

Gospel Conversation

Gospel Conversation

*Wherein Is Shown How the Conduct of Believers Must Be
above What Could Be by the Light of Nature,
beyond Those Who Lived under the Law,
and Suitable to What Truths the Gospel Holds Forth*

Jeremiah Burroughs

Edited by Don Kistler



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Gospel Conversation

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

*J*eremiah Burroughs needs no introduction to lovers of the Puritans. He was of the first rank. This is another of his many books that have never been reprinted until now. Several of his titles were “Gospel” titles: *Gospel Worship*, *Gospel Fear*, *Gospel Conversation*, *Gospel Revelation*, *Gospel Reconciliation*, and *Gospel Remission*, to name a few.

Today the word “conversation” refers to an exchange of opinions or ideas in speech. But in the 17th century it was commonly used to mean conduct or behavior, and this is the way it is used in this book. Today, this book could well have been called “Gospel Conduct.” It addresses the foundational question: How should a person live under the gospel?

In the 1648 edition, from which this book was taken, some paragraphs ran on for two to four pages. I have shortened those somewhat to make them more palatable to the modern reader. Antiquated spellings and a few outdated words have been changed.

I do not believe that any of Burroughs’ thoughts have been altered. I have tried to remain faithful to his words as well as to his intent throughout this edition.

I trust that this book will help you to conform and strengthen your own “Gospel Conversation,” so that it will be one that is becoming the gospel of Jesus Christ.

— Dr. Don Kistler
Soli Deo Gloria Publications

TO THE READER

*T*he order and method which we propounded to ourselves, and still pursue in publishing this blessed man's labors committed to us, is the same with his own in preaching them. And in his preaching style also we present them, that so both for matter and manner they might be in every way his own. We need not set him up any other pillar or monument than what he himself erected by his own worth; and yet we may as truly say of him, as Nazianzen said of Athanasius, "he was high in worth, but humble in heart." He died in the strength of his graces and parts, and did not wear with rust but use. He did the work of Him who sent him while it was day, because he feared, as he would often say, a night was coming upon the kingdom wherein he could not work, and so he lived long in a little time.

It grieved his soul to see how, among professors of religion, holiness of life and circumspect walking is not attended to in this dissolute and dissolved age in which we live. What truths, therefore, served most to revive and renew that spirit and vigor of practical holiness which was breathing in them before these times, these he most insisted on and pressed upon the consciences of believers. And he who is conversant in his writings will readily discern that he judged the power of godliness not to consist in high-towering speculation (though he was of excellently-raised parts), but in a holy conversation, which is peculiarly the subject of this treatise; therein following the direction of Paul to Titus exhorting believers in God to maintain good works, to go before others in good works, or to set before others good works, as the words imply.

While a Christian pursues this with all zealous fervency and

intention, he must withal be acquainted with the root from whence all his holiness must spring. Good works are dangerous if they are made the foundation in the great point of justification by faith; but if they are used in the superstructure then they are very useful. We cannot have children from Christ until we are married to Christ. There are no works of sanctification before there is union with Christ. Many cry out for obedience and good works, yet are profane because they do not go to Christ for these. "You will not come unto me that you might have life," said our Savior. Unless we do all for and from Christ, our lusts will not be mortified, our duties will not be accepted, and our consciences will not be purified. We shall not be strengthened against crosses, neither shall we go on cheerfully or persevere.

The foolish, proud heart of man is loathe to be so behold-
ing to Jesus Christ as to receive salvation from Him altogether. It wants to have something it can do and something Christ must do. It only will take in Christ to make the work more sure. There is a sturdy stoutness and unyieldingness of spirit in men against the blessed truths of the gospel made known unto them. They must have peace, comfort, and assurance their own way or they will reject it all. They would find a principle of life and power within themselves and not go to Christ for it. They would bring something to Christ and not fetch all from Christ, not knowing that the way which all true believers have gone (after much wearying of themselves to find something in themselves) has been at last to roll themselves wholly upon the free grace of God through Jesus Christ, seeing nothing in themselves, yet giving glory to God by believing. And, if they could bring their hearts to be so disposed and qualified, yet they see the danger of resting in what they are, have, and do. And if lack of such and such conditions and qualifications had ground enough to

keep them from Christ, it might have hindered any who ever cast themselves upon the free grace of God, because they would still have been at a loss, finding a defect in themselves.

These things we do not judge unseasonable to premise in the reading of this and all other treatises of this nature, that Christians may (when they abound in much-doing and well-doing) be still as much afraid of resting in doing well as of committing ill, and be content to have all flowers withered which refresh them without Christ. And when, after humiliation and casting down for sin, they begin to stand upright, as they think, upon the legs of their prayers, performances, inherent graces and qualifications, and righteousness and holiness expressed in their lives and conversations, they may yet, notwithstanding all this, be brought not to glory in themselves but in Jesus Christ, and willingly come down from the throne of their own conceits, sufficiencies, abilities, and be at the footstool and threshold of Jesus Christ. So that, seeing they know nothing, are nothing, have nothing, and do nothing, they may *be* nothing in their own eyes; that Christ may be all, do all their work in them and for them, so that they may wholly live upon Christ and to Christ, still drawing virtue from Him, seeing a need of Christ and of nothing else, and finding a fullness and help in Him and in nothing else.

This word of direction being given the reader in perusing this treatise about *Gospel Conversation*, the publishing of which in these perilous times we conceive exceedingly suitable and useful, wherein so many are led away after those doctrines that are not after godliness, as the apostle speaks. This holy man would often bewail the fact that he did not see that holy frame and temper of spirit in the professors of our days which was in those God was pleased to take out of this world to Himself in the days immediately preceeding these troubles. He would

often say, "We seem to have more light now, but we have lost our heat and first love." We pray that the Lord will awaken us that we may do our first works before He comes against us quickly and removes the candlestick out of its place. AMEN.

Thomas Goodwin

William Greenhill

Sydrach Simpson

Philip Nye

William Bridge

John Yates

William Adderly

SERMON 1

(March 1, 1645)

“Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

The apostle, in the 23rd verse of this chapter, we find to be in a difficult place as to what he should do, whether to be willing to live or to die. His own inclination or desire was rather to die, because then he should be with Christ, which was best of all. A notable Scripture to prove the immortality of the soul, for certainly, if the soul died with the body, it could not have been better for Paul to have been dead than alive. It would be better for Paul to have lived even to the day of judgment than to have died, and so be nothing and turned into dust. But he said that when he died he would be with Christ, which was far better for him. That which swayed him on the other side, why he would be willing to live, was this: that he might be useful to the churches. “Nevertheless, it is better for you that I should abide in the flesh.”

Service to the churches is the great cause that makes one who has made his peace with God to be willing to live. It is not that he may live in ease and enjoy pleasures to the flesh, but that he may live and do service for God that makes him willing to live. And then he tells them that he is confident he shall continue with them for awhile for the furtherance of their faith, and that, by his coming to them, their rejoicing should be more abundant. But, in the meantime, whether I come or do not come, “only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ.” It is as if he should say, “I shall the more willingly live, my life will be the more comfortable to me, it will somehow

recompense my absence from heaven, my staying from the joys of it, if your conversation is as becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ; if I may hear from you, being absent, or when I come to you if I may see that your conversation is as becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ." This is the meaning of the words.

For the opening of the words:

"*Only* let your conversation." That is as if he should say, "Do not be solicitous about me and my sufferings, and what shall become of me, and whether I shall come to you or not. Do not be so careful about that. Only let your care be taken up about this great business: that your conversation becomes the gospel of Christ; "for," he says, "this should be the main thing that I should aim at if I should come to you. This is that which I would put upon you and give you directions about: that your conversation is as becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ. And, if I am absent, there is not anything I desire to hear of more than this, that you who have received the gospel of Christ from my hands, as it were, through my ministry, have a conversation that becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Brethren, if we had Paul present here with us or preaching among us, or if he were alive and could write an epistle to this congregation or any other congregation, the main drift of his preaching or writing would be to those who had heretofore received the gospel, that they would make it their great care that their conversations would be as becomes the gospel of Christ.

"*Only* let your *conversation*." The word here is a word taken from the ordering of a city or a commonwealth, wherein everyone acts in their own sphere and is serviceable each unto the other for the public good. So, he says, the church of God is as a city, as a commonwealth wherein every Christian is to act in his own sphere, and everyone is to labor for the good of one

another in a comely order so that there may not only be peace in the churches, but edification of all, and the gospel may thrive and prosper. That's the meaning of this word translated here "let your conversation." It is as if he should say, "Do not think it is enough that you have some enlightenings, that you have some stirrings, some affections that are moved by the ministry of the gospel. Do not rest in these, but look to your conversation."

It is not enough for Christians to have knowledge and to be able to speak of the gospel, and have some strivings of affection, but they must look to their conversations. "Let your conversations be as becometh the gospel of Christ."

For the opening of these words, there are these two things to be considered.

First, what is this gospel of Christ that is here spoken of?

And, second, what is it so to live as becomes the gospel of Christ? "Let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ."

What Is the Gospel of Christ?

The gospel of Christ in general is this: It is the good tidings that God has revealed concerning Christ. "This hath come unto your ears." The good tidings concerning Christ, for so the word "gospel" in the Greek signifies nothing else but the good tidings. The good tidings that come from heaven unto you concerning Jesus Christ is the gospel of Christ.

More largely it is this: All mankind was lost in Adam and became the children of wrath, and was put under the sentence of death. God, though He left His fallen angels and has reserved them in the chains of eternal darkness, has thought upon the children of men. He has provided a way of atonement to reconcile them to Himself again. Namely, the Second Person in the Trinity takes man's nature upon him and becomes the Head of a

second covenant, standing charged with man's sin, and answering for it by suffering what the Law and Divine Justice required. He made satisfaction and kept the Law perfectly, which satisfaction and righteousness He offered up unto the Father as a sweet savor of rest for the souls of those that are given to Him.

And now this meditation of Christ is, by the appointment of the Father, preached to the children of men, of whatever nation or rank, freely offering this unto sinners for atonement for them, requiring them to believe in Him and, upon believing, promising not only a discharge of all their former sins, but that they shall never enter into condemnation, that none of their sins or unworthiness shall ever hinder the peace of God with them, but that they shall, through Him, be received into the number of sons. They shall have the image of God renewed again in them, and they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. These souls and bodies shall be raised to the height of glory that such creatures are capable of. They shall live forever, enjoying the presence of God and Christ in the fullness of all good. This is the gospel of Christ. This is the sum of the gospel that is preached unto sinners.

When you hear someone speaking of the gospel, your thoughts may be about this glad tidings that is come into the world for the salvation of sinful creatures through Jesus Christ, and all the good things that Jesus Christ, by His blood, has purchased for sinners. When ministers are called the ministers of the gospel, the meaning is that they are appointed by God as ministers to declare and to preach these glad tidings to the world. Oh, it is glad tidings to the world indeed! Could there be such glad tidings preached at hell's gates, that there was any such way of reconciling them to God, we could not conceive of the joy that would be there. They would count it as acceptable news indeed!

Now, then, those who believe this gospel, or profess that they have entertained this gospel, these glad tidings, must be careful to walk in their conversation so it becomes this gospel, as becomes such glorious glad tidings sent to them from heaven.

As becomes. The word signifies “worthy of the gospel.” But this cannot mean that our conversation should be such as deserves all the good that there is in the gospel. No, but worthy, that is, as much as beseems the gospel, as is meet for the gospel, or, as it is translated in your books, “becoming the gospel.” The Scripture says that he who eats or drinks unworthily eats and drinks to his own damnation. Why, can one eat and drink so as to be worthy of the body and blood of Christ? No, but he who eats and drinks so carries himself so in that ordinance of the Sacrament as is unbecoming the body and blood of Christ that he comes to receive. On the other hand, those who eat and drink so as to sanctify God’s name in that ordinance (as you have heard) do it worthily, for so the same word is here in the phrase, “*worthy* of the gospel of Christ.” “And so bring forth fruit *worthy* of repentance,” said John to those who came to him. It is the same as saying, “Bring forth fruit fitting for, or meet for, repentance,” such fruit as may manifest your repentance, such fruit as is suitable for men or women who profess repentance for their sins. Further, I find that the word that is here translated “becoming” in another place is translated “convenient” and “meet.” It can be understood in no other sense. In 1 Corinthians 16:4 we read, “If it be meet that I shall go also....” The word that is here translated “meet” is the same Greek word which is translated “worthy” or, in this passage, “becoming.” If it is a comely thing, or a meet or convenient thing, then I’ll go. So, then, it’s clear that this word which we have here is “meet,” “convenient,” “suitable,” or “becoming

the gospel.” “Let your conversation be such as is meet for, or becoming the gospel.”

What Is It to Live as Becomes the Gospel?

You will say, “What conversation is that which is meet for, or becoming, the gospel?”

1. *To that I answer, it is a conversation raised to a higher degree than the light of nature or the Law can raise one unto.* It must be that certainly. It is not a conversation becoming the gospel unless it is a conversation raised higher than the light of nature, or than the law can raise it. It does not become the gospel otherwise.

2. *It must be a conversation suitable and answerable to those many blessed and glorious truths which are revealed in the gospel.* There is much of the mind of God revealed in the gospel, glorious truths are there presented to us. That is a conversation becoming the gospel which is suitable and answerable to those blessed and glorious truths which are revealed in the gospel.

3. *It must be a conversation manifesting the power of the gospel.*

4. *It must be a conversation that is suitable unto all the ordinances of the gospel, agreeable unto whatever there is in any ordinance of the gospel.*

5. *And then, it must be a conversation holding forth the beauty, excellency, and glory of the gospel before those with whom we converse.* Here is a Christian who becomes the gospel: when those who are Christians profess that the Lord has revealed the gospel unto them and that, in some measure, they have been brought to believe in the gospel. And when their conversation is beyond that which any man can attain unto by the light of nature; when it is beyond that which any man can be raised unto by the Law; when it’s answerable to the many blessed and glorious truths that are revealed in the gospel; when it

manifests a power of the gospel in him; when it's answerable unto the blessed ordinances that he enjoys in the gospel; and when his life and conversation holds forth the beauty, excellency, and glory of the gospel before the world, here is a conversation becoming the gospel. And this is that which the apostle here exhorts unto, "Only let your conversation be such as becomes the gospel of Christ." Thus you have had the words opened.

Now, for the first doctrinal points in the words, there are only these two. The first is but to make way for the second.

DOCTRINE 1. Those who profess the gospel must have a great care for their conversation.

DOCTRINE 2. This conversation of theirs must be such as becomes the gospel.

These are the two main points in this text. I shall this morning deal only with the first point, which is the great point in the text. The other shall be dealt with in the next sermon [see Sermon 2, page 29].

DOCTRINE 1. Christians who profess the gospel must have a great care for their conversations.

They must not satisfy themselves with what is inward in their minds or in their affections, but look to their conversations. You think or hope, at least, that through the gospel there has been conversion wrought in you. Why, after the Lord has wrought conversion, He expects that you will be careful of your conversations before men. You have knowledge; you can speak well; you have some stirrings of heart that you have felt in hearing

the Word and the preaching of the gospel, but now look to your conversations and know that there is a bond laid upon you more than ever before to look to your conversations. In James 3, see the exhortation of the apostle there in verse 13, "Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? (mark) let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." It is a very sweet and excellent Scripture. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? What should he do? Why, let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. Here's "wise" and "knowledge" and "wisdom" again. If you would manifest that God has wrought any true saving knowledge, any wisdom in you to save your souls, then know that God requires that you should show your good conversation, and that with meekness and wisdom. You must have a care of your conversations, both in respect of men, God, and saints.

In respect of men. 1 Peter 2:12, "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles." And (the latter part we shall speak to by and by) so that Christians must look to their conversation in respect of men.

In respect of God. In 1 Peter 1:15 we read, "but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." There you have "honest conversation," and in this Scripture "holy in all manner of conversation." So that you are to have regard to your conversation both in respect of men and in respect of God, and upon these grounds:

In Respect of God. First, in regard of God more generally, that God may be honored by your conversations. Oh, you who have ever heard from God the glorious glad tidings of salvation in the gospel, is it not in your hearts to do what you can to honor Him? Now, let your conversation be such. Have a care that your conversations may be honoring; the name of God will be

blasphemed unless you have a care of your conversations, as we see in Matthew 5:16, “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” It is as if Christ should say, “What, has God brought the light of the gospel to you? Has it shone in your hearts? And has He revealed to you those glorious mysteries of salvation in Him? Oh, then let this light break forth and shine in your conversations before men that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Some men and women are ready to say, “What do I care what others observe in me, for God knows my heart.”

Aye, but that’s not enough, even if it were possible that you could have a good heart towards God without a good conversation; but we shall see that there cannot be any such thing. It is required of you that your works should shine forth before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. It is one thing to do a good work that *may* be seen, and another thing to do a good work that *it* may be seen. To do a good work that may be seen is lawful, though we should not do them principally aiming that they may be seen. But our works should be such that, of their own nature, they may be seen, but not to make that to be our main end. We ought to aim not so much that they may be seen, but that, being seen, men may glorify our Father who is in heaven so that God may be honored. Now God is honored by the conversations of His saints many ways and, therefore, they should be very careful of their conversations.

1. *In the first place, the people of God—saints, believers—are the great witnesses that God has in the world to witness for Him against the corruptions of the world.* If you are not careful of your conversations, God will lose witnesses to the truth. Now a witness is not a thing that is kept within. A man cannot be a witness

by keeping things within his own thoughts and heart; he must manifest something to witness. Now the Lord makes use of the lives of His saints to be His witnesses in the world, to stand and witness for His truth, whereas others will think, when the gospel is preached, that it is but a mere notion or imagination and that there is no reality in what is preached. "No," says God, "look here upon the conversation of those who have believed the gospel. Do you not see that they witness that there is a reality in those things of the gospel? Look what a change My gospel has made upon their lives and conversations. Those who were proud before? Look how humble they are. Those that were froward before? Look how meek they are. These are My witnesses." Many Scriptures might be given, especially Revelation 11:3, where the saints in general are called witnesses. And that's the first thing. You are to look to your conversation that you may be God's witnesses.

2. *The second reason is that you may hold forth the image of God in the world, that image that God made man in at first.* By the sin of man it was lost, but now, through the gospel, it comes to be renewed. And God delights to have His image held forth in the world that men may behold something of the glory of His image. But how can the world see the image of God? They cannot see it in your hearts, but God would have it conspicuous. Therefore, have a care of your conversations that, in your conversations, you may hold forth the image of God in the world. It's much to the glory of God to have His image held forth in the world. When men would honor their parents or other dear friends, they have a picture drawn of them. And when it is done, they will not allow it to be abused or defaced, but will take care of it. A man who has the image of his father or dear friend will not hang that picture in a smoky hole, or behind a chimney or door, but in some conspicuous place. So we should

hold forth the image of God in a conspicuous way; it should appear in our lives and conversations.

3. *God may be honored by your conversations.* You will further the great designs that God has in the world in this way. The holy and gracious lives of the saints serve to further the great designs that God has in the world to do.

4. *Last, they may serve to make up the great dishonor that God has from others.* The Lord has an abundance of dishonor from most people in the world, but now there are some that God calls out of the world, and He gives His grace unto them. The end of this is that He might have some of the great dishonor made up that He receives from others in the world. Now such as are careful of their conversations—those who walk exactly and closely with God—are made use of by God to make up some of the great dishonor that God has in the world. What honor would God have in the world were it not for the holy and gracious conversation of some of His saints? And therefore, you who profess the gospel, look to your conversations that God may be honored by you.

In Respect of Men. Second, have a care of your conversations. Look to them in respect of the wicked men among whom you live.

1. *That you may convince evil and ungodly men among whom you live in the world.* 1 Peter 2:12, “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” This, likewise, confirms what was said before, for the glory of God and the conviction of wicked men, that they beholding may glorify God in the day of visitation. “In the day of visitation” means in the day when God will visit them. Though they now rail against you, yet when

God shall visit them either in His stroke upon them by sickness, they will acknowledge you to be righteous and holy men, and will wish that their condition were like yours, or in the day of visitation as God shall visit their spirits to turn them, or in the day of visitation (as some think), the day of Jesus Christ. But I find others looking too narrowly at these words. It would best be translated “in the day of over-seeing.” The word *episkopos*, from whence the word “bishop” comes, is “over-seer.” Now this word “visitation” signifies nothing else but an over-seeing. It is as if God should say, “Walk honestly and holy before the world. Perhaps they will veil your glory and one will say this and the other that, but go on in a constant way and course. There will be a time that all things shall be over-seen. All things shall be examined and narrowly searched into, and, when that day comes, the wicked men shall be convinced and shall be forced to give glory to God and shall say that whatever dispersions were cast upon you, yet certainly you were servants of the living God in the day of inspection, of over-seeing.” Therefore, be careful of your conversations in respect of wicked men so as to convince them.

2. *In respect of wicked men, you should have a care of your conversations to stop their mouths, their malice, their violence, and their rage.* 1 Peter 2:15: “For so is the will of God, that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” The Greek word translated “put to silence” is to put, as it were, a bridle in their mouths, or to stop their mouths. You may even stop their mouths by your holy conversations. O Christians, look to your conversations that by them you may stop the mouths of wicked and ungodly men, that they may not be able to say anything against your holy conversations! So it is in 1 Peter 3:16: “Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.”

3. *You may, by your good conversation, be a means to convert other men, to bring wicked men into the love of the ways of God.* The exhortation in 1 Peter 3:1–2 is directed to wives who had wicked husbands, “Likewise ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the Word, they also may without the Word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.” Mark how the apostle urges wives to look to their conversations to the end that they may be a means to gain their husbands. I am verily persuaded that there are many gracious women who would give, if they had it, a thousand worlds to gain their husbands to those ways of godliness in which they have found so much sweetness. But perhaps they cannot get them to come and hear the Word; and if they do their hearts rise against it or they do not regard it. But you, by your conversations, may do that which the Word will not do! You may be converters of them, and in this sense, indeed, there may be women preachers; that is, preaching in their lives and conversations, and that’s all the preaching the Holy Ghost allows women. Let them preach that way, in their lives and conversations, in their families, and preach a sermon every day. And neither God nor man will find fault with any such thing, and this is the way for them to do great service for God.

Husbands should do likewise to convert their wives. You complain of one another, but do you labor to convince and convert one another by your holy conversations? I am confident that there are many who are able to say by experience, “The Lord struck my heart and conscience when I saw the holy conversation of my wife since she went to hear the Word; and seeing the wisdom, humility, obedience, and carriage of my wife struck my heart.” There are many who have given glory to God and acknowledged this, both wives by their husbands and husbands by their wives. And sometimes the parents seeing

this in their child, or the child in the parent, or brother in brother, or one servant in another, has been a means to turn them unto God.

4. *In the last place, if they are not turned to God, then your conversation shall serve to condemn them, to aggravate their sin and their condemnation in the day of Jesus Christ.* It is said of Noah, Hebrews 11:7, that he prepared an ark by which he condemned the world. He condemned the world by this course of his in believing in God and in making the ark. Every nail that he smote into the ark was, as it were, a condemnation of the world, and so the saints, by their walking in their holy conversation, shall be the judges and condemners of the world. Therefore, you are to be careful of your conversations in respect of wicked men.

In Respect of the Saints. Also, in respect of the saints, we are to be very careful of our conversations.

1. *By your conversation, you will rejoice the hearts of the saints.* Oh, when those who are godly see others who profess godliness walking in a strict and holy conversation, how does it rejoice their hearts! It is the comfort of their lives.

2. *Besides, they bless God for it.* They not only rejoice over it, they bless God for it. When they get alone in secret they are blessing God for the gracious, holy, and convincing conversations of such and such men with whom they converse.

3. *And by that means, the saints have a boldness before men.* They can lift up their heads wherever they go when they know that all who make profession of religion in the places where they live walk unblameably. Upon that, godly men can hold up their heads with boldness whereas, otherwise, it makes such as are professors of religion ashamed when they see and hear of such and such who make profession of religion yet walk scandalously and loosely; but of them we shall speak presently.

4. *Then further, your holy conversation will establish the hearts of the saints; it will settle young beginners.* There are many who are giving up their names to Christ when they see the holy and gracious conversations of these who are ancient professors. O how they are established in the ways of godliness!

5. *It will edify the saints.* They will edify and grow up in holiness. They will imitate you, and you will find the graces of God not only strengthened, but increased in them by your conversations. Oh, the abundance of good that you may do! Therefore, Christians, have a care of your conversations.

By this means, you will have evidence to your souls of the truth of grace in your hearts which you cannot have if your conversations are not right. In 1 John 1:6, mark what the apostle says, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." And again, you have a notable Scripture in 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous." It is as if he should say, "There are a company of deceivers in the world, and they think it enough to talk of righteousness. They say they believe in Jesus Christ, and it's faith only that is required of them; and as for the other, that's a mere legal thing for men to make conscience of duties and of their lives. This is only legal! Let them trust in Jesus Christ; Christ has done all. What, can we be saved by our lives? Has not Christ done all? Is righteousness not found in Him?"

"Let no man deceive you," said the apostle. If there is not a "doing" righteousness, there is no righteousness in you. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous." You have nothing to do with the righteousness of Christ as your own applied yet unto you unless you do righteousness. Therefore, have a care of your conversation that you may have evidence to your souls of the truth that there is in your hearts.

Have a care of your conversations that you may continue and increase that which is within you. Certainly those who make profession of religion and have no care of their conversations will never continue in their profession. Mark this, they may be as comets for awhile, blazing stars, but they will vanish and, within a little while, you shall find that their profession will wear away. Where there is not a godly life together with profession, profession will vanish and come to nothing. Their very common graces will be taken away from them if they do not have a care of their lives but, if they have a care of their lives, they will continue in the ways of godliness, and grow up, and increase more and more.

Have a care of your conversations that you may get honor in the very consciences of men.

QUESTION. Some will say, "Should we have a care of our conversations that we may get honor?"

ANSWER. Yes, truly, a man may desire to have the testimony of the consciences of those with whom he lives. It's no matter for them talking about this or that, but that you may get into their consciences. God gives you liberty for that.

By this means, you will be an instrument of a great deal of public good if you live according to your profession. Otherwise, nobody will regard you. You will be like refuse, no man will employ you; you will be condemned and slighted. But when they see men's conversations according to their professions, everybody loves to make use of this kind of man. They know they shall find them to be faithful in whatever they are employed, and so they come to be instruments of much public good.

You will further a joyful account against the great day, for you must be called to account not only for your thoughts and

the inward workings of your hearts, but for whatever you have done in the flesh. We must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to answer for whatever is done in the flesh. Oh, be careful of your conversations so that you may be able to give a comfortable account!

Last, be careful of your conversations in respect of your profession. This should be the care of those who make profession so that we may keep up the succession of the honor of religion from one generation to another. Heretofore, there were some godly people who lived and kept up, in their generations, the honor of the profession of religion, and they continue on afterward in another generation as men come upon the stage of the world and live here. God expects succeeding ages should keep up the honor of the profession of religion in their times. And this one consideration might go to the very heart of ungodly men, if they would mind it, that it may be that you are the man or woman among others who keeps up, in a continual succession, enmity against God in the world. Do but consider the difference between these two. One man's conversation is wicked and another's is holy and gracious. You who live wickedly, this evil is charged upon you: You are the man who joins in this work to keep up a continued succession of enmity against God in the world.

Ever since Cain's time there was an enmity against God, and Cain's posterity kept up the succession of it. And so, from one generation to another, there have been wicked men keeping up the succession of enmity against God. You, in your generation, have come to it, and this (it seems) is your work. But now, on the other side, ever since Adam and Abel's time there have been godly men in the world, and in every generation some have kept up the honor of profession. And now, has God been pleased to reveal His glorious gospel to your soul? Why, now

you being careful of your life and conversation, God employs you in this work to keep up the succession of the honor of profession in the world. And this is a comfortable life indeed!

And thus we have done with the explication of the point.

Now I shall only give you some passages for the application of it.

APPLICATION

“Only,” said the apostle, “let your conversation be as becomes the gospel of Christ.” Have a care of this above all things. Oh, you would fain get more knowledge, and be counted as somebody in the place where you live, and be an eminent professor where you live! Well, whatever you would fain be counted as, let it be your only care that your conversation be as becomes the gospel. Oh, this point speaks bitter things, and sharply rebukes the carelessness of the professors of the gospel in the point of their conversation!

Oh, Lord, how have we cause to bewail the looseness of the professors of the gospel in this day! I fear that some may be present here whose consciences may tell them that they are very loose in the point of their conversations. You profess that you know Jesus Christ, that the Lord has made known the glorious mysteries of the gospel to you. What is your life like? Can you say in the presence of God that your conversation is answerable to that profession?

I beseech you as in the presence of God to examine this. See whether you are able to say, “Lord, Thou knowest, according to what light Thou hast given me in the gospel, that it has been my care to look to my conversation. Oh, that I might live to Thy honor and be a witness to Thy truth; that I might hold forth Thy image and further Thy designs, and make up the dishonor that

Thou hast from others in the world, and that I might convince wicked men and stop the mouths of those who are contrary! Oh, that I might be a means to convert those with whom I live, or otherwise to judge them! Oh, that I might rejoice the hearts of the saints, that they may lift up their heads with boldness because of me, that they may be established and edified!”

Go along in the rest of the headings I have mentioned. Can your conscience tell you that you have done so? No, it's quite contrary in some. The Lord speaks now to the consciences of those that this point concerns, those who have been negligent in the point of their conversation. You are the man or woman that God has as great dishonor from as from most in the world. Yes, certainly, there are no men upon the face of the earth who darken the glory of the blessed God as much as professors of religion who live loosely. All the profane ones, all your drunkards who reel up and down in the streets, your blasphemers, yes, name what sinners you will, there are none who darken the glory of God as much as you do who are loose in your conversation.

Though you are a professor of the gospel, you cast dirt upon the blessed image of God. You hinder the design that God has in the world as much as any men whatever. You stand against the great works that God has to do in the world. Oh, wretch that you are, is this a time to be loose in? There was never a time that the conversations of the professors of religion were so pried into as now, and never a time since the Christian religion was professed upon the earth that the loose conversations of professors have done more hurt. And I truly believe that there was never a time wherein there were more loose professors.

If our forefathers who were godly and holy and maintained a strict walk with God were alive again, they would spit in the faces of many who think themselves eminent professors of religion, because of the looseness of their conversations. And this

is the worst, that they can all put it upon Christ and the doctrine of Christ. But of that we shall speak more when we come to show how our conversation must be as becomes the doctrine of Christ. Certainly it is that which is quite opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord rebuke you this day, and let this point be as a dart in your liver. You are the man who lives in this generation as if you were born to do mischief. No men live as if they were born to do mischief as the professors of the gospel who live loosely in their conversations. If I should give a mark of a man who was born on purpose to do mischief, it's that man who lives in these times and walks loosely. Do you convince wicked men and stop the mouths of wicked men? Oh no, you harden them and open their mouths. Nay, you are charged with all the scorns of religion, and shall be brought to account for them.

I say, those who live loosely in their conversations shall one day be charged for all the scorn that is cast upon the profession of religion, and for all the opposition to it, and for all the persecution of it, and for all the dishonor done to it. It is because of you! You harden the hearts of wicked men so that they think they do God a good service in following and persecuting such and such men so forward in religion, for they think they are all like you. What do they care for men's talking and profession when they see your conversation loose and wicked. Therefore, they are hardened by you; and the saints fare the worse for you. They are ashamed of it when they go in the streets and meet with some of your acquaintances. "Oh," they say, "do you not know what such and such a one did last week in his house, how false he was and how he played the knave, the rascal. What is this, one who would go in the morning to hear sermons, rise up early in the winter time and take so much pains, and yet do such and such things?"

It casts a mighty scorn upon all professors of religion, and upon the ministers of the gospel, and upon the ways of the gospel. I say, all is scorned and condemned, and men are hardened against it merely for your conversation. There may have been some who were coming on and were beginning to think that the profession of religion was the way to heaven, and that they needed to be more strict than they were, and that they needed to attend upon the ministry of the Word. But, since they heard of such a miscarriage, such looseness in such a one's conversation, their hearts now rise against it and they bless themselves *from* such a way. "God bless me," they say, "*from* such ways! If the fruit of their profession and of their talking of religion is to do these kinds of things!"

You prove to be a stumbling block upon which others stumble and perish. Do you think that you shall go scot-free while they stumble and perish at your sins? Can you think that you who are a means to send so many to hell shall not go there yourself? Certainly there are no men in the world who are the cause of sending so many to hell as those who live loosely in their conversations while they make profession of religion!

Can you have any evidence to your soul that there is a work of grace in you and still live loosely? Oh, Christ and His gospel will scorn such as you, such wicked ones. You are a dishonor to Jesus Christ, a dishonor to the gospel, and I may say of you what was said of Judas, it would have been better if you had never been born, especially to be born in these times. But we shall meet with these again when we come to the point in its particulars, how we should walk as becomes the gospel. This is but only in the general for such as are loose in their conversations, for, certainly, this must be granted as an everlasting rule: That man or woman who does not make conscience of everything in their conversations makes conscience of nothing. If

there are any who, upon deliberation and knowing this or that to be sin beforehand and yet, by and for base ends, will to get money or the like, and so think to gain or free themselves from some trouble, let that man or woman know that they can have no evidence that they ever made conscience of any one thing. "He that breaks one commandment breaks all," and there is such a bond in the commandments, and conscience knits the bond so uniformly, that where there is one bond thus broken, the truth is all broken. "Knowest thou not," said James, "O vain man, what doest thou talk of faith if there be no works, thou art a vain man and thou doest deceive thy self."

Certainly, if God does not humble those who are loose in their conversations and bring down their hearts, they will grow in time not only to lose their profession, but to be enemies to those who are stricter than themselves. That is, when men and women have corrupt hearts and cannot get up to that height of strictness that others do, they fall to persecute the way that is above their own.

First they begin to envy others who live better than themselves and, after having envied them, will begin to have their hearts rise against them and hate them and, after hating, to speak against them, and after speaking against them, to persecute them. And thus, by degrees, men who have been forward professors before grow to be as bitter persecutors as others. Oh, therefore, look to your conversations!

And that should have been the exhortation to Christians to be careful of their conversations. In your families, be careful there. In Psalm 101:2, you have an excellent Scripture of David's, where he professes his care of his conversation in his family: "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." Oh, I beseech you to look to this Scripture. "I

will behave myself wisely in a perfect way." Mark it. "I'll look that my way is perfect, every way right and square to the world. And, when it is so, I will labor to behave myself wisely. I will not carry myself foolishly in those ways that are good." And then, "Oh, when will you come unto me?" Mark it. It was a time when God was absent from him, and yet, then, he professes that he will behave himself wisely in a perfect way. "And I will walk in my house with a perfect heart."

There are some who make profession of religion indeed, and, if you come to them before other company, their conversation seems to be very fair and square. But just follow them to their families and see what they do there. Will you see their conversation to be holy as becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ? It was so with David. He said, "Let those who live with me in my house mark me as narrowly as they can. I will walk in my house with a perfect heart. What I am in the congregation or among those who are godly, or in any other company, I will be in my family, so that those in my family shall see my conversation to be thus and thus."

Oh, that professors of religion would look to this, not only to live before others in the parish or the town where they live, but to walk in their family with a perfect heart so that all in their family may bless them and say, "Oh, how does my master or mistress walk! How gracious they are, in their whole course, from morning to night! Observe them in all their ways and you shall be nearly unable to find any miscarriage in them!"

That is excellent when a man shall have a better testimony from those in his family than from strangers. It may be that they think, though you make a profession of religion, that not all things in your life are answerable to your profession, but those who see it every day can testify that all things are answerable. Thus it should be with every Christian who professes the

gospel, to walk with a perfect heart in the midst of his family, and so to converse in the world. Divers arguments I shall give you to stir you up to look to your conversations.

Arguments to Stir You Up

ARGUMENT 1. *It is the mercy of God that you have your conversations among men to this day, that you do not have your conversations among devils and reprobates.* It might have been your portion that your conversation might have been among devils and reprobates. God might have sent you down to your own place to have conversed with them. Let this be an argument for you to look to your conversations.

ARGUMENT 2. *Consider this: wicked and carnal men, among whom you live, have no skills in the principles that you walk by, but they have skill in your lives and conversations.* They are able to pass judgment upon your lives and conversations, but not on your principles.

Godly people are acted by such and such principles that are mysteries to carnal men. But now, when it comes to their lives, they can understand them. They cannot search into their principles as to whether such a doctrine is true or not, or whether such a thing is according to Scripture, or whether there is a right interpretation of Scripture that carries them on in such a way. They take no pains to look after this, but they look to your lives. There they have skill to discern how you walk, and whether you walk to the rule or not in your lives and conversations. Therefore, let it be your great care to look to your conversations.

ARGUMENT 3. *There are some things that you cannot but do that will displease wicked men if you act according to your principles.* Well, but this should make you so much the more careful of your conversation in all other things so that wicked men may be convinced. If such men do some things that I do not

understand, yet, surely, it is for something that God has made known to them more than to me, for I find this, that in all things that I do understand, there they walk exactly. Therefore, though there are some things that they do which I cannot understand, why should I be enraged at them? For example, in the point of institution of worship, which does not depend upon the light of nature at all, but merely upon Scripture, and such and such interpretations of Scripture, in such principles wicked men have no skill. Now the professors of religion are tied up by institution and by the words of Scripture thus interpreted which they think in their consciences is the truth. Having compared all things together, they think this is the mind of Christ rather than the other and, as long as they think thus, they must follow it.

Now, there are many of these things that carnal men do not understand, for they take not pains to search into them, and therefore they will be angry with you for them. And, indeed, they will have cause to be angry with you for those things they do not understand if they do not see you making conscience of those things that they do understand. But if, in other things that they do understand, you walk circumspectly, and that it appears to them that in those things they understand you walk conscionably, then they will believe that it was mere conscience that made you differ from them in those things which they did not understand or in which they had not skill. This will make them ready to stand for you, yes, to speak and plead for you, if you are careful to walk blamelessly in all those things that they understand. They will be convinced in their consciences that, if these men differ from us, it's conscience that makes them different, for, they say, we find that in all those things we understand, these men walk conscionably.

Certainly, a holy conversation will make many men, even

carnal men themselves, plead for liberty of conscience (as far as things are not destructive to the godliness of the Kingdom) for such men. They will say, "Were they all such men as these men, they might very well be borne withal, for they differ in nothing but that which conscience puts them upon. We find them in all their ways square and just. They walk conscionably." Therefore, be careful of your conversations, because in some things you cannot help but do those things that will displease wicked men.

ARGUMENT 4. *Consider that your lives are short.* Within awhile you must have your conversations either among devils or angels, one of the two, and how soon it may be only God knows. Now, then, I would appeal and put this to your consciences. Are your conversations now such as can give you comfort? Oh, I hope within awhile that I shall have my conversation among angels. Why, I desire now that the will of God may be done on earth as it is in heaven, and that my family and life were, as it were, a heaven. I would fain have my conversation in heaven now, and this gives me some good hope that my conversation shall be with angels within a while.

But, on the other side, will not men's consciences misgive them? If you would make a judgment of what your conversation shall be within awhile by what they are now, are not the conversations of many of you in your family, and when you come in some company, more like those that are appointed to have their conversations with devils?

Why? What's done among devils? There's hatred of religion, of God, and of the saints. There's railing and blaspheming. The devils accuse the brethren and blaspheme the name of God. And what is different about your conversation from theirs? Know that your conversation is such as is an evident fore-runner. If you continue as you are now, within a while your

conversation will be among devils, for that is the most suitable to you.

And, my brethren, consider further the eyes of the world. Yes, the eyes of God, and of Christ, and of the angels are upon you to see how grace acts in your conversations. The eyes of the world are upon you, watching for your halting and rejoicing. Remember this: your conversations are not only before men, but the eyes of God, and of Christ, and His holy angels look upon you wherever you are. When you are in your family, there God, and Christ, and His holy angels stand looking upon you to see what your conversation is with your wife, husband, children, and servants. When you come into company, there the Lord God, and Jesus Christ, and angels stand looking upon you and, therefore, look to your conversations.

And besides, the eyes of the wicked men are upon you. They watch for your halting, and they would rejoice to see anything that they might have against you. Think of that place we had before in I Peter 2:12, where the Holy Ghost said, "That whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." The word translated "behold" means "beholding with a narrow circumspection." It is not only seeing, but with a narrow circumspection. Oh, it's an excellent thing when wicked men bend their eyes and look narrowly upon the saints! And they would be glad and would rejoice if they could find them halting, yet they are able to find nothing. It was said of Christ that the Pharisees were sent to watch Him, but they could find nothing amiss in Him; and so, though others should be sent on purpose to watch your lives, yet your lives should be so exact that they might find nothing amiss in you.

CONCLUSION

I conclude all with that excellent promise we have to such as are careful of their conversations in Psalm 50:23. These times you all cry out of as dangerous times. Mark this one Scripture. It will help you who are careful of your conversations against the danger of the time in which we live. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." There are times that you are called upon for praises and thanksgiving for mercies. We are bound to do that. But mark, do not put off God with a verbal praise. It's true, he who offers praise honors God, but there must be an ordering of our conversation with it. It is to the one that orders his conversation that God will show His salvation.

This is that which is required of Christians: to order their conversations aright. Oh, it's an excellent thing to see the conversations of Christians in a due order, all guided with spiritual wisdom and holiness! Oh, to that man or woman who is careful to order their conversations aright, here is a promise: the Lord will show them His salvation. Whatever times you live in, though never so dangerous, though God appears never so dreadful in the times in which you live, yet, how great it would be if you could have this testimony of your conscience, "Lord, You know it is the care of my soul not only to make profession of religion, but to order my conversation aright. Therefore, Lord, save me in evil times. Lord, show me Your salvation."

You may take this promise and lay it upon your heart and comfort your heart with it. You may plead it to God in prayer. Oh, make it to be a matter of your prayer to God in these evil times, that the Lord would show His salvation to you, because He has put it into your heart, through His grace, to order your conversation aright!

SERMON 2

(March 8, 1645)

“Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

*W*e concluded the last day with an exhortation to Christians. Do you hope that God has wrought the work of conversion? Then be careful of your conversation. And there were many motives to stir up Christians to be careful of their conversations. I shall not look back but proceed, and I will only give you a few rules which I desire to add unto the motives, and then we shall come to the second point.

Look to your conversations and especially observe these rules.

Rules to Stir Up Christians to Be Careful of Their Conversations

RULE 1. *If you are convinced that it ought to be your care to look to your conversations, then have a special regard to the duties of your relations.* The work of grace in men’s conversations appears much in the duties of their relations: children towards their parents, parents towards their children, servants towards their masters, masters towards their servants, husbands towards their wives, wives towards their husbands, the younger towards the elder, and the elder towards the younger. If you stand in a private place or a public place, if you are a magistrate or a servant, if you profess godliness, then manifest it in your conversations in performing the duties of your relations. Whatever men may

talk of godliness, unless it appears in their relations, unless a servant is a diligent, obedient, and faithful servant, all his or her talk of religion is to no purpose. Unless a child is an obedient and loving child, unless a wife is an obedient and loving wife, all profession of religion is to no purpose. Likewise, on the other side, unless masters, husbands, and parents are careful in their places to perform the duties of their relation, all their religion will come to nothing. Look to your conversations in the duties of your relations.

RULE 2. Look to yourselves in those things especially in which you are most in danger to offend in. Take heed of that special sin that you are most inclined to, that it does not break forth in your conversations. It may be that in your conversation you will have a care that you do not offend in such and such things that you see other men offend in, but there is some special haunt of evil. There is some other sin that your natures are most inclined to, and you may give liberty to yourselves in that. This spoils your conversations, this darkens your conversations. No matter what good you do otherwise, this spoils it all. If you give liberty to yourselves in that corruption which your natures are most prone to, nay, if you are not more watchful against that corruption than any other, your conversation will have no beauty at all. God will have no glory in it. You will only dishonor your profession. Therefore, if you would make conscience to have your conversation rightly ordered, be very watchful over yourselves in that special sin your nature is most inclined to.

Are you one who finds yourself very hasty by nature? You may not be guilty of other sins as much, but this one will spoil the beauty of your conversation. A man or woman who is a froward, peevish, and passionate professor has no beauty in their conversations. And so, if you find you are disposed to

penuriousness and covetousness, that will darken all and will carry you into foolish lusts (as the Scripture speaks). O how have men who have made profession of religion, by one fit of base covetousness, been carried into such foolish lusts that every boy in the street could point at them as foolish and silly ones, and crack their credits and names, and wound their souls, yes, and endanger their lives, and make them a byword to all, and dishonor their professions, and get nothing by it at length! Covetousness carries into foolish lusts—foolish, base sordid extremes—unbecoming the gospel of Christ, as we shall hear more of when we come to speak of what conversation we should have as becomes the gospel of Christ. Take heed of your special sins if you would be careful of your conversations.

RULE 3. Take heed of temptations that you are liable to without, by reason of your calling, by reason of the places in which you are, or through any providence of God. Take heed of those temptations that most attend your condition. Every one should consider this: what temptation am I most liable to? Some men's callings are liable to some temptations, other men's to others. Some men, by reason of their business and occasions in the world, are liable to such and such temptations, and others are not. Sometimes a man is liable to some temptations which he is not liable to at other times. When you are at sea, you have your temptations there in foreign places; and, when you come home, you have other temptations. Yes, many times, when a man is at home among his neighbors, he does not dare take the liberty that he does when he is abroad on a journey. Then he thinks he is free, when no one knows of it, and there is his temptation. So you who come from the sea, when you were there, you were kept short of many comforts and of much company. Now, when you come home, the company comes around you and now there is a temptation there that was not there before.

Now, if you would make conscience of your conversations, you should look to your temptations and consider what temptations you are liable to now that you were not liable to before, and be careful of them. You pray to God that you may not be led into temptations, but delivered from evil. If you would not dally with God in your prayers, then be careful of yourselves when a temptation comes to such and such evils. This is a vain plea for men and women to say, "Oh, the temptation was a strong temptation!" God expected, therefore, if you have the Spirit of Christ and wisdom, that you should foresee temptations, and especially that you should be careful when temptations come. You should watch against all temptations. What a vain plea it would be for a soldier who guards a town to say, "Oh, but they came against such a weak part of the town with a great strength!" That's no argument to excuse him for, if you knew that it was the weakest part, you could not help but know that, if the enemy knew of it, he would come against that with his greatest strength. And, therefore, you should have manned that part rather than any other part of the town. So let us not say, "Oh, the temptation came strongly upon me in such a thing!" We should watch the more against that which the temptations comes strongest upon us in, for the devil knows where we are weakest. And that's the third rule to help us in our conversations.

RULE 4. Take heed of defiling yourselves with the sins of the times wherein you live. The Lord expects that every Christian should look to himself in regard to the present times wherein he lives, and consider what the special sins are of that time, age, or place. There are commonly some truths which are more eminently revealed in one age than another, and there are some sins that prevail more in one age than another, in one place more than another. Nearly every country has sins that are most dominant. You should consider, I say, what are the sins of the

times, of the places where you live. Many think to excuse themselves because that which they do is but what others do. It is the common sin of the time and place where they live. You should be so much the more careful to avoid it that you may keep yourself undefiled in your way. And that's a fourth rule for helping us in our conversations.

RULE 5. Live so that your lives shall be convincing lives. Then take heed of any secret sin; take heed of keeping any sin at all within your heart, for it will break out. Take heed of entertaining sin so much as in your thoughts or affections. What's the reason that some who have been professors of religion a great while, and seemed to be very glorious in their profession, at length break out into some vile, scandalous sin? Surely the reason is that they have kept hidden some corruption within, and they have thought it a very horrible thing that this corruption in my heart and thought should ever break out. "Oh, God forbid!" he says. "I hope I shall never live to that time to be so left of God as to commit this sin!" Well, you think verily that you shall not commit it, but if you take liberty to dally and play with this sin secretly in your thoughts and affections, it is just with God to leave you to shame yourself; to leave you to the commission of that sin that you have for a long time kept dangling in your thoughts and affections, although it is with resolution not to commit it. The man who pleases himself in any kind of secret sin will find it just with God to lead him forth with the worker of iniquity so as to lay his shame open and naked before all with whom he lives. Therefore, you who are professors of religion, be careful of secret sins if you would not dishonor your profession by your conversation.

RULE 6. If you would be careful of your conversations, do not so much look at those who are beneath you and in the lower form as let your eye be

upon those who are most eminent in their conversations. Look upon them rather as your mark and aim. Many Christians live and their conversations are very dark and have no beauty in them at all. Why? Because they think they live as others do. They look upon such as are beneath them, and they think their lives are rather better than some others who have made profession, and this makes them go on in a dull and sluggish way. But now, if you would have your conversation indeed as it ought to be so as to be convincing, set before you the examples of the most eminent of those whose conversation most glitters. I do not mean those with a mere glittering show, but that glitter which comes from diamonds, gold, and pearls; those who have the excellency of grace shining in their very faces and conversations. Set them before you and labor to imitate them, and this will help you in your conversations.

We have a Scripture for this in Hebrews 13:7: “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.” It is supposed that they should be the most eminent, those who have the rule over you, those who are your guides; but mark, he speaks of those who had spoken unto them the Word of God. He does not speak of the rulers in civil matters, but of the ministers who were their guides, for so the word is. Now, though there is a work of ruling as well as teaching we find in Scripture, yet we find no rule of any minister but over those unto whom they speak the Word of God. What rule any minister has is over those to whom he speaks the Word of God. If any minister shall come to rule over a people, those people may well ask them, “Have you spoken the Word of God to us? Do you teach us the Word of God? Do you challenge rule over us and have not spoken the Word of God to us?” Remember them which have the rule over you, who have

spoken unto you the Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversations.

They were, it seems, eminent in holiness of life, and eminent so as they continued in that way of eminency. And the apostle would have all Christians to look at them. It's a notable Scripture to show that the ministers of the Word should be eminent in their conversations every way, and that all those to whom they speak the Word of God should see in their conversations the beauty and excellency of the Word of God they speak to them, for people look at the lives of ministers as well as listen to their words. It is not enough only to be a good man in the pulpit unless it is in the constant way of their conversations.

RULE 7. You have here in Hebrews 13:7: "Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." That is, do not be careful of your conversations only at first, when you begin to be professors of religion, but be constant to the very end. Mark, "considering the end of their conversations." He does not mean "the end" as simply the reward that comes upon their conversations, that they shall have a glorious reward, but considering "the end." It is as if he should say, "Look at these who have spoken the Word of God to you. They do not come only at the very first to you and speak great things, and seem as if they were saints or angels who had come among you, but they go on in a constant way. Whatever discouragements they have, they go on in a constant way to the very dying day." Observe not only what they were when they first came among you, but what they are in the end of their conversations. Then follow them.

This is a notable Scripture to show how careful Christians ought to be, not only to be holy in their conversations when their hearts are first stirred by the ministry of the Word, as it is with many. There are many who, when the Word of God first comes to them and they are first enlightened and converted,

are very strict! Oh, how careful are they! They walk exactly and are afraid of the least sin. They examine everything by the Word. Oh, how curious they are in everything then! Their consciences are very tender, and they are afraid that this is a sin and the other thing is a sin, and there is a mighty change in the family. Their masters or parents see them afraid of everything and careful of their very words. On the Lord's Day they are careful in seeking God and attending upon the ordinances. In their particular calling, at first, they are very strict. But now, within a little time, you shall find many of these who, by degrees, grow more loose in their conversations, and especially in these times, because in these times there is a way that the devil has to get men to be loose in their conversations.

This has not been known in England before. Indeed, it was known in Germany, and there it was common in the beginning of Luther's Reformation to think that it is weakness in men to make conscience of duty, to be troubled for their sin and humbled. It was weakness in Paul, Peter, and David when they were so troubled for their sin. O this is a most horrid and abominable wickedness that dishonors the gospel of Christ and will make it ridiculous to the world! Such carriages of people! To think that they may take liberty to walk in a loose way because of the gospel. But to that we shall come more fully when we speak how our conversations should be becoming the gospel of Christ.

But I speak this in this point as a preparation to that, and especially to young professors who have been wrought upon by the Word within these few years since there has been more freedom of preaching the gospel. And I verily believe that divers of you in this congregation know many young ones and others who have been wrought upon by the ministry of the Word who, for the first year, were very exact, very careful of their lives, and very punctual in every thing, but now you see them begin to

grow loose, wanton, and vain in their conversations. Oh, this is a sad and evil thing! If you would be careful of your conversations, observe this seventh rule. Do not be careful only at the first work of God upon you when you begin to be enlightened, but in the constant course of your lives.

Oh, give me a professor of religion who was wrought upon when he was a youth or a young maid and yet continues till they are old disciples in a constant way of holiness and strictness! Oh, they are the most beautiful objects there are in the world to behold! The sun in the firmament is not as glorious as an ancient professor of religion who has continued constant in the ways of godliness from his youth, who can say, as good Obadiah once said, 1 Kings 18:12, "I have feared the Lord from my youth," and my conscience, though it tells me of many failings and weaknesses, excuses me in this, that I have endeavored, with a good conscience, to walk with God and without offense to man. I have not given way to myself in any way of looseness since God made Himself known to me. Oh, such may have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven and die with abundance of comfort! But thus much for this first point: that Christians ought to be careful of their conversations.

We now come to the second, and that is the main point in the text, "Let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ."

DOCTRINE 2. Every kind of conversation of professors is not enough. It must rise to that height as must be suitable to the gospel of Christ, meet for the gospel that they profess. That's our point.

Now we shall come to the particulars, what conversation it is

that is meet for the gospel of Jesus Christ. I gave you the headings in the opening of it, but now I shall speak to them.

1. *That conversation which is meet and becomes the gospel of Christ must be a conversation raised to a higher degree than the light of nature will raise it.* That conversation which is no higher than possibly may be raised by the light of nature is certainly not a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ. That is beneath and not fit for the gospel of Christ.

To live exactly according to the light of nature is beneath the conversation of one who becomes the gospel of Christ. For example, suppose a man is in his boat here on the Thames and rows very exactly. This is not a work suitable to show the skill of a navigator, of one who professes the art of navigation. It's beneath that. Why so? If a man should boast that he has great skill in the art of navigation, how will he show this skill? He will go into a boat and there he will row over the Thames, and by that you may see what a mighty navigator he is. This would be ridiculous to any man. And so, if one who professes the gospel of Christ would manifest that he is a good Christian, what does he do? The life that he lives is no other than a man by the light of nature may be enabled to do. This is as ridiculous as the other.

As now, for instance, the light of nature will teach this: we are to worship God. The heathens have worshipped God in their way.

Yes, the light of nature will teach that we must live justly among men. Yes, and that we must do as we would be done to, the light of nature will teach this. Many of the heathens have had that principle to be just with men, to do as we would be done to. The light of nature condemns gross sins such as drunkenness, adultery, and swearing. I could give you many instances

in the laws of heathens punishing those sins very severely, and some of them with death.

Yes, the light of nature will rise this high, that a man should be conscientious, should make conscience of secret sins, of sins that none in the world could know of, or are ever likely to know of. I remember that I have told you of one of the heathens who owed a shoemaker for a pair of shoes, and nobody knew it but the shoemaker himself. The shoemaker died and nobody could challenge this bill of him, yet his conscience would never let him be quiet until he ran and threw the money into the shop and said, "Though he is dead to others, yet he is not dead to me." He had a temptation to keep it because nobody could challenge it. He knew it was not his. He knew it either belonged to the children or the executors, and so he restored it. Many particulars might be named to show how far we might go by the light of nature; but now I only bring it in to this end, to show that if we would have our conversations such as becomes the gospel of Christ, we must go beyond whatever any have done by the light of nature. And yet, O Lord, how short do many professors of religion come of this! How many will profess they hope to be saved by Christ!

I suppose there is not anyone in this congregation, or if I should go to every one's house that belongs to the parish, they would say they hope to be saved by Jesus Christ; and yet what worship of God is there? And what justice is there among men to do as they would be done by? Nay, this is a rule that will examine many professors of religion, and their consciences would tell them that in such and such things they would be loath to be dealt with as they deal with others. And for gross sins, many professors of religion break out into them also, for all are a kind of professors of the gospel at large, drunkards, adulterers, and blasphemers, and yet they will come and make

profession of religion and think it a great offense if they should be denied the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. Why? Are they not Christians? And their children Christians? And yet must they not be baptized? And yet they are beneath heathens. The heathens will rise up in judgment against them.

I appeal to every one of your consciences. Are there no sins which you live in that your conscience condemns you for? A heathen would not do it; a heathen would not live willfully in a sin that his conscience tells him is a sin. Many of the heathens came to that; and what way have you made in profession? Perhaps you have seemed to be in the school of Christ many years, and others take you for a forward professor, and yet your conscience tells you that you live in some sins that are known sins to you but, because they are secret and no one knows them but yourself, therefore you have continued in them and ventured upon them hoping of God's pardon. Being, perhaps, but one, and no great one, I say, in this you are beneath the light of nature and, therefore, you are far from having your conversations be "such as becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ." This conversation of yours is not such as becomes the light of nature. Divers heathens would abhor such conversation in Christians. They would hardly keep company with you. There are many who make profession of religion who, I say, if they lived among heathens, the heathens would not keep company with a great part of this kingdom, yes, and of most congregations. Therefore, they should not think much, though they may not be admitted into such a near communion as the Lord's Supper.

QUESTION. You will say then, "But what is that conversation becoming the gospel that is beyond the light of nature?"

ANSWER. First, the light of nature, I tell you, teaches to worship a God. That many of you do, you worship God. Aye, but

this is that which becomes the gospel of Christ, to worship and honor God as a Father, and as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That goes beyond the light of nature in that particular. Not only am I convinced that there is a God, and that He is the Creator of heaven and earth, and my Creator, and therefore I'll worship Him, but I do not do that which becomes the gospel of Christ until I get myself to this: that I am able, through the grace of the gospel, to worship God as a Father reconciled to me in Christ, and as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so do I come and present all my services unto God. This few of our civil men do; yet your civil men will make profession of the gospel too, and your civil men worship God in but a mere natural way. The God of heaven and earth that made them is to be worshipped. They can say their old catechism:

Q. "Who made you?"

A. "God."

Q. "And wherefore did He make you?"

A. "He made me to serve Him."

Aye, but do you (when you come to serve and worship the Lord) look upon God as a Father reconciled in Christ, and as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so do you tender up all your services to God? You are not raised to that which becomes the gospel of Christ unless you worship God in this way. This is that which becomes the gospel of Christ; and know that all other worship that you tender up to God (merely as God is Creator, God made me, and therefore I must serve Him), I say, all that worship, if you go no further, God rejects. Indeed, we are to worship God as a Creator. God would have that, yes, but if He does not have that and the other too, if He does not have both, He will not accept either one; for the first is included in the second, but the second is not included in the first.

A man who worships God as a Father, and the Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, worships God as a Creator too; but a man may worship God as a Creator and not at all be acquainted with Him as a Father, and the Father of our Lord Jesus. Therefore, until the Lord, in the ministry of the gospel, has been pleased to shine in upon your soul as a Father, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and you come to worship God thus, or at least until the endeavor of your soul is that you may worship God in this way, you do not worship God as becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ. You are not satisfied in worshiping God the other way, because He made you and your heart works like this, "Indeed, I do not have the full assurance that He is my Father, but this is that which, until I have gotten it, my heart is unsatisfied and I cannot be quiet in any other kind of worshiping God. Until I find some ability to tender up all to Him as a Father, and as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I do not, in that particular, worship God as becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And so, in the point of justice, you give every one his own. Aye, but this is beneath that which is required in your dealing with men according to the gospel of Christ. If you read the 5th chapter of Matthew, you shall find what Christ requires when He comes to preach. He raises the point of justice beyond doing as we would be dealt with. Christ there says, "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

This is higher than to merely be just, and for one man not to wrong another. You shall have many men say, "Who is able to say, 'black is my eye?' I live and nobody can say I wrong them."

You think this is an excellent conversation. It's true, it is good in its kind, and it would be good if all professors of religion could say they live so that nobody can charge them with

unjust dealings. Aye, but this does not rise to that height to be the conversation as becomes the gospel of Christ. You must come to this height so as to love your enemies, and to bless them that curse you. You must do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you. Can you find this? This is something like the gospel of Christ; this is something more than to do no wrong to others.

And, to do as we would be done to, we must go higher. We must not only set this as a pattern: "I'll do as I would be done by." No, our pattern must be: "I'll labor to do to another as God has done by me." This is higher. It is this frame of mind: "Has God showed Himself gracious unto me? I'll labor to do that good to others as much as I am able, even as God has done to me."

You have two Scriptures for that. Ephesians 4:31–32: 'Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice, and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another.' The light of nature now will justify all this. But mark the conclusion, "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Set the example of God before you, what God has done for you for Christ's sake, and let that be the great motive. Do not only argue like this: "Well, I would be forgiven if I had offended, and I would not have another to bear anger and malice against me." This is a low principle. But if I find that this is revealed in the gospel, that the Lord, for Christ's sake, has forgiven me, and it's this that quiets my passion, when I feel my corruption rising and stirring against any who has offended me, when I think of God's mercy in forgiving me for Christ's sake, this quiets me. It is something like that which becomes the gospel of Christ when we walk upon such principles as these are.

A second Scripture is in Colossians 3:13: "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a quarrel

against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” It is very unbecoming such as profess the gospel of Christ to be quarrelsome with their neighbors. Now you shall have some who are of very meek and quiet dispositions naturally. “I love to live quiet,” say some men. So you may come this far in not loving to quarrel simply by the light of nature. But now, when any causes a quarrel, do you labor to quiet the quarrel on this ground, even as Christ forgave you? “Oh, I have found the Lord Jesus Christ, notwithstanding my wretchedness against Him, and all the wrong I have done Him. He has forgiven me and, therefore, seeing Christ will not take advantage of me as He might, I will not take advantage against another.” Is it upon this ground?

And do you raise your conversation with your neighbor in keeping from quarrelsomeness and contentiousness? Do you raise it to this height upon this ground, so as to forgive as Christ has forgiven you: “I will not forgive in this particular alone, or in this lesser offense, but as Christ has forgiven me.” We shall still have further occasion to mention these things in opening the suitableness of our conversations to the gospel. That’s for the point of justice. It must rise higher than that of doing as we would be done by.

And then for gross sins, you keep from them. You thank God you are no swearer, no drunkard, no whoremonger. Such kind of notorious sins you are not guilty of, but what are you in respect of inward sins? What are you in respect of secret sins? Mark that Scripture in Matthew 5:20. Christ said there, “I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” We shall likewise speak further of this when we open that of the law, that our conversations must rise higher than the conversations of those who lived under the law, or else it does not become the gospel of Christ.

You shall find further in the chapter how Christ would raise them higher than merely not to commit adultery or be openly wicked and profane. In the 27th verse we read, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And then, If thy right hand offend thee cut it off.”

And so it was with the point of anger, verses 21 and 22: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say unto his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” That is, liable to the same judgment that you think murder is. Now, is your conversation such as becomes the gospel?

Here Christ is a great preacher of the gospel, and shows that there is more strictness in the gospel than there is by the light of nature or by the law, or by that which they understand by the law. The light of nature dictates that men should not kill, nor commit adultery; but now, if your conversation is such as becomes the gospel, then you must make conscience of anger and tremble at that as a natural man would tremble at murder, for that becomes the gospel.

I say, one who is a professor of the gospel should tremble at sinful anger as a natural man would tremble at murder; for observe here what they said murder made a man liable to. It was the same thing Christ said anger would make a man liable to; therefore, one who would walk as becomes the gospel must

tremble at the inward sin of anger as a natural man would tremble at the outward sin of murder.

And so it is with adultery. You say that you are no whoremonger, but one who professes the gospel must look at the lusting of the eye and the heart as a natural man, who has only the light of nature, would look upon the commission of adultery; for Christ says that upon the lust of the heart lays the commission of adultery. This is as becomes the gospel.

Further, by the light of nature a man may be conscientious. That is, he may make conscience of several sins.

QUESTION. But now you will say, "Wherein should a man go beyond this as becomes the gospel? What can any man who professes the gospel do beyond this, of making conscience of a secret sin? Even though he knew that nobody in the world would ever know his sin, yet he does not dare do it. How can a man go beyond that?"

ANSWER. Yes, you must labor for the mortification of the body of sin that is within you, not only to make conscience to keep from the act of secret sins, but your work must be to labor for the mortification of the body of sin and death that is in you. That is what is revealed by the gospel that no man, by the light of nature, ever knew. You shall never read among all the philosophers, on the point of original sin, nor of mortification of the body of sin and death. This the light of nature never tells. So that now, when a man comes to this height, that is, first my conscience being enlightened by the Word so that I dare not commit any secret sin for all the world, though there is no one but God and my conscience together, but, besides that, Oh, I carry about with me a body of sin and death, a root of bitterness, that original corruption, and this makes me cry out with Paul, "O wretched man, O wretched woman, who

shall deliver me from this body of death?" Oh, that I could find this mortified in me; this is that which is the strength and endeavor of my soul: to get this body of sin to be mortified.

Aye, this is as becomes the gospel, to live in your conversations so that it may appear that you are not content merely to keep from actual sins, though in secret; but it is your great care and endeavor to mortify this very body of death that is within you. And by this, a great many of your civil men, and mere moral men, will, or at least may, be convinced that their conversation comes short of that which becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ, for they are not acquainted with this.

Lastly, if you would have your conversations such as becomes the gospel of Christ, you must not only think to make conscience of secret sins, but that which you do you must manifest that it proceeds out of love; not only that you obey, but that you love the commandment that you obey. Now this neither any hypocrite or mere moral man does, if you take it universally one commandment as well as another.

OBJECTION. You will say, "Love is a secret thing."

ANSWER. As in your family there is a difference between your children's obedience to you and your servant's, so there may appear a difference between the obedience of one that is merely moral, or does it out of conscience, and the other that does it out of love. Therefore, you must know that you do not rise beyond the light of nature, except that you love the command as well as obey the command, and so carry things in your conversations so as to make it appear that all those ways of God that you make conscience of, that you likewise have a love unto them, and do them out of a principle of love. And thus you come beyond the light of nature, and, in some measure, it is as becomes the gospel of Christ.

And that's the first thing, how we should walk in our conversations as becomes the gospel of Christ. But now this is the lowest of all.

2. *Our conversation must be such as is beyond such as live under the law, for the law of God goes higher than the light of nature, for there's more revealed there than in the light of nature.* It's true, if that which you call the moral law, the light of nature, is clearly suitable to you, to the most part of it, only there is some part that is positive, but most part is only suitable to the principles of nature, if they were clear and pure. But now, because since the fall of man the light of nature is darkened, and the principles of nature are much corrupted, therefore God has given His law, that is, as it were, but a glass of His will, that is, the clear glass of what was written in the heart of man in innocence; that's the law. Only there is that limitation of the Seventh Day, particularly from the Creation that has something positive in it; but take all the other, and it is nothing but a glass of what was written in the heart of man in the time of innocency.

There was written in man's heart to keep some solemn time for the worship of God, only the specification was by revelation, but the substance of all those Ten Commandments is the glass of what was written in the heart of man in innocency. And, because God saw that this writing was so much blotted out, almost completely obliterated, therefore God wrote it in tablets of stone; whereas it was written in the tablet of man's heart at first. But now, when He comes to bring men to the gospel, He there writes over that law again in the tablets of their hearts.

At first, it was written in the heart of Adam, but he, falling into sin, blots it out in a great measure. Then God wrote it all over again, but how? He writes it in a fair copy, but it is in tablets

of stone. But when God writes it over again, it is on the tablets of their hearts.


Now this gives you a little hint of the difference between the law and the gospel, between the conversations of men that were merely legal, and the conversation that is evangelical. But the opening of it is to show the difference between the law and the gospel in reference to this, and to show how low the conversation was that was merely legal, and how high raised the conversation of a Christian ought to be if he would make it evangelical, such as becomes the gospel of Christ, would ask more time, and, therefore, we must defer that to the next day.

SERMON 3

(March 15, 1645)

“Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

 conversation becoming the gospel of Christ must be beyond what the law can enable one to attain to, or else it does not become the gospel of Christ.

I have showed you already what the gospel of Christ is; but now we are upon the point of conversation, that it must be higher than can be by the law. Those who live under the gospel must live in a higher way of holiness than those who lived under the law. Now for this we are to consider the law under these two considerations.

1. As it is a covenant of works for life, so it was made at first to Adam.

It was a covenant of works for eternal life to Adam, and so to mankind in him.

2. We are to consider the law as in the ministration of it by Moses.

Take it either of these two ways. Those who live under the gospel and profess the gospel must live in a more holy conversation, or aim or endeavor at least after a more holy conversation than that conversation could be that was under the law. As now, I ask this: The law was the covenant of life to Adam, and what was his conversation?

The Covenant of Works for Eternal Life

1. *It was obedience to God merely as Creator, no further.* In innocence, Adam looked upon God as Creator of all things, as the First-being of all, and so Adam offered up his service to God merely as the Creator and First-being. That was his obedience.

2. *The law to Adam had promise only of natural things, of a natural life to be continued.* We do not read of God's promising Adam to live in heaven if he had obeyed, but "do this and live." That was the tenor of the covenant with him. That is, he should have continued in paradise and so have lived a natural life, but yet continued eternally. God would have upheld that natural life of his; that's all we read that God ever promised Adam if he had stood by virtue of the covenant of the law. That's the second thing considerable in him. So that his obedience was tendered up to God to the end that he might obtain the continuance of a natural life here in this world. We find no more revealed.

The first Adam was the natural man, the second the spiritual man; the first of the earth, earthly, the second the Lord from heaven. The apostle, in 1 Corinthians 15, speaks of Adam in innocence as the common head of all mankind. He was of the earth, earthly, and in a way of distinction, the second Adam was the Lord from heaven who brings all heavenly glory. Though Adam had stood, yet we never read of any heavenly glory that ever he or his posterity should have had, but the second Adam is the Lord from heaven who brings heavenly glory with Him. That's the second thing considerable in the law as a covenant with Adam.

3. *Adam, under the Law, must have wrought by his own strength, that which he received.* God, at first, gave man strength for obedience, and he puts his stock into his own hand, and so he must have wrought and continued by the power of the strength that

God gave him at first. He did not have that fountain to go to for that continual supply of strength like we have, which you shall presently see.

4. *Adam was in such a condition as he was in hazard of miscarrying for his eternal estate.* He was indeed in a way of obedience to the law that God gave him, but still so as he was in hazard of eternal miscarrying. This was the condition of Adam under the Law.

OBJECTION. You will say that he was holy and had no sin.

ANSWER. But consider his condition under the Law. It was obedience to God as a Creator. He worked for natural good; he worked by the strength he had received and was in hazard of miscarrying eternally. Now, compare his condition with the condition of the saints in the time of the gospel, and you will find the condition of the saints having the fruit of the gospel to be a great deal better condition even now. They not only shall be in heaven, but are in a better condition now than Adam was in paradise.

(1.) Adam obeyed God and tendered up his service to God as a Creator. But now the people of God under the gospel, those who are brought home to God by the gospel, look upon God under another relation; not merely as Creator, but all the services that they tender up to God is as unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and their Father in Him. "I ascend to My Father, and your Father," said Christ (John 20:17). It's true, we still look upon God as the First-being of all things and as Creator, but we look upon Him in a higher relation than merely our Creator. We look upon Him as the Father of Jesus Christ, and so in Jesus Christ as our Father. And so we tender up obedience to Him in that way, and surely such obedience

tendered up to God as under such a relation should be a higher kind of obedience, a higher kind of holiness, than was in Adam.

(2.) We have better promises than Adam ever had. We have promises of heavenly glory that he did not have. God does not say to us, "Live here in the world a natural life, and I will free you from outward troubles, and from the death of the body." But we know that the gospel brings immortality and glory to light. It tells us of the glory of heaven, and of the mansions that Jesus Christ is gone before to prepare, of the glorious communion that the saints shall have with God in the highest heavens, which is another manner of motive to obedience than ever Adam had. And, therefore, our obedience to God should be raised in a higher way than ever his was.

(3.) The strength that we have is not put into our hands to keep and so to improve, and that is all there is. But Jesus Christ, the Second Person in the Trinity, is filled with all fullness, that we might receive grace for grace continually from the fullness of Jesus Christ, who has all the treasures of wisdom in Him. It pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell in Him. Now the saints by faith have, as it were, a pipe laid into that Cistern that has all fullness, from whence continually, by the work of faith, they draw strength and nourishment, new supply from Him. They do not have something given to them, and so are set to trade for themselves and improve what is given to them, but they draw new virtue from Jesus Christ as from a Head.

Adam was the head of the first covenant himself, but now it is Jesus Christ who is the Head of the second covenant, and all believers draw spirits from Jesus Christ, and strength from Him as from the Head. They have a Head that Adam did not have

to draw strength from and, therefore, they are to manifest the strength of Jesus Christ in all their ways. The fullness that is in Jesus Christ they are to make appear to the world in their lives and conduct. And therefore, that text in Colossians 1:10–11 is very remarkable, “that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” Mark the 11th verse, “strengthened with all might according to His glorious power.” This is worthy of the Lord, because now we come to receive of His fullness, of the fullness of Jesus Christ, and to have a continual supply from Him. Though it is true, God has ordered that as long as we live we shall have some mixtures of corruption here, but yet He has provided a help for us, a fullness in His Son, that from Him we should draw of His fullness, and so come to be strengthened with all His might.

(4.) We now serve the Lord and obey Him in our lives as those who are delivered from the hazard of eternal miscarrying. Adam obeyed, but yet he might know when he was obeying. “I now obey, but I am in danger of miscarrying eternally, every hour to undo myself and posterity forever.” But now, certainly, this very thought, and the understanding of this, could not stand with that full freedom of spirit that the saints may now have under the gospel. The saints under the gospel come in a way of obedience to God and, upon this ground, have their feet, as it were, upon sure ground.

“Well, as for my eternal estate, the hazard of miscarrying there is over. I bless God that it is over, for now my obedience is not that I might work out and earn salvation, but my obedience to God now is (being set safe upon the shore) that I might live to the praise of the grace of God who has delivered me from a danger of miscarrying, and has set me with Jesus Christ in heavenly places. I am now already set in heavenly places with Jesus

Christ, and I am as sure of heaven (for so a believer may come to be) as if I were already there. And so I am now to begin the life of heaven, to be blessing and magnifying God not in word only, but in my life. Therefore, I am to hold for the glory of God in my life and conversation, that I might bless and magnify the name of God who has delivered me from darkness, and has translated me into the kingdom of His dear Son and, upon these terms, I now serve God.

I do not serve God as one who is in hazard forever to miscarry, and out of a base and slavish fear lest I should miscarry. I endeavor to work out my salvation, but it is as one who is redeemed and delivered from eternal misery. Yes, I now begin to join with the saints and angels who are in heaven, who are there magnifying God, and shall be to all eternity praising Him for His free grace towards them.”

Surely this conversation should be in a higher degree of holiness than the conversation of Adam could be even in paradise. Yet, still remembering this, we cannot in this life attain to such a conversation as to be without mixture of evil, but we should be more spiritual and heavenly in our ways. We have more cause to be so than Adam had in his innocence, and we do not walk answerable to the gospel unless our hearts rise in a more spiritual and heavenly way than his heart could rise when it came new out of the hand of his Creator. That’s the first consideration of the Law as it was a covenant of life to him, and all mankind in him. Oh that as we go along we would but consider what cause we have of humiliation then! Oh how far are our conversations short of that which becomes the gospel if it should rise to so high a pitch as this which has been mentioned!

The Ministration of the Law by Moses

Second, we consider the Law as in the administration of it to Moses, and so to the people of the Jews. The administration of the Law to them was under another notion. It was to bring them to Christ, that they might come to see their inability of keeping that covenant, and come to understand Christ so much the more, and to be driven unto Christ by having the Law presented unto them. God never intended, by giving the Law to the people of the Jews, that it should be a covenant of eternal life to them. Indeed, there was this in the administration of it somewhat different from us, some special covenant about their living in Canaan, and about mercies in that promised land beyond that which we have in the Law, as we find in the New Testament. They had this annexed to it. The Law that was first given unto Adam, and written in his heart, afterwards even obliterated, was then transcribed by the same hand in tables of stone and given unto them chiefly to show them their misery and need of Christ, to be a preparation for Christ's coming into the world. There was this one addition beyond what we have in the New Testament, that there was a temporal covenant annexed unto it that concerned their living prosperously in the land of Canaan, and so far as we are delivered even from the Law as it was given by Moses, that is, from the connection of the Covenant that was added unto the delivering of the Law, concerning their happy and comfortable condition in the land of Canaan upon the keeping of their Law; but now (however it was) certainly that conversation that becomes the gospel should be beyond what could be even from godly men in the time of the Law.

1. *The Law to them was given under low promises.* Their promises were but very low that were under the Law. It's true, they

had something of the gospel that we have, but extremely dark, and very little that they knew of it. But the chief ministration of God towards them was then in a legal way, and that had but low promises, like their living in Canaan. You shall find generally all the promises that are annexed to the Law, even by Moses, is that they shall prolong their days in the land the Lord their God shall give them. They should be blessed in their basket and store. Their promises were under heaven promises, promises of this life, and therefore it could raise them but to a very low degree of holiness.

2. *Their ordinances were but poor, mean, and beggarly in comparison of ours.* For so the gospel calls them (Colossians 2). They were but beggarly rudiments which stood only in meats, drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation (Hebrews 9:10). They had an earthly tabernacle, a worldly sanctuary (Hebrews 9:1).

3. *The burden on them under the Law was very great.* They were under a heavy yoke and burden that made them bow down. A man who is under a heavy burden is made to stoop and bend in the back. He cannot stand as upright or fast as others who have no such weight upon them.

4. *The administration of the Law was with thunder and very terrible lightning.* It made even Moses quake and tremble, as the author to the Hebrews says.

5. *Their spirits were very servile under the Law.* They were subject to bondage all their days. God so ordered things as to carry on His people in a very servile way. They were but mean servants then, hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Life under the Gospel

1. *Our promises are far better, and our covenant better.* In Hebrews 8:5, the apostle compares their condition and ours, “who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.” There was but the shadow of heavenly things. The gospel has the heavenly things themselves, and they are but the shadow, for so you have it in Hebrews 10:1, “for the Law having a shadow of good things to come and not the very image of the things.” They had but a shadow of good things to come and not the very image itself. As Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the Tabernacle, “See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the Mount.” And then, in Hebrews 8:6, “But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry (that is, Christ) by how much also He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises;” a better covenant or a better Testament, and established upon better promises. Their promises, I say, were but low and mean. Our promises are high and precious and we have a better covenant. This covenant is not of living in the land of Canaan, but of heaven, of which that Canaan was but a type and, therefore, our conversations should rise higher in holiness since our covenant and promises are better than theirs.

2. *Our worship is more spiritual than their worship was.* In John 4:23, Christ said (in so many words) to the woman of Samaria, “You serve God in this place, but the time shall come that they shall serve Him everywhere, for God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and truth.” There is more spiritual worship in the time of the gospel than there was in the time of the Law. The Lord carried them on in a carnal and sensitive way, and indeed, this has been a great design of anti-Christ, to bring men to a carnal way of worship, to carnal ordinances, for so they are called in Scripture. The commandments of God by

Moses are called carnal in Hebrews 9:10, for their worship was, in comparison of the worship in the gospel, but carnal.

It has been the design of anti-Christ to darken the glory of Jesus Christ in the gospel by bringing the church to a carnal way of worship, and to take away spiritual, and therefore they are altogether about carnal institutions; whereas Jesus Christ has instituted but only two sacraments wherein there are outward carnal things, wherein we worship God through the creature. Otherwise, His worship is altogether spiritual; but now anti-Christ would bring in altogether carnal things. He would add a hundred inventions of his own, railing in of the communion tables, and then turning them into altars, with such kind of apish gestures, foolish garments, and heathenish music, all which was carnal worship, the devices of men to please children and fools with. These are very much against the very life and soul of godliness, and the only rule of worship in the Word of God. Besides, this ridiculous and carnal way of worship made the worshippers two-fold more the children of Satan than they were before. But now the more spiritual any worship of God is, the more spiritual it makes the heart. The less we stick in the creature while we are worshipping God, the more communion we come to have with Christ, and so it raises holiness to a higher pitch.

3. *Under the gospel our yoke is easier.* You know what Christ said in a Scripture I have opened to you at large, "Come, take My yoke upon you, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." You are delivered from that heavy burden that they were under and, therefore, you should run the ways of God's commandments, and follow after holiness more readily and freely than they could do.

4. *We have access with boldness to the throne of grace.* God does not reveal Himself in that terrible way to His saints now as He did in the time of the Law, but He would have them come with

boldness and have liberty for speech, for that's the word in Ephesians 2 of the boldness that we have to come into the presence of God, "through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." The word "access" signifies a coming with freedom, being led by the hand of God, as it were. In Ephesians 3:12 we read, "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." Three words here are together. We have "boldness" and "access with confidence by the faith of Him." The word that is here translated "boldness" is literally "liberty of speech." We may come and speak our minds and unbosom our speech freely to God without any such terror. And we may come to God without desiring Moses to go into God's presence for us as they did. Oh they dared not go themselves, but Moses must go and speak with God. We may come into the presence of God and speak our hearts freely with a holy boldness in the name of Christ.

5. *We have the spirit of adoption more than they.* Romans 8:15: "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father." There was a spirit of bondage under which even the people of God were in former times, and now the spirit of adoption is more spread abroad and communicated in the world to the churches than it was before; and therefore the Lord expects a conversation suitable to the spirit of adoption. For example, take one who is a child and has a servile spirit, and is afraid to come into the presence of his father. It may be that he will do some works in obedience to his father, but in a heavy and dull way. But afterwards, when his father is fully reconciled to him, and comes and speaks kindly to him, there comes a spirit of adoption upon the child. Oh, then he goes lively on in his duty to his father! Then he rejoices in the presence of his father, and to do anything that may please his father. When he is acted by a

spirit of adoption, there is more service done according to the mind and will of Christ than there was before.

So, my brethren, we should exceed all under the Law with a more filial obedience than ever there was in that time, or else our conversation is not such as becomes the gospel. Therefore, when you open the Old Testament and read of those excellent gracious spirits that were there, especially in the Psalms, what holy breathings and pantings after God there are, and, in the Prophets, what exemplary holiness then lived and shined in the world, be ashamed of yourselves if you do not rise to as high a degree as they did, and higher too.

OBJECTION. You will say, “Why, but they were eminent men. They were the prophets of God and so were extraordinary. And can ordinary Christians rise as high as they did, and be such burning and shining lamps as they were?”

ANSWER. I’ll give you one Scripture about that, Zechariah 12:8, which is a clear prophesy of the times of the gospel: “In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.” Mark it, “he that is feeble among them shall be as David,” who was a man after God’s own heart. Oh, read David’s Psalms, particularly the 119th Psalm, and see the holy breathings of David, and observe that there is a prophesy that those that are feeble shall be as David, and those that are as David, that is, the eminent Christians, the Lord’s champions, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angels of the Lord. Christians, in the time of the gospel, who are eminent should live as angels, angelic lives, and the weakest of all should be as David. Indeed, considering what we have revealed in the gospel, we should be ashamed that our hearts

and lives should come short in spirituality and heavenliness of any who lived in the times of the Law. See in the 119th Psalm how you find David's heart taken and ravished with the Word of God. Oh, how sweet was the Law of God to him, sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb! He does not mean there the Law in opposition to the gospel, but the whole Word of God.

Now you should consider what part of God's Word David had there. He did not have many of the prophesies; he only had the Book of Moses and some other books. The book of Job was there, and some of the Chronicles, some parts of the Kings, and the book of Judges; but most of the Kings he did not have, for he was the second king. Therefore, what little part of the Word of God was written at that time, and yet how sweet was the Word to him, "as sweet as they honey and the honeycomb." And how he delighted in it above gold and silver.

And then, for the ordinances of God, how he was taken with them! Though in comparison of ours they were but carnal! In the 84th Psalm, he envied the very birds that were in the temple of God, "How amiable are Thy courts, O Lord." Now, just compare those Scriptures he had with these that we have. The five books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, and Job were the chief Scriptures then extant, and just compare them with the history of the gospel, in particular the sermons of Christ, from the fifth chapter of Matthew to the eighth. So those remarkable places from the 14th to the 18th of John, and so on. O what heavenly things are there set down among us! What heavenly truths we have! Study and read Paul's epistles, which are several holy letters sent from Christ to His saints here on earth. Oh, what spiritual transcendent truths! What great mysteries and depths of God are opened and revealed there beyond what there is in Genesis, or Exodus,

or Leviticus, or Numbers, etc. And yet the Word of God was dearer to him than all the world, and he professed to meditate in it day and night. Now we have that Word in two testaments that reveal abundantly more of God in Christ than ever he had, and therefore our conversations should rise higher in holiness than the conversations of those who were under the Law. We should be more exemplary in holy walking than they were. And so much for the second head.

DOCTRINE 3. If you would have your conversations to be such as becomes the gospel, it must be suitable to what the gospel holds forth unto you.

Now this is a great point, and it will serve for two ends: to hold forth to you eleven principle things in the gospel [pages 63–156], and, in doing so, to show you how you should suit your conversations to those things that are in the gospel. And we shall abide upon this heading for some time.

*The Gospel Holds Forth to Us the
Infinite Love of God to Mankind*

The first and principle thing in the gospel is the holding forth unto us the infinite love of God to mankind. This is the very end of the gospel, that God might declare what an infinite love He has unto the children of men, yea, unto men rather than unto angels. You know that Scripture in John 3:16: “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” And indeed, that one verse has more of God in it than all the creatures in heaven and earth. The whole frame of heaven and earth does not have as much of God in them as that one verse.

It is as if God should say, when He comes to reveal the gospel, "I will have a way wherein it shall appear to men and angels for what the greatness of My love is unto these poor creatures, unto the children of men. And, to that end, I send My Son, the second Person in the Trinity, to take their natures upon Him, to come to be their Mediator. There I will manifest what My love is, that shall be the fruit of love."

It is the similitude of a learned divine, "The love of God in all other things, in comparison of the love of God in Christ revealed in the gospel, is as a little spark of fire in comparison of the heat in a furnace." When a furnace is heated red-hot, it may be a few sparks of fire flying out; but what is one of those sparks of fire that fly out in comparison of all the heat there is in the furnace? So, he says, all the fruits of the love of God to mankind, in all the works that God ever did, are but as that one spark, excepting this of Christ. And the love of God unto mankind in Christ is, as it were, the heat of the furnace. There's burning love indeed, the love of God in Christ.

This is the great scope of the gospel, the great aim of God, the great design that God had in the gospel, to make known the infiniteness of His love unto the children of men. Now, then, if so be that God in the gospel reveals what there was in His heart from all eternity to mankind (for so it is), that's the scope of the gospel. There was, in the heart of God, infinite love burning toward mankind. God from eternity saw mankind before Him, and there was that strong inclination of His heart towards them in love, as even burned in His heart. Now, in time, God reveals this in the gospel, in the doctrine thereof He opens His heart to the children of men.

Whenever the gospel comes to be preached in any place, God looks upon that place and has these kinds of workings in

Himself, “Well, that love of Mine that I have had burning in My bosom from all eternity towards these poor creatures, now it shall be opened; now it shall be revealed.”

It is just as it was with Joseph, who had his heart so warm in love unto his brethren. Though he kept it in awhile, he could not keep it in long, but at length it broke out like fire. His bowels yearned towards his brethren, and he wept tears of love over their necks. So in the gospel of Christ, God looks upon poor creatures like Joseph did his brethren, and God, as it were, kept in His heart towards them for a long time. But now, when the gospel comes among them, God opens His very heart to them.

Now, therefore, there must be a conversation that becomes the gospel. As becomes this great thing in the gospel, that is the chief thing indeed that the gospel holds forth in every line of it; it reveals His eternal love towards them in particular in the Son of His love, Christ Jesus, in whom He is well-pleased.

QUESTION. You will say, “What is it that becomes this thing in the gospel?”

ANSWER. Surely love, answerable love, that we should return love for love. He that dwells in God dwells in love. God Himself is love. Read but the first Epistle of that beloved disciple John. What abundance of love is there made known of God! Every letter of it is a character of love, and what commendations of love in heavenly expressions! But you read no such thing in the Scripture before the gospel was revealed in that clarity as it was then. Now there is nothing but love, love, and how it called for love. Then there must be this conversation, love to God as God loves us. And that must be real, as God’s in Christ was.

QUESTION. How did God manifest His love?

ANSWER. A conversation becoming the gospel must be a manifestation of our love in some proportionable way. "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son." It is as if He had said, "God so loved the world, so dearly, as that this was the dearest thing unto God He gave for a testimony of His love to mankind."

The dearest thing? What's that? His Son. If God had said, "So that I might testify my love to mankind, since I have made one world for them, I will make ten thousand more. Yea, I will make so many worlds that every one of the children of men shall have a world to possess," you would think that this was something.

Oh, this would be nothing in comparison of that expression, "For God so loved the world that He gave His Son." The Son of God is infinitely dearer to God than ten thousand millions of worlds! Now, a conversation that becomes the revelation of such love must be this: whatever, then, is dearest unto our souls must be given up to God. It was a testimony of the love of Abraham to God when God said, "Hereby I know thou lovest Me." Why? Because he gave up his Isaac to God. He would not spare his only son whom he loved. That is how God showed His love to us.

We may say, "Lord, hereby we know Thou lovest us, that Thou hast given Thy Isaac, Thy only Son for us; and hereby, Lord, shall men and angels know that we love Thee, that whatever is dear to our souls, Thou shalt have it. We will offer it up to Thee in way of sacrifice."

This is a conversation that becomes the gospel. So that when God calls for anything, never think like this, "Oh, this is hard and costly and dear to me. How shall I part with this?" Is this becoming the gospel, to stand with God for anything? Your love must be somewhat suitable to God's. His love was such that

He gave the dearest to you, and your love, therefore (if it runs parallel with His), must give the dearest to Him.

And then, if we are acted by love, as that's the conversation that becomes the gospel, to be acted in all that we do with love to God, to be in a flame of love continually, as the salamander (they say) always lives in the fire, so should we do in the fire of love, not the fire of contention. But now, love has no need of any argument to do anything but only this, "This thing will be pleasing unto Him. It will please my Father." That is argument enough for love, that "if I do such a thing, it will please my Beloved."

Therefore, never stand arguing like this, "Such a thing is a duty, but is it a necessity? Must I do it? Cannot a man be saved unless he does it? Are all damned who do not do this?" These arguments come from base, sordid spirits.

But this is enough for love, "Here's something that will please God. If I do this, I will please God more than if I do not do it." Therefore, that place you had before in Colossians 1:10, "Walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing," let the heart immediately spring upon this. There's such a thing propounded out of the Word at such a day, and I heard it would be well-pleasing to God if I did it.

Apply this, you who do not set up the worship of God in your families. Do you not think that it would please God more to set up His worship in your families than not? Is there no conversation that your consciences tell you would please God more than that conversation you now live in? Would it not be more pleasing to God (just ask your own conscience now) if your hearts were acted by love? You would immediately fall upon that which your consciences tell you would be more pleasing to God.

There is a maxim about love. Love never knows when it has

done enough. It knows no such thing as too much. Men say, "Why do we need to be so strict as to walk circumspectly? Why do we need to be so holy?" This is a base kind of reasoning. Is this as becomes the gospel? If you were acted by love, then you would never think that you had done enough for God. Oh, you would rather think, "If I had ten thousand, thousand times more strength than I have, Lord, Thou art worthy of it all. Whatever I have, whatever I am, whatever I can do, Thou art worthy of it all."

Never stand arguing why so much, or is the thing a good thing! Love never knows any such thing as too much.

We know that love cannot bear with dishonor done unto those that we love. If anyone wrongs someone that we love, if our hearts are enflamed with love, we do not know how to bear it. Such strike us in the apple of our eye. Oh, that's a conversation that becomes the gospel, when we see the name of God dishonored, our hearts rise more against anything that is done against God than it does against anything that is done against us! We are enflamed for God when we see anything done that is a dishonor to the name of God.

And love, we know, will make us mourn and melt for any offense to those that are beloved of us. So that's a conversation that becomes the gospel, when we manifest melting hearts and mourning spirits.

Love makes us delight in the presence of those that we love. So that's a conversation that becomes the gospel, when we manifest that there is nothing in the world that we delight in more than to be in the presence of our Beloved. Oh, to be always with God in the arms of Christ is our heaven on earth!

And then, a conversation that becomes this gospel is to be of a loving disposition towards those that have any reference unto God. Read over the Epistles, where so much of

the gospel is revealed; for indeed there's the chief part of the gospel, though we call those four evangelists the gospel because they are the story of Christ's coming into the world and His actions while here. Yet there is more of the doctrine of the gospel in the Epistles, for the time of the Law was not fully expired till the destruction of the temple, which was after Christ's death; and, therefore, though the gospel began to shine forth, yet till after the time of the destruction of the temple there was not as much of the gospel. And, therefore, read the Epistles, and you shall find there is no one particular duty that the gospel so calls for from men (besides faith in Jesus Christ) as it does love in Christians toward one another, yea, love to all. If you read the Epistles of Paul, divers places in Romans, and in Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, they are continually beating upon love; and especially in the Epistles of John (who was the beloved disciple and lay in the bosom of Christ), nothing as much as love, because this indeed is the conversation that becomes the gospel, for the main thing in the gospel is declaring the love of God. Therefore, Christians who would live as becomes the gospel must live so as acted by love.

In the story of the Acts, as soon as you read of any with whom the gospel prevailed, they had one heart and one mind. Oh, how they cleaved one to another! Their hearts were one. And so we find it in the stories of the primitive times. I remember that Tertullian said that this was the way that the heathens and persecutors used to find out who were Christians. The Christians met at night for fear of danger, and as wisely as they could kept themselves from their persecutors; but they found, by experience, that when they were converted to the Christian religion, there was another kind of spirit in them that acted them, and especially a spirit of love to one another. There was

another kind of love of Christians one towards one another than of any other society of mankind.

The heathens saw this and wondered at it, and it was by this that they found out who were Christians. If they saw any people beginning to have a spirit of love more than before, they would think, "Surely these have heard of the Christian religion, and have begun to be Christians."

This was the glory of the Christian religion in those times, that there was such an entire love and union of hearts among them. The apostle John would have such love that Christians should be willing to die for one another, and they did so in the primitive times. Oh, this would be becoming the gospel, indeed! But, oh how far we are from such a conversation in such times as we now live in, as if so be that the gospel were gone from us. We speak of the gospel as if it were revealed now more than ever, and we say much concerning free grace in the gospel; but look upon the conversations of men. They were never more unsuitable to the gospel; and, in this particular, in respect of the sincere love in the hearts of Christians.

My brethren, malicious dispositions are extremely unbecoming the gospel, hateful and malicious dispositions. What does a beastly, brutish savageness do; what does the fierceness of beasts do in the breast of a Christian? Oh, it is infinitely unbecoming a Christian to have an unloving disposition, a hateful disposition, to be hating one another and have a spirit of opposition, contradiction, and frowardness one against another. Nothing is more unbecoming the gospel of Jesus Christ than this.

I remember reading of one of the heathen emperors who, being convinced somewhat about Christ, and hearing much of Him, saw two persons who professed the name of Christians fall out bitterly with one another. As soon as he perceived what was happening, he called them to himself and gave a straight

command that they should never afterwards presume to call themselves by the name of Christians. He said, "No, you do not do according to the Master you profess; your life is unsuitable to your Master." Even one who was a heathen said this!

Oh, if we profess ourselves Christians, let our conversation be such as becomes the gospel in the point of love, and make that to be the argument of love, the love of God revealed in the gospel.

There are a great many arguments of love from human society, from reason, that men who live together should love one another as men, that a great deal of hurt comes from forwardness and bitterness, and that it is against the rules of society, and that men cannot live quietly unless there is some way of soldering by love. These arguments are something, and these would be among heathens.

Oh, but now those who profess the gospel of Christ have one argument that is infinitely beyond all arguments that can be imagined, and that is in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world." He loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten. We hear how the love of God that was in the heart of God from all eternity is brought forth and revealed in the gospel. Oh, let this enflame our hearts with love! Oh, that there might never be a Christian who professes the name of Christ but that it might appear in him that his heart is sweetened with love, and that he lives, as it were, in the very element of love, and is acted by love in all that he does! Oh, this would beautify your Christian profession more than all your talking of this and the other things! Oh, that it would come again, that this becoming conversation of Christians would come again into the world!

I remember hearing a speech of Dr. Whitaker, rebuking the conversation of the scholars at Cambridge. He said, "Surely,

this that we preach is not the gospel or else we are no gospellers, because our conversation is so different from the gospel.”

And so we may say of this one particular in respect of love. Either it is but a fancy, that we hear so much of the love of God in Jesus Christ in the gospel, or else we are no gospellers. We are no true professors of the gospel. Whatever profession we make of the gospel, unless there appears divine love to act us in all that we do, God will not own us for gospellers; for certainly it is a main scope that God has in revealing the gospel to sweeten the hearts of men with love. Either deny the profession, or walk more lovingly than you have done towards those that make the same profession.

Yes, you should walk lovingly towards your enemies, for the gospel reveals much of God’s goodness even towards the whole world in general, so that there should be love even towards all from the knowledge of the gospel.

Oh, that it might be said of men and women who were of rugged, harsh, and malicious dispositions before (yet since it pleased God that they came to the ministry of the gospel and heard the truths of the gospel opened to them) that, since that time, their hearts have been altered and changed! Oh, of what sweet dispositions they are of now, the husband towards the wife, and the wife towards the husband! In their family there had been nothing but harshness and brawling, but now there is nothing but sweetness and love, and this from the knowledge of the love of God in Jesus Christ. That love will be a divine grace indeed that is raised in the hearts of men, and acted from this principle of the knowledge of the love of God in Jesus Christ. This is the first thing, and the great thing that is held forth in the gospel, namely the love of God to mankind.

I'll but name one or two things more now, and the next is this—the infinite willingness of God to be at peace, and to be reconciled unto those who have offended Him, yes, to His enemies. What is the scope of the gospel? The eternal love of God to mankind in Christ. That's the first thing. Then the second thing is the infinite willingness that there is in God to be at peace, to be reconciled to such as have offended Him. This is held forth in the gospel. The gospel is the ministry of reconciliation. Now what conversation should be in us becoming this in the gospel that is held forth?

And then the infinite mercy of God in the gospel, in delivering poor creatures out of a depth of misery, is a main thing in the gospel. There are many other particulars, like the infinite hatred God has against sin, and the great price paid for souls that is held forth in the gospel too, with divers other things that might be spoken of. But I beseech you to consider the point that we are about, namely, to show you what the gospel holds forth to us, and then what conversation becomes all these things and is suitable to them.

If God would be pleased to go along even with this one point that we are now upon, we hope it may lighten the conversation of Christians and, with all, may commend this word of grace to those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. We hope that it may (if God will say amen to it), in some measure, recover the dishonor that has been cast upon the gospel of Christ in these latter times by that loose and uneven walking among professors themselves, which has very much darkened the glory of this marvelous, great light, which should be a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their paths.

Oh, that Jesus Christ, from whose hand and heart this gospel came, would now preach it home to every heart among us,

that the truths thereof may be turned into grace, spirit, and life in the midst of us, so that our lives and conversations may be a daily practical sermon of holiness and, in particular, that we love one another as becomes the gospel.

SERMON 4

(March 22, 1646)

“Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

We closed with that the last day that we should love one another. First, this holds forth unto us not only the love of God the Father, but the infinite love of Jesus Christ, the second Person in the Trinity, and this calls for love one to another. And I'll hint unto you one or two Scriptures about this. There is union of Christian hearts in one bond of love. No duty more inculcated in the New Testament (next to faith, that great engine of the Covenant of Grace) than love, and love one unto another; and upon the consideration of the infinite love of God and of Jesus Christ to us.

Ephesians 3:19 compared with Ephesians 4:1: “And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Then in the beginning of chapter 4, “I, therefore, (here’s an inference with the use of it), the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called.” You are called to Christ, to the gospel, and there you have the love of Christ made known. How shall they walk worthy of this vocation? “With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

He prayed before that they might know the love of Christ. Therefore, upon that, he exhorts them and builds his exhortation, or rather his beseeching, that they would, with all lowliness,

meekness, and longsuffering, forbear with one another in love. For you are called to the profession of the gospel, and there you have the love of the Father and of Christ set forth unto you.

Now, would you walk worthy of this calling? Then let there be much meekness and forbearing one another in love. In Ephesians 5:2 we read, "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." Walk in love as Christ has loved us. That is suitable; as if the apostle had said, "Would you walk suitable to the gospel of Christ that you profess? Walk in love, then, as Christ has loved us." This is a principal thing.

In the gospel, you come to know the love of Christ in other ways than other men know it. Therefore, walk in love. "Walk in love as Christ hath loved us." Make the love of Christ to be a pattern for your love.

There is nothing (as I told you) that is more unbecoming the gospel of Christ than a hateful, malicious, rugged, pernicious, heated disposition than for Christians to be tearing one another and falling out with one another as those beasts at Ephesus that Paul complains of. Oh, this is infinitely unbecoming the gospel of Christ! Do you know what the love of God means in Jesus Christ? Are you sensible of the love of Christ? Oh, this love should sweeten your hearts that there should be no more bitterness in you, but you should live in this element of love!

An ancient said, "What does beastly fierceness, cruelty, and savagery do in the breast of a Christian?" It is unbecoming the name of a Christian. Therefore, let your conversation be as becomes the gospel of Christ that holds forth love. Oh, let there be much love in you. Be acted by love in all your ways so that they may read this new commandment which Christ left unto His followers, that they love one another in deed and truth.

*The Gospel Holds Forth to Us the Infinite
Willingness of God to Be at Peace with Mankind*

Second, the gospel of Christ holds forth the infinite willingness of God to be at peace with mankind, to be reconciled unto man, unto those who have offended Him, yea, to those who are enemies to Him. This is the scope of the gospel (a principal scope). I say, God, in the gospel, would make known to all the world His infinite willingness to be reconciled to such as have offended Him. Indeed, without the gospel we might apprehend this, that the Lord is a God that is full of goodness; that He is good and does good, that all good is in Him. But to apprehend God to be such a God of peace, so infinitely set upon it to be reconciled to such as are enemies, could never have been known but by this gospel of Christ. Herein we find that, though there was an infinite difference between God and man, between heaven and earth, through our sinning, yet the Lord was willing to be reconciled; yea, though the offense of man was exceeding great so that it cried for vengeance, yet He was pleased wonderfully to condescend to make a peace with him. Yea, though the Lord had man under His power and could do what He pleased with him, He had His enemy under His feet and might have broken him all to pieces with His iron-rod like a potter's vessel which, when it is broken, can never be made whole again, yet He was willing to be reconciled.

God had no need at all of us. He was infinitely blessed in Himself who is perfection and blessedness itself. Sometimes, we are willing to be reconciled to our enemies either because we do not have them under our power or because we have some need of them; but God, who had us under His hand, and might easily have destroyed us, and who had no need of us at all, yet was desirous to spare us as a father spares his only son whom he loves.

The gospel holds out that the Lord begins the work of reconciliation. He first loved us. The infinite God seeks us, His creatures, to come in to be reconciled. Therefore, He sends His ambassadors of peace to beseech us in Christ's stead to come in to be reconciled to Him, to accept His provisions of peace, which make so much for our everlasting salvation.

Reconciliation must cost God very dearly. God must be at a great deal of costs and charges to reconcile His creatures to Himself. It cost no less than the blood of His only begotten Son, and yet He is willing to be reconciled. God says, "My heart is set upon this work and, let it cost what it will, if it were ten thousand worlds, yet My heart is so upon it that I will bring them in that they may be reconciled to Me, and make them one with Me."

The gospel reveals that God is so set upon reconciliation, and is so reconciled to such as embrace the gospel, that He will never be at enmity with them again. Being once reconciled, He will never suffer such a breach to be made between mankind and Himself any more. He will be their Father in Christ, and they shall be His sons and daughters through Him to all eternity in Christ Jesus our Lord. "Who shall separate us from the love of God?" Thus the gospel holds forth not only reconciliation, but such reconciliation as this is, which men and angels can never sufficiently admire and bless God for. This is a second beam of the gospel.

Now, then, what manner of person ought we to be? Our conversation must be as becomes this gospel of Christ in this great thing that the gospel holds forth unto us. Surely, then, this calls to us all aloud to love peace. Oh, love peace! Is God as set upon peace as He is? And is He willing to pay so great a cost for peace? Oh, let us love peace, let us follow peace, let us pursue peace, let us seek peace! Let us do whatever we possibly

can for peace. "If it be possible, as much as lieth within you, live peaceably with all men." Let us account peace never bought too dearly with anything but sin.

The Lord Christ would not sin to purchase peace. If it could possibly have been conceived that any sin should have been committed, Christ would never have purchased peace that way. But if it is by any way of suffering, by His being willing to leave the heavens for awhile to take upon Him the form of a servant, yea, to have the sense of the influences of the love of His Father eclipsed for a time, He was willing to endure, yea, to be made a curse. Yea, whatsoever He suffered in His name, He was willing to endure anything to make peace between man and God, to reconcile the world to heaven.

Oh, let's love peace! That is becoming the gospel of Christ, for our hearts to be set upon peace. And the exhortation that you have in Ephesians that I mentioned before is, likewise, built upon the consideration of Christ's working so for our peace. Ephesians 2:14, "For He is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity." And then, in the 16th verse, "That He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." So this Scripture holds forth not only that Christ is our peace in respect of God, and He died for that end, to make peace between God and us, but, likewise, that Jesus Christ died to make peace between man and man. It was one fruit of His death to break down the middle wall of partition between us and to slay the enmity. He does not say to kill our enemies, but to kill the enmity itself. The meaning is this: Christ died to take down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile.

There was an enmity between the Jew and Gentile that they might not converse one with another. Now it was a fruit of the

death of Christ to take down the partition wall and to slay the enmity between them so that there might be but one sheep-fold, that He might reconcile both unto God in one body. Now, was this the end of the death of Christ, not only to reconcile us to God, but one another in one body, Jew and Gentile? Certainly there cannot be such a distance between one Christian and another as there was between Jew and Gentile; and Christ so loved unity and peace in the world, especially among those who made any profession of His name, that he would die to that end. He would lose His life that He might procure peace between Jews and Gentiles, and bring them into one body.

And, truly, so should it be with us. We should be willing, and those whose hearts are right cannot but be so sensible of the breaches that are among us, and the unpeaceableness of mens' spirits, as if they could, by the laying down of their lives, procure peace, they should be willing to do it. Every Christian should make it appear that he is so set upon peace that, if the laying down of his life could procure peace, he should be willing to do it, that if we may make up breaches by standing in the gap and offering up ourselves as a sacrifice of atonement and pacification, let us thus prove ourselves to be the true followers of Christ our Lord and Master, who has left us His own example herein for our imitation. This would be an excellent thing, becoming the gospel that we profess. Yea, we should not only be willing to admit peace, but seek it. Seek it for our inferiors. Do not say that such a man has wronged me and, therefore, let him seek me. Oh no! It becomes you who make profession of the gospel of Christ not to stay until he who has wronged you comes to you, but for you who are wronged by another to seek those who have wronged you so that they would be at peace with you.

You might think it unreasonable that you who are wronged should seek peace; aye, but it becomes the gospel of Christ

that you should do so. God sought you, you never sought Him. If God had not begun the work of peace with you, God and your souls would have been eternal enemies; and, therefore, remember that you are not to live according to reason. You think there's all the reason in the world that those who have wronged you should crouch to your feet rather than you seek them. Well, grant it, there is all the reason in the world for it; aye, but what is there in the gospel to the contrary? You are not to live only in your conversation as becomes reason, but you are to have your conversations as becomes the gospel of Christ.

If you stand upon these terms (let him come to me rather than me going to him), is this as becomes the gospel? What do you hold forth of the great work of the gospel if you do not hold this forth? Your willingness to be at peace, and to seek for peace even from your inferiors? And do you not say that the offense is great? "Oh! It is a great offense that such a one has committed. He has dealt very proudly with me, and shall I seek him?"

His offense to you is not as great as your offense was to God, and yet God seeks to be at peace with you through Christ. "But he is my inferior. It may be that he is a poor, mean fellow who has so wronged me." Oh, do not think there is such a distance between you and other men! It may be that you have a little power in your hand, and a few pence in your purse, more than your neighbor has, but what infinite distance was there between God and you? Oh, remember, your conversation must be as becomes the gospel of Christ!

"Aye, but it will put me to a great deal of trouble. I can, with more ease, have him punished than I can bring things to make peace between us."

With more ease? Could not God, with more ease, have sent you down to the nethermost hell? How quickly could God have brought you down and undone you forever? But God was

content to be at peace upon hard terms. Indeed, they were hard terms by which God came to reconcile the world unto Himself, the hardest terms that possibly could be conceived, for Jesus Christ, His eternal Son, took upon Him our nature and was made a curse for us, He who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. And, therefore, do not stand upon any hard terms. If peace may be purchased any way but by sin, do not stand upon it, for this is as becomes the gospel of Christ.

Yea, and when you are reconciled to your brother, be so reconciled as to be firm in your reconciliation. Not as some; there is peace made between them, but how? So as they are ready to take advantage against one another upon any miscarriage afterwards. God does not do this with you. The gospel does not hold forth such a peace as this, that God shall be at peace with you for the moment, but look to yourselves afterwards; as though God will take all advantages against you as He can. If there had been such a peace made between God and you as that, you would have been in hell long before this time. And, therefore, let your peace be a firm, settled, and constant peace. Oh, that this were but thought on in these contentious days wherein there are such breaches between brother and brother, in every town, in every family, and none almost but are broken off from one another with an irreconcilable spirit! Oh, how unbecoming the gospel of Jesus Christ is an irreconcilable spirit! Certainly God has not made you to know what the mystery of the gospel of peace is who war in your heart and tongue against your brother. And that's the second thing that the gospel of Christ holds forth.

Only take this one note in this second thing. Whereas there are many arguments to move us to such a conversation as I am now urging upon you, yet let Christians, above all arguments,

make the gospel to be the argument of arguments to move them to it. For example, for the matter of peace, there are many arguments to move us to be at peace with our brother from the inconveniences that will follow upon our breaches and the like. Now show yourselves Christians in this: above all arguments, make the consideration of what you understand in the gospel to be the great motive of motives to prevail with you for peace; and this argument will do it when nothing else will.

It may be that a friend comes and persuades you to be at peace. You will find a great deal of trouble in going to law and suing, in being at enmity with one another. There will come a great deal of anxiety and, therefore, be reconciled and live like neighbors with one another. Well, but when you find that your hearts do not stoop to any arguments, then get alone into your closets, search the Scriptures, and there lay to your hearts all the arguments that you can from the gospel of Jesus Christ. There see how God reconciled the world to Himself, and how God was set upon the work of peace. Lay them to your hearts and, when no other arguments will move, the consideration of that through the blessing of God will do it. That's the second point.

*The Gospel Holds Forth to Us
the Infinite Mercy of God*

In the third place, the gospel holds forth the infinite mercy of God to miserable creatures. When man was plunged into such a depth of misery, nothing but bowels of mercy moved God to help men out of that depth of misery into which they were plunged; and, though man was unworthy of mercy, God's mercy was free. Yea, and it was a transcendent mercy of God, "The mercy of God is over all His works." The heathens could

understand that God was a merciful God; the light of nature will tell us something of the mercy of God, but there is nothing that sets out the bowels of God's mercy as the gospel of Jesus Christ does. There you have the very bowels, indeed, of God's mercy made legible to all the world.

In Luke 1:78 we read, "Through the tender mercies of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us;" the tender mercies of our God, "the bowels of mercy," so the words are. Here's the depth of the bowels of mercy held forth in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's impossible that we could have understood the depth of those bowels of mercy but by the gospel. Adam, in innocence, knew little of the mercy of God, for he, not being in misery, had no need of that mercy to help out of misery; but, though he, by his understanding, must know that mercy was a good thing and, therefore, in God the First-Being of all, yet he did not understand that mercy that the gospel holds forth. Yea, the angels in heaven do not know it but by the gospel, and so they desire to pry into the deep mercies of God unto mankind. Oh, here are the mercies of God that shall be the subject of the praises of angels and saints to all eternity held forth in the gospel!

You think it is a great mercy that God recovers a child who is sick. You think it is a great mercy, when you are at sea, that God turns the wind when, if it had stood but one half hour more the way it did, you would have lost your vessel, your life, and all you had. You think it is a great mercy, when you have been in any dangers abroad in foreign parts, that the Lord was a present help in time of trouble, that God has sent deliverance to you. These are mercies that God is to be praised for.

Oh! But what are all these to the mercies of God in Jesus Christ, His right-hand mercies? And, indeed, this would be a good argument of a gracious heart when any particular mercy

is granted unto them, either family mercies or personal mercies, to meditate, “Lord, I am less than the least of all Thy mercies, yet here are seasonable, comfortable mercies to me and mine. But, O Lord, what is all this to that infinite fountain of mercy in Christ, Thy mercies in the gospel, Thy mercies in Thy Son? There are depths, infinite depths of mercy indeed. This is but a drop and, indeed, that is sweet, but the infinite ocean of mercy is in Jesus Christ. Christ is the mercy of God to mankind, in the bowels of which all other mercies are conceived and brought forth in the world. All my fresh springs are in Him who is “all in all.”

Oh, it would be a good argument that the gospel is revealed to you if you admire Jesus Christ as the great mercy of all mercies! You are to be thankful for every mercy, but when you come to consider the mercy of Christ, look upon that as mercy of wonder. Stand amazed at the thought of that mercy. Well, it is the gospel that holds forth the glory of the riches of the mercy of God. God is said, in the Word, to be rich in mercy; He is not said so much to be rich in power as He is said to be rich in mercy. Now, what conversation is suitable to this?

What’s that but as Christ Himself said, “Be ye merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful.” Oh, have a merciful heart one towards another; look with a merciful eye upon those who are in great misery! This is that which becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ. Oh, a harsh, rugged, and cruel disposition is infinitely unbecoming the gospel of Christ! To see a Christian, one who professes the gospel, who makes more profession of the knowledge of God and of the free grace of God in Christ than others, and yet, when it comes to dealing with such as are in misery, he has a hard heart? Oh, a hard-hearted Christian is a monster! I say, a hard-hearted Christian is a monster in the world, not to be ready to forgive others, and to do anything for

others who are in misery is devilish; but to rejoice that they may have any object to show pity and compassion unto, Oh, this is that which becomes the gospel of Christ! Though they are strangers to you in that misery, yet be merciful to them, for you were strangers to God.

Yea, be merciful to your enemies, not only be willing to be at peace, but be merciful. Do you see any who have wronged you to be in misery? Do not let them perish, but let bowels of compassion even work towards them. Oh, that our hearts yearned towards all! Christ, when He came near to Jerusalem, wept over it. Oh, that the same spirit were in us as was in Jesus Christ!

There's no such argument for mercy to others as the consideration of the mercies of God in Jesus Christ. Oh, bowels of mercy become the gospel of Christ, and it should be manifested really! Do not let people who are in misery have verbal mercies from you, that is, you seem to pity them in words. Oh, but let there be real mercies to them! Open your hearts and let something drop from you for the relief of those who are in misery.

It is a notable Scripture in Ephesians 4:31–32, and suitable to that verse in Colossians 3:13. In Ephesians 4, the apostle, speaking of the mercies of Christ, says, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

"Be tenderhearted." Oh, God manifests the tenderness of His heart in the gospel! And this is becoming the gospel, to set this forth as a pattern: the tenderness of God's heart to poor sinners in the depth of misery. Do you see any to be in misery, and do you not find your heart to break towards them? If you do not find your heart breaking, Oh, set before you this infinite

tenderness of God's mercies in Jesus Christ, and 'tis that which will break your hearts, if anything in the world will.

And so, in Colossians 3:13, a place somewhat parallel to this, we read, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ also forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on charity." You see, the apostle accounts this the great argument to fall; and, therefore, know that the Lord takes it very much to heart when the bowels of professors are turned into gravel. Search that remarkable parable in Matthew 18, from verse 28 to verse 35, where Jesus Christ preached down all cruel and unChristian-like dispositions in those who are fellow servants, belonging to one and the same Master, and living under one roof. Yea, the zeal of Christ broke forth like thunder and lightning against such a servant as would take his fellow by the throat. Therefore, the text says in verse 34, "His Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him."

The Lord Christ delivered that cruel servant, that hard-hearted wretch, to the tormentors who did a thing so unbecoming the mercy he himself had received from Christ. "Oh," said Christ, "are you cruel and unmerciful, when you have received so much favor from Me as a full discharge of your many great debts? Get to the tormentors! Let the most cruel executioners of My wrath torment you without any mercy and compassion."

Oh, those who have hard hearts walk unsuitable to the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is full of the riches of God's grace to all! Oh, you who have received any pardoning mercies from Jesus Christ, take heed of cruelty to your servants, to your children! It's very sad to see how some professors cast the gospel of Christ behind their backs as if their passions are but moved.

What? Will you bite and devour one another when you receive the least affront, either by tongue or hand? Oh, where is your bearing and forbearing with one another? For shame! Do not fly in the faces of any (as a bear bereaved of her whelps) when you are buffeted by men. Oh, remember Jesus Christ! Oh, remember, you who stand in so much need of mercy every day from God! For you to be so cruel to others is a conversation infinitely unbecoming the gospel of Christ.

And it is unbecoming the grace that is offered for you to have a sullen, despairing, and unbelieving disposition. When we see those who are disciples, and yet every little thing causes them to despair and be sullen, and their hearts to sink within them, Oh, friends, is this an evangelical frame of spirit? Let me speak plainly to you. When you come to hear the glorious riches of the grace of the gospel set before you in the Word, you seem to be somewhat taken with it; but when you go home to your family, are you not ready under the least cross, then, to bury a thousand mercies? Oh, what a dishonor is this to the gospel of Jesus Christ, which reveals so much of the mercy of God in it that it calls for Christians who profess it to go through troubles and discouragements with cheerful hearts; and, although there are many things that might daunt the spirits of others who do not understand what the mercies of God in Christ are, yet those who profess the gospel should show undaunted spirits. Why? It is infinite, free, rich, glorious grace that is made known to them by the word of Christ's lips.

OBJECTION. You will say, "Aye, if I knew that this mercy was mine!"

ANSWER. Aye, but do you hear in the gospel that it is free, and there is no soul who has any right to this mercy but by casting

himself upon this mercy. And, therefore, it is as free for you to cast yourself upon it as another. Indeed, the mercy that is revealed by the light of nature is such mercy of God that is more conditional. That is, if I do such and such things, then God will be merciful to me. The light of nature goes no further than this: if I obey and leave my sin, then I may hope that God will be merciful to me.

It's true, the Scripture tells us that, if we do not leave our sin, God will not have mercy; aye, but the gospel holds forth mercy thus: There is mercy in God, first, to pardon your sin, and then to take away your sin. Now the gospel reveals God's mercy in justifying the ungodly. Though I am poor and blind, miserable and naked, and do not have power to leave my sin, yet I have free leave to cast my soul upon God's mercy both for pardon and for power together against my sin, for so it must be. I have no power, I may not stay until I have power against my sin and, then, I will venture all that I have upon Jesus Christ. This is the mercy of the gospel.

I speak of this despairing and sullenness of heart as it is manifested in the conversations of men and women, by which they dishonor the gospel of Christ when they live in their families, and their hearts sink in such a sullen way, as if there were nothing in the gospel of Christ to encourage poor, troubled souls, no more than if men understood by the light of nature. Indeed, if I lived better, and honored God, I might have encouragement that God would show me mercy; but the mercy of the gospel is such that there is mercy to pardon and to heal my soul too. And, therefore, though I am sinful, I must not stay from believing in God's mercy till I am healed, but I must believe in God's mercy that I *may* be healed. That is the third particular that the gospel holds forth unto us.

*The Gospel Holds Forth That God's
Justice Shall Not Be Wronged*

Though God is infinitely merciful, yet He is merciful in such a way that justice shall not be wronged. And this is proper to the gospel too. It's impossible for men or angels to come to understand this mystery but by this gospel-light—how God should be infinitely merciful and yet that He should be infinitely just too. This is held forth in Romans 3:25–26, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare (I say) at this time His righteousness; that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

This is a great mystery of the gospel, a Scripture that Luther fasted and prayed that he might understand, and he was a great while before he could know the mind of God therein. The gospel says this, “I will manifest the infinite riches of My mercy, but yet so as My infinite justice shall be no loser; and, therefore, though I'll save mankind, yet I'll save them by such a way as I'll have as much glory of My justice as if all the men in the world had been damned to all eternity.” This is the mystery of the gospel, and it is clear that, though God manifests infinite mercy, yet God has a way for the manifestation of His mercy in the gospel by which the justice of God is as much honored and satisfied as if all the men in the world had been cast into everlasting burnings, that is, through His Son's dying for man's sin, being made a curse for us.

This is the great point of the gospel which, unless we understand, we know nothing of Christ and His gospel as we are to know it. Most men and women in the world seek God for mercy like this, “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner”; but they do not think of a way of God's showing mercy so as yet He may have

the glory of infinite justice. God seals the forgiveness of sin in the court of justice as well as in the court of mercy. Few think of this, and that's the reason why people are ready, many times, to despair; because a great portion of the time they have but slight thoughts of God. They hope Christ will be merciful to them, yet, in time of temptation, when the devil comes and sets before them the dreadfulness of God's justice, that God is a most just God as well as merciful, this makes their heart to sink like a stone within their breast.

But now, the soul that sees the way of God in the gospel sees that God is infinitely set upon mercy and, likewise, sees a way how God's infinite justice may be satisfied and, seeing both of these, this is a mighty help to faith. Now, let there come never so many temptations when the soul is catching hold upon God's mercy.

"Aye, but," says temptation, "God is a just God as well as merciful, and do you not presume?"

"No," says the soul, "the way of mercy that my soul rests upon, I see there is in it a way of satisfaction to infinite justice as well as a way for the manifestation of mercy; and, therefore, though God is a righteous and just God, yet here I see a way for my soul to be saved and for divine justice to have no wrong either. Therefore, I can believe and venture my soul upon this."

It is impossible for a sinner to venture his soul upon any way of mercy if it comes to understand with what a God it has to deal unless it comes to know God in Jesus Christ, in that way wherein infinite justice is satisfied to the utmost farthing which is declared in the gospel. Now, what conversation is suitable to this?

Hence, let there be that conversation in you that may manifest that you do not turn the grace of God into wantonness. Oh, how a wanton conversation is infinitely unbecoming the gospel! Oh, there is infinite mercy and free grace treasured up here,

and what? Will you be wanton and vain, and lose, therefore? There is infinite grace, but what way does God take to manifest infinite grace? Is it not in a way wherein the dreadful justice of God appears too? Is not the grace of God let out to you through the blood of His Son? In this the most dreadful fruit of God's justice is manifested that ever was since the beginning of the world, or ever shall be manifested to the end of the world.

If it were possible that you should see all the damned in hell, the chambers of death unlocked under the wrath of God there flaming out in fire and brimstone, it would not be such a dreadful sight as to see Jesus Christ made an offering for sin, lying down under the vials of the wrath of His Father, falling down upon the ground, grovelling and sweating out great drops of blood, and crying out upon the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" This is the way of the purchase of Thy mercy, therefore, there is infinite justice together with infinite mercy.

Oh, do not be wanton, then; do not turn the grace of God into wantonness, but rejoice in God's mercy! Yet rejoice with trembling and with fear and reverence of the name of God. When you speak of the free grace of God, and when you come to believe in the free grace of God, you may come cheerfully and boldly. Aye, but come with reverence and holy fear. I do not mean despairing fear or servile, slavish fear, but with awful reverence of the glory of God that appears in the Lord Jesus Christ. I need not send you to the Law to cause fear in your hearts. There is enough in the gospel to cause your souls to tremble before God as well as to believe in God. "Our God is a consuming fire."

Oh, what was He to Jesus Christ? I need go no further to lift up God to make Him an object of my fear but to look upon Him in His dealings with His Son; and, therefore,

those Christians who walk loosely and altogether upon slight thoughts of mercy, without any fear to ballast their hearts, certainly their conversations are not gospel-conversations. For if you understood the way of God's mercy in the gospel, you would see that you should fill your heart with fear and reverence all the days of your life. And as to take heed of wantonness, so to reverence God's justice, even the dreadfulness of it so as the gospel holds forth. To think that God would only have you to have your thoughts about His mercy, and not to have your hearts to give glory to His justice, is certainly a vain conceit and, I fear, it will cause the gospel to vanish into little in the hearts of men when men apprehend the gospel so as not to apprehend the dreadfulness of His justice, as if so be that God would not have the glory of His justice, Christ has satisfied that.

Has Christ satisfied that? Consider what you say when you say so. Consider how much of the glory of God's justice appears in what Christ has done and suffered. I desire to hold forth no further the glory of justice than by holding forth Jesus Christ to you. Do you not think that God would have you to sanctify in your heart and life all the attributes of God that appear in Jesus Christ? Now the glory of justice appears as much in Christ as the glory of mercy does. Then you who profess the gospel must sanctify this attribute of God as well as the other. You sanctify them both in honoring God's justice. I do not say that you should have a despairing heart (nay, it will keep you from despairing) or that you should have a servile spirit, but that you should sanctify it with reverence.

And another thing that is very considerable: Is God so set upon the glory of His justice in the gospel? Oh, labor to be just in all your conversations. You see how God prizes justice, that He will rather have His Son die and be made a curse than

justice should not have honor. Oh, take heed of injustice! The sin of injustice is a sin unbecoming the gospel, and here's an argument against injustice, a stronger argument than any I know in all of the Book of God or can be imagined by men and angels. In the gospel I find that God has His heart so set upon justice that, rather than justice shall not be satisfied, He will not spare His Son one farthing. As the Scripture says, "He spared not His own Son." His Son must pay to the uttermost; His Son must bear His very wrath, and all that God may show His infinite love to justice.

Oh, then, let Christians love justice in their dealings; in their dealings with God, in their dealings between man and man. To see one who professes the gospel, and sometimes accounts the feet of those beautiful who brings glad tidings of salvation, yet be unjust in his dealings between man and man, there he makes no conscience of justice. There he will rather break the rule of justice than lose sixpence or a shilling. What if it were the losing of thirty or forty pounds? Is it such a thing that the rule of justice must rather be broken than the loss of a little money? Is this as becomes the gospel?

How can this be when you hear the gospel say that, rather than the glory of justice be darkened, the blood of God's Son must go for it, and God expects that Christians should so be in love with justice that they should rather be content to be undone in their estates, to beg their bread from door to door than be unjust in any of their actions? Oh, it is an exceeding eclipsing of the glory of the Word when professors of it shall be false in their dealings! Oh, remember, you Christians who hold up the gospel with your right hand, when you hear of the death of Christ, there the love that God bears to justice is held forth, and God is set upon the honor of justice and He will have it! Your injustice in your trading must be made up

one way or another. Either you must pay eternally for it, and so justice is made up, or else it must cost the blood of Jesus Christ. God is set upon justice in another manner than you think of. Oh, let your conversations be as becomes this truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

*The Gospel Holds Forth How Set
God Is upon Satisfying the Law*

Fifth, the Lord, in the gospel, shows how He is set upon satisfying the Law, and what a high price He puts upon the Law. The excellency of the Law more clearly appears in the gospel than in the doctrine of the Law itself. For example, Christ came to fulfill all righteousness. Surely God set a high price on His Law, that He would not save any soul living that had broken it other than by His Son who must come to fulfill it. First, he must have all righteousness kept; and, to the end that He might manifest His love unto the Law, therefore, it was that Christ must come and subject Himself to the Law. He must be under the Law. It was from this that Christ said, “It becomes us to fulfill all righteousness.”

So God was set upon His Law so that when Christ undertook for mankind, if Christ had not satisfied every part of the Law that was required, if there had been one jot of the Law unfulfilled, all mankind must have perished in everlasting burnings.

God sets a high rate on His royal Law; therefore, learn to prize the Law of God. It’s true, you cannot keep it for justification, that was Christ’s task—to so keep the Law that He might justify sinners. By this, God teaches us to highly esteem it and not to slight and condemn it. The Law of God is a precious crystal glass; it is the very glass of the holiness and righteousness of God. And you must prize it as you prize your great glasses that your mariners have from other parts of the world.

You bring home your great crystals of 20, or 40, or 60 pounds, according to the size of them. Now, would you not take it extremely ill, when you have bestowed so much upon it, that a child or a servant should come and break it all to pieces? Now, my brethren, consider that the Law of God here resembles the crystal glass. As you can see your faces in your glasses, so in that crystal glass of the Law the holiness of God is transparent. It is such a glass that God prizes it more worthy than all the world.

This is visible, for the Lord stands much upon the observing of the Law, and upon obedience to it. And, therefore, take heed of breaking it merely to satisfy your lusts, to accommodate and befriend your own base ends. This is unbecoming the gospel of Christ.

There are many who make a great noise about evangelical truths, so that they cry up "The gospel of Christ, the gospel of Christ!" as they once did "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!" And they think that this wholly takes away their obedience to the Law of God, and that it must not be so much as a rule of life. Certainly, there is nothing that holds forth the excellency of the Law more than the knowledge of Jesus Christ (the only Lawgiver) being subjected to the Law, and His subjection was to take away our guiltiness, to cancel the bond of the Law binding us to eternal death.

But we never read that this subjection to the Law was to make void our obedience to it, so that it should not be any rule of life unto us. For what, indeed, is the Law of God but the pure will of God? And do you think that Christ came to take us away from obeying the will of God, which was Christ's meat and drink to do? I do not stand so much upon that term "as given by Moses," but upon those things that are therein contained, therein revealed as part of the will of God.

God stands much upon that, that we should make the revealing of these things in the Word to be the rule of our life, and this is manifested by Christ's ready and full subjection unto it. And that is the first particular, what it is that we come to know by the gospel, according to which we should suit our conversation.

SERMON 5

(March 29, 1646)

“Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

The Gospel Holds Forth God’s Hatred of Sin

In the sixth place, would you know what conversation becomes the gospel? Consider what it is that the gospel holds out to you. It holds forth God’s infinite hatred of sin more than any other thing whatsoever.

1. A man may come to know the evil of sin partly by reason. He may understand that sin is against a right rule, yea, by the light of reason he may conceive it is but reasonable for a rational creature to live by rule, and to transgress against the rule of justice and equity is evil.

2. A man may come to know the evil of sin by God’s command. The Law of God forbids sin and, therefore, it is evil to transgress the Law of God. To go against the will of God must be a great transgression.

3. A man may come to know the evil of sin by the dreadful threatenings that are added to the Law. “Cursed is he that abideth not in everything that is written in the Book of the Law to do it.” This discovers a dreadful evil in sin. When a soul comes to have a real sight of the dreadful threats that are in the Law, it exceedingly terrifies conscience, and raises up that sleepy lion out of his den.

4. A man may come to know the evil of sin by some dreadful judgments that God has executed upon sinners here in this world, and by the terrors of conscience that are upon the

wicked, as on Cain, Saul, and Judas. Men here, many times, are punished for their sin by the wrath of God that is revealed from heaven against the execution of it. But take all those together, yea, if we saw the woeful execution of the wrath of God in hell itself, if the Lord opened unto us a door into the chambers of death to reveal the torments that are there, and to hear all the shrieks and cries of the damned in everlasting burnings; yet all this, the threats of the Law, the terrors of it, the agonies of conscience, the torments of the damned in hell, put all together, and they would not so much, nor so clearly, reveal God's infinite hatred of sin as what we find in the gospel.

The red glass of the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed for sin reveals more of God's hatred against sin than all the torments of hell can do, or all the threats of the Law can do. God, inflicting His wrath upon His Son for man's sin, thus preaches unto the world, "Well, I see that you cannot be brought to understand how I hate sin with a perfect hatred, but I'll have one way of argument to convince you that it's impossible that you should stand against. I will, therefore, send My Son to take your nature upon Him, and to stand charged with your debt, and you shall see how I'll deal with Him who is your Surety. I'll not spare Him. I'll pour out the vials of My wrath upon Him to the last drop. I'll make Him a curse for sin. Though He is infinitely blessed and equal with Myself, yet I'll make Him cry out in the anguish and trouble of His soul, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' He shall tread the winepress of My wrath. I'll make the burden of sin heavy to Him. It shall make Him fall grovelling upon His face, and sweat great drops of blood in a winter season. They shall run down from His body upon the cold ground. I'll do this to the end that all the world (to whom the preaching of the gospel shall come) may see how infinitely I hate sin."

This is one of God's ends. Though it is true that the principal end of the death of Christ was to satisfy divine justice, there is another end that God aims at in the death of His Son—to declare to all the world, to men and angels, how infinitely the Lord abominates all sin. Now, this is held forth in the gospel more than in all the execution of the Law. If the Law were executed to the fullest upon all the world, it would not hold forth God's hatred of sin as much as this does.

Now, then, do you believe this gospel? Has God let you live under this gospel that you hear in your ears, and do you profess that the Lord has enlightened you by His Holy Spirit to understand the certainty and reality of this? Oh, then, let your conversation be as becomes this evangelical truth!

QUESTION. What conversation becomes this?

ANSWER. Hence, then, your own reason cannot but make a consequence from this that the gospel holds forth. Hence, then, cast away all sin as an abominable thing from you. What have I to do anymore with idols? Hence, then, call no sin little which so much provokes the Lord. Indeed, if you were only acted by the light of reason, reason will tell you that such things are but little and small, and you need make no such great matter about them. But now, are you not a Christian? A follower of Christ? A friend to the gospel?

For shame! Call no sin little, for in the gospel you see the infinite hatred of God against all sin. Yea, there is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest affliction whatsoever. That's a point that has been long since at large opened to you, [*The Evil of Evils] and this will show it more clearly. There is more evil in any sin than in the greatest affliction by the dealing of God the Father with His Son; and, therefore, if you will be willing to live as becomes the gospel of Christ, rather be willing

to bear any affliction in the world than willfully to commit the least sin.

Are these two in the balance? Here's a great and sore cross. You think, "How shall I endure that? On the other side, here's a sin to be committed. If I venture upon this sin, maybe I shall be delivered from this affliction."

Now, would this become the gospel of Christ, for one who professes that he believes the gospel of Christ, for one who professes that he believes that God the Father dealt thus with His Son, who had sin only by imputation upon Him, that He let out the vials of His wrath upon Him and made Him a curse for sin? If Christ had only undertaken to have satisfied for one sin, though the least sin, He must have died for it, for the wages of sin is death! Of sin indefinitely, it is death; and I believe this, and yet shall I rather choose the commission of sin than the bearing of any affliction? Oh, this is infinitely unbecoming the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Do I believe this, and is it real unto my soul? Oh, let me then manifest in my whole course and life that I tremble at the very thought of a sin, at the appearance of evil, and am as much afraid of the least spark of lust as of the fire of hell. Let me discover the temptation to sin that I may endeavor to avoid all temptations to sin, because God has given such a testimony from heaven against sin. Oh, it is a loud testimony indeed that God has given from heaven against sin in the death of His Son! Oh, then, let my conversation be such as I may make it appear that I am afraid at the beginnings of sin, of their first whispering and motions to sin! Oh, let me not stand dandling with sin in my thoughts, and rolling it as a sweet morsel under my tongue! Let me not entertain it in my affections in the least degree as to love it, to approve it, to delight in it; but as soon as ever it enters into my heart, let me

cast it out immediately. Do not let it lodge within your doors one moment! Raise up all the power of your soul against it, follow it with hue and cry until you have overtaken it. And then do justice and judgment upon it. What? Though it may be a Delilah, yet cut it off!

Oh, let me take heed of lying in sin! Have I been overtaken in any sin? Oh, let me be willing rather to shame and condemn myself, to deny anything in the world rather than to continue in that sin! The Lord forbid that if I have been once drawn to any sin that I should think to cover it by another sin, by adding one sin to another, to think to shift for my credit or esteem by adding more sin to that already committed.

Oh, no! The Lord in His mercy has made known to me in the gospel of Christ what sin means, the evil of sin and, therefore, I have learned rather to endure anything than to multiply iniquity! Indeed, before I came to understand Jesus Christ, I thought sin was an evil thing, and I abstained from gross sins by that dim light of nature that was within me; but since I came to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ, the great mystery of godliness in His Son and the dealings of the Father with His Son, the Lord knows now that I abhor sin in secret more than I abhor hell itself.

Aye, such a conversation as would manifest such a work of God upon the heart as this is would become the gospel of Christ indeed. Whereas otherwise, brethren, if any of you who profess the gospel of Christ shall make sin to be a slight thing, and shall be ready to entertain sin in your bosom, know that by this means you do nothing other than trample under foot the blood of Jesus Christ as a common thing, as a thing that had no worth in it at all. This spites the gospel of Christ. You dishonor Jesus Christ and you put Him to open shame, whose name you have taken upon you by your profession.

I'll give you a Scripture for this in Hebrews 6:6. He speaks of some who "were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted of the good Word of God (that's the gospel), and the powers of the world to come; if they should fall away it were impossible to renew them to repentance." Mark the reason: "Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." Such as fall off after the profession of the gospel into sinful ways are said here to crucify the Son of God afresh and to put Him to open shame. This is far from walking as becomes the gospel.

And so you have another text in Hebrews 10:29. He speaks here of those who have fallen off from their profession into sinful ways. "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" See how the Holy Ghost speaks of such as fall from their profession into sinful ways again? And there's a great deal of reason for it, for it is not so much for those who never made profession of the gospel to fall into sin, not such a horrid thing for them; but for those who have made profession of the gospel, that *they* hold forth this much, this is the language of their actions (though they dare not say so): "Lord, I acknowledge that I have seen the fruit of Thy hatred of sin in the death of Thy Son, that Thou didst so hate sin that Thou made Thy Son to be a curse for sin; but yet, for all this, such is the strength of my lusts. I must have my lusts, though it is so vile in Thine eyes as the blood of Thy Son went for it; yet I must have it rather than deny my lusts."

Oh, what a dreadful thing is this! How provoking it must be to the holy God! Oh, happy had it been for such men and

women that they had never heard of the gospel of Jesus Christ! But of the evil of walking unbecoming the gospel of Jesus Christ we shall speak to afterwards when we come to the application. That, then, is the sixth particular of what the gospel holds forth, the infinite hatred of God against sin.

The Gospel Holds Forth the Great Price of Souls

Now the seventh thing that is held forth in the gospel that calls for a conversation becoming is this: the great price of souls. There's nothing in the world that God ever did that reveals the worth of man's immortal soul as the gospel of Jesus Christ does. There God manifests to all the world what a price He puts upon man's soul. The Lord saw that men, by sin, had undone themselves, and that those souls that He made were likely to perish to all eternity, yea, were under the sentence of eternal death and must certainly perish eternally, if so be that some way were not found out by an infinite wisdom to ransom them.

"Now, then," says the Lord, rather than have all souls perish, "it's true that the love I have unto My justice is such as, for many souls, I'll let them go, and they shall perish; but yet, that I might show that I have a high esteem for the souls of the children of men, for the ransoming of that number that I have appointed from all eternity to save, I'll send My Son, and He shall die to save souls so that souls may not perish."

If the Lord should have said, concerning any one soul, "I so highly prize this soul, and account the worth of it to be such as, rather than it shall perish, I'll dissolve heaven and earth. Heaven and earth shall perish rather than this soul shall perish." If God were to say this, you would say that it was a great testimony of God's esteem of a soul. But know that the gospel holds forth a higher esteem of a soul than this comes to when

God says, "Rather than this soul and the other soul perish, I'll send My Son to be made a curse." This the gospel holds forth. This is an infinitely higher price that God puts upon a soul.

You know, therefore, what the apostle says in 1 Peter 1:18–19, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold." Then, in the 19th verse, "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish, or without spot." It is not silver and gold, or any corruptible thing, that can redeem you, but the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Oh, that blood that is more precious than the world, even all the world must let the redemption of a soul alone forever. If all the angels in heaven had joined together to redeem a soul, and would have ventured themselves to have been destroyed forever that they might redeem a soul, it would not have been. They must all let the redemption of a soul alone forever.

The matter, then, of the redemption of a soul is more than we are aware of, and we could never have come to have known this but by the gospel of Jesus Christ. The full price of a soul is written down by the finger of God's Spirit in the gospel of Christ, which is only this, "The blood of the Son of God, the blood of the Son of God."

Well, then, let our conversation be as it becomes this which is held forth in the gospel, show in your conversation that you set a high price upon your souls. Do not venture your souls upon nothing. Oh, how unbecoming is this that will set such a price upon a soul as to give for the redemption of it something of more worth than ten thousand worlds, yet that a man or woman who professes themselves to be Christians shall venture the loss of their souls for the getting of six pence or twelve pence, hazard those immortal jewels for one or two minutes of sensual pleasure to satisfy the lusts of the flesh, what is it else when such will lie or deceive for a little piece of red clay? For

the Lord's sake, do not lay down your everlasting soul for a little gain, for a little credit!

Are you a Christian? Did you ever read the gospel, man or woman, did you ever hear of Christ? And do you know what the death of Christ meant, and why Christ came into the world? Must he be moved to provide a way to ransom souls, and do you set them at so low a rate? Oh, how unbecoming is this of the gospel!

And others pawn away their souls when God manifests what a price He sets upon them, yea, will pawn away their souls to the very devil.

QUESTION. You will say, "Is any man so wicked as to pawn away his soul to the devil?"

ANSWER. Yes, when any man will venture upon sin, and upon this condition, "I will repent before I die." That is as if he should say this, "Here I give my soul to pawn. If I repent, then He has it again; if I do not repent, then it's gone forever."

When you give a pawn, you give it upon these terms: "Well, I give you this and, if I bring you so much money by such and such a time, then I'll have it again; and, if not, then it's gone."

That is how men and women do. They say this, "Here, devil, you shall have the possession of my soul all this while as long as I am in a way of sin. If I repent, then I must have it again, but, if I do not repent before I die, then you shall have it forever."

Now, do you know the price of a soul? Oh, is this to show the high price of a soul, that you will pawn your souls thus? And mark to whom you pawn it. You pawn it to the devil; he has it all this time. It's in his custody all the while that anyone sins upon hope of repentance. I say, until they repent, the devil has their souls in his possession, in his hands. When you pawn a piece of household stuff, until the time that you bring the money, that

is how long the man you pawn it to has possession of it. And thus do people.

You put your souls into the devil's hands, and upon such a condition that you are not able to perform, that is, if you repent, you will have it again; if not, he must have it forever. Oh, friends, you little know what repentance means! What is it to repent? It requires a mighty work of God, the same power of God that made the world is required to break the heart of a sinner, so that you put it to pawn upon that which is impossible for you to perform yourselves by all the power that you have.

Suppose a man put a thing to pawn for that which is impossible for him to redeem. It may be that, if he should have a great many friends who will do some great matter for him, then he may redeem it; but it's beyond his power. You will say, "There's a great deal of danger, then, that pawn shall never be redeemed." So know, when you pawn your souls, you put it into the hands of Satan and lock it up in the powers of darkness, and pawn it for that which you have no power to bring. Do you prize the gospel then? Do you know what a price God has set upon souls? Oh, then, take heed and set a greater price upon your souls than to pawn them away for every trifle, a thing of nought.

And, then, if this is held forth in the gospel, oh, then, do not pollute and defile your souls with sin as you do from time to time! God has a high esteem of them; you have a high esteem of them likewise. Do not make your souls drudges and scullions to your bodies, only to make use of your souls to provide for the satisfying of the lusts of the flesh as many men and women have no other use of their precious, immortal souls all their lives, but only their souls are employed to be slaves for the lusts of their flesh. Oh, are these the souls that must cost the blood of Christ,

that God has put such a high price upon? Surely you do not know the gospel nor Jesus Christ.

If I should tell you what philosophers say of the soul, of men's immortal, eternal souls (though this is now doubted, yet it was plentifully known among the heathens), these would be but dry things to you in comparison of this, to tell you that Jesus Christ has died to redeem souls, there is more in this than in all the arguments that possibly can be brought to show the excellency of the soul of man.

Oh, then, likewise, let your conversation be as becomes this of the gospel in your care of the souls of those that are committed to your care and charge! Do you profess the gospel? Then you profess with it that God so esteemed a soul that He gave the life and blood of His Son to ransom a soul. Oh, then, really demonstrate that you highly esteem the souls of your children and servants by walking convincingly before them, that you may do all the good to them that you can by instructing them, by praying for them and with them. And so, before all your friends and acquaintances, let such kind of meditations work thus in you as these: "O Lord, since I came to know the gospel, I have learned what a high price Thou hast put upon souls. Lord, this shall make me for evermore to value souls at a higher rate than heretofore I have done!"

Oh, it would be an excellent point to urge upon ministers who are charged with many souls! Oh, let them so watch over them, pray for them, and preach to them all the counsels of God, both in season and out of season, that in the great Day of Christ they may be clear of the blood of all men as Paul was. And that's the seventh thing that the gospel holds forth unto us, the preciousness of souls, and let your conversations be as becomes this great point of the gospel.

*The Gospel Holds Forth the Honor That
God Has Put upon Human Nature*

But, then, the eighth, which is as principal a one almost as any, and nearly concerns us, and that is this: the gospel reveals unto us the great honor that God has put upon human nature above the angels. This could never have been but by the gospel. This is as proper a thing to the gospel as any I have spoken of, and one special design that God had in the gospel was to reveal those thoughts and counsels that He had from all eternity, to put mighty and great excellencies upon our human nature in these two particulars:

1. In the personal union of man's nature to the second Person in the Trinity. That's the first and great way of honor that God has crowned human nature with. Hence the apostle, in 1 Timothy 3:16, says, "without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness." What is it? God was manifested in the flesh. God manifested in the flesh? That's a great mystery of godliness.

Now it could not be such a mystery if God had only taken a human shape upon Him (for so it was in the time of the Law). Jesus Christ often took human shape, as when He strove with Jacob. It was Jesus Christ, as might easily appear, but great is the mystery of godliness. Without controversy it's great; God manifested in human flesh. That is, God taking the flesh of a man into a personal union, which is more fully expressed in John 1:14, "The Word was made flesh." This was a strange speech, but proper to the gospel.

A heathen would have thought this was a strange speech, especially if he knew that by the Word was meant He who was the true and eternal God. And then in Hebrews 2:16 it is said that Christ did not take the nature of angels upon Him, but the seed of Abraham. So it appears that, by the personal union of our natures to the Son of God, God has advanced

human nature above angels, above all creatures. Truly, my brethren, in Christ's taking our nature upon Him, which the gospel holds forth to us, we may see God, as it were, resolving to do a work from Himself to the uttermost, to manifest the uttermost of His glory in a work out of Himself, the work of God within Himself.

It is His eternal generation, and the possession of the Holy Ghost, but now God would work out of Himself, and work out of Himself to the uttermost extent. "I'll make a world," said God, "heavens and earth by My Word. Aye, but this is not such a glorious work as I am able to do. I could make ten thousand worlds and, when I have made them, I could make as many more and more glorious. But I would do some work wherein I might manifest even the uttermost of My glory."

What work is that? The work God pitched upon. He would do no work from without to manifest the uttermost extent of His glory, and the Lord pitches upon this: to take the nature of a man into personal union with His Son. That's the uttermost; and it is impossible that men or angels, if they were left to all eternity to imagine, could think of a work in which it would be possible for God to express more of His power, wisdom, and glory. We know but little of it now, but we shall know more in heaven.

Now, oh, how God has honored human nature in this: that when He would do a work to the utmost of His excellencies, He would pitch upon man's nature to take it into personal union with Himself! Here's the mystery of the gospel.

Now this is, indeed, the marrow of the mystery of the gospel: the Word made flesh, the second Person in the Trinity taking man's nature upon Him. This is the mystery of the gospel that angels and saints admire, and shall be taken up to all eternity in admiring and praising and magnifying God for. That's the first way of God honoring man's nature.

2. The second thing that the gospel reveals is this: God has put honor not only upon the nature of man as having soul and body, but He has put a mighty honor upon the very body of man; the meanest and the very lowest part of a man, the very shell, outside, rind, and case of man. You have this in 1 Corinthians 6:19: "What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. You have no such thing revealed in the Old Testament; this comes by the light of the gospel that the Lord has made the bodies of the saints to be temples to the Holy Ghost; that the Holy Ghost dwells in their very bodies as in a temple. Like the King in his palace, so the Holy Ghost is in His temple. Now these two are great things revealed in the gospel, and did we have a clear understanding of these two things, oh, it would mightily elevate our spirits!

Conversations suitable to these two particulars surely must be a high-raised conversation. For instance, consider the personal union of our natures with the second Person in the Trinity. Oh, how should this raise up our hearts, and we should manifest the elevation of our spirits in our conversation so as it becomes those who may expect great things from God! Surely the fact that God has honored our natures so as to be personally united to His Son shows that He intends great things to some of the children of men. For example, suppose you who are the poorest and meanest here in this congregation had a sister who was married to the greatest emperor in the world, yea, to one who was the emperor of the whole earth. Now, you would think to live another kind of life than you did before! Would it be becoming such a man to live by scraping chanel or wiping of horse heels when his sister is married to the only monarch of the whole earth? Surely he may think, "Now I must live at a higher rate, for I may expect something by this."

So should every one of the children of men think like this, “Indeed, I have lived in a base, mean way. This human nature of mine has been basely subject to filthy lusts all my days. I have been a bonds slave to sin and Satan; but when I come to hear the gospel, I hear that the second Person in the Trinity, God blessed forever, equal with the Father, who is the Heir of all things, that He has not married my human nature, but has taken it into a personal union with Himself and is become my Kinsman, my near Kinsman. He has taken this into the nearest union as is possible for a creature to be taken into with God.”

Oh, let us be raised, then, in our thoughts to think, “Surely God intends higher things for some of the children of men than to eat, and drink, and satisfy the flesh, and be brutish here in the world! There are higher things that God will do for mankind, and why not for me? I am not excluded any more than others.”

It was a speech I remember of Seneca’s, though he was a heathen, “I am greater, and I am born to greater things than to be a slave to my body.” A heathen could say so! Oh, but when we hear of human nature so advanced and enthroned in Christ, we should think with ourselves that anyone who has humanity in them is born to higher things than to make provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof!

What, will you be a slave to the devil now? You hear how God has dignified the nature of man into so near a union with Himself. Oh, does not this mystery of the gospel call to all the children of men? Oh, all you children of men! Behold what God has done for mankind! Surely the thoughts of God for mankind are great and glorious. There are higher things you may attain to, and will you yet perish and choose your portion here in this world, and be groveling on the ground as if there were no higher thoughts that God had for your good than

merely to live as brute beasts, to eat and drink and then rise up to play?

So, if God has advanced man's nature so, do not despise it in the meanest of the children of men, the lowest servant or poorest boy who lies begging at your door for a piece of bread (for it is of the same kind that is united in a personal union with the second Person in the Trinity, of the same nature which this poor boy who lies begging at your door for broken bread and meat has); therefore, honor human nature in everyone, and do not vilify it in your self. Those men who live under the gospel and vilify human nature put a dishonor upon Jesus Christ.

And even reverence yourself in private when you are alone. I say, reverence yourself, do not abuse your body. It is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Oh, remember this, all you who are professors of religion, that these bodies of yours, this flesh of yours (if you are godly and walk answerably to your profession) is the very temple of the Holy Ghost. Do not abuse it.

It is the apostle's argument, "Therefore, fly fornication, and be not joined to whores, for your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost." Oh, it makes the sin of uncleanness to one who professes the gospel of Christ a cursed sin, the sin of uncleanness in the professor of the gospel. It is a thousand times more abominable than the sin of uncleanness in another. Why? Because they know how God has advanced human nature into a personal union with Himself, and how their bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost. What, shall I make the temple of God a sty for the unclean spirit, a cage of unclean birds? God forbid!

There has been a great deal of do about stony churches and temples, and you should have a great many base whoremasters plead for the whore of Rome (the mistress of all fornications) in bowing and cringing with cap and knee as soon as they set

their foot in some of our meetings places; and, in the mean time, they abuse the saints who are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and they abuse their own bodies, and yet they profess themselves to be Christians. Oh, now, either deny your Christianity or do not abuse your body to any filthy lust, for it is the temple of the Holy Ghost! This the gospel holds forth.

And let your conversation be now as becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ, not abusing your body so. For we see that the gospel calls for bodily cleanness as well as spiritual cleanness; and, truly, I do not know stronger arguments to godliness than these we have mentioned here in the gospel. We have gone through three: God's infinite hatred of sin, the price of souls, and the honor that the gospel shows God has put upon human nature. Conversations becoming these three would be other than you have. I shall only speak of a fourth and that is this:

The gospel holds forth the greatest example of self-denial that ever was in the world, and by all ways that ever God has made known His mind. He never has revealed His will in an example of self-denial as He has done in the gospel, and that is in the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. God evidences there such a work of self-denial as never was; and it is impossible to apprehend a greater example of self-denial than that is, though Christ thought it no robbery to be equal with God.

Just read Philippians 2:6–8, and there you may see what Christ was, and yet how He emptied Himself, how He denied Himself in His honor, how vile He was made in the world. Though He was the brightness of His Father's glory, yet He was made of no reputation. See how He denied Himself in riches. Christ, who was the Heir of all things, though He was rich, yet He was made poor for us. See how He denied Himself in His pleasures. He was the delight of the Father from all eternity, and yet He was made a man of sorrows. He denied Himself in

His life, for He was the Lord of life, and yet He subjected Himself to death, to a cursed death for us. Oh, the example of Christ in self-denial is the greatest that ever was! And this seems to be one great end of the humiliation of Jesus Christ, to hold forth a preaching pattern of self-denial to the world. And there's a great deal more power in the pattern and example of self-denial than in the commands of self-denial. I only present this to you to show you that it is most unbecoming the gospel for anyone who professes the gospel to be selfish altogether, scraping for themselves and whatever service they are put upon. Unless *self* may have an oar in it, they have no mind to it.

Oh, it is becoming the gospel of Jesus Christ for men and women to be emptied of themselves, no matter what becomes of ourselves, to be willing to give up ourselves for public good, to venture your estates and lives and all your comforts, yea, to be swallowed up in the glory of God, to be nothing that Christ may be all, this is becoming the gospel! In the gospel, we find that Christ was swallowed up with the glory of His Father; and He did not come to do His own will, but the will of His Father that sent Him. Though He was one who had infinitely more excellence than all men and angels in heaven and earth, yet He was content, for the honor of His Father, to be made as a worm and no man, to be trampled under foot, to endure the greatest extremities of all sorts. This holds out an example to us, that while we live in this world, we should be taken off from ourselves.

Oh, this self-love sticks much in the hearts of men and women! Now, upon the example of Christ's self-denial, we are required to deny ourselves, and it is the proper lesson of the gospel, "He that will follow Me, let him deny himself." You never read of such a precept in all the Old Testament. There is no question that the people of God denied themselves then, but

in expressed terms so fully, you have no such thing there. And there is no such rule among the heathens for a man to deny himself. Those who know the original know that the word is not only to deny, but there is joined to it the idea that increases the significance. Let them deny themselves thoroughly. There is a preposition to the word to show that those who will come to Christ must deny themselves, and that thoroughly.

It is a proper lesson of the gospel, and the first lesson. Oh, when our Lord and Master has thus denied Himself, and emptied Himself for good to us, what is becoming this gospel but that all who are professors of it should deny themselves? It is very unbecoming the glorious gospel for a Christian to be selfish, to have his self-ends and self-ways and self-interests in everything, as generally almost all men in the world are acted by self. Some self-ends, self-excellency carries them on in things, or else they have no heart to do anything. This is unbecoming the gospel. But one who would live as becomes the gospel must be wholly emptied of himself. Whatever parts, estate, credit, honors he has in the world must be melted into the glory of God.

Jesus Christ, for the glory of His Father, was infinitely content to deny Himself more than we can, for what have we to deny ourselves of? Then do you or I live as becomes the gospel when all that we apprehend to have any excellency in, we have it all swallowed up in the glory of God; when we can dedicate and consecrate our lives, honors, liberties, estates, and comforts all to the glory of God, and be as nothing to ourselves, and let God be all in all to us.

Ministers may bring many reasons why we should deny ourselves, but all these reasons come to nothing until the soul comes to behold the clear light of the gospel, and there beholds the Son of God by faith, how He emptied Himself. "Nay, then,"

says a believing soul, “if the Son of God denied Himself, was emptied thus for me and ventured wholly upon God, I must not live in myself or for myself, nor live to myself, but wholly live in God, and for God, and to God, and upon God.” Oh, this is that which becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ!

SERMON 6

(April 5, 1646)

“Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

*The Gospel Holds Forth That Our Conversation
Should Be Suitable to Spiritual Worship*

To proceed, the ninth thing that the gospel holds forth is this: our conversation should be suitable to spiritual worship, the spiritual worshipping of God. The worship that there was in the time of the Law was carnal in comparison with what there is in the time of the gospel; and, therefore, a great part of the worship of God is called a “carnal commandment,” and “rudiments of the world,” and “beggarly things.” If you read Colossians 2, there you have strange expressions about that which was the worship of God, also divers times in Hebrews. But now you know what Christ said in John 4 to the woman of Samaria, “The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father; but the hour cometh when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, for such the Father seeks to worship Him.”

We must not think to worship God in such carnal ways as before. I beseech you to consider this one thing: Certainly God will have as much worship in the time of the gospel as He ever had; but where we have one external thing to worship God in now, in the time of the Law there were a hundred. A hundred to one of external things, yet now this worship of God must be made up some way. We are not called to those outward

worshippings, offerings, sacrifices, and costly things as they were in the time of the Law.

Now, how should this be made up but in spiritual sacrifices, in presenting our bodies and souls to God as a living sacrifice? Therefore, such men and women as altogether are for the outside of things in the worship of God are warned. Because God has appointed but a few things in His worship, we have use of no other creatures in the worshipping of God but the bread and wine and water, only these elements, and the man to speak to us, to be either God's mouth to us or our mouth to God. That is all we have appointed in the gospel for the worship of God.

Therefore, it is to be expected, if we would have our conversation as becomes the gospel, to be very spiritual in our worship, and to take heed of thinking to make up God's worship with external things of our own. That's exceedingly unbecoming the gospel.

Many thought in former times that they honored God much by adding to His worship ceremonies external things; and people's hearts are more set upon them because they are from man; they are human. I'll give you but one Scripture to show how we should forever take heed of traditions of men and of mixtures in the worship of God, because the gospel points at spiritual worship. 1 Peter 1:18–19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold." From what? "From your vain conversations received by traditions from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish, and without spot."

See what an argument the apostle uses here to those to whom he writes. He says, "There was a time when you worshipped God in an external way, and in a superstitious manner, according to the traditions and fancies of your fathers. This was before you knew Jesus Christ, but now that you have come

to know Christ, know that it was the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed to redeem you from this vain conversation that you received by tradition from your forefathers.”

I do not know any one Scripture that has more power in it to take men’s hearts off from all false and superstitious worship, from all old customs that they had from their forefathers (as people are mightily set upon old customs, to worship God according to them). What a stir did we have to get men from their late Service Book (the great Diana of England), which was made up of the ends and shreds of the Romish Mass Book, only printed in English letters. Reading and babbling over burials and such kind of trumperies, oh, how were those old Samaritan customs settled in the hearts of men, like coming to the communion table and there to kneel down at rails as so many beadsmen to the Pope, and vestries to Rome.

Men’s hearts are mightily set upon such foolish things as these are. But now this text tells you that, if you know what it is to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, you must know that the blood of Christ was shed to take you off from your vain conversation received by tradition from your forefathers. Christ shed His blood that He might deliver you from all such traditional things, that you might worship God in spirit and truth. This becomes the gospel.

At your leisure, read over that second chapter of the epistle to the Colossians, speaking of men who in a voluntary humility worshipped angels, intruding into those things which they have not seen, and then in the 16th verse, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink (not that you may not eat meat at such and such times in the year) or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days (the Jewish Sabbath day). Let no man judge you,” said the apostle, “in regard of these things, which are a shadow of things to come.” Then, in

the 19th verse, “and not holding the Head.” Those that stood upon such things as these are here charged for not holding the Head. That is, they did not hold Christ.

It is as if the apostle should say, “If so be that you hold and profess Christ, you would not stand upon these things, upon these kinds of superstitious ways in the worship of God.” And you shall find the apostle telling the Galatians about such kinds of ways, of continuing and holding the worship of the Law. He says in Galatians 4:10–11, “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.” What, then? “I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.”

It is as if the apostle should say, “I profess, I see you stand upon such old things, and worshipping God in an external way. I am afraid of you lest I have bestowed all my labor in vain. This is so much the opposite of the gospel that it makes me think that all my preaching of the gospel to you is in vain.”

And yet mark, my brethren, what were these days, months, times, and years? They were such as God had appointed, but now they were ceased after Christ came. They were out of date, and yet these people were sticking to them after the death of Christ. The apostle said, “I am afraid of you, that all my preaching to you is in vain.”

Now, my brethren, what shall we say to those who stick upon these things that God never appointed, but were of popish ordination, like keeping one time more holy than another, and thinking thereby to tender up service to God? Why should we not keep the memory of such and such times? Now as to keep them so as to think that they shall sanctify any time is a dangerous thing, a sign that they understand the gospel but little. To think that any men upon any reason whatsoever should be able to sanctify a time, to make that time to be holy, is unbecoming the gospel. No man can make a holy day under the gospel.

OBJECTION. But, you will say, we keep days of fasting and thanksgiving?

ANSWER. But there's a great deal of difference between them and these times that the apostle speaks of here.

Now the keeping of holy days is this: We account the time holy, and the very duty is more acceptable because it is performed at that time. For example, take the Sabbath day. There may be a sermon on the weekday, but, certainly, it's a more holy worship of God to hear upon the Sabbath than on the weekday, and we sanctify God's name more on the Sabbath than during the week. Why? Because the time sanctifies the duty, being set apart by God.

In the temple, the duty was more acceptable than in any other place. Why? Because it was set apart by God. But we cannot make any place holy, nor can we make any time holy. So our days of fasting and thanksgiving are only thus, that we will spend that time in holy duties to humble ourselves or to bless God, but not to make this time holy. So that the duty should be holy because it's on this day rather than on another day. That's the superstition of it, when a duty should be holy because it's on this day rather than on another day.

For example, some think it's more holy to receive the Lord's Supper on an Easter day than on another day. This is superstition, to think that the duty is more holy by any holiness that men put upon a thing. That is unbecoming the gospel. And we are redeemed from such vain conversations by the blood of Christ. While men stick upon these things and say, "Let them do what they will, I think those things are good and right," it's very evil.

Thus it was with the Galatians. They had more reason to think that those things they stuck upon were according to God than you do, yet the apostle says, "I am afraid of you lest I have spent all my labor in vain, lest I have been a burning

and shining lamp to no purpose.” And, truly, there are no people for whom there can be less hope that the ministry of the Word should work savingly upon than those people who are set upon old customs in the worship of God, like wines upon their lees. And until the Lord is pleased to take your hearts off from old customs in the service and worship of God, there’s a plain demonstration that the preaching of the gospel has not prevailed with your hearts, for you do not live as becomes the gospel.

That which becomes the gospel is worshipping God in a spiritual way, consecrating your souls and bodies and all that you have to the worship of God, making them to be a holy sacrifice to God, and that according to the rules of the gospel, “which is your reasonable service.” That’s another particular that the gospel teaches; and, therefore, to live as becomes the gospel is to worship God in spirit and truth.

*The Gospel Holds Forth the Spiritual
Union We Have with Christ*

The tenth thing I shall add of what the gospel holds forth to us is of such consequence that I shall insist on it a little while. That is, the near relation we are in to God and Christ, and our spiritual union with Him. This is opened in the gospel more fully than ever it was before.

1. We have a relation to God, first, as a Father and believers as children, yea, and as children of age. Though in the Law, it’s true, we find that God was there a Father and Ephraim was His dear son. But you shall find in Galatians 3 that we are as “children of age,” whereas believers in the time of the Law were underage. Now you know that when any of your children come to be of age, live to themselves, and are out of their apprenticeships, then their lives are another manner than when they were

little children in their nonage. They come to have stocks in their hands, to trade for themselves, and not to be any more as servants. Before a child comes of age, he is under tutors and governors in the family; but when he comes to years of discretion, then he lives like a man and commands in the family, serviceable to none but his mother and father. So we should live as becomes children of age, that is, manifesting in our conversations steadiness, wisdom, and gravity, and now to live more above the things of this world than we did before as children under age.

And now for the union we have with God, that is that the saints now are made one with God and with Christ, His Son. In 1 Corinthians 6:17, "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." It's a very strange expression: we are one Spirit with God and with Jesus Christ. Oh, what conversation becomes this, that we should be principled and acted with the same Spirit? Surely such a one as must manifest that we are crowned and graced with the same Spirit, that is, God's Spirit, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, His Son. Now, surely, that must be a very holy, spiritual conversation. 1 Corinthians 3:16, "Yea, the Spirit of God dwelleth in you," and 2 Corinthians 6:16, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." See the near union that we have with God held forth to us by the gospel?

Yea, and there is another phrase which is very remarkable. As the Spirit of God is in believers, so believers are in the Spirit. Galatians 5:25, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." The Spirit lives in us and we live in the Spirit. Oh, let us walk not in a fleshly way, to satisfy the lusts of the flesh, but in the Spirit, in the fruits that become the Spirit of God. You shall see them in Galatians 5:22 and following: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law. And

they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts of it." If we walk in the Spirit, then here's the fruit of the Spirit. Would you have your conversations such as become the gospel? Then mark these three phrases:

The Spirit of God is in you, in a constant way of taking up His habitation and residence in your bosoms.

You live in the very Spirit, as in the proper element of a Christian.

You are one Spirit with God.

Put these three together and see how unbecoming to these three expressions (that we have in the gospel and nowhere else) it is for professors of the gospel to satisfy the lusts of the flesh. Oh, how unsuitable are fleshly lusts to a spiritual man! Oh, take heed of this forever, you who make profession of the gospel! Do not wallow in the mire of uncleanness, do not give liberty to the lusts of the flesh, but mortify the lusts of the flesh and the deeds thereof, for you are joined so near to God Himself.

You live in God, too. Colossians 3:3: "Your life is hid with Christ in God." It's a very transcendent phrase, that the saints live in God. You not only live in the air and breathe the air, but while you live here in the world you live in God. Oh, the wonderful mystery of the gospel, and the high things that are held forth in the gospel! God's Spirit is in us, we are in the Spirit, and we are the same Spirit with God, yea, and we live in God. Oh, then, what a conversation should be suitable to these things! Seeing these things are thus, what manner of persons ought we to be?

Yea, and there is another expression, and that's more full than any of these, and it is found in the prayer of Christ in John 17:21, "That they all may be one, as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." The gospel reveals this union, for the saints to be one with the Father and the

Son as the Father and Son are one. Now, the conversations of those who are joined so near to God must be holy and blameless, bearing witness to the glory of that God to whom they are so nearly related. I remember handling that point of drawing nigh to God in His worship [*Gospel Worship*]. There we showed what holiness is required in those who are so nigh to God; but those who are open with God and in God, oh, how much of God, of Jesus Christ, should shine forth by their lives in the faces of others? Read these Scriptures and, by faith, make them real to your souls and, then, let your consciences tell you what conversation is required of you.

If you are a believer, this is so. Charge your soul with this when any temptation to evil comes. What? Is it fit for such a one as me to live thus, who has the Spirit of God dwelling in me, yea, and I dwelling in the Spirit of God, and joined so as to be one Spirit with God, yea, and to live in God, and to be one with God, as the Father and Son are one, and is this conversation such as becomes one who is raised to such a height of honor as this?

Oh, remember this, Christians, it will be a mighty help to your holy conversations, to put you on to shine before men in a holy conversation, to walk in the Spirit, considering the near union we have with God! We would never have known these things had we not had them revealed to us by the gospel. Oh, this is a glorious gospel that has revealed such glorious things to us as this!

2. And then, our relation and union with Jesus Christ. You know the Scripture makes Christ, sometimes, to be the Root and we the branches. Now, therefore, we are to bring forth fruit, seeing that we are branches in Him who is the Root. Bring forth fruit suitable to the sap. You who bring forth sour grapes, grapes of Gomorrah, who have bitter, tart spirits and

live in any wicked and sinful way, is this the sap that is suitable to the Root?

You are grafted into Jesus Christ, not into a crabstock, and do you receive this sap from the Root? Oh, you are a dishonor to the Root that you grow upon. "I am the true vine and every branch in Me that beareth fruit, and My Father purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." Christians should so live in their conversations as to manifest the fullness of the sap and juice that is in the Root, the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not enough here and there to have a leaf, or a grape or two, but full, ripe clusters of grapes become those who grow upon such a fruitful Root.

And, then, you know Christ is the Head and we are the members. Then, do not dishonor your Head. When there is a temptation to sin think like this: Why, will not this be a dishonor to my Head? Do I receive such spirits from the Head to act after such a sinful course?

Oh, do not be a crown of thorns to your Head, Jesus Christ! Yea, and the union is very great, for it is not only that we are members of Christ, and so we are in Christ, but Christ is in us. The Root is not in the branch though the branches are in the Root; and the Head is not in the members though the Head is joined with the members. But Christ is in us as we are in Him, and so the union is very glorious and mysterious. You complain of weakness, aye, but is there not strength in Christ? Are you not joined to Christ thus, and a member of Him, and a branch in Him. Whatever infirmities you have which bow you down, yet there is enough power in Jesus Christ to convey to any to enable them to walk in a holy conversation before the Lord, to renew their strength as the eagle. Manifest, then, the virtue of your Head, from whence all the sinews of every member's strength arises.

And, then, you know the relation we have to Christ: He is the Husband, we are the spouse. Why, do not discredit your Husband. Any virtuous wife would make it a mighty argument against any evil way, "It will disgrace my husband." Especially if her husband is a public man in place and authority. Oh, let this be an argument against every sin, even the appearance of evil. It will be dishonorable to the Lord Jesus, who is my Husband. How can I do this wickedness against my Lord and my God, who has betrothed me to Himself, so that I am bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh? And that's the second thing.

3. And, then, a third thing that the gospel holds forth to us that we should labor to suit our conversations accordingly is this: The near union that the saints have with one another. It's not so revealed anywhere as in the gospel. In Romans 12:5, we are said there to be "members of one another." As we are members of Christ (I beseech you to observe it), so we are members of one another. That Scripture may be in stead of all for this in Ephesians 4:3, the exhortation to unity. We must "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Why? "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." See here, there are seven "ones" to be an argument of unity— one body, one spirit, called in the hope of one calling, one faith, one baptism, and one God. Where do you have such a unity demonstrated in all the Book of God where any one duty is more pressed than unity?

We have hinted somewhat, in speaking of the love of God, which is a great design of the gospel to hold forth, and there we spoke something of love. But here we speak of the unity of the saints; being so nearly united into one thing, the saints should be one. And, certainly, it's the most unbecoming thing in the

world for saints to be divided in their affection upon some little differences in judgment.

Let me argue with you. What? Was the coat of Christ without any seam, and shall the Body of Christ be rent all to pieces? For shame! The gospel of Christ is in your hands, and it teaches another lesson. Next to our salvation, the gospel intends the union of saints, and there's nothing that is pressed more strongly in every leaf of it. It's here in my text, which makes me speak to this, for mark the very words that follow in my text, Philippians 1:27, "only let your conversation be as becomes the gospel of Christ."

Now, if you should say, "Wherein should we walk so?" The apostle answers then, "That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel." Mark it, "striving together." He would have the saints to be strivers. Aye, but strivers for what? Not for their own will, humors, opinions, fancies, custom, and traditions, which are out of date, but strivers for the faith, for the faith of the gospel, for the doctrine of faith. And they should labor to join all their strength together, both shoulders and hearts.

There's a great deal of striving now. Professors of the gospel strive asunder, but the Holy Ghost would have us strive together, and this is as becomes the gospel, says our text. The apostle here instances in this particular above all others, that to live as becomes the gospel is to stand fast with one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. Oh, how unbecoming the gospel are the ways and lives of most Christians!

QUESTION. "From whence are these sad divisions and risings up of heart among the tribes, so that one thinks that he has the truth and another judges that he alone is in the right way?"

ANSWER. I beseech you, therefore, because it's so fully instanced in the very words of the text, that the apostle instances in this particular. Give me leave to speak of it in a few words. Certainly, his meaning is not that you shall be of one spirit and one mind, that men should give up their judgments and consciences to the opinions of other men, that others, according to their power, may again lord it over us, and so enslave us to draw in their yokes, to grind in their mills and plow with their asses. Yea, that would be against other Scriptures.

No, the meaning is this, that we should labor to find out what is truth, search for it as for silver, and go according to what light we have; but yet so, though we might differ, to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," and join in all things that we can, and so walk so lovingly that it may appear that, if there are differences, it is merely that which conscience makes, because we dare not deny what we are persuaded in our consciences is a truth.

We cannot put out the convincing light of the candle of the Lord which is set up within us, yet we can live in unity and peace and be useful to one another, communicating our gifts, graces, comforts, and experiences one to another as becomes Christians. And, indeed, it is a greater honor to the gospel for men, though they differ in their judgments, to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. I say, it's a greater honor to the gospel than if they were all of the same mind.

You know the Turks are all of one mind, but I cannot say so of the Papists, yet they have a chain to keep them together. We read of the Egyptians that, when it was darkness among them, they sat still and kept close together, but when it came to be light every man went about his own business. So, when light begins to break forth, and there is liberty given to search into truths, we cannot imagine that at the very first men should be

of the same judgment unless they will give up their consciences and sacrifice their reason one to another. But, though they are not of one judgment, yet there may be kept a blessed unity of affection. There may be a golden girdle clapped about their loins, yea, and of practice so far as men, with peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, so as not to sin against conscience and light.

Unity of affection and practice should be endeavored to the uttermost, and it is a most Christian thing to do. And, certainly, this should be studied and endeavored by us, as much as lies in us. I think when I read over the Epistles of Paul, or any part of the New Testament, I see nothing more pressed than this (next to believing in Jesus Christ). Therefore, it ought to be the care of Christians. And, as it ought to be the care of Christians to study unity and peace, so I beseech you that small differences may not be abused and heightened so far because some differ from others so that, therefore, immediately (if they are the least part especially) all the odium should be cast upon them, though they can appeal to God so that they endeavor to know the mind of God, and to keep unity as far as they can without sin.

And we shall see that the Scripture never lays the sin of division upon any unless those who lay it upon them are able to say that they make division from some corrupt end or other of their own, and then it charges them deeply. That place is most famous that you have in Romans 16:17–18 (and I verily persuade myself that there are many of you that hear this text much abused), “Now I beseech you brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” This is the great place against that sin which we call schism, for schism is nothing but a rending asunder: “that cause division (schism) contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”

Now, you know the sin of schism was cast by the popish bishops heretofore upon all that would not be of their minds in any ceremonies and will-worship, and because many would not come up to the rails and submit to receive the Lord's Supper by kneeling in that way that it was then administered by our prelatical priests. Therefore, they were termed "schismatics." And so, at this day, many cry out of others if so be they cannot swallow camels with them, if so be they differ in some things wherein they cannot join with them because it would be sin and a snare to them. They immediately say they are guilty of schism and faction (there is a great deal of taking God's name in vain in this thing); yet they do not tell you what the true nature of schism is, but if any persons do not join with the great part (which is usually least contentious), that's schism in a high degree. This is not that which becomes the gospel, immediately to judge all who differ from us; but mark the next words, and there the apostle tells us what schism is.

It must be contrary to sound doctrine, for he says, "They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." The apostle could take it upon his conscience by seeing the behavior of these men that the reason why they differed from others was not out of tenderness of conscience and desire to know the mind of God, but, by their behavior, he saw enough to satisfy his conscience. Their conversation gave their profession the lie; and, therefore he said, "avoid such." So I confess, if men can take it upon their consciences as they would answer to Jesus Christ; I see such and such men to differ thus, but I can appeal to Christ in it that, upon these and these grounds, I am persuaded it is not out of tenderness of conscience, and I am verily persuaded that there is no willingness in them to know the mind of Christ, but it is to serve their own carnal ends and purposes.

I confess, if we can take this upon our consciences as we will answer to Jesus Christ, that there are such and such grounds upon which we believe Christ will so account, that such men do not differ through their tenderness, but through their own carnal ends, these men may be accounted schismatics. This is the sin of schism, when through want of love, and to serve their own ends, men shall rend one from another.

But now, is it possible to think that the Holy Ghost should lay so great a load (as to command the saints to avoid such persons) upon men whose consciences are upright with God. When a man shall be able to appeal to God and say, "Lord, Thou that knowest all things, knowest that it is the desire of my soul to know Thy will, and I search for it and pray for it, and it is the affliction of my soul that I differ in anything from my brethren that I see to be godly. And, if I knew Thy mind, Thou knowest I would quickly close with them, and account it the greatest happiness that can befall me in this life to shake hands with them in such and such particulars. But Thou hast laid this charge upon me that I must do what I do out of faith, and I should sin against that rule of Thine if I should yield to that which I see no footing for out of Thy Word."

Now, if a soul should make this moan to Jesus Christ, do you think that Christ would account this person a schismatic? And that he must be persecuted as a schismatic? No, certainly. There's a great mistake in this, and this is merely for lack of charity. And that which the Holy Ghost is bitter against is when men, for lack of love to their brethren, and to serve their own base ends, make breaches and tears in the church.

Judge such now to be guilty of the sin of schism and no other, for that is to break unity, to judge others guilty of schism merely because they differ from you, and cannot read by your spectacles. These extremes that I have spoken of are ways that

are very much unbecoming the gospel of Christ, for men out of base ends to break unity, to rend from the saints, or otherwise because men do not join with you in everything you desire, therefore, presently to put such a brand upon them as to stigmatize them as schismatics. Certainly, this unChristian-like nicknaming the children of God maintains the breach and widens it more, whereas the conversation that becomes the gospel is to study to find out the truth. And do I see learned and godly men of another judgment? Let me pray more unto the Father of lights for the Spirit of revelation. It may be that I am mistaken. If I am mistaken, Lord, reveal it. Do not let me go on in the ways of darkness, but take away the scales from my understanding that I may see into the deep things of God and His gospel.

And, therefore, others that they differ from should tender these as brethren, and look upon them and see, are they not conscientious in all their other ways? Can I be able to find any fault with them in their lives and conversations? It may be it's their mistake. Then let me pray for them and labor to help them, and tender them all I can. It may be that God will reveal His mind to them more fully afterwards.

Now, in what we have attained, let us walk, and if any are otherwise minded, God will reveal His mind to them. And this carriage should be in Christians one towards another, for to give reviling speeches and names of disgrace, to cast dirt upon one another, is exceedingly unbecoming the gospel. Yea, if the heathens were among us, they would even loathe the gospel of Jesus Christ, to see the carriage of Christians who are this day among us. But the conversation that becomes the gospel of Christ is that which manifests unity, to live in unity one with another, for the gospel preaches to us the greatest unity of Christians that possibly can be between man and man.

Again, the gospel holds forth the glorious happiness of the saints in heaven. You cannot find much of that in the Law. In all the Old Testament you find but little of eternal life. I cannot discover three texts from Genesis to the end of Malachi that clearly hold forth eternal life. It's true, our forefathers (no question) in the Old Testament knew that there was eternal life, and there are some Scriptures that tend that way, but I believe that none of you can give many texts from Genesis to Malachi that expressly hold forth the glory of the saints in heaven.

Now the gospel holds it forth in 2 Timothy 1:9–10. There the apostle says (speaking of the glory of the saints and immortality), “Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which He hath given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But is now made manifest by the appearance of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” How does life and immortality come to be brought to light through the gospel? Did our forefathers not know of life and immortality before? Yes, but very darkly, and some of the eminent ones knew but little of that exceeding riches of glory and happiness the saints shall be crowned with in heaven. Life and immortality is brought to life through the gospel.

In former times, was it known (till Christ came in the flesh) that the happiness of the saints should be in the vision of God, in standing before the face of God, and beholding Him in glory in heaven?

Did they know the communion that the saints shall have with God, and with Jesus Christ in His bodily presence in glory?

Did they understand the fruition of God, and God's being all in all to the saints as He shall be in the communication of all fullness of good?

Did they understand the inheritance of the saints which is in light?

Did they know that the saints were not only heirs, but co-heirs with Christ? These things are known only in the gospel, the glorious reward of the saints.

Did they, in the time of the Law, know that these bodies of ours should be made more glorious than the sun in the firmament? The gospel tells us this, that these lumps of clay that we now carry about with us shall be one day more glorious than the sun shining in its luster.

Did they know that our bodies should be made like the glorious body of Christ? That it is sown in weakness, but should rise in power; sown in dishonor, but rise in glory; sown a natural body, but should rise a spiritual body; and sown in corruption, and should be raised in incorruption? Certainly these things were very little known to the fore-fathers, if known at all.

Now, these things were the great counsels of God that were kept hidden from all eternity, only the Lord reserved the revelation thereof to the coming of His Son. That was the time for opening heaven. Heaven was shut, and there was little seen of the glory thereof until Christ was incarnate in the flesh. The Lord reserved the opening of the gates of heaven and the showing the glory of it to the saints till the coming of Jesus Christ. Christ now tells us of mansions that He has gone before to prepare for us, and when our earthly tabernacle is dissolved we have a building not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens. Oh, now, my brethren, how ought we to live?

It's the argument of the apostle, when he speaks but of the great change in the church here (speaking of new heavens and a new earth), it's meant of the state of the church that it shall be in even here, and he says, "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holiness and godly conversation?" But, then, we

hear of the highest heavens, Abraham's bosom, the paradise the saints shall be in living with Christ, wrapped up to the third heaven (as the apostle was). Oh, what manner of persons ought we to be in all godliness and holy conversation!

Now, if you would ask me what conversation is becoming the gospel, I would tell you that which we have in the third chapter of this epistle. "For our conversation is in heaven." Upon what ground is it? "From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." We look, he says, for the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, who shall put forth such a power as shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like His glorious body. Therefore, our conversation is in heaven.

Do you expect this flesh of yours should be made like the sun in the heavens, like the glorious body of Jesus Christ? Oh, then, do not abuse your flesh to sin; do not make provision for the flesh to satisfy the lusts thereof! Let no member of your body be a weapon of unrighteousness to sin against God with. When you are tempted to any bodily sin, stop yourselves with this meditation: shall I sin against God with this body of mine which, I believe, shall one day be more glorious than the sun in the firmament, which shall, ere long, be made like the glorious body of Christ?

Do we have the hopes and promises of such an inheritance in heaven? Oh, then, let not only our thoughts be there, but our conversation, our trading, our only business be there also! Oh, let it appear that we have heavenly hearts and spiritual carriages, that we live as becomes those who hope within a few days or months to be possessed with the glory of heaven which Christ has prepared for us. Such should our conversations be, heavenly conversations, shining with the light of the glory of

heaven upon us. Heaven should appear in our conversations now so that they who look upon us and converse with us may truly judge us to be citizens of the new Jerusalem, free denizens of heaven. We speak the very language of Canaan already and, ere long, we will be possessed of that promised land.

I'll conclude all now with one Scripture, 2 Corinthians 3:3: "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." Mark it, the apostle here tells the Corinthians that they are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ. Observe the text: The people of God, believers, are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ.

QUESTION. "Epistle of Christ," you will say, "what's the meaning of that? What use can you make of that to your point?"

ANSWER. The meaning of it is this: that Christ by them, or in them, writes an Epistle to the world to declare to the world His mind and His will. It is as if the apostle should say, "You who are believers, know that Christ makes use of you to declare to the world what He is, what His glory is. You are His Epistle. Christ sends by you the knowledge of Himself into the world so that, when the world looks upon you, they who run may read in your lives, conversations, and examples, the very Epistle of Christ (transcribed to the life) whereby He declares to the world His excellencies and His glory in lively characters.

Now, my brethren, this should be the conversation of all saints; that is, they should, in their lives, be the Epistle of Jesus Christ, the mysteries of the gospel, the deep things of God. Would you know what Christ's mind is, and what the excellencies of Christ are, and of the gospel? Read it in the lives of the saints. See their ways, and you may know much of the mind of

Christ in them. You who cannot read one letter in a book may yet read this Epistle. You may read the Epistle that Jesus Christ sends to the world to convince the world.

Now, the Epistle that Christ sends to the world is not only in His Word (there, indeed, is a great Epistle that Christ has sent, for the Scripture is no other but, as an ancient calls it, the Epistle of God to the world; God sends His letter to the world), but the saints are Christ's Epistle likewise, wherein Christ's mind is to be read and known. Now, then, let your conversations be such that you may be a full Epistle of Christ to the whole world, that all the world may read what Christ is in you.

Take heed of blotting and blurring this Epistle. If a letter was sent from a great man, if a prince or a king sent a letter, and those who brought it smeared it and blotted the letter so as it could not be read, it would be taken very badly! So you who profess yourselves to be Christians, you do not *bring* the letter only, but you *are* the letter! And, therefore, do not blot and blur this Epistle of Christ, but keep it fair so that all with whom you converse, all in the family, may daily read something of the mind of Jesus Christ in your conversations; so that you may be the glory of Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 8:23, it is said of Titus and other fellow helpers that they were the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ. Oh, this all professors of religion should endeavor to be, the glory of Jesus Christ, so that wherever they live all might see the glory of Christ held forth! Wherever you go, you may carry the glory of Jesus Christ about you, in your hand, on your faces.

O Christians, I appeal to your consciences. Do you live so that the glory of Christ shines in you in the course of your lives? As the shine of the candle goes through the lantern, so the shine and the glory of Jesus Christ should go through Christians in

their conversations to dazzle the eyes of the world. Oh, do not darken the glory of Christ, but make it as bright as you possibly can, so that this purblind world may be able to see something of the glory of Christ in your conversations. This should be the great care of your lives, but this much shall suffice for this time.

SERMON 7

(April 12, 1646)

“Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

*W*e have preached, you know, many sermons upon this necessary and seasonable duty that as Christians are to sanctify the name of God in worship, so in their conversations and in their lives. Their conversations must be such as becomes the gospel of Christ, worthy of the gospel of Christ, for so I told you the word signifies. Now we are upon this great point—what conversation it is that becomes the gospel of Christ.

I'll only add one Scripture more to the last thing I named and then proceed. The revealing of the glory of heaven in the gospel should work mightily upon our hearts to labor for a conversation suitable thereunto. In Titus 2:11–13 we read, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” What does it teach us? “That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” We have made use of this Scripture thus far already, but that for which I quote it is the reference of this to the next words, “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Here's a Scripture that, if ever the Lord enlightened us in the things of the gospel so that we have been brought to believe, would mightily work upon our hearts to live godly and

holy. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation." What does it teach us? Not to be licentious, vain, slight, and bold in our sinful courses, but it teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

Mark it, it is not enough to live soberly, not to be a drunkard, to live righteously, that is, not to wrong anybody. Many think that's enough. But, indeed, the light of nature would teach us that. But now the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us more, "to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Though we live in the midst of a wicked, tempting world, yet we are to live godly.

And what's the great argument in the gospel to cause us to live godly in this present world? "Looking for the blessed hope." Oh, we look for a blessed hope that the gospel reveals! Oh, we did not understand this hope, this blessed hope, until the gospel was preached to us; but since we apprehend a blessed hope, the Holy Ghost has raised in our hearts a blessed hope of glorious things. What glorious things? Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

We have some little glimpses of the great God when we set forth to sea and launch into the deeps. We see the glory of the great God who rides upon the wings of the wind, and whom both the winds and the seas obey. Oh, but we look for another manner of the glorious appearing of the great God than has ever yet appeared! I beseech you, consider this text. God never appeared great and glorious in comparison to what He will appear, and blessed are those whose conversations shall be such that they can look upon the face of this great God with joy when He shall appear in glory. We look for this blessed

hope, and then, when this great God shall appear in His glory, we shall have our blessed hope, and this teaches us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts.

Oh, do you look to be saved? Have you a blessed hope? And do you expect to the appearing of the great God in glory? Has the gospel revealed these things unto you? Oh, let this that the gospel reveals teach us to deny all ungodliness, and all worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

But there are yet some other things that the gospel holds forth that are very remarkable for the furtherance of our godly conversation in this world. And if we would live as becomes the gospel, we must have a right understanding of these things, or else we shall never suit ourselves to the gospel, unless we apprehend these great points that are published to us in and by the gospel.

For example, this is a great point: The kingdom of Jesus Christ is not of this world. The gospel holds forth to us that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, having taken our nature upon Him, is a great King. He has a kingdom, but He has a kingdom that is not of this world. Neither is Christ of this world, nor His kingdom of this world, nor the saints. Those who are the subjects of this kingdom are not of this world. The right understanding of this would help us greatly in our conversations, and a conversation becoming this would greatly honor the gospel.

First, we shall show how the gospel holds this forth, that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world. Mark those Scriptures in John 18:36, "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is My kingdom not from hence." Therefore, He is saying, you must not

wonder or think that I am thus apprehended and delivered up to men, that they do with Me what they please, though I am the great King of My Church, appointed by My Father. Yet, My kingdom is not of this world, and I did not come here for pomp and glory.

The glory of Christ in His kingdom here is spiritual. Indeed, when this world shall be at an end, then Christ will appear gloriously, though the Scripture speaks of a world hereafter wherein Christ shall appear gloriously, but whether personally or otherwise we do not speak of, but that Christ shall appear a glorious King even in this world; not of this world, but upon the earth, and yet the Scripture speaks of that as another world, a new heaven and a new earth. But for the present, for that which the Scripture calls this world, we must not expect a pompous and glorious kingdom until there is a new world, until there is a new heaven and a new earth. This the gospel holds forth. The people of the Jews thought as soon as the Messiah came, He immediately would be an outward monarch in outward pomp and glory.

“No,” said Christ, “this world must pass away first. I must come first and reign spiritually in another way, and, for My kingdom, there is a time for the glory of it to appear when another world shall come. But while this world lasts, never expect any such outward pomp and glory in the way of My kingdom. I have a kingdom, indeed, here in this world, but it is not of this world. I have a kingdom wherein I reign spiritually in the hearts of My people. There I have set up My throne and, therein, I have written My laws by which I guide and order all things for their eternal salvation, but My kingdom is not of this world.”

Yea, and He says, likewise, in John 8:23, “I am not of this world.” And, in John 15:19 (for John, that beloved disciple who

lay in the bosom of Christ, knew much of the mind and heart of Christ, and was much instructed in this mystery and, indeed, none of those who conversed with Christ knew more of the bosom of Christ than John did), “If ye were of the world, the world would love its own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world.” So that, as Christ is not of the world, so the saints are not of the world. John 17:14 says, “I have given them Thy Word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

Mark it, “as I am not of the world, so they are not of the world.” Thus, the Scripture is clear that neither Christ nor His kingdom is of this world and, therefore, believers are not of this world. And hence, then, what conversation becomes this gospel of Christ? Even a conversation sequestered from the things of this world, a conversation that shall manifest the heart’s being taken off and disengaged from undermoon comforts and accommodations, a conversation which proves that the soul seeks not great things for itself below, but is fully content with a morsel of bread and a cup of cold water, though others fare deliciously every day.

So believers should manifest in their conversations that they do not much pass or care how things go in this world, because Christ is not of this world, and the kingdom of Christ in which they account their happiness to be involved is not of this world. Yea, they are men redeemed from this present world. In Galatians 1:4, it is said that “by Christ we came to be redeemed from this present evil world.” (It’s a very notable Scripture.) “Who gave Himself for our sins (to what end?) that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, and our Father.”

I beseech you to observe this text. Christ gave Himself to deliver us from our sins that we might not perish eternally, and

was that all? No, that He might deliver us from this present evil world. I do not know a more forcible text in all the Book of God to take the hearts of those who profess the gospel off from the world, so that they should not whine and murmur at the loss of every little thing in the world, nor be solicitously careful for the things of this life, nor be offended though the men of the world prevail in the world, have the upper hand, and carry things in a worldly way.

Let them go on in all their pageantry and greatness; but, if you are one who belongs to Christ, know that Christ has laid down His life to purchase this for you, to deliver you from this world. Now, is Christ's blood laid down to purchase this, and yet will you have your heart glued to the ground, and wholly place your contentment in the earth, and seek for your happiness in the dust? Oh, get your heart up from all these things, then, and make it appear in your conversation that you are one who, by the virtue of the death of Jesus Christ, are delivered from this world and, therefore, though you have not such a portion in worldly goods as other men have, never envy them, for Christ has ransomed you from this world. There's another kingdom that you have your portion and interest in. Christ has made us kings and priests to His Father, and has made us heirs and co-heirs of that Kingdom that His Father has given Him, yea, and that He Himself has purchased. And so you must, in your conversations, make it appear that you see another kingdom beyond this kingdom of the world, that you are made partakers of, wherein you shall reign with Christ forever.

Now this conversation becomes the gospel and, therefore, you shall find it in Matthew 10:37–39, where Christ shows what kind of conversation He would have in those who once come to believe in Him. “He that loveth father or mother more than Me

is not worthy of Me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me, and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me; he that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." Here He shows what it is that would make the soul worthy of Christ in a gospel sense. If our hearts are taken off from father and mother, and those comforts and relations which are dearest in the world, brother or sister, or son or daughter, not to take off our natural affection, but to take off our hearts so as they should not be hindrances for us in spiritual things, that our main affections should flow forth after spiritual things. Then we come to be worthy of Christ.

Did you ever know the Lord Jesus Christ and the way of His kingdom? Then why is your heart set upon the world as the hearts of other men who are strangers to Jesus Christ? In Ephesians 5:3, when the apostle speaks of those things that most men of the world are greedy after, he says, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you as becometh saints." It is as if he should say, "For saints, those who know Jesus Christ and the way of His kingdom, to have their hearts set upon bodily lusts, or covetousness of the things of this world, is unbecoming. It is not a gospel conversation becoming saints for them to have a heart greedy of the things of this world, and to wallow in the lusts of this world. Oh, it is unbecoming saints, those who profess the gospel of Christ which shows unto us the kingdom of Christ is not of this world!

*The Gospel Holds Forth the Great
Change It Makes in a Man*

Again, another great point that the gospel holds forth unto us is this: the great difference or change that it makes in the estate of a man or woman when once it prevails with him. A great difference is made in him from what he was before, and from other men. This is held forth in the gospel and nowhere else. I say, the wonderful change that the gospel makes in men when once it comes to work upon their hearts is the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and the great differences between their estates before and what it now is, and between them and other men. I put these two together.

First, the great change that the gospel makes in the hearts of men from what there was before the gospel came: you know the Scripture, in prophesying the times of the gospel, said that the wolf shall eat with the lamb, and the lion with the kid, and the child shall play upon the very hole of the asp. The meaning is generally carried thus: When the gospel comes, it shall change the hearts of men so mightily that, though they were wolfish and cruel before, it would be as if you should see a wolf changed into a lamb, or a lion changed into a kid. You would say this is a mighty change! The gospel makes such a change as this. They who are in Christ are new creatures, it's a new creation.

Suppose God should make a new world. What a mighty thing this would be! Suppose a new sun should be created in the firmament that never was before. How would we stand and wonder! Those who are in Christ are new creatures, God puts forth a creating power upon them, 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Old things are passed away, all things are become new." And the change that is made is called "a new birth." "Except you be born again, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven" (John 3:5).

If there were a new soul put into someone, or if God should infuse a rational soul into a beast, here would be a mighty change. You were a beast before, but here is the soul of grace. There's a new birth when the gospel comes to prevail and to enter in upon a heart, and it's called a new resurrection. If a voice should come from heaven, that should open all the graves you have here in the yard, and all the dead bodies should stand up and live, what a mighty change would there be? Such a change the gospel makes when it conquers a people. Indeed, the gospel may be preached and little change may be wrought, because the power of the gospel does not prevail with their hearts; but, when it does prevail in their hearts, there is such a strange change!

Oh, then, what conversation becomes this! It must be a conversation that holds forth to the world that there is such a mighty change wrought in you. Now I appeal to you, you who make profession of the gospel, you know what you have been heretofore—worldly, base, carnal, sensual, froward, peevish and profane men, altogether unsavory before the gospel came to you.

Now, you profess that God has begun to work upon you by the gospel. What change has it wrought in you? Can those who live with you see your conversations so changed as to make them stand and admire the work of the gospel upon your hearts, the husband to stand and admire the work of God upon the heart of the wife as if she were another woman, and so the wife to admire the grace of God upon the heart of the husband as if he were another man, and so your children and servants not the same that they were before? Oh, what honor would this be to the gospel that, in places where it comes to be preached in power, there might appear a change that becomes the gospel of Christ!

Certainly, if your conversations are not such as holds forth a mighty change that God has wrought in you, then it is not such as becomes the gospel of Christ. It may be you are somewhat better than heretofore you have been, so as not to be a common drunkard. You see that is despised by men. Who regards drunken fools? Mad men? Beasts?

Therefore, you come to be of more understanding, that you will not be as profane and lascivious as you used to be, but live somewhat better. Oh, but this change is not that change which holds forth the work of the gospel for, when the gospel prevails, it makes the greatest change that ever was in the world. We may boldly assert this, that since the creation of the world in the first six days, there was never such a change made in the world as the gospel makes. And, therefore, a conversation becoming the gospel must be a conversation that must be a changed conversation. It must be mightily different from what they were before.

Sometimes, we see it so through the mercy of God that when men and women come to hear the Word in the clearness and power of it revealed, they have such changes that all their friends stand wondering at them. What shall we have of you now? Oh, such have cause to answer and say, "Blessed be God it is so. Oh, it is the gospel that has made such a change in me!"

Aye, this becomes the gospel when it shall appear that your conversation is so changed, so holy, godly, and gracious, more than it was before. But you whose lives are not better than they were before you made some profession, only your *profession* is greater now than it was before; your lives are no better! Know that this is a conversation that in no way becomes the gospel of Christ! The gospel of Christ has no honor by this conversation of yours.

And, then, the great difference that the gospel makes between one man and another. For example, those who the

gospel does not prevail upon, the Scripture tells us that they are the children of wrath; they are dead in trespasses and sins. They are under the curse of the Law; they are even enemies to God. This is the condition of all men before this scepter of Christ's conquers their hearts—children of wrath, enemies to God, dead in sins, under the curse. But now, when the gospel comes to prevail over men's hearts, then they come to be the children of the living God, heirs of Christ, co-heirs with Him. They come to be partakers of the life of God. They increase with the increase of God, and their lives are hid with Christ in God; they come to be reconciled to God, to be friends with God, to be at peace with God and to inherit blessings. Oh, the change that the Lord puts upon the heart and state of the saints when the gospel prevails! How high are they raised above other men! Therefore, you must not make other men to be your example in your way. You must not think to live as the world lives and to do as other men do. The gospel makes a mighty difference between your state and the state of other men. Therefore, never look to what other men do, but consider as God has made a vast difference between you and other men, so let there be a great difference between your conversation and the conversation of other men.

Now, this meditation should have a great deal of power to prevail upon the heart. I believe that I have such and such privileges beyond other men, and I look for such and such mercies above others. Now, what things I look for beyond others I must labor to be as much beyond them in holiness of conversation as God has made me beyond them in spiritual privileges and spiritual mercies. I think, sometimes, I would not be in the condition of such men as are in their natural estate for all the world. Nay, I would not be one hour in their estates if I might have ten thousand worlds, for I fear that I should die that hour, and then

I would be lost forever. Well, has God made such a difference then? Let not my life be like theirs for one hour, nay, for one moment. Oh, this meditation (through God's blessing) would mightily help us in our conversation.

Our conversation should be such as becomes the ordinances of the gospel. The Word and Sacraments have a great deal more in them than the ordinances of the Law; but, because I spoke of the gospel's being higher than the Law heretofore, and these things may fall something near, yet had I time, I would speak a little concerning these and show how we are to hold forth a conversation suitable to them.

Our conversations should be suitable to the power of the gospel. There is a great deal of power in the gospel, it's called the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). The very light of the gospel is a transforming light; it has a mighty power in it. The gospel is called the wisdom of God and the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:24). It brings a great deal of power with it to help men against strong corruptions, to overcome violent temptations, to carry them through any difficulties. Powerful corruptions, powerful temptations, powerful difficulties are overcome by the power of the gospel; and, therefore, it is said that by faith, that is by faith in the gospel, we overcome the world.

The gospel certainly does not only stir in some men and women some wishes, wouldings, and faint desires, but it brings a power to transform their hearts, to make a metamorphosis there. The light of the gospel comes, the light of life comes together with it, as the Scripture says in Hebrews 10:32, "after ye were illuminated (that is, by the gospel)." Then he speaks of their great sufferings; they were willing to endure anything for Christ. Therefore, a conversation that becomes the gospel is such a one as exemplarily demonstrates the very power of godliness, that men and women should not be "always learning and

never coming to a knowledge of the truth,” not always wishing and desiring, and never coming to any powerful resolutions and determinations, for, certainly, where the gospel has the upper hand in a soul, it brings power.

I do not say it brings power so as to overcome all our lusts, so as there should be no sin remaining, for as long as we live we must be hungering after a further degree of righteousness and sanctification, but certainly, when the gospel prevails, there comes a great strength. There’s the strength of Christ put forth, the Spirit of power (as the apostle says), “We have not received the spirit of fear, but the Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind; be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.” It is as if Paul had said to Timothy, “It’s true, you meet with many difficulties, but has not the gospel given you a Spirit of power?”

There’s a spirit of power and resolution when the gospel comes in . Timothy was a poor, weak, sickly man in his body, and Paul had no bodily presence with him. He was a poor, contemptible man in regard of his bodily presence, but he had a Spirit of power given him by the gospel. So we should manifest a Spirit of power; that’s as becomes the gospel of Christ.

Last, the gospel of Christ is a glorious gospel (1 Timothy 1:11). It’s called there by the title of a glorious gospel, “according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God.” Mark it, what a title is here? The gospel is the glorious gospel of the blessed God, that is, the glory of all the attributes of God appear in the gospel more brightly than they do in all the works that God has made. There appears indeed a great deal of the glory of God in the heavens, earth, and seas, and you have seen much of the glory of God there, but I appeal to you in this: have you seen more of the glory of God in the gospel than ever you did in all the works that God has made? That would be a good argument

that you have had a true understanding of the gospel, and that the Spirit of God has shined into your hearts.

Can you say, "Lord, I have seen much of Thy glory in Thy works when I have been abroad in the mighty waters where God's path and footsteps are. Oh, the seas are Thy glorious creatures, but Thy gospel is glorious beyond all. There I see Thine infinite wisdom, infinite power, infinite justice, infinite mercy, and infinite faithfulness. And the Lord knows that all the glory of the creatures has been darkened in my eyes since the Lord has shown me the glory of His gospel."

Can you say this? This is a good evidence that the gospel is a saving gospel to your souls, if you stand and admire the glory of God in the gospel. Certainly, there's none, though never so weak in parts, yet if so be that God has revealed Himself in the gospel to them, they see that which makes them stand and admire God, and darkens all the world in their eyes. Have you seen the gospel thus? Then it is to you the glorious gospel of the blessed God. And in 2 Corinthians 4:4 we read, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine into them." Oh, read this Scripture over and over again! "The god of this world hath blinded their minds." Mark it and compare this Scripture with what I said before about Christ, that His kingdom is not of this world, but the devil is called "the god of this world." Note this, he has blinded the minds of those who do not believe. If any who live under the gospel do not believe, it is because the devil, as he prevails in the world and by worldly things, by the pomp and vanity of the world, he hoodwinks the eyes of those who believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the expressed image of God should shine into them.

Oh, the devil is loathe that the glorious gospel should shine

into the hearts of men. He is content that they should come and hear the gospel, but he labors to keep off the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, that it doesn't shine into them, for he knows when once it has shined into men's hearts, then all the glory of the world will be darkened in their eyes, and they will admire nothing but Christ. They will then say, "Oh, none but Christ, none but Christ! Whom have I in heaven but Christ, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of my dearest Savior, who is the fairest of ten thousand! I never knew God before I saw Him in the face of Jesus Christ; and now I see God in the face of His Son. I see Him in another way than I ever did."

Oh, the gospel is a glorious gospel! There is more of the glory of God in one sentence of the gospel than in all the heavens and earth beside. This we may boldly aver. Now, our conversations must be as becomes the gospel. There must be a glory in our conversations; we must hold forth the glory of the gospel in our conversations. Therefore, professors of the gospel should shine as lights in the world.

I beseech you to mark this one note. I remember in the close of all the last day showing you that the saints and godly people are called the glory of Jesus Christ Himself. Surely, you who are professors of the gospel should live so as to be the glory of the glorious gospel, and what manner of persons ought we to be then? It's not enough that our conversations are not defiled with the most filthy and abominable pollutions of the world, but our conversations should be such as should be a glory to the glorious gospel.

Look in the gospel. There shine the attributes of God in glory; so, in our lives, there should be shining the glorious attributes of God that all who behold our conversation may admire the attributes of God shining in our lives, and glorify

our Heavenly Father. Certainly, a child of God who keeps close to God and lives holy in this world lets out more of the glory of God shining before the world than the sun in the firmament. A Christian who professes the gospel, and walks answerably to the gospel, is a more glorious creature in this world than the sun in the firmament. Certainly, if we consider this, that we are appointed here in this world while we live to hold forth the glory of the gospel, to make it to be a glorious gospel before all among whom we live, it would cause another manner of conversation than what we have.

But to wind up all in a few words of application, more particularly (though all the way as I have gone, I have labored to apply it), all that I shall say may be referred unto these two particulars.

APPLICATION

And the first is for the rebuking of those whose conversations are not as becomes the gospel.

I appeal to your consciences, do your consciences not condemn you in hearing these things? If this is a conversation becoming the gospel, oh Lord, how far are we from honoring the gospel in our lives, for how do many of your conversations disgrace the gospel of Jesus Christ! You put Jesus Christ even to open shame by your conversations, and such as you are blots to profession and stains to religion. And, the truth is, it had been better if you had never been born, if God does not work upon your hearts in some measure before you die, to recover the honor that you have taken away from this glorious gospel. Compare Galatians 2:11 and 2:14 and, in the 11th verse, you shall find when Paul saw Peter walking as he ought not to do, he said "I withstood Peter to his face." What's the matter? You

shall see the cause in the 14th verse, "he did not walk uprightly according to the truth of the gospel." In that one particular, it seems, Peter was blameworthy.

Oh, how was Paul's spirit stirred! I resisted him to his face, said Paul. Though Peter was a glorious apostle, yet because, in that one thing, he did not walk according to the truth of the gospel, Paul resisted him to his face! And are there any who make profession? And do you see that they do not walk according to the truth of the gospel? Resist them to their faces. Though they are never so eminent either in church or in Commonwealth, to be head and shoulders above others, yet these are to be resisted to their face.

Oh, the gospel was precious to the heart of Paul and, therefore, he could not bear for Peter not to walk according to the truth of the gospel! Oh, how many, how many are there among you who do not walk according to the truth of the gospel! Now, the Lord cause your consciences this day to resist you to your faces, and to speak in secret to you, and to convince you of the dreadful evil that you are guilty of. Is such a conversation as you walk in such as becomes the gospel?

I remember reading a story; you shall find it in Richard the First. When he prevailed in war and took a bishop, the Bishop of Bevoice, the Pope was angry and sent and expostulated with him that he would presume to meddle with one of his sons and imprison him. The King sent this answer back to the Pope. He took the harbergion, and other warlike instruments that the Bishop had, and sent them to the Pope with these words: "See, is this your son's coat? Is it fit for him to wear such things as these?"

So I may say, concerning many professors, look upon their conversations, and what? Is this the coat? Is this the conversation of the Son of God? Richard the First thought it such an

unbecoming thing for a bishop to have warlike instruments about him and to be taken clad in armor. Oh, it is an unbecoming thing for such as profess the gospel of Christ to have instruments of death about them, to have wicked conversations, to live in wicked and ungodly ways! Oh, 'tis not Christ's livery, not the coat of one who professes godliness! Certainly, there must be another manner of conversation than this!

EXHORTATION

Therefore, to close all in a word or two of exhortation, oh, that God would move our hearts now by what we have heard to labor to honor the glorious gospel that we profess! Oh, that this worthy name in James 2:7 may not be blasphemed by wicked men, Oh, let not that worthy name of God and Christ (which you profess) be blasphemed! For your sakes, walk worthy of that worthy name of the Lord, and of His Christ, and of His gospel. My brethren, know that when you undertake the profession of the gospel, and look upon it as if it were a slight matter; the profession of the gospel is a great matter!

In 1 Timothy 2:10 ('tis a good Scripture for women), he says that women should walk as those who profess godliness. Such should preach the contents of the gospel in an evangelical behavior before others. They should, therefore, bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, or meet for repentance.

Has the Lord wrought upon your hearts to change your minds and turn your hearts to Him? Oh, then, bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, that is, your conversation must be worthy of the gospel, and that is fruit worthy of repentance. In Acts 26:20 the phrase is "works meet for repentance." Oh, you say you have repented of your sins? The word translated "repentance"

there is “change of mind.” Oh, has God changed your mind? Then let there be works worthy of this change of mind!

There should be divers motives named for the stirring up of your hearts to walk worthy of the gospel. Oh, consider what this gospel is you profess. The Scripture calls it the gospel of Christ, and Acts 20:24 calls it the gospel of God.

It’s a gospel by which you are begotten (1 Corinthians 4:15).

It’s the gospel of your salvation (Ephesians 1:13).

It’s an everlasting gospel (Revelation 14:6).

And, then, as you had it before, a glorious gospel.

Oh, walk worthy of this gospel that you have gotten so much good by. I appeal to you, any who have had the gospel working upon your hearts, have you not gotten so much good by the gospel that you would not part with it for ten thousand worlds? Oh, then, walk worthy of that gospel, seeing you have gotten so much good by it. And I beseech you to consider that motive in the text, “Only let your conversation be as becomes the gospel of Christ.” It is as if the apostle should say, “The gospel has many things that darken it, and many adversaries who oppose it. Oh, but let your conversation be as becomes the gospel. You need care for nothing that opposes, so you walk worthy of the gospel; only let your conversation be as becomes the gospel.”

Now, how many enemies does the gospel have in this day? And what errors and divisions are there to eclipse this evangelical sun? Why, now, only let your conversation be as becomes the gospel, that is, in these times wherein there is so much done against the gospel. It is as if the apostle should say, “Let all devils and wicked men do what they can, they shall never prevail against the gospel if your conversations are such as becomes the gospel.”

Oh, I think this argument should be a prevailing argument! Oh, do not your hearts bleed when you hear what opposition

is made against the glorious gospel of Christ that should be ten thousand times more dear than your lives? Here's the way that the gospel should stand against hell and the gates of hell. All counsels of the enemy shall not prevail against the gospel if your conversations are becoming the gospel. This will do it.

And mark what Paul said. He looks upon it as a thing dearer than his life to walk so as to further the gospel. 1 Corinthians 9:12: "We suffer all things lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." It is as if he should say, "Oh, 'tis more dear than our lives a thousand times! We will do anything and suffer anything." Oh, the apostle's spirit was filled with the sweetness of the gospel; he had found the good in it. And here in this Scripture he says, "Oh what shall I do? What shall I suffer that I may not hinder the gospel? Let them do anything they possibly can to me, or take what they will from me, I do not crave them. We suffer all things that the gospel may not be hindered."

Now, what if you will neither do nor suffer for the gospel, you will not part with a base lust that the gospel may not be hindered? One professor, being overtaken with an apparent sin, may do more hurt to the gospel than he can do good all his life, let him live as long as Methuselah. That sin of yours that is so dear to you, will you not part with it? It will hinder the gospel. Oh, will you not part with your sin when any temptation comes to sin?

Let every one of you who profess that you love the gospel think thus: "Oh, shall I not hinder the gospel if I listen and yield to this temptation? Indeed, this will bring me a great deal of comfort and contentment, and I shall get so much by it, but will it not obstruct the gospel?"

The very thought that it may possibly hinder the gospel should cause your hearts to rise with indignation against that temptation and cast out that sin. God forbid that I should meddle with that sin which will hinder the gospel. Therefore, in

Acts 20:24, the apostle professes that his life is not dear to him, so be it he might but further the gospel. In 1 Corinthians 9, from the 12th to 23rd verses, he professes there that he would become all things to all men, he would be a servant to any man, and yield to all things that he could, so be it he might not sin against God, to be never so vile in the eyes of men, and all that he might further the gospel. Oh, that it were so in our hearts!

We read an excellent commendation of one in 2 Corinthians 8:18, that His praise is in the gospel in all the churches. Oh, this is an excellent thing when it can be said of a professor of religion (it may be that this man did not have any great commendation for parts) that his praise is in the gospel! As the saints of God and all the churches of God that knew him, they highly commended him. Why? Because the gospel was furthered by him; his praise is in the gospel. This we should labor for, all of us, as much as we possibly can.

My brethren, what a mercy it is that God should account anything that we do worthy of the gospel! Mark the text. Why, can we poor worms do anything worthy of the gospel? Aye, but though you can do but little, God will account your endeavors even worthy of the gospel. John said that he was unworthy to loose the latchet of Christ's shoe, nor worthy to carry the shoe of Christ. Then are we such as can walk worthy of the glorious gospel? Oh, 'tis God's infinite goodness that shall account us to be worthy of the gospel!

The apostles did not account themselves worthy to suffer for the gospel (Acts 5:41), and shall God account us to do that which is worthy of His gospel? Oh, this should be a mighty encouragement to us to walk worthy of the gospel!

There is a notably encouraging text in Luke 21:36: "Walk worthy of the gospel." And then you shall see what God will account you worthy of: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always,

that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

“Watch and pray”; be watchful in all your conduct. Keep your communion with God close. What will be the fruit of this? That you may be accounted worthy to escape these things, that is, the many afflictions, dangers, and evils that shall come upon the world. You shall escape the evil of them at least.

“And to stand before the Son of Man”; here’s a notable Scripture to quicken up our hearts to walk conscionably and strictly in our conversation. Watch over your ways, stand upon your guard, and pray that you may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man.

Why, is there any who can stand before the Son of Man in glory, or who shall be accounted worthy to stand before Him? Yes, a godly, a gracious man or woman who walks conscionably in their conversation, when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, shall be able to stand before Him and be accounted worthy.

Oh, then, let your conversation be as becomes the gospel, and you shall be accounted by God worthy to stand before the Son of Man. Jesus Christ walks towards you as becomes a Mediator; yea, Christ does all things that are suitable to His relations as a Husband and a Savior. Oh, you do all things that are suitable to your relations.

And, for the close of all, I beseech you to lay to heart the great design that God has in the gospel. Think thus with yourself, “Surely, the work of God in the gospel is a glorious work. Well, then, surely God has some great design that He drives on in the gospel.”

What is it? Let me labor to serve it to you whatever in me lies. Now, if you read in the gospel, you shall find that the design God has is to purchase to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; to promote holiness and godliness, “that we being

redeemed from the hands of our enemies might serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives.” This is the design that God has.

It is as if God were to say, “I see that mankind is fallen from Me, and the people in the world generally are fallen into wickedness. The whole world lies in wickedness, over head and ears in sin; but I would have holiness advanced, I would have My image renewed. I would have a peculiar people that might live forever to serve and worship Me.”

Here’s the design of God. Oh, let me now serve this design of God and labor to do all that I can to serve, honor, bless, and magnify that God who has wrought such glorious things for us as He has in the gospel. And, as Christ said in Matthew 3 when He came to be baptized of John, “It becomes us to fulfill all righteousness.” Now, shall the Lord Jesus Christ Himself say that it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness? Surely, then, it becomes you to fulfill all righteousness.

Would you walk as becomes the gospel? Give up your hearts, strength, and endeavors, whatever you possibly can, to fulfill all righteousness. Do not say, “Why should I do this, and why do we need to be so froward and strict?” Oh, remember the text. If any one talks of too much strictness, and too much frowardness, answer him thus, “I heard in such a place such a text opened and applied to me, that my conversation must be as becomes the gospel. And, certainly, let me do what I can. I cannot do so much but that the gospel will require ten thousand times more than I can do, and, therefore, I endeavor to walk as becomes the gospel. And I hear that Christ Himself said that it became Him to fulfill all righteousness, why should not I walk as Christ Himself walked?”

Oh, my life has been too vain heretofore! My heart has been dead, and I have not been quickened up so as to walk worthy of

the gospel; but for time to come my care and endeavor, above all things in the world, shall be that I may honor this glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, from whom I expect to have such glorious things hereafter.”

Consider now what has been said, and the Lord give you understanding in these things, that you may be kept blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON 8

(April 19, 1646)

“Jesus answered and said, My kingdom is not of this world.”

JOHN 18:36

*I*f you will please reflect back upon the last day’s exercise when we finished that Scripture in Philippians that teaches us to walk as becomes the gospel, in the prosecution of which we showed what it was the gospel principally held forth unto us, and what conversations ought to be in the professors of it suitable unto those things the gospel holds forth. And, among those, this was one particular of great importance, that we only hinted at to you in a word or two, that the kingdom of Christ was not of this world. These are Christ’s own words. Now, because it is a consideration of very great use, and I would be loathe if the benefit of it should be lost; therefore, I have now picked out that to speak to you more largely, and to open the meaning of it unto you from this Scripture. “Jesus answered and said, My kingdom is not of this world,” John 18:36.

The words are a part of the story of Christ’s arraignment before Pilate. Behold, here the King of heaven and earth stands arraigned at the bar of a wicked man. In this arraignment, we find a special charge that His adversaries bring against Him which was that He made Himself the King of the Jews, that He was an enemy to government. This is the usual charge that the world has had against the saints, they are enemies to government. They fare no worse than did Christ here.

Pilate requires Him to answer the charge, whether it were so or not that He had made Himself a King. Now, you shall find in the answer of Christ that He does not deny the thing, but implicitly grants it. Neither does He answer Him fully to his mind, but says, “My kingdom is not of this world.”

“My kingdom.” It is as if He should say, “I acknowledge that I have a kingdom, as mean and low as I am brought now, though I stand here before you as a despised man, a carpenter’s son, yet I confess that I have a kingdom, but it is not of this world.”

“Not of this world.” He does not say “not *in* this world,” but He says it is not *of* this world. It is not a worldly kingdom. We have in the words these two things:

First, that Christ has a kingdom.

Second, what kind of kingdom Christ’s is, it is not of this world.

I shall not speak much unto the former here, and so handle the commonplace of Christ’s kingly office, but only hint at it to you as it makes way to the latter. There we shall stay awhile.

Christ Has a Kingdom

He is anointed by the Father to be King as well as Priest and Prophet of His Church. Psalm 45:6, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: the scepter of Thy kingdom is a right scepter.” That Psalm is a prophecy of Christ. And, in Revelation 19:16, Christ is called King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Christ, God-man, is the King of Heaven and Earth. Christ, God-man, is the King of angels and over all the world, and we must know Christ as a King, and act our faith upon Him as a King, or else we do not know Him aright. We do not have the true work of faith unless our faith acts upon Him as a King as well as a Savior.

In Acts 2:36, the text says, “God hath made Him both Lord

and Christ.” Mark it, He is not only Christ, but Lord and Christ. It is true that, in the word “Christ,” all His offices are implied, which signifies that He is anointed to them all, but yet this is expressed by itself, for indeed properly He is Christ unto His church, but He is also Lord over all the world in some sense.

But then you will say, “How does He say that His kingdom is not of this world if He is Lord over all the world?”

Now that I might come to this point that I have chosen the text for, we are to know that Christ has a double kingdom. First, together with the Father, He has a providential kingdom (as I may so say for distinction’s sake). Second, He has a mediatorial kingdom, as Divines call it.

First, a providential kingdom, together with the Father, whereby He manages all the affairs of the world. I say, God-man, the second Person in the Trinity, manages all the affairs of the world; His scepter rules over all. As God made all things by Christ, so He governs all things by Him. If God had not deputed the second Person in the Trinity “God-man,” the Mediator to have been the Governor of all things, the holiness and justice of God, according to the covenant of works by which he had to deal with man, would have destroyed the world upon man’s sin. For though He was not manifested in the flesh, He had not actually taken our human nature upon Him, yet He was looked upon as God-man with the Father even before the foundation of the world was laid, and so all things were committed to Him. And hence the world, notwithstanding the sin that has been in it, has been preserved so as it has been to this day.

Christ, therefore, has a providential kingdom together with the Father, and so He is King not over the churches only, the King of the saints, but He is over all the heathen, over all the world, from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof.

And the civil magistrate, I may say, is the deputy of Christ in His providential kingdom, God's vice-regent upon earth. All magistrates whatsoever are officers subordinate under Him.

But now there's another kingdom of Christ that this Scripture speaks of. "My kingdom is not of this world"; that is, the kingdom of the Mediator, as divines call it, more properly concerns His church in the execution of His mediatorial office. Now, this kingdom of Christ has existed ever since there was a church, but it was very dark, under clouds and curtains. The glory of it was small until the second Person came to be manifested in the flesh. Then, indeed, this mediatorial kingdom of Christ came to be revealed abundantly, more clearly than before, and Christ exercised it more fully. This is that of which the Scripture so often, in the gospel, calls the kingdom of Heaven. "Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." It is not of this world, but it is called the kingdom of Heaven, the mediatorial kingdom of Christ is not of this world.

There's a great deal of difference between a worldly kingdom and this kingdom of Christ. And that's the subject that I am now to open to you, how Christ's kingdom is not of this world, the vast difference between worldly kingdoms and Christ's kingdom which you will find to be a point of very great use.

Christ's Kingdom Is a Different Kind of Kingdom

1. *Christ's kingdom does not have that pomp and glory, that bravery and gallantry that the kingdoms of the world have.* You know, in the kingdoms of the world, there's a great deal of outward pomp and glory. Bernice and Agrippa, the text says, came in great pomp. The kings of the earth have glorious attendance; Christ has no such thing. His attendance was a few poor fishermen.

Kings have great courts and they are crowded with courtiers. Christ's court was small, only a few of such kind of men, low and contemptible, taken from the hedges and out of the highways. Kings have sumptuous palaces; Christ did not have a place to lay His head here in this world.

He said Himself that "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not wherewithal to lay His head"; but yet He was a great King for all that. Surely His kingdom was not of this world. The kings of the earth have all kinds of delicacies that this world can afford. They carry things in great state, but it was not so with Christ. Zechariah 9:9, "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, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." He comes lowly and mean. The way of Christ in His kingdom is a way of humility, outward meanness, and lowliness. It is a way of outward contempt, scorn, and derision. This is the way of the kingdom of Christ.

By poverty and lowliness He would overcome the world; not by bravery and magnificence, nor by great pomp and glory. He does not dazzle the eyes of men by such means, but His glory consists in self-denial, in emptying Himself, in becoming poor and, therefore, His kingdom is not of this world.

In Luke 17:20 we read, "The kingdom of God comes not by observation." That's the word, the meaning of it is this: it is not a thing that, by any outward, pompous ceremonies can be observed. Now kings, when they go from one place to another, by their attendance, and by a great many ceremonies that are used to set out their pomp and glory, are taken notice of and observed. You may know the King is coming, say the people, when they see such things. But the text here says that the kingdom of God does not come by observation. There's no such

outward pomp and glory. There's nothing but outward meanness and baseness to the eye of the flesh in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. He who is in Himself the most glorious King, and from whom all other kings have their power, yet has a kingdom that is not of this world. It has nothing but meanness, poverty, and lowliness that appears in it unto the eyes of men.

2. *The kingdom of Christ is not of this world in regard to His subjects.* Look what subjects Christ has, they are such as are not of this world. So Christ tells His disciples, as you may read in John 17, "I am not of this world, and you are not of this world." Kings have, for their subjects, nobles, peers, and great persons, especially those who are near about them; but now the subjects that Christ has for His kingdom, generally, are the poor, mean, base, and contemptible men of the world. They are such as are looked upon as the off-scouring of all things; these are His subjects. James 2:5, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?"

The poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. These are the great heirs, even the poor of this world. You know what an offense it was unto the Jews. They said, "Do any of the rulers believe in Him, other than this multitude which is accursed?"

A company of poor women, illiterate people, *they* flock after Jesus Christ. The subjects of Christ are men chosen out of this world. He Himself appeared not with the glory of the world. So, secondly, His subjects are men chosen out of the world.

3. *The kingdom of Christ is not of this world; that is, the rule that Christ has in His subjects, and over these subjects in His kingdom, is not of this world.* The rule is spiritual. It is principally upon the hearts, the wills, the consciences of those who are His subjects.

Every subject of Christ has his will and heart subdued to Jesus Christ. It is not so in this world. Men may be subject to the kings of this world merely by constraint, because they dare not do otherwise. Many kings in this world have subjects whose hearts are not with them, who do not love them. The kings of the world only rule the outward man, but Christ's kingdom is another kind of kingdom. He rules in the hearts of men. There is His throne, in the wills, in the affections of men, in the consciences of men. Christ sways His scepter in men's souls. Men, by conquest, subdue subjects to themselves; Christ subdues also in a way of conquest, but He does not subdue the outward man so much as the inward man. The will is subdued to Christ; He sways His scepter in their hearts. This is a great mystery of godliness, the swaying of the scepter of Jesus Christ in the hearts of the saints; and, therefore, the Scripture tells us that the kingdom of God is within us. It is an inward kingdom. That's the third thing wherein the difference between Christ's kingdom and the kingdoms of the world consist.

4. *The kingdom of Christ is not of this world, that is, the laws of Christ are spiritual.* Observe the difference between the laws of Christ in the government of His church and the laws that are for the government of the world. It will be of great use for you to know this. The Lord, in His providential kingdom, appointing magistrates to govern here in the world in His stead, leaves them to make laws according to the general rules of prudence and justice. Such laws are sufficient for the governing of the outward man and for the attaining of a civil end for which their government is appointed. But now, Jesus Christ, in His mediatorial kingdom, in His church, makes all the laws Himself. He does not leave it unto the church to make new laws according to the rules of their own prudence, what they conceive to be fit in way of prudence. No, they must fetch the laws out of His

Word, and impose none but the same laws that are in His Word. They must have a *Scriptum est*, an “it is written.” Here are these and these texts of Scripture for what is joined; nothing must be added unto what He has revealed in His Word. There are divine laws for the government of His church.

Now, it is true that the church, because they are a society of men, have some things natural and some things civil among them. As far as they have need of natural and civil helps, so far there may be laws made according to rules of prudence and justice, and magistrates may come in to be helpful to the church so far as they have need here of natural and civil helps as a society of men. But now, to speak properly to that which belongs to them merely as they are of the church of Christ, besides that which they have need of as they are men, and natural and civil societies, what belongs to them merely considered as they are the church of Christ, they are to be governed only by the laws of Jesus Christ, who is the only Law-giver, and only by the laws of the Word.

And there is not that liberty of making new laws in the church that there is of making new laws in the Commonwealth and state, and that’s a great difference between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world. That’s a fourth, the laws are different.

The laws are different not only in that they are by divine revelation in the one, and left to human prudence in the other, but, secondly, in the one the law binds conscience, in the other they do not. They do not bind conscience any further than the nature of the thing that is required binds unless it is in case of scandal and contempt. So our divines who have been most orthodox have gone, that the laws of men in the state do not bind conscience. That is, if a man should not do the thing that is required, he should in conscience be bound over to eternal

death for not doing it. This is a very hard bondage, a cruel yoke; but if the thing that is required is right and just, then the nature of the thing may bind conscience, for then there comes in a law of God. If the thing is just and right, that is required; or, however, if I know nothing to the contrary but that it may be just and right, we must not break the law so as to give scandal, or in a way of contempt. But, if it is privately, so as it is no scandal, or no contempt, and the nature of the thing does not bind me, then my conscience is not bound over as guilty of eternal death, if so be I do not do everything that man requires. But now the laws of Christ are such as bind conscience, since they come from Him. He is such a King that, because they come from Him and from His will, though we see no reason in the matter of the thing, though they have nothing in the nature of the thing but the will of Christ, it's enough to tie conscience, and to bind us even upon pain of eternal death to obedience. That's the fourth thing. The laws of Christ's kingdom are spiritual and different from the laws of the world.

5. *Christ's kingdom is not of this world in that homage that the saints do unto Christ is not worldly, but spiritual.* The worship of Christ and the ordinances of Christ are not worldly, but spiritual. Now, the kings of this world may appoint what kind of worship they please, that is, what ceremonies they will whereby their subjects should tender up their homage to them. And now, men have ventured to be so bold with Christ the King, because men may tender up their homage unto their earthly kings by any ways invented of their own. Therefore, they have thought that they might presume to tender up their homage to Christ, their spiritual King, by any ways of invented worship. And therein was a great error; they looked upon the kingdom of Christ only in a carnal way, whereas the kingdom of Christ is such as all our homage that we tender up to Him must be

spiritual. It must be heavenly, it must be from heaven, it must be from Christ Himself. It must be from some institution and appointment of Jesus Christ. And the more the kingdom of Christ prevails, the more spiritual shall that homage be that the subjects tender up to Him.

Therefore, you shall find that, when the Holy Ghost speaks of the kingdom of Christ in the New Testament, with reference unto that which was then in the Old Testament, he calls even those ways of worship in the Old Testament “worldly” in comparison of the worship and homage that the saints tender to Christ in the New Testament. You will see it in Galatians 4:3, “Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.” The ceremonies of the Law are here called “the elements of the world.” These are they to which we were in bondage while we were children for, though we were subjects to Christ then, yet we were but in our non-age, and indeed, in comparison to that we are in the times of the gospel, we were slaves rather than subjects. We were then in bondage. And then, in Colossians 2:8, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

“After the rudiments of the world.” These rudiments of the world had some reference, as it appears in reading this chapter, to the ceremonies of the Law, and, together with them, there was a mixture of men’s own inventions. They were the rudiments of the world, not after Christ. You do not acknowledge Christ to be a King when you worship Him in a worldly way, after the rudiments of the world.

For instance, because men were wont to honor the Presence Chamber where the King sits, when you go into it, you are to be uncovered. Now, like unto that, according to the way

of the world, men think that when they come (as any time in the week) into such a place as this, they must come uncovered. Now this is after the rudiments of the world. You think to worship this King after the same way, but his way of worship is no such low institution. And they bowed to the Chair of State, and so they would bow with cap and knee to the communion table that they called the “altar.” Now these are according to the rudiments of the world, but Christ’s kingdom is not of this world.

His worship must be spiritual, as in Hebrews 9:1, “Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.” Mark it, in the time of the Law it was but a worldly sanctuary in comparison to what is now in the times of the gospel. Those ways of worship, though they were once appointed by God, Christ the King of His church in the New Testament, would not have His homage tendered up by these ways of worship. They were too worldly for Him.

Then, surely, to have the inventions of men in the worship of Christ, in the New Testament especially, is too worldly for Christ. No, it must be divine and spiritual. He who worships must worship in spirit and in truth. All the worship and homage that we tender up to Jesus Christ, we must look to have it spiritual and not worldly. And so the ordinances, though they have something external, like the Sacraments, yet, if we stick in the outward part, we do not worship Christ as our King in a right way; but we must be spiritual in all. Look upon the spiritual part in all ordinances, or else (I say) we do not tender up that homage to Christ that is due to Him as the King of His church.

6. *Christ’s kingdom is not of this world; that is, the officers that Christ has appointed for the government of His church are not of this world.* They are not to be of this world, but they are to be by divine institution. Observe the difference in the administration of Christ’s kingdom and the worldly kingdoms. In the

kingdoms of this world, men may invent as many new officers as they please. They may erect new officers in a state and commonwealth, but all the men in the world cannot erect any one new office in the church; they cannot make one new officer other than what is in the Word.

Now, though we do not find officers of states in the Word, yet a human creation is enough. As the apostle says, "Be subject to every ordinance of man." The word there translated "ordinance of man" is literally "of human creation." Now, in the church there can be no new officers created. Christ has made pastors, teachers, elders, deacons, and widows in the church, and no new sort can be added by all the men in the world. And, therefore, it was heretofore.

As in popery, so in prelacy. They would erect a new kind of religion (as they called it), more spiritual, and so make the kingdom of Christ like unto the kingdoms of the world. And they thought that they had power to make as many new officers in the church as they pleased. Certainly, this was a derogation from the kingdom of Christ; they made it too worldly.

A second difference in the church officers from the officers in the kingdom of the world is this: Once they are put into such a place in the church, they have the full power of the place. Suppose a pastor or teacher has as much power as any one pastor or teacher upon the face of the earth. There cannot be a difference between one officer and another of the same kind in the church as in the state. Now, the state may limit their officers as they please. In some countries they may make Justices of the Peace for one use, and in another country for another use. They may limit them according as they please, how they shall execute their places, and when they must leave their offices to others. But, in the church, one pastor (whatever he may be) has as much power of Christ in him as any who lives, for, as

there can be no new offices in this kingdom of Christ unless by divine institution, so there can be no limitation of their office but according to the institution of Jesus Christ. So His kingdom is not of this world. It's true, if the magistrates shall come in by a law to help the church, as far as they shall come in to give civil help to the church, they may appoint officers to see that their power is not abused; but they may appoint none who are properly church officers to administer any spiritual ordinance in the church but such as are by divine institution.

7. *The kingdom of Christ is not of this world in that the weapons by which Christ fights with His adversaries to maintain His kingdom are not the weapons of the world.* In that notable Scripture, 2 Corinthians 10:4–5 we read, “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Mark it, here's the weapons of the kingdom of Christ. Christ brings into captivity every thought and casts down strongholds. Whatever stronghold or high thing is lifted up against the kingdom of Christ, Christ has weapons in His kingdom to cast it down; but, he says, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual.

In Christ's kingdom, He does not appoint carnal weapons. He does not give weapons of the flesh unto His church to make men believe whether they want to or not.

You will say, “If there are not such weapons that are outward to force men, then all will be to no purpose. It will be nothing.”

Yes, says the apostle, our weapons are not carnal but spiritual, and he answers that objection that men will not care for them if they do not come in an outward, compulsory way, by imprisonments and such kinds of ways.

We are not speaking of what power the civil state has, but Christ has committed no such thing to the church as the church, and these weapons the apostle speaks of, though they are not carnal but spiritual, yet they are mighty through God. And, the more spiritual they are, the more mighty they are to cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

These weapons, what are they? They are the two-edged sword of the Spirit, the Word of God in the name of Christ and, with the authority of Christ, preached to the people in the Word of God, binding men in a dogmatic way. These are our spiritual weapons. Christ has never appointed His church to defend itself by carnal weapons, the church goes no further than spiritual weapons. It's in the very text that I have read to you, "My kingdom is not of this world." Mark what follows. What were the weapons Christ had to defend His kingdom? Surely, they were not worldly weapons. "My kingdom is not of this world, if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now My kingdom is not from hence." If My kingdom were from hence, I should have the same weapons to defend Myself as the kings of the world have to defend themselves.

QUESTION. You will say, then, "What are the fighting and wars for now? May there not be wars and fighting for the maintenance of religion and the kingdom of Christ?"

ANSWER. Now to that I answer this: The church does not have these weapons. As a church, they have only spiritual weapons, yea, and were it that any church of God were in any place where they did not have a civil right to the exercise of their religion, then, I confess, merely for their religion when the civil right

of the state is against it, if they should take up arms and fight for it, I think they should go beyond the commission of Jesus Christ. They should trust Christ for His kingdom, and we find no warrant in all the Book of God to take up weapons merely for the defense of religion. Therefore, in the primitive times, they never took up weapons; all their armor were prayers and tears.

OBJECTION. But we do now. Are not our wars for the defense of religion?

ANSWER. Now to that, it's clearly answered. Our wars are for the defense of the civil right we have to the outward practice of our religion, and so, by weapons, we may defend our civil right. That is, if we live in such a state where we have civil right by the laws of the state to the peaceable enjoyment of our religion, if any shall come to disturb us, then, by the virtue of our civil right, we may take up weapons to fight and defend ourselves. Aye, but not as a church, nor merely for religion; for, if now the civil state should be so changed that the supreme power should be against the ways of religion, yet for civil things they would defend us. But for the ways of religion, they were against us in it. I confess, in such a case, for men who have no civil authority at all to take up weapons, to force any practice or way of religion, this would not be warranted by Christ and, by this, we should fight for the kingdom of Christ by other weapons than ever Christ has appointed. But now, when we have the civil power, the civil magistrate may grant civil liberty, and civil liberty for the outward practice of religion, and so we may defend such a right as this for the peaceable practice of our religion so that none should come to force any other false religion on us.

But now, the kingdom of Christ is not of this world. The weapons of Christ's kingdom are spiritual weapons and, in those times when there were no outward weapons to defend

the kingdom of Christ, as in the primitive times when the civil states were against the kingdom of Jesus Christ, did it not thrive? We are ready to say, "All religion will be taken away unless there are such compulsory ways."

I do not say that, but there may be compulsion to keep men from mischieving others in things that are against the foundation. But now, for the raising up of the kingdom of Christ, we know that when there were no compulsory ways, yet the kingdom of Jesus Christ went on and flourished as much as ever it has done since, so that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world. He has not committed to His church those weapons that are carnal. All their weapons are weapons that are spiritual to prevail with the hearts and consciences of men and no further; and, if we understood this correctly, it would mightily quiet our spirits. And the more we rested upon the weapons Christ has appointed in His Word, the more we looked into the armory of the gospel to find what weapons there are against errors and abuses in His church, the more we would have the kingdom of Christ prevail among us.

8. *The kingdom of Christ is not of this world; that is, the privileges of Christ's kingdom are not worldly privileges, but spiritual, divine, and heavenly privileges.* Men who live in several kingdoms have several privileges. Some in one way, some in another. So every society of men, and every kingdom, has privileges. Men who are the subjects of such a kingdom have the privileges that belong to such a kingdom. We plead for many privileges as we are the free-born subjects of England, that the people have a right to by their freedoms, being free-born subjects. As those who are above them have a right to that power that they have, so now, in the kingdom of Christ, there are some privileges that those who are in the kingdom of Christ have that others do not have.

For example, when any man comes into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, oh, he comes to partake of a great many excellent privileges, being once made a free denizen in this kingdom of Christ, he comes to have a great many privileges that others do not have. But of these I shall treat more particularly afterwards.

9. *The kingdom of Christ is not of this world in that the penalties that Christ has in His church are not worldly.* I do not mean only external ones, for they may be referred to that head of the weapons of Christ; but we take them under another notion. Those who are truly the subjects of Christ may be under penalties. You think that those who are believers cannot be chastised for their sin, as if there were no penalties in Christ's Kingdom; I confess, they are delivered from the penalties of the Law, but Christ inflicts penalties as He is King. There may be penalties in Christ's kingdom, and the right understanding of this would help us much in that point of whether believers may be chastised for sin or not, though they are believers.

Oh, they will say "No!" Why? "Because Christ has satisfied the Law fully, and how can God require it in them?"

I confess that the Law cannot, but Jesus Christ, in His administration as King, not as He is the Judge of the Law, but as He is the King over them, may inflict chastisements upon them. They may, in Christ's Kingdom, have some chastisements. They cannot be carried out of that kingdom to have the chastisements of the Law but, in Christ's kingdom, Jesus Christ many times inflicts spiritual chastisements upon them by hiding His face from them for sin, and by many spiritual desertions. And such men as are but by outward profession under the kingdom of Christ, and seem to be His subjects, but are not so truly. The Lord inflicts spiritual judgments upon them like hardness of heart, blindness of mind, reprobate senses.

I beseech you to observe it. The Lord Christ does not so much observe the way of outward judgments upon wicked men who are in the bosom of the church as He observes to inflict outward judgments upon the heathens and others who are out of the bosom of the church. No, Christ has other manner of punishments for those who are in the church though, now and then, Christ inflicts outward judgments upon them. But the main thing that Christ looks at in His church is as to reward with spiritual rewards, as righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and the like, so He inflicts spiritual punishments. Those who are professors in the church, and are naughty and vile, it may be that God will prosper them for awhile as well as others outwardly, oh, but the punishments of Christ in His kingdom are spiritual. Your souls are bound over to eternal death. Your hearts are hardened. Your consciences are numbed, and that's a great deal more dreadful wrath than if the Lord Christ should punish your bodies or take away your estates. Those are punishments in Christ's providential kingdom, but the penalties of Christ, the King of the church, are ever spiritual punishments at which we should tremble and fear a great deal more. Thus the kingdom of Christ is not of this world.

Now, I should have shown you how this kingdom of Jesus Christ will certainly prevail in the world. Let the world do what it can, yet Psalm 2 says, "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill." It will, at length, prevail over all the world and bring under all the kingdoms of the world to it; but when it has done so, then there shall be a new world. Certainly there is a time that Christ shall have the kingdoms of this world to reign over them in a manner other than what He now has, and that is at the end of the world. I will give you a Scripture or two about that. Revelation 11:15: "The seventh angel sounded and there were great voices in heaven saying, The kingdoms of this world

are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.” That is, He shall subdue the kingdoms that were of this world, and then He shall reign. He shall reign forever and ever.

Now, they are the kingdoms of this world, but when He reigns it is in this manner that is here spoken of; it is in another world, as appears in Hebrews 2:5: “For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.” Here the apostle shows that Christ is above the angels, for He has not put in subjection the world to come wherein Christ shall have a further dominion than yet He has. And Adam was a type of Jesus Christ in this. Adam had the command of this present world.

Now, in this world, Christ rules but in the midst of His adversaries, but there is a time coming that Christ shall have all under Him, as Adam, in his innocence, had the whole world under his feet. And Christ promises unto His people, in Revelation 3:21, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne.” Mark it. It seems there is a throne of Christ that has not yet been, for here’s a promise that He will set them upon His throne as He sits upon His Father’s throne. Now Christ rules together with His Father, but, He says, “You who are My saints and subjects now shall sit upon My throne.”

Aye, but you will say, that is in heaven. In heaven, indeed, the saints shall reign.

Nay, it cannot be meant of a kingdom wherein the saints shall sit eternally with Christ in heaven. I might give you many Scriptures for that, but I will only give you one Scripture, 1 Corinthians 15:28: “And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

Here he tells us that there is a time that God shall be all in all, both unto Christ and unto His saints. Yea, and you shall find in this chapter that Jesus Christ shall give up the kingdom unto the Father (speaking of the time of the resurrection) when all shall rise again. And when that shall come, the kingdom shall be delivered up unto the Father, so that this is a time before the general resurrection that Christ shall sit upon the throne. There is yet a time between this and the saints being in heaven when the saints shall sit upon Christ's throne (as He upon His Father's) in another manner than they do now.

Surely, Christ shall have the kingdoms of the world subdued unto Him in another manner than yet He has, and, for the proof of it, read the 7th chapter of the Book of Daniel, and you shall find abundant proof. There shall be an abundant deal of glory in that kingdom of His. There He shall have attendants to purpose; a thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Christ; and, though there was judgment, and the books were brought, yet it is apparent afterwards that the Scripture speaks of a time that should be before the saints should come to heaven, for he says this, "That as concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season."

Therefore, it is not meant at that time when the saints shall ascend up into heaven with Jesus Christ, for the beasts had their lives prolonged for a season and time after that. But, he says in the 18th verse, "The saints of the Most High shall take your kingdom and possess it forever, even forever and ever." And, in the 21st verse, "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given unto the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." And then, in the 27th verse, "And the kingdom

and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

What dominions shall there be when the saints are in the highest heavens to serve and obey Christ? He means the dominions that are here upon the earth shall serve and obey Christ. Therefore, the kingdom of Jesus Christ is not of this world, nor can it be said hereafter to be of such a world as this is; but, when there shall be another world, then Christ shall have a kingdom that shall have such glory as shall be apparent to all, and such a kingdom as the kings of the earth shall come and bring their glory to it, as in Revelation 21 you shall find that it is said of the kings of the earth. Read that description of the glorious condition of the church of God there, and you shall see this to be true. “And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor to it.” But that is in another world, not the world that Christ speaks here of in this place in John.

For now, consider a little of the excellency of this point by way of preparation to you for the next time. It would be a notable Scripture to take our hearts off of the things of this world. The right understanding of this would spiritualize the hearts of the saints, would take away the offense of the cross of Jesus Christ, would help them to carry themselves through this world with an abundance of joy and triumph, and not to regard so much how things go here below. I, through the mercy of God, am brought into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. And I find the whole tenor of Scripture carries it so that the kingdom of Jesus Christ is not of this world, but in a spiritual way.

Oh, then, let me have spiritual mercies! Let me enjoy Jesus Christ in a way of His spiritual kingdom, and farewell to the

world and all things under Christ. Truly, Christians are not acquainted with this point of the spiritual government of Jesus Christ in His church, and how God the Father has so ordered things that, in this world, Christ should have a kingdom, but not of this world.

And blessed are they who have, by the Holy Ghost, an enlightening to understand this mystery, to see the reality of it indeed, that the kingdom of Jesus Christ is not of this world.

SERMON 9

(April 26, 1646)

“Jesus answered and said, My kingdom is not of this world.”

JOHN 18:36

*M*any particulars I passed over the last day briefly, which I told you would need some further explication. I'll give you some few things about that, and then proceed to the application of all.

The Privileges of the Kingdom of Christ

1. *The privileges of this kingdom of Christ are not of this world.* Let me name a principal one, and this is the privilege of all who are under the kingdom of Christ, that all businesses and transactions between God and them are in the court of Christ the Mediator. They are not in the court of exact and severe justice, but they are tried for their eternal estate, and for all they do in the court of Christ in this kingdom, which is a mighty privilege of the saints. As kingdoms have several privileges, it is a greater privilege to be tried in one kingdom than in another. All men and women in their natural estate, not under the kingdom of Christ, are to be tried in the court of justice. That's the court of God's providential kingdom, and there they are either to be acquitted or condemned by the Law. That's the way of God's proceedings towards those who are under the providential kingdom of His, only to be dealt with according to the Law. But all those who are under the kingdom of Christ have all their business in reference to God

tried in another court, tried in the court (if I may so call it) of the gospel in the judicature of Jesus Christ, for Christ is as a Mediator to them. He is the Judge to pass all sentences concerning them, and the right understanding of this would help much in the point of believers being chastised for sin. It's true, they are not chastised by judgment out of the court of law as other men are, but they are chastised by Christ who has the judicature committed to Him, and the administration of all things especially concerning His church and people, and by a sentence from Him chastised, not by a sentence from the Father, as He is the Judge of all flesh proceeding according to the Law. This is the main thing which we spoke to before. But there are yet divers other things.

2. *All who are in Christ's kingdom are free men, they are delivered from bondage.* All who are out of this kingdom are bondslaves, they are under the prince of this world (that is, the devil), and in slavery unto him. They are all as vassals under the Law, in bondage, and have no other spirit but a spirit of bondage in them. They are slaves to sin, they are under the curse of the Law. But now, being brought to the kingdom of Christ, they are made free. They are free denizens of heaven.

3. *And then, from hence, all who are in Christ's kingdom have the privilege of free trade to heaven.* They have free traffic to heaven. There is now a blessed intercourse between heaven and them that they have by being subjects of this kingdom. We know that the subjects of this kingdom have many freedoms that foreigners do not have, that those who belong to another kingdom have nothing to do with. So the subjects of Christ's kingdom have a freedom of coming into God's presence, of trading to the promised land, that others do not have. Others are cast out of God's sight and cannot trade to heaven so as believers do who are brought under the kingdom of Christ.

4. *By virtue of this kingdom, they come to have a right unto all the ordinances of Christ, and only by this we come to have a right unto them so as to be our own.* Indeed, Christ, for the sake of such as are His elect ones that He intends to bring into His kingdom, sends forth His Word, the preaching of the Word, to them; but, when they are brought into His kingdom, then they are under the ministry of the Word in another way. Christ, then, is their great Pastor and Shepherd, and so His ministers are, in a more peculiar manner, pastors and shepherds unto them. And, besides, there are other ordinances that they have nothing to do with until they are brought into the kingdom of Christ, namely, the seals of the covenant, with some others that might be named. That's the great privilege of those who are under the kingdom of Christ to have a right to all ordinances. Certainly, all saints and believers have a right unto all, but they are to come in an orderly way to them.

5. *By being under the kingdom of Christ, there is this privilege, this protection: as kings should be the protectors of their subjects, Jesus Christ has taken upon Himself the protection of all such as come under Him.* All power in heaven and earth is given unto Christ, and it is all exercised for their protection to deliver them from dangers, bodily and spiritual, to protect their souls. They are under Christ's kingly power for protection. When any temptation to sin comes, they should flee unto Christ as King to shield them from their enemies. When their spiritual enemies come in like a flood, why, then, the Spirit of Christ sets up a standard against them.

6. *By being in this kingdom, they shall certainly have victory over all their enemies.* This kingdom shall never be shaken, let all the world conspire what they will against it, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. No cunning device, no subtle ways, shall ever overcome this kingdom; no, nor any one subject of that kingdom. This is a privilege beyond what is in the world.

A kingdom may preserve itself so as to continue a kingdom, but many subjects may be destroyed in the preservation of it; but this is such a kingdom as there shall never one subject be destroyed in it. That is, all the enemies shall never take off one subject from this kingdom. Indeed, they may take away their bodily lives, aye, but it is a transferring of them to the more glorious part of the kingdom that they shall attain to. Then may a subject of this kingdom be said to be destroyed when he shall be cut off from Christ and lose the grace that he has received. But now, none shall be thus destroyed, but all shall be preserved by Christ, and shall certainly overcome all enemies, both inward and outward, and that's a sixth privilege.

7. *By being in this kingdom, believers are made every one of them kings.* Though they are subjects in some sense unto Christ, yet Christ has made them kings and priests unto God (so they are called in Scripture). There's no kingdom where all the subjects are kings, but it is so here. Christ makes all who come under His kingdom to be kings, and they also have (according to their princely state) the angels to be their guard. As kings have their guard wherever they go, so the poorest and meanest believer who is under this kingdom of Christ has his guard wherever he goes. Though it is a poor, smoky hole or cottage that he lives in, yet it is guarded by angels. Every night they keep the door and watch around the bed. Thus, the Scripture tells us that the angels are ministering spirits for God's elect.

8. *The benefit of this kingdom of Christ are spiritual peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.* So in Romans 14:17: "The kingdom of God consists not in meat and drink; but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." There's another manner of peace than the world gives. So Christ, in John 14:27, says, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

It's the note of a learned interpreter, speaking of this place, that it should be read, "I give not peace as the world gives." The world gives peace by taking away affliction from a troubled person, but Christ gives peace by taking away a troubled person from affliction. His meaning is this: the world's way to give peace is to take away trouble from us, but the way that Christ has is to take the trouble of our hearts from our affliction. The world cannot give peace as long as the affliction continues, but Christ gives peace though the affliction continues.

Christ takes off the troublesomeness of men's hearts from the affliction. The world takes off the affliction from the trouble of men's hearts. Now, this is a great deal better peace, when the trouble of our hearts is taken away though the affliction continues, than when the affliction is taken away and trouble of heart continues.

"I give peace, not as the world gives peace. It is inward peace. The world's is outward. The world takes away some trouble, but I take away the very root of all trouble. The peace of the world only takes away the branches.

Whereas you did not have trading before, nor the freedom of your estates before, you shall have that now. Aye, but the world cannot take away the root of all your trouble, which is sin; aye, but I take away sin that is the root of all trouble."

We may, through the blessing of God upon armies or Parliament, come to have outward peace, that is, freedom from outward troubles. Oh, but there may be vexation and trouble in our spirits in the meantime! But Christ's peace is especially in the conscience and heart, within doors. We may have peace here mixed with an abundance of sin and wickedness; it may be procured in a sinful way or it may be the cause of much sin, but "My peace is a holy peace. It furthers holiness wherever I give it. My peace is a lasting and stable peace. Peace here may

be only for a few months, but My peace shall be eternal. I give peace not as the world.”

That’s the fruit of Christ’s kingdom. So, the truth is, though there are many outward afflictions attending the kingdom of Christ, yet the kingdom of Christ is always in peace and in joy in the Holy Ghost. That’s a privilege which we can never be crowned with but in the kingdom of Christ, as we can never enjoy peace but here. All the peace that men’s consciences have until they come under the kingdom of Christ will turn to greater trouble. That peace they have and live loosely, not being subdued to the kingdom of Christ, will turn to horror and misery, and so the joy that there is in the world will turn to sorrow and vexation.

It’s proper to the kingdom of Christ to have joy in the Holy Ghost. You may have joy in your cups, joy in your dishes, joy in your mirth and wicked company, but it is proper to the kingdom of Christ to bring joy unspeakable and glorious unto the soul. The soul never knows experimentally what the joy of the Holy Ghost means until it comes under the kingdom of Jesus Christ. It’s the privilege of the kingdom of Christ to bring spiritual peace which passes all understanding and joy in the Holy Ghost.

9. *This is a privilege in the kingdom of Christ, that all who are in His kingdom have right to all the gifts and graces of all the saints in the world.* “Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephus, or life or death, all is yours, for you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” They have, I say, right to all, all the gifts of all the ministers of the world, and the graces of all the saints work for good unto them.

10. *Last, they are all heirs with Christ of an immortal crown of glory that is laid up in heaven for them.* Thus, Christ’s kingdom is not of this world. The privileges of it are beyond the world’s, which can only be seen by the eye of faith, for they are spiritual and glorious privileges.

If you ask me why it is that God the Father would not have His Son to have His kingdom in this world, certainly, God might have given to Christ all the government of this world, might have made Him the great Emperor, to have ruled in an external way, and all His subjects to have been in pomp and glory here below. But God would not have the kingdom of His only Son here in this world for these reasons:

First, because hereby He would confound the wisdom of the world and show the vanity of all the things of this present world, and the folly of the hearts of men who are set upon the things of this world. We look upon these things as great things, but God has showed that He does not look upon them as great matters, but as things that have little value and excellency in them. And, therefore, He would not have His Son to have His kingdom here in this world. Surely, if there were such excellent things here as men dream of, then, undoubtedly, Christ should have had His kingdom in this world; but, that God might confound all the glory and nonplus the wisdom of this world, He goes another way to work. God would so order things that He would fetch about the glory of His name, and those great things that He intended from all eternity. He would fetch them about in a way that should be hidden from the eyes of the world, in a way that would appear contemptible in the eyes of the world. And He would, by this, rebuke and shame all the pride, folly, and vanity of this world. There is no greater rebuke of the pride, folly, and vanity of the world than is in my text here that says, "The kingdom of Jesus Christ is not of this world."

Second, because the Lord delights so much in the exercise of the graces of His Spirit, the spiritual workings of the hearts of His saints, there is nothing that is from God that is more delightful to Him than the exercises of the graces of His Spirit in the hearts of all His saints (excepting what is in the Person of

Christ Himself). Nothing is more pleasing in all the works that God ever made, in which He takes more pleasure, than in the exercise of faith, of humility, of patience, and the like, and the holiness of His saints.

Now, the less the kingdom of Christ is of the world, the more bright and glorious the graces of the saints appear, the more they come to be exercised. Had the saints a worldly glory and pomp here, their graces would not shine forth as eminently. There would not be such a spiritual luster and shine upon them; but, now that God may exercise, especially the grace of faith, humility, patience, self-denial, and brotherly love which are so precious to Him, therefore, God has so ordered things that the kingdom of His Son should not be of this world, but it should be spiritual.

You may think that it is a sad affliction that you do not have those comforts that you see others having in the world. You do not have such estates and bravery as others have, and you cannot provide for your children as they do. Aye, but is there the exercise of faith in God in the lack of these things, the exercise of humility, self-denial, of patience? Know that these are more glorious things than if you sat upon a throne with a crown of gold upon your head, and a scepter in your hand, and all the people prostrated themselves before you. This would be but a childish vanity in comparison to the exercise of the graces of God's Spirit. You have that which is more excellent in the eyes of God and of His Son, and in the eyes of the blessed angels, far more excellent than these outward, pompous, glorious, glittering vanities that are here. And, when you find, by experience, that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, oh, then, think that surely God delights much in the exercise of His Spirit in His saints. And this is the reason why He would not have the kingdom of Christ to be of this world.

Third, and last, He would not have it to be of this world so that, hereafter, when the Lord shall come to fetch out all His glory from those things that seem to be the most contrary, His power and wisdom may be more glorious and appear more evidently, that His glory may be more conspicuous. Certainly it will, hereafter, at the Great Day, when the issue of all the great designs that God had in sending Christ into the world, when the issue of all shall come and be accomplished, then the name of God will be so much the more honorable to all eternity because He has wrought out such glorious things from that which seemed to the eye of flesh to be so mean and contemptible.

APPLICATION

My application shall be built upon the consideration of the point more generally, and upon the reasons that are named why the kingdom of Christ is not of this world.

USE 1. From hence follows this much in the first place, that if the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, then there is a happiness beyond the things of this world to be had. We must certainly conclude and determine that. If we believe this point, that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, we must lay down this for a certain and infallible ground that we may build upon, that there is a happiness to be attained unto that is beyond this world; for, surely, there is a good in the kingdom of Christ. There is something beyond this world for the souls of the children of men to look after as their chief good, as their happiness. That's a consequence that follows from it.

USE 2. The kingdom of Christ, whatever it is, is a glorious kingdom; it is the kingdom of His dear Son (as the Scripture speaks) and is, therefore, very glorious. And all the glory of the kingdom of Solomon was but to typify the glory of the kingdom of Christ. Now that's not of this world, therefore, there is some glory beyond that of this world. And it is a good sign of a spiritual eye and a spiritual heart to be able to see an excellency and glory that is beyond this world, to be able to look higher and further than this world can.

We think that all the good things that God has to communicate to the children of men should be here on earth, but, I beseech you to consider, can we think in our consciences that all the good things that God has to communicate to such as He loves should be here in this world? Certainly not! Consider, therefore, that all the good things that God intends for His people are not of this world.

First, it's called an evil world. Truly, it's no great matter, and we should not account it much that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world if we consider:

*Why It Is Good That the Kingdom
of Christ Is Not of This World*

1. This world is an evil world. In Galatians 4, we are said to be delivered from this evil world.

2. It's a world that the devil (in Scripture) is called the god of, and prince of this world. 2 Corinthians 4:4, "Whose eyes the god of this world hath blinded." Surely, all the good things that God has to communicate to His saints is not of this world which is an evil world. It is a world that the very devil is god of, in a Scripture phrase.

3. This is a world whose bravery and pomp and glory is not of the Father (1 John 2:16). You have an epitome there of what is

the excellency of the world, for, he says, "All that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life." Under these three heads are all things that men of the world look upon as desirable contained. Either they are the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, or the pride of life. But, he says, all that is in the world is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Why, surely the chief things that God has to communicate to His saints are not of the things of this world, for all that is in the world is not of the Father, and would you not have the riches of the Father? It's true, God is the Creator of all things, and has the disposal of all things, but which the men of the world look upon as the excellent things are not of the Father. They are none of the good things that God the Father has to bestow upon His children; and, therefore, surely there is a happiness beyond the things of this world. Oh, my brethren, that I could but so take the hearts of people off by this point from the things of this world so as to make them look after the kingdom of Christ that is not of this world. All that is here in the world, the Scripture says is not of the Father.

4. As all the excellent things are not of the Father, so, the truth is, all the glory that is in the world is but darkness. It is a dungeon of darkness to a spiritual eye. As bats can see in the night, so the men of the world think they see some glittering here in the world; but, in the language of Scripture, and to spiritual hearts, it is but darkness. Hence, the apostle says in Ephesians 6:12, "For but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." Rulers of the darkness of this world are the unclean spirits, spiritual wickednesses. The devils are the rulers of the darkness of this world. This world has a darkness in it and, therefore, surely, the chief good things that God has to bestow upon the saints are things that are beyond this world.

5. The world does not know God (John 17:25). The world is

that which Christ says does not know the Father. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee." Take men who are the wisest of the world, and have all the wisdom that this world can afford, it will not help them to the knowledge of the Father. The world does not know those excellent and glorious things that are of the Father.

6. The world lies in wickedness (1 John 5:19). Just as you see in a common shore, a carrion, a dead dog that lies over head and ears in the mire or mud and in its own filthiness, so the whole world lies in wickedness. The wickedness of the world is like the common shore in which there is nothing but filth and dirt, and the world, as a dead carrion, lies in its own pollutions. Surely, then, there are other things that God has to communicate to His saints than the things of this world, and we should not be offended though the kingdom of Christ is not of this world.

7. The world passes away with the lusts of it (1 John 2:17). It is a notable Scripture for that: "and the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever (speaking before of what was the glory of the world)," and it passes away with the lusts thereof. Not only things of the world pass away, but the very lusts unto those things pass away. For example, men and women who have their health, and live bravely for awhile, oh, how greedy are they for the contents of this world! How they long and desire that they might have such a merry meeting with such friends and such cheer and such comings in. They make provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. But now, within a little while, not only these comforts shall be taken from them, but the very lust of them shall pass away. That is, they shall have no mind in the world to them.

Take a poor man who was wont to long for these things. When he lies upon his sickbed at the point of death, he looks upon these things as those things that are dry leaves. He has no mind

to them, not so much as a fancy after these things. All the varnish of the things of the world is gone in his eyes. He tastes them no more than the white of an egg; yea, the desire of his heart is dead to them. For example, a man who lusted after drink, when his desire is satisfied, the very desire after it is gone. And one who lived in gluttony, when his body is a little distempered, the very lust thereof passes away. Surely, there are other things that God has for His people than the things of this world.

8. There must be something else besides the things of this world, for Christ Himself is not of this world (John 8:23). Are all the good things that the Father has to communicate of this world, and yet Christ Himself is not of this world? Let me tell you, Christ is the greatest gift that ever was given, or possibly could be received and, yet, Christ is not of this world. Therefore, there is something else besides the things of this world that God has for some of the children of men that He intends good unto.

9. The saints are said not to be of this world (John 15:19 and 17:14). If they are not of this world, then their happiness is not here. God has other happiness for them than that which is here.

10. The Scripture makes it to be a sign of a child of wrath that he walks according to the course of this world (1 John 4:5). This is enough to describe a child of wrath.

11. It's made a sign of one who is an enemy to God, and who's hateful before God, who is a lover of this world (James 4:4 and 1 John 2:15). He that loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him, and, the friendship of the world is enmity to God. If so be that, in the world, there were the special things that God has to communicate to the children of men; certainly, then, God would have His people love the world. He would say, "Love these things, for these are the fruits of My favor and love.

These are part of the riches that I have to communicate unto those I intend good to; and, therefore, delight in these. Expiate your heart in these." The Holy Ghost says, "Oh, me! Whoever loves the world is an enemy to God. And, if the love of the world is in you, the love of the Father is not in you." Surely, then, here are not the things that God intends for the children of men.

12. The world is that which shall be condemned. 1 Corinthians 11:32: "That ye may not be condemned with the world." This notes that God intends to condemn this whole world. All these things are under the sentence of death, and all the men of the world are condemned before God. Therefore, these are not the things that men should so much look after to make them happy.

13. Take all the world together (the Scripture speaks by way of supposition), that a man may gain the whole world, and yet his soul is lost forever. If one man could get all the world into his possession and, thereby, lose his soul, it would be a bad bargain. The world, then, has no such excellency in it that we should place our happiness in it. God has something else for His people than these things that are at best but under moon vanities.

14. If Christ's kingdom is not of this world, then, certainly, those who are of the world are not of His kingdom; for these two cannot stand together, that Christ's kingdom should not be of this world and yet that these who are of the world should be of His kingdom. If such as are of the world are none of His kingdom, then, certainly, a worldly man or woman is not of the kingdom of Christ. Christ does not own them as under His kingdom. They are vagabonds and renegades who are neither under the protection of Jesus Christ, nor partakers of any privilege of Jesus Christ.

QUESTION. You will say to me, "How should one know when a man is a man of this world?" The Scripture makes a plain distinction of some who are of this world and some who are not. The best of all of you will say they have hearts worldly enough, and they desire to have the comforts of this world as well as others. Well, though there are some, yet we need to look to ourselves, to examine whether we are of the world or not, for this much lies upon it, if we are of the world, we are not of the kingdom of Christ. I would give you but these three notes of a man of the world.

ANSWER 1. The first is this: one who is a man of the world is such a one as could be content if God would let him live here in this world and enjoy what he does. He would be content to live forever here, and could be satisfied though he never enjoyed anything from God but what he has received here if he could always hold onto it. Here's an evident argument of a man of the world, I mean such a man as has health of body in this world. He has for outwards as much as the world can afford any man, that for the properness of his body, his comeliness, his health; he has as much as the world can give. He has convenient dwelling with all accommodations belonging thereunto, and he has the comings of the world, as much as his heart can desire. He has his wife and children about him, in whom he has a great deal of delight and content. Now, I would but put it to this man, "What are you saying? Would not this satisfy your heart if you might always be here, always have your house, gardens, walks, your comings in that you have now, that you might fare deliciously every day, and have the sweet and fat of the world? Would it not satisfy your soul, though God should never give you anything else but this?"

I beseech you in your own thoughts, answer even to God this question and seriously look into your hearts, for you may

know very much of your hearts upon the answer to this question. You may come to know what is likely to become of you forever, even from the answer that your consciences would give to this question. That man or woman whose conscience tells them that this would satisfy, we may conclude that, surely, that man or woman is of the world, because the things of the world would be enough for his or her portion.

But now, take a man or woman who is chosen out of this world, who is of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, unto whom the Lord has made known the things of another world and the excellencies of Jesus Christ, and such a one, though it had ten thousand times more than it has, though it had what possibly can be imagined, it would say, "Lord, it's true, I am unworthy of the least crumb of bread that I eat, or the least drop of water, but yet it is not all the world, nor ten thousand worlds, can satisfy my soul, for the portion of it is nothing but Thyself. The unsearchable riches in Jesus Christ, those blessed things that Thou hast revealed in that glorious kingdom of Thy Son, only those can satisfy my soul for the portion of it. And, if Thou shouldst say, 'Well, you shall have all the things in this world for your portion and enjoy them forever, I would account myself in a miserable condition, for Thou hast revealed better and higher things to my soul.'" This would be the answer of one who is chosen out of the world, who has a gracious heart and is brought under the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

ANSWER 2. A second note that I would give to know whether a man is a man of this world or not is this: a man of this world is one who accounts the possessions of worldly comforts to be greater riches than any riches contained in the promises. He is one who looks upon the comforts of this world as real things, they have them in possessions. But he looks upon the promise as that which has but a notion in it, as if there were no such

reality and excellency in the things of the promise. A man who dares not trust God upon His Word, upon His promise, without seeing in a way of reason or sense how things may come in unto him for supply from the things of this world, this is a man of the world. He has a promise, but things go very badly with him in respect of his outward estate, in respect of whatever, by sense or by reason, he is able to discern. He looks upon himself as miserable. If, indeed, God would give him the things of the world in real possession, that would satisfy him, but not the promise.

This is an evidence of a worldly heart. It regards the possession of the things of the world more than the promise of God for provision for him. As for promises, he thinks that man is but in a sad condition who has nothing but bare promises to live upon. Here's a worldly heart that has low and mean thoughts of the promises.

But now, one who is taken out of this world and is translated into the kingdom of Jesus Christ regards more to have a promise to live upon than to have possessions to live upon. Promises in the Word are greater and more real things to that soul than any bills or bonds from men can be. He can live better upon a promise than upon bills, bonds, leases, or any such things in the world. Have you found such a principle within you that can close with the promise, and you can bless yourself in the promises? Can you say, "I have title to, and an interest in, many promises in the Book of God, for life and godliness are more to me than all the treasures of Egypt; and, though I do not enjoy as much in the land as others, yet my heart has enough because it is possessed by Jesus Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. That is sure and infallible. God is faithful who has promised."

This is an argument that you are taken out of the world, and taken into the kingdom of Jesus Christ; but, otherwise, you

who cannot trust God for your outward state, body and soul, upon a promise, this is an evidence of one who has set his heart on the world.

ANSWER 3. A third sign of a man of this world is this: a man of the world blesses those who are like himself, looks upon and measures the happiness or misery of other men according to what they enjoy, or according to what they do not enjoy in the world. They call the proud happy. I mean, by this, that they measure the happiness of other men according to what they have of the world, and think that the mere enjoying of worldly accommodations is enough to make men happy, notwithstanding they see them to be very wicked and sinful. Yet, as long as they flourish as a green bay tree, you rejoice in them and with them. Yea, get themselves in the midst of the guilt that is upon them when conscience like a wolf in their bosom flies in their faces, yet they can bless themselves in the enjoyment of outward comforts, and set that against any trouble of mind whatsoever, as if so be it were enough to make up their comforts.

“I have been at such a place, and contracted such guiltiness upon my soul, committed such sins. Oh! What shall comfort me now?”

Well, he comes home, and sees all well about him, his house furnished, his table spread, means coming in like a flood, and this quiets him. Here’s a worldly heart. Whereas, were the heart taken off from the world, the possession of all under Christ would never calm a conscience that has any guilt upon it.

“When I have contracted any guilt upon my soul, although I see all well about me, until I have an assurance from the Holy Ghost, the Witness of the Spirit, that the guilt of my sin is washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ, what good will all these do me? Oh! But I have an unclean conscience, a leprous soul. Set the good things here to countervail the evil of sin.”

Certainly you are a man of the world, your name is written in the earth. You are but living dust and ashes at best, and the world is likely to be the one portion of your soul. You are a stranger to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and that's a second use.

USE 3. Here we see the main thing that hinders people from the kingdom of Jesus Christ. What's that which keeps off men from coming under the scepter of this King, of saints from subjecting themselves to His kingdom? Certainly, this shows it clearly. Why, His kingdom is not of this world. Were the kingdom of Jesus Christ of this world, then people would flock into it. Who would not join such a kingdom and be a member therefore, where he could have worldly glory, pomp, riches, and bravery; but now, because it is not of this world, therefore they slight it. As I remember we read in the gospel of Herod that, when he heard of the great miracles that Christ wrought, Herod sent for Christ, and longed a great while to see Jesus Christ; but, when Christ came, he saw Him to be a poor, mean, contemptible man to the outward eye. He thought to have seen Him to have done such and such great things, and to have been such a man as unlike any on earth. But now, Christ condemned Herod as much as Herod condemned Him, and Christ would not show His glory before Herod, but appeared in His outward meanness. And the text says, "Herod set Him at naught." He set Him at naught when he saw Him so outwardly contemptible, and so it is reported of the Roman emperors that, hearing that Christ should be the King of the Jews, and that out of David's stock there should come a King of the Jews, they sought to destroy all of that family that they could find, and all the tribe of Judah. But afterward, when they found out some who were kindred of Jesus Christ, and saw that they were poor, laboring men who labored with their hands to eat their

bread in the sweat of their brows, they set them at naught and condemned them.

Certainly, this is the great offense to the world, that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world and, as Christ said, “Woe to the world because of offenses,” so woe to the world because of this great offense. Christ’s kingdom, being so spiritual, hence it is that the world does not receive Him. In John 1:10 and John 14:17: “Even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive.” Mark it, the world cannot receive the Spirit of truth; the world does not receive Christ and it cannot receive the Spirit of truth.

You speak of the world to men, then they favor those things. Come to a man and tell him of a good bargain on the exchange, he will listen to you and remember what you say; but come and speak to him of the great things of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, of the glorious privileges of that great kingdom, and it’s only a sound in the air that passes away, and makes no impression at all on the heart of one who is carnal. In 1 John 4:5, you have this expressed fully, the very way of a carnal heart: “They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.” Those who are of the world speak of the world and discourse of the world, and favor the things of the world, and the world hears them. But now, let a man come and tell them of the things that are heavenly, of a goodly pearl of Jesus Christ, and they do not favor those things, neither do they hear them. Oh! It is from hence that men do not come in to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, because it is not of this world.

What’s the reason that there are more who come into the kingdom of Antichrist than to the kingdom of Christ? Revelation 13:3: “The whole world wandered after the beast.” It is because they are of the world, and Antichrist sets up a worldly

kingdom instead of Christ's kingdom, and men who are of the world flock after antichrist.

And hence it was that your great rich men in places where the gospel has not been were Papists, or popishly affected, so that, therefore, the Papists make outward prosperity to be one badge or sign of the true church. Hence it is that popery is so suitable to worldly hearts. And the Holy Ghost prophesied beforehand that the whole world should follow Antichrist, only here and there a few poor ones are chosen out of the world by Jesus Christ to follow Him, for His kingdom is not of this world.

One more particular, in a word. Seeing the kingdom of Christ is not of the world, then a worldly heart is the most vile thing of anything that can be in the world in one who professes himself to be a Christian. If Christ's kingdom is not there, your heart certainly should not be there.

You who profess yourself to be of the kingdom of Christ, which is spiritual and heavenly, and yet you have a worldly, earthly heart. I say, it is the most unbecoming thing that possibly can be. What? For a professor of religion to have an earthly, covetous, worldly heart? By that which I have already spoken in showing the vanity and the evil of the world, and the great evil of loving the world, it should be enough to strengthen this use, but now that which I intended should have been especially to speak to those who are Christians, who have hopes that God has made them partakers of Jesus Christ, and who would be loath to lose their hopes in the good things of the kingdom of Jesus Christ for ten thousand worlds; and yet there remains much worldliness in their hearts to this day. Surely, this is not becoming one of the profession that you make. It is no honor unto your King, the Lord Jesus Christ. When there appears no difference between those that we account to be men of the

world and such as we hope are chosen out of the world, oh, how is Christ dishonored by this!

Look upon the lives of Christians who profess religion, and one would think that the kingdom of Christ was a kingdom of this world rather than anything else, for I say, to outward appearance, though it may be Christ may see some integrity in the heart, yet, to outward appearance, there is almost no difference between them and the men of the world.

It becomes Christians to live so in their whole course as to make it appear that they are men and women above the world, whose conversations are in heaven, who believe in a kingdom of Jesus Christ that is not of this world.

SERMON 10

(May 3, 1646)

“Jesus answered and said, My kingdom is not of this world.”

JOHN 18:36

*W*hat this kingdom of Christ is, and how different it is from the kingdoms of this world, we have already opened unto you.

USE 4. The fourth use which we are to proceed in is this: if the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, then of all dispositions, a worldly spirit is most unsuitable to those who profess themselves to be of the kingdom of Christ. Certainly, then, such as are believers, who have come under the kingdom of Christ, must not be of earthy hearts. We find the apostle, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, ranks covetousness and uncleanness together and says of them both in 5:3, “Let it not be once named among you as becometh saints.” So that a heart that is covetous after the things of the world is such a disposition as it should scarcely be named among saints any more than whoredom. They should abstain from it like it was whoredom, “as becometh saints.” It is the most uncomely thing for a saint of God, one of the kingdom of Christ to have a covetous heart for the things of the world; it is as uncomely as possibly can be.

“As becometh saints.” It does not become you, and Luther, who was a great man for the promoting of the kingdom of Christ, is bold to profess that of all sins he was scarcely ever tempted to that sin. He found nothing tending that way. Though it’s true,

there's no sin but we have the seeds of it in our hearts, yet he found his spirit most above that worldly sin because he was so much taken up with Jesus Christ. And indeed, the more any soul is taken up with the excellency of Jesus Christ, and with the glorious things of His kingdom, the more vile will the things of the world be to them. "We look not at the things that are seen," said the apostle. They are not things to be looked at, "but at the things that are not seen. "

In Galatians 6:14, Paul, who was the great man for the promoting of Christ in the world and the setting up of His throne, professes that he was crucified to the world and the world was crucified to him. That is, he looked upon the world only as a crucified thing.

What esteem would you have of a man who is hanging upon a gallows? All the world was nothing else but that to him. It was a thing crucified to him, and he was crucified to the world. The world does not care for me, and I do not care for the world. I have quit with it in that way, and slight and condemn and trample the world under foot like the world slights and condemns and tramples me under foot. This should be the disposition of a Christian who is under the kingdom of Christ; for now it is to converse with things of another nature. And, therefore, you find that Christ says of those who are given to Him by the Father that they are given to Him out of the world. John 17:6: "I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given Me out of the world." No men have Christ manifested unto them but those whom the Father gives Him out of the world. The Father says, "Here's so many out of the world, and there are a select company that I will take out of this rude heap and mass of mankind, and I'll give them to Thee. Take them and manifest Thyself unto them."

If this is so—that those who come under Christ's kingdom

are given to Him out of the world—then, though they live in the world, they should not live as of the world.

Second, they are chosen out of the world (John 15:19), and they are delivered from the world by Christ (Galatians 1:4), and they are opposed to the children of the world (Luke 16:8). There it speaks of divers sorts of people, and makes the distinction between one and another. The Lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely; for the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light. These two are opposed one to another. The children of this world and the children of light are quite contrary to one another; for, indeed, one is in the kingdom of darkness and the other is in the kingdom of light, in the kingdom of the dear Son of God. You must be children of light; others are children of the world.

It becomes a child of the world to follow after the things of the world, but not the children of light. You are chosen out of the world that you may be the light of the world. So the Scripture speaks of the saints that they should be the light of the world (Philippians 2:15). Now, if they have as worldly hearts as others, how can they be the lights of the world? Oh! Many who are professors of religion are, indeed, nothing but dark lanterns. They have a candle in them, they have some kind of knowledge, but, by their worldly conversations, they are made but as dark lanterns. The light of knowledge and profession which they have is so darkened by it that none can see the beauty and excellency of Jesus Christ shining through them.

Third, surely, it is a very unbecoming disposition in one who is under the kingdom of Christ to be worldly, for he is appointed to be one who shall judge the world another day. In 1 Corinthians 6:2 we read, "The saints shall judge the world." Now, there should be a great deal of difference between judges

and those who are judged by them. If they are of the same disposition that the world is, why should any be chosen out of the world to judge them? Now, all the saints, if they believe themselves to be brought into the kingdom of Christ, should look upon themselves as those who are appointed by God hereafter to judge the whole world; and, therefore, they should not live so as the men of the world do, but as judges, very precisely and strictly living according to rule.

Fourth, it is required of them that they should hate their own lives in this world (Luke 14:26). Now, if the saints should be such as see so much excellency in the kingdom of Christ so as to hate their very lives in this world, then, surely, they must be such as look upon all things in this world as contemptible, as hateful in comparison. It is not meant that they should hate their lives absolutely, but in comparison when any comfort or preservation of their lives in this world comes in the least competition with the furtherance of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. They should look upon the comforts of their lives as a hateful thing, and look upon the very preservation of their lives as a hateful thing.

Shall I make my life comfortable with any hindrance unto the kingdom of Christ? Oh, 'tis that which my soul should abhor! So, should I preserve my life with doing anything that may be any prejudice to the kingdom of Christ? I should look upon the very suggestion to such a thing as that which my very soul abhors.

And we find in Scripture that this is made an argument of apostasy, of one who is falling off from the profession of Christ to embrace the world. It is said of Demas in 2 Timothy 4:10, "Demas hath forsaken me." But what is it that has made Demas to forsake Paul? "He hath embraced this present world." So look upon many of your professors of religion. Such as have been

very forward in former times and “Oh, nothing but Christ!” in their mouths, afterward begin to decline, and become worse and worse. But observe them. They embrace this present world. It is because of some honors and esteem, some comforts, riches, estate, that they would have, or live at ease in this present world. They cannot endure the hatred of the world.

So it was with Demas. When he began to hear Paul, he perceived that it was a great excellency to be one of Paul’s followers. Paul wrought miracles, and Demas thought it was an excellent thing to follow Paul; but after he had followed Paul awhile, he found that he was persecuted and saw there was no preferment that came in by Paul’s preaching. Nothing but blows, imprisonments, scorns, and contempt. Then Demas began to think himself deserving better than that, and thought he was mistaken, “I thought that this Paul would be a great man in the world one day and, by my following him, I would get great matters to myself.” But when he saw that all men were set against Paul, and nothing but persecution was likely to betide him and his disciples, Demas began to think to himself, “Is it not better for me to keep my credit and esteem in this world?”

So Demas left him to shift for himself; and, therefore, the apostle said, “Demas hath forsaken me, and embraced this present world.” This may be written upon every apostate’s grave: “Here lies an apostate who has forsaken Jesus Christ, and has embraced this present world.” But, observe it and look upon those who were forward in religion and now are not. See whether they have more worldly hearts than before and give themselves up to honors, pleasures, and profits.

Therefore, it’s exceedingly unbecoming the saints to have worldly hearts. They will certainly apostatize if their hearts take deep root in the earth. Do you find your spirits so glued to the things of the world that you do not know how to part with them,

that you do not know how to live in a place and not have your neighbors love, respect, and honor you, and to have the countenance of the times in which you live? Do you find your hearts thus cleaving to the things of the world like the serpent, eating dust, and going upon your belly? You have a worldly heart, and you are likely to be an apostate from the truth of God ere long.

In Titus 2:11–12, the apostle says that “the grace of God hath appeared to all men, teaching them to deny all worldly lusts.” Oh, my brethren! Let’s labor to walk worthy of our calling into this kingdom of Jesus Christ! In 1 Thessalonians 2:12, the apostle, with a great deal of earnestness, speaks to the Thessalonians, exhorting them that they would walk worthy of God who has called them into His kingdom and glory. Are you converted to Christ? You are called into this kingdom, walk worthy of Him.

And mark his earnestness in the verse before, “As you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children.” We comforted you in showing you the excellency of the kingdom of God and the privileges of this kingdom. We exhorted you, and we charged every one of you as a father does his children. And what did he exhort, what did he charge them to? It was this: that they would walk worthy of God who had called them into His kingdom and His glory.

Oh! ’Tis a great mercy that God has revealed anything of the kingdom of God unto you. Walk worthy of it, as becomes those who are called to be the subjects of such a glorious kingdom as this is. And, above all things, have a care, and let me warn you of this worldliness in the hearts of the saints; namely, of a crafty, cunning subtleness in the things of this life. There is nothing more unbecoming a Christian than a crafty, cunning subtleness for the world.

Many men bless themselves in this, and they take abundance of content to think that, by their craft and cunning sophistry, they can set about things, circumvent others, and so provide for themselves in this world. I say, there is nothing more unbecoming a Christian than to be crafty and cunning in circumventing others, and providing for themselves in the matters of this world. In 1 Corinthians 2:12, the apostle says, "We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God." It is that which we have received.

There are many men (you may plainly see that) who have the spirit of the world. I have many times wondered at it. Some men, come and speak to them about any matters of the kingdom of Christ, and they speak so foolishly and childishly. Either they must hold their peace and say nothing, or else, if they do speak, they reveal so much ignorance and childishness that a man would wonder where the understandings of such men are who have lived so long a time in the world as they have done, heard so much of religion, and, when one hears them speak so, one would wonder how these men should have understanding to live in the world.

But now, these same men, in the business of the world, are worldly political; no man can outdo them there. They can force all kinds of dangers in any miscarriage, and can judge twenty things together in their thoughts, and compare one thing with another, see further into the world than other men. So a man would wonder sometimes, when one hears them speaking of religion, whether these men have any wit or understanding; but when one follows them in the things of the world, you shall see them as witty, as understanding, as judicious and as cunning as any men can be. They have received the spirit of the world and are led by the spirit of the world. The god of this world has taken possession of them,

and it's that which makes them so; but they have not received the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

They may say quite the opposite of the apostle. While the apostle said, "We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of Jesus Christ," they may say, "We have not received the Spirit of Jesus Christ, but the spirit of the world."

It's true, Christ would have us, as long as we live in the world, to be wise as serpents yet innocent as doves. The wisdom that is for the promotion of the kingdom of Christ is a wisdom that has an upright plainness in it, and is according to the simplicity of the gospel. Indeed, when they have to deal with wicked men, they may exercise a natural wisdom to avoid the dangers of persecution, or to avoid the circumventing of wicked men but, when they have to deal with spiritual things, there the wisdom is that which holds forth a simplicity of the gospel that is carried on with plainness and simplicity of heart.

The Hebrews have the same word to signify a naked man and a cunning, subtle man. You shall find that where it is said that Adam and Eve were naked, nakedness of spirit and subtlety may stand together; they signify the same thing to show what kind of subtlety should be in those who are the people of God. It should be that which may stand with a naked spirit. So that, if God would reveal the secrets of their hearts to all the children of men, they should not be ashamed to have all their secrets opened to them. But now, the cunningness, that is, the cunningness of the serpent, is such a cunningness that, if men were but laid open, they would quickly be ashamed. And so much for the fourth use, that it is unbecoming those who are of the kingdom of Christ to have the spirit of the world, because Christ's kingdom is not of this world.

USE 5. Hence we see the reason of the meanness of the outward

condition of the people of God in this world. Why is it that Christ has so ordered things that the people of God should be so outwardly poor in this world? “My kingdom is not of this world,” said Christ. Why, therefore, should any who come under My kingdom look for great things in this world? They must look to have their comfort and glory in things that concern My kingdom and not in the things of this world. We read, in Psalm 73:12, “Behold! Those that are ungodly prosper in this world.” Men who are godly and come under the kingdom of Christ must look for a prosperity that is beyond this world. God gives the earth to the children of men and to the men of the world. Let them prosper, God says. Here’s their portion, here’s all that they are ever likely to have.

But now, for the people of God, they must not look to prosper outwardly in this world. John 16:33 says, “In the world, you shall have trouble.” Christ tells His disciples plainly beforehand that, in the world, they shall have trouble. Never make account to have ease and prosperity here in the world. Certainly, you shall have trouble. This is not your kingdom and, therefore, John, in Revelation 1:9 calls himself, in writing to the churches, “your companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.”

Observe it, when John, who was such an eminent member of the kingdom of Christ, speaks unto others who are brought into the kingdom of Christ, he says, “I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.” These two may well stand together: to be of the kingdom of Christ, and companions of men in the kingdom of Christ and in tribulation. Yea, mark how the kingdom of Christ is set in the middle: companions in tribulation, then kingdom, then patience. So that trouble and afflictions are on both sides of the kingdom of Christ. And, it’s very

observable here that John does not say this to get credit for himself, that he was the apostle of Jesus Christ, or that he was the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ, or that he was the kinsman of Jesus Christ. No, but he says, "I, John, your companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ."

If you would be the companion of the saints in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, you must be willing to be their companion in tribulation, and in the patience of Jesus Christ. So things are ordered by Christ that the saints should be in tribulation and live in trouble in this world.

When any of you who are godly shall meet with crosses and afflictions (the briars and thorns which spring out of the world ever since it was cursed by God), the very thought of this text may be a means to quiet your hearts, and not to have any risings in your bosoms against the dispensations of God towards you. "Do I not desire to fear the Lord and follow Him in all His ways? And yet, how the Lord crosses me in this world!"

These murmuring and repining thoughts will be. Yea, it may be that you will think, "Since the time that God wrought upon me by His Word, I am more afflicted than before. Is not God displeased with me? It may be I am not in the right way because of these afflictions."

Oh, take heed of these temptations! Let my text come into your minds and answer all these temptations. Christ said that His kingdom was not of this world. Since the time I was called out of darkness by the ministry of the Word, no marvel though I meet with afflictions more than before, for I am translated into another kingdom which is not of this world. It pleases the Father to make Christ, who is my Captain, to be perfect through sufferings. Hebrews 2:10, "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through

suffering.” It’s an excellent Scripture to quiet the hearts of the saints in the midst of their sufferings.

The Captain of your salvation, yea, your King, that is, the King of glory, yet He was made perfect through sufferings. Now, you must go the same way that He did. So, then, if you must enter into a full possession of this glorious kingdom through sufferings, why should you murmur? Luke 24:26 says, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” It’s a speech of Christ Himself. So I say, concerning you, ought not you to suffer first and then enter into your glory? Why should you not come to the fullness of the glory of that kingdom that is prepared for you as Jesus Christ, your Head, came to the fullness of the glory of His kingdom? It was by suffering. Remember, His kingdom is not of this world.

USE 6. Here’s the reason why the wicked hate the saints. Why? Because they love their own. John 15:19: “If you were of the world, the world would love you, but you are not of the world, therefore the world hates you.” You are translated into another kingdom and, therefore, their spirits are bitter against you and their tongues as sharp as two-edged swords. You come to live by other laws than they do. They know no other law but the law of the land where they live, but you have other laws that they do not understand the authority of. You have other rules for your consciences than they have. Their consciences can yield to this or that according as may serve for their worldly ends; but now, your consciences are subjected to another authority. You cannot have your consciences yield up and down as they can and, thereupon, they think it to be stoutness in you, but God knows it to be otherwise. And they wonder at this. They do not understand the reason of this, and therefore it is that they malign you; they hate you with a perfect hatred.

You are rebels against their kingdom. They are under the kingdom of Satan, but you are brought under the kingdom of Christ, and so rebel against that kingdom. We hate rebels, it's true. In some sense, all the saints are rebels; that is, they rebel against the kingdom of Satan and the powers of darkness. And if anything is enjoined by men, yet, if it is against the kingdom of Christ, they cannot be rebel in a sense. That is, their spirits must be against it and, whatever they suffer, they cannot submit to it. They do not rebel against lawful authority, but against the kingdom and power of darkness. That is why the world hates them so much.

When you come into the kingdom of Christ, you live upon other principles and have other ends. You are a kind of separated people from the world, and we know there is nothing more odious to the world than that we should be a certain kind of separated people from them. The world would have all to be like themselves and, for any kind of people to make a profession as if they were called out of the world, and live after another kind and fashion, and have other sorts of hopes, comforts, ends, and rules by which they live, oh, this the world cannot endure! As long as Paul was in the world, and lived like the men of the world, they loved him. And he was a man of authority among them; but, when he was called out of the world, then he was a pestilent fellow, seditious. This separation from the world cannot be borne. There is nothing more provoking to the world than separation from the world and, therefore, it is no marvel that the people of God are hated in the world and looked upon as the ringleaders of sedition. They are separated from the world, and translated into another kingdom, into a kingdom that is not of this world.

USE 7. From hence may appear the wickedness of the world, that they should reject Christ and His kingdom; that they

should not embrace it. That's not so great a wonder, but that they should hate it, persecute it, and reject it, there appears their wickedness.

You will say, "How does it appear?"

From my doctrine it appears thus: If Christ's kingdom is not a kingdom of this world, it would do men no hurt at all, it would no way hinder any lawful comforts or honors here in this world. It is not opposite unto the kingdoms of the world, that is, so as to hinder anything that is good in the world. The kingdom of Christ may be set up, and the world need never be the worse for it. Indeed, it opposes the wickedness of the world, but it does not oppose anything that they dare say themselves to be good.

Herod persecuted Christ because he heard a king of the Jews was born; but it was without cause. Jesus Christ did not come to take away the kingdom of Herod from him. The kings of the earth conspire together, says the Psalm, and are engaged against Christ. It is their wickedness.

Christ does not envy them or their kingdoms. They may live and be the kings of the earth still, and yet the kingdom of Jesus Christ may go on. The truth is that the kingdom of Jesus Christ does not entrench upon any civil liberty of men, and it's their hatred to it that makes them think it cannot stand with civil peace. The kingdom of Christ may be set up and civil liberty maintained. You may have your estates still, and yet have the kingdom of Christ; and you may be in a place of rule and government, and have outward honors still, and yet be of the kingdom of Christ.

It's true, if you are brought into the kingdom of Christ, perhaps God may call you sometimes to suffering; but, then, it is so as you will be willing to endure it. You shall never be called to suffering, but you shall see cause to be willing to it. You shall

have as much good by what you suffer as you have loss of outward comforts. But this I speak: The kingdom of Christ does not entrench upon any civil liberties of men. They may enjoy all their lawful comforts, their estates, their rule, their government, and yet the kingdom of Christ may flourish.

Now, what a wickedness is this, when Christ would come and set up His kingdom without any prejudice at all to the worldly kingdoms, and yet they cannot endure it! You would account a man to be an ill neighbor if you should come and live by him, and in no way prejudice him, and yet, for all that, he maligns you because you merely live by him. Thus it is with the world. They malign Jesus Christ merely for living by them. Indeed, if a neighbor comes and will entrench upon your ground and liberties, you cannot bear it. Jesus Christ does not do it. One would wonder, sometimes, why wicked men should be so opposed to men when they come under the kingdom of Christ more than before.

I appeal to you. When God converts a wife to be under the kingdom of Christ, does that take her off from subjection to her husband? Let me assure you, it makes her to acknowledge her husband to be lord more than before. Indeed, if, when the wife were converted, it took the wife from subjection to her husband, then there would be some reason why the husband should storm about it; but, the more the wife is under the kingdom of Christ, the more she acknowledges the authority of her husband over her.

And so it is for servants. I confess, if bringing servants by the Word under the kingdom of Christ took them off from their obedience to their masters and mistresses, then there would be some ground to oppose them from going to hear the Word; but, when your consciences tell you that the more they go to hear the Word, and are wrought upon by the Word, they are

the more obedient to you, why would you hate them? Why should you so malign Christ's kingdom when Christ's kingdom would help you?

I appeal to the consciences of divers masters. You have one servant who is profane, and another who cannot lie in his bed in the morning, but must come to hear the Word. Now, if you had trust to commit to each one of them, so that you whole estate lay upon it, which of these two would you trust? Your consciences would tell you that the servant who is to come under the kingdom of Christ is rather to be trusted, so that you would trust him in a case of great trust. Yet your consciences tell you that you hate that servant more than the other. Now here's the wickedness of men. They hate the kingdom of Christ, though the kingdom of Christ does not entrench upon them. Oh, let Christ alone with His kingdom and do not oppose Him. He will not oppose you in anything that you can desire as a rational man.

And, for the outward government, Christ would have no man to be compelled to it other than those who are convinced that it is the best way. He gives no such rules to force any man. Do you think the government is too strict for you that you cannot live under it? Indeed, there may be something used as a natural help, some outward means used to take men off from their wantonness and willfulness; but now, if it appears that you, desiring to know which is the best way, and endeavoring to know, and after your desires and endeavors cannot be convinced that this is the way that you should walk in, Christ gives no rules to compel you but, if you belong to God, he is content to stay until the Word and Spirit shall convince you to come under His government. Oh! Why should you be against it when it does not force you to come into it?

Oh! Do not be such an enemy to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, but let those who believe another way is the way wherein

they come most under the kingdom of Christ, and enjoy most communion with Christ, let them alone in that way, especially when they live peaceably with you, and are every way useful as much as your hearts can desire in all civil things, living neighborly, lovingly and faithfully with you in all things. Why should you malign them because you know there is some other way wherein they may enjoy more sweet communion with Jesus Christ than you do? That's the seventh use, which shows the wickedness of the world in opposing the kingdom of Christ when it is not of this world. It is not that which entrenches upon their worldly privileges.

USE 8. Hence, this kingdom, if it is not of this world, then it does not depend upon this world. Whatever may become of the world, the kingdom of Christ will go on. Men are afraid, "Oh! If the enemies should prevail, and overcome and take away our civil rights, then what will become of the kingdom of Christ?"

Let us not be too solicitous about that, for the kingdom of Christ is of another world. There is no such dependence of the kingdom of Christ upon the kingdoms of this world, but, though they were broken, the kingdom of Christ would subsist. We indeed should labor to preserve our civil liberties as much as we can, yea, and our civil liberty in exercise of religion in a war-like way, and I should wonder that any should mistake in that when this has been so declared from the beginning of the war to this time, that we may fight for the civil liberties we have to our peaceable practice and profession of religion. So far we may, and that has been the ground of our war.

Had we indeed lived in such a country as the Christians in the primitive times, where the governors and the generality of the country had been against it, then indeed the taking up of arms might have been very questionable; but now, when we live

in such a place where our civil laws are for the protection of us in the practice of our religion, if any will come and disturb us, we may take up arms because we have a right to the profession of it by the laws of the kingdom like we have to our houses, lands, and estates, but that is by the way.

But that's the thing I aim at in this use. Though our civil rights are lost, yet the kingdom of Christ would go on for all of that (Hebrews 12:28), this is a kingdom that cannot be shaken. At those times when the magistrates were the greatest enemies unto the kingdom of Christ, yet even then the kingdom of Christ went on as fully as ever it has done since that time; but the magistrates may be helps, and there is a promise that kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church, but yet so it fell out that, at the first, when the church was in its infancy, that it thrived as much when magistrates and civil power was against it as ever it has done since. And, thereby, Christ would show us that His kingdom does not depend upon this world, but the kingdom of Christ stands, and will stand, and it does and will prevail to the end of the world. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it; it shall be more than a conqueror, and this is a great comfort to the saints.

USE 9. If the kingdom of Christ is not of this world but of another, then, hence, we collect the absolute necessity of living by faith. Christians need, then, a principle of faith to live by for their greatest good is in things that are beyond this world. Their very King whom they obey is a King that cannot be seen by the eye of sense, nor by the eye of reason. They need to have an eye of faith to behold their King in His glory. The throne of this King of saints is not a visible throne to be seen by the eye of sense and reason, but by faith. The privileges that we speak of are not to be seen and enjoyed by sense and reason, but by faith.

And so, the ordinances of this kingdom, and the laws and statutes of it, are spiritual, and must have faith to close with them. And all the comforts of this kingdom must be drawn in by faith; therefore, it is of absolute necessity that the saints should exercise much faith in their lives, that they should live continually by faith. The apostle said, in 2 Corinthians 5:7, "For we walk by faith and not by sight." It is not by sight we walk. Indeed, all the good things that there are in the kingdoms of the world are seen by sense and reason. Reason and sense is enough to order us in the matters of the kingdom of this world, but now, the kingdom of the Son of God that we are translated into is a spiritual kingdom, a heavenly kingdom, so that the saints must walk by faith and not by sight.

Therefore, my brethren, labor to strengthen faith, and to act your faith, and to live upon faith. Exercise faith in all your ways; make much of grace and faith or you will never have much good in the kingdom of Christ. But that grace will help you comfortably to enjoy, and spiritually to improve, all the good things in the kingdom of Jesus Christ to an everlasting advantage.

USE 10. If the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, then the greater mercy to your soul that ever you were brought under this kingdom of Christ. Oh, you may look back unto your former time and know that you had a worldly heart, worldly apprehensions. Your spirit was worldly, altogether for things of the world, taken with the pomps, glory, and pleasures of this world. How does it come to pass that you should have a heavenly kingdom revealed to you? Why was it that Jesus Christ should ever be known to your soul, a soul that was so worldly, so drossy, so earthy a soul? You were as deeply rooted in the world, it may be, as any, and yet, that the Lord should call you out of the world and reveal such a kingdom to you, is such a mystery as

the princes of the world have not known. It is a mystery that you, who are a poor creature, should come to understand the realities of Christ which the wise and learned men of the world have not known!

Oh, the free grace of God to you and not to the world! As Judas (not Iscariot) said, "How is it that Thou revealest Thyself to us, and not unto the world?" How does it come to pass that such wise men, who bear sway in the world, have very poor, low, mean, and contemptible thoughts of the kingdom of Jesus Christ? They look upon it but as a mere notion and conceit of men, and the rather because they see but a few poor people who are but of meaner parts who embrace such a way. Upon that, they condemn it and, through the worldly wisdom that they have, they come to undervalue it.

Oh, then, bless God that ever He should choose such a poor, weak wretch as you are to make known the things of the kingdom of Christ unto! And therefore, of all men, your rich, covetous men are the hardest to be wrought upon by the ministry of the Word. When Christ Himself was preaching, it is said in Luke 16:14 that the Pharisees who were covetous derided Him. They blew their noses at Him, that's the meaning of the original. A man who scorns and derides another snivels in the nose; that's the propriety of the word that is here translated "derided." Oh, a worldly heart is hardest brought into the kingdom of Christ! Therefore, bless God so much the more who has brought your soul to understand the mysteries of Christ's scepter, who has translated you into another kingdom.

USE 11. If the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, then they are rebuked who seek to make the kingdom of Christ a worldly kingdom. I might name many sorts of men who do this, but I will speak only of three or four.

The first is the Papists, those who are popishly affected. All their way is under the name of honoring Christ, to raise up a worldly kingdom and, therefore, they make the pope to be as an emperor of all the world, as the king of kings. They make their cardinals and many of their bishops to be princes, and all in a worldly pomp, and they carry it on and maintain it by a worldly policy, and by worldly means, and by worldly weapons; and, therefore, they stir up the kings of the earth to root out all those who are against them. These do not understand the kingdom of Christ.

Second, such as would conform the government of the church merely to worldly governments because worldly men may, by their prudence, order things as they please in commonwealths so as shall be most suitable to them. Therefore, they falsely think that the kingdom of Christ must be so too, that it must be suited to every country; whereas, the truth is, there is but one way of the government of Christ in all the world. The great argument of the prelates was, "In some places there may be another government, but where there is monarchy, there must be a bishop."

Now, certainly, that's not the way of Christ, to suit Himself in His government to the government of the world; but that government that was in the primitive times must be still.

Third, such kind of men as think that the success of the gospel and the ordinances depend upon worldly things. For example, upon outward pomp, there must be some outward pomp to go along with the gospel. For example, great preferments of those who are the preachers of the gospel, they think the gospel will be condemned otherwise and, unless the ordinances are carried on in an outward pomp. They conceive that all will be despised unless there are magnificent temples built and beautified, and unless there are brave gold and silver chalices the

Sacrament will be despised; and unless they have their altars and rails about them, with all their heathenish vanities, Christ is not worshipped. But this is to look upon the kingdom of Christ like the kingdoms of the world.

Oh, no! The kingdom of Christ prevails where there is but little of the world with it. I remember reading of a martyr named Boniface who, being asked whether it was lawful to give the wine in the Sacrament in a wooden chalice, said, "There was a time indeed when the church had wooden chalices and golden priests; but now, the church has golden chalices and wooden priests."

No question, in the primitive times, they had very mean things in the Lord's Supper, and all things were carried in a very low way to a worldly eye; but, he says, though their chalices were wooden, the priests were golden, and so the gospel prevailed. Oh, it's the spiritualness of those things that makes the kingdom of Christ to prevail!

Many think that the kingdom of Christ cannot prevail unless it has an abundance of jingles of men's wit, and tongues, and such kind of school-boy vanities as these are, but the gospel never prevails by such things. That which the world calls foolishness is made the power of God and the wisdom of God to salvation. They have carnal hearts who think that the outward pomp and glory of the world should be a furtherance to the gospel, as if it could not thrive without it.

Lastly, those who think that the gospel and the promoting of Christ's kingdom depends wholly upon human policy and strength. These make the kingdom of Christ to be but as a worldly kingdom.

USE 12. The last use is this: If Christ's kingdom is not of this world, then it teaches us all to labor to further a kingdom of

Christ as distinct from the world. It is a great point I am speaking of about furthering the kingdom of Christ as distinct from the kingdoms of the world. Christ Himself professes that he came into the world to witness to this truth; and, therefore, certainly we should do likewise. It is in the very next words to my text. When Christ had said that His kingdom was not of this world, Pilate said to Him, "Art Thou a King? Then Jesus answered, Thou sayest I am a King, to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the Truth." Pilate asked Him what the truth was, but did not stay for the answer. Certainly, the truth that Christ means here is the truth of His kingdom.

Oh, my brethren, it is a matter of so great consequence that it is a special end why Christ came into the world, why He was born, that He should witness to this truth! Then, certainly, we should account it a great end of our lives to set to oversee to this truth of the kingdom of Christ as distinct from the world. Let this be a great engagement on our spirits to further the preaching of the kingdom. Further it as many ways as you can, improve your estates, improve your credits, your esteem, your places for the kingdom of Christ; and then, oh, how comfortable will your death be! Though you should not live here to enjoy all the privileges that the saints in other ages shall have in the kingdom of Christ, yet, when you die, your death shall be but a passage into the glorious kingdom of Jesus Christ, for there's a kingdom of Christ beyond this world. Christ will rule spiritually while this world lasts; but, when men are taken off from this world, yet they go into the kingdom of Christ.

In 2 Peter 1:5-8, with which I will conclude, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, add to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly

kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity, for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And so he goes on further in his exhortation in the 10th and 11th verses, “Wherefore the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Christ is here a King. He rules in His church in a spiritual way; but when this world is done, He shall be a King, and if you are now godly, you shall have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Mark it, when a believer dies, he goes into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. He goes but from one administration of it to another, but still he is in the same kingdom of Christ. Here’s the difference between the death of the man of the world and the death of the saints: the men of the world are of the world, and they are under the kingdom of darkness, and when they die they go to the kingdom of darkness. The saints are now under the kingdom of Christ spiritually, and when they die they go to another administration of the kingdom of Christ; and, the more godly men are, the more abundant entrance they shall have into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now, suppose that, when His Excellency, who has done so much service for the kingdom, shall come, what an entrance shall be made for him into the city? Every man who is a free subject may come freely into the city, nobody may wrong him, and he shall enjoy the liberty of the city. But he does not have that abundant entrance into it like a man who has done much for the kingdom we live in. So now, every godly man or woman, if they have but the least degree of grace, shall come into the

kingdom of Christ. Aye, but those who are powerfully godly, burning and shining lamps, and have been very active and faithful to the death, when they die, the gates of heaven shall be set wide open, and they shall have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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APPENDIX

The Saints' Duty in Times of Extremity

*W*hat the certainty of the cause of those fears that are upon the hearts of people is not yet apparent, but that there are many distracted fears in their hearts is fully apparent. And therefore, though I prepared for that ordinary course as formerly, yet, for this time, I desire that you would turn to that Scripture, that I might speak a word or two in season, Exodus 14, part of the 13th verse: “stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.”

The beginning of the verse is thus, “And Moses said unto the people, Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.” In the former chapter, we have Pharaoh dismissing Israel out of Egypt. In this chapter, we have him pursuing Israel with a new-heated fury, against all common sense and reason. His malice and rage besotted him, because God intended to destroy him. Though God’s hand appeared gloriously for His people, yet Pharaoh will not see the majesty of the Lord; but he shall see it. He gathers all the strength that he possibly can, and seems too rash in his way. He overtakes them in a place of the greatest advantage that possibly could be for, the text says, that they were before Pihahiroth, in the first verse, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon, and that by God’s appointment too. They were there then when Pharaoh comes to find them. There the sea is before them, all the strength of Egypt is behind them, and they were at Pihahiroth, going into a hole, into the mouth of a hole that was compassed about with rocks on each side. And not only so, but they were between Migdol over against Baalzephon. Migdol signifies a tower, so that in that place the Egyptians had a tower built likewise. Besides the

advantage of the rocks and the hills, there was a tower built for further strength, and there the people of Israel were an unarmed people.

I remember, in the last exercise, I showed you what Baal was, and that the heathens worshipped several Baals for their gods. It was a general name, sometimes for any other idol. This Baalzephon was a god that they worshipped upon this ground. They had an idol set in that place at the going out of Egypt, that was to watch those who were to go out, for so “zephon” comes out of *zuri speculatus est*. The god was to watch, to stand and watch any runaway servant, or any people who went out of Egypt without leave. They trusted in this Baal to stop and stay them, and he was set in that place for this very purpose. Thereupon, his name was Baalzephon.

As conjurers, by their magic arts, will have their spells, so the Egyptians had there, by their magical arts, a spell. They had a Baalzephon, a god to stop people in that place where they would have them stopped. That is the meaning of this name of the idol Baalzephon.

So you see what a strait Israel was in upon their going out of Egypt. They were before the sea, and the Egyptians had all their strength behind in a hole of rocks, and a tower, and a god to stop them altogether. Being in those great straits, their hearts began to fail them. They began to be extremely troubled, and in a most grievous distemper of spirit they were coming. Chiding Moses, they said in the 11th verse, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us to die in the wilderness, wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?”

We would rather have continued in Egypt! What? Brought to these straits, these extremities? Such a perplexity as we are now in? Would to God we have been in Egypt!

This was the baseness of their spirits. They would rather be

under vile bondage than endure any hazard, than be put to any straits and difficulties. It is the baseness of the spirits of many at this day among us, because they see that those ways that have been taken by the Parliament brings some troublesome difficulties, some straits. They cry out at the times, "Aye, would to God we were as we were before. We were well enough before; we were quiet enough before. We never knew what such stirs as these meant before. Now we are brought into these perplexities. Aye, they have brought us unto this!" And thus they are ready to murmur and repine. Oh, unthankful, unworthy generation! Men and women of vile spirits that shall do so.

It was in a speech of Cyrus, speaking unto his soldiers, that the historian gives us this expression of him: It is the part of a true valiant man either to live honorably or die honorably, one of them; but that is the part of a base coward rather to live basely than to die honorably, rather to be under any base servitude than to be in any hazard of their lives, though, perhaps, their lives may be saved too.

I remember Philo tells us even of women (for in these times, the public cause of the kingdom suffers exceedingly much by the timorousness of the spirits of women) that, being in danger of their enemies, of being brought into bondage by them, they took their children and threw them into the rivers with these words, "You shall not serve; we would rather see you die than to be slaves."

I do not commend that this was well done, but to show what a spirit the heathen women had to see their children die rather than have them be bondslaves. Indeed, what would our lives be worth? Would they be worth having if we return to our bondage again? The utmost of the danger is our lives, the killing of our bodies, yet we hope God will preserve them too. But suppose the worst; it is only death. But if our lives should not

be hazarded now, and if, through base cowardice we should decline the cause of God, surely our lives would not be worth taking up. Living after that manner that we are likely to live, in the bondage to these cavaliers, notorious wretches, blasphemers of God Himself, would make our lives worth very little. Nay, for your children perhaps to be brought up in Popery, to hold a candle to a mass-priest at the altar, that may be the employment of your children, if so be that they should live. But these people, being now in this extremity, and manifesting so much passion, being in a distemper, Moses, as the Captain of the Lord, comes to the people and speaks bravely to them, encouraging them, and says, "Fear not, but 'stand still,' and see the salvation of the Lord." The Hebrew word for "stand still" signifies to settle and compose, to be in a settled condition. It is a reflective word upon ourselves, so the learned know; that is, to work upon ourselves, to form, it signifies so. It is as much as if he should say, "Work upon your own hearts to get your hearts to 'stand still'. Work upon your hearts to do that. Work arguments upon your spirits and never stop working until you have wrought your hearts into such a frame that you may 'stand still' and be quiet."

At first, even the dearest servants of God will find their hearts shaking in times of hazard and extremities, but, when they come to work upon their spirits, to bring arguments to lay to their hearts, there they get some advantage so that their hearts quickly grow quiet. For that, we have a notable text in the example of David in Psalm 62:1-2, "Truly my soul waiteth upon God, from Him cometh my salvation; He only is my Rock and my Salvation, He is my Defense. I shall not greatly be moved."

Mark it, he begins to exercise faith, and he says he shall not greatly be moved. It is as if he had said, "I confess, I cannot say but that my heart is somewhat stirred. I am somewhat afraid,

and I feel some working in my spirit, but I hope I shall not greatly be moved." He falls to working upon his heart more and considers his innocence and the mischievous devices of the ungodly. "How long will ye imagine mischief against a man, ye shall be slain all of you." And then again in the 5th verse, "My soul wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from Him, He only is my Rock." And then he repeats the word again after he had been rubbing upon his heart the same meditation. Then he fetches in the words again that he had in the 2nd verse, "He only is my Rock and my Salvation;" but mark now what advantage he gets over himself in the 6th verse, "He only is my Rock and my salvation, and my Defense, I shall not be moved." Before, he said that God was his Rock, his Salvation, and his Defense, and that he would not be *greatly* moved; but, after he had been working further upon his own heart, he gained and said that God is his Rock, and his Salvation, and his Defense, and he would not be moved.

David said, "I have overcome these distracting fears, I have gotten the advantage and the victory. Blessed be God, I have overcome them. God is my salvation and my glory." Now he begins to glory and triumph after he had wrought upon himself. So that, in this indeed, he stood still in this phrase by working upon his own heart. Though he was a little stirred at first, yet he got the victory.

So, indeed, not to be moved, as the Septuagint defines this word, is not just to "stand still," but to stand fast. It is a word taken from soldiers in their ranks. Soldiers who are in their ranks, when they apprehend a danger, must not go out of their way because of the danger. It is as much as their lives are worth to go out of the way, but they must stand. They must "stand still," though there is never such danger, yet they must "stand still" in their ranks. That is the meaning of the word.

I shall open more what the meaning of the Holy Ghost is by and by, what kind of “stand still” this should be; but thus for the word. It is such a “stand still” as the soldiers have in their ranks, not to go out of their ranks for fear. The word is used in Scripture divers times for “standing fast” as in Philippians 1:27, where it means to stand fast in one spirit. Now the word “fast” is not in the Greek text, but only the other word in the Greek text, and so you have the same word in the other Scriptures. In 1 Corinthians 16:13, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith.” It is two words in the Greek as it is in English. This standing is a standing fast, standing still in your ranks. Do not be in a hurry up and down, and do not be in confusion. If, upon danger, soldiers should presently be in a confusion in the army, what would become of them? And so, the truth is, in a city, in any place where there is danger, if people grow to a confusion, they are gone, they are lost. You must “stand still” in your ranks.

SEVERAL KINDS OF “STAND STILL’S”

There are several “stand still’s,” some very vile and naughty, others very good. There is first:

1. *There is a “stand still” of amazement, when a man, through fear, is at a stand, and dares not stir any further.* Now this cannot be meant in the text, for Moses said, “Fear not, but stand still.” Therefore, it is not a standing still out of fear because I am astonished.

2. *There is a “stand still” of ignorance, because I do not know which way to go, and this is not in the text either.* Thus, many in our time “stand still” and plead ignorance. They stand still, and will be of no side, and they plead ignorance. They do not know what to do. One says one thing, another says another thing.

The King commands one thing, and the Parliament another. They do not know what to do. Is it not rebellion to go against the King? And so they stand still because they plead ignorance, and their consciences are not informed.

It has been the work of divers ministers who have hazarded themselves in this to open to you the counsel of God and to set your consciences at liberty. Divers things I have spoken in this place, but, certainly, men blind their own eyes and are willing to “stand still,” to plead ignorance after so much light revealed. It is strange that any rational man should speak of rebellion now when, as we know, that the King himself sent aid to the Rochellers, and that, in the case of their liberties and religion, they took up arms to defend themselves against their own King, and he sent help to them. Surely he did not himself take them to be rebels. And King James, in his answer to Byron, who inveighed against the Protestants in France, stands to justify what the Protestants in France did, even King James himself in that book of his, answering Byron! And besides, we must acknowledge all the Protestant churches in the world to be rebels if it is rebellion merely to take up arms.

Do we not know that our own King has matched his daughter to the young Prince of Orange? Now we know this Prince of Orange is the general of the states in their fields, as the Earl of Essex is the general of our forces here, and their business against the King of Spain to defend their liberties and religion, and still they maintain the same quarrel, and the Prince of Orange is their general and undertakes it.

We desire nothing but the maintenance of our liberty and our religion. Though things are not gone so far yet as to take our estates, yet the cause they began with is our case, and what the general was there, he was the same in a kind (there’s not a great difference) here; and certainly, if it were rebellion, our

King would never have matched his daughter unto the son of such a rebel. Is it rebellion merely to take up arms to defend religion, and to defend the liberties of the country that are according to unto law? Yea, we know further that the King himself has acknowledged our brethren, the Scots, to be his loyal subjects. Do we do more than they? Do we more in our cause? Nay, have we done as much in our cause as they have done? How generally was it there in their kingdom? And shall it be acknowledged that they are loving subjects doing so much, and we are accounted rebels? Surely no man can plead to “stand still” through ignorance upon that ground.

3. *There is a third “stand still” which, the truth is, though it is not through ignorance it is, though, a worse principle, and that is of neutralizing.* That is, when men, though they are informed well enough, yet they stand still to see which will be the strongest side, and are loathe to appear yet. They do not know which side will most prevail, but they have such a principle in their spirits to go to the strongest side, whichever way it will be. Only they will stand still till it appears.

My brethren, certainly we can admit no neuters in these times. The times are grown to a greater height than that any should be admitted as a neuter either for us or against us. Whatever is not for us at this time, now coming to this straight, may well be concluded to be against us.

4. *There is a fourth wicked “stand still,” and that is out of sullenness of spirit.* This one is more particular, and is true of many men and women, especially who are in some troubles of conscience. When they are seeking God, when they are performing duties that God requires of them, and do not find that encouragement that their hearts desire, they leave off all and have no mind to do anything but stand still and die. They will even sink in a sullen discouragement and go no further; they will leave

off their work, leave off their duty, and say, "Why should I go on in doing duty? I get no good by it. I am never a whit the better!" And so they stand still out of a sullen discouragement. The devil himself is the most discouraged spirit in the world, and yet he is the proudest spirit in the world. This standing still out of discouragement may come out of pride and stoutness of heart, though you think it is out of humility.

5. *There is a sluggish standing still, and that is sinful and wicked.* This is when people stand still because they are idle, and are loathe to venture themselves or to put themselves to trouble, to go forward in any work because it is tedious. And thus the sluggard stands still and is ready to catch at any argument that he may plead for his standing still. My brethren, this is not that "stand still" here, that we should stand still and do nothing and be sluggards. No, the "stand still" here is after we have gone on and done the utmost that we are able, then we should stand still and commit the work to God as if we had done nothing at all. There is the "stand still." I shall speak of more presently.

As that worthy divine said, he would labor to preach as if he expected no assistance, and then he would expect assistance as if he had not labored at all. So warriors and people in danger should prepare in the use of means as if they expected no further help, and then they should expect help from God as if they had used no means at all. So we must use means.

Think of that brave speech of Job, "Come let us play the men"; let us fight for our cities, and the people of our God, and then let God do what seems good to Him. Then he would stand still and look for the salvation of God. This was no sluggish "stand still." It is no hindrance at all to any preparations that may be used; therefore, all these are naught.

6. *There is an obediential "stand still," that is, for the hearts of men and women to "stand still," to wait, to know further of God's mind,*

what God reveals. Our hearts are willing to yield unto that, and we will listen to hear what the mind of God is further, what God would have us to do; to “stand still,” to hearken to what the Lord would have us to do with hearts resigned up to Him and resolved to walk accordingly to it. This is good, and that is something of it, but that is not all.

7. *There is a “stand still” out of faith, a believing “stand still,” and that is when (though in greatest extremity) I have used what means I can for helping myself, yet I see myself wrapped up in extremity.* I will now exercise faith, first, to quiet my heart; to get out of my spirit those distracting thoughts of that hurry and tumult that is there in the heart, and to get all silence, all murmurings, all distractions, all giddiness of spirit, and the uproar that, many times, is in the hearts of men and women in time of danger. So by faith I come to quiet these, and to get my heart to be still, to be still within me. “Be still, O my soul.” And, therefore, the Scripture expresses the waiting upon God out of faith by a word of silence. In Psalm 62:5: “My soul waits upon God, it is silenced.” So the Hebrew word signifies; it signifies a silence in God.

There is, many times, in the hearts of men and women (when they apprehend any danger) a great deal of hurrying and noise. All is in a combustion in their hearts. It is a grievous thing to see a city all in a combustion and tumult. There are many men’s and women’s hearts in as great a tumult upon apprehension of danger as, many times, a whole city is. There is a rising in their hearts and a mighty noise there. Sometimes they keep (it may be private and public exigencies) their tongues silent, but their hearts boil within them. But your hearts must be silent. You must cry to your heart, “Be silent there!”

If your heart is now in a state of mutiny, a great deal of stir, cry silence to your hearts that your hearts and thoughts may be composed. That is the meaning of the word, that there should

be a settled, composed frame of spirit in the hearts of men and women in the times of extremity. That is the first.

Second, when it is out of faith, there should be a keeping of our stations until God calls us out; not to run up and down this way and that way, and to think of nothing but of shifting courses, to shift for ourselves. In times of danger (I verily believe), if we could look into the thoughts of many men and women, they scarcely have any thoughts but merely of shifting their place or house; they think to shift for themselves. Now, we should not busy our thoughts so much about shifting as about quieting our hearts in believing; for, my brethren, in times of extremity of danger, God calls for courage more than discretion. It's true, discretion is not excluded, yet that is not that explicit and special work that is called for in times of danger. I do not mean discretion to shift for yourselves, but discretion so far as may improve courage. The main work that God now calls for at this time is courage; discretion, and prudence only so far as to manage courage, and to drive it on further, and improve it, not to abate it. That is not the discretion, certainly, that is now called for, but to keep our station.

QUESTION. But you will say, "In time of danger, may we not flee? Must men keep their stations? Is it not lawful to avoid danger and to flee? Then shall we accuse many of our brethren who, heretofore, have fled in time of danger?"

ANSWER. My brethren, you are to know that the case now is far different from the case that was heretofore. The case heretofore was especially (for the present) directed against particulars, not against the general. There were plots against the general, but the hazard and danger was against such and such particular men, especially your ministers who were most faithful and conscionable. They were the forefront; they bore the

brunt, and it was aimed especially against them. Now the case is far different when the aim of the adversary is against particulars and not against the godly in general. When it is against particulars, there may be all lawful means by an avoiding and fleeing; when it is against the godly in general, then everyone should “stand still” and keep in their ways and stations, to come in and add what strength they can to the public cause. And, certainly, those who shall shift then, and think to flee then, God may justly meet with them.

We read of Jeremiah and Urijah. Urijah the priest flew in public time of danger, and he was sent for, and caught, and put to death. Jeremiah stayed and was saved. But when the case is the danger of particular persons, then it is nothing against this text to flee in any lawful way.

Many people will cry out against fleeing by a lawful way in times of danger because they think they may shift from fleeing themselves; and, if others who are in danger should not do so, they would be far enough from helping and assisting them in extremities. And yet they will be crying out against it.

Peter Martyr, I remember, had this answer to it. It is just for all the world in this case. It is like a man who has a dangerous sickness upon him. The physicians tell him that there is no way but by taking strong medicine, or by cutting off a leg or a limb. Now he comes and pleads, “I will not so distrust God, and be so impatient of my present pain as to take a course to help me. I’ll rather continue patient and quiet, endure my present pain, and trust in God rather than put myself to any such hazard.”

Now, is this man more patient than another man who will take strong medicine or have a member cut off? Is it through the strength of his patience? No, it is rather through the weakness of his spirit, because the other is a certain great pain and hazard; and, while he goes on in the use of ordinary means,

he has a lesser pain with hope that he may be delivered from a greater and be preserved.

So this is the objection against fleeing in particular danger, because the fleeing is a certain great suffering. They who have fled have found it so. Now, others will rather satisfy themselves to endure a little certain suffering than to go upon a great certain suffering, and that is the very ground. But that this is not against faith at all, to flee in danger, when it is particularly aimed at particulars, I'll give you but a Scripture or two to show that it is not against faith.

Matthew 10:23 is remarkable. We might spend a great deal of time in this case here, but we must be done with it. "When they persecute you in this city, flee into another." He speaks of particular persecution of this or that body, and not of a whole kingdom. They say, "Let us flee! We will be more believing, trusting in God, and not be afraid. Do we not have a good cause, and is not God with us?" This would argue too much fear.

Mark it. In the next words, Christ speaks after He had given them liberty and commanded them to flee. He says, "Fear them not therefore, and fear not them that can kill the body." You see, these two can well stand together, that there is no fear of them that can kill the body, and yet there is fleeing. And so Christ Himself, in Matthew 14, when he heard what Herod did to John, He withdrew Himself. In the 12th and 13th verses, "And when Jesus heard of it, He departed thence." When he heard what was done to John, Christ withdrew Himself and went away. Therefore, it may stand with faith so to avoid danger in particular cases; but now, when persecution is general, we are to "stand still" and not avoid our station.

The third thing of this "stand still" of faith is looking up for the salvation of God, expecting a good issue one way or another. I do not know how salvation will come, but there will

be salvation one way or another, that my soul rests upon. I do not stand still out of stoutness of spirit, or because I think I have means enough to resist; whether I have means or not, when I am put into the greatest extremity, yet I can “stand still” and look for salvation.

What! “Stand still” and look for the salvation of the Lord? Why do you talk of salvation (might they say to Moses) when there is nothing but destruction before us?

True, if you look before you, behind you, without you, and within yourselves, there is nothing but destruction. Yet, look up to heaven, and there is salvation. “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.” I have done no more than the mere opening of the text and what is contained in it. There are four doctrinal conclusions in the text:

DOCTRINE 1. When God is in a way of mercy and salvation to His people, many times He brings them into great straits, even when He is in a way of salvation.

DOCTRINE 2. In time of these great straits, even the people of God are subject to having their hearts be overwhelmed with trouble, distracting fears, and to be disquieted.

DOCTRINE 3. It is our duty to “stand still,” keep quiet, and look for God’s salvation in the time of the greatest straits.

DOCTRINE 4. The sight of God’s salvation coming after straits is a glorious sight to behold. “Stand still” and see the salvation of God. These are the four.

DOCTRINE 1. When God is in a way of salvation, yet He may, and does, divers times, bring His people into very great straits.

Truly, this strait in the text is exceedingly remarkable. But I'll show you further how, when God was about to save this people of Israel out of Egyptian bondage (which is the work God has to do now with us, to save us out of the Egyptian bondage that we were in, and that we were going further into), after they were delivered from this strait from Pharaoh and all his host. Yet, in the 15th chapter, you shall find that, after they had come out of the sea, they immediately wanted water to drink. Yes, the waters were so bitter that they could not drink them, says the 15th verse. They were ready to perish for lack of water.

As soon as they were delivered out of that strait, they were in another as bad as that. Mark the 16th chapter; there you shall find that they lack bread and were ready to starve for hunger. In 16:2–3, all the assembly were ready to be killed for hunger. Well, Moses cried to God, and God delivered them out of that strait too. In the next chapter, they were in as great a strait again. They pitched at Rephidim, “and there they had no water to drink again.” I might go through the story and show you in the wilderness what great straits God put them in, and yet God was working salvation for them.

When they come to possess the land (because I will not go through the story since time will not permit), they have Jordan to pass over without any bridge. Whether the bridges were cut down, or whether there were none, I cannot tell; but it was more danger to pass over the bridges (if there were any) because at that time Jordan flowed over all its banks. So, then, it was the worst time that could be when the banks of Jordan overflowed, yet God delivered them out of that strait. When they had gotten over there, I could show you many other straits, but I shall mention only one—the first enemy the people of God fought

with in Canaan, they were discomfited, they were beaten back at the first battle they ever fought. When they came to set upon the land of Canaan and to fight with the adversary, then the adversary came out and got the day, and made them flee before them. That was at the sight of Ai; they fled before the men of Ai. Upon this, Joshua fell down upon the ground.

“Why, Lord! Why have we come to this? After all these straits, we come to fight with the people of Canaan, and they, at the very first blow, have the day and make us flee before them. Now all the people will come out against us. If so be that people have such distracting fears now, suppose there should be a meeting of both armies, and you should hear that one army flees before another, that our men flee before those who come out against them, before the Cavaliers. What a fear and distraction would there be then?”

Yet it was so with the people of Israel. Though God was coming in with such a mighty hand to deliver them and possess Canaan, yet, at the very first blow, they had the worst and people overcame them.

It would take a great deal of time to show you the straits that David, Josiah, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah were in. I'll only give you a word or two about David, because it may be a very great help to poor troubled spirits in time of straits. David was in such straits sometimes that he professed himself overwhelmed (Psalm 61:2). In Psalm 77:4 you find that he could not even speak.

Many poor souls are in grievous afflictions and, when we put them to go and open their hearts to God and men, “Oh, I cannot speak,” they say. David was in such straits that he could not speak, yea, he could not so much as look up (Psalm 40:12); he could not so much as look up to God because of the grievous straits he was in.

And the people of Israel, in their other captivity, found mountains before them. What straits did God put them into? When they had come forth from Babylon, Zechariah 4:7, "What art thou, O great mountain, that are before them?" But examples will be needless to illustrate the thing. It is so clear that this was God's way of dealing with His people.

As with wicked men, when God is in a way of wrath against the ungodly, He will, many times, allow them to prosper in the highest way with the most flourishing prosperity that they ever had in their lives. So, when He is in a way of salvation with His saints, He lets them be in the lowest ebb that they were ever in all their lives.

In Job 20:22, the text says that in the fullness of his sufficiency, he shall be in straits. "In the fullness of his sufficiency"; what a phrase is here! A wicked man shall be in straits when he is full, when he thinks that he is sufficient, in the fullness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.

And, on the other side, a godly man, in his greatest straits, has a fullness of sufficiency. I will show you that clearly in 2 Corinthians 1:5: "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." We have a fullness of consolation when we have a fullness of suffering. Yea, we not only abound, but we super-abound, for that is the word. In 2 Corinthians 7:4: "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations." We are brought into tribulation, in great straits, and I have a fullness filled with comfort, and are exceedingly joyful, more than abundantly joyful. So the word signifies. There is "abounding" in the other text, but here a "super" added to it, a "super-abounding," which is more than joyful, and not only in times of prosperity.

Carnal hearts never know to rejoice except in times of prosperity. When they can eat, drink, and play, then they can be

merry; but the saints know how to joy, how to be filled with joy, how to abound in joy, and how to be exceedingly abounding in joy when they are in tribulation. Thus, as wicked men are in straits for their sufficiencies, so godly men, when God is in a way of comfort, may be in a way of great affliction. And the reason for it may be:

REASON 1. Because God will humble His people when He is in a way of salvation. When God intends the greatest good to His people, and intends to raise them the highest, He is very careful to keep them very low. That has always been the manner of God's administration. You see, the reason of the people's having straits in the wilderness was this. In Deuteronomy 8:2, God gives the reason: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness." To what end? Why were they so long in the wilderness? It was, says the text, to humble them. God says, "I brought you into the wilderness, and it was to humble you."

Does God, my brethren, bring us into straits now in these times? Certainly, He is in a way of salvation for England; He is in a way of salvation to do us good in the latter end, but yet He is bringing us into straits. Oh! We may thank the pride of our spirits that we have not been brought low enough to this very day! There has been indeed some humiliation of some of the people of God. In fasting and praying they have humbled their souls; but yet, though there has been humble expressions, yet not humble hearts for, after those times, they have had (many of them) exceedingly froward spirits. And that argues, apparently, that their hearts are not humbled and broken when their spirits, after days of humiliation, should still be froward and petty like before.

But especially, for the generality of the kingdom, how far

are we from being a humbled people! We are not yet capable of what mercy God intends for us in this regard, because we are not humbled. Oh, the exceeding pettiness, envy, and pride (and a great deal worse) not only in the people of the land, but even in those who are godly and gracious! How the spirits of men, of one brother oppose another! And that is because there is some difference in judgment in such and such a thing. Oh, they could be content, many of them, to have them rid out of the land, and if God did not prevent (whereas the persecution by bishops is now at an end), who knows (unless God humbles their hearts more) whether many of God's dear servants, who differ in some point of judgment, might not meet with a great deal of sufferings, even from those who are godly. And that is the worst suffering, better a thousand times to suffer from wicked men.

It is not so hard to the spirits of godly men to suffer from never so many bishops and wicked men as to suffer from one godly man. Oh, there lacks that charity and tenderness of spirit one towards another that should be! We are not yet humbled and brought upon our knees and, therefore, it is just with God to lay us upon our backs awhile, or that we should even be with our faces upon the ground and confounded in our own thoughts before that great salvation comes that God intends for us. That's the first reason.

REASON 2. God brings to straits because He takes so much delight in the exercise of faith. My beloved, faith is a most glorious grace. It is one of the most glorious things that ever God enabled any creature to do, and especially now, when there is so much guilt upon them. It is a more glorious work than Adam performed in innocence. For a poor creature to believe upon God for his good here, and in the midst of all extremities to rely upon Him, is a most glorious work, and God is exceedingly

delighted in it. Therefore, the Scripture calls it “precious faith” in the beginning of 2 Peter.

Now God loves the acting of precious things. God loves to see the actings of what He calls “precious faith” in 2 Peter. Now God loves to see the actings of all His creatures, every creature active in His way; but, when God has put such a precious grace as faith into the heart, oh how God delights to see the acting of that precious faith! Therefore, it has been the way of God to go quite cross after the Lord has made a promise of mercy and salvation. He goes seemingly cross only to exercise faith.

I think I have told you, sometimes, that to Abraham there were only two promises made. First, that the country God would give him should flow with milk and honey, and, second, his seed should be as the stars of heaven. And mark what way God goes to bring this about. As soon as ever he gets into Canaan, he was ready to starve there. Is this the country that flows with milk and honey? And then, for the other, his seed should be as the stars of heaven, he stayed twenty years before he had a child, and Isaac stayed forty years before he had a child, and yet his seed should be great. And then Isaac must be killed too.

And then there was another thing exercised. His faith would give him the land, and yet, notwithstanding, during his life he must not possess one foot of the land. It was to be only a burying place. And what was the reason of all this? It was to exercise his faith.

Think of the promise God made to his Son, Christ: “I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.” Yet Christ must not have a hole to lay His head in. He had not so much as the foxes and birds have. Thus the way of God is to seem to go quite contrary that He might draw forth that glorious work of faith He

so much delights in; and, because this is the only time of exercising this precious grace, and there shall be no such faith in heaven exercised as this, therefore God (because He will have as much as may be of the excellency of this faith), though He is in a way of salvation, brings His people into straits.

REASON 3. Because the Lord delights so much in the prayers of His people that He might draw out their prayers. Oh, the voice is sweet! The voice of prayer is very melodious in the ears of God. It's true, God delights in a praising voice too, but here in this world He delights rather in prayer. Why? Because God shall have a praising voice to all eternity. God's saints shall be praising Him to all eternity, but they shall not be praying to Him to all eternity. Now God, delighting so much in the praying voice of His saints, and knowing that He shall have a great deal of praise from His people when they are delivered from great troubles, it is no wonder that He exercises His people. That which pleases God more than heaven and earth is the exercise of the faith and the prayers of His people. They are the most pleasing things to God in all the world and, therefore, He brings them into straits.

REASON 4. Because God would reveal wicked men. Before He brings His great salvation, He would reveal those who are vile and wicked so that they should not partake of that great salvation. In our times we know how God, in every strait we have been in, has made some useful revelation to us. It has been a revealing time of many whom we have known to be vile and naughty whom we did not know as such before. Luke 2:35, you know the place, "A sword shall pierce through thy soul." Why? "That the thoughts of many may be revealed." There shall be great afflictions and troubles, and the end I aim at is to reveal the thoughts of many.

How have men's thoughts been revealed by plots? When God was bringing His people into Canaan, He would not have a rebellious generation come in among them, and all the trouble they had in the wilderness was by a mixture of a base and vile generation. That is plain in Numbers 11. When they were in such a distressed condition, and in a murmuring and vexing way, mark the 4th verse, "The mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting." They disturbed all the host of God. And certainly, if men should not be revealed more than they are, if God should come to set up a full reformation among us here in England to bring us to that Canaan we desire, we should be so troubled with a mixed multitude, the mixed multitude would so vex and trouble the church of God, that they should scarcely ever have peace among themselves. And therefore, God, in mercy, will reveal them beforehand; before Canaan comes He will reveal this mixed multitude.

REASON 5. God will bring them into straits because He might give occasion to the Adversary to vent his malice to the utmost, and to ripen his sin that it may be ripe to the full before God comes to deliver us, that they may be gathered together to be a great sacrifice to the Lord. Therefore, God's people are brought to such straits that, if they will blaspheme, they shall blaspheme to the fullest. In our times now, the more straits we are brought into, the greater are the blasphemies of the wicked and, if God should bring us into more straits and give them the better over us, I believe there will be that horrible blasphemy in England that never was in any place in the world. The heavens never heard and the earth never bore such blasphemies and blasphemers as there would be if God should deliver up His people in any degree to the hands of their enemies. We do not know but for the ripening of their sins, and that so they may come to be remarkable for God's vengeance

on them here in this world, God may give them power over His people, and bring His people into greater straits. And then, the last reason is:

REASON 6. Because the work of Jesus Christ will appear more at the last, the greater the strait is. Therefore, in Daniel 9:25, He will build up the city even in troublesome times. Every one can build in quiet times, but in troubled times Christ will build up the city. And He rules in the midst of His enemies. Christ loves to rule in the midst of His enemies so that His rule may be the more conspicuous.

USE. Is it so with us? Take heed then that we do not have our hearts sink because of straits. Let us not say, "Why is it thus with us? If God is in a way of mercy, why does He deal thus with us?" Do not be immediately ready to conclude against the ways of God, "Certainly all is gone, God is gone. Whatever hopes and confidence we had, all is undone." All their hopes are undone. God forbid there should ever be such an unbelieving heart in any of you, or such murmuring and repining speeches among any of you, whatever strait you are brought into!

DOCTRINE 2. In these straits, God's people are mightily troubled. It was so here; in every strait they repined, and were in a distraction, and especially at this time. "stand still," said Moses. What do you mean to do? They were all in a confusion. And as it was here, so it is many times in many of God's saints. As the blessed man Heman, who made the 88th Psalm, you shall find in that Psalm that he was distracted; and yet, though Heman was one of the wisest men on earth (for so you shall find in 1 Kings 4:31, where the Holy Ghost speaks of wise men) "Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the

east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt, for he was wiser than all men; than Heman.” And yet Heman was in woeful perplexity when he was brought into straits.

And, in Isaiah 8:11–12, it was the same case there that seems to be ours now. Oh, there was a confederacy, and many people joined together against God’s servants. “The Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people saying, Say ye not, A confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say, A Confederacy, neither fear ye their fear.” Mark it, God was fain to speak to the prophet with a strong hand, that he should not be so troubled as other people were in the time of their fear.

Yea, we shall find that many of God’s saints, whom He has delivered in a most glorious way, at some other times have been too secure. Their hearts have been all in a confusion, and were not able to stand before the difficulties they met with. And for that you have a famous example in 1 Kings 19 of Elijah.

If you read the 18th chapter, you may see what a spirit Elijah had. He would appear before Ahab, “As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today (to Ahab)”; and he showed himself to Ahab and told him that it was he and his people who troubled Israel. When Ahab said to him, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” He said, “No, it is thou and thy father’s house that troubleth Israel.” And then he came and got the priests of Baal together, got fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice, and destroyed all the priests of Baal. Then he got rain from heaven to rain upon the earth.

What an excellent spirit Elijah had! Yet, in the 19th chapter, Jezebel only threatened Elijah and he took himself to his heels and ran away at the threatening of wicked Jezebel, though he had such a brave spirit in the former chapter. So it is truly with many men. At some times their courage makes their adversaries

afraid, and at other times their cowardice makes their friends ashamed. Many have been so; they have been a terror to their adversaries one day, and a shame to their friends another day. The reasons are:

REASON 1. Because we have much flesh still in the best of us all, and we are much led by sense, and because we are not thoroughly skillful in the ways of God because the fear of God is so weak in us. Therefore it is that the fear of man is so strong and, therefore, we know so little of God's secrets. The secrets of God are with them who fear Him. If we feared God more, we would know His secret ways and not be troubled so much.

REASON 2. Because there is a great deal of guilt resting in the land, and that will make one afraid. Where there is much guilt in their hearts, it is exceedingly troublesome to the soul.

REASON 3. Because they are too confident in the flesh; they are too confident in themselves. Thence it is that God withdraws Himself from them; and, at what time they are afraid, they cannot trust in God, as David professes of himself that at what time he was afraid, he would trust in God. There is many a man who, for the present, thinks he can trust in God, but he cannot do it at that time when he is afraid. Psalm 56:3, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in the Lord." When your passion comes, then you make not use of your faith to trust in God. For example, many a man or woman can be meek and quiet until they have a temptation, but, when your passion is up, can you be meek then? Can you rise then and beat it down with the contrary grace? So, when the passion of your fears and troubles come up, can you trust in God then? Because we trust so much in ourselves, therefore, when the time comes that we should trust in God, God withdraws Himself from us and we are most afraid.

USE 1. This is that for which we should lay our hands on our hearts and charge our souls, and be ashamed for before the Lord. Never a one here but has cause to lay his hand upon his heart and say, "Oh that I who have had so much experience of God, of His ways of helping and delivering me out of six troubles and seven, and yet the Lord knows upon any new trouble I am to seek as much and ever, and in any hurly-burly in as great distemper of fear as ever." Be ashamed of this before the Lord.

It is true, God's people may be so, and you are so; therefore, be ashamed of it and labor to prepare for such times. Those who are troubled with fainting fits used to carry their bottle of *aqua-vitae* about with them; so you who have been disquieted in times of trouble, lay up something that may help in those times. Though a candle will serve to carry in a yard in calm weather, it must be a torch, a great light, that serves when the wind blows. So a little may serve now, but a great deal must be laid up for times of extremity.

First, lay up encouraging promises.

Second, lay up encouraging experiences that may help you against such times of fainting and trouble.

USE 2. But then, if it is so with the saints and God's own people, that when they are in straits they are so ready to be troubled with distracting fears and cares, what shall become of the wicked and ungodly then? When they come into straits, how must their hearts sink in horror? Because all their straits are no other but the beginning of eternal straits, present sorrows making a way for eternal sorrows. The way of their deliverance from present straits is by being brought into greater straits.

Many women with child have strong pains in their child-birth, yet, when they think they shall be delivered, they have joy instead of sorrow. But a woman who is with child, and is

only reprieved because she is with child, until she is delivered, though she has a great deal of trouble and pain before she is delivered, she desires not to be rid of it because then she knows she shall come to greater, to be hanged. And, if she could live seven years together and never be delivered, she could be content with the trouble because, when that is gone, greater comes. So, wicked and ungodly men who are in great straits for the present may well be content with them because, when they are gone, greater will come.

DOCTRINE 3. In the time of these straits, it is our duty to “stand still” and look for God’s salvation, to quiet our spirits, and look up to God.

First, for the quieting of our spirit.

As they were to be delivered out of this bondage in that way, so they were to be delivered out of the Babylonian bondage in the same way. So you shall find in Isaiah 30. See what God said for that deliverance. He tells them plainly, in the 15th verse, “In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength, and you would not.” In quietness and confidence. It’s true, they were in a passionate way, and God tells them that in quietness and confidence lay their strength, and they would not. So, come to many people who are in great extremities, to some women and others (when they are wringing their hands and hanging around their husband’s neck), and tell them, “Your confidence must be in quietness.” They will be ready to throw you out! “But they would not,” said God.

So it is in Isaiah 30:7, “I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.” My brethren, this day in the name of God I cry concerning all our straits! After we have used all the means we can, we are to sit still and see the salvation of our God; to quiet our

hearts with this believing “stand still” and look up to God for our salvation. It was their great fault that they did not do so in their deliverance out of their captivity.

There is one remarkable place for that in Jeremiah 31:22: “How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? For the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth.” How long will you go about, you backsliding daughter? What’s the meaning of this text? It is this: in the time of their deliverance from captivity, they met with a great deal of difficulty, many straits, and they went about to this and that underhanded course. They backslid and, when they were in a good way, they went back again, and the Prophet could not get them to “stand still” in any way. It was as if he should have said, “Go on right in the way; do not be discouraged by difficulties, by extremities. Do not seek any shifting way. Do not be backsliding, but stand to your tackling and work God has set you about, for the Lord has created a new thing.”

Perhaps you will say, “There never was a strait like we are in!”

Well, God has created a new thing! Many cry out in their straits, “Oh, my affliction, and my strait is as much as never was before in this world!”

Well, gratify them so (as many times we must gratify distempered spirits when they cry out of the greatness of their straits), yet is there no comfort for them to stay them?

Yes, there is. Isaiah 64:4: “It was never known, since the beginning of the world, what God has laid up for those who wait for Him.” Just wait for Him, and there was never such mercy shown in the world as God has laid up for you. Come, let us grant that there was never the like of that affliction that you are under, yet there is reason enough for you to wait and look for the salvation of God in such a way, in such a condition.

I shall give some reasons for that part of the doctrine, that we are to “stand still” and be quiet, for our standing still, and our quieting our hearts in our straits.

REASON 1. We are fit to look to the wisdom, faithfulness, and power of God. We are not able to see God’s wisdom, faithfulness, and power, nor to make use of it unless we get our spirits to be quiet. First, get them quiet, and then we can look up to God. Psalm 46:10, “Be still and know that I am God.” There is a God in heaven who can help and succor in time of great straits and extremities but, for all this, people are in a hurly-burly, and their spirits are distempered, and they are wringing their hands and crying. They cannot know that God is God; they can have no use of all the power, goodness, faithfulness, and mercy of God. First, get your hearts still and quiet in your families and in your spirits, and then you shall know that God is God. God will not appear until first you are still.

REASON 2. We are not able to make use of our own graces until we are quiet and still. If God has bestowed graces when we are in a hurly-burly, we have no use of them at all. Therefore, says Psalm 4, “Stand in awe, sin not, commune with your own hearts upon your beds and be still.” Commune with your own hearts. You have something in your own hearts that may quiet you. Commune with your own hearts and be still. You are not fit to commune with your own hearts until you get them quiet; first, be quiet, and then commune.

Oh, my brethren, a man or woman of a staid, sound, quiet, and still spirit has a mighty advantage of all passionate spirits. There are many of you who are passionate at all other times, and that is the reason that, in such great extremities, you are so over-ruled with passion. You are so overruled with your passion of anger at other times, and out of God’s just judgment. You

are overruled with the passion of fear now but, if at other times you would labor to keep your spirits, God would help you now.

REASON 3. Because, without this stillness and quietness, we cannot manifest that subjection to God that we owe Him; for then, there is a great deal of sin, pride, and stoutness, committed against God. Therefore, in Psalm 4, the old Latin had it, "My soul, be silent." My soul is subject to God; the subjection of our souls to God depends much upon this quieting of our hearts.

REASON 4. Our reverence to God depends much upon it and, therefore, in Psalm 4, "Stand in awe and sin not, commune with your own heart and be still." For us to behave ourselves in such a manner as many people do, wringing and throwing out their hands, and keeping such a stir as they do, shows there is not that reverence in their hearts they owe to God. Stand in awe; if your hearts were possessed with God's fear, you would not keep such a stir as you do in times of great danger.

REASON 5. This makes people unfit to listen to anything that is spoken to them. Let anything be spoken to them that is of any use, and they can neither hear it nor make use of it. We read this of the people of Israel, Exodus 6:9. When Moses came to tell them of their deliverance, the text says he spake to the children of Israel, but they hearkened not to him. Why? For anguish of spirit.

How many, in times of trouble of conscience, and in other times of extremity, have their spirits in such anguish that they can never hearken to anything that is delivered to them; and, therefore, they come with the same objection over and over again, a hundred times in cases of conscience.

REASON 6. Without this quietness of spirit, you are mighty hinderers of others, and you daunt and discourage the hearts of others. Many times the cause miscarries merely upon the

unquietness of the hearts of men and women in times of danger. Therefore, you must be quiet and look up to God for salvation, for faith has this excellency, that it is able to bring life out of death, light out of darkness. It has a kind of creating virtue.

As God Himself brings one contrary out of another, so faith has such a kind of working. If faith is of the right stamp, a genuine faith, it has a mighty power, in times of extremity, to behold God's salvation and make use of it.

I'll give you one example of the use of faith in times of extremity, and that is of David when he fled from Saul, and when he was in the cave. "Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for my soul trusteth in Thee, yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge." What was the shadow of God's wings? Poor David was in the shadow of the cave, and the sun did not shine upon him, but he looked upon himself in that cave as being under the shadow of God's wings. You poor people who may live in cellars, and in poor, dark holes and lanes, the sun scarcely shines upon you once a year, yet, if you are godly, you are under God's wings by faith.

I shall now speak to the second part of the doctrine, that we are to expect salvation from God.

David fled from Absalom, and yet, what confidence did David have in God? Read the third Psalm and you'll see confidence enough in David, and yet fleeing too.

Divers grounds and reason I shall give why we must look up to God as well as be still.

REASON 1. Hereby we sanctify God's name. "Fear ye not their fear, but sanctify God in your hearts," says the text. You do not sanctify God otherwise. I suppose many of you would be loath to be guilty of swearing, of taking God's name in vain in that

way, but, by your distracting thoughts and unbecoming carriage in times of danger, you take God's name in vain; you break the third commandment.

REASON 2. This shows the beauty and excellency of faith. As David said, "Thou shalt see what Thy servants can do." So now, there is a great deal of talk of faith in the world; let us see now what it can do. The truth of love is when I can love God without His gifts; so it is when I can believe in God without experience. I show the excellency of my faith when I can trust in God merely upon His Word. As I love God merely for Himself, when my faith takes God's single bond without any security, that is the excellency of faith. When I would have outward helps and assurances, there I call for sureties. So Christians, when they must have outward helps and former experiences, they call to God for sureties as if they would not trust God upon His single bond. That's the excellency of faith, to trust God upon His single bond.

REASON 3. When we look up to God for salvation, we engage God in our own cause. God does not own the cause until then, and then He owns it. Now, how happy would we be if we could do this in all our particular and private straits: "Stand still" and look up to God for help and for salvation. It's true, you cry out and complain, "I have lost a dear husband and a dear friend. Never a man lost such a friend, and these great straits I am brought into."

But do not lose the quiet of your heart too; take heed of that. That is a greater loss than any loss you can have in this world. I remember reading of a philosopher who had this expression, he said, "If the gods would grant me my desire, and bid me ask what would have, I would ask them this thing, that I might have the composed spirit of Socrates, that I might have such a spirit as Socrates had; for it is observed of him that he

scarcely changed his countenance upon anything that beset him. He was always in a quiet, composed frame." He said this, and yet he was a heathen.

How much more should a Christian say, "If God would give me my asking, I would ask nothing but that; for indeed, there is a great deal of glory and excellency in a composed spirit." This is worthy of the gospel. Therefore, mark what the apostle said in Philippians 1:27, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ, that whether I come to see you, or be absent from you, I may hear of your affairs, and that you stand fast in one spirit." This is to walk worthy of the gospel, to stand fast in one spirit; and, observe this, that unless we stand fast and quiet out hearts, we lose everything that should help us.

When we are in a hurly-burly in our spirits to get some help, alas, we lose all our help. Therefore, in Philippians 4, "Let the God of peace keep your hearts." The word in the original is "guard your hearts." The peace of God in your hearts must be the best guard of your hearts in the time of danger. Now, because you would avoid trouble, you put away your guard. What madness is this? Casting away the peace of God is casting away your guard; therefore, keep that in your hearts whatever else you lose!

Yea, it's our arms (Ephesians 6). What are the arms of a Christian? First, the girdle of truth. Fear dissolves the heart and makes a man so that he cannot gird himself. When he is in fear, his heart is melted, and he has little use of his truth; the girdle is loosed then. In the text, there is the helmet of salvation, but in fear hope is gone. There is the breastplate of righteousness, but in fear a man has no use of his righteous conversation, nor use of the sword of the Spirit. He can use nothing in times of such distracting fears. Therefore, do not lose your arms.

It is very observable in Ephesians 6 how the Holy Ghost still calls upon us to stand. Verse 10: "My brethren, be strong in the

Lord,” and not only strong, but strong in the Lord; and strong in the might of the Lord. “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might; put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand.” Then again, in the 13th verse, “Wherefore, take ye all the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand the evil one; and having done all, to stand.” Though, perhaps, you have overcome at one time, yet still look to your own hearts. When you have done all, stand. Four times we are called upon to stand, noting what a great advantage we have by standing.

It’s true, our afflictions are great, and the soul says, “The Lord is my portion.” Perhaps temptations and afflictions say otherwise, but the soul says, “The Lord is my portion,” and it is good for a man to say, “What, shall I, whom am so full of sin, yet not be willing to have some trouble, but be so full of fears upon every trouble that befalls me? Why should I not yield to God’s providential will as well as to His commanding will? How do I know but that God may have glorious ends to work out of these extremities and troubles I am in? Why should I not give up myself to God, to have His will upon me? And has not God, heretofore, delivered me from great straits and extremities, even from the wrath of God Himself, and from His justice? Greater and other manner of straits than those I am in now; and, if I do not believe in God now, but am disquieted, perhaps these straits of affliction will bring me to greater straits. What if these straits of affliction should bring me to greater straits? And it’s just with God to leave me to fall into the straits of sin who cannot bear the straits of affliction; therefore, let me “stand still” and look up to God’s salvation.”

Let us be so affected with our straits as to carry us up to God in prayer. Pray as much as you can, but still keep your hearts in a quiet frame. And, if your prayers are right, they will

be to you, as Luther said, the leeches of your cares. Luther had a great many corrupt cares (as in a corrupt body there is much corrupt blood), but now his prayers were the leeches to suck out his cares.

When you are distempered, go to prayer and then examine what a great deal of corrupt blood have your prayers sucked out of your heart. When Hannah had been at prayer, she no longer looked sad.

There are many thing I thought to have given you to stay your hearts in times of extremities. Peace shall be to that man who has his heart stayed upon God; and blessed is that man who stays his heart upon God. And, if ever people had cause to stay their hearts upon God, certainly we have it this day, for we have God with us. Therefore, it's unworthy of a Christian to have a distempered spirit.

I remember reading of the Romans, that when Hannibal was just before them, yet they bought and sold their ground as they did at other times; they were so quiet in their hearts. It was a speech that Antigonus had when some were afraid of the multitude that came against him. They said, "So many are coming against us." He said, "How many do you reckon me for?"

So we may say, "We hear of so many coming against us," but how many do you reckon Jesus Christ for? How many do you reckon Him for who is the Captain of all our Hosts? Have not prayers been sent up to God? Why do you despise the prayers of the saints of God as if there were nothing in their prayers? Is not God's name engaged in all this business? Oh, therefore, "stand still" and do not be afraid.

And especially, let me speak a word to you who are of timorous and fearful spirits. Isaiah 35:4: "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, fear not." Do not excuse yourselves in that you are of a timorous spirit, God says.

And especially mark what the Holy Ghost says to women in 1 Peter 3:4, women must clothe themselves with a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price. And in the 6th verse, “And as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters ye are as long as you do well and are not afraid with any amazement.” What should be the meaning of this, that women must be the daughters of Sarah upon these terms?

Abraham was brought into straits many times and carried from his own country. Now if Sarah had been of such a spirit as many women are, how would Sarah have hindered her husband in every strait he was brought into? She would have said, “Husband, why do we go from our own country, and are friends, and so are brought into such straits? I pray you, husband, go back again and do not venture yourself this way.” But it seems that she was of a gracious spirit, quieted herself with God, and was not afraid with amazement. If you would prove yourselves the daughters of Sarah, you do this when God calls your husbands to any service. Though it is with some hazard, do not hang around their necks and wring your hands and say, “I beseech you, husband, consider what will become of me and my children. Will you leave me now?” Take heed. You are not the daughters of Sarah at such a time, if you hinder your husbands.

DOCTRINE 4. The sight of salvation, after such straits, will be a glorious thing. If we are brought into straits, that which is coming will pay for all. There is enough to satisfy; let us not be troubled at greater straits than we now have.

Suppose blood should be shed, beloved. God has such mercy for England that shall pay for all the blood of His saints which will be shed. And the blood of His people is a very precious thing. Every drop of the blood of His people is very precious, and the Adversary shall be accountable for every drop.

God will value it, and there shall be a valuable consideration given for every drop of blood. And, the more difficulties we have in obtaining the mercy God is about to give us, the mercy shall be the greater. Isaiah 54:11, “O thou afflicted and tossed with tempests, thy foundations shall be laid with sapphires and with precious stones.”

If we are afflicted and tossed with tempests, and the blood of God’s people go for it, comfort yourselves with this: The more precious blood that is shed in this business, the greater mercy is to come; for God will have a valuable consideration for all the blood of His saints.

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THE LIFE OF
Jeremiah Burroughs

(1599–1646)

*T*his very amiable divine was born in the year 1599. He was forced to leave the university, and afterwards the kingdom, on account of his non-conformity. After he later finished his studies at the university, he entered the ministerial work and was chosen colleague to Edmund Calamy at Bury St. Edmunds. In 1631 he became rector of Tivetshal in the county of Norfolk, but upon the publication of Bishop Wren's articles and injunctions, in 1636 he was suspended and deprived of his living. He sheltered himself for some time under the hospitable roof of the Earl of Warwick, but, on account of the intolerant and oppressive proceedings of the ecclesiastical rulers, the noble Earl, at length, found it was impossible to protect him any longer. Shortly after, to escape the fire and persecution, he fled to Holland and settled at Rotterdam, where he was chosen teacher to the congregational church of which Mr. William Bridge was the pastor.

Upon his arrival, he was cordially received by the church, and continued to be a zealous and faithful laborer for several years, gaining a very high reputation among the people. After the commencement of the civil war, when the power of the bishops was set aside, he returned to England, says Granger's *Biographical History*, "not to preach sedition, but peace, for which he earnestly prayed and labored."

Mr. Burroughs was a highly honored and esteemed person, and he soon became a most popular and admired preacher.

After his return, his popular talents and great worth presently excited public attention, and he was chosen preacher to the congregations of Stepney and Cripplegate, London, then accounted two of the largest congregations in England. Mr. Burroughs preached at Stepney at seven o'clock in the morning, and William Greenhill at three in the afternoon. These two persons, stigmatized by the historian Anthony Wood as notorious schismatics and independents, were called by Mr. Hugh Peters, one "the morning star," the other "the evening star of Stepney."

Mr. Burroughs was chosen to be one of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and was one of the dissenting brethren, but a divine of great wisdom and moderation. He united with his brethren, Messrs. Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, William Bridge, and Sydrach Sympson, in publishing their own "Apologetical Narration" in defense of their own distinguishing sentiments. The authors of this work, who had been exiles for religion, to speak in their own language, "...consulted the Scriptures without any prejudice. They considered the Word of God as impartially as men of flesh and blood are likely to do, in any juncture of time; the place they went to, the condition they were in, and the company they were with, affording no temptation to any bias."

They asserted that every church or congregation has sufficient power within itself for the regulation of religious government, and is subject to no external authority whatever. The principles upon which they founded their church government were to confine themselves in everything to what the Scriptures prescribed, without paying any attention to the opinions or practices of men; nor to tie themselves down too strictly to their present resolutions, so as to leave no room for alterations upon a further acquaintance with divine truth. They steered a middle course between Presbyterianism and Brownism: the former they accounted too arbitrary, the latter too rigid, deviating from the spirit and simplicity of the gospel.

These are the great principles of the Independents of the present day.

Richard Baxter, who knew his great worth, said, "If all the Episcopalians had been like Archbishop Usher, all the Presbyterians like Stephen Marshall, and all the Independents like Jeremiah Burroughs, the breaches of the church would soon have been healed." The last subject on which Burroughs preached was his *Irenicum*, an attempt to heal the divisions among Christians. This title has been published by Soli Deo Gloria Publications. His incessant labors, and his grief for the distractions of the times, are said to have hastened his end. He died of tuberculosis on November 14, 1646, at the age of 47. The historian Granger says, "he was a man of learning, candor, and modesty, and of an exemplary and irreproachable life." Thomas Fuller has classed him among the learned writers of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Williams' *Christian Preacher* says that his *Exposition of Hosea* is a pleasing specimen, to show how the popular preachers of his time applied the Scriptures in their expository discourses to the various cases of their hearers. He published several of his writings while he lived, and his friends sent forth many others after his death, most of which were highly esteemed by all pious Christians.

A Summary of the Gospel

by Jeremiah Burroughs

From Gospel Conversation (1657)

and reprinted by Soli Deo Gloria Publications

The gospel of Christ in general is this: It is the good tidings that God has revealed concerning Christ. More largely it is this: As all mankind was lost in Adam and became the children of wrath, put under the sentence of death, God, though He left His fallen angels and has reserved them in the chains of eternal darkness, yet He has thought upon the children of men and has provided a way of atonement to reconcile them to Himself again.

Namely, the second Person in the Trinity takes man's nature upon Himself, and becomes the Head of a second covenant, standing charged with sin. He answers for it by suffering what the law and divine justice required, and by making satisfaction for keeping the law perfectly, which satisfaction and righteousness He tenders up to the Father as a sweet savor of rest for the souls that are given to Him.

And now this mediation of Christ is, by the appointment of the Father, preached to the children of men, of whatever nation or rank, freely offering this atonement unto sinners for atonement, requiring them to believe in Him and, upon believing, promising not only a discharge of all their former sins, but that they shall not enter into condemnation, that none of their sins or unworthiness shall ever hinder the peace of God with them, but that they shall through Him be received into the number of those who shall have the image of God again to be renewed unto them, and that they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

