What is my obedience, that Thou shouldst accept, or I should deny it to Thee? It is but little that I can do. My heart is so false and so feeble that I am afraid how I undertake for it; but, such as it is, take it to Thyself. I bestow it wholly upon Thee, with this promise: if Thou wilt help me, I will love Thee; if Thou wilt help me, I will be subject to Thee, and lay up all my hopes and expectations with Thee.

Now, soul, now that you know what it means, will you have Christ for your husband? Will you take Him for better and for worse, for richer and for poorer?

Though your Lord is a King, yet His kingdom is not of this world. He did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister. He came to serve and to suffer, and all those who will follow Him must suffer with Him. He did not come to divide lands, spoils, crowns, temporal dignities, and honors among His disciples, but crosses, prisons, scourges, and wants. You will join yourself to the Lord, but will you take up your lot with Him? You will live with Him and abide with Him, but do you know where He dwells, and what His entertainment is? Sometimes He has bread, and sometimes He is hungry. Sometimes He has clothes, and sometimes He is naked. Sometimes He has a house, and sometimes He has none. Sometimes He has friends, and sometimes He has none. He is sometimes used kindly and sometimes

used coarsely; sometimes it is "Hosanna," and sometimes it is "Crucify Him." Sometimes He is cried up as a King, sometimes cried out against as a devil. And as it is with the Master, so it will be with the pupil; as it is with the Lord, so it will be with the disciple. Where He is, you must be also. Can you say, "Whither Thou goest, I will go with Thee; where Thou feedest, I will feed with Thee; where my Lord dwelleth—if in a tent, if in a cave, if in a dungeon, if in a wilderness—let me dwell with Him"? Consider what you are saying, and do not be overly hasty.

Perhaps you do not yet know what hunger, thirst, and nakedness mean; what the wrath of man, their reproaches, spittings, stripes, and bonds mean. Perhaps you have thought, "This may be far enough off that it may never come upon me," or have taken up a resolution through thoughtlessness, not weighing how sharp and how pinching they may be to you. But suppose that you were just now come to it, and that you saw that your first step Christ-ward would be the departure point between you and all that is dear to you in the world; that your first step heavenward would be into the fire, into the water, or into the camp of the Philistines, whose faces were full of fury against you. Have you yet such a far deeper sense of the eternal sufferings you are in danger of; such a settled belief of your absolute necessity of Christ so as to escape these; such a high value of the love of Christ, and the everlasting salvation you expect from Him, as will overbalance and swallow up the sharpest and quickest sense you have or can have of the greatest things you shall suffer by Him?

Have you cast up all afflictions imaginable, and then put your soul to it? Now resolve what to do: either

this or no Christ; either this or no crown; either this cross or the curse; either the wrath of man or the wrath of God—scorpions, dragons, and devils, shrieking, howling, and gnashing teeth forever and ever.

Confess Christ and be confessed by Him; suffer with Christ and reign with Him; weep with Christ and rejoice with Him; die with Christ and live forever; deny and forsake Christ and perish forever. Have you put yourself to it? And after the most solemn debate you have had, what is the result? Now tell me, Christ or no Christ? Will you have Christ for better and for worse, however dearly He costs you?

Will you forsake all others? You have three husbands who lay claim to you: sin, the world, and the devil. Will you renounce and be divorced from all these? There is no joining Christ and them; either He or they must go.

Renouncing sin consists in disengaging the heart from it and engaging the heart against it.

- Disengaging or loosening the heart from sin. It is a hearty willingness to let it go; a willingness to part is our parting with sin. Breaking the peace, cutting off the league between sin and the soul; when a sinner stands so clearly convinced of the worth of Christ, of the value of the soul, of the enmity of sin against Christ and the soul, of the unworthiness of sin, with all its pleasures and advantages, to be laid in the balance with Christ—then he is willing to be rid of it.

“What is there in it? What can it do for me? How long will it last me? Where will it lead me? Oh, the tail of these locusts, the sting that I see there! Can I do without Christ, or can I hope that He will dwell with such neighbors? Can I bear the loss of my soul, or can

it escape if these escape? I see it is vain to think of keeping both Christ and lusts; it is vain to think of saving both my sins and my soul. It is the same as thinking I can be saved and damned at the same time. I may as well bring heaven and hell together. Well, let them go; henceforth, hold your peace, sin, and plead no more with me for entertainment; be a stranger to me forever. Henceforth, I know you no more."

- In engaging the heart against sin: when the heart is not only content to let it depart, but gives it a bill of divorce and sends it away; when it can lack it and cannot bear it; when it deals with it as the Egyptians did with Israel (at first they gave them permission to be gone, but after a while they threw them out). They were urgent upon them "that they might send them out of the land in haste, for they said, 'We be all but dead men' " (Exodus 12:33).

"Begone, sin. I am but a dead man if you abide with me; and so I will no longer court you as a friend, but curse you as an enemy. I fear you, I hate you, and I am resolved to be your mortal enemy. And to this end, I am determined to use all God's means to discover you and destroy you."

This kind of heart will use all God's means to discover sin, to bring to light the hidden things of darkness. Sin goes under a disguise; it is hard to know friends from enemies. They need to have their senses about them, and be well-exercised too, who can discern between good and evil (Hebrews 5:14). Who can understand his errors (Psalm 19:12)? Sin lies in the dark. As Jeremiah asked, "The heart of man is desperately wicked; who can know it?" There is too much wickedness, and it lies too deep to be discerned by every eye;

he who earnestly means to cast out his iniquities must first search them out. "Let us search and try our ways" (Lamentations 3:40). He must search the Scriptures which describe these enemies, and mark them out: what they are, how many there are, how you may know them, where you may find them, and under whatever disguise they might appear; you must search the heart where, if they walk no more openly, they will hide themselves so that they are not discovered or suspected.

You are a fool, a self-deceiver, sinner, who thinks of yourself as an adversary to sin and takes no care to find it out; much more who willingly hides it out of sight. He takes part with sin who will not take pains to know it. Vain men talk thusly: "I hate the devil and all his works. I repent of and forsake all my sins; and though I have done iniquity, by the grace of God, I will do so no more." But do you know what you are saying? What is sin? Do you know a friend from an enemy? Good from evil? What are your sins? What have you done? Wherein have you transgressed? What are those sins that have done you mischief? What are their names? Perhaps you will say that their name is "Legion," for they are many.

You say, "In many things I have transgressed, in many things I have offended." But in what things? Do you know your enemy when you see him? Or would you know him if you could? Do you make any search or inquiry after him? When you read of a proud heart in the Scriptures, are you able to say, "There is one that has done me mischief"? Of if you see a covetous heart, can you say, "There is another one"? Or of an envious, malicious, froward heart, "There are more of them"? Or of a hard, hypocritical, ignorant, and unbelieving heart, "This is he; this is my great enemy"? Of, if you cannot

tell, do you ask, "Is this not he? Are these not they? Oh, that I could understand my errors, Lord; make me to know my transgressions"?

Sinners, never make yourselves believe you are enemies to sin till you make narrow and particular inquiry after it, after all sin, the various kinds of it, whether of omission or commission, whether outward or spiritual, open or secret, greater or smaller, sins of ignorance or knowledge, of infirmities or presumption, your beloved sins, your most pleasing sins, your most gainful lusts; whatever they are, you can never renounce till you resolve to make a diligent search after them.

This kind of heart will use all God's means to destroy and overcome sins. He who hides his enemy, and he who will spare him when he has found him, is not an enemy, but a friend. He who says, "I will destroy," but will not use the weapons to do so, either knows not what he says, or else he says what he never means. You say you will renounce and resist all your sins, but are you in earnest? What course do you mean to take? Will you take God's way? He bids you to hear, believe, pray, fast, mourn, strive, watch, and so on. Will you hearken to His counsels? Will you be healed of your diseases? You say that you will, but will you take the counsel of the Physician? Will you use His medicines? You say that you will overcome your enemy, but will you take heed of him? Will you fight against him? Will you take in all the help that is offered to you? Will you not only believe, and lean upon God for His help, but will you pray and lift up your heart for His help? Will you not only pray against your sins, but watch against them, against the occasions, temptations, and beginnings of them? Will you use all God's means against your sins? Will

your eyes spare any of them? Will you make thorough work of them, root and branch, old and young? Shall there be neither the lowing of the oxen, nor the bleating of the sheep heard with you? Will you destroy the greater ones, and dash the little ones also against the stones?

Will you avenge yourself of your adversaries, and will you never again agree with your adversaries? Will you never say again, "Is it peace, Jehu? Is it peace, Jezebel?" Will you answer, "What do you have to do with peace? Get behind me." Will you neither make a truce with sin nor embrace a parley, nor entertain a treaty for peace with it? Will you not draw back your hand, nor put up your weapons, nor give over your watch, nor go off your guard, till all your enemies become your footstool? All this is included in renouncing sin.

Beware of being mistaken here; the world's mistakes about repentance is the cause of their damnation. They easily say, "I repent of my sins. I forsake the devil and all his works." And just as easily they persuade themselves that they do as they say. But if they understood what there is in this repentance—a searching out of their sins and dividing their souls from them; a painful and watchful shunning and resisting them in their whole course; if they knew what their particular sins are, how near they are to their hearts, how they have been nursed in their bosoms, and how hard it will be now to part; this covetousness must go, this sensuality must go, these dear pleasures, these beloved gains, these pleasant companions must all be sent away, and not one can be spared—if they understood this, they would then see what wind all their good words are. They as much mean to pluck their eyes out of their

heads, to tear the flesh off their bones, as to repent, if this is repentance. Well, will you repent? Will you now renounce sin?

Will you renounce the world also? By the world you must understand all the substance of the world: houses, lands, money, and whatsoever worldly possessions; all the shadows of the world, its honors, pleasures, poms, and all its glory; the men of this world, the friendship of the world, all fleshly relations, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and children, all sinful companions and societies—whatsoever is in and of the world.

These are then renounced when we are resolved that they shall neither be our gods or idols, our devils or our tempters.

These are not to be our gods. We make the world a god to us when we make it our happiness or end; when we bless ourselves in it, and count that our very life consists in the abundance of the things which we possess; when we devote ourselves to it, making it the blessedness and the great business of our life. He who can lack the world and yet be blessed, he who can have the world and yet not serve it, has renounced it even while he has it; though it is his still, it is not his god.

These are not to be our devils or tempters. The world tempts in a double way, by objects and instruments. Objects are those things that have something in them that is apprehended as desirable, enticing and inviting the heart; or an object could be something formidable that frightens us out of our way. Thus pleasant meats tempt the glutton, wine the drunkard, and a lion in the streets tempts the coward.

The world also tempts by instruments, like “under-devils,” the devil’s instruments or agitators by which he

betrays and beguiles unstable souls. In the former sense, the things of the world are temptations and tempters to us; in the latter, it is the men of the world. He renounces the world who will not be tempted by the world, who takes up with Christ and will not be bribed by worldly advantages nor proselyted by worldly companions.

He who is resolved for Christ, though with the loss of all, and with the displeasure of all the world; he who can be poor for Christ, who can be vile for Christ, who can go hungry and naked with Christ, who can go alone with Christ, when turning away from Christ would mean riches, honor, clothing, a full stomach, and as much company as a person could desire—he forsakes the world.

He who can renounce the world has dealt with the foundational issue: either Christ must be forsaken, or all things must be forsaken for Christ. What do you say now, O soul?

You will have Christ, but what if you must leave all behind? What if He says to you, “Sell all that you have and follow Me”? Can you be poor? Can you be naked? Can you be hungry for Christ? You will have Christ, but how will you leave your companions? What will all your carnal friends say of you? “He is a fool; he is mad; he is beside himself.” How will you look your father, mother, or wife in the face, who are all against it? Who will be persuading you, beseeching you, weeping over you, hanging upon your neck, or, it may be, scoffing, reviling, discouraging you and holding you back? What do you say now? Are you still for Christ? Will you forsake them all, and cast off all that stands in the way?

Will you forsake the devil also? But I do not need to

ask you that, for once sin and the world are cast out, that has been done already. If you will not be tempted to sin, if the world ceases to be a temptation, the devil ceases to be a tempter. There are many who say, "I defy the devil," and yet do not defy sin and the world. What wise men these are! They do not like the devil, but they will still follow his will; they hate the devil, and yet never stop dancing in his chains. Defy the devil and yet love sin! Such defiance is his delight. Let sin be defied, let the world be despised, and the devil is conquered.

Will you cleave unto Christ from henceforth unto death?

You say you will have Christ, but when? Shall this be your marriage day? Will you from henceforth be the Lord's, or when shall it be? Must it be tomorrow, next month, next year, or some time or other, you know not when? May we not take your promise as those did the prophecy in Ezekiel 12:27, "Is it not for many days to come? Is it not of the times that are afar off?" Tomorrow you will; hereafter you will. This is as good as if you had said nothing, as if you had said, "Never," or, "Not yet."

Speak, soul, will you give yourself to the Lord? Will you do it now? If you will, how long will you abide with Him? Will your gift come with the power to revoke? Will you not repent, not return again from heaven to earth? Will you be chaste and play the harlot no more? Will you be faithful and obedient to the death? Is this your voice, "I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back. As the Lord liveth, nothing but death, no, not even death itself, shall part Him and me. I am persuaded, and I am resolved, that neither life nor death, angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things

present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall separate me from the love of God, or withdraw me from Jesus Christ my Lord”?

Now, soul, gather up all this together; stand before the Lord, the God of all the earth. Let me ask once more, will you have Jesus Christ for your husband? Do you choose Him for your Lord? Will you cleave to Him in love? Will you lean upon Him for righteousness and strength, for righteousness to pay your debts and for strength to pay your vows? Will you be subject to Him? You know the commandments, how holy and strict they are. Will you obey them in all things? Will you exercise yourself to godliness in the strictness of it? Will you be a thorough-paced disciple? Will you not be content with such a cold or lukewarm indifference in religion as your lazy flesh will bear, as your credit, your safety, or the temper of the times will bear? Will you follow your Lord fully? Will you take up your lot with Christ, whether it is for better or for worse? Will you espouse not only His crown, but His cross too? Wherever He goes, will you go? Where He dwells, will you dwell? Will you say, “Wherever my Lord is, there let His servants be”? Will you forsake all others, and all your sins too? Will you be made clean? Will you give up your fleshly lusts to be purged out? Does your heart stand disengaged from every sin? Is there not any one iniquity concerning which your heart says, “Let this stay with me”? Will you search out your sins? Will you accomplish a diligent search, sweep every corner, and search every chamber of your heart and life? Will you go down to the bottom of your great deep to find out what lodges there? Will you faithfully endeavor no more to allow yourself in any known iniquity? Will you use all God’s

means to conquer and cast them out? Will you forsake the world? Will you cast away your idols? Shall your mammon be no more a god, nor a demi-god to you? Shall it neither carry away your heart from Him, nor so much as share with Him in it? Will you not bow down to this golden image, nor serve it? Will you no longer serve your greedy appetite? Shall your heart no longer go after your covetousness?

Will you abandon your estate, your pleasures, your honors, your friends and companions, so far as any of these divide or entice or steal your heart away from the Lord? Whenever they say, "Come away," will you say, "Get away"? Will you forsake the devil? Will you fear and fly from, and no longer hearken to his temptations? Will you no longer regard his promises nor his threatenings, his flatteries nor his frowns?

Coming away from the tents of all these, will you cleave unto your Lord from henceforth, from this day forward, and not depart from Him forever? Will you hold to your course? Will you run and finish your race? Will you be faithful to death? Will you hope to the end for the grace that shall be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ?

What do you say? If you say, "No," as the Lord lives, you speak this word against your own life. If you refuse to enter into this covenant, you say, "I will not be the Lord's. I will have none of Him. I will not live; let death, wrath, chains, and plagues be my portion forever. I will not be the Lord's. I will not leave my sins or my pleasures or my companions forever; that is, I will be a fool, a beast, and a devil. I will die, and will not see life."

Do not mistake yourself; do not be deceived, it is a matter of life and death that is before you. It is whether

heaven or hell, God or no God, Christ or no Christ, a saved soul or a lost soul, everlasting life or everlasting fire shall be your portion—these are the things that now stand to be determined by your consent or refusal. Look to it; be wise for eternity this once. Consent and you are blessed; consent and He is yours, and with Him the kingdom.

The Lord has given His consent already; view the handwriting, the whole New Testament, which is written in blood and sealed as it is written. There you have His “I will” in almost every line, visible before you, put to your hand, and it is done. What do you say? Do you consent? Shall your heart come in and make your hand subscribe for you with an “I will”? Let that be done, and then say after me:

*A Form of Words Expressing Man's
Covenanting with God*

O most dreadful God, for the passion of Thy Son, I beseech Thee, accept Thy poor prodigal who now prostrates himself at Thy door. I have fallen from Thee by my iniquity, and am by nature a son of death, and a thousand times more the child of hell by my wicked practice. But of Thine infinite grace Thou hast promised mercy to me in Christ if I will but turn to Thee with all my heart. Therefore, upon the call of the gospel, I am now in, and, throwing down my weapons, I submit myself to Thy mercy.

And because Thou requirest, as the condition of my peace with Thee, that I should put away my idols, and be at defiance with all Thine enemies which I acknowl-

edge I have wickedly sided with against Thee, I here, from the bottom of my heart, renounce them all, firmly covenanting with Thee not to allow myself in any known sin, but conscientiously to use all the means that I know Thou hast prescribed for the death and utter destruction of all my corruptions.

And whereas I have formerly inordinately and idolatrously let out my affections upon the world, I here resign my heart to Thee who made it, humbly protesting before Thy glorious majesty that it is the firm resolution of my heart, and that I do unfeignedly desire grace from Thee that when Thou shalt call me hereunto, I may practice my resolution, through Thy assistance, to forsake all that is dear to me in this world rather than to turn from Thee to the ways of sin. I will watch against all sin's temptations, whether of prosperity or adversity, lest they should withdraw my heart from Thee, beseeching Thee also to help me against the temptations of Satan, to whose wicked suggestions I resolve, by Thy grace, never to yield myself a servant. And because my own righteousness is but filthy rags, I renounce all confidence therein, and acknowledge that I am of myself a hopeless, helpless, undone creature without righteousness or strength.

And forasmuch as Thou hast, of Thy bottomless mercy, offered most graciously to me, a wretched sinner, to be again my God through Christ if I would accept Thee, I call heaven and earth to record this day that I do here solemnly avouch Thee for the Lord my God, and with all possible veneration, bowing the neck of my soul under the feet of Thy most sacred Majesty, I do here take Thee the Lord Jehovah—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—for my portion and chief good. And I give

myself up, body and soul, to be Thy servant, promising and vowing to serve Thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

And since Thou hast appointed the Lord Jesus Christ as the only means of coming unto Thee, I do here, upon the bended knees of my soul, accept Him as the only new and living way by which sinners may have access to Thee, and do here solemnly join myself in the marriage covenant to Him.

O blessed Jesus, I come to Thee hungry and hard-pressed, poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked; a most loathsome, polluted wretch; a guilty, condemned malefactor, unworthy to ever wash the feet of the servants of my Lord, much more to be solemnly married to the King of glory. But since such is Thine unparalleled love, I do here, with all my power, accept Thee, and take Thee for my Head and Husband, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, for all times and conditions, to love, honor, and obey Thee before all others, and this to the death. I embrace Thee in all Thine offices. I renounce my own unworthiness, and do here avow Thee to be the Lord my righteousness. I renounce my own wisdom, and do here take Thee for my only Guide. I renounce my own will, and take Thy law for my law.

And since Thou hast told me that I must suffer if I will reign, I do here covenant with Thee to take my lot as it falls with Thee, and, by Thy grace assisting, to run all hazards with Thee, verily supposing that neither life nor death shall part Thee and me.

And because Thou hast been pleased to give me Thy holy laws as the rule of my life, and the way in which I should walk to Thy kingdom, I do here willingly put my neck under Thy yoke, and set my shoulder to Thy bur-

den; and I subscribe to all Thy laws as holy, just, and good. I solemnly take them as the rule of my words, thoughts, and actions, promising that though my flesh contradicts and rebels, yet I will endeavor to order and govern my whole life according to Thy direction, and will not allow myself in the neglect of anything that I know to be my duty.

Because of the frailty of my flesh, I am subject to many failings, and only on this account am I bold enough to trust that unallowed miscarriages, contrary to the settled bent and resolution of my heart, shall not make void this covenant; for so Thou hast said.

Now, Almighty God, Searcher of hearts, Thou knowest that I make this covenant with Thee this day, without any known guile or reservation, beseeching Thee that if Thou discover any flaw or falsehood therein, Thou wouldst reveal it to me and help me to do it aright.

And now glory be to Thee, O God the Father, whom I shall be bold from this day forward to look upon as my God and Father, that ever Thou shouldst find out such a way for the recovery of undone sinners. Glory be to Thee, O God the Son, who hast loved me, and washed me from my sins in Thine own blood, and art now become my Savior and my Redeemer. Glory be to Thee, O God the Holy Ghost, who by Thine almighty power hast turned my heart from sin to God.

O dreadful Jehovah, the Lord God omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Thou art now become my covenant Friend, and I through Thine infinite grace, am become Thy covenant servant. Amen, so be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.

Chapter 20

An Exhortation to the Saints

Come, you beloved people, you who are highly favored; the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among men and women. The lines are fallen to you in a pleasant place; yea, you have a goodly heritage. Come and enter upon your lot; let your hearts be glad and let your glory rejoice. But, that your joy may be full, hearken to the following counsels:

1. Make sure of your interest in the covenant. Do not rejoice in that which is not yours. Make sure, for all lies upon this. Your life, and all the comforts and concerns of it, both your eternal safety hereafter and your success in all the parts of your Christian course here, depend on your interest in the covenant. What do you have if Christ is not yours? And what do you have in Christ if you are not in covenant? Where are your hopes, either of mercy at last or of prospering in anything at present, but from the covenant of promise? And what do you have there if your name is not in it? Oh, do not give yourselves rest till this is put out of doubt. Whatever duties you perform, whatever ease or hope you find hereupon, whatever transport of affection you feel in your hearts, in the midst of all, inquire, "But am I in covenant?"

But you will say, "How shall I know that?" Why, make a strict and narrow inquiry as to whether those special

graces already mentioned are wrought upon you. Common mercies—though even these are covenant mercies to the saints—will not prove themselves to be so; but special graces will be their own evidence. Outward things fall alike to all. “No man knows love or hatred by ought that befalls him” (Ecclesiastes 9:1). You may be a son or a bastard, notwithstanding all that you enjoy or suffer here; but not one of the aforementioned graces is other than a child’s portion, God’s mark upon the heart to distinguish children from strangers. Prove that you truly know the Lord, have one heart, a tender heart, and you therein prove yourself to be a child of promise. Read over the descriptions that have been given of these graces; observe diligently where the main difference lies between common and special grace; compare your heart with it, and thereby you may give a judgment of your state. If it is yet questionable whether it is found or not, do not sit down till you have obtained.

2. But, having obtained, keep your evidences clear. Do you have peace? Maintain it carefully. The hidden manna will never breed worms by long keeping. Do not content yourselves that you once had peace; it will be but a poor livelihood you will get out of what is wasted and lost. Get good evidences that God is yours, and keep them by you until you no longer need them. Grace is your best evidence; cherish and preserve it. Get a seeing eye, and keep your eye open; get a single heart, and let it not be divided again; get a tender heart, and keep it tender; let the love and fear of God be acted in holy obedience. An obedient, gracious, watchful, and active life will keep grace in the heart; and flourishing grace will speak for itself and for you. Do not look for the

Lord to so far countenance your declinings to a more fleshly, careless state as to smile upon you in such a state. God will not be an abettor to sin. Count upon it that your grace and peace, your duty and comfort will rise and fall together; suspect those comforts that accompany you into the tents of wickedness, and do not forsake you when you forsake your God. Keep up your spirits, and then lift up your heads; keep heedfully on your way and no man will be able to take your joy from you. Particularly, keep close to God; keep hold of Christ; do not quench the Spirit; and keep in with conscience.

(1) Keep close to God. Keep yourself under His eye and influences. As both your graces and your comforts had their birth from heaven, so they must have their nourishment from there. Lose the sight of the sun and darkness follows. Let your eyes be towards the hills. Let divine love be the pleasure of your life. Let it be your Lord's cord upon your heart; let it bind you to Him. He loves captives; let your ear be bored to the threshold; be familiar in heaven; keep your acquaintance there, and be at peace; chide back your gadding heart. Soul, where are you going? Who has the words of eternal life? Let the interviews of love between your Lord and you be constant; let them not be only on some few holy days of your life. Do not count that you have lived that day in which you have not lived with God.

Keep close to God by keeping close to duty. Keep close to duty, and keep close to God in duty. Do not call that a duty which you cannot call communion with God. Do not make duty to do the work of sin, to take God out of sight. Do not let prayer, hearing the Word,

or the sacraments be instead of God to you. Such praying and hearing there is among many, but as for you, know nothing of any religion where you do not meet with God.

Behold the face of God, but behold His face in righteousness (Psalm 17:15). It is ill-looking on God with a bloodshot eye. Guilt upon the heart will be a cloud that will make the sun as darkness to you. Walk in the light of the Lord. Walk in the light as He is in the light. In the holiness of your life, you shall see His light. The light of His holiness in you will be attended with the light of His countenance upon you. By the light of His countenance, you will both see yourself in your way to your hopes and learn your way more perfectly. "Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant, and teach me Thy statutes" (Psalm 119:135). God has many ways of teaching: He teaches by His Book, He teaches by His finger, and He teaches by His rod; but His most comfortable and effective teaching is by the light of His eye. Send forth Thy light and Thy truth, O God; let them lead me, let them bring me to Thy holy hill.

(2) Keep hold of Christ. He is your peace. Do not appear before God except in the blood of the Lamb. Let Him carry up your duties, and do not own that for a comfort which is not brought to you by His hand. Let Him be your way to the Father, and your Father's way to you. Keep fresh upon your heart the memory of His death and satisfaction, and let that be your life and your hope. Have you cast your anchor on this rock? Do not loosen your hold; hand upon the horns of the altar. You cannot live if you do not live there; if you must die, say, "I will die here." Put forth fresh acts of faith every day and every hour. Believe, believe, believe, and you

shall be established. Do not fall into unbelief, for then you are gone; then you depart from the living God (Hebrews 3:12).

(3) Do not quench the Spirit. Observe and obey His motions. When He excites you, act on it; when He checks you, back away; know the Holy Spirit from an evil spirit by its according or differing with the Scriptures; reject that spirit in your heart that is not the same with the Spirit in the Word. Try the wind, what it is and where it is from, by the card and compass. "To the law and the testimony." And when you perceive that it is from above, hoist up your sails and move forward. "Quench not the Spirit; grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby thou art sealed to the day of redemption."

(4) Keep in with conscience. Do not make your witness your enemy. Deal friendly with it. You will need its good word, which you cannot have if it receives blows from you. It will not learn to speak good for evil; or, if you should bear it unto it, you are undone. If an abused conscience speaks peace, it becomes a traitor.

Give due respect to conscience. Let it abide with you in peace and in power. Keep up its authority as God's vice-regent. Next to God, commit the keeping of your soul to conscience; as the Lord has made it the superintendent of your soul, so you should do the same. Make it the judge and overseer of all your motions and actions. Let conscience counsel you and tell you your way; let conscience quicken you and put you on in your way; let conscience watch you so that you do not turn out of your way; let conscience check you and reduce you into your way.

Wherever you go, carry conscience along with you. Carry conscience into your closet, and let it watch how

you behave yourself there; carry conscience into your shop and let it eye what you do there; carry conscience into your fields, into the market, among your friends, among your enemies, and let it observe how you behave yourself among them; carry conscience with you to your recreation, to your bed, to your table—wherever you go, there is likely to be but sad work if conscience is not with you.

Commit the keeping of your covenant to conscience. Let it be the ark in which the tables of the testimony are kept and preserved; let it be the executor of your testament. Conscience is bound by the covenant; the covenant lays hold on it, so let it lay hold on you. Is your conscience bound? Do not seek to be loosened. Is your conscience bound? Give it leave to bind the whole man. Let it bind your thoughts, your will, your affections, your tongue, and your whole practice. You live as a man in covenant longer than you live as a man of conscience.

What becomes of the covenant when a breach is made of the conscience? Oh, what is there in the world when conscience is not? What faith, truth, or peace is there left alive? What are vows, covenants, and promises? What are our duties to the Lord or our dealings with men when there is no conscience towards God? Keep your conscience and you keep your soul; keep your conscience and you keep your covenant; keep your covenant and you keep your peace; let that go and all is lost.

Let conscience govern what God has put under its power, and let it resist all adverse power. Let it resist temptations. Satan and your flesh will fall upon you, and tempt you, saying, "Pity yourself; spare yourself;

take your liberty; take your ease; take your pleasure, provide for your safety. What need is there for so much ado? Why can you not take the same liberty, and allow yourself the same latitude as others do? They have souls as well as you; they have dangers as well as you; they have hopes as well as you; they have reason and understanding to know what they do as well as you; and why can you not be content to do as they do?"

Let your answer be, "But what conscience is there for it? With what conscience can I serve my flesh when I have said that I will crucify it? With what conscience can I love this world when I have said that I will renounce it? With what conscience can I walk at liberty when I have said that I will walk circumspectly? If all this were more than needs be (far from me to have such a thought, unless serving my God and saving my soul are more than I need to), yet is it any more than I am bound to? Are there any such liberties put into my indentures? Was there any exception made of this duty or that duty? Was there any limitation made to this measure or that measure, such as 'This far I will go and no farther; this little will I do and no more'? Was there any proviso put in, such as, 'I will serve the Lord, provided I may do so with ease or with safety'? Have I not solemnly engaged to obey the Lord in all things, to follow Him fully, to love and serve Him with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my strength, and these to the death? And, oh, shall I lie to God? Is it more than needful to be righteous and to keep my faith? Come, O my soul; you have opened your mouth to the Lord, and you must not go back." Be true and be honest; be honest though you must swear for it; be honest though you suffer for it. Remember what your mouth has spoken, and see that

you fulfill it with your hand.

Keep conscience pure. It is the book in which all your records are written; let no blot be upon your book. Beware of sinning against conscience. Every sin against conscience is a blot upon conscience, and blots upon conscience are blots upon your covenant evidences. You will not be able to read whether there is anything written there for you or not. Ah, foolish soul, what are you doing? You are dashing out all your hopes with your own hand. Beware that you do not content yourself with blotted evidences.

Christians, do not forget this counsel: keep your evidences clear. He who has his whole estate in bonds or notes, how carefully he will keep them! If these are torn, lost, or become so blurred that they cannot be read, he is undone. Whatever else is lost, if his money is gone, if his goods are lost, or if his house is burned, yet if his deeds are safe, he is well enough. Oh, take heed, and keep your "deeds" safe and fair; keep your title to God clear, and you can never be poor and miserable. Whatever earth or hell can do against you, until they can tear the covenant of your God, or make you blot out your own names, they have left you abundantly enough, even when they have left you nothing.

Oh, how highly we are concerned to be tender of conscience, and yet how little care is taken of it! What has become of the authority of conscience when your thoughts and your passions, when your eyes, ears, appetite, and tongue, are left unbridled and unconquered? When every servant is set up to be master, and bears rule in you, where is your conscience? What has become of its authority? When your soul has been no better kept, what poverty and leanness has grown upon

it? What a starveling it has become in both grace and peace, eaten out with lust, evaporated into vanity, sunk into sensuality, your spirit even transubstantiated into flesh, ready to perish and die for lack of being looked after!

When your soul has been no better kept, where is your conscience? When your covenant has been kept no better; when the duties you have vowed to perform are so hastily and heedlessly shuffled over, if not totally thrust aside; when your hours of prayer are such short hours, your sabbaths such winter days, so short and so cold; when your God is so shamefully neglected, and never hears from you unless you have nothing else to do, and perhaps not even then; when your spare hours are hardly spared for God; when this earth, your corn, your cattle, your pleasures, and your friends (whom you have vowed to renounce) are let in again upon your heart and have stolen it away from heaven, where is your conscience? When you sleep so, and have let the enemy come in and sow his tares in your field; when you are such a busybody in other men's matters, and have not kept your own vineyard, but have let it lie fallow, like the field of the sluggard, overgrown with thorns and nettles; when both your heart and your house are so much out of order; when your wife, your children, and your servants are left to do all that is right in their own eyes; when more care is taken for the asses than for your sons and daughters; when your house is a very hospital of blind, lame, and sick souls, ready to die for lack of instruction and good discipline, where is your conscience? And if conscience is not there, where is your covenant? And if your covenant is not there, oh, where is your God and your peace?

Ah, conscience! Where are you? What has become of that good thing committed to you? Yea, what has become of you?

Ah, soul! Where is your peace? How is the keeper of your peace laid low, and the covenant of your peace broken! What? Peace where there is no conscience, and what do you have left if you do not have peace? Ah, Lord! Thy treacherous dealers, how treacherously have they dealt with Thee! Thy children have forgotten Thee, and Thy servants are runaways from Thee. Thou art our Father, but where is Thine honor? Thou art our Master, but where is Thy fear? We are Thy servants, but where is our faith? Ah, Lord, we have dealt falsely in Thy covenant.

Return, O Lord, return; repair Thy watches; recover Thine honors; reduce Thy wanderers; restore our consciences; revive our peace; cause us to return and renew our covenant. And remember, do not break Thy covenant with us.

Christians, bewail lost conscience, and let it be recovered. Let us weep over our dead, and let their souls return into them. Let those of us who have obtained grace to be faithful, watchful, and tender, rejoice and take heed. "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall." Go on in the name of the Lord: remember His counsels; keep close to God; keep hold of Christ; quench not the Spirit; keep in with conscience; keep your heart; keep your garments; keep your watch; keep on the way; finish your course and keep the faith. And then let the devil do his worst, your peace shall be extended to you like a river and established like a rock; and you shall be able to say in the words and in the faith of the apostle, "Henceforth is laid up for me a

crown of righteousness, which God, the righteous Judge, shall give unto me at that day, and not to me only, but to all that love His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8).

3. Add to your covenant your sacrifice. "Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice" (Psalm 50:5). God has made a covenant with you, and He expects that you make covenant with Him by sacrifice. Sacrifices were seals of the covenant. As God's part of the covenant must be sealed, so must ours be sealed, and sealed with blood. His covenant must be sealed with the blood of His Son, ours with the blood of our sins.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1). Sacrificing ourselves to the Lord consists in three things: alienation, dedication, and oblation.

Alienation is the passing away of ourselves from ourselves. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." Thus He has said, and He expects that we should say also, "True, Lord, I am not my own."

Dedication is passing ourselves over to the Lord. "Ye have consecrated yourselves to the Lord" (2 Chronicles 29:31). We are His by purchase, but He expects that we are also His by donation. We are His by conquest, but He expects that we should be His by consent also. Though He may challenge us as His right, yet the most acceptable claim is when He has us as a gift. When our hearts say, "I am Thine, Lord," then His heart will answer, "Soul, you are Mine."

Oblation is the actual surrendering or offering up ourselves to Him. In offering this sacrifice, there is also the immolation, or slaying of it. We must slay ourselves

(in a spiritual sense), be mortified, be crucified with Christ, and so offered up as a sacrifice to Him.

QUESTION. How is it then required that we offer ourselves up as a living sacrifice?

ANSWER. We are never truly alive till we are dead. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). When our flesh is dead, our spirit is alive (Romans 8:10). As the apostle said regarding "that which thou sowest," so that which you sacrifice "is not quickened, except it die" (1 Corinthians 15:36). It is only the mortified Christian who is a living sacrifice.

Christians, come and sacrifice yourselves to the Lord; come and slay your sacrifices, and so offer them up. Your sacrifice is then slain (as before was intimated), when your carnal self, your old man, is crucified with Christ, and the body of sin destroyed (Romans 6:6); when the wisdom of the flesh is crucified and made to vanish before the wisdom of God; when the will of the flesh is subdued and swallowed up by the will of God; when the lusts of the flesh are vanquished, and made captives by the law of God.

Christians, it may be that you are willing to make your claim to the covenant of God, but have you made covenant with Him? You have entered into covenant with God, but will you confirm your covenant by sacrifice? You will give yourselves a sacrifice to the Lord, but is your sacrifice slain? Is the wisdom of the flesh made foolishness? How is it with your carnal wills? Is the will of the flesh broken, and brought into subjection, yielding itself to the Lord? Oh, for an emptying of wills into the will of God!

What will you do? What will you have? Will you say, "Nothing but what God will have me do or have; what

the Lord will have me do, avoid, or suffer. I can no longer tell Him 'No.' Is my sanctification the will of God? Then it is my will too. Is my humiliation the will of God? So it is mine. Is tribulation the will of God? So it is mine. Is God for holiness? Then through grace so am I. Is God for His own will? So am I. This is all the will I have, that the Lord may have His will in me, be all to me, have all from me, rule all in me, and dispose of all that concerns me."

How is it with your carnal affections and fleshly lusts? Are these slain? Is your covetousness, your sensuality, your pride and envy; are your carnal joys, fears, and worldly sorrows destroyed? Are those wildfires of passion, fury, and rage quenched? Come, put the knife to the throat of all these, and then there is a sacrifice for God. Go and offer it up, and let it be, first, a free-will offering, and, second, a thank-offering.

Let it be a free-will offering. Offer yourselves willingly to the Lord. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (Psalm 110:3). Oh, may that glorious day dawn upon us! God loves a cheerful giver; offer up your hearts with all your heart; do not begrudge what the Lord requires, but bless God that He will accept an offering. This has a comfortable significance. If the Lord had meant to destroy us, He would not have accepted an offering at our hands (Judges 13:23).

Let it be a thank-offering. Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay your vows unto the Most High. Offer yourselves up in token of your thankfulness to the Lord. Be both the priests and the lambs for the sacrifice. Present yourselves to the Lord as the accomplishments of His covenant, as the fruits of the death of your Redeemer, as the trophies of His victory, as the spoils

which He has recovered from death and hell, making a show of them openly, so that it may be seen that the promise of God is not of "none effect," and that Christ did not die in vain. Let your Lord Jesus, when He comes down into His garden where He left His blood, reap His pleasant fruits, and carry up your purified souls as the signals of His glorious achievement. Offer up your sins to the Lord; these unclean beasts will be an acceptable sacrifice. There is more real honor growing up to the Lord from one mortified saint than from ten thousand anthems from the most seraphic tongues.

Offer up your duties to the Lord, your obedience for a sacrifice. To obey is better than sacrifice, than thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil. Let your whole life be a sacrifice. Let every day be a sabbath, every duty a eucharist, and every member a cymbal, sounding out the praises of God. Offer up the calves of your lips unto the Lord. Oh, let your souls be filled with wonder and your mouths with praise.

"Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me" (Luke 1:43)? Oh, whence is this to us, that the Lord, our Father, should come, and come so near to us! Oh, whence is it that the mighty God should indent, and come into bond with sinful man! That He who was free from all men should make Himself debtor to any! That the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity should dwell in houses of clay and pitch His tabernacle in the dust! That He who humbles Himself to behold the heavens should come down into the earth, and that He should come down after so degraded a creature as man! That He should make a league with the stones of the ground, with the beasts of the field, and creeping things! That He

should espouse dust and ashes, and gather up vile worms into His bosom, set His heart upon shadows, and adopt the refuse of the earth to be His sons and daughters! That He should raise the poor out of the dust and the beggar from the dunghill! That He should do such great things, and should choose the foolish, the weak, the base and the contemptible, and bestow on them among all the world these high honors! That He should make them the head and the honorable whom the world has made the tail, the filth, and the offscouring of all things! That He should give Himself to be the portion, His son to be the ransom, and His kingdom to be the heritage of prisoners, captives, and bankrupt person! Lord, "what is man that Thou art mindful of him!" Soul, what is God that you should be unmindful of Him! How is it that the tongue of the dumb is not yet loosened, and that the feet of the lame do not leap as a deer?

Oh, what is that love whence this strange thing has broken forth! This, this is the womb that bare you; hence has your righteousness sprung forth; hence have your dignities, your astonishing hope and joys arisen to you. This is it that yearned upon you in your misery, that reprieved you from death, redeemed you from darkness, rescued you like a brand out of the burning; that pitied you in your blood, washed you from your blood, spared you, pardoned you, reconciled you, and brought you, an enemy, a rebel, and a traitor, into the covenant of peace with the God of glory. Ah, contemptible dust! That ever there should be such compassionate contrivances and such astonishing condescensions of the eternal Deity towards so vile a thing.

Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints! Oh, bless the

Lord, you beloved people near unto the Lord. Alas, that our hearts should be so narrow, that the waters should be so shallow with us; where are our eyes if we are not yet filled with wonders? What hearts do we have if we have not yet filled our lips with praise! Open all your springs, O my soul; let them flow forth in streams of love and joy; let every faculty be tuned and strained to the height; let hearts, hands, tongue, and eyes lift up their voice. Be astonished, O heavens; be moved, you strong foundations of the earth; fall down you elders; strike up, you heavenly choir; lend, poor mortals, your notes to sing forth the high praises of God, who rides on the heavens, and has caused us to ride on the high places of the earth; who made us sit together with Him in heavenly places, showing forth the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Awake, my glory; awake, psalter and harp. I myself will awake right early. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior; for He that is mighty hath done for me great things, and holy is His name. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath visited and redeemed His people, who hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, who hath laid help on one who is mighty, and exalted one chosen among the people, and hath given Him for a covenant to them.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name; who hath redeemed thy life from death, and crowned thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies. Salvation to our God that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and

glory, and honor, and blessing; for Thou livedst, and wast dead, and art alive forevermore. Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us kings and priests unto our God forever." Hallelujah, hallelujah!

