

# WRITINGS OF JOHN OWEN - VOLUME 1

by John Owen

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*A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by John Owen (Volume 1), compiled for study and devotional reading.*

100 Chapters

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## 00.00. Owen, John - Library

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## 01.01. A Brief Declaration and Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity

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A Brief Declaration and Vindication of The Doctrine of the Trinity and also of The Person and Satisfaction of Christ accommodated to the capacity and use of such as may be in danger to be seduced; and the establishment of the truth.

“Search the Scriptures.” — John 5:39.

Prefatory note

Few of Owen’s treatises have been more extensively circulated and generally useful than his “Brief Declaration and Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity,” etc. It was published in 1669; and the author of the anonymous memoir of Owen, prefixed to an edition of his Sermons in 1720, informs us “This small piece has met with such an universal acceptance by true Christians of all denominations, that the seventh edition of it was lately published.” An edition printed in Glasgow was published in 1798, and professes to be the eighth. A translation of the work appeared in the Dutch language (Vitringa, Doct. Christ., pars vi. p. 6, edit. 1776). At the time when the treatise was published, the momentous doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement were violently assailed; but it was not so much for the refutation of opponents as for “the edification and establishment of the plain Christian,” that our author composed the following little work. The reader will find in it traces of that deep and familiar acquaintance with opposing views, and with the highest theology involved in the questions which might be expected from Dr Owen on a subject which he seems to have studied with peculiar industry and research. Reference may be made to his “Vindiciæ Evangelicæ” and his “Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in proof how thoroughly he had mastered the whole controversy in regard to the divinity and satisfaction of Christ, so far as the discussion had extended in his day. His controversy with Biddle, in which he wrote his “Vindiciæ Evangelicæ,” took place in 1655; and the first volume of the “Exposition” was published only the year before the “Brief Declaration,” etc., appeared. The latter may be regarded, accordingly, as the substance of these important works, condensed and adapted to popular use and comprehension, in all that relates to the proper Godhead of the Son, and the nature of the work which he accomplished in the redemption of his people. For the special object which he had in view, he adopts the course which has since been generally approved of and pursued, as obviously the wisest and safest in defending and expounding the doctrine of the Trinity. He appeals to the broad mass of Scripture evidence in favour of the doctrine, and after proving the divine unity, together with the divinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost respectively, is careful not to enter on any discussion in regard to the unrevealed mysteries involved in the relations of the Trinity, beyond what was necessary for the refutation of those who argue, that whatever in this high doctrine is incomprehensible by reason, must be incompatible with revelation. This little work is farther remarkable for the almost total absence of the tedious digressions, which abound in the other works of Owen. Such logical unity and concentration of thought is the more remarkable, when we find that the treatise was written, as he tells us, “in a few hours.” But it was a subject on which his mind was fully stored, and his whole

heart was interested. The treatise which follows, therefore, was not the spark struck in some moment of collision, and serving only a temporary purpose, but a steady flame nourished from the beaten oil of the sanctuary. — Ed.

## 01.02. To the Reader

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To the Reader Christian Reader, This small treatise has no other design but thy good, and establishment in the truth. And therefore, as laying aside that consideration alone, I could desirously have been excused from the labour of those hours which were spent in its composure; so in the work itself I admitted no one thought, but how the things treated of in it might and ought to be managed unto thy spiritual benefit and advantage. Other designs most men have in writing what is to be exposed to public view, and lawfully may have so; in this I have nothing but merely thy good. I have neither been particularly provoked nor opposed by the adversaries of the truth here pleaded for; nor have any need, from any self-respect, to publish such a small, plain discourse as this. Love alone to the truth, and the welfare of thy soul, has given efficacy to their importunity who pressed me to this small service. The matters here treated of are on all hands confessed to be of the greatest moment, such as the eternal welfare of the souls of men is immediately and directly concerned in. This all those who believe the sacred truths here proposed and explained do unanimously profess and contend for; nor is it denied by those by whom they are opposed. There is no need, therefore, to give thee any especial reasons to evince thy concernment in these things, nor the greatness of that concernment, thereby to induce thee unto their serious consideration. It were well, indeed, that these great, sacred, and mysterious truths might, without contention or controversies about them, be left unto the faith of believers, as proposed in the Scripture, with that explanation of them which, in the ordinary ministry and dispensation of the gospel, is necessary and required.

Certainly, these tremendous mysteries are not by us willingly to be exposed, or prostituted to the cavils of every perverse querist and disputer; — those *suz■t■tai tou ai■nos toutou*, [1] whose pretended wisdom (indeed ignorance, darkness, and folly) God has designed to confound and destroy in them and by them. For my part, I can assure thee, reader, I have no mind to contend and dispute about these things, which I humbly adore and believe as they are revealed. It is the importunity of adversaries, in their attempts to draw and seduce the souls of men from the truth and simplicity of the gospel in these great fundamentals of it, that alone can justify any to debate upon, or eristically [in the form of controversy] to handle these awful mysteries. This renders it our duty, and that indispensably, inasmuch as we are required to “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints.” But yet, also, when this necessity is imposed on us, we are by no means discharged from that humble reverence of mind wherewith we ought always to be conversant about them; nor from that regard unto the way and manner of their revelation in the Scripture which may preserve us from all unnecessary intermixture of litigious or exotic phrases and expressions in their assertion and declaration. I know our adversaries could, upon the matter, decry any thing peculiarly mysterious in these things, although they are frequently and emphatically in the Scriptures affirmed so to be. But, whilst they deny the mysteries of the things themselves — which are such as every way become the glorious being and wisdom of God, — they are forced to assign such an enigmatical sense unto the words, expressions, and propositions wherein they are revealed and declared in the Scripture, as to turn almost the whole

gospel into an allegory, wherein nothing is properly expressed but in some kind of allusion unto what is so elsewhere: which irrational way of proceeding, leaving nothing certain in what is or may be expressed by word or writing, is covered over with a pretence of right reason; which utterly refuses to be so employed. These things the reader will find afterward made manifest, so far as the nature of this brief discourse will bear. And I shall only desire these few things of him that intends its perusal:— First, That he would not look on the subject here treated of as the matter of an ordinary controversy in religion, —

— “Neque enim hic levia aut ludicra petuntur Præmia; lectoris de vita animæque salute Certatur.”  
[2]

They are things which immediately and directly in themselves concern the eternal salvation of the souls of men, and their consideration ought always to be attended with a due sense of their weight and importance. Secondly, Let him bring with him a due reverence of the majesty, and infinite, incomprehensible nature of God, as that which is not to be prostituted to the captious and sophistical scanning of men of corrupt minds, but to be humbly adored, according to the revelation that he has made of himself. Thirdly, That he be willing to submit his soul and conscience to the plain and obvious sense of Scripture propositions and testimonies, without seeking out evasions and pretences for unbelief. These requests I cannot but judge equal, and fear not the success where they are sincerely complied withal.

I have only to add, that in handling the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ, I have proceeded on that principle which, as it is fully confirmed in the Scripture, so it has been constantly maintained and adhered unto by the most of those who with judgment and success have managed these controversies against the Socinians: and this is, that the essential holiness of God with his justice or righteousness, as the supreme governor of all, did indispensably require that sin should not absolutely go unpunished; and that it should do so, stands in a repugnancy to those holy properties of his nature. This, I say, has been always constantly maintained by far the greatest number of them who have thoroughly understood the controversy in this matter, and have successfully engaged in it. And as their arguments for their assertion are plainly unanswerable, so the neglect of abiding by it is causelessly to forego one of the most fundamental and invincible principles in our cause. He who first laboured in the defence of the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ, after Socinus had formed his imaginations about the salvation that he wrought, and began to dispute about it, was Covetus, [3] a learned man, who laid the foundation of his whole disputation in the justice of God, necessarily requiring, and indispensably, the punishment of sin. And, indeed, the state of the controversy as it is laid down by Socinus, in his book “De Jesu Christo Salvatore,” which is an answer to this Covetus, is genuine, and that which ought not to be receded from, as having been the direct ground of all the controversial writings on that subject which have since been published in Europe. And it is in these words laid down by Socinus himself: “Communis et orthodoxa (ut asseris) sententia est, Jesum Christum ideo servatorem nostrum esse, quia divinæ justitiæ per quam peccatores damnari merebamur, pro peccatis nostris plene satisfecerit; quæ satisfactio, per fidem, imputatur nobis ex dono Dei credentibus.” This he ascribes to Covetus: “The common and orthodox judgment is, that Jesus Christ is therefore our Saviour, because he has satisfied the justice of God, by which we, being sinners, deserved to be condemned for all our sins” [which satisfaction, through faith, is imputed to us who through the grace of God believe.] In opposition whereunto he thus expresses his own opinion: “Ego vero

censeo, et orthodoxam sententiam esse arbitror, Jesum Christum ideo servatorem nostrum esse, quia salutis æternæ viam nobis annuntiaverit, confirmaverit, et in sua ipsius persona, cum vitæ exemplo, tum ex mortuis resurgendo, manifestè ostenderit; vitamque æternam nobis ei fidem habentibus ipse daturus sit. Divinæ autem justitiæ, per quam peccatores damnari meremur, pro peccatis nostris neque illum satisfecisse, neque et satisfaceret, opus fuisse arbitror;” — “I judge and suppose it to be the orthodox opinion, that Jesus Christ is therefore our Saviour, because he has declared unto us the way of eternal salvation, and confirmed it in his own person; manifestly showing it, both by the example of his life and by rising from the dead; and in that he will give eternal life unto us, believing in him. And I affirm, that he neither made satisfaction to the justice of God, whereby we deserved to be damned for our sins, nor was there any need that he should so do.” This is the true state of the question; and the principal subtlety of Crellius, the great defender of this part of the doctrine of Socinus, in his book of the “Causes of the Death of Christ,” and the defence of this book, “De Jesu Christo Servatore,” consists in speaking almost the same words with those whom he does oppose, but still intending the same things with Socinus himself. This opinion, as was said of Socinus, Covetus opposed and everted on the principle before mentioned. The same truth was confirmed also by Zarnovitius, who first wrote against Socinus’ book; as also by Otto Casmannus, who engaged in the same work; and by Abraham Salinarius. Upon the same foundation do proceed Paræus, Piscator, Lubbertus, Lucius, Camero, Voetius, Amyraldus, Placæus, Rivetus, Walæus, Thysius, Altingius, Maresius, Essenius, Arnoldus, Turretinus, Baxter, with many others. The Lutherans who have managed these controversies, as Tarnovius, Meisnerus, Calovius, Stegmannus, Martinius, Franzius, with all others of their way, have constantly maintained the same great fundamental principle of this doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ; and it has well and solidly been of late asserted among ourselves on the same foundation. And as many of these authors do expressly blame some of the schoolmen, as Aquinas, Durandus, Biel, Taretus, for granting a possibility of pardon without satisfaction, as opening a way to the Socinian error in this matter; so also they fear not to affirm, that the foregoing of this principle of God’s vindictive justice indispensably requiring the punishment of sin, does not only weaken the cause of the truth, but indeed leave it indefensible. However, I suppose men ought to be wary how they censure the authors mentioned, as such who expose the cause they undertook to defend unto contempt; for greater, more able, and learned defenders, this truth has not as yet found, nor does stand in need of.

J. O.

[1] [learned researchers of this century]

[2] — “Nec enim levia aut ludicra petuntur Præmia, sed Turni de vita et sanguine certant.”

Virg. *Æn.* xii. 764.

[3] The only notice of this divine we can discover will be found in the Bibliotheca of Kongius (1678). All the information he communicates respecting him is in these words: — “Covetus (Jacobus) Parisiensis Theologus. An. 1608 obiit. Reliquit Apologiam de Justificatione.” Socinus, in a curious preface to his work, mentioned above, “De Jesu Christo Servatore,” narrates in what manner Covetus and he first happened to meet. They subsequently exchanged communications on the points in dispute between them. It was in reply to the arguments of Covetus in this correspondence, that Socinus wrote the work to which Dr Owen alludes. It is a matter of regret that

so little is known of one whom Dr Owen mentions so respectfully, and who had the honour of supplying the first antidote and check to the heresies of Socinus. — Ed.

### 01.03. The Preface

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The Preface The disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ having made that great confession of him, in distinction and opposition unto them, who accounted him only as a prophet, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Matthew 16:14, Matthew 16:16, he does, on the occasion thereof, give out unto them that great charter of the church's stability and continuance, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Matthew 16:18. He is himself the rock upon which his church is built, — as God is called the rock of his people, on the account of his eternal power and immutability, Deuteronomy 32:4, Deuteronomy 32:18, Deuteronomy 32:31, Isaiah 26:4; and himself the spiritual rock which gave out supplies of mercy and assistance to the people in the wilderness, 1 Corinthians 10:4. The relation of the professing church unto this rock consists in the faith of this confession, that he is "the Christ, the Son of the living God." This our Lord Jesus Christ has promised to secure against all attempts; yet so as plainly to declare, that there should be great and severe opposition made thereunto. For whereas the prevalency of the gates of hell in an enmity unto this confession is denied, a great and vigorous attempt to prevail therein is no less certainly foretold. Neither has it otherwise fallen out. In all ages, from the first solemn foundation of the church of the New Testament, it has, one way or other, been fiercely attempted by the "gates of hell." For some time after the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the principal endeavours of Satan, and men acting under him, or acted by him, were pointed against the very foundation of the church, as laid in the expression before mentioned. Almost all the errors and heresies wherewith for three or four centuries of years it was perplexed, were principally against the person of Christ himself; and, consequently, the nature and being of the holy and blessed Trinity. But being disappointed in his design herein, through the watchful care of the Lord Christ over his promise, in the following ages Satan turned his craft and violence against sundry parts of the superstructure, and, by the assistance of the Papacy, cast them into confusion, — nothing, as it were, remaining firm, stable, and in order, but only this one confession, which in a particular manner the Lord Christ has taken upon himself to secure. In these latter ages of the world, the power and care of Jesus Christ reviving towards his church, in the reformation of it, even the ruined heaps of its building have been again reduced into some tolerable order and beauty. The old enemy of its peace and welfare falling hereby under a disappointment, and finding his travail and labour for many generations in a great part frustrate, he is returned again to his old work of attacking the foundation itself; as he is unweary and restless, and can be quiet neither conqueror nor conquered, — nor will be so, until he is bound and cast into the lake that burns with fire. For no sooner had the reformation of religion firmed itself in some of the European provinces, but immediately, in a proportion of distance not unanswerable unto what fell out from the first foundation of the church, sundry persons, by the instigation of Satan, attempted the disturbance and ruin of it, by the very same errors and heresies about the Trinity, the person of Christ and his offices, the person of the Holy Ghost and his grace, wherewith its first trouble and ruin was endeavoured. And hereof we have of late an instance given among ourselves, and that so notoriously known, through a mixture of imprudence and impudence in the managers of it, that a very brief reflection upon it will suffice unto our present design.

It was always supposed, and known to some, that there are sundry persons in this nation, who, having been themselves seduced into Socinianism, did make it their business, under various pretences, to draw others into a compliance with them in the same way and persuasion. Neither has this, for sundry years, been so secretly carried, but that the design of it has variously discovered itself by overt acts of conferences, disputations, and publishing of books; which last way of late has been sedulously pursued. Unto these three is now a visible accession made, by that sort of people whom men will call Quakers, from their deportment at the first erection of their way (long since deserted by them), until, by some new revolutions of opinions, they cast themselves under a more proper denomination. That there is a conjunction issued between both these sorts of men, in an opposition to the holy Trinity, with the person and grace of Christ, the pamphlets of late published by the one and the other do sufficiently evince. For however they may seem in sundry things as yet to look diverse ways, yet, like Samson's foxes, they are knit together by the tail of consent in these fire-brand opinions, and jointly endeavour to consume the standing corn of the church of God. And their joint management of their business of late has been as though it were their design to give as great a vogue and report to their opinions as by any ways they are able. Hence, besides their attempts to be proclaiming their opinions, under various pretences, in all assemblies whereinto they may intrude themselves (as they know) without trouble, they are exceeding sedulous in scattering and giving away, yea, imposing gratis (and, as to some, ingratii), their small books which they publish, upon all sorts of persons promiscuously, as they have advantage so to do. By this means their opinions being of late become the talk and discourse of the common sort of Christians, and the exercise of many, — amongst whom are not a few that, on sundry accounts, which I shall not mention, may possibly be exposed unto disadvantage and prejudice thereby, — it has been thought meet by some that the sacred truths which these men oppose should be plainly and briefly asserted and confirmed from the scripture; that those of the meanest sort of professors, who are sincere and upright, exercising themselves to keep a good conscience in matters of faith and obedience to God, may have somewhat in a readiness, both to guide them in their farther inquiry into the truth, as also to confirm their faith in what they have already received, when at any time it is shaken or opposed by the "cunning sleight of men that lie in wait to deceive." And this comprises the design of the ensuing discourse. It may possibly be judged needless by some, as it was in its first proposal by him by whom it is written; and that because this matter at present is, by an especial providence, cast on other hands, who both have, and doubtless, as occasion shall require, will well acquit themselves in the defence of the truths opposed. Not to give any other account of the reasons of this small undertaking it may suffice, that "in publico discrimine omnis homo miles est," — "every man's concernment lying in a common danger," — it is free for every one to manage it as he thinks best, and is able, so it be without prejudice to the whole or the particular concerns of others. If a city be on fire, whose bucket that brings water to quench it ought to be refused? The attempt to cast fire into the city of God by the opinions mentioned, is open and plain; and a timely stop being to be put unto it, the more hands that are orderly employed in its quenching, the more speedy and secure is the effect like to be.

Now, because the assertors of the opinions mentioned do seem to set out themselves to be some great ones, above the ordinary rate of men, as having found out, and being able publicly to maintain, such things as never would have entered into the minds of others to have thought on or conceived; and also that they seem with many to be thought worthy of their consideration because

they now are new, and such as they have not been acquainted withal; I shall, in this prefatory entrance, briefly manifest that those who have amongst us undertaken the management of these opinions have brought nothing new unto them, but either a little contemptible sophistry and caption of words, on the one hand, or futilous, affected, unintelligible expressions, on the other, — the opinions themselves being no other but such as the church of God, having been opposed by and troubled with from the beginning, has prevailed against and triumphed over in all generations. And were it not that confidence is the only relief which enraged impotency adheres unto and expects supplies from, I should greatly admire that those amongst us who have undertaken an enforcement of these old exploded errors, whose weakness does so openly discover and proclaim itself in all their endeavours, should judge themselves competent to give a new spirit of life to the dead carcass of these rotten heresies, which the faith of the saints in all ages has triumphed over, and which truth and learning have, under the care and watchfulness of Christ, so often baffled out of the world. The Jews, in the time of our Saviour's converse on the earth, being fallen greatly from the faith and worship of their forefathers, and ready to sink into their last and utmost apostasy from God, seem, amongst many other truths, to have much lost that of the doctrine of the holy Trinity, and of the person of the Messiah. It was, indeed, suited, in the dispensation of God, unto the work that the Lord Jesus had to fulfil in the world, that, before his passion and resurrection, the knowledge of his divine nature, as unto his individual person, should be concealed from the most of men. For this cause, although he was "in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation, by taking on him the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men, that being found in the fashion of a man, he might be obedient unto death," Php 2:6-8; whereby his divine glory was veiled for a season, until he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," Romans 1:4; and then "was glorified with that glory which he had with the Father before the world was," John 17:5. And as this dispensation was needful unto the accomplishment of the whole work which, as our mediator, he had undertaken, so, in particular, he who was in himself the Lord of hosts, a sanctuary to them that feared him, became hereby "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem," Isaiah 8:13-14. See Luke 2:34; Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:8; Isaiah 28:16. But yet, notwithstanding, as occasions required, suitably unto his own holy ends and designs, he forbore not to give plain and open testimony to his own divine nature and eternal pre-existence unto his incarnation. And this was it which, of all other things, most provoked the carnal Jews with whom he had to do; for having, as was said, lost the doctrine of the Trinity and person of the Messiah, in a great measure, whenever he asserted his Deity, they were immediately enraged, and endeavoured to destroy him. So was it, plainly, John 8:56-59. Says he, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him." So, also, John 10:30-33, "I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makes thyself God." They understood well enough the meaning of those words, "I and my Father are one," — namely, that they were a plain assertion of his being God. This caused their rage. And this the Jews all abide by to this day, — namely, that he declared himself to be God, and

therefore they slew him. Whereas, therefore, the first discovery of a plurality of persons in the divine essence consists in the revelation of the divine nature and personality of the Son, this being opposed, persecuted, and blasphemed by these Jews, they may be justly looked upon and esteemed as the first assertors of that misbelief which now some seek again so earnestly to promote. The Jews persecuted the Lord Christ, because he, being a man, declared himself also to be God; and others are ready to revile and reproach them who believe and teach what he declared.

After the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus, all things being filled with tokens, evidences, and effects of his divine nature and power (Romans 1:4), the church that began to be gathered in his name, and according to his doctrine, being, by his especial institution, to be initiated into the express profession of the doctrine of the holy Trinity, as being to be baptized in the name of the Father, and, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, — which confession comprises the whole of the truth contended for, and by the indispensable placing of it at the first entrance into all obedience unto him, is made the doctrinal foundation of the church, — it continued for a season in the quiet and undisturbed possession of this sacred treasure. The first who gave disquietment unto the disciples of Christ, by perverting the doctrine of the Trinity, was Simon Magus, with his followers; — an account of whose monstrous figments and unintelligible imaginations, with their coincidence with what some men dream in these latter days, shall elsewhere be given. Nor shall I need here to mention the colluvies of Gnostics, Valentians, Marcionites, and Manichees; the foundation of all whose abominations lay in their misapprehensions of the being of God, their unbelief of the Trinity and person of Christ, as do those of some others also. In especial, there was one Cerinthus, who was more active than others in his opposition to the doctrine of the person of Christ, and therein of the holy Trinity. To put a stop unto his abominations, all authors agree that John, writing his Gospel, prefixed unto it that plain declaration of the eternal Deity of Christ which it is prefaced withal. And the story is well attested by Irenæus, Eusebius, and others, from Polycarpus, who was his disciple, that this Cerinthus coming into the place where the apostle was, he left it, adding, as a reason of his departure, lest the building, through the just judgment of God, should fall upon them. And it was of the holy, wise providence of God to suffer some impious persons to oppose this doctrine before the death of that apostle, that he might, by infallible inspiration, farther reveal, manifest, and declare it, to the establishment of the church in future ages. For what can farther be desired to satisfy the minds of men who in any sense own the Lord Jesus Christ and the Scriptures, than that this controversy about the Trinity and person of Christ (for they stand and fall together) should be so eminently and expressly determined, as it were, immediately from heaven? But he with whom we have to deal in this matter neither ever did, nor ever will, nor can, acquiesce or rest in the divine determination of any thing which he has stirred up strife and controversy about: for as Cerinthus and the Ebionites persisted in the heresy of the Jews, who would have slain our Saviour for bearing witness to his own Deity, notwithstanding the evidence of that testimony, and the right apprehension which the Jews had of his mind therein; so he excited others to engage and persist in their opposition to the truth, notwithstanding this second particular determination of it from heaven, for their confutation or confusion. For after the more weak and confused oppositions made unto it by Theodotus Coriarius [i.e., the tanner], Artemon, and some others, at length a stout champion appears visibly and expressly engaged against these fundamentals of our faith. This was Paulus Samosatenus, bishop of the church of Antioch, about the year 272; — a man of most intolerable pride, passion, and folly, — the greatest that has left a

name upon ecclesiastical records. This man openly and avowedly denied the doctrine of the Trinity, and the Deity of Christ in an especial manner. For although he endeavoured for a while to cloud his impious sentiments in ambiguous expressions, as others also have done (Euseb., lib. vii. cap. 27), yet being pressed by the professors of the truth, and supposing his party was somewhat confirmed, he plainly defended his heresy, and was cast out of the church wherein he presided. Some sixty years after, Photinus, bishop of Sirmium, with a pretence of more sobriety in life and conversation, undertook the management of the same design, with the same success.

What ensued afterward among the churches of God in this matter is of too large and diffused a nature to be here reported. These instances I have fixed on only to intimate, unto persons whose condition or occasions afford them not ability or leisure of themselves to inquire into the memorials of times past amongst the professors of the gospel of Christ, that these oppositions which are made at present amongst us unto these fundamental truths, and derived immediately from the late renewed enforcement of them made by Faustus Socinus and his followers, are nothing but old baffled attempts of Satan against the rock of the church and the building thereon, in the confession of the Son of the living God.

Now, as all men who have aught of a due reverence of God or his truth remaining with them, cannot but be wary how they give the least admittance to such opinions as have from the beginning been witnessed against and condemned by Christ himself, his apostles and all that followed them in their faith and ways in all generations; so others whose hearts tremble for the danger they apprehend which these sacred truths may be in of being corrupted or defamed by the present opposition against them, may know that it is no other but what the church and faith of professors has already been exercised with, and, through the power of Him that enables them, have constantly triumphed over. And, for any part, I look upon it as a blessed effect of the holy, wise providence of God, that those who have long harboured these abominations of denying the holy Trinity, and the person and satisfaction of Christ, in their minds, but yet have sheltered themselves from common observation under the shades of dark, obscure, and uncouth expressions, with many other specious pretences, should be given up to join themselves with such persons (and to profess a community of persuasion with them in those opinions, as have rendered themselves infamous from the first foundation of Christianity), and wherein they will assuredly meet with the same success as those have done who have gone before them. For the other head of opposition, made by these persons unto the truth in reference unto the satisfaction of Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness thereon unto our justification, I have not much to say as to the time past. In general, the doctrine wherein they boast, being first brought forth in a rude misshapen manner by the Pelagian heretics, was afterward improved by one Abelardus, a sophisticated scholar in France; but owes its principal form and poison unto the endeavours of Faustus Socinus, and those who have followed him in his subtle attempt to corrupt the whole doctrine of the gospel. Of these men are those amongst us who at this day so busily dispute and write about the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, and his satisfaction. — the followers and disciples. And it is much more from their masters, who were some of them men learned, diligent, and subtle, than from themselves, that they are judged to be of any great consideration. For I can truly say, that, upon the sedate examination of all that I could ever yet hear or get a sight of, either spoken or written by them, — that is, any amongst us, — I never yet observed an undertaking of so great importance managed with a greater evidence of incompetency and inability, to give any tolerable

countenance unto it. If any of them shall for the future attempt to give any new countenance or props to their tottering errors, it will doubtless be attended unto by some of those many who cannot but know that it is incumbent on them “to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints.” This present brief endeavour is only to assist and direct those who are less exercised in the ways of managing controversies in religion, that they may have a brief comprehension of the truths opposed, with the firm foundations whereon they are built, and be in a readiness to shield their faith both against the fiery darts of Satan, and secure their minds against the “cunning sleight of men, who lie in wait to deceive.” And wherein this discourse seems in any thing to be too brief or concise, the author is not to be blamed who was confined unto these strait bounds by those whose requests enjoined him this service.

## 01.04. The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity explained p1

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The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity Explained and Vindicated The doctrine of the blessed Trinity may be considered two ways: First, In respect unto the revelation and proposal of it in the Scripture, to direct us unto the author, object, and end of our faith, in our worship and obedience. Secondly, As it is farther declared and explained, in terms, expressions, and propositions, reduced from the original revelation of it, suited whereunto, and meet to direct and keep the mind from undue apprehensions of the things it believes, and to declare them, unto farther edification. In the first way, it consists merely in the propositions wherein the revelation of God is expressed in the Scripture; and in this regard two things are required of us. First, To understand the terms of the propositions, as they are enunciations of truth; and, Secondly, To believe the things taught, revealed, and declared in them. In the first instance, no more, I say, is required of us, but that we assent unto the assertions and testimonies of God concerning himself, according to their natural and genuine sense, as he will be known, believed in, feared, and worshipped by us, as he is our Creator, Lord, and Rewarder; and that because he himself has, by his revelation, not only warranted us so to do, but also made it our duty, necessary and indispensable. Now, the sum of this revelation in this matter is, that God is one; — that this one God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; — that the Father is the Father of the Son; and the Son, the Son of the Father; and the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of the Father and the Son; and that, in respect of this their mutual relation, they are distinct from each other. This is the substance of the doctrine of the Trinity, as to the first direct concernment of faith therein. The first intention of the Scripture, in the revelation of God towards us, is, as was said, that we might fear him, believe, worship, obey him, and live unto him, as God. That we may do this in a due manner, and worship the only true God, and not adore the false imaginations of our own minds it declares, as was said, that this God is one, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; — that the Father is this one God; and therefore is to be believed in, worshipped, obeyed, lived unto, and in all things considered by us as the first cause, sovereign Lord, and last end of all; — that the Son is the one true God; and therefore is to be believed in, worshipped, obeyed, lived unto, and in all things considered by us as the first cause, sovereign Lord, and last end of all; — and so, also, of the Holy Ghost. This is the whole of faith's concernment in this matter, as it respects the direct revelation of God made by himself in the Scripture, and the first proper general end thereof. Let this be clearly confirmed by direct and positive divine testimonies, containing the declaration and revelation of God concerning himself, and faith is secured as to all it concerns; for it has both its proper formal object, and is sufficiently enabled to be directive of divine worship and obedience. The explication of this doctrine unto edification, suitable unto the revelation mentioned, is of another consideration; and two things are incumbent on us to take care of therein:— First, That what is affirmed and taught do directly tend unto the ends of the revelation itself, by informing and enlightening of the mind in the knowledge of the mystery of it, so far as in this life we are, by divine assistance, capable to comprehend it; that is, that faith may be increased, strengthened, and confirmed against temptations and oppositions of Satan, and men of corrupt minds; and that we may be distinctly directed unto, and encouraged in, the obedience unto, and worship of God, that are required of us. Secondly, That nothing be affirmed or taught

herein that may beget or occasion any undue apprehensions concerning God, or our obedience unto him, with respect unto the best, highest, securest revelations that we have of him and our duty. These things being done and secured, the end of the declaration of this doctrine concerning God is attained. In the declaration, then, of this doctrine unto the edification of the church, there is contained a farther explanation of the things before asserted, as proposed directly and in themselves as the object of our faith, — namely, how God is one, in respect of his nature, substance, essence, Godhead, or divine being; how, being Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he subsists in these three distinct persons or hypostases; and what are their mutual respects to each other, by which, as their peculiar properties, giving them the manner of their subsistence, they are distinguished one from another; with sundry other things of the like necessary consequence unto the revelation mentioned. And herein, as in the application of all other divine truths and mysteries whatever, yea, of all moral commanded duties, use is to be made of such words and expressions as, it may be, are not literally and formally contained in the Scripture; but only are, unto our conceptions and apprehensions, expository of what is so contained. And to deny the liberty, yea, the necessity hereof, is to deny all interpretation of the Scripture, — all endeavours to express the sense of the words of it unto the understandings of one another; which is, in a word, to render the Scripture itself altogether useless. For if it be unlawful for me to speak or write what I conceive to be the sense of the words of the Scripture, and the nature of the thing signified and expressed by them, it is unlawful for me, also, to think or conceive in my mind what is the sense of the words or nature of the things; which to say, is to make brutes of ourselves, and to frustrate the whole design of God in giving unto us the great privilege of his word.

Wherefore, in the declaration of the doctrine of the Trinity, we may lawfully, nay, we must necessarily, make use of other words, phrases, and expressions, than what are literally and syllabically contained in the Scripture, but teach no other things.

Moreover, whatever is so revealed in the Scripture is no less true and divine as to whatever necessarily follows thereon, than it is as unto that which is principally revealed and directly expressed. For how far soever the lines be drawn and extended, from truth nothing can follow and ensue but what is true also; and that in the same kind of truth with that which it is derived and deduced from. For if the principal assertion be a truth of divine revelation, so is also whatever is included therein, and which may be rightly from thence collected. Hence it follows, that when the Scripture reveals the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be one God, seeing it necessarily and unavoidably follows thereon that they are one in essence (wherein alone it is possible they can be one), and three in their distinct subsistences (wherein alone it is possible they can be three), — this is no less of divine revelation than the first principle from whence these things follow.

These being the respects which the doctrine of the Trinity falls under, the necessary method of faith and reason, in the believing and declaring of it, is plain and evident:—

First. The revelation of it is to be asserted and vindicated, as it is proposed to be believed, for the ends mentioned. Now, this is, as was declared, that there is one God; that this God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and so, that the Father is God, so is the Son, so is the Holy Ghost. This being received and admitted by faith, the explication of it is, —

Secondly, To be insisted on, and not taken into consideration until the others be admitted. And herein lies the preposterous course of those who fallaciously and captiously go about to oppose

this sacred truth:— they will always begin their opposition, not unto the revelation of it, but unto the explanation of it; which is used only for farther edification. Their disputes and cavils shall be against the Trinity, essence, substance, persons, personality, respects, properties of the divine persons, with the modes of expressing these things; whilst the plain scriptural revelation of the things themselves from whence they are but explanatory deductions, is not spoken to, nor admitted into confirmation. By this means have they entangled many weak, unstable souls, who, when they have met with things too high, hard, and difficult for them (which in divine mysteries they may quickly do), in the explication of this doctrine, have suffered themselves to be taken off from a due consideration of the full and plain revelation of the thing itself in Scripture; until, their temptations being made strong, and their darkness increased, it was too late for them to return unto it; as bringing along with them the cavils wherewith they were prepossessed, rather than that faith and obedience which is required. But yet all this while these explanations, so excepted against, are indeed not of any original consideration in this matter. Let the direct, express revelations of the doctrine be confirmed, they will follow of themselves, nor will be excepted against by those who believe and receive it. Let that be rejected, and they will fall of themselves, and never be contended for by those who did make use of them. But of these things we shall treat again afterward.

This, therefore, is the way, the only way that we rationally can, and that which in duty we ought to proceed in and by, for the asserting and confirming of the doctrine of the holy Trinity under consideration, — namely, that we produce divine revelations or testimonies, wherein faith may safely rest and acquiesce, that God is one; that this one God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; so that the Father is God, so also is the Son, and the Holy Ghost likewise, and, as such, are to be believed in, obeyed, worshipped, acknowledged, as the first cause and last end of all, — our Lord and reward. If this be not admitted, if somewhat of it be not, particularly [if it be] denied, we need not, we have no warrant or ground to proceed any farther, or at all to discourse about the unity of the divine essence, or the distinction of the persons.

We have not, therefore, any original contest in this matter with any, but such as deny either God to be one, or the Father to be God, or the Son to be God, or the Holy Ghost so to be. If any deny either of these in particular, we are ready to confirm it by sufficient testimonies of Scripture, or clear and undeniable divine revelation. When this is evinced and vindicated, we shall willingly proceed to manifest that the explications used of this doctrine unto the edification of the church are according to truth, and such as necessarily are required by the nature of the things themselves. And this gives us the method of the ensuing small discourse, with the reasons of it:—

I. The first thing which we affirm to be delivered unto us by divine revelation as the object of our faith, is, that God is one. I know that this may be uncontrollably evinced by the light of reason itself, unto as good and quiet an assurance as the mind of man is capable of in any of its apprehensions whatever; but I speak of it now as it is confirmed unto us by divine revelation. How this assertion of one God respects the nature, essence, or divine being of God, shall be declared afterward. At present it is enough to represent the testimonies that he is one, — only one. And because we have no difference with our adversaries distinctly about this matter, I shall only name few of them. Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord.” A most pregnant testimony; and yet, notwithstanding, as I shall elsewhere manifest, the Trinity itself, in that one divine essence, is here asserted. Isaiah 44:6, Isaiah 44:8, “Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his Redeemer

the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any." In which also we may manifest that a plurality of persons is included and expressed. And although there be no more absolute and sacred truth than this, that God is one, yet it may be evinced that it is nowhere mentioned in the Scripture, but that, either in the words themselves or the context of the place, a plurality of persons in that one sense is intimated.

II. Secondly, It is proposed as the object of our faith, that the Father is God. And herein, as is pretended, there is also an agreement between us and those who oppose the doctrine of the Trinity. But there is a mistake in this matter. Their hypothesis, as they call it, or, indeed, presumptuous error, casts all the conceptions that are given us concerning God in the Scripture into disorder and confusion. For the Father, as he whom we worship, is often called so only with reference unto his Son; as the Son is so with reference to the Father.

He is the "only begotten of the Father," John 1:14. But now, if this Son had no pre-existence in his divine nature before he was born of the Virgin, there was no God the Father seventeen hundred years ago, because there was no Son. And on this ground did the Marcionites [4] of old plainly deny the Father (whom, under the New Testament, we worship) to be the God of the Old Testament, who made the world, and was worshipped from the foundation of it. For it seems to follow, that he whom we worship being the Father, and on this supposition that the Son had no pre-existence unto his incarnation, he was not the Father under the Old Testament; he is some other from him that was so revealed. I know the folly of that inference; yet how, on this opinion of the sole existence of the Son in time, men can prove the Father to be God, let others determine. "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son;" but "whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God," 2 John 1:9. Whoever denies Christ the Son, as the Son, that is, the eternal Son of God, he loses the Father also, and the true God; he has not God. For that God which is not the Father, and which ever was, and was not the Father, is not the true God. Hence many of the fathers, even of the first writers of the church, were forced unto great pains in the confirmation of this truth, that the Father of Jesus Christ was he who made the world, gave the law, spoke by the prophets, and was the author of the Old Testament; and that against men who professed themselves to be Christians. And this brutish apprehension of theirs arose from no other principle but this, that the Son had only a temporal existence, and was not the eternal Son of God. But that I may not in this brief discourse digress unto other controversies than what lies directly before us, and seeing the adversaries of the truth we contend for do, in words at least, grant that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, or the only true God, I shall not farther show the inconsistency of their hypothesis with this confession, but take it for granted that to us "there is one God, the Father," 1 Corinthians 8:6; see John 17:3. So that he who is not the Father, who was not so from eternity, whose paternity is not equally co-existent unto his Deity, is not God unto us.

III. Thirdly, It is asserted and believed by the church that Jesus Christ is God, the eternal Son of God; — that is, he is proposed, declared, and revealed unto us in the Scripture to be God, that is to be served, worshipped, believed in, obeyed as God, upon the account of his own divine excellencies. And whereas we believe and know that he was man, that he was born, lived, and died as a man, it is declared that he is God also; and that, as God, he did pre-exist in the form of God before his incarnation, which was effected by voluntary actings of his own, — which could not

be without a pre-existence in another nature. This is proposed unto us to be believed upon divine testimony and by divine revelation. And the sole inquiry in this matter is, whether this be proposed in the Scripture as an object of faith, and that which is indispensably necessary for us to believe? Let us, then, nakedly attend unto what the Scripture asserts in this matter, and that in the order of the books of it, in some particular instances which at present occur to mind; as these that follow:—

Psalms 45:6, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” Applied unto Christ, Hebrews 1:8, “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.”

Psalms 68:17-18, “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” Applied unto the Son, Ephesians 4:8-10, “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things.”

Psalms 110:1, “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand.” Applied unto Christ by himself, Matthew 22:44.

Psalms 102:25-27, “Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.” Declared by the apostle to be meant of the Son, Hebrews 1:10-12.

Proverbs 8:22-31, “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.”

Isaiah 6:1-3, “I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; With twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.” Applied unto the Son, John 12:41.

Isaiah 8:13-14, “Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” Applied unto the Son, Luke 2:34; Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:8.

Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."

Jeremiah 23:5-6, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness."

Hosea 12:3-5, "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; even the Lord God of hosts; the Lord is his memorial."

Zechariah 2:8-9, "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, After the glory has he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me."

Matthew 16:16, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Luke 1:35, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

John 1:1-3. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

John 1:14, "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

John 3:13, "And no man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven."

John 8:57-58, "Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

John 10:30, "I and my Father are one."

John 17:5, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

John 20:28, "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

Acts 20:28, "Feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood."

Romans 1:3-4, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

Romans 9:5, "Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

Romans 14:10-12, "For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

1 Corinthians 8:6, "And one Lord Jesus, by whom are all things, and we by him."

1 Corinthians 10:9, "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents;" compared with Numbers 21:6.

Php 2:5-6, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

Colossians 1:15-17, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

1 Timothy 3:16, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."

Titus 2:13-14, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us."

Hebrews 1:1-14 throughout.

Hebrews 3:4, "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God."

1 Peter 1:11, "Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify."

1 Peter 3:18-10, "For Christ also has once suffered for sins, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

1 John 3:16, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us."

1 John 5:20, "And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

Revelation 1:8, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 1:11-13, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book.... And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And, being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man."

Revelation 1:17, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last."

Revelation 2:23, "I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

These are some of the places wherein the truth under consideration is revealed and declared, — some of the divine testimonies whereby it is confirmed and established, which I have not at present inquired after, but suddenly repeated as they came to mind. Many more of the like nature and importance may be added unto them, and shall be so as occasion does require.

Let, now, any one who owns the Scripture to be the word of God, — to contain an infallible revelation of the things proposed in it to be believed, — and who has any conscience exercised towards God for the receiving and submitting unto what he declares and reveals, take a view of these testimonies, and consider whether they do not sufficiently propose this object of our faith. Shall a few poor trifling sophisms, whose terms are scarcely understood by the most that amongst us make use of them, according as they have found them framed by others, be thought meet to be set up in opposition unto these multiplied testimonies of the Holy Ghost, and to cast the truth confirmed by them down from its credit and reputation in the consciences of men? For my part, I do not see in any thing, but that the testimonies given to the Godhead of Christ, the eternal Son of God, are every way as clear and unquestionable as those are which testify to the being of God, or that there is any God at all. Were men acquainted with the Scriptures as they ought to be, and as the most, considering the means and advantages they have had, might have been; did they ponder and believe on what they read, or had they any tenderness in their consciences as to that reverence, obedience, and subjection of soul which God requires unto his word; it were utterly impossible that their faith in this matter should ever in the least be shaken by a few lewd sophisms or loud clamours of men destitute of the truth, and of the spirit of it. That we may now improve these testimonies unto the end under design, as the nature of this brief discourse will bear, I shall first remove the general answers which the Socinians give unto them, and then manifest farther how uncontrollable they are, by giving an instance in the frivolous exceptions of the same persons to one of them in particular. And we are ready, God assisting, to maintain that there is not any one of them which does not give a sufficient ground for faith to rest on in this matter concerning the Deity of Christ, and that against all the Socinians in the world.

They say, therefore, commonly, that we prove not by these testimonies what is by them denied. For they acknowledge Christ to be God, and that because he is exalted unto that glory and authority that all creatures are put into subjection unto him, and all, both men and angels, are commanded to worship and adore him. So that he is God by office, though he be not God by nature. He is God, but he is not the most high God. And this last expression they have almost continually in their mouths, “He is not the most high God.” And commonly, with great contempt and scorn, they are ready to reproach them who have solidly confirmed the doctrine of the Deity of Christ as ignorant of the state of the controversy, in that they have not proved him to be the most high God, in subordination unto whom they acknowledge Christ to be God, and that he ought to be worshipped with divine and religious worship. But there cannot be any thing more empty and vain than these pretences; and, besides, they accumulate in them their former errors, with the addition of new ones. For, —

First. The name of the most high God is first ascribed unto God in Genesis 14:18-19, Genesis 14:22, denoting his sovereignty and dominion. Now, as other attributes of God, it is not distinctive of the subject, but only descriptive of it. So are all other excellencies of the nature of God. It does not intimate that there are other gods, only he is the most high, or one over them all; but only that the true God is most high, — that is, endued with sovereign power, dominion, and authority over all. To say, then, that Christ indeed is God, but not the most high God, is all one as to say he is God, but not the most holy God, or not the true God; and so they have brought their Christ into the number of false gods, whilst they deny the true Christ, who, in his divine nature, is “over all, God blessed for ever,” Romans 9:5; a phrase of speech perfectly expressing this attribute of the most

high God.

Secondly. This answer is suited only unto those testimonies which express the name of God with a corresponding power and authority into that name; for in reference unto these alone can it be pleaded, with any pretence of reason, that he is a God by office, — though that also be done very futilely and impertinently. But most of the testimonies produced speak directly unto his divine excellencies and properties, which belong unto his nature necessarily and absolutely. That he is eternal, omnipotent, immense, omniscient, infinitely wise; and that he is, and works, and produces effects suitable unto all these properties, and such as nothing but they can enable him for; is abundantly proved by the foregoing testimonies. Now, all these concern a divine nature, a natural essence, a Godhead, and not such power or authority as a man may be exalted unto; yea, the ascribing any of them to such a one, implies the highest contradiction expressible.

Thirdly. This God in authority and of office, and not by nature, that should be the object of divine worship, is a new abomination. For they are divine, essential excellencies that are the formal reason and object of worship, religious and divine; and to ascribe it unto any one that is not God by nature, is idolatry. By making, therefore, their Christ such a God as they describe, they bring him under the severe commination of the true God. Jeremiah 10:11, “The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.” That Christ they worship they say is a God; but they deny that he is “that God that made the heavens and the earth:” and so leave him exposed to the threatenings of him, who will accomplish it to the uttermost.

Some other general exceptions sometimes they make use of, which the reader may free himself from the entanglement of, if he do but heed these ensuing rules:—

First. Distinction of persons (of which afterwards), it being in an infinite substance, does no way prove a difference of essence between the Father and the Son. Where, therefore, Christ, as the Son, is said to be another from the Father, or God, spoken personally of the Father, it argues not in the least that he is not partaker of the same nature with him. That in one essence there can be but one person, may be true where the substance is finite and limited, but has no place in that which is infinite.

Secondly. Distinction and inequality in respect of office in Christ, does not in the least take away his equality and sameness with the Father in respect of nature and essence, Php 2:7-8. A son, of the same nature with his father, and therein equal to him, may in office be his inferior, — his subject.

Thirdly. The advancement and exaltation of Christ as mediator to any dignity whatever, upon or in reference to the work of our redemption and salvation, is not at all inconsistent with the essential honour, dignity, and worth, which he has in himself as God blessed for ever. Though he humbled himself, and was exalted in office, yet in nature he was one and the same; he changed not.

Fourthly. The Scriptures, asserting the humanity of Christ, with the concernments thereof, as his birth, life, and death, do no more thereby deny his Deity than, by asserting his Deity, with the essential properties thereof, they deny his humanity.

Fifthly. God working in and by Christ as he was mediator, denotes the Father's sovereign appointment of the things mentioned to be done, — not his immediate efficiency in the doing of the things themselves.

These rules are proposed a little before their due place in the method which we pursue. But I thought meet to interpose them here, as containing a sufficient ground for the resolution and answering of all the sophisms and objections which the adversaries use in this cause. From the cloud of witnesses before produced, every one whereof is singly sufficient to evert the Socinian infidelity, I shall in one of them give an instance, both of the clearness of the evidence and the weakness of the exceptions which are wont to be put in against them, as was promised; and this is John 1:1-3, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." By the Word, here, or ho Logos, on what account soever he be so called, either as being the eternal Word and Wisdom of the Father, or as the great Revealer of the will of God unto us, Jesus Christ the Son of God is intended. This is on all hands acknowledged; and the context will admit of no hesitation about it. For of this Word it is said, that "he came" into the world, John 1:10; "was rejected by his own," John 1:11; "was made flesh and dwelt among us, whose glory was the glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father," John 1:14; called expressly "Jesus Christ," John 1:17; "the only begotten Son of the Father," John 1:18. The subject, then, treated of, is here agreed upon; and it is no less evident that it is the design of the apostle to declare both who and what he was of whom he treats. Here, then, if any where, we may learn what we are to believe concerning the person of Christ; which also we may certainly do, if our minds are not perverted through prejudice, "whereby the god of this world does blind the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them," 2 Corinthians 4:4. Of this Word, then, this Son of God, it is affirmed, that he "was in the beginning." And this word, if it does not absolutely and formally express eternity, yet it does a pre-existence unto the whole creation; which amounts to the same: for nothing can pre-exist unto all creatures, but in the nature of God, which is eternal; unless we shall suppose a creature before the creation of any. But what is meant by this expression the Scripture does elsewhere declare. Proverbs 8:23, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." John 17:5, "Glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Both which places, as they explain this phrase, so also do they undeniably testify unto the eternal pre-existence of Christ the Son of God. And in this case we prevail against our adversaries, if we prove any pre-existence of Christ unto his incarnation; which, as they absolutely deny, so to grant it would overthrow their whole heresy in this matter. And therefore they know that the testimony of our Saviour concerning himself, if understood in a proper, intelligible sense, is perfectly destructive of their pretensions, John 8:58, "Before Abraham was, I am." For although there be no proper sense in the words, but a gross equivocation, if the existence of Christ before Abraham was born be not asserted in them (seeing he spoke in answer to that objection of the Jews, that he was not yet fifty years old, and so could not have seen Abraham, nor Abraham him; and the Jews that were present, understood well enough that he asserted a divine pre-existence unto his being born, so long ago, as that hereon, after their manner, they took up stones to stone him, as supposing him to have blasphemed in asserting his Deity, as others now do in the denying of it); yet they [Socinians], seeing how fatal this pre-existence, though not here absolutely asserted to be eternal, would be to their cause, contend that the meaning of the words is, that "Christ was to

be the light of the world before Abraham was made the father of many nations;" — an interpretation so absurd and sottish, as never any man not infatuated by the god of this world could once admit and give countenance unto. But "in the beginning," as absolutely used, is the same with "from everlasting," as it is expounded, Proverbs 8:23, and denotes an eternal existence; which is here affirmed of the Word, the Son of God. But let the word "beginning," be restrained unto the subject matter treated of (which is the creation of all things), and the pre-existence of Christ in his divine nature unto the creation of all things is plainly revealed, and inevitably asserted. And indeed, not only the word, but the discourse of these verses, does plainly relate unto, and is expository of, the first verse in the Bible, Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." There it is asserted that in the beginning God created all things; here, that the Word was in the beginning, and made all things. This, then, is the least that we have obtained from this first word of our testimony, — namely, that the Word or Son of God had a personal pre-existence unto the whole creation. In what nature this must be, let these men of reason satisfy themselves, who know that Creator and creatures take up the whole nature of beings. One of them he must be; and it may be well supposed that he was not a creature before the creation of any.

But, secondly, Where, or with whom, was this Word in the beginning? "It was," says the Holy Ghost, "with God." There being no creature then existing, he could be nowhere but with God; that is, the Father, as it is expressed in one of the testimonies before going, Proverbs 8:22, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old;" Proverbs 8:30, "Then was I by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;" that is, in the beginning this Word, or Wisdom of God, was with God. And this is the same which our Lord Jesus asserts concerning himself, John 3:13, "And no man," says he, "has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." And so in other places he affirms his being in heaven, — that is, with God, — at the same time when he was on the earth; whereby he declares the immensity of his nature, and the distinction of his person; and his coming down from heaven before he was incarnate on the earth, declaring his pre-existence; by both manifesting the meaning of this expression, that "in the beginning he was with God." But hereunto they have invented a notable evasion. For although they know not well what to make of the last clause of the words, that says, then he was in heaven when he spoke on earth, — "The Son of man which is in heaven," answerable to the description of God's immensity, "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord," Jeremiah 23:24, but say that he was there by heavenly meditation, as another man may be; yet they give a very clear answer to what must of necessity be included in his descending from heaven, — namely, his pre-existence to his incarnation: for they tell us that, before his public ministry, he was in his human nature (which is all they allow unto him) taken up into heaven, and there taught the gospel, as the great impostor Mohammed pretended he was taught his Alkoran. If you ask them who told them so, they cannot tell; but they can tell when it was, — namely, when he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days after his baptism. But yet this instance is subject to another misadventure; in that one of the evangelists plainly affirms that he was "those forty days in the wilderness with the wild beasts," Mark 1:13, and so, surely, not in heaven in the same nature, by his bodily presence, with God and his holy angels. And let me add this, by the way, that the interpretation of this place, John 1:1, to be mentioned afterward, and those of the two places before mentioned, John 8:58, John 3:13, Faustus Socinus [5] learned out of his uncle Lælius' papers, as he confesses; and does more than intimate that he believed he had them as it were by revelation. And it may be so; they are indeed

so forced, absurd, and irrational, that no man could ever fix upon them by any reasonable investigation; but the author of these revelations if we may judge of the parent by the child, could be no other but the spirit of error and darkness. I suppose, therefore, that notwithstanding these exceptions, Christians will believe “that in the beginning the Word was with God;” that is, that the Son was with the Father, as is frequently elsewhere declared. But who was this Word? Says the apostle, He was God. He was so with God (that is, the Father), as that he himself was God also; — God, in that notion of God which both nature and the Scripture do represent; not a god by office, one exalted to that dignity (which cannot well be pretended before the creation of the world), but as Thomas confessed him, “Our Lord and our God,” John 20:28; or as Paul expresses it, “Over all, God blessed for ever;” or the most high God; which these men love to deny. Let not the infidelity of men, excited by the craft and malice of Satan, seek for blind occasions, and this matter is determined; if the word and testimony of God be able to umpire a difference amongst the children of men. Here is the sum of our creed in this matter, “In the beginning the Word was God,” and so continues unto eternity, being Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the Lord God Almighty. And to show that he was so God in the beginning, as that he was one distinct, in something, from God the Father, by whom afterward he was sent into the world, he adds, John 1:2, “The same was in the beginning with God.” Farther, also, to evince what he has asserted and revealed for us to believe, the Holy Ghost adds, both as a firm declaration of his eternal Deity, and also his immediate care of the world (which how he variously exercised, both in a way of providence and grace, he afterward declares), John 1:3, “All things were made by him.” He was so in the beginning, before all things, as that he made them all. And that it may not be supposed that the “all” that he is said to make or create was to be limited unto any certain sort of things, he adds, that “without him nothing was made that was made;” which gives the first assertion an absolute universality as to its subject. And this he farther describes, John 1:10, “He was in the world, and the world was made by him.” The world that was made, has a usual distribution, in the Scripture, into the “heavens and the earth, and all things contained in them;” — as Acts 4:24, “Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is;” that is, the world, the making whereof is expressly assigned unto the Son, Hebrews 1:10, “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.” And the apostle Paul, to secure our understandings in this matter, instances in the most noble parts of the creation, and which, if any, might seem to be excepted from being made by him, Colossians 1:16, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him.” The Socinians say, indeed, that he made angels to be thrones and principalities; that is, he gave them their order, but not their being: which is expressly contrary to the words of the text; so that a man knows not well what to say to these persons, who, at their pleasure, cast off the authority of God in his word: “By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth.”

What now can be required to secure our faith in this matter? In what words possible could a divine revelation of the eternal power and Godhead of the Son of God be made more plain and clear unto the sons of men? Or how could the truth of any thing more evidently be represented unto their minds? If we understand not the mind of God and intention of the Holy Ghost in this matter, we may utterly despair ever to come to an acquaintance with any thing that God reveals unto us; or, indeed, with any thing else that is expressed or is to be expressed, by words. It is directly said that

the Word (that is Christ, as is acknowledged by all) “was with God,” distinct from him; and “was God,” one with him; that he was so “in the beginning,” before the creation, that he “made all things,” — the world, all things in heaven and in earth: and if he be not God, who is? The sum is, — all the ways whereby we may know God are, his name, his properties, and his works; but they are all here ascribed by the Holy Ghost to the Son, to the Word: and he therefore is God, or we know neither who nor what God is. But say the Socinians, “These things are quite otherwise, and the words have another sense in them than you imagine.” What is it, I pray? We bring none to them, we impose no sense upon them, we strain not any word in them, from, beside, or beyond its native, genuine signification, its constant application in the Scripture, and common use amongst men. What, then, is this latent sense that is intended, and is discoverable only by themselves? Let us hear them coining and stamping this sense of theirs.

First, they say that by “In the beginning,” is not meant of the beginning of all things, or the creation of them, but the beginning of the preaching of the gospel. But why so, I pray? Wherever these words are else used in the Scripture, they denote the beginning of all things, or eternity absolutely, or an existence preceding their creation. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” Genesis 1:1. “I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was,” Proverbs 8:23. “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth,” Hebrews 1:10. And besides, these words are never used absolutely anywhere for the beginning of the gospel. There is mention made, indeed, of the “beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ,” Mark 1:1, which is referred to the preaching of John Baptist: but “In the beginning,” absolutely, is never so used or applied; and they must meet with men of no small inclination unto them, who will, upon their desire, in a matter of so great importance, forego the sense of words which is natural and proper, fixed by its constant use in the Scripture, when applied in the same kind, for that which is forced and strained, and not once exemplified in the whole book of God. But the words, they say, are to be restrained to the subject-matter treated of. Well, what is that subject-matter? “The new creation, by the preaching of the gospel.” But this is plainly false; nor will the words allow any such sense, nor the contempt, nor is any thing offered to give evidence unto this corrupt perverting of the words, unless it be a farther perverting of other testimonies no less clear than this. For what is, according to this interpretation, the meaning of these words, “In the beginning was the Word?” “That is, when John Baptist preached, and said, ‘This is the Lamb of God,’ which was signally the beginning of the gospel, — then he was.” That is, he was when he was, — no doubt of it! And is not this a notable way of interpreting of Scripture which these great pretenders to a dictatorship in reason, indeed hucksters in sophistry, do make use of? But to go on with them in this supposition, How was he then with God, — “The Word was with God?” “That is,” say they, “he was then known only to God, before John Baptist preached him in the beginning.” But what shall compel us to admit of this uncouth sense and exposition, — “ ‘He was with God;’ that is, he was known to God alone?” What is there singular herein? Concerning how many things may the same be affirmed? Besides, it is absolutely false. He was known to the angel Gabriel, who came to his mother with the message of his incarnations Luke 1:35. He was known to the two angels which appeared to the shepherds upon his birth, Luke 2:9, — to all the heavenly host assembled to give praise and glory to God on the account of his nativity, as those who came to worship him, and to pay him the homage due unto him, Luke 2:10, Luke 2:13-14. He was known to his mother, the blessed Virgin, and to Joseph, and Zacharias, and to Elisabeth, to Simeon and Anna, to John Baptist, and probably to many more to whom Simeon and Anna spoke of him, Luke 2:38. So that the sense

pretended to be wrung out and extorted from these words, against their proper meaning and intendment, is indeed false and frivolous, and belongs not at all unto them. But let this pass. What shall we say to the next words, "And the Word was God?" Give us leave, without disturbance from you, but to believe this expression, which comprises a revelation of God, proposed to us on purpose that we should believe it, and there will be, as was said, an end of this difference and debate. Yea, but say they, "These words have another sense also." Strange! They seem to be so plain and positive, that it is impossible any other sense should be fixed on them but only this, that the Word was in the beginning, and was God; and therefore is so still, unless he who is once God can cease so to be. "But the meaning is, that afterwards God exalted him, and made him God, as to rule, authority, and power." This making of him God is an expression very offensive to the ears of all sober Christians; and was therefore before exploded. And these things here, as all other figments, hang together like a rope of sand. In the beginning of the gospel he was God, before any knew him but only God; that is, after he had preached the gospel, and died, and rose again, and was exalted at the right hand of God, he was made God, and that not properly, which is absolutely impossible, but in an improper sense! How prove they, then, this perverse nonsense to be the sense of these plain words? They say it must needs be so. Let them believe them who are willing to perish with them.

Thus far, then, we have their sense:— "In the beginning," that is, about sixteen or seventeen hundred years ago, "the Word," that is, the human nature of Christ before it was made flesh, which it was in its being, "was with God," that is, known to God alone; and "in the beginning," that is afterwards, not in the beginning, was made God! — which is the sum of their exposition of this place. But what shall we say to what is affirmed concerning his making of all things, so as that without him, that is, without his making of it, nothing was made that was made; especially seeing that these "all things" are expressly said to be the world, John 1:10, and all things therein contained, even in heaven and earth? Colossians 1:16. An ordinary man would think that they should now be taken hold of, and that there is no way of escape left unto them; but they have it in a readiness. By the "all things" here, are intended all things of the gospel, — the preaching of it, the sending of the apostles to preach it, and to declare the will of God; and by the "world," is intended the world to come, or the new state of things under the gospel. This is the substance of what is pleaded by the greatest masters amongst them in this matter, and they are not ashamed thus to plead. And the reader, in this instance, may easily discern what a desperate cause they are engaged in, and how bold and desperate they are in the management of it. For, —

First, The words are a plain illustration of the divine nature of the Word, by his divine power and works, as the very series of them declares. He was God, and he made all things: "He that built all things is God," Hebrews 3:4.

Secondly, There is no one word spoken concerning the gospel, nor the preaching of it, nor any effects of that preaching; which the apostle expressly insists upon and declares afterward, John 1:15, and so onwards.

Thirdly, The making of all things, here ascribed unto the Word, was done in the beginning; but that making of all things which they intend, in erecting the church by the preaching of the word, was not done in the beginning, but afterwards, — most of it, as themselves confess, after the ascension of Christ into heaven.

Fourthly, In this gloss, what is the meaning of “All things?” “Only some things,” say the Socinians. What is the meaning of “Were made?” “That is, were mended.” “By him?” “That is, the apostles, principally preaching the gospel.” And this “In the beginning?” “After it was past;” — for so they say expressly, that the principal things here intended were effected by the apostles afterwards.

I think, since the beginning, place it when you will, — the beginning of the world or the beginning of the gospel, — there was never such an exposition of the words of God or man contended for.

Fifthly, It is said, “He made the world,” and he “came” into it, — namely, the world which he made; and “the world,” or the inhabitants of it “knew him not.” But the world they intend did know him: for the church knew him, and acknowledged him to be the Son of God; for that was the foundation that it was built upon.

I have instanced directly in this only testimony, to give the reader a pledge of the full confirmation which may be given unto this great fundamental truth, by a due improvement of those other testimonies, or distinct revelations, which speak no less expressly to the same purpose. And of them there is not any one but we are ready to vindicate it, if called whereunto, from the exceptions of these men; which how bold and sophistical they are we may, in these now considered, also learn and know.

It appears, then, that there is a full, sufficient revelation made in the Scripture of the eternal Deity of the Son of God; and that he is so, as is the Father also. More particular testimonies I shall not at present insist upon, referring the full discussion and vindication of these truths to another season.

IV. Fourthly, We are, therefore, in the next place, to manifest that the one, or the like testimony, is given unto the Deity of the Holy Spirit; that is, that he is revealed and declared in the Scripture as the object of our faith, worship, and obedience, on the account and for the reason of those divine excellencies which are the sole reason of our yielding religious worship unto any, or expecting from any the reward that is promised unto us, or to be brought by them to the end for which we are. And herein lies, as was showed, the concernment of faith. When that knows what it is to believe as on divine revelation, and is enabled thereby to regulate the soul in its present obedience and future expectation, seeing it is its nature to work by love and hope, there it rests. Now, this is done to the utmost satisfaction in the revelation that is made of the divine existence, divine excellencies, and divine operations of the Spirit; as shall be briefly manifested.

## 01.05. The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity explained p2

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But before we proceed, we may, in our way, observe a great congruency of success in those who have denied the Deity of the Son and those who have denied that of the Holy Spirit. For as to the Son, after some men began once to disbelieve the revelation concerning him, and would not acknowledge him to be God and man in one person, they could never settle nor agree, either what or who he was, or who was his Father, or why he was the Son. Some said he was a phantasm or appearance, and that he had no real subsistence in this world; and that all that was done by him was an appearance, he himself being they know not what elsewhere. That proud beast, Paulus Samosatenus, [6] whose flagitious life contended for a pre-eminence in wickedness with his prodigious heresies, was one of the first, after the Jews, that positively contended for his being a man, and no more; who was followed by Photinus and others. The Arians perceiving the folly of this opinion, with the odium of it amongst all that bare the name of Christians, and that they had as good deny the whole Scripture as not grant unto him a pre-existence in a divine nature antecedent to his incarnation, they framed a new Deity, which God should make before the world, in all things like himself, but not the same with him in essence and substance, but to be so like him that, by the writings of some of them, ye can scarce know the one from the other; and that this was the Son of God, also, who was afterward incarnate. Others, in the meantime, had more monstrous imaginations: some, that he was an angel; some, that he was the sun; some, that he was the soul of the world; some, the light within men. Departing from their proper rest, so have they hovered about, and so have they continued to do until this day. In the same manner it is come to pass with them who have denied the Deity of the Holy Ghost. They could never find where to stand or abide; but one has cried up one thing, another another. At first they observed that such things were everywhere ascribed unto him in the Scripture as uncontrollably evidence him to be an intelligent, voluntary agent. This they found so plain and evident, that they could not deny but that he was a person, or an intelligent subsistence. Wherefore, seeing they were resolved not to assent unto the revelation of his being God, they made him a created spirit, chief and above all others; but still, whatever else he were, he was only a creature. And this course some of late also have steered. The Socinians, on the other hand, observing that such things are assigned and ascribed unto him, as that, if they acknowledge him to be a person, or a substance, they must, upon necessity, admit him to be God, though they seemed not, at first, at all agreed what to think or say concerning him positively, yet they all concurred peremptorily in denying his personality. Hereon, some of them said he was the gospel, which others of them have confuted; some, that he was Christ. Neither could they agree whether there was one Holy Ghost or more; — whether the Spirit of God, and the good Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit, be the same or no. In general, now they conclude that he is “vis Dei” or “virtus Dei,” or “efficacia Dei;” — no substance, but a quality, that may be considered either as being in God, and then they say it is the Spirit of God; or as sanctifying and conforming men unto God, and then they say it is the Holy Ghost. Whether these things do answer the revelation made in the Scripture concerning the eternal Spirit of God, will be immediately manifested. Our Quakers, who have for a long season hovered up and down like a swarm of flies, with a confused noise and humming, begin now to settle in the opinions lately by them declared

for. But what their thoughts will fall in to be concerning the Holy Ghost, when they shall be contented to speak intelligibly, and according to the usage of other men, or the pattern of Scripture the great rule of speaking or treating about spiritual things, I know not, and am uncertain whether they do so themselves or no. Whether he may be the light within them, or an infallible afflatus, is uncertain. In the meantime, what is revealed unto us in the Scripture to be believed concerning the Holy Ghost, his Deity and personality, may be seen in the ensuing testimonies. The sum of this revelation is, — that the Holy Spirit is an eternally existing divine substance, the author of divine operations, and the object of divine and religious worship; that is, “Over all, God blessed for ever,” as the ensuing testimonies evince:—

Genesis 1:2, “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters”

Psalms 33:6, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the Spirit of his mouth.”

Job 26:13, “By his Spirit he has garnished the heavens.”

Job 33:4, “The Spirit of God has made me.”

Psalms 104:30, “Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created.”

Matthew 28:19, “Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Acts 1:16, “That scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake.”

Acts 5:3, “Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?” Acts 5:4, “Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”

Acts 28:25-26, “Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say,” etc.

1 Corinthians 3:16, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

1 Corinthians 12:11, “All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” 1 Corinthians 12:6, “And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.”

2 Corinthians 13:14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.”

Acts 20:28, “Take heed to the flock over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers.”

Matthew 12:31, “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.”

Psalms 139:7, “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?”

John 14:26, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.”

Luke 12:12, "The Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say."

Acts 13:2, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

Acts 13:4, "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia," etc.

2 Peter 1:21, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

It is evident, upon the first consideration, that there is not any thing which we believe concerning the Holy Ghost, but that it is plainly revealed and declared in these testimonies. He is directly affirmed to be, and is called, "God," Acts 5:3-4; which the Socinians will not say is by virtue of an exaltation unto an office or authority, as they say of the Son. He is an intelligent, voluntary, divine agent; he knows, he works as he will: which things, if, in their frequent repetition, they are not sufficient to evince an intelligent agent, a personal subsistence, that has being, life, and will, we must confess that the Scripture was written on purpose to lead us into mistakes and misapprehensions of what we are under penalty of eternal ruin, rightly to apprehend and believe. It declares, also, that he is the author and worker of all sorts of divine operations, requiring immensity, omnipotence, omniscience, and all other divine excellencies, unto their working and effecting. Moreover, it is revealed that he is peculiarly to be believed in, and may peculiarly be sinned against, [as] the great author of all grace in believers and order in the church. This is the sum of what we believe, of what is revealed in the Scripture concerning the Holy Ghost.

As, in the consideration of the preceding head, we vindicated one testimony in particular from the exceptions of the adversaries of the truth, so on this we may briefly sum up the evidence that is given us in the testimonies before produced, that the reader may the more easily understand their intendment, and what, in particular, they bear witness unto. The sum is that the Holy Ghost is a divine, distinct person, and neither merely the power or virtue of God, nor any created spirit whatever. This plainly appears, from what is revealed concerning him. For he who is placed in the same series or order with other divine persons, without the least note of difference or distinction from them, as to an interest in personality; who has the names proper to a divine person only, and is frequently and directly called by them; who also has personal properties, and is the voluntary author of personal, divine operations, and the proper object of divine worship, — he is a distinct divine person. And if these things be not a sufficient evidence and demonstration of a divine, intelligent substance, I shall, as was said before, despair to understand any thing that is expressed and declared by words. But now thus it is with the Holy Ghost, according to the revelation made conceding him in the Scripture. For, —

First. He is placed in the same rank and order, without any note of difference or distinction as to a distinct interest in the divine nature (that is, as we shall see, personality) with the other divine persons. Matthew 28:19, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." 1 John 5:7, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." 1 Corinthians 12:3-6, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now, there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." Neither does a denial of his divine being and distinct

existence leave any tolerable sense unto these expressions. For read the words of the first place from the mind of the Socinians, and see what is it that can be gathered from them, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the virtue or efficacy of the Father." Can any thing be more absonant from faith and reason than this absurd expression? and yet it is the direct sense, if it be any, that these men put upon the words. To join a quality with acknowledged persons, and that in such things and cases as wherein they are proposed under a personal consideration, is a strange kind of mystery. And the like may be manifested concerning the other places.

Secondly. He also has the names proper to a divine person only; for he is expressly called "God," Acts 5:1-42. He who is termed the "Holy Ghost," Acts 5:3, and the "Spirit of the Lord," Acts 5:9, is called also "God," Acts 5:4. Now, this is the name of a divine person, on one account or other. The Socinians would not allow Christ to be called God were he not a divine person, though not by nature, yet by office and authority. And I suppose they will not find out an office for the Holy Ghost, whereunto he might be exalted, on the account whereof he might become God, seeing this would acknowledge him to be a person, which they deny. So he is called the "Comforter," John 16:7. A personal appellation this is also; and because he is the Comforter of all God's people, it can be the name of none but a divine person. In the same place, also, it is frequently affirmed, that he shall come, that he shall and will do such and such things; all of them declaring him to be a person.

Thirdly. He has personal properties assigned unto him; as a will, 1 Corinthians 12:11, "He divideth to every man severally as he will;" and understanding, 1 Corinthians 2:10, "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God;" — as also, all the actings that are ascribed unto him are all of them such as undeniably affirm personal properties in their principal and agent. For, —

Fourthly. He is the voluntary author of divine operations. He of old cherished the creation, Genesis 1:2, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." He formed and garnished the heavens. He inspired, acted, and spoke, in and by the prophets, Acts 28:25, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers;" 2 Peter 1:21, "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." He regenerates, enlightens, sanctifies, comforts, instructs, leads, guides, all the disciples of Christ, as the Scriptures everywhere testify. Now, all these are personal operations, and cannot, with any pretence of sobriety or consistency with reason, be constantly and uniformly assigned unto a quality or virtue. He is, as the Father and Son, God, with the properties of omniscience and omnipotence, of life, understanding, and will; and by these properties, works, acts, and produces effects, according to wisdom, choice, and power.

Fifthly. The same regard is had to him in faith, worship, and obedience, as unto the other persons of the Father and Son. For our being baptized into his name, is our solemn engagement to believe in him, to yield obedience to him, and to worship him, as it puts the same obligation upon us to the Father and the Son. So also, in reference unto the worship of the church, he commands that the ministers of it be separated unto himself; Acts 13:2, "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them;" Acts 13:4, "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed;" — which is comprehensive of all the religious worship of the church. And on the same account is he sinned against, as Acts 5:3-4, Acts 5:9; for there is the same reason of sin and obedience. Against whom a man may sin formally and ultimately, him he is bound to obey,

worship, and believe in. And this can be no quality, but God himself. For what may be the sense of this expression, “Thou hast lied to the efficacy of God in his operations” or how can we be formally obliged unto obedience to a quality? There must, then, an antecedent obligation unto faith, trust, and religious obedience be supposed, as the ground of rendering a person capable of being guilty of sin towards any; for sin is but a failure in faith, obedience, or worship. These, therefore, are due unto the Holy Ghost; or a man could not sin against him so signally and fatally as some are said to do in the foregoing testimonies.

I say, therefore, unto this part of our cause, as unto the other, that unless we will cast off all reverence of God, and, in a kind of atheism which, as I suppose, the prevailing wickedness of this age has not yet arrived unto, say that the Scriptures were written on purpose to deceive us, and to lead us into mistakes about, and misapprehensions of, what it proposes unto us, we must acknowledge the Holy Ghost to be a substance, a person, God; yet distinct from the Father and the Son. For to tell us, that he will come unto us, that he will be our comforter, that he will teach us, lead us, guide us; that he spoke of old in and by the prophets, — that they were moved by him, acted by him; that he “searcheth the deep things of God,” works as he will; that he appoints to himself ministers in the church; — in a word, to declare, in places innumerable, what he has done, what he does, what he will do, what he says and speaks, how he acts and proceeds, what his will is, and to warn us that we grieve him not, sin not against him, with things innumerable of the like nature; and all this while to oblige us to believe that he is not a person, a helper, a comforter, a searcher, a willer, but a quality in some especial operations of God, or his power and virtue in them, were to distract men, not to instruct them, and leave them no certain conclusion but this, that there is nothing certain in the whole book of God. And of no other tendency are these and the like imaginations of our adversaries in this matter. But let us briefly consider what is objected in general unto the truth we have confirmed:—

They say, then, “The Holy Spirit is said to be given, to be sent, to be bestowed on men, and to be promised unto them: and therefore it cannot be that he should be God; for how can any of these things he spoken of God?”

I answer, First, As the expressions do not prove him to be God (nor did ever any produce them to that purpose), yet they undeniably prove him to be a person, or an intelligent, voluntary agent, concerning whom they are spoken and affirmed. For how can the power of God, or a quality, as they speak, be said to be sent, to be given, to be bestowed on men? So that these very expressions are destructive to their imaginations.

Secondly. He who is God, equal in nature and being with the Father, may be promised, sent, and given, with respect unto the holy dispensation and condescension wherein he has undertaken the office of being our comforter and sanctifier.

Thirdly. The communications, distributions, impartings, divisions of the Spirit, which they mention, as they respect the object of them, or those on whom they were or are bestowed, denote only works, gifts, operations, and effects of the Spirit; the rule whereof is expressed, 1 Corinthians 12:11. He works them in whom he will, and as he will. And whether these and the like exceptions, taken from acting and operations which are plainly interpreted and explained in sundry places of Scripture, and evidently enough in the particular places where they are used, are sufficient to impeach the truth of the revelation before declared, all who have a due reverence of God, his

word, and truths, will easily understand and discern.

These things being declared in the Scripture concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, it is, moreover, revealed, "And these three are one;" that is, one God, jointly to be worshipped, feared, adored, believed in, and obeyed, in order unto eternal life. For although this does absolutely and necessarily follow from what is declared and has been spoken concerning the one God, or oneness of the Deity, yet, for the confirmation of our faith, and that we may not, by the distinct consideration of the three be taken off from the one, it is particularly declared that "these three are one;" that one, the one and same God. But whereas, as was said before, this can no otherwise be, the testimonies given whereunto are not so frequently multiplied as they are unto those other heads of this truth, which, through the craft of Satan, and the pride of men, might be more liable to exceptions. But yet they are clear, full, and distinctly sufficient for faith to acquiesce in immediately, without any other expositions, interpretations or arguments, beyond our understanding of the naked importance of the words. Such are they, of the Father [and] the Son, John 10:30, "I and my Father are one;" — Father, Son, and Spirit, 1 John 5:7, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." Matthew 28:19, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." For if those into whose name we are baptized be not one in nature, we are by our baptism engaged into the service and worship of more gods than one. For, as being baptized, or sacredly initiated, into or in the name of any one, does sacramentally bind us unto a holy and religious obedience unto him, and in all things to the avowing of him as the God whose we are, and whom we serve, as here we are in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; so if they are not one God, the blasphemous consequence before mentioned must unavoidably be admitted: which it also must upon the Socinian principle, who, whilst of all others they seem to contend most for one God, are indeed direct polytheists, by owning others with religious respect, due to God alone, which are not so.

Once more: It is revealed, also, that these three are distinct among themselves, by certain peculiar relative properties, if I may yet use thee terms. So that they are distinct, living, divine, intelligent, voluntary principles of operation or working, and that in and by internal acts one towards another, and in acts that outwardly respect the creation and the several parts of it. Now, this distinction originally lies in this, — that the Father begets the Son, and the Son is begotten of the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from both of them. The manner of these things, so far as they may be expressed unto our edification, shall afterwards be spoken to. At present it suffices, for the satisfaction and confirmation of our faith, that the distinctions named are clearly revealed in the Scripture, and are proposed to be its proper object in this matter:— Psalms 2:7, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Matthew 16:16, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." John 1:14, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." John 1:18, "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him." John 5:26, "For as the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself." 1 John 5:20, "The Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding." John 15:26, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me."

Now, as the nature of this distinction lies in their mutual relation one to another, so it is the foundation of those distinct actings and operations whereby the distinction itself is clearly

manifested and confirmed. And these actings, as was said, are either such as where one of them is the object of another's actings, or such as have the creature for their object. The first sort are testified unto, Psalms 110:1; John 1:18, John 5:20, John 17:5; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; Proverbs 8:22; most of which places have been before recited. They which thus know each other, love each other, delight in each other, must needs be distinct; and so are they represented unto our faith. And for the other sort of actings, the Scripture is full of the expressions of them. See Genesis 19:24; Zechariah 2:8; John 5:17; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 2 Corinthians 8:9. Our conclusion from the whole is, — that there is nothing more fully expressed in the Scripture than this sacred truth, that there is one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; which are divine, distinct, intelligent, voluntary, omnipotent principles of operation and working: which whosoever thinks himself obliged to believe the Scripture must believe; and concerning others, in this discourse, we are not solicitous. This is that which was first proposed, — namely, to manifest what is expressly revealed in the Scripture concerning God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; so as that we may duly believe in him, yield obedience unto him, enjoy communion with him, walk in his love and fear, and so come at length to be blessed with him for evermore. Nor does faith, for its security, establishment, and direction, absolutely stand in need of any farther exposition or explanation of these things, or the use of any terms not consecrated to the present service by the Holy Ghost. But whereas it may be variously assaulted by the temptations of Satan, and opposed by the subtle sophisms of men of corrupt minds; and whereas it is the duty of the disciples of Christ to grow in the knowledge of God, and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by an explicit apprehension of the things they do believe, so far as they are capable of them; this doctrine has in all ages of the church been explained and taught in and by such expressions, terms, and propositions, as farther declare what is necessarily included in it, or consequent unto it; with an exclusion of such things, notions, and apprehensions, as are neither the one nor the other. This I shall briefly manifest, and then vindicate the whole from some exceptions, and so close this dissertation.

[First.] That God is one, was declared and proved. Now this oneness can respect nothing but the nature, being, substance, or essence of God. God is one in this respect. Some of these words, indeed, are not used in the Scripture; but whereas they are of the same importance and signification, and none of them include any thing of imperfection, they are properly used in the declaration of the unity of the Godhead. There is mention in the Scripture of the Godhead of God, Romans 1:20, "His eternal power and Godhead;" and of his nature, by excluding them from being objects of our worship who are not God by nature, Galatians 4:8. Now, this natural godhead of God is his substance or essence, with all the holy, divine excellencies which naturally and necessarily appertain whereunto. Such are eternity, immensity, omnipotence, life, infinite holiness, goodness, and the like. This one nature, substance, or essence, being the nature, substance, or essence of God, as God, is the nature, essence, and substance of the Father, Son, and Spirit; one and the same absolutely in and unto each of them: for none can be God, as they are revealed to be, but by virtue of this divine nature or being. Herein consists the unity of the Godhead.

Secondly. The distinction which the Scripture reveals between Father, Son, and Spirit, is that whereby they are three hypostases or persons, distinctly subsisting in the same divine essence or being. Now, a divine person is nothing but the divine essence, upon the account of an especial property, subsisting in an especial manner. As in the person of the Father there is the divine essence and being, with its property of begetting the Son, subsisting in an especial manner as the

Father, and because this person has the whole divine nature, all the essential properties of that nature are in that person. The wisdom, the understanding of God, the will of God, the immensity of God, is in that person, not as that person, but as the person is God. The like is to be said of the persons of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Hereby each person having the understanding, the will, and power of God, becomes a distinct principle of operation; and yet all their actings ad extra being the actings of God, they are undivided, and are all the works of one, of the self-same God. And these things do not only necessarily follow, but are directly included, in the revelation made concerning God and his subsistence in the Scriptures.

[Thirdly.] There are, indeed, very many other things that are taught and disputed about this doctrine of the Trinity; as, the manner of the eternal generation of the Son, — of the essence of the Father, — of the procession of the Holy Ghost, and the difference of it from the generation of the Son, — of the mutual in-being of the persons, by reason of their unity in the same substance or essence, — the nature of their personal subsistence, with respect unto the properties whereby they are mutually distinguished; — all which are true and defensible against all the sophisms of the adversaries of this truth. Yet, because the distinct apprehension of them, and their accurate expression, is not necessary unto faith, as it is our guide and principle in and unto religious worship and obedience, they need not here be insisted on. Nor are those brief explications themselves before mentioned so proposed as to be placed immediately in the same rank or order with the original revelations before insisted on, but only are pressed as proper expressions of what is revealed, to increase our light and farther our edification. And although they cannot rationally be opposed or denied, nor ever were by any, but such as deny and oppose the things themselves as revealed, yet they that do so deny or oppose them, are to be required positively, in the first place, to deny or disapprove the oneness of the Deity, or to prove that the Father, or Son, or Holy Ghost, in particular, are not God, before they be allowed to speak one word against the manner of the explication of the truth concerning them. For either they grant the revelation declared and contended for, or they do not. If they do, let that concession be first laid down, namely, — that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are one God and then let it be debated, whether they are one in substance and three in persons, or how else the matter is to be stated. If they deny it, it is a plain madness to dispute of the manner of any thing, and the way of expressing it, whilst the thing itself is denied to have a being; for of that which is not, there is neither manner, property, adjunct, nor effect. Let, then, such persons as this sort of men are ready to attempt with their sophistry, and to amuse with cavils about persons, substances, subsistence, and the like, desire to know of them what it is that they would be at. What would they deny? what would they disapprove? Is it that God is one? or that the Father is God, or the Son, or the Holy Ghost is so? If they deny or oppose either of these, they have testimonies and instances of divine revelation, or may have, in a readiness, to confound the devil and all his emissaries. If they will not do so, if they refuse it, then let them know that it is most foolish and unreasonable to contend about expressions and explications of any thing, or doctrine, about the manner, respects, or relations of any thing, until the thing itself, or doctrine, be plainly confessed or denied. If this they refuse, as generally they do and will (which I speak upon sufficient experience), and will not be induced to deal openly, properly, and rationally, but will keep to their cavils and sophisms about terms and expressions, all farther debate or conference with them may justly, and ought, both conscientiously and rationally, to be refused and rejected. For these sacred mysteries of God and the gospel are not lightly to be made the subject of men's contests and disputations. But as we dealt before in particular, so here I shall give instances of the

sophistical exceptions that are used against the whole of this doctrine, and that with respect unto some late collections and representations of them; from whence they are taken up and used by many who seem not to understand the words, phrases, and expressions themselves, which they make use of. The sum of what they say in general is, — 1. “How can these things be? How can three be one, and one be three? Every person has its own substance; and, therefore, if there be three persons, there must be three substances, and so three Gods.”

Answer. Every person has distinctly its own substance, for the one substance of the Deity is the substance of each person, so it is still but one; but each person has not its own distinct substance, because the substance of them all is the same, as has been proved.

2. They say, “That if each person be God, then each person is infinite, and there being three persons, there must be three infinities.”

Ans. This follows not in the least; for each person is infinite as he is God. All divine properties, such as to be infinite is, belong not to the persons on the account of their personality, but on the account of their nature, which is one, for they are all natural properties.

3. But they say, “If each person be God, and that God subsist in three persons, then in each person there are three persons or Gods.”

Ans. The collusion of this sophism consists in that expression, “be God” and “that God.” In the first place the nature of God is intended; in the latter, a singular person. Place the words intelligibly, and they are thus:— If each person be God, and the nature of God subsists in three persons, then in each person there are three persons; and then the folly of it will be evident.

4. But they farther infer, “That if we deny the persons to be infinite, then an infinite being has a finite mode of subsisting, and so I know not what supposition they make hence; that seeing there are not three infinities, then the Father, Son, and Spirit are three infinities, that make up an infinity.” The pitiful weakness of this cavil is open to all; for finite and infinite are properties and adjuncts of beings, and not of the manner of the subsistence of any thing. The nature of each person is infinite, and so is each person because of that nature. Of the manner of their subsistence, finite and infinite cannot be predicated or spoken, no farther than to say, an infinite being does so subsist.

5. “But you grant,” say they, “that the only true God is the Father, and then if Christ be the only true God, he is the Father.”

Ans. We say, the only true God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We never say, the Scripture never says, that the Father only is the true God; whence it would follow, that, he that is the true God is the Father. But we grant the Father to be the only true God; and so we say is the Son also. And it does not at all thence follow that the Son is the Father; because, in saying the Father is the true God, we respect not his paternity, or his paternal relation to his Son, but his nature, essence, and being. And the same we affirm concerning the other persons. And to say, that because each person is God, one person must be another, is to crave leave to disbelieve what God has revealed, without giving any reason at all for their so doing. But this sophism being borrowed from another, namely, Crellius, [7] who insisted much upon it, I shall upon his account, and not on theirs, who, as far as I can apprehend, understand little of the intendment of it, remove it more fully

out of the way. It is proposed by him in way of syllogism, thus, "The only true God is the Father; Christ is the only true God: therefore he is the Father." Now, this syllogism is ridiculously sophistical. For, in a categorical syllogism the major proposition is not to be particular, or equipollent to a particular; for, from such a proposition, when any thing communicable to more is the subject of it, and is restrained unto one particular, nothing can be inferred in the conclusion. But such is this proposition here, The only true God is the Father. It is a particular proposition, wherein the subject is restrained unto a singular or individual predicate, though in itself communicable to more. Now, the proposition being so made particular, the terms of the subject or predicate are supposed reciprocal, — namely, that one God, and the Father, are the same; which is false, unless it be first proved that the name God is communicable to no more, or no other, than is the other term of Father: which to suppose, is to beg the whole question; for the only true God has a larger signification than the term of Father or Son. So that, though the only true God be the Father, yet every one who is true God is not the Father. Seeing, then, that the name of God here supplies the place of a species, though it be singular absolutely, as it respects the divine nature, which is absolutely singular and one, and cannot be multiplied, yet in respect of communication it is otherwise; it is communicated unto more, — namely, to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And, therefore, if any thing be intended to be concluded from hence, the proposition must be expressed according to what the subject requires, as capable of communication or attribution to more than one, as thus: Whoever is the only true God is the Father; — which proposition these persons and their masters shall never be able to prove.

I have given, in particular, these strictures thus briefly upon these empty sophisms; partly because they are well removed already, and partly because they are mere excriptions out of an author not long since translated into English, unto whom an entire answer may ere long be returned. That which at present shall suffice, is to give a general answer unto all these cavils, with all of the same kind which the men of these principles do usually insist upon.

1. "The things," they say, "which we teach concerning the Trinity, are contrary to reason;" and thereof they endeavour to give sundry instances, wherein the sum of the opposition which they make unto this truth does consist. But first, I ask, What reason is it that they intend? It is their own, the carnal reason of men. By that they will judge of these divine mysteries. The Scripture tells us, indeed, that the "spirit of a man which is in him knows the things of a man," — a man's spirit, by natural reason, may judge of natural things; — "but the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God," 1 Corinthians 2:11. So that what we know of these things, we must receive upon the revelation of the Spirit of God merely, if the apostle may be believed. And it is given unto men to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, — to some, and not to others; and unless it be so given them, they cannot know them. In particular, none can know the Father unless the Son reveal him. Nor will, or does, or can, flesh and blood reveal or understand Jesus Christ to be the Son of the living God, unless the Father reveal him, and instruct us in the truth of it, Matthew 16:17. The way to come to the acknowledgment of these things, is that described by the apostle, Ephesians 3:14-19, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints," etc. As also, Colossians 2:2-3, That ye might come "unto all riches of the full assurance of

understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." It is by faith and prayer, and through the revelation of God, that we may come to the acknowledgment of these things, and not by the carnal reasonings of men of corrupt minds.

2. What reason do they intend? If reason absolutely, the reason of things, we grant that nothing contrary unto it is to be admitted. But reason as it is in this or that man, particularly in themselves, we know to be weak, maimed, and imperfect; and that they are, and all other men, extremely remote from a just and full comprehension of the whole reason of things. Are they in such an estate as that their apprehension shall pass for the measure of the nature of all things? We know they are far from it. So that though we will not admit of any thing that is contrary to reason, yet the least intimation of a truth by divine revelation will make me embrace it, although it should be contrary to the reason of all the Socinians in the world. Reason in the abstract, or the just measure of the answering of one thing unto another, is of great moment: but reason — that is, what is pretended to be so, or appears to be so unto this or that man, especially in and about things of divine revelation — is of very small importance (of none at all) where it rises up against the express testimonies of Scripture, and these multiplied, to their mutual confirmation and explanation.

3. Many things are above reason, — that is, as considered in this or that subject, as men, — which are not at all against it. It is an easy thing to compel the most curious inquirers of these days to a ready confession hereof, by multitudes of instances in things finite and temporary; and shall any dare to deny but it may be so in things heavenly, divine, and spiritual? Nay, there is no concernment of the being of God, or his properties, but is absolutely above the comprehension of our reason. We cannot by searching find out God, we cannot find out the Almighty to perfection.

4. The very foundation of all their objections and cavils against this truth, is destructive of as fundamental principles of reason as are in the world. They are all, at best, reduced to this: It cannot be thus in things finite; the same being cannot in one respect be one, in another three, and the like: and therefore it is so in things infinite. All these reasonings are built upon this supposition, that that which is finite can perfectly comprehend that which is infinite, — an assertion absurd, foolish, and contradictory unto itself. Again; it is the highest reason in things of pure revelation to captivate our understandings to the authority of the Revealer; which here is rejected. So that by a loud, specious, pretence of reason, these men, by a little captious sophistry, endeavour not only to countenance their unbelief, but to evert the greatest principles of reason itself.

5. The objections these men principally insist upon, are merely against the explanations we use of this doctrine, — not against the primitive revelation of it, which is the principal object of our faith; which, how preposterous and irrational a course of proceeding it is, has been declared.

6. It is a rule among philosophers, that if a man, on just grounds and reasons, have embraced any opinion or persuasion, he is not to desert it merely because he cannot answer every objection against it. For if the objections wherewith we may be entangled be not of the same weight and importance with the reason on which we embraced the opinion, it is a madness to forego it on the account thereof. And much more must this hold amongst the common sort of Christians, in things spiritual and divine. If they will let go and part with their faith in any truth, because they are not able to answer distinctly some objections that may be made against it, they may quickly find

themselves disputed into atheism.

7. There is so great an intimation made of such an expression and resemblance of a Trinity in unity in the very works of the creation, as learned men have manifested by various instances, that it is most unreasonable to suppose that to be contrary to reason which many objects of rational consideration do more or less present unto our minds.

8. To add no more considerations of this nature, let any of the adversaries produce any one argument or grounds of reason, or those pretended to be such, against that that has been asserted, that has not already been baffled a thousand times, and it shall receive an answer; or a public acknowledgment, that it is indissoluble.

[4] Marcion was a native of Pontus, and a celebrated heretic, who lived and propagated his errors in the middle of the second century. He seems to have been engaged in teaching his heretical views at Rome in a.d. 139. He held two original and seminal principles, — the invisible and nameless one, “the Good;” and the visible God, “the Creator.” Epiphanius ascribes to him a third, — “the Devil.” The second, according to his system was the God of the Old Testament, the author of evil; and Christ was the Son of the first, sent by him to overthrow the dominion of God the Creator. He held that there was an irreconcilable opposition between God the Creator revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures, and the Christian God revealed in the New. One ground on which he maintained this preposterous notion is mentioned and explained by Dr Owen. Tertullian devotes five books to the errors of Marcion. — Ed.

[5] The two Sozzini were descended from an honourable family, and were both born at Siena, — Lælius, the uncle in 1525, and his nephew, Faustus, in 1539. The former became addicted to the careful study of the Scriptures, forsaking the legal profession, for which he had undergone some training; and acquiring, in furtherance of his favourite pursuit, the Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic languages. He is said to have been one of the forty individuals who held meetings for conference on religious topics, chiefly at Vicenza, and who sought to establish a purer creed, by rejection of certain doctrines on which all the divines of the Reformation strenuously insisted. To these Vicentine “colleges,” as the meetings were termed, Socinians have been accustomed to trace the origin of their particular tenets. Dr M’Crie, in his “History of the Reformation in Italy” (p. 154), assigns strong reasons for discarding this account of the origin of Socinianism as unworthy of credit. Lælius never committed himself during his life to a direct avowal of his sentiments, and was on terms of intercourse and correspondence with the leading Reformers; intimating, however, his scruples and doubts to such an extent, that his soundness in the faith was questioned, and he received an admonition from Calvin. He left Italy in 1547, travelled extensively, and at length settled in Zürich, where he died in 1562, leaving behind him some manuscripts, to which Dr Owen alludes, and of which his nephew availed himself, in reducing the errors held in common by uncle and nephew to the form of a theological system. The nephew, Faustus, had rather a chequered life. Tainted at an early age with the heresy of his uncle, he was under the necessity of quitting Siena; and after having held for twelve years some honourable offices in the court of the Duke of Tuscany, he repaired to Basle, and for three years devoted himself to theological study. The doubts of the uncle rose to the importance of convictions in the mind of the nephew. In consequence of divisions among the reformers of Transylvania, who had become Antitrinitarians, he was sent for by Blandrata, one of their leaders, to reason Francis David out of some views he

held regarding the adoration due to Christ. The result was, that David was cast into prison, where he died, — Socinus using no influence to restrain the Prince of Transylvania from such cruel intolerance; a fact too often forgotten by some who delight in reproaching Calvin for the death of Servetus. He visited Poland in 1579; but before his visit, the Antitrinitarians of that country had, by resolutions of their synods in 1563 and 1565, withdrawn from the communion of other churches, and published a Bible and a Catechism, — commonly known, from Rakau, the town in which it was first published, as the “Racovian Catechism.” Faustus Socinus was not at first well received by his Polish brethren; but he overcame their aversion to him, which at one time was so strong that he was nearly torn to pieces by a mob. He acquired considerable influence amongst them; managed to compose their differences, and became so popular, that his co-religionists adopted the name of Socinians, in preference to their old name of Unitarians. He died in 1604. His tracts were collected into two folio volumes of the “Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum.” Starting with mistaken views of private judgment, he inferred, from competency of reason to determine the credibility of doctrine; but his views differed from modern Rationalism, inasmuch as he adhered more to historical Christianity as the basis of his principles, and was by no means so free in impugning the authenticity of Scripture, when it bore against his system. His heresies assumed a shape more positive and definite than is generally fancied, and affected the doctrines of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ (on which his views were somewhat akin to Arianism), the necessity of an atonement, the nature of repentance, the efficacy of grace, the sacraments, and the eternity of future punishments. — Ed.

[6] A heresiarch of the third century, elevated to the bishopric of Antioch about a.d. 260. He is said to have indulged in haughty pomp and licentious practices, and was deposed by a council held in 269, chiefly for his heretical doctrines; — amongst which he held, that while the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God, they are not respectively distinct persons, and that the Son in particular had no distinct personality, but existed in God, and came to dwell in the man Jesus. — Ed.

[7] John Crell is not to be confounded with Samuel Crell, also a Socinian writer, who lived about a century later, and who seems to have been converted to the faith of our Lord’s divinity. The former was born in Franconia in 1590. He was rector of the University of Rakau in 1616. He had a controversy with Grotius, and was recognised as a leader among the Socinians. He died 1633, leaving behind him works that occupy four volumes in the “Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum.” — Ed.

## 01.06. Of the Person of Christ

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Of the Person of Christ The next head of opposition made by the men of this conspiracy against this sacred truth, is against the head of all truth, the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Socinians, indeed, would willingly put a better face or colour upon their error about the person of Christ than it will bear or endure to lie on it. For in their catechism, unto this question, "Is the Lord Jesus Christ purus homo, a mere man?" they answer, "By no means." "How then? Has he a divine nature also?" Which is their next question. To this they say, "By no means; for this is contrary to right reason." How, then, will these pretended masters of reason reconcile these things? For to us it seems, that if Christ has no other nature but that of man, he is as to his nature purus homo, a mere man, and no more. Why, they answer, that "he is not a mere man, because he was born of a virgin." Strange! that that should be an argument to prove him more than a man, which the Scripture, and all men in their right wits, grant to be an invincible reason to prove him to be a man, and, as he was born of her, no more. Romans 1:3, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" Romans 9:5, "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came." Galatians 4:4, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." But, say they, "He was endowed with the Spirit, wrought miracles, was raised from the dead, had all power given [him] in heaven and earth; for by these degrees he became to be God." But all men see that the inquiry is about the nature of Christ, and this answer is about his state and condition. Now this changes not his nature on the one hand, no more than his being humbled, poor, and dying, did on the other. This is the right reason we have to deal withal in these men! If a man should have inquired of some of them of old, whether Melchizedek were purus homo, a mere man, some of them would have said, "No, because he was the Holy Ghost;" some, "No, because he was the Son of God himself;" and some, "No, because he was an angel;" — for such foolish opinions have men fallen into. But how sottish soever their conceptions were, their answer to that inquiry would have been regular, because the question and answer respect the same subject in the same respect; but never any was so stupid as to answer, "He was not a mere man, (that is, by nature,) because he was a priest of the high God," — which respects his office and condition. Yet, such is the pretence of these men about the person of Christ, to incrustate and give some colour unto their foul misbelief; as supposing that it would be much to their disadvantage to own Christ only as a mere man, — though the most part of their disputes that they have troubled the Christian world withal have had no other design nor aim but to prove him so to be, and nothing else. I shall briefly, according to the method insisted on, first lay down what is the direct revelation which is the object of our faith in this matter, then express the revelation itself in the Scripture testimonies wherein it is recorded; and having vindicated some one or other of them from their exceptions, manifest how the doctrine hereof is farther explained, unto the edification of them that believe. That there is a second person, the Son of God, in the holy trin-unity of the Godhead, we have proved before. That this person did, of his infinite love and grace, take upon him our nature, — human nature, — so as that the divine and human nature should become one person, one Christ, God and man in one, so that whatever he does in and about our salvation, it is done by that one person, God and man, is revealed unto us in the

Scripture as the object of our faith: and this is that which we believe concerning the person of Christ. Whatever acts are ascribed unto him, however immediately performed, in or by the human nature, or in and by his divine nature, they are all the acts of that one person, in whom are both these natures. That this Christ, God and man, is, because he is God, and on the account of what he has done for us as man, to be believed in, worshipped with worship religious and divine, to be trusted and obeyed, this also is asserted in the Scripture. And these things are, as it were, the common notions of Christian religion, — the common principles of our profession, which the Scriptures also abundantly testify unto.

Isaiah 7:14, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel;” that is, he shall be God with us, or God in our nature. Not that that should be his name whereby he should be called in this world; but that this should be the condition of his person, — he should be “God with us,” God in our nature. So are the words expounded, Matthew 1:20-23, “That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which, being interpreted, is, God with us.” his name whereby he was to be called, was Jesus; that is, a Saviour. And thereby was accomplished the prediction of the prophet, that he should be Emmanuel; which, being interpreted, is, “God with us.” Now, a child born to be “God with us,” is God in that child taking our nature upon him; and no otherwise can the words be understood.

Isaiah 9:6, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and his name shall be called The mighty God.” The child that is born, the son that is given, is the mighty God; and as the mighty God, and a child born, or son given, he is the Prince of Peace, as he is there called, or our Saviour.

John 1:14, “The Word was made flesh.” That the Word was God, who made all things, he had before declared. Now, he affirms that this Word was made flesh. How? converted into flesh, into a man, so that he who was God ceased so to be, and was turned or changed into flesh, — that is, a man? Besides that this is utterly impossible, it is not affirmed. For the Word continued the Word still, although he was “made flesh,” or “made of a woman,” as it is elsewhere expressed, — or made of the seed of David, — or took our flesh or nature to be his own. Himself continuing God, as he was, became man also, which before he was not. “The Word was made flesh;” this is that which we believe and assert in this matter.

See John 3:13, John 3:31, John 6:62, John 16:28. All which places assert the person of Christ to have descended from heaven in the assumption of human nature, and ascended into heaven therein [in that nature] being assumed; and to have been in heaven as to his divine nature, when he was on the earth in the flesh that he had assumed.

Acts 20:28, “Feed the church of God, [8] which he has purchased with his own blood.” The person spoken of is said to be God absolutely, — “the church of God.” And this God is said to have blood of his own; — the blood of Jesus Christ, being the blood of him that was God, though not the blood of him as God; for God is a spirit. And this undeniably testifies to the unity of his person as God and man.

Romans 1:3-4, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Romans 9:5, "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." This is all we desire that we may believe without disturbance from the clamours of these men, — namely, that the same Christ, as concerning the flesh, came of the fathers, of David, and, in himself, is over all, God blessed for ever. This the Scripture asserts plainly; and why we should not believe it firmly, let these men give a reason when they are able.

Galatians 4:4, "God sent forth his Son made of a woman." He was his Son, and was made of a woman, according as he expresses it, Hebrews 10:5, "A body hast thou prepared me;" as also, Romans 8:3.

Php 2:5-7, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." It is the same Christ that is spoken of. And it is here affirmed of him, that he was "in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God." But is this all? Is this Jesus Christ God only? Does he subsist only in the form or nature of God? No; says the apostle, "He took upon him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man." That his being truly a man is expressed in these words our adversaries deny not; and we therefore believe that the same Jesus Christ is God also, because that is no less plainly expressed.

1 Timothy 3:16, "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God [9] was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels." It is a mystery, indeed; under which name it is despised now and reproached; nor are we allowed so to call it, but are reflected on as flying to mysteries for our defence. But we must take leave to speak in this matter according to His directions without whom we cannot speak at all. A mystery it is, and that a great mystery; and that confessedly so, by all that do believe. And this is, that "God was manifested in the flesh." That it is the Lord Christ who is spoken of, every one of the ensuing expressions do evince: "Justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." And this, also, is the substance of what we believe in this matter, — namely, that Christ is God manifest in the flesh; which we acknowledge, own, and believe to be true, but a great mystery, — yet no less great and sacred a truth notwithstanding.

Hebrews 2:14, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Hebrews 2:16, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." And this plainly affirms his pre-existence unto that assumption of our nature, and the unity of his person in it being so assumed.

1 John 3:16, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." He who was God laid down for a season and parted with that life which was his own, in that nature of ours which he had assumed. And that taking of our nature is called his "coming in the flesh;" which whose denies, is "not of God, but is the spirit of Antichrist," 1 John 4:3.

These are some of the places wherein the person of Christ is revealed unto our faith, that we may believe in the Son of God, and have eternal life. The method formerly proposed would require that

I should take off the general objections of the adversaries against this divine revelation, as also vindicate some peculiar testimonies from their exceptions; but because a particular opposition unto this truth has not, as yet, publicly and directly been maintained and managed by any that I know of among ourselves, though the denial of it be expressly included in what they do affirm, I shall leave the farther confirmation thereof unto some other occasion, if it be offered, and it be judged necessary. And this is that which the faith of believers rests in, as that which is plainly revealed unto them, — namely, that Jesus Christ is God and man in one person; and that all his actings in their behalf are the actings of him who is God and man; and that this Son of God, God and man, is to be believed in by them, and obeyed, that they [may] have eternal life.

What is farther added unto these express testimonies, and the full revelation of the truth contained in them in this matter, in way of explication educed from them, and suitable unto them, to the edification of the church, or information of the minds of believers in the right apprehension of this great mystery of God manifested in the flesh, may be reduced to these heads:—

1. That the person of the Son of God did not, in his assuming human nature to be his own, take an individual person of any one into a near conjunction with himself, but preventing the personal subsistence of human nature in that flesh which he assumed, he gave it its subsistence in his own person; whence it has its individuation and distinction from all other persons whatever. This is the personal union. The divine and human nature in Christ have but one personal subsistence; and so are but one Christ, one distinct personal principle of all operations, of all that he did or does as mediator. And this undeniably follows from what is declared in the testimonies mentioned. For the Word could not be made flesh, nor could he take on him the seed of Abraham, nor could the mighty God be a child born and given unto us, nor could God shed his blood for his church, but that the two natures so directly expressed must be united in one person; for otherwise, as they are two natures still, they would be two persons also.

2. Each nature thus united in Christ is entire, and preserves unto itself its own natural properties. For he is no less perfect God for being made man; nor no less a true, perfect man, consisting of soul and body, with all their essential parts, by that nature's being taken into subsistence with the Son of God. His divine nature still continues immense, omniscient, omnipotent, infinite in holiness, etc.; his human nature, finite, limited, and, before its glorification, subject to all infirmities of life and death that the same nature in others, absolutely considered, is obnoxious unto.

3. In each of these natures he acts suitably unto the essential properties and principles of that nature. As God, he made all things, upholds all things by the word of his power, fills heaven and earth, etc.; as man, he lived, hungered, suffered, died, rose, ascended into heaven: yet, by reason of the union of both these natures in the same person, not only his own person is said to do all these things, but the person expressed by the name which he has on the account of one nature, is said to do that which he did only in the other. So God is said to “redeem his church with his own blood,” and to “lay down his life for us,” and the Son of man to be in heaven when he was on the earth; all because of the unity of his person, as was declared. And these things do all of them directly and undeniably flow from what is revealed concerning his person, as before is declared.

[8] It involves a critical discussion of long standing, whether Kurion or Theou is the proper reading in this passage. By some recent editors of critical editions of the Greek Testament — Scholz, for instance — Theou is retained. Adhuc sub iudice lis est. — Ed.

[9] Since the days of Owen, this reading has been the subject of protracted and sifting discussion. At one time the current opinion had set against Theos as the reading, and the preference was given to hos. The results of later criticism decidedly converge in proof that the text as it stands in the received version is correct. — Ed.

## 01.07. Of the Satisfaction of Christ

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Of the Satisfaction of Christ The last thing to be inquired into, upon occasion of the late opposition to the great fundamental truths of the gospel, is the satisfaction of Christ. And the doctrine hereof is such as, I conceive, needs rather to be explained than vindicated. For it being the centre wherein most, if not all, the lines of gospel promises and precepts do meet, and the great medium of all our communion with God in faith and obedience, the great distinction between the religion of Christians and that of all others in the world, it will easily, on a due proposal, be assented unto by all who would be esteemed disciples of Jesus Christ. And whether a parcel of insipid cavils may be thought sufficient to obliterate the revelation of it, men of sober minds will judge and discern. For the term of satisfaction, we contend not about it. It does, indeed, properly express and connote that great effect of the death of Christ which, in the cause before us, we plead for. But yet, because it belongs rather to the explanation of the truth contended for, than is used expressly in the revelation of it, and because the right understanding of the word itself depends on some notions of law that as yet we need not take into consideration, I shall not, in this entrance of our discourse, insist precisely upon it, but leave it as the natural conclusion of what we shall find expressly declared in the Scripture. Neither do I say this as though I did decline the word, or the right use of it, or what is properly signified by it, but do only cast it into its proper place, answerable unto our method and design in the whole of this brief discourse.

I know some have taken a new way of expressing and declaring the doctrine concerning the mediation of Christ, with the causes and ends of his death, which they think more rational than that usually insisted on: but, as what I have yet heard of or seen in that kind, has been not only unscriptural, but also very irrational, and most remote from that accuracy whereunto they pretend who make use of it; so, if they should publish their conceptions, it is not improbable but that they may meet with a scholastical examination by some hand or other. Our present work, as has been often declared, is for the establishment of the faith of them who may be attempted, if not brought into danger, to be seducers by the sleights of some who lie in wait to deceive, and the glammers of others who openly drive the same design. What, therefore, the Scripture plainly and clearly reveals in this matter, is the subject of our present inquiry. And either in so doing, as occasion shall be offered, we shall obviate, or, in the close of it remove, those sophisms that the sacred truth now proposed to consideration has been attempted withal. The sum of what the Scripture reveals about this great truth, commonly called the “satisfaction of Christ,” may be reduced unto these ensuing heads:—

First. That Adam, being made upright, sinned against God; and all mankind, all his posterity, in him:— Genesis 1:27, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Genesis 3:11, “And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?” Ecclesiastes 7:29, “Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.” Romans 5:12, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Romans 5:18,

“Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” Romans 5:19, “By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.”

Secondly. That, by this sin of our first parents, all men are brought into an estate of sin and apostasy from God, and of enmity unto him:— Genesis 6:5, “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Psalms 51:5, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 8:7, “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Ephesians 4:18, “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart,” Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13.

Thirdly. That in this state all men continue in sin against God, nor of themselves can do otherwise:— Romans 3:10-12, “There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

Fourthly. That the justice and holiness of God, as he is the supreme governor and judge of all the world, require that sin be punished:— Exodus 34:7, “That will by no means clear the guilty.” Joshua 24:19, “He is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.” Psalms 5:4-6, “For thou art not a God that has pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing.” Habakkuk 1:13, “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity.” Isaiah 33:14, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” Romans 1:32, “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.” Romans 3:5-6, “Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?” 2 Thessalonians 1:6, “It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.” Hebrews 12:29, “For our God is a consuming fire;” from Deuteronomy 4:24.

Fifthly. That God, has also engaged his veracity and faithfulness in the sanction of the law, not to leave sin unpunished:— Genesis 2:17, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Deuteronomy 27:26, “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.” In this state and condition, mankind, had they been left without divine aid and help, must have perished eternally.

Sixthly. That God out of his infinite goodness, grace, and love to mankind, sent his only Son to save and deliver them out of this condition:— Matthew 1:21, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.” John 3:16-17, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” Romans 5:8, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” 1 John 4:9, “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” 1 John 4:10, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” 1 Thessalonians 1:10, “Even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

Seventhly. That this love was the same in Father and Son, acted distinctly in the manner that shall be afterward declared; so, vain are the pretences of men, who, from the love of the Father in this matter, would argue against the love of the Son, or on the contrary.

Eighthly. That the way, in general, whereby the Son of God, being incarnate, was to save lost sinners, was by a substitution of himself, according to the design and appointment of God, in the room of those whom he was to save:— 2 Corinthians 5:21, “He has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.” Galatians 3:13, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” Romans 5:7-8, “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 8:3, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.” 1 Peter 2:24, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” 1 Peter 3:18, “For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” All these expressions undeniably evince a substitution of Christ as to suffering in the stead of them whom he was to save; which, in general, is all that we intend by his satisfaction, — namely, that he was made “sin for us,” a “curse for us,” “died for us,” that is, in our stead, that we might be saved from the wrath to come. And all these expressions, as to their true, genuine importance, shall be vindicated as occasion shall require.

Ninthly. This way of his saving sinners is, in particular, several ways expressed in the Scriptures. As, —

1. That he offered himself a sacrifice to God, to make atonement for our sins; and that in his death and sufferings:— Isaiah 53:10, “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.” John 1:29, “Behold the lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.” Ephesians 5:2, “Christ hath loved us, and has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.” Hebrews 2:17, Was “a merciful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” Hebrews 9:11-14, “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls,” etc., “how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works?”

2. That he redeemed us by paying a price, a ransom, for our redemption:— Mark 10:45, “The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many.” 1 Corinthians 4:20, 1 Corinthians 7:23, “For ye are bought with a price.” 1 Timothy 2:6, “Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” Titus 2:14, “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.” 1 Peter 1:18-19, “For ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

3. That he bare our sins, or the punishment due unto them:— Isaiah 53:5-6, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:11, “For he shall bear

their iniquities.” 1 Peter 2:24, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”

4. That he answered the law and the penalty of it:— Romans 8:3-4, “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.” Galatians 3:13, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” Galatians 4:4-5, “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.”

5. That he died for sin, and sinners, to expiate the one, and in the stead of the other:— Romans 4:25, “He was delivered for our offences.” Romans 5:10, “When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” 1 Corinthians 15:3, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” 2 Corinthians 5:14, “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead,” 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10.

6. Hence, on the part of God it is affirmed, that “he spared him not, but delivered him up for us all,” Romans 8:32; and caused “all our iniquities to meet upon him,” Isaiah 53:6.

7. The effect hereof was, —

(1.) That the righteousness of God was glorified. Romans 3:25-26, “Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.” (2.) The law fulfilled and satisfied, as in the places before quoted, Romans 8:3-4; Galatians 3:13, Galatians 4:4-5. (3.) God reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Hebrews 2:17, “He made reconciliation for the sins of the people.” (4.) Atonement was made for sin. Romans 5:11, “By whom we have now received the atonement;” and peace was made with God. Ephesians 2:14, Ephesians 2:16, “For he is our peace, who has made both one, ... that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” (5.) [He] made an end of sin. Daniel 9:24, “To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.” The glory of God in all these things being exalted, himself was well pleased, righteousness and everlasting redemption, or salvation, purchased for sinners. Hebrews 9:14, For in that “the chastisement of our peace was upon him,” and that “by his stripes we are healed,” he being punished that we might go free, himself became a captain of salvation unto all that do obey him.

I have fixed on these particulars, to give every ordinary reader an instance how fully and plainly what he is to believe in this matter is revealed in the Scripture. And should I produce all the testimonies which expressly give witness unto these positions, it is known how great a part of the Bible must be transcribed. And these are the things which are indispensably required of us to believe, that we may be able to direct and regulate our obedience according to the mind and will of God. In the explanation of this doctrine unto farther edification, sundry things are usually insisted on, which necessarily and infallibly ensue upon the propositions of Scripture before laid down, and serve to beget in the minds of believers a due apprehension and right understanding of them; as, —

1. That God in this matter is to be considered as the chief, supreme, absolute rector and governor of all, — as the Lord of the law, and of sinners; but yet so as an offended ruler: not as an offended person, but as an offended ruler, who has right to exact punishment upon transgressions, and

whose righteousness of rule requires that he should so do.

2. That because he is righteous and holy, as he is the supreme Judge of all the world, it is necessary that he do right in the punishing of sin; without which the order of the creation cannot be preserved. For sin being the creature's deduction of itself from the order of its dependence upon, and obedience unto, the Creator and supreme Lord of all, without a reduction of it by punishment, confusion would be brought into the whole creation.

3. That whereas the law, and the sanction of it, is the moral or declarative cause of the punishment of sin, and it directly obliges the sinner himself unto punishment; God, as the supreme ruler, dispenses, not with the act of the law, but the immediate object, and substitutes another sufferer in the room of them who are principally liable unto the sentence of it, and are now to be acquitted or freed; — that so the law may be satisfied, requiring the punishment of sin; justice exalted, whereof the law is an effect; and yet the sinner saved.

4. That the person thus substituted was the Son of God incarnate, who had power so to dispose of himself, with will and readiness for it; and was, upon the account of the dignity of his person, able to answer the penalty which all others had incurred and deserved.

5. That God, upon his voluntary susception of this office, and condescension to this work, did so lay our sins, in and by the sentence of the law, upon him, that he made therein full satisfaction for whatever legally could be charged on them for whom he died or suffered.

6. That the special way, terms, and conditions, whereby and wherein sinners may be interested in this satisfaction made by Christ, are determined by the will of God, and declared in the Scripture.

These, and the like things, are usually insisted on in the explication or declaration of this head of our confession; and there is not any of them but may be sufficiently confirmed by divine testimonies. It may also be farther evinced, that there is nothing asserted in them, but what is excellently suited unto the common notions which mankind has of God and his righteousness; and that in their practice they answer the light of nature and common reason, exemplified in sundry instances among the nations of the world.

I shall therefore take one argument from some of the testimonies before produced in the confirmation of this sacred truth, and proceed to remove the objections that are commonly bandied against it.

If the Lord Christ, according to the will of the Father, and by his own counsel and choice, was substituted, and did substitute himself, as the mediator of the covenant, in the room and in the stead of sinners, that they might be saved, and therein bare their sins, or the punishment due unto their sins, by undergoing the curse and penalty of the law, and therein also, according to the will of God, offered up himself for a propitiatory, expiatory sacrifice, to make atonement for sin, and reconciliation for sinners, that the justice of God being appeased, and the law fulfilled, they might go free, or be delivered from the wrath to come; and if therein, also, he paid a real satisfactory price for their redemption; then he made satisfaction to God for sin: for these are the things that we intend by that expression of satisfaction. But now all these things are openly and fully witnessed unto in the testimonies before produced, as may be observed by suiting some of them unto the several particulars here asserted:—

As, 1. What was done in this matter, was from the will, purpose, and love of God the Father, Psalms 40:6-8; Hebrews 10:5-7; Acts 4:28; John 3:16; Romans 8:3.

2. It was also done by his own voluntary consent, Php 2:6-8.

3. He was substituted, and did substitute himself, as the mediator of the covenant, in the room and stead of sinners, that they may be saved, Hebrews 10:5-7, Hebrews 7:22; Romans 3:25-26, Romans 5:7-8.

4. And he did therein bear their sins, or the punishment due to their sins, Isaiah 53:6, Isaiah 53:11; 1 Peter 2:24. And this, —

5. By undergoing the curse and penalty of the law, Galatians 3:13; or the punishment of sin required by the law, 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 8:3.

6. Herein, also, according to the will of God, he offered up himself a propitiatory and expiatory sacrifice, to make atonement for sin and reconciliation for sinners, Ephesians 5:6; Romans 5:6; Hebrews 9:11-14; — which he did, that the justice of God being satisfied, and the law fulfilled, sinners might be freed from the wrath to come, Romans 3:25; 1 Thessalonians 1:10.

7. And hereby also he paid a real price of redemption for sin and sinners, 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 Corinthians 6:20. These are the things which we are to believe concerning the satisfaction of Christ. And our explication of this doctrine we are ready to defend when called whereunto. The consideration of the objections which are raised against this great fundamental truth shall close this discourse. And they are of two sorts:— First, In general, to the whole doctrine, as declared, or some of the more signal heads or parts of it. Secondly, Particular instances in this or that supposal, as consequences of the doctrine asserted. And, in general, —

First, they say “This is contrary to, and inconsistent with, the love, grace, mercy, and goodness of God, which are so celebrated in the Scripture as the principal properties of his nature and acts of his will wherein he will be glorified; — especially contrary to the freedom of forgiveness, which we are encouraged to expect, and commanded to believe.” And this exception they endeavour to firm by testimonies that the Lord is good and gracious and that he does freely forgive us our sins and trespasses.

Ans. 1. I readily grant that whatever is really contrary to the grace, goodness, and mercy of God, whatever is inconsistent with the free forgiveness of sin, is not to be admitted; for these things are fully revealed in the Scripture, and must have a consistency with whatever else is therein revealed of God or his will.

2. As God is good, and gracious, and merciful, so also he is holy, righteous, true, and faithful. And these things are no less revealed concerning him than the others; and are no less essential properties of his nature than his goodness and grace. And as they are all essentially the same in him, and considered only under a different habitude or respect, as they are exerted by acts of his will; so it belongs to his infinite wisdom, that the effects of them, though divers, and produced by divers ways and means, may no way be contrary one to the other, but that mercy be exercised without the prejudice of justice or holiness, and justice be preserved entire, without any obstruction to the exercise of mercy.

3. The grace and love of God, that in this matter the Scripture reveals to be exercised in order unto the forgiveness of sinners, consists principally in two things:— (1.) In his holy eternal purpose of providing a relief for lost sinners. He has done it, “to the praise of the glory of his grace,” Ephesians 1:6. (2.) In the sending his Son in the pursuit and for the accomplishment of the holy purpose of his will and grace. Herein most eminently does the Scripture celebrate the love, goodness, and kindness of God, as that whereby, in infinite and for ever to be adored wisdom and grace, he made way for the forgiveness of our sins. John 3:16, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” Romans 3:25, “Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.” Rom. v. 8, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Titus 3:4; 1 John 4:9-10. Herein consists that ever to be adored love, goodness, grace, mercy, and condescension of God. Add hereunto, that, in the act of causing our iniquities to meet on Christ, wherein he immediately intended the declaration of his justice, Romans 3:25, — “not sparing him, in delivering him up to death for us all,” Romans 8:32, — there was a blessed harmony in the highest Justice and most excellent grace and mercy. This grace, this goodness, this love of God towards mankind, towards sinners, our adversaries in this matter neither know nor understand; and so, indeed, what lies in them, remove the foundation of the whole gospel, and of all that faith and obedience which God requires at our hands.

4. Forgiveness, or the actual condonation of sinners, the pardon and forgiveness of sins, is free; but yet so as it is everywhere restrained unto a respect unto Christ, unto his death and blood-shedding. Ephesians 1:7, “We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Ephesians 4:32. “God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.” Romans 3:25-26, “God has set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.” It is absolutely free in respect of all immediate transactions between God and sinners.

(1.) Free on the part of God.

[1.] In the eternal purpose of it, when he might justly have suffered all men to have perished under the guilt of their sins. [2.] Free in the means that he used to effect it, unto his glory. 1st In the sending of his Son; and, 2dly In laying the punishment of our sin upon him. 3dly In his covenant with him, that it should be accepted on our behalf. 4thly In his tender and proposal of it by the gospel unto sinners, to be received without money or without price. 5thly In the actual condonation and pardon of them that do believe.

(2.) It is free on the part of the persons that are forgiven; in that, [1.] It is given and granted to them, without any satisfaction made by them for their former transgressions. [2.] Without any merit to purchase or procure it. [3.] Without any penal, satisfactory suffering here, or in a purgatory hereafter. [4.] Without any expectation of future recompense; or that, being pardoned, they should then make or give any satisfaction for what they had done before. And as any of these things would, so nothing else can, impeach the freedom of pardon and forgiveness. Whether, then, we respect the pardoner or the pardoned, pardon is every way free, — namely, on the part of God who forgives, and on the part of sinners that are forgiven. If God now has, besides all this, provided himself a lamb for a sacrifice; if he has, in infinite wisdom and grace, found out a way thus freely to forgive us our sins, to the praise and glory of his own holiness, righteousness, and severity against sin, as well as unto the unspeakable advancement of that grace, goodness, and bounty which he immediately exercises in the pardon of sin; are these men’s eyes evil, because

he is good? Will they not be contented to be pardoned, unless they may have it at the rate of despoiling God of his holiness, truth, righteousness, and faithfulness? And as this is certainly done by that way of pardon which these men propose, no reserve in the least being made for the glory of God in those holy properties of his nature which are immediately injured and opposed by sin; so that pardon itself, which they pretend so to magnify, having nothing to influence it but a mere arbitrary act of God's will, is utterly debased from its own proper worth and excellency. And I shall willingly undertake to manifest that they derogate no less from grace and mercy in pardon, than they do from the righteousness and holiness of God, by the forgiveness which they have feigned; and that in it both of them are perverted and despoiled of all their glory. But they yet say, "If God can freely pardon sin, why does he not do it without satisfaction? If he cannot, he is weaker and more imperfect than man, who can do so."

Ans. 1. God cannot do many things that men can do, — not that he is more imperfect than they, but he cannot do them on the account of his perfection. He cannot lie, he cannot deny himself, he cannot change; which men can do, and do every day.

2. To pardon sin without satisfaction, in him who is absolutely holy, righteous, true, and faithful, — the absolute, necessary, supreme Governor of all sinners, — the author of the law, and sanction of it, wherein punishment is threatened and declared, — is to deny himself, and to do what one infinitely perfect cannot do.

3. I ask of these men, why God does not pardon sins freely, without requiring faith, repentance, and obedience in them that are pardoned; yea, as the conditions on which they may be pardoned? For, seeing he is so infinitely good and gracious, cannot he pardon men without prescribing such terms and conditions unto them as he knows that men, and that incomparably the greatest number of them, will never come up unto, and so must of necessity perish for ever? Yea, but they say, "This cannot be: neither does this impeach the freedom of pardon; for it is certain that God does prescribe these things, and yet he pardons freely; and it would altogether unbecome the holy God to pardon sinners that continue so to live and die in their sins." But do not these men see that they have hereby given away their cause which they contend for? For, if a prescription of sundry things to the sinner himself, without which he shall not be pardoned, do not at all impeach, as they say, the freedom of pardon, but God may be said freely to pardon sin notwithstanding it; how shall the receiving of satisfaction by another, nothing at all being required of the sinner, have the least appearance of any such thing? If the freedom of forgiveness consists in such a boundless notion as these men imagine, it is certain that the prescribing of faith and repentance in and unto sinners, antecedently to their participation of it, is much more evidently contrary unto it, than the receiving of satisfaction from another who is not to be pardoned can to any appear to be. Secondly, if it be contrary to the holiness of God to pardon any without requiring faith, repentance, and obedience in them (as it is indeed), let not these persons be offended if we believe him when he so frequently declares it, that it was so to remit sin, without the fulfilling of his law and satisfaction of his justice.

Secondly, they say, "There is no such thing as justice in God requiring the punishment of sin; but that that which in him requires and calls for the punishment of sin is his anger and wrath; which expressions denote free acts of his will, and not any essential properties of his nature." So that God may punish sin or not punish it, at his pleasure; therefore there is no reason that he should require any satisfaction for sin, seeing he may pass it by absolutely as he pleases.

Ans. 1. Is it not strange, that the great Governor, the Judge of all the world, which, on the supposition of the creation of it, God is naturally and necessarily, should not also naturally be so righteous as to do right, in rendering unto every one according to his works?

2. The sanction and penalty of the law, which is the rule of punishment, was, I suppose, an effect of justice, — of God's natural and essential justice, and not of his anger or wrath. Certainly, never did any man make a law for the government of a people in anger. Draco's laws were not made in wrath, but according to the best apprehension of right and justice that he had, though said to be written in blood; and shall we think otherwise of the law of God?

3. Anger and wrath in God express the effects of justice, and so are not merely free acts of his will. This, therefore, is a tottering cause, that is built on the denial of God's essential righteousness. But it was proved before, and it is so elsewhere.

Thirdly, they say, "That the sacrifice of Christ was only metaphorically so," — that he was a metaphorical priest, not one properly so called; and, therefore, that his sacrifice did not consist in his death and blood-shedding, but in his appearing in heaven upon his ascension, presenting himself unto God in the most holy place not made with hands as the mediator of the new covenant.

Ans. 1. When once these men come to this evasion, they think themselves safe, and that they may go whither they will without control. For they say it is true, Christ was a priest; but only he was a metaphorical one. He offered sacrifice; but it was a metaphorical one. He redeemed us; but with a metaphorical redemption. And so we are justified thereon; but with a metaphorical justification. And so, for aught I know, they are like to be saved with a metaphorical salvation. This is the substance of their plea in this matter:— Christ was not really a priest; but did somewhat like a priest. He offered not sacrifice really; but did somewhat that was like a sacrifice. He redeemed us not really; but did somewhat that looked like redemption. And what these things are, wherein their analogy consists, what proportion the things that Christ has done bear to the things that are really so, from whence they receive their denomination, it is meet it should be wholly in the power of these persons to declare. But, —

2. What should hinder the death of Christ to be a sacrifice, a proper sacrifice, and, according to the nature, end, and use of sacrifices, to have made atonement and satisfaction for sin? (1.) It is expressly called so in the Scripture; wherein he is said to "offer himself, to make his soul an offering, to offer himself a sacrifice," Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 13:1, Hebrews 9:14, Hebrews 9:25-26, Hebrews 7:27. And he is himself directly said to be a "priest," or a sacrificer, Hebrews 2:17. And it is nowhere intimated, much less expressed, that these things are not spoken properly, but metaphorically only. (2.) The legal sacrifices of the old law were instituted on purpose to represent and prepare the way for the bringing in of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, so to take away the sin of the world; and is it not strange, that true and real sacrifices should be types and representations of that which was not so? On this supposition, all those sacrifices are but so many seductions from the right understanding of things between God and sinners. (3.) Nothing is wanting to render it a proper propitiatory sacrifice. For, — [1.] There was the person offering, and that was Christ himself, Hebrews 9:14, "He offered himself unto God." "He," that is, the sacrificer, denotes the person of Christ, God and man; and "himself," as the sacrifice, denotes his human nature whence God is said to "purchase his church with his own blood," Acts 20:28; for he offered

himself through the eternal Spirit: so that, — [2.] There was the matter of the sacrifice, which was the human nature of Christ, soul and body. “His soul was made an offering for sin,” Isaiah 53:10; and his body, “The offering of the body of Jesus Christ,” Hebrews 10:10, — his blood especially, which is often synecdochically mentioned for the whole. (4.) His death had the nature of a sacrifice: for, — [1.] Therein were the sins of men laid upon him, and not in his entrance into heaven; for “he bare our sins in his own body on the tree,” 1 Peter 2:24. God made our sins then “to meet upon him,” Isaiah 53:6; which gives the formality unto any sacrifices. “Quod in ejus caput sit,” is the formal reason of all propitiatory sacrifices, and ever was so, as is expressly declared, Leviticus 16:21-22; and the phrase of “bearing sin,” of “bearing iniquity,” is constantly used for the undergoing of the punishment due to sin. [2.] It had the end of a proper sacrifice; it made expiation of sin, propitiation and atonement for sin, with reconciliation with God; and so took away that enmity that was between God and sinners, Hebrews 1:3; Romans 3:25-26; Hebrews 2:17-18, Hebrews 5:10; Romans 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. And although God himself designed, appointed, and contrived, in wisdom, this way of reconciliation, as he did the means for the atoning of his own anger towards the friends of Job, commanding them to go unto him, and with him offer sacrifices for themselves, which he would accept, Job 42:7-8; yet, as he was the supreme Governor, the Lord of all, attended with infinite justice and holiness, atonement was made with him, and satisfaction to him thereby.

What has been spoken may suffice to discover the emptiness and weakness of those exceptions which in general these men make against the truth before laid down from the Scripture. A brief examination of some particular instances, wherein they seek not so much to oppose as to reproach the revelation of this mystery of the gospel, shall put a close to this discourse. It is said, then, —

First, “That if this be so, then it will follow that God is gracious to forgive, and yet [it is] impossible for him, unless the debt be fully satisfied.”

Ans. 1. I suppose the confused and abrupt expression of things here, in words scarcely affording a tolerable sense, is rather from weakness than captiousness; and so I shall let the manner of the proposal pass. 2. What if this should follow, that God is gracious to forgive sinners, and yet will not, cannot, on the account of his own holiness and righteousness, actually forgive any, without satisfaction and atonement made for sin? The worst that can be hence concluded is, that the Scripture is true, which affirms both these in many places. 3. This sets out the exceeding greatness of the grace of God in forgiveness, that when sin could not be forgiven without satisfaction, and the sinner himself could no way make any such satisfaction, he provided himself a sacrifice of atonement, that the sinner might be discharged and pardoned. 4. Sin is not properly a debt, for then it might be paid in kind, by sin itself; but is called so only because it binds over the sinner to punishment, which is the satisfaction to be made for that which is properly a transgression, and improperly only a debt. It is added, —

Secondly, “Hence it follows, that the finite and impotent creature is more capable of extending mercy and forgiveness than the infinite and omnipotent Creator.”

Ans. 1. God being essentially holy and righteous, having engaged his faithfulness in the sanction of the law, and being naturally and necessarily the governor and ruler of the world, the forgiving of sin without satisfaction would be no perfection in him, but an effect of impotency and imperfection,

— a thing which God cannot do, as he cannot lie, nor deny himself. 2. The direct contrary of what is insinuated is asserted by this doctrine; for, on the supposition of the satisfaction and atonement insisted on, not only does God freely forgive, but that in such a way of righteousness and goodness, as no creature is able to conceive or express the glory and excellency of it. And to speak of the poor having pardons of private men, upon particular offences against themselves, who are commanded so to do, and have no right nor authority to require or exact punishment, nor is any due upon the mere account of their own concernment, in comparison with the forgiveness of God, arises out of a deep ignorance of the whole matter under consideration.

Thirdly. It is added by them, that hence it follows, “That God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son to save it; and yet that God stood off in high displeasure, and Christ gave himself as a complete satisfaction to offended justice.”

Ans. Something these men would say, if they knew what or how; for, —

1. That God so loved the world as to give his only Son to save it, is the expression of the Scripture, and the foundation of the doctrine whose truth we contend for. 2. That Christ offered himself to make atonement for sinners, and therein made satisfaction to the justice of God, is the doctrine itself which these men oppose, and not any consequent of it. 3. That God stood off in high displeasure, is an expression which neither the Scripture uses, nor those who declare this doctrine from thence, nor is suited unto divine perfections, or the manner of divine operations. That intended seems to be, that the righteousness and law of God required the punishment due to sin to be undergone, and thereby satisfaction to be made unto God; which is no consequent of the doctrine, but the doctrine itself.

Fourthly. It is yet farther objected, “That if Christ made satisfaction for sin, then he did it either as God or as man, or as God and man.”

Ans. 1. As God and man. Acts 20:28, “God redeemed his church with his own blood.” 1 John 3:16, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.” Hebrews 9:14. 2. This dilemma is proposed, as that which proceeds on a supposition of our own principles, that Christ is God and man in one person: which, indeed, makes the pretended difficulty to be vain, and a mere effect of ignorance; for all the mediatory acts of Christ being the acts of his person, must of necessity be the acts of him as God and man. 3. There is yet another mistake in this inquiry; for satisfaction is in it looked on as a real act or operation of one or the other nature in Christ, when it is the apotelesma or effect of the actings, the doing and suffering of Christ — the dignity of what he did in reference unto the end for which he did it. For the two natures are so united in Christ as not to have a third compound principle of physical acts and operations thence arising; but each nature acts distinctly according to its own being and properties, yet so as what is the immediate act of either nature is the act of him who is one in both; from whence it has its dignity. 4. The sum is, that in all the mediatory actions of Christ we are to consider, — (1.) The agent; and that is the person of Christ. (2.) The immediate principle by which and from which the agent works; and that is the natures in the person. (3.) The actions; which are the effectual operations of either nature. (4.) The effect or work with respect to God and us; and this relates unto the person of the agent, the Lord Christ, God and man. A blending of the natures into one common principle of operation, as the compounding of mediums unto one end, is ridiculously supposed in this matter. But yet, again; it is pretended that sundry consequences, irreligious and irrational, do ensue upon a supposition of the

satisfaction pleaded for. What, then, are they?

First. "That it is unlawful and impossible for God Almighty to be gracious and merciful, or to pardon transgressors."

Ans. The miserable, confused misapprehension of things which the proposal of this and the like consequences does evidence, manifests sufficiently how unfit the makers of them are to manage controversies of this nature. For, — 1. It is supposed that for God to be gracious and merciful, or to pardon sinners, are the same; which is to confound the essential properties of his nature with the free acts of his will. 2. Lawful or unlawful, are terms that can with no tolerable sense be used concerning any properties of God, all which are natural and necessary unto his being; as goodness, grace, and mercy, in particular, are. 3. That it is impossible for God to pardon transgressors, according to this doctrine, is a fond imagination; for it is only a declaration of the manner how he does it. 4. As God is gracious and merciful, so also he is holy, and righteous, and true; and it became him, or was every way meet for him, in his way of exercising grace and mercy towards sinners, to order all things so, as that it might be done without the impeachment of his holiness, righteousness, and truth. It is said, again, —

Secondly, "That God was inevitably compelled to this way of saving men; — the highest affront to his uncontrollable nature."

Ans. 1. Were the authors of these exceptions put to declare what they mean by God's "uncontrollable nature," they would hardly disentangle themselves with common sense; such masters of reason are they, indeed, whatever they would fain pretend to be. Controllable or uncontrollable, respects acting and operations, not beings or natures. 2. That, upon the principle opposed by these men, God was inevitably compelled to this way of saving men, is a fond and childish imagination. The whole business of the salvation of men, according unto this doctrine, depends on a mere free, sovereign act of God's will, exerting itself in a way of infinite wisdom, holiness, and grace. 3. The meaning of this objection (if it has either sense or meaning in it) is, that God, freely purposing to save lost sinners, did it in a way becoming his holy nature and righteous law. What other course Infinite Wisdom could have taken for the satisfaction of his justice we know not; — that justice was to be satisfied, and that this way it is done we know and believe.

Thirdly. They say it hence follows, "That it is unworthy of God to pardon, but not to inflict punishment on the innocent, or require a satisfaction where there was nothing due."

Ans. 1. What is worthy or unworthy of God, himself alone knows, and of men not any, but according to what he is pleased to declare and reveal; but, certainly, it is unworthy any person, pretending to the least interest in ingenuity or use of reason, to use such frivolous instances in any case of importance, which have not the least pretence of argument in them, but what arises from a gross misapprehension or misrepresentation of a doctrine designed to opposition. 2. To pardon sinners, is a thing becoming the goodness and grace of God; to do it by Christ, that which becomes them, and his holiness and righteousness also, Ephesians 1:6-7; Romans 3:25. 3. The Lord Christ was personally innocent; but "he who knew no sin was made sin for us," 2 Corinthians 5:21. And as the mediator and surety of the covenant, he was to answer for the sins of them whom he undertook to save from the wrath to come, by giving himself a ransom for them, and making his soul an offering for their sin. 4. That nothing is due to the justice of God for sin, — that is, that sin

does not in the justice of God deserve punishment, — is a good, comfortable doctrine for men that are resolved to continue in their sins whilst they live in this world. The Scripture tells us that Christ paid what he took not; that all our iniquities were caused to meet upon him; that he bare them in his own body on the tree; that his soul was made an offering for sin, and thereby made reconciliation or atonement for the sins of the people. If these persons be otherwise minded, we cannot help it.

Fourthly. It is added, that “This doctrine does not only disadvantage the true virtue and real intent of Christ’s life and death, but entirely deprives God of that praise which is owing to his greatest love and goodness.”

Ans. 1. I suppose that this is the first time that this doctrine fell under this imputation; nor could it possibly be liable unto this charge from any who did either understand it or the grounds on which it is commonly opposed. For there is no end of the life or death of Christ which the Socinians themselves admit of, but it is also allowed and asserted in the doctrine now called in question. Do they say, that he taught the truth, or revealed the whole mind and will of God concerning his worship and our obedience? We say the same. Do they say, that by his death he bare testimony unto and confirmed the truth which he had taught? It is also owned by us. Do they say, that in what he did and suffered he set us an example that we should labour after conformity unto? It is what we acknowledge and teach: only, we say that all these things belong principally to his prophetic office. But we, moreover, affirm and believe, that as a priest, or in the discharge of his sacerdotal office, he did, in his death and sufferings, offer himself a sacrifice to God, to make atonement for our sins, — which they deny; and that he died for us, or in our stead, that we might go free: without the faith and acknowledgment whereof no part of the gospel can be rightly understood. All the ends, then, which they themselves assign of the life and death of Christ are by us granted; and the principal one, which gives life and efficacy to the rest, is by them denied. Neither, — 2. Does it fall under any possible imagination, that the praise due unto God should be eclipsed hereby. The love and kindness of God towards us is in the Scripture fixed principally and fundamentally on his “sending of his only begotten Son to die for us.” And, certainly, the greater the work was that he had to do, the greater ought our acknowledgment of his love and kindness to be. But it is said, —

Fifthly, “That it represents the Son as more kind and compassionate than the Father; whereas if both be the same God, then either the Father is as loving as the Son, or the Son as angry as the Father.”

Ans. 1. The Scripture refers the love of the Father unto two heads:— (1.) The sending of his Son to die for us, John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9-10. (2.) In choosing sinners unto a participation of the fruits of his love, Ephesians 1:3-6. The love of the Son is fixed signally on his actual giving himself to die for us, Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:25; Revelation 1:5. What balances these persons have got to weigh these loves in, and to conclude which is the greatest or most weighty, I know not. 2. Although only the actual discharge of his office be directly assigned to the love of Christ, yet his condescension in taking our nature upon him, — expressed by his mind, Php 2:5-8, and the readiness of his will, Psalms 40:8, — does eminently comprise love in it so. 3. The love of the Father in sending of the Son was an act of his will; which being a natural and essential property of God, it was so far the act of the Son also, as he is partaker of the same nature, though eminently, and in respect of order, it was peculiarly the act of the Father. 4. The anger of God

against sin is an effect of his essential righteousness and holiness, which belong to him as God; which yet hinders not but that both Father, and Son, and Spirit, acted love towards sinners. They say again, —

Sixthly, “It robs God of the gift of his Son for our redemption, which the Scriptures attribute to the unmerited love he had for the world, in affirming the Son purchased that redemption from the Father, by the gift of himself to God as our complete satisfaction.”

Ans. 1. It were endless to consider the improper and absurd expressions which are made use of in these exceptions, as here; the last words have no tolerable sense in them, according to any principles whatever. 2. If the Son’s purchasing redemption for us, procuring, obtaining it, do rob God of the gift of his Son for our redemption, the Holy Ghost must answer for it; for, having “obtained” for us, or procured, or purchased, “eternal redemption,” is the word used by himself, Hebrews 9:12; and to deny that he has laid down his life a “ransom” for us, and has “bought us with a price,” is openly to deny the gospel. 3. In a word, the great gift of God consisted in giving his Son to obtain redemption for us. 4. Herein he “offered himself unto God,” and “gave himself for us;” and if these persons are offended herewithal, what are we, that we should withstand God? They say, —

Seventhly, “Since Christ could not pay what was not his own, it follows, that in the payment of his own the case still remains equally grievous; since the debt is not hereby absolved or forgiven, but transferred only; and, by consequence, we are no better provided for salvation than before, owing that now to the Son which was once owing to the Father.”

Ans. The looseness and dubiousness of the expressions here used makes an appearance that there is something in them, when indeed there is not. There is an allusion in them to a debt and a payment, which is the most improper expression that is used in this matter; and the interpretation thereof is to be regulated by other proper expressions of the same thing. But to keep to the allusion:— 1. Christ paid his own, but not for himself, Daniel 9:26. 2. Paying it for us, the debt is discharged; and our actual discharge is to be given out according to the ways and means, and upon the conditions, appointed and constituted by the Father and Song of Solomon. 3. When a debt is so transferred as that one is accepted in the room and obliged to payment in the stead of another, and that payment is made and accepted accordingly, all law and reason require that the original debtor be discharged. 4. What on this account we owe to the Son, is praise, thankfulness, and obedience, and not the debt which he took upon himself and discharged for us, when we were nonsolvent, by his love. So that this matter is plain enough, and not to be involved by such cloudy expressions and incoherent discourse, following the metaphor of a debt. For if God be considered as the creditor, we all as debtors, and being insolvent, Christ undertook, out of his love, to pay the debt for us, and did so accordingly, which was accepted with God; it follows that we are to be discharged upon God’s terms, and under a new obligation unto his love who has made this satisfaction for us: which we shall eternally acknowledge. It is said, —

Eighthly, “It no way renders men beholden or in the least obliged to God, since by their doctrine he would not have abated us, nor did he Christ, the least farthing; so that the acknowledgments are peculiarly the Son’s: which destroys the whole current of Scripture testimony for his goodwill towards men. O the infamous portraiture this doctrine draws of the infinite goodness! Is this your retribution, O injurious satisfactionists?”

Ans. This is but a bold repetition of what, in other words, was mentioned before over and over. Wherein the love of God in this matter consisted, and what is the obligation on us unto thankfulness and obedience, has been before also declared; and we are not to be moved in fundamental truths by vain exclamations of weak and unstable men. It is said, —

Ninthly, “That God’s justice is satisfied for sins past, present, and to come, whereby God and Christ have lost both their power of enjoining godliness and prerogative of punishing disobedience; for what is once paid, is not revocable, and if punishment should arrest any for their debts, it argues a breach on God or Christ’s part, or else that it has not been sufficiently solved, and the penalty complete sustained by another.”

Ans. The intention of this pretended consequence of our doctrine is that, upon a supposition of satisfaction made by Christ, there is no solid foundation remaining for the prescription of faith, repentance, and obedience, on the one hand; or of punishing them who refuse so to obey, believe, or repent, on the other. The reason of this inference insinuated seems to be this, — that sin being satisfied for, cannot be called again to an account. For the former part of the pretended consequence, — namely, that on this supposition there is no foundation left for the prescription of godliness, — I cannot discern any thing in the least looking towards the confirmation of it in the words of the objection laid down. But these things are quite otherwise; as is manifest unto them that read and obey the gospel. For, — 1. Christ’s satisfaction for sins acquits not the creature of that dependence on God, and duty which he owes to God, which (notwithstanding that) God may justly, and does prescribe unto him, suitable to his own nature, holiness, and will. The whole of our regard unto God does not lie in an acquitment from sin. It is, moreover, required of us, as a necessary and indispensable consequence of the relation wherein we stand unto him, that we live to him and obey him, whether sin be satisfied for or no. The manner and measure hereof are to be regulated by his prescriptions, which are suited to his own wisdom and our condition; and they are now referred to the heads mentioned, of faith, repentance, and new obedience. 2. The satisfaction made for sin being not made by the sinner himself, there must of necessity be a rule, order, and law-constitution, how the sinner may come to be interested in it, and made partaker of it. For the consequent of the freedom of one by the suffering of another is not natural or necessary, but must proceed and arise from a law-constitution, compact, and agreement. Now, the way constituted and appointed is that of faith, or believing, as explained in the Scripture. If men believe not, they are no less liable to the punishment due to their sins than if no satisfaction at all were made for sinners. And whereas it is added, “Forgetting that every one must appear before the judgement-seat of Christ, to receive according to the things done in the body, yea, and every one must give an account of himself to God;” closing all with this, “But many more are the gross absurdities and blasphemies that are the genuine fruits of this so confidently-believed doctrine of satisfaction:” I say it is, — 3. Certain that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive according to the things done in the body; and therefore, woe will be unto them at the great day who are not able to plead the atonement made for their sins by the blood of Christ, and an evidence of their interest therein by their faith and obedience, or the things done and wrought in them and by them whilst they were in the body here in this world. And this it would better become these persons to betake themselves unto the consideration of, than to exercise themselves unto an unparalleled confidence in reproaching those with absurdities and blasphemies who believe the Deity and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who died for us; which is the

ground and bottom of all our expectation of a blessed life and immortality to come. The removal of these objections against the truth, scattered of late up and down in the hands of all sorts of men, may suffice for our present purpose. If any amongst these men judge that they have an ability to manage the opposition against the truth as declared by us, with such pleas, arguments, and exceptions, as may pretend an interest in appearing reason, they shall, God assisting, be attended unto. With men given up to a spirit of railing or reviling, — though it be no small honour to be reproached by them who reject with scorn the eternal Deity of the Son of God, and the satisfactory atonement that he made for the sins of men, — no person of sobriety will contend. And I shall farther only desire the reader to take notice, that though these few sheets were written in a few hours, upon the desire and for the satisfaction of some private friends, and therefore contain merely an expression of present thoughts, without the least design or diversion of mind towards accuracy or ornament; yet the author is so far confident that the truth, and nothing else, is proposed and confirmed in them, that he fears not but that an opposition to what is here declared will be removed, and the truth reinforced in such a way and manner as may not be to its disadvantage.

## 01.08. Appendix

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An Appendix The preceding discourse, as has been declared, was written for the use of ordinary Christians, or such as might be in danger to be seduced, or any way entangled in their minds, by the late attempts against the truths pleaded for: for those to whom the dispensation of the gospel is committed, are “debtors both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise,” Rom. i. 14. It was therefore thought meet to insist only on things necessary, and such as their faith is immediately concerned in; and not to immix therewithal any such arguments or considerations as might not, by reason of the terms wherein they are expressed, be obvious to their capacity and understanding. Unto plainness and perspicuity, brevity was also required, by such as judged this work necessary. That design, we hope, is answered, and now discharged in some useful measure. But yet, because many of our arguments on the head of the satisfaction of Christ depend upon the genuine signification and notion of the words and terms wherein the doctrine of it is delivered, — which, for the reasons before mentioned, could not conveniently be discussed in the foregoing discourse, — I shall here, in some few instances, give an account of what farther confirmation the truth might receive by a due explanation of them. And I shall mention here but few of them, because a large dissertation concerning them all is intended [10] in another way.

First. For the term of satisfaction itself, it is granted that in this matter it is not found in the Scripture, — that is, it is not so *rhētōs*, or syllabically, — but it is *kata to pragma anantirrhētōs*; the thing itself intended is asserted in it, beyond all modest contradiction. Neither, indeed, is there in the Hebrew language any word that does adequately answer unto it; no, nor yet in the Greek. As it is used in this cause, *engū*, which is properly “sponsio,” or “fide-jussio,” in its actual discharge, makes the nearest approach unto it: *hikanon poiein* is used to the same purpose. But there are words and phrases, both in the Old Testament and in the New, that are equipollent unto it, and express the matter or thing intended by it: as in the Old are, *שָׂדֵק* [Psalms 49:9], and *שָׂדֵק*. This last word we render “satisfaction,” Numbers 35:32-33, where God denies that any compensation, sacred or civil, shall be received to free a murderer from the punishment due unto him; which properly expresses what we intend: “Thou shalt admit of no satisfaction for the life of a murderer.” In the New Testament: *Lutron*, *antilutron*, *apolutrōsis*, *timō*, *hilasmos* and the verbs, *lutroun*, *apolutroun*, *exagorazein*, *hilaskesthai*, are of the same importance, and some of them accommodated to express the thing intended, beyond that which has obtained in vulgar use. For that which we intended hereby is, the voluntary obedience unto death, and the passion or suffering, of our Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, whereby and wherein he offered himself through the eternal Spirit, for a propitiatory sacrifice, that he might fulfil the law, or answer all its universal postulata; and as our sponsor, undertaking our cause, when we were under the sentence of condemnation, underwent the punishment due to us from the justice of God, being transferred on him; whereby having made a perfect and absolute propitiation or atonement for our sins, he procured for us deliverance from death and the curse, and a right unto life everlasting. Now, this is more properly expressed by some of the words before mentioned than by that of satisfaction;

which yet, nevertheless, as usually explained, is comprehensive, and no way unsuited to the matter intended by it. In general, men by this word understand either “reparationem offensæ” or “solutionem debiti,” — either “reparation made for offence given unto any,” or “the payment of a debt.” “Debitum” is either “criminale” or “pecuniarium;” that is, either the obnoxiousness of a man to punishment for crimes or the guilt of them, in answer to that justice and law which he is necessarily liable and subject unto; or unto a payment or compensation by and of money, or what is valued by it; — which last consideration, neither in itself nor in any seasonings from an analogy unto it, can in this matter have any proper place. Satisfaction is the effect of the doing or suffering what is required for the answering of his charge against faults or sins, who has right, authority, and power to require, exact, and inflict punishment for them. Some of the schoolmen define it by “Voluntaria redditio æquivalentis indebiti;” of which more elsewhere. The true meaning of, “to satisfy, or make satisfaction,” is “tantum facere aut pati, quantum satis sit justè irato ad vindictam.” This satisfaction is impleaded as inconsistent with free remission of sins, — how causelessly we have seen. It is so far from it, that it is necessary to make way for it, in case of a righteous law transgressed, and the public order of the universal Governor and government of all disturbed. And this God directs unto, Leviticus 4:31, “The priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.” This atonement was a legal satisfaction, and it is by God himself premised to remission or pardon. And Paul prays Philemon to forgive Onesimus, though he took upon himself to make satisfaction for all the wrong or damage that he had sustained, Philemon 1:18-19. And when God was displeased with the friends of Job, he prescribes a way to them, or what they shall do, and what they shall get done for them, that they might be accepted and pardoned, Job 42:7-8, “The Lord said unto Eliphaz, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly.” He plainly enjoins an atonement, that he might freely pardon them. And both these, — namely, satisfaction and pardon, with their order and consistency, — were solemnly represented by the great institution of the sacrifice of the scape-goat. For after all the sins of the people were put upon him, or the punishment of them transferred unto him in a type and representation, with “Quod in ejus caput sit,” the formal reason of all sacrifices propitiatory, he was sent away with them; denoting the oblation or forgiveness of sin, after a translation made of its punishment, Leviticus 26:21-22. And whereas it is not expressly said that that goat suffered, or was slain, but was either ■■■■■■■■■■, “hircus,” apompaios, “a goat sent away,” or was sent to a rock called Azazel, in the wilderness, as Vatablus [11] and Oleaster, [12] with some others, think (which is not probable, seeing, though it might then be done whilst the people were in the wilderness of Sinai, yet could not, by reason of its distance, when the people were settled in Canaan, be annually observed), it was from the poverty of the types, whereof no one could fully represent that grace which it had particular respect unto. What, therefore, was wanting in that goat was supplied in the other, which was slain as a sin-offering, verses 15, 16.

Neither does it follow, that, on the supposition of the satisfaction pleaded for, the freedom, pardon, or acquitment of the person originally guilty and liable to punishment must immediately and “ipso facto” ensue. It is not of the nature of every solution or satisfaction, that deliverance must “ipso facto” follow. And the reason of it is, because this satisfaction, by a succedaneous substitution of one to undergo punishment for another, must be founded in a voluntary compact and agreement. For there is required unto it a relaxation of the law, though not as unto the punishment to be

inflicted, yet as unto the person to be punished. And it is otherwise in personal guilt than in pecuniary debts. In these, the debt itself is solely intended, the person only obliged with reference whereunto. In the other, the person is firstly and principally under the obligation. And therefore, when a pecuniary debt is paid, by whomsoever it be paid, the obligation of the person himself unto payment ceases “ipso facto.” But in things criminal, the guilty person himself being firstly, immediately, and intentionally under the obligation unto punishment, when there is introduced by compact a vicarious solution, in the substitution of another to suffer, though he suffer the same absolutely which those should have done for whom he suffers, yet, because of the acceptance of his person to suffer, which might have been refused, and could not be admitted without some relaxation of the law, deliverance of the guilty persons cannot ensue “ipso facto,” but by the intervention of the terms fixed on in the covenant or agreement for an admittance of the substitution.

It appears, from what has been spoken, that, in this matter of satisfaction, God is not considered as a creditor, and sin as a debt; and the law as an obligation to the payment of that debt, and the Lord Christ as paying it; — though these notions may have been used by some for the illustration of the whole matter, and that not without countenance from sundry expressions in the Scripture to the same purpose. But God is considered as the infinitely holy and righteous author of the law, and supreme governor of all mankind, according to the tenor and sanction of it. Man is considered as a sinner, a transgressor of that law, and thereby obnoxious and liable to the punishment constituted in it and by it, — answerably unto the justice and holiness of its author. The substitution of Christ was merely voluntary on the part of God, and of himself, undertaking to be a sponsor, to answer for the sins of men by undergoing the punishment due unto them. To this end there was a relaxation of the law as to the persons that were to suffer, though not as to what was to be suffered. Without the former, the substitution mentioned could not have been admitted; and on supposition of the latter, the suffering of Christ could not have had the nature of punishment, properly so called: for punishment relates to the justice and righteousness in government of him that exacts it and inflicts it; and this the justice of God does not but by the law. Nor could the law be any way satisfied or fulfilled by the suffering of Christ, if, antecedently thereunto, its obligation, or power of obliging unto the penalty constituted in its sanction unto sin, was relaxed, dissolved, or dispensed withal. Nor was it agreeable to justice, nor would the nature of the things themselves admit of it, that another punishment should be inflicted on Christ than what we had deserved; nor could our sin be the impulsive cause of his death; nor could we have had any benefit thereby. And this may suffice to be added unto what was spoken before as to the nature of satisfaction, so far as the brevity of the discourse whereunto we are confined will bear, or the use whereunto it is designed does require.

Secondly. The nature of the doctrine contended for being declared and cleared, we may, in one or two instances, manifest how evidently it is revealed, and how fully it may be confirmed or vindicated. It is, then, in the Scripture declared, that “Christ died for us,” — that he “died for our sins;” and that we are thereby delivered. This is the foundation of Christian religion as such. Without the faith and acknowledgment of it, we are not Christians. Neither is it, in these general terms, at all denied by the Socinians. It remains, therefore, that we consider, — 1. How this is revealed and affirmed in the Scripture; and, 2. What is the true meaning of the expressions and propositions wherein it is revealed and affirmed; — for in them, as in sundry others, we affirm that

the satisfaction pleaded for is contained.

1. Christ is said to die, to give himself, to be delivered, *huper hōmōn*, etc., for us, for his sheep, for the life of the world, for sinners, John 6:51, John 10:15; Romans 5:6; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 2:9. Moreover, he is said to die *huper hamartiōn*, for sins, 1 Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 1:4. The end whereof, everywhere expressed in the gospel, is, that we might be freed, delivered, and saved. These things, as was said, are agreed unto and acknowledged.

2. The meaning and importance, we say, of these expressions is, that Christ died in our room, place, or stead, undergoing the death or punishment which we should have undergone in the way and manner before declared. And this is the satisfaction we plead for. It remains, therefore, that from the Scripture, the nature of the things treated of, the proper signification and constant use of the expressions mentioned, the exemplification of them in the customs and usages of the nations of the world, we do evince and manifest that what we have laid down is the true and proper sense of the words wherein this revelation of Christ's dying for us is expressed; so that they who deny Christ to have died for us in this sense do indeed deny that he properly died for us at all, — whatever benefits they grant that by his death we may obtain.

First. We may consider the use of this expression in the Scripture either indefinitely or in particular instances.

Only we must take this along with us, that dying for sins and transgressions, being added unto dying for sinners or persons, makes the substitution of one in the room and stead of another more evident than when the dying of one for another only is mentioned. For whereas all predicates are regulated by their subjects, and it is ridiculous to say that one dies in the stead of sins, the meaning can be no other but the bearing or answering of the sins of the sinner in whose stead any one dies. And this is, in the Scripture, declared to be the sense of that expression, as we shall see afterward. Let us, therefore, consider some instances:—

John 11:50, The words of Caiaphas' counsel are, *Sumpherei hōmin, hina heis anthrōpos apothanē huper tou laou, kai mē holon to ethnos apolētai*; — "It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not:" which is expressed again, John 18:14, *apolesthai huper tou laou*, "perish for the people." Caiaphas feared that if Christ were spared, the people would be destroyed by the Romans. The way to free them, he thought, was by the destruction of Christ; him, therefore, he devoted to death, in lieu of the people. As he, —

"Unum pro multi dabitur caput;" —

"One head shall be given for many." Not unlike the speech of Otho the emperor in Xiphilin, [13] when he slew himself to preserve his army; for when they would have persuaded him to renew the war after the defeat of some of his forces, and offered to lay down their lives to secure him, he replied, that he would not, adding this reason, *Polu gar pou kai kreitton, kai dikaioteron estin, hena huper pantōn ē pollous huper henos apolesthai*; — "It is far better, and more just, that one should perish or die for all, than that many should perish for one;" that is, one in the stead of many, that they may go free; or as another speaks, —

*Exon pro patēn mian huperdounai thanein* —

"Let one be given up to die in the stead of all."



that she considered none in the company, but him who said, *hanc tibi pro morte Daretis Persolvo*, [Cyp. lib. iii.] And these things are added on the occasion of the instances mentioned in the Scripture; whence it appears, that this expression of “dying for another” has no other sense or meaning, but only dying instead of another, undergoing the death that he should undergo, that he might go free. And in this matter of Christ’s dying for us, add that he so died for us as that he also died for our sins; that is, either to bear their punishment or to expiate their guilt (for other sense the words cannot admit); and he that pretends to give any other sense of them than that contended for, which implies the whole of what lies in the doctrine of satisfaction, “*erit mihi magnus Apollo*,” even he who was the author of all ambiguous oracles of old. And this is the common sense of “*mori pro alio*,” and “*pati pro alio*,” or “*pro alio discrimen capitis subire*,” a substitution is still denoted by that expression: which suffices us in this whole cause, for we know both into whose room he came, and what they were to suffer. Thus Entellus, killing and sacrificing an ox to Eryx in the stead of Dares, whom he was ready to have slain, when he was taken from him, expresses himself, —

“*Hanc tibi, Eryx, meliorem animam pro morte Daretis Persolvo.*”

*Æn.* v. 483.

He offered the ox, a better sacrifice, in the stead of Dares, taken from him. So, —

“*Fratrem Pollux alterna morte redemit.*”

*Æn.* vi. 121. And they speak so not only with respect unto death, but wherever any thing of duration or suffering is intended. So the angry master in the comedian:—

“*Verberibus cæsum te in pistrinum, Dave, dedam usque ad necem;*

*Ea lege atque omine, ut, si te inde exemerim, ego pro te molam.*”

*Ter. And.*, i. 2, 28.

He threatened his servant, to cast him into prison, to be macerated to death with labour; and that with this engagement, that if he ever let him out, he would grind for him; — that is, in his stead. Wherefore, without offering violence to the common means of understanding things amongst men, another sense cannot be affixed to these words. The nature of the thing itself will admit of no other exposition than that given unto it; and it has been manifoldly exemplified among the nations of the world. For suppose a man guilty of any crime, and on the account thereof to be exposed unto danger from God or man, in a way of justice, wrath, or vengeance, and when he is ready to be given up unto suffering according unto his demerit, another should tender himself to die for him, that he might be freed; let an appeal be made to the common reason and understandings of all men, whether the intention of this his dying for another be not, that he substitutes himself in his stead, to undergo what he should have done, however the translation of punishment from one to another may be brought about and asserted; for at present we treat not of the right, but of the fact, or the thing itself. And to deny this to be the case as to the sufferings of Christ, is, as far as I can understand, to subvert the whole gospel.

Moreover, as was said, this has been variously exemplified among the nations of the world; whose acting in such cases, because they excellently shadow out the general notion of the death of

Christ for others, for sinners, and are appealed unto directly by the apostle to this purpose, Romans 5:7-8, I shall in a few instances reflect upon. Not to insist on the voluntary surrogations of private persons, one into the room of another, mutually to undergo dangers and death for one another, as before mentioned, I shall only remember some public transactions, in reference unto communities, in nations, cities, or armies. Nothing is more celebrated amongst the ancients than this, that when they supposed themselves in danger, from the anger and displeasure of their gods, by reason of any guilt or crimes among them, some one person should either devote himself or be devoted by the people, to die for them; and therein to be made, as it were, an expiatory sacrifice. For where sin is the cause, and God is the object respected; the making of satisfaction by undergoing punishment, and expiating of sin by a propitiatory sacrifice, are but various expressions of the same thing. Now, those who so devoted themselves, as was said, to die in the stead of others, or to expiate their sins, and turn away the anger of God they feared, by their death, designed two things in what they did. First, That the evils which were impendent on the people, and feared, might fall on themselves, so that the people might go free. Secondly, That all good things which themselves desired, might be conferred on the people. Which things have a notable shadow in them of the great expiatory sacrifice, concerning which we treat, and expound the expressions wherein it is declared. The instance of the Decii is known; of whom the poet, —

“Plebeiæ Deciorum animæ, plebeian fuerunt Nomina; pro totis legionibus Hi tamen, et pro Omnibus auxiliis, atque omni plebe Latina, Sufficiunt Diis infernis.” The two Decii, father and son, in imminent dangers of the people, devoted themselves, at several times, unto death and destruction. And says he, “Sufficiunt Diis infernis,” — they satisfied for the whole people; adding the reason whence so it might be:—

“Pluris denim Decii quam qui servantur ab illis.”

Juv., Sat. vii. 254–8.

They were more to be valued than all that were saved by them. And the great historian does excellently describe both the actions and expectations of the one and the other in what they did. The father, when the Roman army, commanded by himself and Titus Manlius, was near a total ruin by the Latins, called for the public priest, and caused him, with the usual solemn ceremonies, to devote him to death for the deliverance and safety of the army; after which, making his requests to his gods, (“dii quorum est potestas nostrorum hostiumque,”) “the gods that had power over them and their adversaries,” as he supposed, he cast himself into death by the swords of the enemy. “Conspectus ab utrâque acie aliquanto augustior humano visu, sicut cœlo missus piaculum omnis deorum iræ, qui pestam ab suis aversam in hostes ferret;” — “He was looked on by both armies as one more august than a man, as one sent from heaven, to be a piacular sacrifice, to appease the anger of the gods, and to transfer destruction from their own army to the enemies,” Liv., Hist. viii. 9. His son, in like manner, in a great and dangerous battle against the Gauls and Samnites, wherein he commanded in chief, devoting himself, as his father had done, added unto the former solemn deprecations:— “Præ se agere sese formidinem ac fugam, cædemque ac cruorem, cœlestium, inferorum iras,” lib. x. 28; — “That he carried away before him, from those for whom he devoted himself, ‘fear and flight, slaughter and blood, the anger of the celestial and infernal gods.’” And as they did, in this devoting of themselves, design “averruncare malum, deûm iras, lustrare populum, aut exercitum, piaculum fieri,” or perips<sup>ma</sup>, anath<sup>ma</sup>, apokatharma, — “expiare

crimina, scelus, reatum,” or to remove all evil from others, by taking it on themselves in their stead; so also they thought they might, and intended in what they did, to covenant and contract for the good things they desired. So did these Decii; and so is Menœceus reported to have done, when he devoted himself for the city of Thebes, in danger to be destroyed by the Argives. So Papinius [Stattius] introduces him treating with his gods:—

“*Armorum superi, tuque ô qui funere tanto Indulges mihi, Phœbe, mori, date gaudia Thebis, Quæ pepigi, et toto quæ sanguine prodigus emi.*”

[Theb. x. 757.]

He reckoned that he had not only repelled all death and danger from Thebes, by his own, but that he had purchased joy, in peace and liberty, for the people. And where there was none in public calamities that did voluntarily devote themselves, the people were wont to take some obnoxious person, to make him execrable, and to lay on him, according to their superstition, all the wrath of their gods, and so give him up to destruction. Such the apostle alludes unto, Romans 9:3; 1 Corinthians 4:9, 1 Corinthians 4:13. So the Massilians were wont to expiate their city by taking a person devoted, imprecating on his head all the evil that the city was obnoxious unto, casting him into the sea with these words, *Peripsma hēmōn genou*; — “Be thou our expiatory sacrifice.” To which purpose were the solemn words that many used in their expiatory sacrifices, as Herodotus [lib ii. 39] testifies of the Egyptians, bringing their offerings. Says he, *Katarentai de, tade legontes, tēsi kephalōsin ei ti melloi sphisī toisi thuōusi, Aiguptō tē sunapas kakon genesthai es kephalōn tautōn trapesthai*; — “They laid these imprecations on their heads, that if any evil were happening towards the sacrificer, or all Egypt, let it be all turned and laid on this devoted head.” And the persons whom they thus dealt withal, and made execrate, were commonly of the vilest of the people, or such as had rendered themselves detestable by their own crimes; whence was the complaint of the mother of Menœceus upon her son’s devoting himself:—

“*Lustralemne feris, ego te puer inclyte Thebis, Devotumque caput, vilis seu mater alebam?*” —

[Stattius, Theb. x. 788, 789.]

I have recounted these instances to evince the common intention, sense, and understanding of that expression, of one dying for another, and to manifest by examples what is the sense of mankind about any one’s being devoted and substituted in the room of others, to deliver them from death and danger; the consideration whereof, added to the constant use of the words mentioned in the Scripture, is sufficient to found and confirm this conclusion:—

“That whereas it is frequently affirmed in the Scripture, that ‘Christ died for us, and for our sins,’ etc., to deny that he died and suffered in our stead, undergoing the death whereunto we were obnoxious, and the punishment due to our sins, is, — if we respect in what we say or believe the constant use of those words in the Scripture, the nature of the thing itself concerning which they are used, the uncontrolled use of that expression in all sorts of writers in expressing the same thing, with the instances and examples of its meaning and intention among the nations of the world, — to deny that he died for us at all.”

Neither will his dying for our good or advantage only, in what way or sense soever, answer or make good or true the assertion of his dying for us and our sins. And this is evident in the death of





## **02.0.1. A discourse concerning evangelical love, church peace, and unity**

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A discourse concerning evangelical love, church peace, and unity; by John Owen with the occasions and reasons of the present differences and divisions about things sacred and religious.

## 02.0.2. Table of Contents

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### 02.0.3. Prefatory note.

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Prefatory note. In 1672, the year in which this “Discourse concerning Evangelical Love, Church-Peace, and Unity” was published, an indulgence had been extended to Dissenters; and, encouraged by this capricious gleam of better feeling on the part of the Government, Dr Owen endeavours in the following discourse to exhibit the religious principles of his denomination, under a light fitted to disarm hostility and allay the rancour with which they had been long regarded.

He shows, Chap. 1:, that it was not from want of Christian love they continued in a state of separation from the Church of England. After illustrating the obligation of Christian love to all mankind in general, 2:, he proceeds to establish the claims of the Church of Christ on our affections, considering it first as the spiritual body of Christ, secondly, in regard to its outward profession, and, thirdly, as consisting of professors of the gospel ranged under particular churches. In a position of dissent from the Church of England, there is no repudiation of it as a true church of Christ, and no sin of schism from the church, viewed as catholic and invisible, or as visibly professing the fundamental truths of the gospel, 3: The causes of schisms and divisions are specified, such as erroneous views of evangelical unity, and the neglect of various duties incumbent upon the churches for the preservation of order and purity, 4: In the last chapter the grounds and reasons of nonconformity are stated.

He first proves that the imposition of terms of communion not required by divine law is inconsistent with the rule of communion established by Christ himself; secondly, with the practice of the apostles; thirdly, with the doctrine of Scripture on the duty of churches and the liberty of Christians in these matters; fourthly, with certain special facts in the history of the primitive churches; and, fifthly, he argues that if unscriptural terms of communion are allowed, it would follow that no rule of communion had been fixed by Christ himself, — an inference which would set aside the authority of Christ over the church. He next illustrates in what respects the terms of communion in the Church of England are unscriptural; — in the subscription to the liturgy which is exacted; in the canonical submission required to the polity of the church; in the observance of unscriptural ceremonies; and in the oath of canonical obedience, which must be taken by its ministers. He shows farther, that in conforming to the usages and polity of the Established Church, consent would be given, to the omission of sundry duties which Christ expressly enjoins, — such as the obligation of every minister of the gospel to take the immediate care of the flock whereof he is the overseer, and the responsibility under which he lies to admit to sacramental privileges those only who make “a credible profession of repentance, faith, and obedience.” The scope of the argument is to produce the conviction that the guilt of schism rests not with those who refuse, but with those who exact compliance with unscriptural terms of communion.

Mr Orme states that this work of Owen, though very excellent, has not attained the celebrity and circulation of his other writings, “perhaps in consequence of its being without his name.” He does not seem to have been aware that though the work on its first issue was anonymous, within a twelvemonth after its publication it was issued anew with the name of the author on the title-page.

The value of this discourse would be less appreciated when the controversy between the Established Church and Dissenters assumed another phase. The charge of schism, with the refutation of which it is occupied, soon lost all power, when, in the course of discussion, it came to be felt that this question depended entirely on the validity of the grounds on which secession from any church took place. And to this change in the nature of the discussion, more than to the circumstance that the work was at first published anonymously, may be attributed the comparative neglect into which, in later times, the treatise had fallen. It contains, nevertheless, much important matter, and the spirit which it breathes throughout is admirable. — Ed.

## 02.01. Chapter 01.

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### Chapter 01.

Complaints of want of love and unity among Christians, how to be managed, and whence fruitless — Charge of guilt on some, why now removed, and for whose sakes — Personal miscarriages of any not excused — Those who manage the charge mentioned not agreed. The great differences that are in the world amongst professors of the gospel, about things relating to the worship of God, do exercise more or less the minds of the generality of men of all sorts; for, either in themselves or their consequences, they are looked on to be of great importance. Some herein regard principally that disadvantageous influence which they are supposed to have into men's spiritual and eternal concerns; others, that aspect which they fancy them to have upon the public peace and tranquility of this world. Hence, in all ages, such divisions have caused "great thoughts of heart," Judges 5:15, especially because it is very difficult to make a right judgment either of their nature or their tendency. But generally by all they are looked on as evil; — by some, for what they are in themselves; by others, from the disadvantage which they bring (as they suppose) unto their secular interests. Hence there are amongst many great complaints of them, and of that want of love which is looked on as their cause. And, indeed, it seems not only to be in the liberty, but to be the duty of every man soberly to complain of the evils which he would but cannot remedy; for such complaints, testifying a sense of their evil and a desire of their cure, can be no more than what love unto the public good requireth of us. And if in any case this may be allowed, it must be so in that of divisions about sacred things or the worship of God, with their causes and manner management amongst men: for it will be granted that the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the progress of the gospel, with the edification and peace of the church, are deeply concerned in them, and highly prejudiced by them; and in these things all men have, if not an equal, yet such a special interest as none can forbid them the due consideration of. No man, therefore, ought to be judged as though he did transgress his rule, or go beyond his line, who soberly expresseth his sense of their evil and of the calamities wherewith they are attended. Yet must it not be denied but that much prudence and moderation are required unto the due management of such complaints; for those which either consist in, or are accompanied with, invectives against the persons or ways of others, instead of a rational discourse of the causes of such divisions and their remedies, do not only open, inflame, and irritate former wounds, but prove matters of new contention and strife, to their great increase. Besides, in the manifold divisions and differences of this nature amongst us, all men are supposed to be under an adherence unto some one party or other. Herein every man stands at the same distance from others as they do from him. Now, all complaints of this kind carry along with them a tacit justification of those by whom they are made; for no man can be so profligate as to judge himself, and the way of religious worship wherein he is engaged, to be the cause of blamable divisions amongst Christians, and yet continue therein: reflections, therefore, of guilt upon others they are usually replenished withal. But if those are not attended with evident light and unavoidable conviction, because they proceed from persons supposed not indifferent, yea, culpable in this very matter more or less themselves, by them whom they reflect upon, they

are generally turned into occasions of new exasperations and contests. And hence it is come to pass, that although all good men do on all occasions bewail the want of love, forbearance, and condescension that is found among professors of the gospel, and the divisions which follow thereon, yet no comfortable nor advantageous effects do thence ensue. Yea, not only is all expectation of that blessed fruit, which a general serious consent unto such complaints might produce, as yet utterly frustrated, but the small remainders of love and peace amongst us are hazarded and impaired, by mutual charges of the want and loss of them on the principles and practices of each other. We have, therefore, need of no small watchfulness and care, lest in this matter it fall out with us as it did with the Israelites of old on another occasion, 2 Samuel 19:41-43. For when they had, by a sinful sedition, cast out David from amongst them, and from reigning over them, after a little while, seeing their folly and iniquity, they assembled together with one consent to bring him home again; but in the very beginning of their endeavours to this purpose, falling into a dispute about which of the tribes had the greatest interest in him, they not only desisted from their first design, but fell into another distemper of no less dangerous importance than what they were newly delivered from. It must be acknowledged that there hath been a sinful decay of love among professors of the gospel in this nation, if not a violent casting of it out, by such prejudices and corrupt affections as wherewith it is wholly inconsistent. And it would be a matter of no small lamentation if, upon the blooming of a design for its recovery and reduction, with all its train of forbearance, condescension, gentleness, and peace, if any such design there be, by contests about the occasions and causes of its absence, with too much fierceness in our own vindication, and pleas of a special interest in it above others, new distempers should be raised, hazarding its everlasting exclusion. In this state of things we have hitherto contented ourselves with the testimony of our own hearts unto the sincerity of our desires, as to walk in love and peace with all men, so to exercise the fruits of them on all occasions administered unto us. And as this alone we have thus far opposed unto all those censures and reproaches which we have undergone to the contrary, so therewithal have we supported ourselves under other things which we have also suffered. Farther to declare our thoughts and principles, in and about the worship of God, than they are evidenced and testified unto by our practice, we have hitherto forborne, lest the most moderate claims of an especial interest in the common faith and love of Christians should occasion new contests and troubles unto ourselves and others. And we have observed, that sometimes an over-hasty endeavour to extinguish flames of this nature hath but increased and diffused them, when, perhaps, if left alone, their fuel would have failed, and themselves expired. Besides, a peaceable practice, especially if accompanied with a quiet bearing of injuries, gives a greater conviction to unprejudiced minds of peaceable principles and inclinations than any verbal declaration, whose sincerity is continually obnoxious to the blast of evil surmises. In a resolution, therefore, to the same purpose we had still continued, had we not so openly and frequently been called on either to vindicate our innocency or to confess and acknowledge our evil.

One of these, we hope, is the aim and tendency of all those charges or accusations, for want of love, peaceableness, and due compliance with others, of being the authors and fomenters of schisms and divisions, that have been published against us, on the account of our dissent from some constitutions of the church of England: for we do not think that any good men can please themselves in merely accusing their brethren, whereby they add to the weight of their present troubles, and evidently expose them unto more; for every charge of guilt on those who are already under sufferings gives new encouragement and fierceness to the minds of them from whom they

suffer. And as no greater encouragement can be given unto men to proceed in any way wherein they are engaged than by their justification in what they have already done; so the only justification of those who have stirred up persecution against others consists in charging guilt on them that are persecuted. As, therefore, we shall readily acknowledge any evil in our persons, principles, or ways, which we are or may be convinced of; so the sober vindication of truth and innocency, that none of the ways of God be evil spoken of by reason of us, is a duty in the care whereof we are no less concerned. Yea, did we design and directly endeavour our own justification, we should do no more than the prime dictates of the law of nature, and the example of some of the best of men, will give us a sufficient warrant for. Besides, the clearing of private persons, especially if they are many, from undue charges and false accusations, belongs unto public good, that those who have the administration of it committed unto them may not be misled to make a wrong judgment concerning what they have to do, as David was in the case of Mephibosheth, upon the false suggestions of Ziba, 2 Samuel 16:4.

Neither could we be justly blamed should we be more than ordinarily urgent herein, considering how prone the ears of men are to receive calumnious accusations concerning such as from whom they expect neither profit nor advantage, and how slow in giving admittance to an address of the most modest defensative. But this is the least part of our present design. Our only aim is, to declare those principles concerning mutual love and unity among Christians, and practices in the worship of God, wherein our own consciences do find rest and peace, and others have so much misjudged us about. This, therefore, we shall briefly do, and that without such reflections or recriminations as may any way exasperate the spirits of others, or in the least impede that re-introduction of love and concord which it is the duty of us all to labour in. Wherefore we shall herein have no regard unto the revilings, reproaches, and threatenings of them who seem to have had no regard to truth, or modesty, or sobriety, indeed to God or man, in the management of them. With such it is our duty not to strive, but to commit our cause to Him that judgeth righteously, especially with respect unto those impure outrages which go before unto judgment. Furious persons, animated by their secular interests or desire of revenge, unacquainted with the spirit of the gospel and the true nature of the religion revealed by Jesus Christ, incompassionate towards the infirmities of the minds of men, whereof yet none in the world give greater instances than themselves, who have no thoughts but to trample under foot and destroy all that differ from them, we shall rather pity and pray for, than either contend withal or hope to convince.

Such they are, as, if outward prevalency were added to their principles and desires, they would render all Christians like the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, who came out to fight against Judah, 2 Chronicles 20:23. The two greater parties, upon some difference or distaste, conspire at first to destroy the inhabitants of Seir, not doubting but that, when they had despatched them out of the way, they should accord well enough among themselves; but the event deceived their expectation, — their rage ceased not until issued in the mutual destruction of them all. No otherwise would it be with those who want nothing but force or opportunity to exterminate their next dissenters in matters of religion; for when they had accomplished that design, the same principle and rage would arm them to the wasting of the residue of Christians, or their own, for a conceit of the lawfulness hereof is raised from a desire of enlarging power and dominion, which is boundless. Especially is it so where an empire over the reason, faith, and consciences of men is affected; which first produced the fatal engine of papal infallibility, that nothing else could have

strained the wit of men to invent, and nothing less can support. Unto such as these we shall not so much as tender satisfaction, until they are capable of receiving the advice of the apostle, Ephesians 4:31, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice;" for until this be done, men are to be esteemed but as "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame," whom it is to no purpose to seek to pacify, much less to contend withal.

It is for the sake of them alone who really value and esteem love, peace, and unity among Christians for themselves, that we here tender an account of our thoughts and principles concerning them; for even of them there are some who unduly charge us with owning of principles destructive unto Christian love and condescension, and suited to perpetuate the schisms and divisions that are amongst us. Whether this hath been occasioned by an over-valuation of their own apprehensions, conceiting that their judgments ought to give rule and measure to other men's; or whether they have been, it may be insensibly unto themselves, biased by provocations, as they suppose, unjustly given them; we are not out of hopes but that they may be convinced of their mistakes. Upon their indications we have searched our consciences, principles, and practices, to find whether there be any such way of perverseness in them as we are charged withal; and may with confidence say that we have a discharge from thence, where we are principally concerned. Having, therefore, satisfied that duty which on this occasion was in the first place incumbent on us, we shall now, for their satisfaction and our own vindication with all impartial men, declare what are our thoughts and judgments, what are our principles, ways, and practices, in and about the great concerns of Christian love, unity, and peace, referring the final decision of all differences unto Him who "hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained." This being our present design, none may expect that we should attempt to justify or excuse any of those miscarriages or failings that are charged on some or all of those professors of the gospel who at this day come not up unto full communion with the church of England; for we know that "no man liveth and sinneth not," yea, that "in many things we all offend." We all know but in part, and are liable to manifold temptations, even all such as are common unto men. Those only we have no esteem of who through the fever of pride have lost the understanding of their own weak, frail, and sinful condition. And we do acknowledge that there are amongst us "sins against the Lord our God," for which he might not only give us up unto the reproaches and wrath of men in this world, but himself also cast us off utterly and forever. We shall not, therefore, in the least complain of those who have most industriously represented unto the public view of the world the weakness and miscarriages that have fallen out amongst some or more of them whose cause we plead, and discovered those corrupt affections from whence, helped on with variety of temptations, they might probably proceed; nor shall we use any reflections on them who have severely, and we fear maliciously, laid to their charge things which they knew not; as hoping that by the former the guilty may learn what to amend, now they are taught with such thorns and briars as are the scorns and reproaches of the world, and by the latter the innocent may know what to avoid. Such charges and accusations, therefore, we shall wholly pass over, with our hearty prayers that the same or worse evils may never be found amongst them by whom they are accused. Much less shall we concern ourselves in those reflections on them which are raised from the words, expressions, or actions of particular persons, as they have been reported and tossed up and down in the lips of talkers. The debate of such things tends only to mutual exasperations and endless strife. It may be, also, that for the

most part they are false, or misreported invidiously, or misapplied; and, true or false, have been sufficiently avenged by severe retortions. And in such altercations few men understand the sharpness of their own words. Their edge is towards them whom they oppose; but when a return of the like expressions is made unto themselves, they are sensible how they pierce. So are provocations heightened, and the first intendment of reducing love ends in mutual defamatory contentions. All things, therefore, of this nature we shall pass over, and help to bury by our silence. The principal charge against us, and that whereinto all others are resolved, is our nonconformity unto the present constitutions of the church of England; for hence we are accused to be guilty of the want of Christian love and peaceableness, of schism, and an inclination to all sorts of divisions, contrary to the rules and precepts of the gospel. Now, we think it not unreasonable to desire that those who pass such censures on us would attend unto the common known rule, whereby alone a right judgment in these cases may be made; for it is not equal that we should be concluded by other men's particular measures, as though by them we were to be regulated in the exercise of love and observance of peace. And as we doubt not but that they fix those measures unto themselves in sincerity, according unto their own light and apprehension of things, so we are sure it will be no impeachment of their wisdom or holiness to judge that others who differ from them do with an equal integrity endeavour the direction and determination of their consciences in what they believe and practice; yea, if they have not pregnant evidence to the contrary, it is their duty so to judge. A defect hereof is the spring of all that want of love whereof so great a complaint is made. And rationally they are to be thought most sincere and scrupulous herein who take up with determinations that are greatly to their outward disadvantage; for unless it be from a conviction of present duty with respect unto God and their own eternal good, men are not easily induced to close with a judgment about sacred things and religious worship, which will not only certainly prejudice them, but endanger their ruin in things temporal. It is ordinarily outward secular advantages, wherewith the minds of men are generally too much affected, that give an easy admission unto persuasions and practices in religion. By these are men turned and changed every day from what before they professed, when we hear of no turnings unto a suffering profession but what arise from strong and unavoidable convictions. Moreover, should we endeavour to accommodate ourselves to the lines of other men, it may make some change of the persons with whom we have to do, but would not in the least relieve us against the charges of guilt, of schism, and want of love, which we suffer under. Some would prescribe this measure unto us: That we should occasionally join with parish assemblies, as now stated, in all their worship and sacred administrations, but will not require of us that we should absolutely forbear all other ways and means of our own edification. Will this measure satisfy all amongst us? will it free us from the imputation we suffer under? shall we not be said any more to want Christian love, to be factious or guilty of schism? 66It is known unto all how little it will conduce unto these ends, and how little the most will grant that church peace is preserved thereby. Yea, the difficulty will be increased upon us beyond what an ordinary ability can solve, though we doubt not but that it may be done, for if we can do so much, we may expect justly to be pressed severely to answer why we do no more; for others say immediately that our attendance on the public worship must be constant, with a forbearance of all other ways of religious worship beyond that of a family: yet this they would have us so to do, as in the meantime studiously to endeavour the reformation of what is judged amiss in the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the church. This is the measure which is prescribed unto us by some, and we know not how many censures are passed upon us for a nonconformity

thereunto. Will, therefore, a compliance unto this length better our condition? will it deliver us from the severest reflections of being persons unpeaceable and intolerable? Shall we live in a perpetual dissimulation of our judgments as to what needeth reformation? will that answer our duty, or give us peace in our latter end? Shall we profess the persuasions of our minds in these things, and endeavour by all lawful means to accomplish what we desire? shall we then escape the severest censures, as of persons inclined to schisms and divisions? Yea, many great and wise men of the church of England do look on this as the most pernicious principle and practice that any can betake themselves unto; and in reporting the memorials of former times,

1 some of them have charged all the calamities and miseries that have befallen their church to have proceeded from men of this principle endeavouring reformation according unto models of their own without separation. And could we conscientiously betake ourselves to the pursuit of the same design, we should not, especially under present jealousies and exasperations, escape the same condemnation that others before us have undergone. And so it is fallen out with some; which might teach them that their measures are not authentic; and they might learn moderation towards them who cannot come up unto them, by the severity they meet withal from those that do outgo them. Shall we, therefore, — which alone seems to remain, — proceed yet farther, and, making a renunciation of all those principles conceiving the constitution, rule, and discipline of the church, with the ways and manner of the worship of God to be observed in the assemblies of it, which we have hitherto professed, come over unto a full conformity unto the present constitution of the church of England, and all the proceedings of its rulers thereon? “Yea, this is that,” say some, “which is required of you, and that which would put an end unto all our differences and divisions.” We know, indeed, that an agreement in any thing or way, right or wrong, true or false, will promise so to do, and appear so to do for a season; but it is truth alone that will make such agreements durable or useful. And we are not engaged in an inquiry merely after peace, but after peace with truth. Yea, to lay aside the consideration of truth, in a disquisition after peace and agreement in and about spiritual things, is to exclude a regard unto God and his authority, and to provide only for ourselves. And what it is which at present lays a prohibition on our consciences against the compliance proposed shall be afterward declared. Neither will we here insist upon the discouragements that are given us from the present state of the church itself; which yet are not a few. Only, we must say, that there doth not appear unto us in many that steadiness in the profession of the truth owned amongst us upon and since the Reformation, nor that consent upon the grounds and reasons of the government and discipline in it that we are required to submit unto, which were necessary to invite any dissenters to a thorough conformity unto it. That there are daily inroads made upon the ancient doctrine of this church, and that without the least control from them who pretend to be the sole conservators of it, until, if not the whole, yet the principal parts of it are laid waste, is sufficiently evident, and may be easily proved. And we fear not to own that we cannot conform to Arminianism [and] Socinianism, on the one hand, or Popery on the other, with what new or specious pretences soever they may be blended. And for the ecclesiastical government, as in the hands of our mere ecclesiastical persons, when it is agreed among themselves whether it be from heaven or of men, we shall know the better how to judge of it. But suppose we should waive all such considerations, and come up to a full conformity unto all that is, or shall, or may be required of us, will this give us a universally pleadable acquitment from the charges of the guilt of want of love, schism, and divisions?

We should, indeed, possibly be delivered from the noise and clamour of a few crying-out sectaries, fanatics, schismatics, church-dividers; but withal should continue under the censures of the great, and at present thriving church of Rome, for the same supposed crimes. And sure enough we are, that a compliance with them who have been the real causes and occasions of all the schisms and divisions that are amongst Christians almost in the whole world, would yield us no solid relief in the change of our condition; yet without this no men can free themselves from the loudest outcries against them on the account of schism. And this sufficiently manifests how little indeed they are to be valued, seeing, for the most part, they are nothing but the steam of interest and party. It is therefore apparent, that the accommodations of our judgments and practices to the measures of other men will afford us no real advantage as to the imputations we suffer under, nor will give satisfaction unto all professors of Christianity that we pursue love and peace in a due manner: for what one sort requireth of us, another will instantly disallow and condemn; and it is well if the judgment of the major part of all sorts be not influenced by custom, prejudices, and secular advantages. We have, therefore, no way left but that which, indeed, ought to be the only way of Christians in these things, — namely, to seek in sincerity the satisfaction of our own consciences, and the approving of our hearts unto the Searcher of them, in a diligent attendance unto our own especial duty, according to that rule which will neither deceive us nor fail us; and an account of what we do herein we shall now tender unto them that follow truth with peace.

## 02.02. Chapter 02.

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### Chapter 02.

Commendations of love and unity — Their proper objects, with their general rules and measures — Of love toward all mankind in general — Allows not salvation unto any without faith in Christ Jesus — Of the differences in religion as to outward worship. The foundation of our discourse might be laid in the commendation of Christian love and unity, and thereon we might easily enlarge, as also abound in a collection of testimonies confirming our assertions; but the old reply in such a case, — “By whom ever were they discommended?” — evidenceth a labour therein to be needless and superfluous. We shall therefore only say, that they are greatly mistaken who, from the condition whereinto at present we are driven and necessitated, do suppose that we value not these things at as high a rate as themselves, or any other professors of Christian religion in the world. A greater noise about them may be made, possibly, by such as have accommodated their name and notion to their own interests, and who point their pleas about them and their pretences of them to their own secular advantage; but as for a real valuation of the things themselves, as they are required of us and prescribed unto us in the gospel, we shall not willingly be found to come behind any that own the name of Christ in the world. We know that God hath styled himself the God of love, peace, and order in the church, because they are eminently from him, and highly accepted with him. And as love is the new commandment which Jesus Christ hath given unto his disciples, so he hath appointed it to be the bond of perfection unto them; which nothing else will ever be, however finely invented for them, or forcibly imposed on them. Without this love, in what relates to church communion, whatever else we are, we are but as “sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.” And all unity or agreement in outward order not proceeding from and animated by this love, are things wherein neither Christ nor the gospel is much concerned. An endeavour also after one mind and one judgment, Php 2:2, 1 Corinthians 1:10, amongst all believers, for a help unto us to keep the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” we acknowledge to be indispensably required of us.

And, therefore, where any opinion or practice, in or about religion or the worship of God, do apparently in themselves impair the gracious, holy principles of love and peace, or obstruct men in the exercise of any duties which those principles require or lead unto, it is a great and weighty prejudice against their truth and acceptation with God. As, therefore, we shall not boast of the prevalency of these principles in our minds, seeing that, though we should know nothing to the contrary by ourselves, yet are we not therefore justified; so we are assured that none can justly condemn us for the want of them, unless they can make good their charge by instances not relating to the peculiar differences between them and us, for what doth so will neither warrant any to make such a judgment, nor carry any conviction in it towards them that are judged. Upon the whole matter, we shall not easily be diverted from pursuing our claim unto an equal interest in these things with any other professors of the Christian religion, although at present we do it not by enlarged commendations of them. Much less are we in the least moved or shaken in our minds from the accusations of them who, having the advantage of force and power, do make a

compliance with themselves, in all their impositions and self-interested conceptions, the sole measure of other men's exercise and actings of these principles. We have a much safer rule whereby to make a judgment of them, whereunto we know "we shall do well to attend, as unto a light shining in a dark place." But, now, whereas all these things, — namely, love, peace, and unity, — are equally dear unto us, yet there are different rules prescribed for the exercise and pursuit of them. Our love is to be catholic, unconfined as the beams of the sun, or as the showers of rain that fall on the whole earth. Nothing of God's rational creation in this world is to be exempted from being the object thereof. And where only any exception might seem to be warranted by some men's causeless hatred, with unjust and unreasonable persecution of us, there the exercise of it is given us in especial and strictest charge; which is one of the noble singularities of Christian religion. But whereas men are cast into various conditions on account of their relation unto God, the actual exercise of love towards them is required of us in a suitable variety; for it is God himself, in his infinite excellencies, who is the first and adequate object of our love, which descends unto others according to their participation from him, and the especial relations created by his appointment; whereof we shall speak afterward. Our duty in the observance of peace is, as unto its object, equally extended; and the rule or measure given us herein is the utmost of our endeavours in all ways of truth and righteousness which are required or may have a tendency thereunto: for as we are commanded to "follow peace with all men," Hebrews 12:14, under the same indispensable necessity as to obtain and observe "holiness" in our own persons, "without which no man shall see the Lord;" so as to the measure of our endeavours unto this end, we are directed, "if it be possible, and as far as in us lieth, to live peaceably with all men," Romans 12:18. The rule for unity, as it is supposed to comprise all church-communion, falls under many restrictions; for herein the especial commands of Christ and institutions of the gospel committed unto our care and observance falling under consideration, our practice is precisely limited unto those commands and by the nature of those institutions.

These being the things we are to attend unto, and these being their general rules and measures, we shall, with respect unto the present state of religious affairs in the world amongst those who make profession of the Christian religion, plainly declare what are our thoughts and judgments, what we conceive to be our duty, and what is our practice; submitting them unto the present apprehensions of unprejudiced persons, leaving the final sentence and determination of our cause to the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ.

Love toward all mankind in general we acknowledge to be required of us, and we are debtors in the fruits of it to the whole creation of God: for he hath not only implanted the principles of it in that nature whereof we are in common partakers with the whole race and kind, whereunto all hatred and its effects were originally foreign, and introduced by the devil, nor only given us his command for it, enlarging on its grounds and reasons in the gospel; but in his design of recovering us out of our lapsed condition unto a conformity with himself, proposeth in an especial manner the example of his own love and goodness, which are extended unto all, for our imitation, Matthew 5:44-45. His philanthropy and communicative love, from his own infinite self-fullness, wherewith all creatures, in all places, times, and seasons, are filled and satisfied, as from an immeasurable ocean of goodness, are proposed unto us to direct the exercise of that drop from the divine nature wherewith we are intrusted. "Love your enemies," saith our Saviour, "bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that

ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

Now, all mankind may be cast into two ranks or orders: for, first, there are those who are yet “without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world,” Ephesians 2:12, — such, we mean, as are either negatively or privatively infidels or unbelievers, who have yet never heard the sound of the gospel, or do continue to refuse and reject it where it is proposed and tendered unto them; and there are those, secondly, who have in one way or other received the doctrine of the gospel, and do make profession thereof in the world. To both these sorts we do acknowledge that we owe the duty of love. Even towards the infidel, pagan, and Mohammedan world, Jews and Gentiles, we are debtors in this duty; and we desire to be humbled for it as our sin, wherein we are wanting in the discharge of it, or wherein the fruits of it do not abound in us to the praise of God. Now, love, in the first notion of it, is the willing of a wanted good unto the object of it, or those that are loved, producing an endeavour to effect it unto the utmost of the ability of them in whom it is. Where this absent good is of great importance, the first natural and genuine effect of love is compassion. This good, as unto all unbelievers, is whatever should deliver them from present or eternal misery, — whatever should lead, guide, or bring them unto blessedness in the enjoyment of God.

Besides, the absence hereof is accompanied, even in this world, with all that blindness and darkness of mind, all that slavery unto sin and the devil, that can any way concur to make a rational being truly miserable. If we have not hearts like the flint or adamant, we cannot but be moved with compassion towards so many perishing souls, originally made like ourselves, in the image of God, and from whom that we differ in any thing is an effect of mere sovereign grace, and not the fruit of our own contrivance nor the reward of our worth or merit. And those who are altogether unconcerned in others are not much concerned in themselves; for the true love of ourselves is the rule of our love unto other men. Again, compassion proceeding from love will work by prayer for relief; for it is God alone who can supply their wants, and our only way of treating with him about it is by our humble supplications. And if herein also we should be found wanting, we should more judge ourselves to be defective in true Christian love and charity than we can for many of those mistakes which are charged on us in other things, were we convinced that such they are, which as yet we are not. It is therefore our continual prayer, that God would send out his light and his truth unto the utmost parts of the earth, to visit by them those dark places which are yet filled with habitations of cruelty; that he would remove the vail of covering which is yet on the face of many great and populous nations; that “the whole earth may be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;” even that, according to his promise, “he would turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.” And this we desire to be found doing, not in a formal or customary manner, but out of a sincere compassion for the souls of men, a deep sense of the interest herein of the glory of God, and a desire after the accomplishment of those prophecies and promises in the Scripture which speak comfortably towards an expectation of abundant grace to be manifested unto the residue of sinners, both Jews and Gentiles, in the latter days. Moreover, unto compassion and supplications, love requireth that we should add also all other possible endeavours for their relief. Herein consists that work and labour of love which are so much recommended unto us. But the actings of love in these most useful ways are, for the most part, obstructed unto us by the want of opportunities;

which, under the guidance of divine Providence, are the rule of our call unto the duties wherein such endeavours consist, and whereby they may be expressed. Only, this at present we have to rejoice in, that, through the unwearied labours of some holy and worthy persons, sundry churches of Indians are lately called and gathered in America; wherein the natives of those parts of the world, who for so many generations sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, do, under the guidance of pastors and elders of their own, walk in the fellowship of the gospel, giving glory to God by Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> And let it not seem impertinent that we have given this account of our judgments concerning that love which we do and ought to bear unto all, even the worst of men; seeing those by whom our testimony is received will not, nay cannot, easily suppose that we would willfully neglect the exercise of the same affections towards those concerning whom our obligations thereunto are unspeakably greater and more excellent.

There is, indeed, another kind of pretended charity towards this sort of men, which we profess we have not for them, although we judge we do not want it; for there can be no want unto any of an error or mistake, wherein the charity intended doth consist. And this is the judgment of some, that they, or some of them, may attain salvation or eternal blessedness in the condition wherein they are, without the knowledge of Jesus Christ. This, we acknowledge, we neither believe nor hope concerning them; nor, to speak plainly, can desire it should be so, unless God had otherwise revealed himself concerning Jesus Christ and them than yet he hath done. And we are so far from supposing that there is in us, on this account, any blamable defect of charity, that we know ourselves to be freed by this persuasion from a dangerous error, which, if admitted, would both weaken our own faith and impair all the due and proper effects of charity towards others: for “though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him,” 1 Corinthians 8:5-6. We know “there is no salvation in any other” but by Jesus Christ; and that “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,” Acts 4:12. Nor is this name given any otherwise amongst men but by the gospel; for it is not the giving of the person of Christ absolutely to be a mediator, but the declaration of his name by the gospel, as the means of salvation, that is intended.

Hence our Lord Jesus Christ, giving that commission to his apostles to preach it, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” he adds unto it that decretory sentence concerning the everlasting condition of all men with respect thereunto, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned,” Mark 16:15-16. As the preaching of the gospel, and the belief on Jesus Christ thereon, are the only means of obtaining salvation, so all those who are not made partakers of them must perish eternally. So when the apostle affirms that the Jews would have hindered them from preaching to the Gentiles “that they might be saved,” 1 Thessalonians 2:16, he plainly declares that without it they could not so be. Neither were any of them ever better, or in a better condition, than they are described by the same apostle, Ephesians 2:12, and in sundry other places, wherein he allows them no possibility of obtaining eternal blessedness. Neither do we in this matter consider what God can do, or what he hath done, to the communicating of grace and faith in Jesus Christ unto any particular persons at any time, or in any place, in an extraordinary manner. We are not called to make a judgment thereof, nor can any rule be hence collected to regulate the exercise of our love: “Secret things

belong to the Lord our God, but revealed things to us and our children, that we may do his will." When and where such grace and faith do manifest themselves by their effects, we ought readily to own and embrace them. But the only inquiry in this matter is, what those that are utterly destitute of the revelation of Jesus Christ, either as made originally in the promise or as explained in the gospel, may, under the mere conduct of the light of nature, as consisting of the innate principles of reason, with their improvement, or as increased by the consideration of the effects of divine power and providence, by the strength and exercise of their own moral principles, attain unto, as unto their present acceptance with God and future eternal salvation? That they may be saved in every sect who live exactly according to the light of nature, is a doctrine anathematized by the church of England, article 18.; and the reason given hereof is, because the Scriptures propose the name of Jesus Christ alone whereby we may be saved. And if we do believe that description which is given in the Scripture of men, their moral abilities and their works, as they lie in the common state of mankind since the entrance of sin, with respect unto God and salvation, we shall not be able to be of another mind: for they are said to be "blind," Luke 4:18; yea, to be "darkness," to be "dead in trespasses and sins," not to "receive the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness unto them," and their minds to be "enmity against God" himself, Acts 26:18; Ephesians 2:1-3; Ephesians 4:18; Romans 8:7. That there may be any just expectation concerning such persons, that they will "work out their salvation with fear and trembling," we are not convinced; neither do we think that God will accept of a more imperfect obedience in them that know not Jesus Christ than he requires of them who do believe in him, for then should he prove a disadvantage unto them. Besides, all their best works are severely reflected on in the Scripture, and represented as unprofitable; for whereas in themselves they are compared to evil trees, thorns, and briers, we are assured they neither do nor can bring forth good grapes or figs. Besides, in the Scripture the whole business of salvation, in the first place, turns upon the hinge of faith supernatural and divine: for "without faith it is impossible to please God," and "he that believeth not shall be damned;" "he that believeth not in the name of the Son of God is condemned already;" for "neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love;" and it is "by faith that the just shall live," Hebrews 11:6, [Mark 15:16,] John 3:18; John 3:36, Galatians 5:6, [Habakkuk 2:4.] That this faith may be educed out of the obediencial principles of nature was, indeed, the opinion of Pelagius of old; but it will not now, we hope, be openly asserted by any. Moreover, this faith is in the Scripture, if not limited and determined, yet directed unto Jesus Christ as its necessary peculiar object: "For this is life eternal, that we may know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent." It seems, therefore, that the knowledge of the only true God is not sufficient to attain eternal life, unless the knowledge of Jesus Christ also do accompany it; for "this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life," 1 John 5:11-12; which is enough to determine the controversy. And those assertions, that "there is none other name given among men whereby they must be saved," and that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," Acts 4:12, 1 Corinthians 3:11, are of the same importance; and it were needless to multiply the testimonies that are given us to that purpose elsewhere. Neither can it be made to appear that the concatenation of the saving means, whereby men that are adult are brought unto glory, is not absolutely universal; and amongst them there is vocation, or an effectual calling (Romans 8:29-30) to the knowledge of Christ by the gospel. Neither will the same apostle allow a saving invocation of the name of God to any but those that are brought to

believe by hearing the word preached, Romans 10:13-15. It is said that God may, by ways secret and unknown to us, reveal Jesus Christ to them, and so by faith in him sanctify their natures and endow them with his Spirit; which things it is granted, we suppose, are indispensably necessary unto salvation. Those whom God thus deals withal are not Pagans but Christians, concerning whom none ever doubted but they might be saved.

It is also granted that men may learn much of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, which both require and teach many duties to be performed towards him; but withal, we believe that without the internal sanctification of the Spirit, communicated by and with the knowledge of Jesus Christ, no man can be saved. But we intend not here to dispute about these things. Instead of an effect of love and charity, it is manifest that the opinion which grants salvation unto the heathen, or any of them, upon the due improvement of their rational faculties and moral principles, ariseth from a want of due consideration of the true nature of sin and grace, of the fall of man and his recovery, of the law and gospel, and of the wisdom and love of God in sending Jesus Christ to make atonement for sinners, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. And not only so, but it evidently prepares the way unto those noxious opinions which at this day among, many infest and corrupt Christian religion, and foment those seeds of atheism which spring up so fast as to threaten the overspreading of the whole field of Christianity; for hence it will follow, by an easy deduction, that every one may be saved, or attain unto his utmost happiness, in his own religion, be it what it will, whilst under any notion or conception he acknowledgeth a divine Being, and his own dependence thereon. And seeing that, on this supposition, it must be confessed that religion consists solely in moral honesty, and a fancied internal piety of mind towards the Deity (for in nothing else can a centring of all religions in the world unto a certain end be imagined), it follows that there is no outward profession of it indispensably necessary, but that every man may take up and make use of that which is best suited unto his interest in his present condition and circumstances. And as this, being once admitted, will give the minds of men an indifferency as unto the several religions that are in the world, so it will quickly produce in them a contempt of them all. And, from an entertainment of, or an indifferency of mind about, these and the like noisome opinions, it is come to pass that the gospel, after a continued triumph for sixteen hundred years over hell and the world, doth at this day, in the midst of Christendom, hardly with multitudes maintain the reputation of its truth and divinity; and is by many, living in a kind of outward conformity unto the institutes of Christian religion, despised and laughed to scorn. But the proud and foolish atheistical opiniators of our days, whose sole design is to fortify themselves by the darkness of their minds against the charges of their own conscience upon their wicked and debauched conversations, do but expose themselves to the scorn of all sober and rational persons; for what are a few obscure, and, for the most part, vicious renegadoes, in comparison of those great, wise, numerous, and sober persons, whom the gospel, in its first setting forth in the world, by the evidence of its truth and the efficacy of its power, subdued and conquered? Are they as learned as the renowned philosophers of those days, who, advantaged by the endeavours and fruits of all the great wits of former ages, had advanced solid, rational literature to the greatest height that ever it attained in this world, or possibly ever will do so, the minds of men having now something more excellent and noble to entertain themselves withal? Are they to be equalled in wisdom and experience with those glorious emperors, senators, and princes who then swayed the scepters and affairs of the world? Can they produce any thing to oppose unto the gospel that is likely to influence the minds of men in any degree comparably to the religion of these great, learned, wise, and mighty personages; which,

having received by their fathers from days immemorial, was visibly attended with all earthly glories and prosperities, which were accounted as the reward of their due observance of it? And yet, whereas there was a conspiracy of all those persons, and this influenced by the craft of infernal powers, and managed with all that wisdom, subtlety, power, and cruelty that the nature of man is capable to exercise, on purpose to oppose the gospel, and keep it from taking root in the world; yet, by the glorious evidence of its divine extract and original wherewith it is accompanied, by the efficacy and power which God gave the doctrine of it in and over the minds of men, all managed by the spiritual weapons of its preachers, which were “mighty through God to the pulling down of those strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalted itself against, the knowledge of God,” 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, it prevailed against them all, and subdued the world unto an acknowledgment of its truth, with the divine power and authority of its Author. Certainly there is nothing more contemptible than that the indulgence of some inconsiderable persons unto their lusts and vices, who are void of all those excellencies, in notion and practice, which have already been triumphed over by the gospel when set up in competition with it or opposition unto it, should be once imagined to bring it into question or to cast any disreputation upon it. But to treat of these things is not our present design; we have only mentioned them occasionally, in the account which it was necessary we should give concerning our love to all men in general, with the grounds we proceed upon in the exercise of it.

## 02.03. Chapter 03.

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### Chapter 03.

Nature of the catholic church — The first and principal object of Christian love — Differences among the members of this church, of what nature, and how to be managed — Of the church catholic as visibly professing — The extent of it, or who belong unto it — Of union and love in this church-state — Of the church of England with respect hereunto — Of particular churches; their institution; corruption of that institution — Of churches diocesan, etc. — Of separation from corrupt particular churches — The just causes thereof, etc. In the second sort of mankind, before mentioned, consists the visible kingdom of Christ in this world. This being grounded in his death and resurrection, and conspicuously settled by his sending of the Holy Ghost after his ascension, he hath ever since preserved in the world against all the contrivances of Satan or opposition of the gates of hell, and will do so unto the consummation of all things; for “he must reign until all his enemies are made his footstool.” Towards these, on all accounts, our love ought to be intense and fervent, as that which is the immediate bond of our relation unto them and union with them. And this kingdom or church of Christ on the earth may be, and is generally, by all considered under a three-fold notion:—First, As therein, and among the members of it, is comprised that real living and spiritual body of his, which is firstly, peculiarly, and properly the catholic church militant in this world. These are his elect, redeemed, justified, and sanctified ones, who are savingly united unto their head by the same quickening and sanctifying Spirit, dwelling in him in all fulness, and communicated unto them by him according to his promise. This is that catholic church which we profess to believe; which being hid from the eyes of men, and absolutely invisible in its mystical form, or spiritual saving relation unto the Lord Christ and its unity with him, is yet more or less always visible by that profession of faith in him and obedience unto him which it maketh in the world, and is always obliged so to do: “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,” Romans 10:10. And this church we believe to be so disposed over the whole world, that wherever there are any societies or numbers of men who ordinarily profess the gospel, and subjection to the kingly rule of Christ thereby, with a hope of eternal blessedness by his mediation, we no way doubt but that there are among them some who really belong thereunto. In and by them doth the Lord Christ continually fulfil and accomplish the promise of his presence by his Spirit with them that believe in his name; who are thereby interested in all the privileges of the gospel, and authorized unto the administration and participation of all the holy ordinances thereof. And were it not that we ought not to boast ourselves against others, especially such as have not had the spiritual advantages that the inhabitants of these nations have been intrusted withal, and who have been exposed unto more violent temptations than they, we should not fear to say, that among those of all sorts who in these nations hold the Head, there is probably, according unto a judgment to be made by the fruits of that Spirit which is savingly communicated unto the church in this sense alone, a greater number of persons belonging thereunto than in any one nation or church under heaven. The charge therefore of some against us that we paganize the nation, by reason of some different

apprehensions from others concerning the regular constitution of particular churches for the celebration of gospel worship, is wondrous vain and ungrounded. But we know that men use such severe expressions and reflections out of a discomposed habit of mind, which they have accustomed themselves unto, and not from a sedate judgment and consideration of the things themselves; and hence they will labour to convince others of that whereof, if they would put it unto a serious trial, they would never be able to convince themselves.

This, then, is that church which, on the account of their sincere faith and obedience, shall be saved, and out of which, on the account of their profession, there is no salvation to be obtained: which things are weakly and arrogantly appropriated unto any particular church or churches in the world; for it is possible that men may be members of it, and yet not belong or relate unto any particular church on the earth; and so it often falleth out, as we could manifest by instances, did that work now lie before us. This is the church which the Lord Christ “loved and gave himself for; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish,” Ephesians 5:26-27. And we must acknowledge that in all things this is the church unto which we have our first and principal regard, as being the spring from which all other considerations of the church do flow. Within the verge and compass of it do we endeavour to be found, the end of the dispensation of the gospel unto men being that they should do so. Neither would we, to save our lives (which, for the members of this church and their good, we are bound to lay down, 1 John 3:16, when justly called thereunto), willfully live in the neglect of that love towards them or any of them which we hope God hath planted in our hearts, and made natural unto us, by that one and selfsame Spirit, by whom the whole mystical body of Christ is animated.

We do confess, that, because the best of men in this life do know but in part, all the members of this church are in many things liable to error, mistakes, and miscarriages; and hence it is that, although they are all internally acted and guided by the same Spirit in all things absolutely necessary to their eternal salvation, and do all attend unto the same rule of the word, according as they apprehend the mind of God in it and concerning it, have all, for the nature and substance of it, the same divine faith and love, and are all equally united unto their Head, yet, in the profession which they make of the conceptions and persuasions of their minds about the things revealed in the Scripture, there are, and always have been, many differences among them. Neither is it morally possible it should be otherwise, whilst in their judgment and profession they are left unto the ability of their own minds and liberty of their wills, under that great variety of the means of light and truth, with other circumstances, whereinto they are disposed by the holy wise providence of God. Nor hath the Lord Christ absolutely promised that it shall be otherwise with them; but securing them all by his Spirit in the foundations of eternal salvation, he leaves them in other things to the exercise of mutual love and forbearance, with a charge of duty after a continual endeavour to grow up unto a perfect union, by the improvement of the blessed aids and assistances which he is pleased to afford unto them. And those who, by ways of force, would drive them into any other union or agreement than their own light and duty will lead them into, do what in them lies to oppose the whole design of the Lord Christ towards them and his rule over them. In the meantime, it is granted that they may fall into divisions, and schisms, and mutual exasperations among themselves, through the remainders of darkness in their minds and the infirmity of the flesh, Romans 14:3; and in such cases mutual judgments and despisings are apt to

ensue, and that to the prejudice and great disadvantage of that common faith which they do profess. And yet, notwithstanding all this (such cross-entangled wheels are there in the course of our nature), they all of them really value and esteem the things wherein they agree incomparably above those wherein they differ. But their valuation of the matter of their union and agreement is purely spiritual, whereas their differences are usually influenced by carnal and secular considerations, which have, for the most part, a sensible impression on the minds of poor mortals. But so far as their divisions and differences are unto them unavoidable, the remedy of farther evils proceeding from them is plainly and frequently expressed in the Scripture. It is love, meekness, forbearance, bowels of compassion, with those other graces of the Spirit wherein our conformity unto Christ doth consist, with a true understanding and the due valuation of the "unity of faith," and the common hope of believers, which are the ways prescribed unto us for the prevention of those evils which, without them, our unavoidable differences will occasion. And this excellent way of the gospel, together with a rejection of evil surmises, and a watchfulness over ourselves against irregular judging and censuring of others, together with a peaceable walking in consent and unity so far as we have attained, is so fully and clearly proposed unto us therein, that they must have their eyes blinded by prejudices and carnal interests, or some effectual working of the god of this world on their minds, into whose understandings the light of it doth not shine with uncontrollable evidence and conviction. That the sons or children of this church, of "Jerusalem which is above, and is the mother of us all," should, on the account of their various apprehensions of some things relating to religion or the worship of God, unavoidably attending their frail and imperfect condition in this world, yea, or of any schisms or divisions ensuing thereon, proceeding from corrupt and not thoroughly mortified affections, be warranted to hate, judge, despise, or condemn one another, much more to strive by external force to coerce, punish, or destroy them that differ from them, is as foreign to the gospel as that we should believe in Mohammed and not in Jesus Christ. Whatever share, therefore, we are forced to bear in differences with or divisions from the members of this church (that is, any who declare and evidence themselves so to be by a visible and regular profession of faith and obedience), as it is a continual sorrow and trouble unto us, so we acknowledge it to be our duty (and shall be willing to undergo any blame, where we are found defective in the discharge of it, unto the utmost of our power) to endeavour after the strictest communion with them in all spiritual things that the gospel doth require, or whereof our condition in this world is capable. In the meantime, until this can be attained, it is our desire to manage the profession of our own light and apprehensions without anger, bitterness, clamour, evil speaking, or any other thing that may be irregular in ourselves or give just cause of offence unto others. Our prayers are also continually for the spiritual prosperity of this church, for its increase in faith and holiness, and especially for the healing of all breaches that are among them that belong thereunto throughout the world. And were we not satisfied that the principles which we own about the right constitution of the churches of Christ, and the worship of God to be observed in them, are singularly suited to the furtherance and preservation of union and due order among all the members of this church, we should not need to be excited by any unto their renunciation. But our main design in all these things is, that both they and we with them may enjoy that peace which the Lord Christ hath bequeathed unto us, and walk in the way which he hath prescribed for us. And these things we mention, neither to boast of nor yet to justify ourselves, but only to acknowledge what is our conviction concerning our duty in this matter. And might there any sedate, peaceable, unprejudicate endeavours be countenanced and encouraged, for the allaying of all occasional

distempers and the composing of all differences among them who belong to this church of Christ, so as that they might all of them (at least in these nations) not only “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” but also agree and consent in all ways and acts of religious communion, we doubt not to manifest that no rigid adherence unto the practice of any conceptions of our own, in things wherein the gospel alloweth a condescension and forbearance, no delight in singularity, no prejudice against persons or things, should obstruct us in the promotion of it to the utmost of our power and ability. Upon the whole matter, we own it as our duty to follow and seek after peace, unity, consent and agreement in holy worship, with all the members of this church, or those who, by a regular profession, manifest themselves so to be; and will, with all readiness and alacrity, renounce every principle or practice that is either inconsistent with such communion, or directly or indirectly is in itself obstructive of it.

Secondly, The church of Christ may be considered with respect unto its outward profession, as constitutive of its being, and the formal reason of its denomination. And this is the church catholic visible, whereunto they all universally belong who profess the invocation of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours, under the limitations that shall be mentioned afterward. And this is the visible kingdom of Christ; which, on the account of its profession, and thereby, is distinguished from that world which lieth in evil and is absolutely under the power of Satan. And so in common use the church and the world are contradistinguished. Yet, on other accounts, many who belong unto this church, by reason of some kind of profession that they make, may justly be esteemed to be the world, or of it. So our Lord Jesus Christ called the generality of the professing church in his time. “The world,” saith he, “hateth me,” John 17:18-19; John 17:25. And that we may know that he thereby intended the church of the Jews, besides that the circumstances of the place evince it, he puts it out of question by the testimony which he produceth in the confirmation of his assertion concerning their unjust and causeless hatred, — namely, “It is written in their law, They hated me without a cause;” which, being taken out of the Psalms (Psalms 35:19), was part of the law or rule of the Judaical church only.

Now, he thus terms them, because the generality of them, especially their rulers, although they professed to know God, and to worship him according to his word and the tradition of their fathers, yet were not only corrupt and wicked in their lives, but also persecuted him and his disciples, in whom the power and truth of God were manifested beyond what they were able to bear. And hence a general rule is established: That what profession soever any men do make of the knowledge and worship of God, to what church soever they do or may be thought to belong, yet if they are wicked or ungodly in their lives, and persecutors of such as are better than themselves, they are really of the world, and with it will perish, without repentance. These are they who, receiving on them a form or delineation of godliness, do yet deny the power of it; from whom we are commanded to “turn away.” But yet we acknowledge that there is a real difference to be made between them who in any way or manner make profession of the name of Christ, with subjection unto him, and that infidel world by whom the gospel is totally rejected, or to whom it was never tendered. In this catholic visible church, as comprehensive of all who throughout the world outwardly own the gospel, there is an acknowledgment of “one Lord, one faith, one baptism:” which are a sufficient foundation of that love, union, and communion among them, which they are capable of, or are required of them; for in the joint profession of the same Lord, faith, and baptism, consists the union of the church under this consideration, — that is, as catholic and visibly

professing, — and in nothing else. And hereunto also is required, as the principle animating that communion, and rendering it acceptable, mutual love with its occasional exercise, as a fruit of that love which we have unto Jesus Christ, who is the object of our common profession. And setting aside the consideration of them who openly reject the principal fundamentals of Christian religion (as denying the Lord Christ to be the eternal Son of God, with the use and efficacy of his death, as also the personal subsistence and deity of the Holy Spirit), there is no known community of these professors in the world but they own so much of the truths concerning “one Lord, one faith, and one baptism,” as is sufficient to guide them unto life and salvation. And thereon we no way doubt but that among them all there are some really belonging to the purpose of God’s election, who by the means that they do enjoy shall at length be brought unto everlasting glory: for we do not think that God, by his providence, would maintain the dispensation of the gospel in any place, or among any people, among whom there are none whom he hath designed to bring into the enjoyment of himself; for that is the rule of his sending and continuing of it, whereon he enjoined the apostle Paul to stay in such places where he had “much people” whom he would have to be converted, Acts 18:9-11.

He would not continue from generation to generation to scatter his pearls where there were none but rending swine, nor send fishers unto waters wherein he knew there were nothing but serpents and vipers. It is true the gospel, as preached unto many, is only a testimony against them, Matthew 24:14, leaving them without excuse, and proves unto them “a savour of death unto death.” But the first, direct, and principal design of the dispensation of it being the conversion of souls and their eternal salvation, it will not probably be continued in any place, nor is so, where this design is not pursued nor accomplished towards any; neither will God make use of it anywhere merely for the aggravation of men’s sins and condemnation; nor would his so doing consist with the honour of the gospel itself, or the glory of that love and grace which it professeth to declare. Where it is indeed openly rejected, there that shall be the condemnation of men; but where it finds any admittance, there it hath somewhat of its genuine and proper work to effect. And the gospel is esteemed to be in all places dispensed and admitted, where, the Scripture being received as the word of God, men are, from the light, truth, and doctrine contained therein, by any means so far instructed as to take upon them the profession of subjecting their souls to Jesus Christ, and of observing the religious duties by him prescribed, in opposition to all false religions in the world. Amongst all these the foundations of saving faith are at this day preserved; for they universally receive the whole canonical Scripture, and acknowledge it to be the word of God, on such motives as prevail with them to do so sincerely.

Herein they give a tacit consent unto the whole truth contained in it, for they receive it as from God, without exception or limitation; and this they cannot do without a general renunciation of all the falsities and evils that it doth condemn. Where these things concur, men will not believe nor practice any thing in religion but what they think God requires of them and will accept from them. And we find it also in the event, that all the persons spoken of, wherever they are, do universally profess that they believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in his only and eternal Son. They all look, also, for salvation by him, and profess obedience unto him, believing that God raised him from the dead. They believe, in like manner, that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, with many other sacred truths of the same importance; as also, that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” However, therefore, they are differenced and divided

among themselves, however they are mutually esteemed heretics and schismatics, however, through the subtlety of Satan, they are excited and provoked to curse and persecute one another with wonderful folly, and by an open contradiction unto other principles which they profess; yet are they all subjects of the visible kingdom of Christ, and belong all of them to the catholic church, making profession of the name of Christ in the world, in which there is salvation to be obtained, and out of which there is none.

We take not any consideration at present of that absurd, foolish, and uncharitable error, which would confine the catholic church of Christ unto a particular church of one single denomination, or, indeed, rather unto a combination of some persons in an outward mode of religious rule and worship; whereof the Scripture is as silent as of things that never were, nor ever shall be. Yea, we look upon it as intolerable presumption, and the utmost height of uncharitableness, for any to judge that the constant profession of the name of Christ made by multitudes of Christians, with the lasting miseries and frequent martyrdoms which for his sake they undergo, should turn unto no advantage, either of the glory of God or their own eternal blessedness, because in some things they differ from them. Yet such is the judgment of those of the church of Rome, and so are they bound to judge by the fundamental principles and laws of their church-communion. But men ought to fear lest they should meet with "judgment without mercy, who have shewed no mercy," James 2:13. Had we ever entertained a thought uncharitable to such a prodigy of insolence, had we ever excluded any sort of Christians absolutely from an interest in the love of God or grace in Jesus Christ, or hope of salvation, because they do not or will not comply with those ways and terms of outward church-communion which we approve of, we should judge ourselves as highly criminal, in want of Christian love, as any can desire to have us esteemed so to be.

It is, then, the universal collective body of them that profess the gospel throughout the world which we own as the catholic church of Christ. How far the errors in judgment, or miscarriages in sacred worship, which any of them have superadded unto the foundations of truth which they do profess, may be of so pernicious a nature as to hinder them from an interest in the covenant of God, and so prejudice their eternal salvation, God only knows. But those notices which we have concerning the nature and will of God in the Scriptures, as also of the love, care, and compassion of Jesus Christ, with the ends of his mediation, do persuade us to believe that where men in sincerity do improve the abilities and means of the knowledge of divine truth wherewith they are intrusted, endeavouring withal to answer their light and convictions with a suitable obedience, there are but few errors of the mind of so malignant a nature as absolutely to exclude such persons from an interest in eternal mercy. And we doubt not but that men, out of a zeal to the glory of God, real or pretended, have imprisoned, banished, killed, burned others for such errors as it hath been the glory of God to pardon in them, and which he hath done accordingly. But this we must grant, and do, that those whose lives and conversations are no way influenced by the power of the gospel, so as to be brought to some conformity thereunto, or who, under the covert of a Christian profession, do give themselves up unto idolatry and persecution of the true worshippers of God, are no otherwise to be esteemed but as enemies to the cross of Christ; for as "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," so "no idolater or murderer hath eternal life abiding in him," Hebrews 12:14; Revelation 21:8; 1 John 3:15. With respect unto these things we look upon the church of England, or the generality of the nation professing Christian religion (measuring them by the doctrine that hath been preached unto them and received by them since the Reformation), to be as sound and

healthful a part of the catholic church as any in the world; for we know no place nor nation where the gospel for so long a season hath been preached with more diligence, power, and evidence for conviction, nor where it hath obtained a greater success or acceptation. Those, therefore, who perish amongst us, do not do so for want of truth and a right belief, or miscarriages in sacred worship, but for their own personal infidelity and disobedience; for according to the rules before laid down, we do not judge that there are any such errors publicly admitted among them, nor any such miscarriages in sacred administration, as should directly or absolutely hinder their eternal salvation. That they be not any of them, through the ignorance or negligence of those who take upon them the conduct of their souls, encouraged in a state or way of sin, or deprived of due advantages to further their spiritual good, or led into practices in religion neither acceptable unto God nor tending to their own edification, whereby they may be betrayed into eternal ruin, is greatly incumbent on themselves to consider.

Unto this catholic church we owe all Christian love, and are obliged to exercise all the effects of it, both towards the whole and every particular member, as we have advantage and occasion. And not only so, but it is our duty to live in constant communion with it. This we can no otherwise do but by a profession of that faith whereby it becomes the church of Christ in the notion under consideration. For any failure herein we are not, that we know of, charged by any persons of modesty or sobriety. The reflections that have been made of late by some on the doctrines we teach or own, do fall as severely on the generality of the church of England (at least until within a few years last past) as they do on us; and we shall not need to own any especial concernment in them until they are publicly discountenanced by others. Such are the doctrines concerning God's eternal decrees, justification by faith, the loss of original grace, and the corruption of nature, the nature of regeneration, the power and efficacy of grace in the conversion of sinners, that we say not of the Trinity and satisfaction of Christ. But we do not think that the doctrines publicly taught and owned among us ever since the Reformation will receive any great damage by the impotent assaults of some few, especially considering their management of those assaults by tales, railing, and railery, to the lasting reproach of the religion which themselves profess, be it what it will.

Thirdly, The church of Christ, or the visible professors of the gospel in the world, may be considered as they are disposed of by providence, or their own choice, in particular churches. These at present are of many sorts, or are esteemed so to be; for whereas the Lord Christ hath instituted sundry solemn ordinances of divine worship to be observed jointly by his disciples, unto his honour and their edification, this could not be done but in such societies, communities, or assemblies of them to that purpose. And as none of them can be duly performed but in and by such societies, so some of them do either express the union, love, and common hope that is among them, or do consist in the means of their preservation. Of this latter sort are all the ways whereby the power of Christ is acted in the discipline of the churches. Wherefore, we believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, as the king, ruler, and lawgiver of his church, hath ordained that all his disciples, all persons belonging unto his church in the former notion of it, should be gathered into distinct societies, and become as flocks of sheep in several folds, under the eye of their great Shepherd and the respective conducts of those employed under him. And this conjunction of professors in and unto particular churches, for the celebration of the ordinances of sacred worship appointed by Christ, and the participation of his institutions for their edification, is not a matter of accident, or merely under the disposal of common providence, but is to be an act in them of choice

and voluntary obedience unto the commands of Christ. By some this duty is more expressly attended unto than by others, and by some it is totally neglected; for neither antecedently nor consequentially unto such their conjunction do they consider what is their duty unto the Lord Christ therein, nor what is most meet for their own edification. They go on in these things with others, according to the customs of the times and places wherein they live, confounding their civil and spiritual relations. And these we cannot but judge to walk irregularly, through ignorance, mistakes, or prejudices. Neither will they in their least secular concernments behave themselves with so much regardlessness or negligence; for however their lot previously unto their own choice may be cast into any place or society, they will make an after-judgment whether it be to their advantage, according to the rules of prudence, and by that judgment either abide in their first station, or otherwise dispose of themselves. But a liberty of this nature, regulated by the gospel, to be exercised in and about the great concernments of men's souls, is by many denied and by most neglected. Hence it is come to pass that the societies of Christians are for the most part mere effects of their political distributions by civil laws, aiming principally at other ends and purposes. It is not denied but that civil distributions of professors of the gospel may be subservient unto the ends of religious societies and assemblies; but when they are made a means to take off the minds of men from all regard to the authority of the Lord Christ instituting and appointing such societies, they are of no small disadvantage unto true church communion and love. The institution of these churches, and the rules for their disposal and government throughout the world, are the same, — stable and unalterable. And hence there was in the first churches, planted by the apostles, and those who next succeeded them in the care of that work, great peace, union, and agreement; for they were all gathered and planted alike, according unto the institution of Christ, all regulated and ordered by the same common rule. Men had not yet found out those things which were the causes of differences in after ages, and which yet continue so to be. Where there was any difference, it was for the most part on the account of some noisome, foolish, fantastical opinions, vented by impostors, in direct opposition to the Scripture; which the generality of Christians did with one consent abhor. But on various occasions, and by sundry degrees, there came to be great variety in the conceptions of men about these particular churches appointed for the seat and subject of all gospel ordinances, and wherein they were authoritatively to be administered in the name of Jesus Christ; for the church in neither of the former notions is capable of such administrations. Some, therefore, rested in particular assemblies, or such societies who did or might meet together under the guidance and inspection of their own elders, overseers, guides, or bishops,

Acts 14:23; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Acts 15:2; Php 1:1. And hereunto they added the occasional meetings of those elders and others, to advise and determine in common about the especial necessities of any particular church, or the general concernments of more of them, as the matter might require. These in name, and some kind of resemblance, are continued throughout the world in parochial assemblies. Others suppose a particular church to be such a one as is now called diocesan, though that name in its first use and application to church affairs was of a larger extent than what is now applied unto, for it was of old the name of a patriarchal church. And herein the sole rule, guidance, and authoritative inspection of many, perhaps a multitude of particular churches, assembling for sacred worship and the administration of gospel ordinances distinctly, is committed unto one man, whom, in contradistinction from others, they call the Bishop: for the joining of others with him, or their subordination unto him in the exercise of jurisdiction, hinders not but that the sole ecclesiastical power of the diocese may be thought to reside in him alone; for

those others do either act in his name or by power derived from him, or have no pretence unto any authority merely ecclesiastical, however in common use what they exercise may be so termed. But the nature of such churches, with the rule and discipline exercised in them and over them, is too well known to be here insisted on. Some rest not here, but unto these diocesan add metropolitan churches; which also are esteemed particular churches, though it be uncertain by what warrant or on what grounds. In these one person hath in some kind of resemblance a respect unto and over the diocesan bishops, like that which they have over the ministers of particular assemblies. But these things being animated and regulated by certain arbitrary rules and canons, or civil laws of the nations, the due bounds and extent, of their power cannot be taken from any nature or constitution peculiar unto them; and therefore are there, wherever they are admitted, various degrees in their elevation. But how much or little the gospel is concerned in these things is easy for any one to judge; neither is it by wise men pretended to be so, any farther than that, as they suppose, it hath left such things to be ordered by human wisdom for an expediency unto some certain ends. One or more of these metropolitan churches have been required, in latter ages, to constitute a church national: though the truth is, that appellation had originally another occasion, whereunto the invention of these metropolitan churches was accommodated; for it arose not from any respect unto ecclesiastical order or rule, but unto the supreme political power, whereunto the inhabitants of such a nation as gives denomination to the church are civilly subject. Hence, that which was provincial at the first erection of this fabric, which was in the Romish empire whilst the whole was under the power of one monarch, became national when the several provinces were turned into kingdoms, with absolute sovereign power among themselves, wholly independent of any other. And he who, in his own person and authority, would erect an ecclesiastical image of that demolished empire, will allow of such provincial churches as have a dependence upon himself, but cares not to hear of such national churches as in their first notion include a sovereign power unto all intents and purposes within themselves: so the church of England became national in the days of King Henry VIII., which before was but provincial.

Moreover, the consent of many had prevailed that there should be patriarchal churches, comprehending under their inspection and jurisdiction many of these metropolitical and provincial churches. And these also were looked on as particular; for, from their first invention, there having been four or five of them, no one of them could be imagined to comprise the catholic church, although those who presided in them, according to the pride and vanity of the declining ages of the church, styled themselves Œcumenical and Catholic. Things being carried thus far, about the fifth and sixth century of years after Christ, one owned as principal or chief of this latter sort set up for a church denominated Papal, from a title he had appropriated unto himself; for by artifices innumerable he ceased not from endeavouring to subject all those other churches and their rulers unto himself, and by the advantage of his pre-eminence over the other patriarchs, as theirs over metropolitans, and so downwards, whereby all Christians were imagined to be comprised within the precincts of some of them, he fell into a claim of a sovereignty over the whole body of Christianity, and every particular member thereunto belonging. This he could have had no pretence for, but that he thought them cast into such an order as that he might possess them on the same grounds on which that order itself was framed; for had not diocesan, metropolitical, and patriarchal churches made way for it, the thought of a church papal, comprehensive of all believers, had never befallen the minds of men; for it is known that the prodigious empire which the pope claimed and had obtained over Christianity, was an emergency of the contests that fell

out amongst the leaders of the greater sorts of churches about the rights, titles, and pre-eminencies among themselves, with some other occasional and intestine distempers.

Only, he had one singular advantage for the promotion of his pretence and desire; for whereas this whole contignation of churches into all these storeys, in the top whereof he emerged and lifted up himself, was nothing but an accommodation of the church and its affairs unto the government of the Roman empire, or the setting up of an ecclesiastical image and representation of its secular power and rule, the centring therein of all subordinate powers and orders in one monarch inclined the minds of men to comply with his design as very reasonable. Hence, the principal plea for that power over the whole church which at present he claims lies in this, that the government of it ought to be monarchical. And therein consists a chief part of the mystery of this whole work, that whereas this fabric of church rule was erected in imitation of and compliance with the Roman empire, so that he could never effect his sovereignty whilst that empire stood in its strength and union, under the command of one or more emperors by consent, yet when that empire was destroyed, and the provinces thereof became parcelled out unto several nations, who erected absolute independent sovereignties among themselves, he was able, by the reputation he had before obtained, so to improve all emergencies and advantages as to gather all these new kingdoms into one religious empire under himself, by their common consent. In the meantime, by the original divisions of the empire, and the revolutions that happened afterward amongst the nations of the world, the greatest number of Christians were wholly unconcerned in this new church-sovereignty, which was erected in the western provinces of that empire. So was the mystery of iniquity consummated; for whereas the pope, to secure his new acquisitions, endeavoured to empale the title and privileges of the catholic church unto those Christians which professed obedience unto himself, unto an exclusion of a greater number, there ensued such a confusion of the catholic and a particular church, as that both of them were almost utterly lost.

Concerning these several sorts of conceited particular churches, it is evident that some of them, as to their nature and kind, have no institution in or warrant from the Scripture, but were prudential contrivances of the men of the days wherein they were first formed; which they effected by various degrees, under the conduct of an apprehension that they tended unto the increase of concord and order among Christians. Whether really and effectually they have attained that end, the event hath long since manifested. And it will be one day acknowledged that no religious union or order among Christians will be lasting, and of spiritual use or advantage unto them, but what is appointed and designed for them by Jesus Christ. The truth is, the mutual intestine differences and contests among them who first possessed the rule of such churches, about their dignities, pre-eminencies, privileges, and jurisdictions, which first apparently let in pride, ambition, revenge, and hatred into the minds and lives of church guides, lost us the peace of Christendom; and the degeneracy of their successors more and more into a secular interest and worldly frame of spirit, is one great means of continuing us at a loss for its retrieval.

How far any man may be obliged in conscience unto communion with these churches in those things wherein they are such, and as such behave themselves in all their rule and administrations, may be inquired into by them who are concerned. What respect we have unto them, or what duty we owe them, as they may in any place be established by the civil laws of the supreme magistrate, is not of our present consideration. But whereas, in their original and rise, they have no other warrant but the prudential contrivance of some men, who unquestionably might be variously

influenced by corrupt prejudices and affections in the finding out and management of their inventions, what ground there is for holding a religious communion with them, and wherein such communion may consist, is not easy to be declared; for the notion that the church-communion of the generality of Christians and ministers consists only in a quiet subjection unto them who, by any means, may pretend to be set over them and claim a right to rule them, is fond and impious. In the meantime, we wholly deny that the mistakes or disorders of Christians in complying with or joining themselves unto such churches as have no warrantable institution ought to be any cause of the diminishing of our love towards them, or of withdrawing it from them: for, notwithstanding their errors and wanderings from the paths of truth in this matter, they do or may continue interested in all that love which is due from us unto the church of Christ upon the double account before insisted on; for they may be yet persons born of God, united unto Christ, made partakers of his Spirit, and so belong to the church catholic mystical, which is the first principal object of all Christian love and charity. The errors wherewith they are supposed to be overtaken may befall any persons under those qualifications, the admittance of them, though culpable, being not inconsistent with a state of grace and acceptation with God. And they may also, by a due profession of the fundamental truths of the gospel, evince themselves to be professed subjects of the visible kingdom of Christ in the world, and so belong to the church catholic visibly professing; under which notion the disciples of Christ are in the next place commended unto our love. And it is the fondest imagination in the world, that we must of necessity want love towards all those with whom we cannot join in all acts of religious worship, or that there need be any schism between them and us on the sole account thereof, taking schism in the common received notion of it.

If we bear unkindness towards them in our minds and hearts; if we desire or seek their hurt; if we persecute them, or put them to trouble in the world for their profession; if we pray not for them; if we pity them not in all their temptations, errors, or sufferings; if we say unto any of them when naked, "Be thou clothed," and when hungry, "Be thou fed," but relieve them not according unto our abilities and opportunities; if we have an aversion to their persons, or judge them any otherwise than as they cast themselves openly and visibly under the sentence of natural reason or Scripture rule, — we may be justly thought to fail in our love towards them. But if our hearts condemn us not in these things, it is not the difference that is or may be between them and us about church-constitutions or order that ought to be a cause, or can be an evidence, of any want of love on our parts. There will, indeed, be a distinct and separate practice in the things wherein the difference lies; which in itself, and without other avoidable evils, need not on either side to be schismatical. If by censures, or any kind of power, such churches or persons would force us to submit unto or comply with such things or ways in religious worship as are contrary unto our light, and which they have no authority from the Lord Christ to impose upon us, the whole state of the case is changed, as we shall see afterward. As for those particular churches, which in any part of the world consist of persons assembling together for the worship of God in Christ, under the guidance of their own lawful pastors and teachers, we have only to say, that we are full well assured that "wherever two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ," there he is present with them; and farther than this, there are very few concerning whom we are called to pass any other censure or judgment. So we hope it is with them, and so we pray that it may be. And therefore we esteem it our duty to hold our communion with all these assemblies, when called thereunto; which is required of any Christians in the like cases and circumstances. Unless we are convinced that, with respect unto such or such instances, it is the mind of Christ that neither

among ourselves, nor in conjunction with others, nor for the sake of the present communion with them, we should observe them in his worship, we judge ourselves under an obligation to make use of their assemblies in all acts of religion unto our edification, as occasion shall require. But where the authority of Christ in the things of sacred worship doth intervene, all other considerations must be discarded; and a compliance therewith will secure us from all irregular events.

It must be acknowledged that many of these churches have woefully degenerated, and that any of them may so do, both from their primitive institution and also the sole role of their worship. And this they may do, and have done, in such various degrees and ways as necessarily requires a great variety in our judgments concerning them and our communion with them. The whole Christian world gives us instances hereof at this day; yea, we have it confirmed unto us in what is recorded concerning sundry churches mentioned in the Scripture itself. They were newly planted by the apostles themselves, and had rules given by them to attend unto for their direction; and, besides, they were obliged in all emergencies to inquire after and receive those commands and directions, which they were enabled infallibly to give unto them. And yet, notwithstanding these great advantages, we find that sundry of them were suddenly fallen into sinful neglects, disorders, and miscarriages, both in doctrine, discipline, and worship. Some of these were reprov'd and reformed by the great apostle, in his epistles written unto them for that end; and some of them were rebuked and threatened by the Lord Christ himself immediately from heaven, Revelation 2:3 : That in process of time they have increased in their degeneracy, waxing worse and worse, their present state and condition in the world, or the remembrance of them which are now not at all, with the severe dealings of God with them in his holy, wise providence, do sufficiently manifest.

Yea, some of them, though yet continuing under other forms and shapes, have, by their superstition, false worship, and express idolatry, joined with wickedness of life and persecution of the true worshippers of Christ, as also by casting themselves into a new worldly constitution, utterly foreign unto what is appointed in the gospel, abandoned their interest in the state and rights of the churches of Christ. So are sundry faithful cities become harlots; and where righteousness inhabited, there dwell persecuting murderers. Such churches were planted of Christ wholly noble vines, but are degenerated into those that are bitter and wild. Whatever our judgment may be concerning the personal condition of the members of such apostatized churches, or any of them, all communion with them, as they would be esteemed the seat of gospel ordinances, and in their pretended administration of them, is unlawful for us, and it is our indispensable duty to separate from them: for whatever indifference many may be growing into in matter of outward worship, — which ariseth from ignorance of the respect that is between the grace and institutions of Christ, as that from an apprehension that all internal religion consists in moral honesty only, — yet we know not any other way whereby we may approve ourselves faithful in our profession but in the observance of all whatever Christ hath commanded, Matthew 28:20, and to abstain from what he condemns; for both our faith and love, whatever we pretend, will be found vain if we endeavour not to keep his commandments, John 15:10; John 15:14.

Such was the state of things in the church of Israel of old, after the defection under Jeroboam. It was no more a true church, nor any church at all, by virtue of positive institution; for they had neither priests, nor sacrifices, nor any ordinances of public worship, that God approved of. Hence it was the duty of all that feared God in the ten tribes not to join with the leaders and body of the people in their worship; as also to observe those sacred institutions of the law which were

forbidden by them, in the order that they should not go up to Jerusalem, but attend unto all their sacred solemnities in the places where the calves were set up, 1 Kings 12:13 ; 2 Chronicles 11:13 : Accordingly, many of the most zealous professors among them, with the priests and Levites, and with a great multitude of the people, openly separated from the rest, and joined themselves unto Judah in the worship of God continued therein. Others amongst them secretly, in the worst of times, preserved themselves from the abominations of the whole people. In like manner under the New Testament, when some have deserved the title of "Babylon," because of their idolatry, false worship, and persecution, we are commanded to "come out from among them," in an open, visible, professed separation, that we be not partakers of their sins and plagues. But this judgment we are not to make, nor do make concerning any, but such as among whom idolatry spreads itself over the face of all their solemn assemblies, and who join thereunto the persecution of them who desire to worship God in spirit and in truth. The constitution of such churches, as to their being acceptable assemblies of worshippers before God, is lost and dissolved; neither is it lawful for any disciple of Christ to partake with them in their sacred administrations, for so to do is plainly to disown the authority of Christ, or to set up that of wicked and corrupt men above it.

Yet all this hinders not but that there may in such apostatical churches remain a profession of the fundamental truths of the gospel. And by virtue thereof, as they maintain the interest of Christ's visible kingdom in the world, so we no way doubt but that there may be many amongst them who, by a saving faith in the truths they do profess, do really belong to the mystical church of Christ. An instituted church, therefore, may, by the crimes and wickedness of its rulers and the generality of its members, and their idolatrous administrations in holy things, utterly destroy their instituted estate, and yet not presently all of them cease to belong unto the kingdom of Christ: for we cannot say that those things which will certainly annul church administrations, and render them abominable, will absolutely destroy the salvation of all individual persons who partake in them; and many may secretly preserve themselves from being defiled with such abominations. So in the height of the degeneracy and apostasy of the Israelitish church, there were seven thousand who kept themselves pure from Baalish idolatry, of whom none were known to Elijah. And therefore did God still continue a respect unto them as his people, because of those secret ones, and because the token of his covenant was yet in their flesh, affording unto them an extraordinary ministry by his prophets, when the ordinary by priests and Levites was utterly ceased. This we are to hope concerning every place where there is any profession made of the name of Christ, seeing it was the passion of Elijah which caused him to oversee so great a remnant as God had left unto himself in the kingdom of Israel. And from his example we may learn, that good men may sometimes be more severe in their censures for God than he will be for himself.

Moreover, such as were baptized in those churches were not baptized into them as particular churches, nor initiated into them thereby; but the relation which ensued unto them thereon was unto the catholic church visible, together with a separation from the infidel world, lying wholly in darkness and evil, by a dedication unto the name of Christ. Upon a personal avowment of that faith whereinto they were baptized, they became complete members of that church. Whatever state they are hereby admitted into, whatever benefit or privilege they are personally interested in, they lose them not by the miscarriage of that particular church whereunto they do relate; yea, losing the whole advantage of an instituted church-state, they may still retain whatever belongs unto their faith and profession. Were baptism only an institution into a particular church, upon the

failure of that church, baptism, as to all its benefits and privileges, must cease also. We do therefore own, that amongst those whose assemblies are rejected by Christ, because of their false worship and wickedness, there may be persons truly belonging to the mystical church of God, and that also by their profession are a portion of his visible kingdom in the world. How far they do consent unto the abominations of the churches whereunto they do belong, how far they have light against them, how far they do bewail them, how far they repent of them, what God will bear withal in them, we know not, nor are called to judge. Our love is to be towards them as persons relating unto Jesus Christ in the capacity mentioned; but all communion with them in the acts of false worship is forbidden unto us. By virtue also of that relation in which they still continue unto Christ and his church, as believers, they have power, and are warranted (as it is their duty), to reform themselves, and to join together anew in church order, for the due celebration of gospel ordinances, unto the glory of Christ and their own edification; for it is fond to imagine, that by the sins of others any disciples of Christ, in any place of the world, should be deprived of a right to perform their duty towards him, when it is discovered unto them. And these are our thoughts concerning such churches as are openly and visibly apostatical.

Again, there are corruptions that may befall or enter into churches, that are not of so heinous a nature as those before insisted on, especially if, as it often falls out, the whole lump be not leavened; if the whole body be not infected, but only some part or parts of it, which others more sound do resist and give their testimony against. And these may have none of the pernicious consequences before mentioned. Thus, many errors in doctrines, disorders and miscarriages in sacred administrations, irregular walking in conversation, with neglect or abuse of discipline in rulers, may fall out in some churches, which yet may be so far from evacuating their church state, as that they give no sufficient warrant unto any person immediately to leave their communion or to separate from them. The instances that may be given of the failings of some of the primitive churches in all these things, with the consideration of the apostolical directions given unto them on such occasions, render this assertion evident and uncontrollable. Nor do we in the least approve of their practice (if any such there be that are considerable), who, upon every failing in these things in any church, think themselves sufficiently warranted immediately of their own minds to depart from its communion. Much more do we condemn them who suffer themselves in these things to be guided by their own surmises and misapprehensions; for such there may be as make their own hasty conceptions to be the rule of all church administrations and communion, — who, unless they are in all things pleased, can be quiet nowhere. Wherefore, when any church, whereof a man is by his own consent antecedently a member, doth fall, in part or in whole, from any of those truths which it hath professed, or when it is overtaken with a neglect of discipline or irregularities in its administration, such a one is to consider that he is placed in his present state by divine Providence, that he may orderly therein endeavour to put a stop unto such defections, and to exercise his charity, love, and forbearance towards the persons of them whose miscarriages at present he cannot remedy. In such cases there is a large and spacious field for wisdom, patience, love, and prudent zeal to exercise themselves. And it is a most perverse imagination, that separation is the only cure for church disorders. All the gifts and graces of the Spirit bestowed on church members, to be exercised in their several stations at such a season, — all instructions given for their due improvement unto the good of the whole, — the nature, rules, and laws of all societies, — declare that all other remedies possible and lawful are to be attempted before a church be finally deserted. But these rules are to be observed provided always that it be judged

unlawful, for any persons, either, for the sake of peace, or order, or concord, or on any other consideration, to join actually in anything that is sinful, or to profess any opinion which is contrary to sound doctrine or the form of wholesome words, which we are bound to hold fast on all emergencies. And farther: if we may suppose, as sure enough we may, that such a church, so corrupted, shall obstinately persist in its errors, miscarriages, neglects, and maladministrations; that it shall refuse to be warned or admonished, or being so, by any means, shall willfully reject and despise all instruction; that it will not bear with them that are yet sound in it, whether elders or members, in peaceable endeavours to reduce it unto the order of the gospel, but shall rather hurt, persecute, and seek their trouble for so doing, whereby their edification comes continually to be obstructed, and their souls to be hazarded, through the loss of truth and peace; — we no way doubt but that it is lawful for such persons to withdraw themselves from the communion of such churches, and that without any apprehension that they have absolutely lost their church-state, or are totally rejected by Jesus Christ; for the means appointed unto any end are to be measured and regulated according unto their usefulness unto that end. And let men's present apprehensions be what they will, it will one day appear that the end of all church order, rule, communion, and administrations, is, not the grandeur or secular advantage of some few, not outward peace and quietness, unto whose preservation the civil power is ordained; but the edification of the souls of men, in faith, love, and gospel obedience. Where, therefore, these things are so disposed of and managed as that they do not regularly further and promote that end, but rather obstruct it, if they will not be reduced unto their due order and tendency, they may be laid aside and made use of in another way. Much more may any refuse the communion of such churches, if they impose on them their corruptions, errors, failings, and mistakes, as the condition of their communion; for hereby they directly make themselves lords over the faith and worship of the disciples of Christ, and are void of all authority from him in what they so do or impose. And it is so far [from being true], that any men's withdrawing of themselves from the communion of such churches, and entering into a way of reformation for their own good, in obedience to the laws of Christ, should infer in them a want of love and peaceableness, or a spirit of division, that to do otherwise were to divide from Christ, and to cast out all true Christian love, embracing a cloud of slothful negligence and carelessness in the great concernments of the glory of God and their own souls in the room thereof.

We are neither the authors nor the guides of our own love: he who implants and worketh it in us hath given us rules how it must be exercised, and that on all emergencies. It may work as regularly by sharp cutting rebukes as by the most silken and compliant expressions, — by manifesting an aversation from all that is evil, as by embracing and approving of what is good. In all things and cases it is to be directed by the word. And when, under the pretence of it, we leave that rule, and go off from any duty which we owe immediately unto God, it is will, pride, and self-conceit in us, and not love. And among all the exhortations that are given us in the Scripture unto unity and concord, as the fruits of love, there is not one that we should agree or comply with any in their sins or evil practices. But as we are commanded in ourselves to abstain “from all appearance of evil,” so are we forbidden a participation in the sins of other men, and all “fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.” Our love towards such churches is to work by pity, compassion, prayer, instructions; which are due means for their healing and recovery; — not by consent unto them or communion with them, whereby they may be hardened in the error of their way, and our own souls be subverted: for if we have not a due respect unto the Lord Christ and his authority, all that we

have, or may pretend to have, unto any church is of no value; neither ought we to take into consideration any terms of communion whose foundation is not laid in a regard thereunto.

Moreover (as hath been declared), there is no such society of Christians in the world, whose assemblies, as to instituted worship, are rejected by Christ so that they have a bill of divorce given unto them, by the declaration of the will of the Lord Jesus to that purpose in the Scripture, but that, until they are utterly also, as it were, extirpate by the providence of God (as are many of the primitive plantations), we are persuaded of them that there are yet some secret, hidden ones among them, that belong unto the purpose of God's grace; for we do judge that wherever the name of Jesus Christ is called upon, there is salvation to be obtained, however the ways of it may be obstructed unto the most by their own sins and errors. They may also retain that profession which distinguisheth them from the infidel world. In these things we are still to hold communion with them, and on these accounts is our love to be continued unto them. Some kind of communion we may hold with them that are of no instituted or particular churches, or whose church-state is rejected, even as a person excommunicated is to be admonished as a brother. And some kind of communion we may lawfully refuse with some true churches; instances whereof shall be given afterward.

There is, therefore, no necessity that any should deny all them to be true churches from whom they may have just reason to withdraw their communion; for such as are so may require such things thereunto as it is not lawful for them to accept of or submit unto. What assemblies of Christians we behold visibly worshipping God in Christ, we take for granted to be true visible churches. And when we judge of our own communion with them, it is not upon this question, whether they are true churches or no, as though the determination of our practice did depend solely thereon: for as we are not called to judge of the being of their constitution, as to the substance of it, unless they are openly judged in the Scripture, as in the case of idolatry and persecution persisted in; so a determination of the truth of their constitution, or that they are true churches, will not presently resolve us in our duty as to communion with them, for the reasons before given. But in such a case two things are by us principally to be considered:—

1. That nothing sinful in itself, or unto us, be required of us as the condition of communion.
2. That we may in such churches obtain the immediate end of their institution and our conjunction with them; which is our edification in faith, love, and obedience. And the things whereof we have discoursed comprise our thoughts concerning those societies of Christians whose degeneracy from their primitive rule and institution is most manifest and notorious. Whilst there is any profession of the gospel, any subjection of souls unto Jesus Christ avowed, or any expectation of help from him continued among them, we cannot but hope that there are, in all of them, at least some few names that are "written in the Lamb's book of life," and which shall be saved eternally: for as a relation unto a particular visible church, walking according to the order and rule of the gospel, is the duty of every believer to give himself up unto, as that which is a means appointed and sanctified to the furtherance of his edification and salvation; so where it cannot be obtained, through invincible outward impediments, or is omitted through ignorance of duty, or is on just causes refused where opportunities make a tender of it, or where the being and benefit of it are lost through the apostasy of those churches whereunto any persons did belong, the utter want of it, and that always, is not such as necessarily infers the eternal loss of their souls who suffer under

it.

Other churches there are in the world, which are not evidently guilty of the enormities, in doctrine, worship, and discipline, before discoursed of. These all we judge to be true churches of Christ, and do hope that his promised presence is with them in their assemblies. Answerable hereunto is our judgment concerning their officers or rulers, and all their sacred administrations. It becomes us to think and believe that the one have authority from Christ, and that the other are accepted with him; for it is most unwarrantable rashness and presumption, yea, an evident fruit of ignorance, or want of love, or secular, private interest, when upon lesser differences men judge churches to be no true churches, and their ministers to be no true ministers, and, consequently, all their administrations to be invalid. So do some judge of churches, because they have bishops; and so do more of others because they have none. But the validity or invalidity of the ordinances of Christ, which are the means of union and communion with him unto all his disciples, depend not on the determination of things highly disputable in their notion, and not inconsistent with true gospel obedience in their practice. And we are unduly charged with other apprehensions. God forbid that any such thought should ever enter into our hearts, as though the churches constituted in all things according unto our light, and the rules we apprehend appointed in the Scripture for that purpose, should be the only true churches in the world.

They do but out of design endeavour to expose us to popular envy and hatred who invent and publish such things concerning us, or any of us. But whatever be the judgment of others concerning us, we intend not to take from thence any such provocation as might corrupt our judgments concerning them, nor to relieve ourselves by returning the like censures unto them as we receive from them. Scripture rule and duty must in these matters regulate our thoughts on all occasions. And whilst we judge others to be true churches, we shall not be much moved with their judgment that we are none, because we differ from them. We stand to the judgment of Christ and his word. We cannot but judge, indeed, that many churches have missed, and do miss, in some things, the precise rules of their due constitution and walking; that many of them have added useless, superfluous rites to the worship of God among them; that there is in many of them a sinful neglect of evangelical discipline, or a carnal rule erected in the stead of it; that errors in doctrines of importance and danger are prevalent in sundry of them; that their rulers are much influenced by a spirit of bitterness and envy against such as plead for reformation beyond their measure or interest; — yet that hereupon they should all or any of them immediately forfeit their church-state, so as to have no lawful ministers nor acceptable sacred administrations, is in itself false imagination, and such as was never by us entertained.

101In particular, as to those churches in Europe which are commonly called Reformed, we have the same thoughts of them, the same love towards them, the same readiness for communion with them, as we would desire any disciples of Christ in the world to have, bear, or exercise towards ourselves. If we are found negligent in any office of love towards them or any of their members, — in compassion, help, or assistance, or such supplies in outward or inward things as we have opportunity or ability for, — we are willing to bear the guilt of it as our sin, and the reproach of it as our shame. And herein we desire to fulfil the royal law, according to the Scripture, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” The same we say concerning all the churches in England of the same mould and constitution with them; especially if it be true, which some say, that parochial churches are under a force and power, whereby they are enjoined the practice of sundry things and

forbidden the performance of others, wherein the compliance of some is not over-voluntary nor pleasing to themselves. Neither is there a nullity or invalidity in the ordinances administered in them, any otherwise than as some render them ineffectual unto themselves by their unbelief. And this is the paganizing of England which some of us are traduced for! We believe that, among the visible professors in this nation, there is as great a number of sincere believers as in any nation under heaven; so that in it are treasured up a considerable portion of the invisible mystical church of Christ.

We believe that the generality of the inhabitants of this nation are, by their profession, constituted an eminent part of the kingdom of Christ in this world. And we judge not, we condemn not, those who, walking according to their light and understanding in particular rites, do practice such things in the worship of God as we cannot comply withal; for we do not think that the things wherein they fail, wherein they miss or outgo the rule, are in their own nature absolutely destructive of their particular church-state. And what more can reasonably be required of us, or expected from us, in this matter, we know not. The causes of the distance that doth remain between us all shall be afterward inquired into. For our duty in particular presential communion, at the celebration of the same individual ordinances, with such churches as are remote from us, in Asia or Africa, we shall, we hope, be directed to determine aright concerning it when we are called thereunto. In the meantime, what are our thoughts concerning them hath been before declared: to love them as subjects of the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the world, to pray for them that they have all needful supplies of grace and the Holy Spirit from above, that God would send out his light and truth to guide them in their worship and obedience, and to help them in things spiritual and temporal, as we have opportunity, is the sum of the duty which is required in us towards them. Those we are more concerned in who are within the lines of our ordinary communication, among whom we walk and converse in the world. Unto any of these it is in the liberty and power of every believer to join himself, by his own consent. And no more is required hereunto, in the present constitution of churches among ourselves, but that a man remove his habitation, to comply with his own desires herein: and this choice is to be regulated by a judgment how a man may best improve and promote his own edification. We see not, therefore, how any man, with the least pretence of sobriety or modesty, can charge us with the want of an esteem and valuation of evangelical unity; for we embrace it on all the grounds that it is in the gospel recommended unto us. And we do know within what narrow bounds the charity and unity of some are confined, who yet advantage themselves by a noise of their pretence. But that we do not in the least disturb, break, or dissent from the catholic church, either as it is invisible, in its internal form, by faith and the renovation of the Holy Ghost, or as visibly professing necessary, fundamental truths of the gospel, we have sufficiently evinced. And the principles laid down concerning particular churches, congregations, assemblies, or parishes, have not as yet been detected by any to spring from want of love, or to be obstructive of the exercise of it. Having, therefore, thus briefly given some account of what we conceive to be our duty in relation unto the whole church of God, we can with confidence and much assurance of mind own as dear a valuation of love, unity, and peaceableness in the profession of the gospel as any sort of professors whatever. And we are persuaded that our principles do as much tend and conduce unto the improvement of them as any that are or can be proposed unto that end; for we either do or are in a readiness to embrace every thing or way that the Lord Christ hath appointed or doth bless thereunto.

We doubt not, as hath been before acknowledged, but that there have been many failings and sinful miscarriages among all sorts of professors, who separate, or are rather driven from, the present public worship. There is no question but that in them all there are some remainders of the bitter root of corrupt affections, which, under the various temptations and provocations they have been exposed unto, hath brought forth fruit of an unpleasant relish. It is no new thing that irregular prejudices should be found acting themselves in professors of the gospel; it hath been so among them from the beginning. And we hope that, where there is or hath been any guilt of this nature, the reproofs which have been publicly given unto it (with what spirit or intention soever managed) may be useful to the amendment of them who have offended. But for our own parts, we must bear this testimony, unto our sincerity, that we not only condemn but abhor all evil surmises among professors, all rash and uncharitable censures, all causeless aversations of mind and affections, all strife, wrath, anger, and debate, upon the account of different apprehensions and practices in and about the concerns of religious worship. Much more do we cast out all thoughts of judging men's eternal state and condition with respect unto such differences; nor do we, nor dare we, give countenance unto any thing that is in the least really opposite to love, peace, unity, or concord, amongst the disciples of Christ. And as we shall not excuse any of those extravagancies and intemperate heats, in words or otherwise, which some it may be have been guilty of, who, until their repentance, must bear their own judgment; so we will not make a recharge on others who differ in persuasion from us of the same or the like crimes; nor indeed need we so to do, their principles and practices, contrary unto all Christian love and charity, being written as with the beams of the sun. And we do not complain of our lot in the world, — that the appearance of such things in any of us would be esteemed a scandalous crime, which others that condemn them in us indulge in themselves without the least check or control. The law of this condition is put upon us by the profession which we do avow. Only, we are not willing that any should make advantage against us by their pleas for love, unity, and concord; as if, indeed, they were for peace, but that we make ourselves ready for war. Could they convince us that we come behind them in the valuation and seeking after these things by all ways and means blessed by Christ to that purpose, we should judge ourselves with a severity at least commensurate to the utmost they are able to exercise against us, whilst free from malice and evil designs. Only we must add, that there is no true measure of love to be taken by the accessions that men can make towards them who depart from truth. If it were so, those must be judged to abound most with it who can most comply with the practices of the church of Rome. But we are persuaded that such discourses, with the application of them unto those who differ from their authors, do proceed from sincerity in them; only, as we fear, somewhat leavened with an apprehension that their judgments and practices, being according unto truth, ought to be the standard and measure of other men's, perhaps no less sincere and confident of the truth than themselves, though differing from them. And hence it is unhappily fallen out, that, in the reproofs which some do manage on the foundations mentioned, and in the way of their management, many do suppose that there is as great an appearance, if not evidence, of evil surmises, ungrounded, temerarious censures; of self-conceit and elation of mind; of hard thoughts of, undue charges on, and the contempt of others; and in all of a want of real love, condescension, and compassion, as in any things that are true and to be really found among professors blamed by them: for these things, both as charged and recharged, have a double appearance. Those from whom they proceed look on them in the light of that sincerity and integrity which they are conscious of to themselves, wherein they seem amiable, useful, and free from all

offence; whereas others, that are concerned, viewing of them in the disordered reflections of their opposition unto them, and the disadvantage which they undergo by them, do apprehend them quite of another nature. And it is a matter of trouble unto us to find that when some are severely handled for those principles and ways wherein they can and do commend their consciences unto God, — and thereby apprehending that their intentions, purposes, principles, and affections, are injuriously traduced and perverted, — they fall with an equal severity on them by whom they are reprov'd; though their reproofs proceed from an equal sincerity unto what themselves profess and expect to be believed in. Especially are such mutual reflections grievous and irksome unto men, when they apprehend that in them or by them professed friends do industriously expose them to the contempt and wrath of professed adversaries.

## 02.04. Chapter 04.

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### Chapter 04.

Want of love and unity among Christians justly complained of — Causes of divisions and schisms — 1. Misapprehensions of evangelical unity — Wherein it doth truly consist — The ways and means whereby it may be obtained and preserved — Mistakes about both — 2. Neglect in churches to attend unto known gospel duty — Of preaching unto conversion and edification — Care of those that are really godly — Of discipline: how neglected, how corrupted — Principles seducing churches and their rulers into miscarriages: 1. Confidence of their place; 2. Contempt of the people; 3. Trust unto worldly grandeur — Other causes of divisions — Remainders of corruption from the general apostasy — Weakness and ignorance — Of readiness to take offence — Remedies hereof — Pride — False teachers.

Upon the whole matter, it is generally acknowledged that there is a great decay of love, a great want of peace and unity, among professors of the gospel in the world. And it is no less evident nor less acknowledged that these things are frequently commanded and enjoined unto them in the Scripture. Might they be obtained, it would greatly further the ends of the gospel and answer the mind of Christ; and their loss is obstructive unto the one, and no less dishonourable unto that profession which is made of the name of the other: for the divisions of Christians (occasioned chiefly by false notions of unity, and undue means of attaining it) are the chief cause of offences unto them who are yet strangers from Christianity. The Jews object unto us the wars among Christians, which they suppose shall have no place under the kingdom and reign of the true Messiah. And we have been reproached with our intestine differences by Gentiles and Mohammedans; for those who never had either peace, or love, or unity among themselves, do yet think meet to revile us with the want of them, because they know how highly we are obliged unto them. But any men may be justly charged with the neglect of that duty which they profess, if they be found defective therein.

Under the sad effects of the want of these things we may labour long enough, if we endeavour not to take away the causes of it. And yet in the entrance of our disquisition after them we are again entangled. Christians cannot come to an agreement about these causes; and so live under the severity of their effects, as not being able to conclude on a remedy. The multitude of them is here divided, and one crieth one thing, another another. Most place the cause of all our differences in a dissent from themselves and their judgments; yea, they do so apparently who yet disavow their so doing. And it may be here expected that we should give some account of our thoughts as to the causes of these differences, whereof we also have now complained, so far as they are contrary to the nature or obstructive of the ends of the gospel. We shall therefore briefly endeavour the satisfaction of such as may have those expectations. Particular evils, which contribute much unto our divisions, we shall not insist upon; much less shall we reflect upon and aggravate the failings of others, whether persons or societies. Some of the principal and more general reasons and causes of them, especially amongst Protestants, it shall suffice us to enumerate.

1. The principal cause of our divisions and schisms is no other than the ignorance or misapprehension that is among Christians of the true nature of that evangelical unity which they ought to follow after, with the ways and means whereby it may be attained and preserved. Hence it is come to pass, that, in the greatest pleas for unity and endeavours after it, most men have pursued a shadow, and fought uncertainly, as those that beat the air; for having lost every notion of gospel unity, and not loving the thing itself, under what terms soever proposed unto them, they consigned the name of it unto, and clothed with its ornaments and privileges, a vain figment of their own, which the Lord Christ never required, nor ever blessed any in their endeavours to attain. And when they had changed the end, it was needful for them also to change the means of attaining it, and to substitute those in their room which were suited to the new mark and aim they had erected. Farther to evidence these things, we shall give some account of the nature of evangelical unity, the means of attaining it, with the false notion of it that some have embraced, and the corrupt means which they have used for the compassing of the same.

First, That unity which is recommended unto us in the gospel is spiritual; and in that which is purely so lies the foundation of the whole. Hence it is called "The unity of the Spirit," which is to be kept "in the bond of peace;" because "there is one body, and one Spirit," whereby that body is animated, Ephesians 4:3-4. Thus, all true believers become one in the Father and the Son, or perfect in one, John 17:21-22. It is their participation of, and quickening by, the same Spirit that is in Christ Jesus, whereby they become his body, or members of it, "even of his flesh and of his bones," Ephesians 5:30; that is, no less really partakers of the same divine spiritual nature with him, 2 Peter 1:4, than Eve was of the nature of Adam, when she was made of his flesh and his bones, Genesis 2:23. The real union of all true believers unto the Lord Christ as their head, wrought by his Spirit, which dwelleth in them, and communicates of his grace unto them, is that which we intend; for as hereby they become one with and in him, so they come to be one among themselves, as his body; and all the members of the body, being many, are yet but one body, wherein their oneness among themselves doth consist. The members of the body have divers forms or shapes, divers uses and operations, much more may be diversely clothed and adorned; yet are they one body still, wherein their unity doth consist. And it were a ridiculous thing to attempt the appearance of a dead, useless unity among the members of the body, by clothing of them all in the same kind of garments or covering. But granting them their unity by their relation unto the Head, and thence to one another, unto the constitution of the whole, and their different forms, shapes, uses, operations, ornaments, all tend to make them serviceable in their unity unto their proper ends. And saith the apostle, "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit," 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. And he doth elsewhere so describe this fundamental unity of believers in one body, under and in dependence on the same Head, as to make it the only means of the usefulness and preservation of the whole. They "grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love," Ephesians 4:15-16. The conjunctions of all the members into one body, their mutual usefulness unto one another, the edification of the whole, with its increase, the due exercise of love (which things contain the whole nature and the utmost ends of all church-communion), do depend merely and solely upon, and

flow from, the relation that the members have to the Head, and their union with him. He speaketh again to the same purpose in the reproof of them who “hold not the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God,” Colossians 2:19. This is the foundation of all gospel unity among believers, whereunto all other things which are required unto the completing of it are but accessory; nor are they, without this, of any value or acceptation in the sight of God. Whatever order, peace, concord, union in the church, any one may hold or keep who is not interested herein, he is but like a stone in a building, laid it may be in a comely order, but not cemented and fixed unto the whole; which renders its station useless to the building and unsafe unto itself: or like a dead, mortified part of the body, which neither receives any vital influence from the head, nor administers nourishment unto any other part. Now, it cannot be denied but that, in the contests that are in the world about church union and divisions, with what is pleaded about their nature and causes, there is little or no consideration had thereof.

Yea, those things are principally insisted on, for the constituting of the one and the avoiding of the other, which casts a neglect, yea, a contempt upon it. It is the Romanists who make the greatest outcries about church-union, and who make the greatest advantage by what they pretend so to be. But hereunto they contend expressly, on the one side, that it is indispensably necessary that all Christians should be subject to the pope of Rome and united unto him; and, on the other, that it is not necessary at all that any of them be spiritually and savingly united unto Christ. Others, also, place it in various instances of conformity unto and compliance with the commands of men; which, if they are observed, they are wondrous cold in their inquiries after this relation unto the Head. But the truth is, that where any one is interested in this foundation of all gospel unity, he may demand communion with any church in the world, and ought not to be refused, unless in case of some present offence or scandal. And those by whom such persons are rejected from communion, to be held on gospel terms, on the account of some differences not intrenching on this foundation, do exercise a kind of church tyranny, and are guilty of the schism which may ensue thereon. So, on the other side, where this is wanting, men’s compliance with any other terms or conditions that may be proposed unto them, and their obtaining of church-communion thereon, will be of little advantage unto their souls.

Secondly, Unto this foundation of gospel unity among believers, for and unto the due improvement of it, there is required a unity of faith, or of the belief and profession of the same divine truth; for as there is one Lord, so also [there is] one faith and one baptism unto believers. And this ariseth from and followeth the other; for those who are so united unto Christ are all taught of God to believe the truths which are necessarily required thereunto. And however, by the power of temptation, they may fall in it or from it for a season, as did Peter, yet, through the love and care of Jesus Christ, they are again recovered. Now, unto this unity of faith two things are required: — First, A precise and express profession of the fundamental articles of Christian religion; for we outwardly hold the Head by a consent unto the form of wholesome words wherein the doctrine of it is contained. Of the number and nature of such fundamental truths, whose express acknowledgment belongs unto the unity of faith, so much has been discoursed by others as that we need not add any thing thereunto. The sum is, that they are but few, plainly delivered in the Scripture, evidencing their own necessity, all conducing to the begetting and increase of that spiritual life whereby we live unto God. Secondly, It is required hereunto, that in other things and duties “every man be fully

persuaded in his own mind," and, walking according to what he hath attained, do follow peace and love with those who are otherwise persuaded than he is, Romans 14:5; Php 3:16; — for the unity of faith did never consist in the same precise conceptions of all revealed objects; neither the nature of man nor the means of revelation will allow such a unity to be morally possible. And the figment of supplying this variety by an implicit faith is ridiculous; for herein faith is considered as professed, and no man can make profession of what he knoweth not. It is, therefore, condescension and mutual forbearance whereby the unity of faith, consisting in the joint belief of necessary truths, is to be preserved with respect unto other things about which differences may arise.

Yet is not this so to be understood as though Christians, especially ministers of the gospel, should content themselves with the knowledge of such fundamentals, or confine their Scripture inquiries unto them. Whatever is written in the Scripture is "written for our admonition, 1 Corinthians 10:11; and it is our duty to search diligently into the whole counsel of God, therein revealed; yea, to inquire with "all diligence," 1 Timothy 4:13-16; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:10-11, in the use of all means and the improvement of all advantages, with fervent supplications for light and aid from above, into the whole mystery of the will of God, as revealed in the Scripture, and all the parts of it, is the principal duty that is incumbent on us in this world. And those who take upon them to be ministers and instructors of others, by whom this is neglected, who take up with a superficial knowledge of general principles, and those such, for the most part, as have a coincidence with the light of nature, do but betray the souls of those over whom they usurp a charge, and are unworthy of the title and office which they bear. Neither is there any thing implied in the means of preserving the unity of faith that should hinder us from explaining, confirming, and vindicating any truth that we have received, wherein others differ from us, provided that what we do be done with a spirit of meekness and love; yea, our so doing is one principal means of ministering nourishment unto the body, whereby the whole is increased as "with the increase of God." But in the room of all this, what contentings, fightings, destructions of men, body and soul, upon variety of judgments about sacred things, have been introduced, by the craft of Satan and the carnal interest of men of corrupt minds, is known to all the world.

Thirdly, There is a unity of love that belongs unto the evangelical unity which we are in the description of; for love is the bond of perfection, that whereby all the members of the body of Christ are knit together among themselves, and which renders all the other ingredients of this unity useful unto them. And as we have discoursed of the nature of this love before, so the exercise of it, as it hath an actual influence into gospel unity among Christians, may be reduced unto two heads. For, first, It worketh effectually, according to the measure of them in whom it is, in the contribution of supplies of grace, and light, and helps of obedience, unto other members of the body. Every one in whom this love dwelleth, according to his ability, call, and opportunities, which make up his measure, will communicate the spiritual supplies which he receiveth from the head, Christ Jesus, unto others, by instructions, exhortations, consolations, and example, unto their edification. This he will do in love, and unto the ends of love, — namely, to testify a joint relation unto Christ, the head of all, and the increase of the whole by supplies of life from him. Instead hereof, some have invented bonds of ecclesiastical unity, which may bind men together in some appearance of order, whilst in the meantime they live in envy, wrath, and malice, biting and devouring one another; or if there be any thing of love among them, it is that which is merely natural, or carnal and sensual,

working by a joint consent in delights and pleasure, or at best in civil things, belonging unto their conversation in this world. The love that is among such persons in this world is of the world, and will perish with the world. But it is a far easier thing to satisfy conscience with a pretence of preserving church-unity, by an acquiescency in some outward rules and constitutions, wherein men's minds are little concerned, than to attend diligently unto the due exercise of this grace of love against all oppositions and temptations unto the contrary; for indeed the exercise of this love requires a sedulous and painful "labour," Hebrews 6:10. But yet this is that alone which is the bond of perfection unto the disciples of Christ, and without which all other pretences or appearances of unity are of no value with him. Secondly, This love acts itself by forbearance and condescension towards the infirmities, mistakes, and faults of others; wherein of what singular use it is for the preservation of church peace and order, the apostle at large declares, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 :

Fourthly, The Lord Christ, by his kingly authority, hath instituted orders for rule, and ordinances for worship, Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 4:8-13, to be observed in all his churches. That they be attended unto, and celebrated in a due manner, belongs unto the unity which he requires among his disciples. To this end he communicates supplies of spiritual ability and wisdom, or the gifts of his Spirit, unto the guides and rulers of his churches, for their administration unto edification. And hereon, if a submission unto his authority be accompanied with a due attendance unto the rule of the word, no such variety or difference will ensue as shall impeach that unity which is the duty of them all to attend unto. In these things doth consist that evangelical church-unity which the gospel recommends unto us, and which the Lord Christ prayed for, with respect unto all that should believe on his name, John 17:20-23. One Spirit, one faith, one love, one Lord, there ought to be in and unto them all. In the possession of this unity, and no other, were the first churches left by the apostles; and had they in succeeding generations continued, according to their duty, in the preservation and liberty of it, all those scandalous divisions which afterward fell out among them, on account of pre-eminences, jurisdictions, liturgies, rites, ceremonies, violently or fraudulently obtruded on their communion, had been prevented, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5. The ways and means whereby this unity may be obtained and preserved amongst Christians are evident from the nature of it: for whereas it is spiritual, none other are suited thereunto, nor hath the Lord Christ appointed any other but his Spirit and his word; for to this end doth he promise the presence of his Spirit among them that believe unto the consummation of all things, Matthew 28:20; John 14:16. And this he doth, both as to lead and "guide them into all truth" necessary unto the ends mentioned, so to assist and help them in the orderly performance of their duties in and about them. His word, also, as the rule which they are to attend unto, he hath committed unto them. And other ways and means for the compassing of this end, besides the due improvement of spiritual assistances in a compliance with the holy rule, he hath not desired or appointed. This is that gospel unity which we are to labour after, and these are the means whereby we may do so. But now, through the mistake of the minds of men, with the strong influence which carnal and corrupt interests have upon them, we know how it hath been despised, and what hath been set up in the room thereof, and what have been the means whereby it hath been pursued and promoted. We may take an instance in those of the church of Rome. No sort of Christians in the world (as we have already observed) do at this day more pretend unto unity, or more press the necessity of it, or more fiercely judge, oppose, and destroy others for the breach of it, which they charge upon them, nor more prevail or advantage themselves by the pretence of it, than do they; but yet, notwithstanding all their pretences, it will not be denied but that the unity which they so make their boast of, and press upon

others, is a thing utterly foreign to the gospel, and destructive of that peace, union, and concord among Christians which it doth require. They know how highly unity is commended in the Scripture, how much it is to be prized and valued by all true believers, how acceptable it is to Jesus Christ, and how severely they are condemned who break it or despise it: these things they press, and plead, and make their advantage by. But when we come to inquire what it is that they intend by church-unity, they tell us long stories of subjection unto the pope, — to the church in its dictates and resolutions, without farther examination, merely because they are theirs. Now, these things are not only of another nature and kind than the unity and concord commended unto us by Jesus Christ, but perfectly inconsistent with them, and destructive of them. And as they would impose upon us a corrupt confederacy, for their own secular advantage, in the room of the spiritual unity of the gospel; so it was necessary that they should find out means suitable unto its accomplishment and preservation, as distant from the means appointed by Christ for the attaining of gospel union as their carnal confederacy is from the thing itself. And they have done accordingly; for the enforcing men, by all ways of deceit and outward violence, unto a compliance with and submission unto their orders, is the great expedient for the establishment and preservation of their perverse union that they have fixed on. Now, that this fictitious unity and corrupt carnal pursuit of it have been the greatest occasion and cause of begetting, fomenting, and continuing the divisions that are among Christians in the world, hath been undeniably proved by learned men of all sorts. And so it will fall out, wherever any reject the union of Christ's institution, and substitute in the room thereof an agreement of their own invention; as his will be utterly lost, so they will not be able to retain their own.

Thus, others also, not content with those bounds and measures which the gospel hath fixed unto the unity of Christians and churches, will have it to consist almost wholly in an outward conformity unto certain rites, orders, ceremonies, and modes of sacred administrations, which themselves have either invented and found out or do observe and approve. Whoever dissents from them in these things must immediately be branded as a schismatic, a divider of the church's unity, and an enemy unto the peace and order of it. Howbeit, of conformity unto such institutions and orders of men, of uniformity in the observation of such external rites in the worship of the church, there is not one word spoken, nor any thing of that nature intimated, in all the commands for unity which are given unto us, nor in the directions that are sanctified unto the due preservation of it. Yet such a uniformity being set up in the room of evangelical unity and order, means suited unto the preservation of it, but really destructive of that whose name it beareth and whose place it possesseth, have not been wanting. And it is not unworthy of consideration how men endeavour to deceive others, and are deceived themselves, by manifold equivocations in their arguings about this matter. For, first, they lay down the necessity of unity among Christians, with the evil that is in breaches, divisions, and schisms; which they prove from the commands of the one and the reproofs of the other that abound in the Scripture.

Then, with an easy deduction, they prove that it is a duty incumbent on all Christians, in their several capacities, to observe, keep, further, and promote this unity; and to prevent, oppose, resist, and avoid all divisions that are contrary thereunto. If so, the magistrate must do the same in his place and capacity. Now, seeing it is his office, and unto him of God it is committed, to exercise his power in laws and penalties for the promoting of what is good, and the punishing of what is contrary thereunto, it is his duty to coerce, restrain, and punish, all those who oppose, despise, or

any way break or disturb, the unity of the church. And this ratiocination would seem reasonable were it not doubly defective. For, first, the unity intended in the first proposition, whose necessity is confirmed by Scripture testimonies, is utterly lost before we come to the conclusion, and the outward uniformity mentioned is substituted in the room thereof. And hereby, in the second place, are they deceived to believe that external force and penalties are a means to be used by any for the attaining or preserving of gospel unity. It is not improbable, indeed, but that it may be suited to give countenance unto that external uniformity which is intended; but that it should be so unto the promotion of gospel union among believers is a weak imagination. Let such persons keep themselves and their argument unto that union which the Scripture commends amongst the disciples of Christ and his churches, with the means fitted and appointed unto the preservation of it, and they shall have our compliance with any conclusion that will thence ensue.

Herein, therefore, lies the fundamental cause of our divisions; which will not be healed until it be removed and taken out of the way. Leave believers or professors of the gospel unto their duty in seeking after evangelical unity in the use of other means instituted and blessed unto that end, — impose nothing on their consciences or practice under that name, which indeed belongs not thereunto; and although, upon the reasons and causes afterward to be mentioned, there may for a season remain some divisions among them, yet there will be a way of healing continually ready for them, and agreed upon by them as such. Where, indeed, men propose unto themselves different ends, though under the same name, the use of the same means for the compassing of them will but increase their variance: as where some aim at evangelical union, and others at an external uniformity, both under the name of unity and peace, in the use of the same means for these ends, they will be more divided among themselves. But where the same end is aimed at, even the debate of the means for the attaining of it will insensibly bring the parties into a coalition, and work out in the issue a complete reconciliation. In the meantime, were Christians duly instructed how many lesser differences, in mind, and judgment, and practice, are really consistent with the nature, ends, and genuine fruit, of the unity that Christ requires among them, it would undoubtedly prevail with them so to manage themselves in their differences, by mutual forbearance and condescension in love, as not to contract the guilt of being disturbers or breakers of it; for suppose the minds of any of them to be invincibly prepossessed with the principles wherein they differ from others, yet all who are sincere in their profession cannot but rejoice to be directed unto such a managery of them as to be preserved from the guilt of dissolving the unity appointed by Christ to be observed. And, to speak plainly, among all the churches in the world which are free from idolatry and persecution, it is not different opinions, or a difference in judgment about revealed truths, nor a different practice in sacred administrations, but pride, self-interest, love of honour, reputation, and dominion, with the influence of civil or political intrigues and considerations, that are the true cause of that defect of evangelical unity that is at this day amongst them; for set them aside, and the real differences which would remain may be so managed, in love, gentleness, and meekness, as not to interfere with that unity which Christ requireth them to preserve.

Nothing will from thence follow which shall impeach their common interest in one Lord, one faith, one love, one Spirit, and the administration of the same ordinances according to their light and ability. But if we shall cast away this evangelical union among the disciples and churches of Christ, — if we shall break up the bounds and limits fixed unto it, and set up in its place a compliance with, or an agreement in, the commands and appointments of men, making their observations the rule

and measure of our ecclesiastical concord, — it cannot be but that innumerable and endless divisions will ensue thereon. If we will not be contented with the union that Christ hath appointed, it is certain that we shall have none in this world; for concerning that which is of men's finding out, there have been, and will be, contentions and divisions, whilst there are any on the one side who will endeavour its imposition, and on the other who desire to preserve their consciences entire unto the authority of Christ in his laws and appointments.

There is none who can be such a stranger in our Israel as not to know that these things have been the great occasion and cause of the divisions and contentions that have been among us near a hundred years, and which at this day make our breaches wide like the sea, that they cannot be healed. Let, therefore, those who have power and ability be instrumental to restore to the minds of men the true notion and knowledge of the unity which the Lord Christ requireth among his churches and disciples; and let them be left unto that liberty which he hath purchased for them, in the pursuit of that unity which he hath prescribed unto them; and let us all labour to stir up those gracious principles of love and peace which ought to guide us in the use of our liberty, and will enable us to preserve gospel unity; — and there will be a greater progress made towards peace, reconciliation, and concord, amongst all sorts of Christians, than the spoiling of the goods or imprisoning the persons of dissenters will ever effect.

But, it may be, such things are required hereunto as the world is yet scarce able to comply withal; for whilst men do hardly believe that there is an efficacy and power accompanying the institutions of Christ, for the compassing of that whole end which he aimeth at and intendeth, — whilst they are unwilling to be brought unto the constant exercise of that spiritual diligence, patience, meekness, condescension, self-denial, renunciation of the world and conformity thereunto, which are indispensably necessary in church guides and church members, according to their measure, unto the attaining and preservation of gospel unity, but do satisfy themselves in the disposal of an ecclesiastical union into a subordination unto their own secular interests, by external force and power, — we have very small expectation of success in the way proposed. In the meantime, we are herewith satisfied: Take the churches of Christ in the world that are not infected with idolatry or persecution, and restore their unity unto the terms and conditions left unto them by Christ and his apostles, and if in any thing we are found uncompliant therewithal, we shall without repining bear the reproach of it, and hasten an amendment.

2. Another cause of the evil effects and consequences mentioned is, the great neglect that hath been in churches and church rulers in the pursuance of the open, direct ends of the gospel, both as to the doctrine and discipline of it. This hath been such and so evident in the world that it is altogether in vain for any to deny it, or to attempt an excuse of it. And men have no reason to flatter themselves that, whilst they live in an open neglect of their own duty, others will always, according to their wills or desires, attend with diligence unto what they prescribe unto them. If churches or their rulers could excuse or justify their members in all the evils that may befall them through their miscarriages and maladministrations, it might justly be expected that they should go along with them under their conduct, whither ever they should lead them: but if it can never be obliterated out of the minds and consciences of men that they must every one live by his own faith, and every one give an account of himself unto God; and that everyone, notwithstanding the interposition of the help of churches and their rulers, is obliged immediately, in his own person, to take care of his whole duty towards God; it cannot be but that in such cases they will judge for

themselves, and what is meet for them to do. In case, therefore, that they find the churches whereunto they do relate under the guilt of the neglect mentioned, it is probable that they will provide for themselves and their own safety. In this state of things it is morally impossible but that differences and divisions will fall out, which might all of them have been prevented had there been a due attention unto the work, doctrine, order, and discipline of the gospel in the churches that were in possession of the care and administration of them; for it is hard for men to believe that, by the will and command of Christ, they are inevitably shut up under spiritual disadvantages, seeing it is certain that he hath ordered all things in the church for their edification. But the consideration of some particular instances will render this cause of our divisions more evident and manifest. The first end of preaching the gospel is, the conversion of the souls of men unto God, Acts 26:17-18. This, we suppose, will not be questioned or denied. That the work hereof, in all churches, ought to be attended and pursued with zeal, diligence, labour, and care, all accompanied with constant and fervent prayers for success, in and by the ministers and rulers of them, is a truth also that will not admit of any controversy among them that believe the gospel, 1 Timothy 5:17 ;2 Timothy 4:1-2. Herein principally do men in office in the church exercise and manifest their zeal for the glory of God, their compassion towards the souls of men, and acquit themselves faithfully in the trust committed unto them by the "great Shepherd of the sheep," Christ Jesus. If, now, in any assembly or other societies professing themselves to be churches of Christ, and claiming the right and power of churches towards all persons living within the bounds or limits which they have prescribed unto themselves, this work be either totally neglected, or carelessly and perfunctorily attended unto; if those on whom it is immediately incumbent do either suppose themselves free from any obligation thereunto, upon the pretence of other engagements, or do so dispose of themselves, in their relation unto many charges or employments, as that it is impossible they should duly attend unto it, or are unable and insufficient for it; so that, indeed, there is not in such churches a due representation of the love, care, and kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ towards the souls of men, which he hath ordained the administration of his gospel to testify, — it cannot be but that great thoughts of heart, and no small disorder of mind, will be occasioned in them who understand aright how much the principal end of constituting churches in this world is neglected among them. And although it is their duty for a season patiently to bear with, and quietly seek the reformation of, this evil in the churches whereunto they do belong, yet when they find themselves excluded, — it may be by the very constitution of the church itself, it may be by the iniquity of them that prevail therein, — from the performance of any thing that tends thereunto, it will increase their disquietment. And whereas men do not join themselves, nor are by any other ways joined, unto churches, for any civil or secular ends or purposes, but merely for the promotion of God's glory, and the edification of their own souls in faith and gospel obedience, it is altogether vain for any to endeavour a satisfaction of their consciences that it is sin to withdraw from such churches, wherein these ends are not pursued nor attainable; and yet a confidence hereof is that which hath countenanced sundry church-guides into that neglect of duty which many complain of and groan under at this day. The second end of the dispensation of the gospel, in the assemblies of the churches of Christ, by the ministers of them, is the edification of them that are converted unto God and do believe. Herein consists that feeding of his sheep and lambs that the Lord Christ hath committed unto them; and it is mentioned as the principal end for which the ministry was ordained, or for which pastors and teachers are granted unto the church, Ephesians 4:8-13. And the Scripture abounds in the declaration of what skill and knowledge in the mystery of the gospel, what

attendance unto the word and prayer, what care, watchfulness, and diligent labour in the word and doctrine, are required unto a due discharge of the ministerial duty. Where it is omitted or neglected; where it is carelessly attended unto; where those on whom it is incumbent do act more like hirelings than true shepherds; where they want skill to divide the word aright, or wisdom and knowledge to declare from it “the whole counsel of God,” or diligence to be urgent continually in the application of it — they are like to be exercised withal who make conscience of the performance of their own duty, and understand the necessity of enjoying the means that Christ hath appointed for their edification. And it is certain that such churches will in vain, or at least unjustly, expect that professors of the gospel should abide in their particular communion, when they cannot or do not provide food for their souls, whereby they may live to God.

Unless all the members of such churches are equally asleep in security, divisions among them will in this case ensue. Will any disciple of Christ esteem himself obliged to starve his own soul for the sake of communion with them who have sinfully destroyed the principal end of all church-communion? Is there any law of Christ, or any rule of the gospel, or any duty of love, that requires them so to do? The sole immediate end of men's joining in churches being their own edification and usefulness unto others, can they be bound in conscience always to abide there, or in the communion of those churches where it is not to be attained, where the means of it are utterly cast aside? This may become such as know not their duty, nor care to be instructed in it, and are willing to perish in and for the company of others; but for them which in such cases shall provide, according to the rules of the gospel, for themselves and their own safety, they may be censured, judged, and severely treated, by them whose interest and advantage it is so to do, — they may be despised by riotous persons, who sport themselves with their own deceivings, — but with the Lord Christ, the judge of all, they will be accepted. And they do but increase the dread of their own account, who, under pretence of church power and order, would forcibly shut up Christians in such a condition as wherein they are kept short of all the true ends of the institution of churches. To suppose, therefore, that every voluntary departure from the constant communion of such churches, made with a design of joining unto those where the word is dispensed with more diligence and efficacy, is a schism from the church of Christ, is to suppose that which neither the Scripture nor reason will give the least countenance unto. And it would better become such churches to return industriously unto a faithful discharge of their duty, whereby this occasion of divisions may be removed out of the way, than to attempt their own justification by the severe prosecution of such as depart from them.

Thirdly, In pursuit of the doctrine of the gospel so improved and applied, it is the known and open duty of churches, in their guides or ministers, by all means to countenance and promote the growth of light, knowledge, godliness, strictness, and fruitfulness of conversation, in those members of them in whom they may be found, or do appear in an especial manner. Such are they to own, encourage, and make their companions, and endeavour that others may become like unto them. For unless men, in their ordinary and common conversation, in their affections, and the interest which they have in the administration of discipline, do uniformly answer the doctrine of truth which they preach, it cannot be avoided but that it will be matter of offence unto others, and of reproach to themselves. Much more will it be so, if, instead of these things, those who preside in the churches shall beat their fellow-servants, and eat and drink with the drunken. But by all ways it is their duty to separate the precious from the vile, if they intend to be as the mouth of the Lord,

even in their judgments, affections, and conversations. And herein what wisdom, patience, diligence, love, condescension, and forbearance are required, they alone know, and they full well know, who for any season have in their places conscientiously endeavoured the discharge of their duty. But whatever be the labour which is to be undergone therein, and the trouble wherewith it is attended, it is that which, by the appointment of Christ, all ministers of the gospel are obliged to attend unto.

They are not, by contrary actings, to make sad the hearts of them whom God would not have made sad, nor to strengthen the hands of them whom God would not have encouraged, as they will answer it at their peril. The hearts of church guides, and of those who in an especial manner fear God, thriving in knowledge and grace under the dispensation of the word, ought to be knit together in all holy affections, that they may together grow up into him who is the Head; for where there is the greatest evidence and manifestation of the power and presence of Christ in any, there ought their affections to be most intense. For as such persons are the crown, the joy and rejoicing of their guides, and will appear to be so in the day of the Lord; so they do know, or may easily do so, what obligations are on them to honour and pay all due respects unto their teachers, how much on all accounts they owe unto them; whereby their mutual love may be confirmed. And where there is this uniformity between the doctrine of the gospel as preached, and the duties of it as practised, then are they both beautiful in the eyes of all believers, and effectual unto their proper ends. But where things in churches, through their negligence or corruption, or that of their guides, are quite otherwise, it is easy to conjecture what will ensue thereon.

If those who are forwardest in profession, who give the greatest evidence that they have received the power of that religion which is taught and owned among them, who have apparently attained a growth in spiritual light and knowledge above others, shall be so far from being peculiarly cherished and regarded, from being loved, liked, or associated withal, as that on the other side they shall be marked, observed, reproached, and it may be on every slight provocation put even to outward trouble; whilst men of worldly and profane conversation, ignorant, perhaps riotous and debauched, shall be the delight and companions of church guides and rulers; — it cannot be that such churches should long continue in peace, nor is that peace wherein they continue much to be valued. An agreement in such ways and practices is rather to be esteemed a conspiracy against Christ and holiness than church order or concord; and when men once find themselves hated, and it may be persecuted, for no other cause, as they believe, but because they labour in their lives and professions to express the power of that truth wherein they have been instructed, they can hardly avoid the entertainment of severe thoughts concerning them from whom they had just reason to expect other usage, and also to provide for their own more peaceable encouragement and edification.

Fourthly, Hereunto also belongeth the due exercise of gospel discipline, according to the mind of Christ. It is, indeed, by some called into question whether there be any rule or discipline appointed by Christ to be exercised in his churches. But this doubt must respect such outward forms and modes of the administration of these things as are supposed, but not proved necessary: for whether the Lord Christ hath appointed some to rule and some to be ruled; whether he hath prescribed laws or rules, whereby the one should govern and the other obey; whether he hath determined the matter, manner, and end of this rule and government, — cannot well be called into controversy by such as profess to believe the gospel. Of what nature or kind these governors or

rulers are to be, what is their office, how they are to be invested therewith, and by what authority, how they are to behave themselves in the administration of the laws of the church, are things determined by him in the word. And for the matters about which they are to be conversant, it is evidently declared of what nature they are, how they are to be managed, and to what end. The qualifications and duties of those who are to be admitted into the church, their deportment in it, their removal from it, are all expressed in the laws and directions given unto the same end. In particular, it is ordained that those who are unruly or disorderly, who walk contrary unto the rules and ways of holiness prescribed unto the church, shall be rebuked, admonished, instructed; and if, after all means used for their amendment, they abide in impenitency, that they be ejected out of communion. For the church, as visible, is a society gathered and erected to express and declare the holiness of Christ, and the power of his grace in his person and doctrine; and where this is not done, no church is of any advantage unto the interests of his glory in this world. The preservation, therefore, of holiness in them, whereof the discipline mentioned is an effectual means, is as necessary and of the same importance with the preservation of their being. The Lord Christ hath also expressly ordained, that in case offences should arise in and among his churches, that in and by them they should be composed, according to the rules of the word and his own laws; and, in particular, that in sinful miscarriages causing offence or scandal, there be a regular proceeding, according unto an especial law and constitution of his, for the removal of the offence and recovery of the offender; as also, that those who in other cases have fallen by the power of temptation should be restored by a spirit of meekness; and, not to instance in more particulars, that the whole flock be continually watched over, exhorted, warned, instructed, comforted, as the necessities or occasions of the whole, or the several members of it, do require. Now, supposing these and the like laws, rules, and directions, to be given and enjoined by the authority of Christ (which gives warranty for their execution unto men prudent for the ordering of affairs according to their necessary circumstances, and believers of the gospel, doing all things in obedience unto him), we judge that a complete rule or government is erected thereby in the church.

However, we know that the exercise of discipline in every church, so far as the laws and rules of it are expressed in the Scripture, and the ends of it directed unto, is as necessary as any duty enjoined unto us in the whole course of our gospel obedience. And where this is neglected, it is in vain for any churches to expect peace and unity in their communion, seeing itself neglecteth the principal means of them. It is pleaded, that the mixture of those that are wicked and ungodly in the sacred administrations of the church doth neither defile the administrations themselves, nor render them unuseful unto those who are rightly interested in them and duly prepared for the participation of them. Hence, that no church ought to be forsaken, nor its communion withdrawn from, merely on that account, many of old and of late have pleaded. Nor do we say that this solely of itself is sufficient to justify a separation from any church. But when a church shall tolerate in its communion not only evil men, but their evils, and absolutely refuse to use the discipline of Christ for the reformation of the one and the taking away of the other, there is great danger lest the "whole lump be leavened," and the edification of particular persons be obstructed beyond what the Lord Christ requires of them to submit unto and to acquiesce in.

Neither will things have any better success where the discipline degenerates into an outward forcible jurisdiction and power. The things of Christ are to be administered with the spirit of Christ. Such a frame of heart and mind as was in him is required of all that act under him and in his name.

Wherefore, charity, pity, compassion, condescension, meekness, and forbearance, with those other graces which were so glorious and conspicuous in him and in all that he did, are to bear sway in the minds of them who exercise this care and duty for him in the church. To set up such a form of the administration of discipline, or to commit the exercise of it unto such persons, as whereby or by whom the Lord Christ, in his rule of the church, would be represented as furious, captious, proud, covetous, oppressive, is not the way to honour him in the world, nor to preserve the peace of the churches. And indeed some, while they boast of the imitation of Christ and his example, in opposition to his grace, do in their lives and practices make unto the world a representation of the devil. But an account of this degeneracy is given so distinctly by Pietro Soave,<sup>3</sup> the author of the History of the Council of Trent, lib. 4: ad ann. 1551, that we think it not unmeet to express it in his own words. He saith, therefore, that "Christ having commanded his apostles to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, he left also unto them, in the person of all the faithful, this principal precept, to love one another, charging them to make peace between those that dissented; and, for the last remedy, giving the care thereof to the body of the church, promising it should be bound and loosed in heaven, whatever they did bind and loose, on earth, and that whatever they did ask with a common consent should be granted by the Father. In this charitable office, to give satisfaction to the offended and pardon to the offender, the primitive church was always exercised. And in conformity to this, St Paul ordained that brethren having civil suits one against another should not go to the tribunals of infidels, but that wise men should be appointed to judge the differences. And this was a kind of civil judgment, as the other had the similitude of a criminal; but were both so different from the judgments of the world, that as these are executed by the power of the judge, who enforceth submission, so those only by the will of the guilty to receive them, who refusing of them, the ecclesiastical judge remaineth without execution, and hath no power but to foreshew the judgment of God, which, according to his omnipotent good pleasure, will follow in this life or the next. And, indeed, the ecclesiastical judgment did deserve the name of charity, in regard that it did only induce the guilty to submit, and the church to judge with such sincerity, that neither in the one any bad effect could have place, nor just complaint in the other; and the excess of charity in correcting did make the corrector to feel greater pain than the corrected, so that in the church no punishment was imposed without lamentation in the multitude, and greater of the better sort. And this was the cause why to correct was called to 'lament.' So St Paul, rebuking of the Corinthians for not chastising the incestuous, said, 'Ye have not lamented to separate such a transgressor from you.' And in another epistle, 'I fear that when I come unto you, I shall not find you such as I desire, but in contentions and tumults, and that at my coming I shall lament many of those who have sinned before.' The judgment of the church (as it is necessary in every multitude) was fit that it should be conducted by one, who should preside and guide the action, propose the matters, and collect the points to be consulted on. This care, due to the most principal and worthy person, was always committed to the bishop; and when the churches were many, the propositions and deliberations were made by the bishop first in the college of the priests and deacons, which they called the presbytery, and there were ripened, to receive afterward the last resolution in the general congregation of the church. This form was still on foot in the year 250, and is plainly seen by the epistles of Cyprian; who, in the matter concerning those who did eat of meats offered to idols, and subscribe to the religion of the Gentiles, writeth to the presbytery that he doth not think to do any thing without their counsel and consent of the people; and writeth to the people, that at his return he will examine the causes and merits thereof in their presence and

under their judgment; and he wrote to those priests who of their own brain had reconciled some, that they should give an account to the people.

“The goodness and charity of the bishops made their opinion for the most part to be followed, and by little and little was cause that the church, charity waxing cold, not regarding the charge laid upon them by Christ, did lean the ear to the bishop; and ambition, a witty passion, which doth insinuate itself in the show of virtue, did cause it to be readily embraced. But the principal cause of the change was the ceasing of the persecutions; for then the bishops did erect, as it were, a tribunal, which was much frequented; because, as temporal commodities, so suits did increase. This judgment, though it were not as the former in regard of the form, to determine all by the opinion of the church, yet it was of the same sincerity. Whereupon Constantine, seeing how profitable it was to determine causes, and that by the authority of religion captious actions were discovered which the judges could not penetrate, made a law that there should be no appeal from the sentences of bishops, which should be executed by the secular judge. And if, in a cause depending before a secular tribunal, in any state thereof, either of the parties, though the other contradict, shall demand the episcopal judgment, the cause shall be immediately remitted to him. Here the tribunal of the bishop began to be a common pleading-place, having execution by the ministry of the magistrate, and to gain the name of episcopal jurisdiction, episcopal audience, and such like. The emperor Valens did enlarge it, who in the year 365 gave the bishops the care over all the prices of vendible things. This judicial negotiation pleased not the good bishops. Possidonius doth recount that Austin being employed herein, sometimes until dinner-time, sometimes longer, was wont to say that it was a trouble, and did divert him from doing things proper unto him; and himself writeth, that it was to leave things profitable and to attend things tumultuous and perplexed. And St Paul did not take it unto himself, as being not fit for a preacher, but would have it given to others. Afterward, some bishops beginning to abuse the authority given them by the law of Constantine, that was seventy years after revoked by Arcadius and Honorius, and an ordinance made that they should judge causes of religion, and not civil, except both parties did consent, and declared that they should not be thought to have a court; which law being not much observed in Rome, in regard of the great power of the bishops, Valentinian being in the city in the year 452, did renew it, and made it to be put in execution. But a little after, some part of the power taken away was restored by the princes that followed, so that Justinian did establish unto them a court and audience, and assigned unto them the causes of religion, the ecclesiastical faults of the clergy, and divers voluntary jurisdictions also over the laity. By these degrees the charitable correction of Christ did degenerate into domination, and made Christians lose their ancient reverence and obedience. It is denied in words that ecclesiastical jurisdiction is dominion as is the secular, yet one knoweth not how to put a difference between them. But St Paul did put it when he wrote to Timothy, and repeated it to Titus, that a bishop should not be greedy of gain, nor a striker. Now, on the contrary, they made men pay for processes, and imprisoned the parties, as is done in the secular court,” etc. This degeneracy of discipline was long since esteemed burdensome, and looked on as the cause of innumerable troubles and grievances unto all sorts of people; yea, it hath had no better esteem among them who had little or no acquaintance with what is taught concerning these things in the Scripture, only they found an inconsistency in it with those laws and privileges of their several countries whereby their civil liberties and advantages were confirmed unto them. And if at any time it take place or prevail amongst persons of more light and knowledge, who are able to compare it or the practice of it with the institutions of Christ in the

gospel, and the manner of the administration therein also directed, it greatly alienates the minds of men from the communion of such churches. Especially it doth so if set up unto an exclusion of that benign, kind, spiritual, and every way useful discipline that Christ hath appointed to be exercised in his church. When corruptions and abuses were come to the height in the Papacy in this matter, we know what ensued thereon. Divines, indeed, and sundry other persons learned and godly, did principally insist on the errors and heresies which prevailed in the church of Rome, with the defilements and abominations of their worship. But that which alienated the minds of princes, magistrates, and whole nations from them, was the ecclesiastical domination which they had craftily erected and cunningly managed unto the ends of their own ambition, power, and avarice, under the name of church rule and discipline. And wherever any thing of the same kind is continued, — that a rule under the same pretence is erected and exercised in any church after the nature of secular courts, by force and power, put forth in legal citations, penalties, pecuniary mulcts, without an open evidence of men being acted in what they do herein by love, charity, compassion towards the souls of men, zeal for the glory of God and honour of Christ, with a design for the purity, holiness, and reformation of the members of it, — that church may not expect unity and peace any longer than the terror of its proceedings doth overbalance other thoughts and desires proceeding from a sense of duty in all that belong unto it. Yea, whatever is or is to be the manner of the administration of discipline in the church, about which there may be doubtful disputations, which men of an ordinary capacity may not be able clearly to determine, yet if the avowed end of it be not the purity and holiness of the church, and if the effects of it in a tendency unto that end be not manifest, it is hard to find out whence our obligation to a compliance with it should arise. And where an outward conformity unto some church-order is aimed at alone, in the room of all other things, it will quickly prove itself to be nothing or of no value in the sight of Christ. And these things do alienate the minds of many from an acquiescence in their stations or relations to such churches; for the principal enforcements of men's obedience and reverence unto the rulers of the church are because they "watch diligently for the good of their souls, as those that must give an account," Hebrews 13:17. And if they see such set over them as give no evidence of any such watchful care acting itself according to those Scripture directions which are continually read unto them, but rather rule them with force and rigour, seeking theirs, not them, they grow weary of the yoke, and sometimes regularly, sometimes irregularly, contrive their own freedom and deliverance.

It may not here be amiss to inquire into the reasons and occasions that have seduced churches and their rulers into the miscarriages insisted on. Now, these are chiefly some principles with their application that they have trusted unto, but which indeed have really deceived them, and will yet continue so to do.

1. And the first of these is, that whereas they are true churches, and thereon intrusted with all church power and privileges, they need not farther concern themselves to seek for grounds or warranty to keep up all their members unto their communion; for be they otherwise what they will, so long as they are true churches, it is their duty to abide in their peace and order. If any call their church-state into question, they take no consideration of them but how they may be punished, it may be destroyed, as perverse schismatics. And they are ready to suppose, that upon an acknowledgment that they are true churches, every dissent from them in anything must needs be criminal, — as if it were all one to be a true church — a supposition including a nullity in the state of those churches which in the least differ from them, than which there is no more uncharitable nor

schismatical principle in the world. But in the common definition of schism, that it is a causeless separation from a true church, that term of causeless is very little considered or weighed by them whose interest it is to lay the charge of it on others. And hence it is come to pass, that wherever there have been complaints of faults, miscarriages, errors, defections of churches, in late ages, their counsels have only been how to destroy the complainers, not in the least how they should reform themselves; as though, in church affairs, truth, right and equity, were entailed on power and possession. How the complaints concerning the church of Rome, quickened by the outcries of so many provinces of Europe, and evidence and matter of fact, were eluded and frustrated in the council of Trent, leaving all things to be tried out by interest and force, is full well known. For they know that no reformation can be attempted and accomplished, but it will be a business of great labour, care, and trouble, things not delightful unto the minds of men at ease. Besides, as it may possibly ruffle or discompose some of the chiefs in their present ways or enjoyments, so it will, as they fear, tend to their disreputation, as though they had formerly been out of the way or neglective of their duty: and this, as they suppose, would draw after it another inconvenience, by reflecting on them and their practices as the occasions of former disorders and divisions.

They choose, therefore, generally to flatter themselves under the name and authority of the church, and lay up their defence and security against an humble, painful reformation, in a plea that they need it not. So was it with the church of Laodicea of old, who, in the height of her decaying condition, flattered herself "that she was rich, and increased with goods, and had need of nothing; and knew not," or would not acknowledge, "that she was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," Revelation 3:17. Now, it cannot but seem exceeding strange, unto men who wisely consider these things, that, whereas the churches which were planted and watered by the apostles themselves, and enjoyed for some good season the presence and advantage of their infallible guidance to preserve them in their original purity and order, did within a few years, many of them, so degenerate and stand in need of reformation, that our Lord Jesus Christ threatened from heaven to cast them off and destroy them, unless they did speedily reform themselves according to his mind, those now in the world, ordered at first by persons fallible, and who in many things were actually deceived, should so continue in their purity and holiness from age to age as to stand in need of no reformation or amendment.

Well will it be if it prove so at the great day of visitation. In the meantime, it becomes the guides of all the churches in the world to take care that there do not such decays of truth, holiness, and purity in worship, fall out under their hand in the churches wherein they preside, as that for them they should be rejected by our Lord Jesus Christ, as he threatens to deal with those who are guilty of such defections; for the state of the generality of churches is such at this day in the world, as he who thinks them not to stand in need of any reformation may justly be looked on as a part of their sinful degeneracy. We are not ignorant what is usually pleaded in bar unto all endeavours after church reformation; for they say, "If, upon the clamours of a few humorous, discontented persons, whom nothing will please, and who, perhaps, are not agreed among themselves, a reformation must instantly be made or attempted, there will be nothing stable, firm, or sacred left in the church, — things once well established are not to be called into question upon every one's exceptions." And these things are vehemently pleaded and urged, to the exclusion of all thoughts of changing anything, though evidently for the better. But long-continued complaints and petitions of multitudes, whose sincerity hath received as great an attestation as human nature or Christian

religion can give, it may be, deserve not to be so despised. However, the jealousy which churches and their rulers ought to have over themselves, their state and condition, and the presence of the glory of Christ among them, or its departure from them, especially considering the fearful example of the defection and apostasy of many churches, which is continually before their eyes, seems to require a readiness in them, on every intimation or remembrance, to search into their state and condition, and to redress what they find amiss: for suppose they should be in the right, and blameless as to those orders and constitutions wherein others dissent from them, yet there may be such defects and declensions in doctrine, holiness, and the fruits of them in the world, as the most strict observation of outward order will neither countenance nor compensate. For to think to preserve a church by outward order, when its internal principles of faith and holiness are decayed, is but to do like him who, endeavouring to set a dead boy upright, but failing in his attempt, concluded that there was somewhat wanting within.

2. Another principle of the same importance, and applied unto the same purpose, is, that the people are neither able nor fit to judge for themselves, but ought in all things to give themselves up unto the conduct of their guides, and to rest satisfied in what they purpose and prescribe unto them. The imbibing of this apprehension, which is exceedingly well suited to be made a covering to the pride and ignorance of those unto whose interests it is accommodated, makes them impatient of hearing anything concerning the liberty of Christians in common to judge of what is their duty, what they are to do, and what they are not to do, in things sacred and religious. Only, it is acknowledged there is so much ingenuity in the management of this principle and its application, that it is seldom extended by any beyond their own concerns: For whereas the church of Rome hath no way to maintain itself, in its doctrine and essential parts of its constitution, but by an implicit faith and obedience in its subjects, seeing the animating principles of its profession will endure no kind of impartial test or trial, they extend it unto all things, as well in matters of faith as of worship and discipline: but those who are secure that the faith which they profess will endure an examination by the Scripture, as being founded therein and thence educed, they will allow unto the people at least a judgment of discerning truth from falsehood, to be exercised about the doctrines which they teach; but as for the things which concern the worship of God and rule of the church wherein they have an especial interest and concern, there they betake themselves for relief unto this principle.

Now, as there is more honesty and safety in this latter way than in the former, so it cannot be denied but that there is less of ingenuity and self-consistency; for if you will allow the people to make a judgment in and about anything that is sacred or religious, you will never know how to hit a joint aright to make a separation among such things, so as to say, with any pretence of reason, "About these things they may judge for themselves, but not about those." And it is a little too open to say that they may exercise a judgment about what God hath appointed, but none about what we appoint ourselves. But, without offence be it spoken, this apprehension, in its whole latitude, and under its restrictions, is so weak and ridiculous, that it must be thought to proceed from an excess of prejudice, if any man of learning should undertake to patronize it. Those who speak in these things out of custom and interest, without a due examination of the grounds and reasons of what they affirm or deny, as many do, are of no consideration; and it is not amiss for them to keep their distance and stand upon their guard, lest many of those whom they exclude from judging for themselves should be found more competent judges in those matters than themselves. And let

churches and church rulers do what they please, every man at last will be determined in what is meet for him to do by his own reason and judgment. Churches may inform the minds of men; they cannot enforce them. And if those that adhere unto any church do not do so, because they judge that it is their duty, and best for them so to do, they therein differ not much from a herd of creatures that are called by another name. And yet a secret apprehension in some, that the disposal of the concernments of the worship of God is so left and confined unto themselves as that nothing is left unto the people but the glory of obedience, without any sedulous inquiry after what is their own duty with respect unto that account which every one must give of himself unto God, doth greatly influence them into the neglect insisted on. And when any of the people come to know their own liberty and duty in these things, as they cannot but know it if at all they apply their minds unto the consideration of them, they are ready to be alienated from those who will neither permit them to judge for themselves nor are able to answer for them if they should be misled; for “if the blind lead the blind,” as well he that is led as he that leads “will fall into the ditch.”

3. Add hereunto the thoughts of some, that secular grandeur and outward pomp, with a distance and reservedness from the conversation of ordinary men, are necessary in ecclesiastics, to raise and preserve that popular veneration which they suppose to be their due. Without this, it is thought, government will not be carried on, nor the minds of men awed unto obedience. Certain it is that this was not the judgment of the apostles of old, nor of the bishops or pastors of the primitive churches. It is certain, also, that no direction is given for it in any of the sacred or ancient ecclesiastical writings; and yet they all of them abound with instructions how the guides of the church should preserve that respect which is their due. The sum of what they teach us to this purpose is, that in humility, patience, self-denial, readiness to take up the cross, in labours, kindness, compassion, and zeal in the exercise of all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, they should excel and go before the flock as their example, 1 Peter 5:1-3; Acts 20:18-21; Acts 20:28; Acts 20:31. This way of procuring veneration unto church guides, by worldly state, greatness, seeming domination or power, was, as far as we can find, an utter stranger unto the primitive times; yea, not only so, but it seems to be expressly prohibited in that direction of our Saviour unto them for avoiding conformity in these things unto the rulers of the world, Luke 22:24-26. “But those times,” they say, “are past and gone; there remains not that piety and devotion in Christians, as to reverence their pastors for their humility, graces, labours, and gifts. The good things of this world are now given them to be used; and it is but a popular levelling spirit that envies the dignities and exaltation of the clergy.” Be it so, therefore, that in any place they are justly and usefully, at least as unto themselves, possessed of dignities and revenues, and far be it from us or any of us to envy them their enjoyments, or to endeavour their deprivation of them; but we must crave leave to say, that the use of them to the end mentioned is vain and wholly frustrate. And if it be so, indeed, that Christians, or professors of the gospel, will not pay the respect and duty which they owe unto their pastors and guides, upon the account of their office, with their work and labour therein, it is an open evidence how great a necessity there is for all men to endeavour the reduction of primitive light, truth, holiness, and obedience into churches; for this is that which hath endangered their ruin, and will effect it if continued, — namely, an accommodation of church order and discipline, with the state and deportment of rulers, unto the decays and irreligion of the people, which should have been corrected and removed by their reformation. But we hope better things of many Christians; whose faith and obedience are rather to be imitated than the corrupt degeneracy of others to be complied with or provided for. However, it is evident that this corrupt persuasion hath in most ages,

since the days of

Paulus Samosatenus, let out and given countenance unto the pride, covetousness, ambition, and vain-glory of several ecclesiastics; for how can it be otherwise with them, who, being possessed of the secular advantages which some churches have obtained in the world, are otherwise utterly destitute of those qualifications which the names of the places they possess do require? And yet all this while it will be impossible to give one single instance where that respect and estimation which the Scripture requires in the people towards their spiritual guides were ingenerated or improved by that worldly grandeur, pomp, and domination, which some pretend to be so useful unto that end and purpose; for that awe which is put thereby on the spirits of the common sort of men, — that terror which these things strike into the minds of any who may be obnoxious unto trouble and disadvantage from them, — that outward observance which is by some done unto persons vested with them, with the admission which they have thereby into an equality of society with great men in the world, — are things quite of another nature. And those who satisfy and please themselves herewith, instead of that regard which is due unto the officers or guides of the churches of Christ from the people that belong unto them, do but help on their defection from their duty incumbent on them.

Neither were it difficult to manifest what innumerable scandalous offences, — proceeding from the pride and elation of mind that is found among many, who, being perhaps young and ignorant, it may be corrupt in their conversations, have nothing to bear up themselves withal but an interest in dignities and worldly riches, — have been occasioned by this corrupt persuasion. And it is not hard to judge how much is lost hereby from the true glory and beauty of the church. The people are quietly suffered to decay in that love and respect towards their pastors which is their grace and duty, whilst they will pay that outward veneration which worldly grandeur doth acquire; and pastors, satisfying themselves therewith, grow neglective of that exemplary humility and holiness, of that laborious diligence in the dispensation of the word and care for the souls of the flock, which should procure them that holy respect which is due unto their office by the appointment of Jesus Christ. But these things are here mentioned only on the occasion of what was before discoursed of.

Another great occasion of schisms and divisions among Christians ariseth from the remainders of that confusion which was brought upon the churches of Europe, by that general apostasy from gospel truth, purity, and order, wherein they were for sundry ages involved. Few churches in the world have yet totally freed themselves from being influenced by the relics of its disorders. That such an apostasy did befall these churches we shall not need to prove. A supposition of it is the foundation of the church-state of England. That things should so fall out among them was of old foretold by the Holy Ghost, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 : That many churches have received a signal deliverance from the principal evils of that apostasy, in the Reformation, we all acknowledge; for therein, by several ways, and in several degrees of success, a return unto their pristine faith and order was sincerely endeavoured. And so far was there a blessing accompanying of their endeavours, as that they were all of them delivered from things in themselves pernicious and destructive to the souls of men. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied but that there do yet continue among them sundry remainders of those disorders, which under their fatal declension they were cast into. Nor doth there need any farther proof hereof than the incurable differences and divisions that are found among them; for had they attained their primitive condition, such divisions with all

their causes had been prevented. And the Papists, upbraiding Protestants with their intestine differences and schisms, do but reproach them that they have not been able in a hundred years to rectify all those abuses and remove all those disorders which they were inventing and did introduce in a thousand.

There is one thing only of this nature, or that owes itself unto this original, which we shall instance in, as an occasion of much disorder in the present churches, and of great divisions that ensue thereon. It is known none were admitted unto the fellowship of the church in the days of the apostles but upon their repentance, faith, and turning unto God. The plain story of their preaching, the success which they had therein, and their proceedings to gather and plant churches thereon, put this out of the reach of all sober contradiction. None will say that they gathered churches of Jews and Gentiles, — that is, while they continued such; nor of open sinners continuing to live in their sins. An evidence, therefore, and confession of conversion to God, were unavoidably necessary to the admission of members in the first churches; neither will we ever contend with such importune prejudices as, under any pretences capable of a wrangling countenance, shall set up against this evidence. Hence, in the judgment of charity, all the members of those churches were looked on as persons really justified and sanctified, — as effectually converted unto God; and as such were they saluted and treated by the apostles. As such, we say, they were looked on and owned; and as such, upon their confession, it was the duty of all men, even the apostles themselves, to look on them and own them, though absolutely in the sight of God, who alone is “searcher of the hearts of men,” some among them were hypocrites, and some proved apostates. But this profession of conversion unto God by the ministry of the word, and the mutual acknowledgment of each other as so converted unto God, in a way of duty, was the foundation of holy, spiritual love and unity among them. And although this did not, nor could, preserve all the first churches absolutely free from schisms and divisions, yet was it the most sovereign antidote against that infection, and the most effectual means for the reduction of unity, after that, by the violent interposition of men’s corruptions and temptations, it had been lost for a season. Afterward, in the primitive times, when many more took on them the profession of Christian religion, who had not such eminent and visible conversions unto God as most of those had who were changed by the ministry of the apostles, that persons unfit and unqualified for that state and condition, of being members of churches, might not be admitted into them, unto the disturbance of their order and disreputation of their holy conversation, they were for some good season kept in the condition of expectants, and called catechumens, or persons that attended the church for instruction. In this state they were taught the mysteries of religion, and trial was made of their faith, holiness, and constancy before their admission; and by this means was the preservation of the churches in purity, peace, and order, provided for. Especially were they so in conjunction with that severe discipline which was then exercised towards all the members of them. But after that the multitudes of the Gentile world, in the times of the first Christian emperors, pressed into the church, and were admitted on much easier terms than those before mentioned, whole nations came to claim successively the privilege of church-membership, without any personal duty performed or profession made unto the purpose on their part. And so do they continue to do in many places to this day.

Men generally trouble themselves no farther about a title to church membership and privileges, but rest in the prepossession of their ancestors, and their own nativity in such or such places; for

whatever may be owned or acknowledged concerning the necessity of a visible profession of faith and repentance, and that credible as to the sincerity of it, in the judgment of charity, it is certain for the most part no such thing is required of any, nor performed by them. And they do but ill consult for the edification of the church, or the good of the souls of men, who would teach them to rest in an outward, formal representation of things, instead of the reality of duties and the power of internal grace. And no small part of the present ruin of Christian religion owes itself unto this corrupt principle; for whereas the things of it, — which consist in powers internal and effectual operations of grace, — have outward representations of them, which, from their relation unto what they represent, are called by the same names with them, many take up with and rest in these external things, as though Christianity consisted in them, although they are but a dead carcase, where the quickening life and soul of internal grace is wanting. Thus it is in this matter, where there is a shadow and appearance of church-order, when the truth and substance of it is far away.

Men come together unto all the ends of the church assemblies whereunto they are admitted, but on no other grounds, with no other hearts nor designs, but on and with what they partake in any civil society, or jointly engage in any other worldly concern. And this fundamental error in the constitution of many churches is the occasion, as of other evils, so in particular of divisions among professed Christians. Hence, originally, was the discipline of the church accommodated, by various degrees, to the rule and government of such persons as understood little, or were little sensible, of the nature, power, and efficacy of that spiritual discipline which is instituted in the gospel; which thereby at last degenerated into the outward way of force and power before described: for the churches began to be composed of such as could no otherwise be ruled, and instead of reducing them to their primitive temper and condition, whereunto the evangelical rule was suited, there was invented a way of government accommodate unto that state whereinto they were lapsed; which those concerned found to be the far easier work of the two. Hence did sincere mutual love, with all the fruits of it, begin to decay among church members, seeing they could not have that tolerable persuasion of that truth or profession in each other which is necessary to preserve it without dissimulation, and to provoke it unto a due exercise.

Hence did private spiritual communion fail amongst them, the most being strangers unto all the ways and means of it, yea, despising and contemning it in all the instances of its exercise; which will yet be found to be as the life and soul of all useful church-communion. And where the public communion is only attended unto, with neglect hereof, it will quickly wither and come to nothing; for on this occasion do all duties of watchfulness, exhortations, and admonitions, proceeding from mutual love and care of each other's condition, so frequently recommended unto us in the Scripture, utterly cease and become disused. Hence members of the same church began to converse together as men only, or at the best, civil neighbours; and if at all as Christians, yet not with respect unto that especial relation unto a particular church wherein their usefulness as members of the same organical body is required, 1 Corinthians 12:14-21. Hence some persons, looking on these things as intolerable, and not only obstructive of their edification, but destructive unto all really useful church-communion, we ought not to wonder if they have thought meet to provide otherwise for themselves. Not that we approve of every departure or withdrawing from the communion of churches where things continue under such disorders, but only show what it is that occasioneth many so to do; for as there may sometimes be just cause hereof, and persons in so doing may manage what they do according unto Scripture rule, so we doubt not but that some may

rashly and precipitately, without due attendance unto all the duties which in such undertakings are required of them, without that charity and forbearance which no circumstances can absolve them from, make themselves guilty of a blamable separation. And these are some of those things which we look upon as the general causes or occasions of all the schisms and divisions that are at this day found among professors of the gospel. Whether the guilt of them will not much cleave unto them by whom they are kept on foot and maintained is worth their inquiry; for so doth it befall our human nature, apt to be deceived and imposed on by various pretences and prejudices, that those are oftentimes highly guilty themselves of those miscarriages, whose chiefest satisfaction and glory consist in charging them on others. However, if these things do not absolutely justify any in a secession from the churches whereunto they did relate, yet they render the matter so highly questionable, and the things themselves are so burdensome upon the minds of many, as that divisions will thereon undoubtedly ensue. And when it is so fallen out, to design and contrive the reduction of all unto outward unity and concord, by forcing them who on such occasions have dissented and withdrawn themselves from the communion of any church, without endeavouring the removal of those occasions of their so doing and the reformation of those abuses which have given cause thereunto, is severe, if not unjust. But when the Lord Jesus Christ, in his care towards his churches, and watchfulness over them, shall be pleased to remove these and the like stumbling-blocks out of the way, there will, we hope, be a full return unto gospel unity and peace among them that serve and worship him on the earth. In this state of things, wherever it be found, it is no wonder if the weaknesses, ignorance, prejudices, and temptations of men do interpose themselves unto the increase and heightening of those divisions whose springs and occasions lie elsewhere. When none of these provocations were given them, yet we know there was enough in professors themselves to bring forth the bitter fruit of differences and schisms, even in the days of the apostles, 1 Corinthians 1:11; 1 Corinthians 3:3. How much more may we fear the like fruits and effects from the like principles and corrupt affections! Now the occasions of drawing them forth are more, temptations unto them greater, directions against them less evident and powerful, and all sense of ecclesiastical authority, through its abuse and maladministration, is, if not lost and ruined, yet much weakened and impaired. But from the darkness of the minds of men and their unmortified affections (as the best know but in part, nor are they perfectly sanctified) it is that they are apt to take offence one at another, and thereon to judge and censure each other temerarily; and, which is worst of all, every one to make his own understanding and persuasion thereon the rule of truth and worship unto others. All such ways and courses are against us in the matter of love and union, all tending to make and increase divisions among us: and the evil that is in them we might here declare, but that it falls frequently under the chastisement of other hands; neither, indeed, can it well meet with too much severity of reproof.

Only, it were desirable that those by whom such reproofs are managed would take care not to give advantages of retortion or self-justification unto them that are reprov'd by them; but this they do unavoidably, whilst they seem to make their own judgments and practices the sole rule and measure of what they approve or disallow. In what complies with them there is nothing perverse; and in what differs from them there is nothing sincere! And on this foundation, whilst they reprove censuring, rash-judging, and reproaching of others, with pride, self-conceitedness, false opinions, irregular practices in church-worship, or any other concerns of religion, backbiting, easiness in taking up false reports, with the like evils, as they deserve severely to be rebuked, those reprov'd by them are apt to think that they see the guilt of many of the crimes charged on themselves in

them by whom they are reprov'd. So on all hands things gender unto farther strife; whilst every party, being conscious unto their own sincerity, according unto the rule of their present light, which is the only measure they can take of it, are ready to impeach the sincerity of them by whom they suppose themselves causelessly traduced and condemned. This evil, therefore, is to be diligently watched against by all that love unity, truth, holiness, or peace; and seeing there are rules and precepts given us in the Scriptures to this purpose, it may not be unmeet to call over some of them.

[First,] One rule of this nature and import is, that we should all of us “study to be quiet, and to do our own business,” in things civil and sacred, 1 Thessalonians 4:11. Who will harm men, who will be offended with them, whilst they are no otherwise busied in the world? And if any attempt to do them evil, what need have they to be troubled thereat? Duty and innocency will give peace to a worthy soul in the midst of all storms, and whatever may befall it. Now, will any one deny, or can they, but that it is the duty and ought to be the business of every man to seek his own edification and the saving of his soul? Deny this unto any man, and you put yourself in the place of God to him, and make him more miserable than a beast. And this, which no man can forbid, no man can otherwise do than according to that light and knowledge of the will of God which he hath received. If this, therefore, be so attended to as that we do not thereby break in upon the concerns of others, nor disturb them in what is theirs, but be carried on quietly and peaceably, with an evidence in what we do that it is merely our own personal duty that we are in the pursuance of, all cause of offence will be taken away; for if any will yet be offended with men because they peaceably seek the salvation of their own souls, or do that in order thereunto which they cannot but do, unless they will cast off all sense of God’s authority over them, it is to seek occasions of offence against them where none are given. But when any persons are acted by a pragmatistical curiosity to interpose themselves in the ways, affairs, and concerns of other men, beyond what the laws of love, usefulness, and mutual Christian aid do require, tumults, disorders, vexations, strife, emulations, with a world of evils, will ensue thereon; — especially will they do so when men are prone to dwell on the real or supposed faults of others, which, on various pretences of pity for their persons, or a detestation of their evils, or public reproof of them, they will aggravate, and so on all occasions expose them to public censure, perhaps, as they think, out of zeal to God’s glory and a desire for the church’s good; for the passions and interests of such persons are ready to swell over the bounds of modesty, sobriety, and peace, though, through the blindness which all self-love is accompanied withal, they seldom see clearly what they do. Would we, therefore, labour to see a beauty, desirableness, and honour in the greatest confinement of our thoughts, words, and actions, unto ourselves and our own occasions, that express duty will admit of, it might tend very much to the preservation of love and peace among professors, for unto this end it is prescribed unto us.

Secondly, It is strictly commanded us that we should “not judge, that we be not judged,” Matthew 7:1-2. There is no rule for mutual conversation and communion in the Scripture that is oftener repeated or more earnestly inculcated, Luke 6:37; nor is there any of more use, nor whose grounds and reasons are more evident or more cogent, Romans 14:3-4; Romans 14:10. Judging and determining in ourselves, or divulging censures concerning others, their persons, states, and conditions towards God, their principles as to truth and sincerity, their ways as to righteousness and holiness, whether past or present, any otherwise than by the “perfect law of liberty,” and that

only when we are called thereunto in a way of duty, is the poison of common love and peace, and the ruin of all communion and society, be it of what nature it will. For us to judge and determine whether these or those churches are true churches or no, whether such persons are godly or no, whether such of their principles and actions are regular or no, and so condemn them in our minds (unless where open wickedness will justify the severest reflections), is to speak evil of the law, and to make ourselves judges of it as well as of them who, together with ourselves, are to be judged by it,

James 4:11-12. Nor is a judgment of that nature necessary unto our advantage in the discharge of any duty required at our hands. We may order all our concernments towards churches and persons without making any such judgment concerning them. But so strong is the inclination of some persons unto an excess in this kind, that no consideration can prevail with them to cast it out, according to its desert. Whether they do it as approving and justifying themselves in what they condemn in others, or as a thing conducing unto their interests, or out of faction and an especial love to some one party of men, or some secret animosities and hatred against others, it is a matter they seldom will quit themselves of whilst they are in this world. Yea, so far do some suffer themselves to be transported, as that they cannot restrain from charging of others with the guilt of such things as they know to be charged on themselves by them who pretend to be the only competent judges in such cases; and so will they also reflect upon and complain of other men for miscarriages by severities, in instances exceedingly inferior, as by themselves represented, unto what it is known they were engaged in. But men are apt to think well of all they do themselves or those whom they peculiarly regard, and to aggravate whatever they conceive amiss in such as they dislike. Were it not better by love to cover a multitude of faults, and to leave the judgment of persons and things, wherein we are not concerned, unto "Him who judgeth righteously, and will render unto every man according to his works?" However, certain it is that until this evil fountain of bitter waters be stopped, until we cease to bless God, even the Father, and at the same time to curse men made after the similitude of God, the wounds that have been given to the love and peace of professors will not be healed.

Thirdly, Unto the same end are all men forbidden to think that they have a dominion over the faith of others, or that the ordering and disposal of it is committed unto them. It is Christ alone who is the Lord of the consciences of his disciples; and therefore the best and greatest of the sons of men who have been appointed by him to deal with others in his name, have constantly disclaimed all thoughts of power or rule over the consciences or faith of the meanest of his subjects, 2 Corinthians 1:24; 1 Peter 5:3. How many ways this may be done we are filled with experiences; for no way whereby it may be so hath been left unattempted. And the evil of it hath invaded both churches and particular persons; some whereof, who have been active in casting off the dominion of others, seemed to have designed a possession of it in themselves. And it is well if, where one pope is rejected, many do not rise in his place, who want nothing but his power and interest to do his work. The indignation of some, that others do not in all things comply with their sentiments and subject themselves unto their apprehensions and dictates, ariseth from this presumption; and the persecutions wherein others engage do all grow out of the same bitter root: for men can no otherwise satisfy their consciences herein but by a supposition that they are warranted to give measures unto the minds and practices of others, — that is, their faith and consciences, — in sacred things. And whilst this presumptuous supposition, under any pretence or colour,

possesseth the minds of men, it will variously act itself unto the destruction of that gospel unity which it is our duty to preserve; for when they are persuaded that others ought to give up themselves absolutely to their guidance in the things of religion, either because of their office and dignity, or because they are wiser than they, or it may be are only able to dispute more than they, if they do not immediately so do, especially seeing they cannot but judge themselves in the right in all things, they are ready to charge their refusal on all the corrupt affections, principles, and practices which they can surmise, or their supposed just indignation suggest unto them. That they are proud, ignorant, self-conceited, wilful, factious, is immediately concluded; and a semblance unto such charges shall be diligently sought out and improved. Nothing but a deceiving apprehension that they are some way or other meet to have a dominion over the faith of their brethren and fellow-servants would prevail with men otherwise sober and learned so to deal with all that dissent from them as they are pleased to do.

Fourthly, All these evils mentioned are much increased in the minds of men when they are puffed up with a conceit of their own knowledge and wisdom, Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 8:1. This, therefore, we are warned to avoid, that the edification of the church may be promoted and love preserved; for hence are very many apt to take false measures of things, especially of themselves, and thereon to cast themselves into many mischievous mistakes, 2 Corinthians 10:12. And this is apt to befall them who, for ends best known unto themselves, have with any ordinary diligence attended to the study of learning; for on a supposal of some competent furniture, with natural abilities, they cannot but attain some skill and knowledge that the common sort of unstudied persons are unacquainted withal; — oftentimes, indeed, their pre-eminence in this kind consists in matters of very small consequence or importance. But whatever it be, it is ready to make them think strange of the apostle's advice: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise," 1 Corinthians 3:18. Apt it is to puff them up, to influence their minds with a good conceit of themselves, and a contempt of others. Hence may we see some, when they have got a little skill in languages, and through custom, advantaged by the reading of some books, are able readily to express some thoughts, perhaps not originally their own, presently conceit themselves to be so much wiser than the multitude of unlettered persons, that they are altogether impatient that in any thing they should dissent from them; and this is a common frame with them whose learning and wit being their all, do yet but reach half way towards the useful ends of such things.

Others also there are, and of them not a few, who having been in the ways wherein the skill and knowledge mentioned are usually attained, yet through their incapacity or negligence, or some depraved habit of mind or course of life, have not really at all improved in them; and yet these also, having once attained the countenance of ecclesiastical offices or preferments, are as forward as any to declaim against and pretend a contempt of that ignorance in others which they are not so stupid as not to know that the guilt of it may be reflected on themselves. However, these things at best, and in their highest improvement, are far enough from solid wisdom, especially that which is from above, and which alone will promote the peace and edification of the church. Some have no advantage by them but that they can declare and speak out their own weakness; others, that they can rail, and lie, and falsely accuse, in words and language wherewith they hope to please the vilest of men. And certain it is that science, — which whatever it be, without the grace of God, is but falsely so called, and oftentimes falsely pretended unto, for this evil end of it alone, — is apt to

lift up the minds of men above others, who perhaps come not behind them in any useful understanding. Yea, suppose men to have really attained a singular degree in useful knowledge and wisdom, and that either in things spiritual and divine, or in learning and sciences, or in political prudence, yet experience shows us that a hurtful elation of mind is apt to arise from them, if the souls of men be not well balanced with humility, and this evil particularly watched against.

Hence ariseth that impatience of contradiction, that jealousy and tenderness of men's own names and reputations, those sharp revenges they are ready to take of any supposed inroads upon them or disrespects towards them, that contempt and undervaluation of other men's judgments, those magisterial impositions and censures, which proceed from men under a reputation of these endowments. The cautions given us in the Scripture against this frame of spirit, the examples that are proposed unto us to the contrary (even that of Christ himself), the commands that are multiplied for lowliness of mind, jealousy over ourselves, the sovereignty of God in choosing whom he pleaseth to reveal his mind and truth unto and by, may, in the consideration of them, be useful to prevent such surprisals with pride, self-conceit, and contempt of others, as supposed or abused knowledge is apt to cast men into, whereby divisions are greatly fomented and increased among us. But it may be these things will not much prevail with them who, pretending a zeal and principle above others in preaching and urging the example of Christ, do in most of their ways and actings, and in some of their writings, give us an unparalleled representation of the devil.

Lastly, It is confessed by all, that false teachers, seducers, broachers of novel, corrupt, and heretical doctrines, have caused many breaches and divisions among such as once agreed in the profession of the same truths and points of faith. By means of such persons, whether within the present church-state or without, there is scarce any sacred truth, which had formerly secured its station and possession in the minds of the generality of Christians in this nation, but what hath been solicited or opposed. Some make their errors the principal foundation, rule, and measure in communion; whoever complies with them therein is of them, and whoso doth not they avoid: so at once they shut up themselves from having any thing to do with them that love truth and peace. And where these consequents do not ensue, men's zeal for their errors being overbalanced by their love of and concern in their secular interest, and their minds influenced by the novel prevailing opinion of a great indifferency in all things appertaining unto outward worship, yet the advancing and fomenting of opinions contrary unto that sound doctrine which hath been generally owned and taught by the learned and godly pastors, and received by the people themselves, cannot but occasion strife, contentions, and divisions among professors. And it may be there are very few of those articles or heads of religion which in the beginning of the Reformation, and a long time after, were looked on as the most useful, important, and necessary parts of our profession, that have not been among us variously opposed and corrupted. And in these differences about doctrine lie the hidden causes of the animosities whereby those about worship and discipline are managed; for those who have the advantage of law and power on their side in these lesser things are not so unwise as to deal openly with their adversaries about those things wherein the reputation of established and commonly-received doctrines lie against them; but under the pretence and shelter of contending for legal appointments, not a few do exercise an enmity against those who profess the truth, which they think it not meet as yet openly to oppose.

Such are the causes and such are the occasions of the differences and divisions in and about religious concerns that are among us, by which means they have been fomented and increased:

heightened they have been by the personal faults and miscarriages of many of all sorts and parties. And as the reproof of their sinful failings is in its proper season a necessary duty, so no reformation or amendment of persons will give a full relief, nor free us from the evil of our divisions, until the principles and ways which occasion them be taken out of the way.

## 02.05. Chapter 05.

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### Chapter 05.

Grounds and reasons of nonconformity.

Having briefly declared our sense concerning the general causes and occasions of our differences, and that present want of Christian love which is complained of by many, we shall now return to give some more particular account concerning our inconformity unto and non-compliance with the observances and constitutions of the church of England. It is acknowledged, that we do in sundry things dissent from them; that we do not, that we cannot, come up unto a joint practice with others in them. It is also confessed, that hereon there doth ensue an appearance of schism between them and us, according as the common notion of it is received in the world. And because in this distance and difference the dissent unto compliance is on our parts, there is a semblance of a voluntary relinquishment of their communion; and this we know exposeth us, in vulgar judgments and apprehensions, unto the charge of schism, and necessitateth us unto self-defence, as though the only matter in question were, whether we are guilty of this evil or no. For that advantage have all churches which have had an opportunity to fix terms of communion, right or wrong, just or unequal, — the differences which ensue thereon, they will try out on no other terms, but only whether those that dissent from them are schismatics or not.

Thus they make themselves actors oftentimes in this cause who ought in the first place to be charged with injury; and a trial is made merely at the hazard of the reputation of those who are causelessly put upon their purgation and defence. Yea, with many, a kind of possession and multitude do render dissenters unquestionably schismatical; so that it is esteemed an unreasonable confidence in them to deny themselves so to be. So deals the church of Rome with those that are reformed. An open schism there is between them; and if they cannot sufficiently fix the guilt of it on the reformed by confidence and clamours, with the advantage of prepossession, yet, as if they were perfectly innocent themselves, they will allow of no other inquiry in this matter but what consists in calling the truth and reputation of the other party into question. It being our present condition to lie under this charge from many, whose interest it is to have us thought guilty thereof, we do deny that there is any culpable secession made by us from the communion of any that profess the gospel in these nations, or that the blame of the appearing schism that is among us can duly or justly be reflected on us; which, in the remainder of our discourse, we shall make to appear.

142What are our thoughts and judgments concerning the church state and interest of the professors of the gospel in this nation, we have before declared; and we hope they are such that, in the judgment of persons sober and impartial, we shall be relieved from those clamorous accusations which are without number or measure by some cast upon us. Our prayers are also continually unto the God of love and peace, for the taking away of all divisions and their causes from among us. Nor is the satisfaction which ariseth from our sincerity herein in the least taken off or rent from us by the uncharitable endeavours of some to rake up pretences to the contrary. And should those in whose power it is think meet to imitate the pastors and guides of the churches of

old, and to follow them in any of the ways which they used for the restoration of unity and agreement unto Christians, when lost or endangered, we should not decline the contribution of any assistance, by counsel or fraternal compliance, which God should be pleased to supply us withal. But whilst some, whose advantages render them considerable in these matters, seem to entertain no other thoughts concerning us but what issue in violence and oppression, the principal duty incumbent on us is quietly to approve our consciences unto

God, that in sincerity of heart we desire in all things to please him, and to conform our lives, principles, and practices to his will, so far as he is graciously pleased to make it known unto us. And as for men, we hope so to discharge the duty required of us as that none may justly charge us with any disorders, unpeaceableness, or other evils; for we do not apprehend that we are either the cause or culpable occasion of those inconveniences and troubles which some have put themselves unto by their endeavours for our disturbance, impoverishing, and ruin. Let none imagine but that we have considered the evils and evil consequents of the schisms and divisions that are among us; and those who do so, do it upon the forfeiture of their charity. We know how much the great work of preaching the gospel, unto the conversion of the souls of men, is impeded thereby; as also what prejudice ariseth thence against the truth wherein we are all agreed, with what temptations and mutual exasperations, to the loss of love, and the occasioning of many sinful miscarriages in persons of all sorts, do hereon ensue: but we deny that it is in our power to remove them, or take them out of the way; — nor are we conscious unto ourselves of any sin or evil, in what we do, or in what we do not do, by our not doing of it in the worship of God. It is duty alone unto Jesus Christ whereunto in these things we attend, and wherein we ought so to do. And where matters of this nature are so circumstanced as that duty will contribute nothing towards unity, we are at a loss for any progress towards it. The sum of what is objected unto us (as hath been observed) is our nonconformity, or our forbearance of actual personal communion with the present church constitutions, in the modes, rites, and ceremonies of its worship: hence the schism complained of doth ensue. Unless the communion be total, constant, without endeavour of any alteration or reformation, we cannot, in the judgment of some, be freed from the guilt hereof. This we deny, and are persuaded that it is to be charged elsewhere; for, —

First, All the conditions of absolute and complete communion with the church of England, which are proposed unto us, and indispensably required of us, especially as we are ministers, are unscriptural, — such as the word of God doth neither warrant, mention, nor intimate, especially not under any such consideration as necessary conditions of communion in or among the churches of Christ. We dispute not now about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of things in themselves, nor whether they may be observed or no by such as have no conviction of any sin or evil in them; neither do we judge or censure them by whom they are observed. Our inquiry is solely about our own liberty and duty. And what concerneth them is resolved into this one question, as to the argument in hand: Whether such things or observances in the worship of God as are wholly unscriptural may be so made the indispensable condition of communion with any particular church, as that they by whom they are so made and imposed on others should be justified in their so doing; and that if any differences, divisions, or schisms do ensue thereon, the guilt and blame of them must necessarily fall on those who refuse submission to them or to admit of them as such? That the conditions proposed unto us, and imposed on us indispensably, if we intend to enjoy the communion of this church, are of this nature, we shall afterward prove by an induction of

instances. Nor is it of any concernment, in this matter, what place the things inquired after do hold, or are supposed to hold, in the worship of God; our present inquiry is about their warranty to be made conditions of church communion. Now, we are persuaded that the Lord Christ hath set his disciples at liberty from accepting of such terms of communion from any churches in the world. And on the same grounds we deny that he hath given or granted unto them authority to constitute such terms and conditions of their communion, and indispensably to impose them upon all that enjoy it, according to their several capacities and concerns therein; for, —

1. The rule of communion among the disciples of Christ in all his churches is invariably established and fixed by himself. His commission, direction, and command, given out unto the first planters and founders of them, containing an obliging rule unto all that should succeed them throughout all generations, hath so established the bounds, limits, and conditions of church-communion, as that it is not lawful for any to attempt their removal or alteration. “Go ye,” saith he to them, “and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” Matthew 28:19-20. All the benefits and blessings, all the comfort and use of church assemblies and communion, depend alone on the promise of the presence of Christ with them. Thence doth all the authority that may be exercised in them proceed, and thence doth the efficacy of what they do unto the edification of the souls of men arise and flow. Now, that any one may thus enjoy the presence of Christ in any church, with the fruits and benefits of it, no more can be required of him but that, through the preaching of the gospel and baptism, being made a professed disciple, he do or be ready to do and observe all whatsoever Christ hath commanded. This hath he established as the rule of communion among his disciples and churches in all generations. In all other things which do relate unto the worship of God, he hath set them and left them at liberty, Galatians 5:1; which, so far as it is a grant and privilege purchased for them, they are obliged to make good and maintain.

We know it will be here replied, that among the commands of Christ it is that we should “hear the church,” and obey the guides and rulers thereof; whatever, therefore, is appointed by them, we are to submit unto and observe, even by virtue of the command of Christ. And, indeed, it is certainly true that it is the will and command of the Lord Jesus that we should both hear the church and obey the guides of it; — but, by virtue of this rule, neither the church nor its guides can make any thing necessary to the disciples of Christ, as a condition of communion with them, but only what he hath commanded; for the rule here laid down is given unto those guides or rulers, who are thereby bound up, in the appointments of what the disciples are to observe, unto the commands of Christ. And were a command included herein of obeying the commands or appointments of church guides, and the promise of the presence of Christ annexed thereunto, as he had given them all his own power and placed them in his throne, so we had been all obliged to follow them whither ever they had carried or led us, although it were to hell itself, as some of the canonists, on this principle, have spoken concerning the pope. Here, therefore, is a rule of communion fixed, both unto them that are to rule in the church and them that are to obey. And whereas, perhaps, it may be said, that if the rulers of the church may appoint nothing in and unto the communion of the church but what Christ hath himself commanded, then, indeed, is their authority little worth, yea, upon the matter none at all, for the commands of Christ are sufficiently confirmed and fixed by his own authority; and to what end, then, serves that of the rulers of the church? — we must say that their whole

authority is limited in the text unto teaching of men to observe what Christ hath commanded; and this they are to do with authority, but under him and in his name, and according to the rules that he hath given them. And those who think not this power sufficient for them must seek it elsewhere, for the Lord Christ will allow no more in his churches. To make this yet more evident, we may consider that particular instance wherein the primitive Christians had a trial in the case as now stated before us; and this was in the matter of Mosaical ceremonies and institutions, which some would have imposed on them as a condition of their communion in the profession of the gospel. In the determination hereof was their liberty asserted by the apostles, and their duty declared, to abide therein. And this was the most specious pretence of imposing on the liberty of Christians that ever they were exercised withal; for the observation of these things had countenance given unto it from their divine original, and the condescending practice of the apostles for a good season. That other instances of the like nature should be condemned in the Scripture is impossible, seeing none had then endeavoured the introduction of any of that nature. But a general rule may be established in the determination of one case as well as in that of many, provided it be not extended beyond what is eminently included in that case. Herein, therefore, was there a direction given for the duty and practice of churches in following ages, and that in pursuit of the law and constitution of the Lord Christ before mentioned. Neither is there any force in the exception, that these things were imposed under a pretence of being commanded by God himself: for they say, to require anything under that notion, which indeed he hath not commanded, is an adding to his command, which ought not to be admitted; but to require things indifferent without that pretence may be allowed. But as in the former way men add unto the commands of God formally, so in this latter they do it materially, which also is prohibited; for in his worship we are forbidden to add to the things that he hath appointed no less than to pretend commands from him which he hath not given. He, therefore, who professeth and pleadeth his willingness to observe and do in church-communion whatever Christ hath instituted and commanded cannot regularly be refused the communion of any church, under any pretence of his refusal to do other things which confessedly are not so required.

It is pleaded, indeed, that no other things, as to the substance of the worship of God, can or ought to be appointed besides what is instituted by Jesus Christ; but as to the manner or modes of the performance of what he doth command, with other rites and ceremonies to be observed for order and decency, they may lawfully be instituted by the rulers of the church. Let it therefore at present be granted that so they may be, by them who are persuaded of the lawfulness of those modes, and of the things wherein they consist, seeing that is not the question at present under agitation; — neither will this concession help us in our present inquiry, unless it be also granted that whatever may be lawfully practised in the worship of God may be lawfully made a necessary condition of communion in that worship; but this will not be granted, nor can it ever be proved. Besides, in our present difference, this is only the judgment of one party, that the things mentioned may be lawfully observed in and among sacred administrations; and thereon the conclusion must be, that whatever some think may be lawfully practised in divine worship may lawfully be made an indispensable condition of communion unto the whole. Nor will it give force unto this inference, that those who judge them lawful are the rulers and guides of the church, unto whose determination the judgment of private persons is not to be opposed; for we have showed before that a judgment concerning what any one is to do or practice in the worship of God belongs unto every man who is to do or practice aught therein, and he who makes it not is brutish. And the judgment which the

rulers of the church are to make for the whole, or to go before it, is in what is commanded, or not so, by Jesus Christ, not in what is fit to be added thereunto by themselves. Besides, if it must be allowed that such things may be made the conditions of church-communion, then any who are in places of authority may multiply such conditions according unto the utmost extent of their judgments, until they become burdensome and intolerable unto all, or really ridiculous in themselves; as it is fallen out in the church of Rome. But this would prove expressly destructive unto that certain and unvariable rule of church-communion which the Lord Christ hath fixed and established, whereof we shall speak again afterward.

Neither will that plea which is by some insisted on in this case yield any solid or universal relief. It is said that some may warrantably and duly observe in the worship of God what is unduly and unwarrantably imposed on them by others. And, indeed, all controversies about church constitution, discipline, and external worship, are by some reduced unto these two heads: That the magistrate may appoint what he pleaseth, and the people may observe whatever he appoints; for as there is no government of the church determined in the Scripture, it is meet it should be erected and disposed by the supreme magistrate, who, no doubt, upon that supposition, is only fit and qualified so to do. And for outward worship, and the rites thereof, both it and they are so far indifferent as that we may comply with whatever is imposed on us; whether they be good and useful, or evil, lies at the doors of others to answer about. But this seems to rise up in express contradiction unto those commands which are given us to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,” and in these things not to be “the servants of men;” for what do we do less than renounce the privilege of our liberty, purchased for us at a high rate and price, or what are we less than “servants of men,” whilst we bring ourselves in bondage unto the observation of such things in the worship of God as we judge neither commanded by him nor tending unto our own edification, but merely because by them ordained? Moreover, suppose it be the judgment of some, as it is of many, that the things mentioned, though in their own nature indifferent, do become unlawful unto them to observe when imposed as necessary conditions of all church-communion, contrary to the command and appointment of Christ.

We know this is exceedingly declaimed against, as that which is perverse and froward: “For what,” say many, “can be more unreasonable than that things in their own nature indifferent should become unlawful because they are commanded?” But it is at least no less unreasonable that things confessedly indifferent should not be left so, but be rendered necessary unto practice, though useless in it, by arbitrary commands. But the opinion traduced is also much mistaken; for although it be granted that the things themselves are indifferent in their own nature, — not capable, but as determined by circumstances, of either moral good or evil, yet it is not granted that the observation of them, even as uncommanded, is indifferent in the worship of God. And although the command doth not alter the nature, and make that which was indifferent become evil, yet that command of itself being contrary to many divine commands and instructions given us in the Scripture, a compliance with the things commanded therein may become unlawful to us. And what shall they do whose judgment this is? Shall they admit of them as lawful, upon the consideration of that change about them which renders them unlawful? This they will not easily be induced to give their assent unto.

Let, therefore, the rule of church-communion be observed which our Lord Jesus Christ hath fixed, and no small occasion of our strifes and divisions will be removed out of the way. But whilst there

is this contest amongst us, if one pleads his readiness “to do and observe whatever the Lord Christ hath commanded,” and cannot be convinced of insincerity in his profession, or of want of understanding in any known institution of his, and thereon requires the communion of any church; but others say, “Nay, you shall observe and do sundry other things that we ourselves have appointed, or you shall have no communion with us;” — as it cannot be but that divisions and schisms will ensue thereon, so it will not be difficult for an indifferent bystander to judge on whether side the occasion and guilt of them doth remain.

2. We have the practice of the apostles, in the pursuance of the direction and command of their Lord and ours, for our guide in this case. And it might be well and safely thought that this should give a certain rule unto the proceedings and actings of all church guides in future ages. Now, they did never make any thing unscriptural, or what they had not received by divine revelation, to be a condition of communion in religious worship and church-order among Christians: for as they testified themselves that “they would give themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word,” Acts 6:4, so it was of old observed concerning them, “that their constant labour was for the good of the souls of men in their conversion unto God, and edification in faith and holiness;”<sup>4</sup> but as for the institution of festivals or fasts, of rites or ceremonies, to be observed in the worship of the churches, they intermeddled with no such things. And thence it came to pass, that in the first entrance and admission of observances about such things, there was a great and endless variety in them, both as to the things themselves observed and as to the manner of their observation; and this was gradually increased unto such a height and excess, as that the burden of them became intolerable unto Christendom. Nor, indeed, could any better success be expected in a relinquishment and departure from the pattern of church-order given us in their example and practice.

Neither is the plea from hence built merely on this consideration, that no man alive, either from their writings or the approved records of those times, can manifest that they ever prescribed unto the churches or imposed on them the observance of any uninstituted rite, to be observed as a measure and rule of their communion, but also it so fell out, in the good providence of God, that the case under debate was proposed unto them, and jointly determined by them; for, being called unto advice and counsel in the difference that was between the Jewish and Gentile converts and professors, wherein the former laboured to impose on the latter the observation of Moses’ institutions as the condition of their joint communion, as was mentioned even now, they not only determine against any such imposition, but also expressly declare that nothing but “necessary things” (that is, such as are so from other reasons antecedently unto their prescriptions and appointments) ought to be required of any Christians in the communion or worship of the church, Acts 15:1-41 : And as they neither did nor would, on that great occasion, in that solemn assembly, appoint any one thing to be observed by the disciples and churches which the Lord Christ had not commanded, so in their direction given unto the Gentile believers for a temporary abstinence from the use of their liberty in one or two instances whereunto it did extend, they plainly intimate that it was the avoidance of a present scandal, which might have greatly retarded the progress of the gospel, that was the reason of that direction. And in such cases it is granted that we may in many things for a season forego the use of our liberty. This was their way and practice, this the example which they left unto all that should follow them in the rule and guidance of the church. Whence it is come to pass in after ages that men should think themselves wiser than they, or more careful to

provide for the peace and unity of the church, we know not. But let the bounds and measures of church-communion fixed in and by their example stand unmoved, and many causes of our present divisions will be taken away. But, it may be, it will be offered, that the present state of things in the world requires some alteration in or variation from the precise example of the apostles in this matter. The due observation of the institutions of Christ, in such manner as the nature of them required, was then sufficient unto the peace and unity of the churches; but primitive simplicity is now decayed among the most, so that a multiplication of rules and observances is needful for the same ends. But we have showed before, that the accommodation of church rule and communion to the degeneracy of Christians or churches, or their secular engagements, is no way advantageous unto religion.

Let them whose duty it is endeavour to reduce professors and profession to the primitive standard of light, humility, and holiness, and they may be ordered in all church concerns according to the apostolical pattern. Wherefore, when Christians unto the former plea of their readiness to observe and do whatsoever Christ hath commanded them, do also add their willingness to comply with whatever the apostles of Christ have either by precept or example in their own practice commended unto them, or did do or require in the first churches, and cannot be convinced of failing to make good their profession, we do not know whence any can derive a warranty enabling them to impose any other conditions of communion on them. The institution, therefore, of the Lord Christ, and the practice of the apostles, lie directly against the imposing of the conditions inquired about. And first to invent them, then to impose them, making them necessary to be observed, and then to judge and censure them as schismatics, as enemies to love and peace, who do not submit unto them, looks not unlike the exercise of an unwarrantable dominion over the faith and consciences of the disciples of Christ.

1503. Not only by their example and practice, but they have also doctrinally declared what is the duty of churches, and what is the liberty of Christians in this matter. The apostle Paul discourseth at large hereon, Romans 14:15 : The attentive reading of these two chapters is sufficient to determine this cause among all uninterested and unprejudiced persons. He supposeth in them, — and it is the case which he exemplifies in sundry instances, — that there were among Christians and churches at that time different apprehensions and observances about some things appertaining unto the worship of God; and these things were such as had some seeming countenance of a sacred and divine authority, for such was their original institution. Some, on the consideration hereof, judged that they were still to be observed, and their consciences had been long exercised in a holy subjection unto the authority of God in the observance of them. Nor was there yet any express and positive law enacted for their abrogation; but the ceasing of any obligation unto their observance from their primitive institution was to be gathered from the nature of God's economy towards his church. Many, therefore, continued to observe them, esteeming it their duty so to do.

Others were persuaded and satisfied that they were freed from any obligation unto the owning and observance of them; and whereas this liberty was given them by Jesus Christ in the gospel, they were resolved to make use of it, and not to comply with the other sort, who pressed conformity upon them in their ceremonies and modes of divine worship. So it may fall out in other instances. Some may be persuaded that such or such things may be lawful for them to observe in the worship of God, — they may be so unto them, and, as is supposed, in their own nature; on the

consideration of some circumstances, they may judge that it is convenient or expedient to attend unto their observance; lastly, all coincidences weighed, that it is necessary that so they should do, and that others also that walk with them in the profession of the gospel should conform themselves unto their order and practice. On the other hand, some there are who, because the things of the joint practice required are not appointed by Jesus Christ, nor doth it appear unto them that he hath given power unto any others to appoint them, do not judge it expedient, nor yet, all circumstances considered, lawful to observe them.

Now, whereas this case answers unto that before proposed, the determination thereof given by the apostle may safely be applied unto this also. What rule, therefore, doth he give therein, which he would have attended unto as the means for the preservation of love, peace, and unity among them? Is it that the former sort of persons, provided they be the most or have the most power, ought to impose the practice of those things which they esteem lawful and convenient on those who judge them not so, when it is out of question that they are not appointed by Christ, only it is pretended that they are not forbidden by him? Where, indeed, the question was about the institutions of Christ, he binds up the churches precisely unto what he had received from him, 1 Corinthians 11:23; but in cases of this nature, wherein a direct command of Christ cannot be pleaded nor is pretended, he absolutely rejects and condemns all thoughts of such a procedure. But supposing that differences in judgment and practice were and would be among Christians, the sum of his advice is, that all offences and scandals ought to be diligently avoided; that censuring, judging, and despisings, on the account of such differences, be cast out; that tenderness be used towards them that are weak, and nothing severely pressed on them that doubt; and for their different apprehensions and ways, they should all walk in peace, condescending unto and bearing with one another. Nothing can more evidently determine the unlawfulness of imposing on Christians unscriptural conditions of communion than do the discourses of that great apostle to this purpose.

Yea, better it is, and more agreeable unto the mind of Christ, that persons and particular churches should be left unto different observations in sundry things relating unto sacred worship, wherein they cannot join with each other nor communicate together, endeavouring in the meantime to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," than that they should be enforced unto a uniformity in the practice of things that have not the immediate authority of Christ enstamped on them. Accordingly it so fell out among them unto whom the apostle gave these directions, and that suitably unto his intention in them; for the dissenting parties agreeing in the common faith and profession of the gospel, did yet constantly meet in distinct assemblies or churches for the celebration of holy worship, because of the different rites wherein they did not agree. And in this posture were peace and love continued among them, until in process of time, their differences through mutual forbearance being extinguished, they coalesced into one church state and order. And the former peace which they had in their distances was deemed sufficient, whilst things were not measured nor regulated by secular interest or advantages. But it is a part of our present unhappiness, that such a peace among Christians and particular churches is mistaken to have an ill aspect upon the concerns of some belonging unto the church in power, honour, and revenue. But as we apprehend there is, as things are now stated among us, a plain mistake in this surmise, so, if the glory of God and the honour of the gospel were chief in our consultations about church affairs, it would be with us of no such consideration as to hinder us from committing quietly the

success and events of duty unto the providence of God.

1524. There was also a signal vindication of the truth pleaded for, in an instance of fact among the primitive churches. There was an opinion which prevailed very early among them about the necessary observation of Easter, in the room of the Jewish passover, for the solemn commemoration of the death and resurrection of our Saviour. And it was taken for granted by most of them, that the observance hereof was countenanced, if not rendered necessary unto them, by the example of the apostles; for they generally believed that by them it was observed, and that it was their duty to accommodate themselves unto their practice; only there was a difference about the precise time or day which they were to solemnize as the head and rule of their festival, as every undue presumption hath one lameness or other accompanying it, — it is truth alone which is square and steady. Some, therefore, pleaded the example of John the apostle and evangelist, who, as it is strongly asserted and testified by multitudes, kept his Easter at such a time and by such a rule; whom they thought meet to follow and imitate. Others, not inferior unto them in number or authority, opposed unto their time the example of Peter, whom they affirmed (on what grounds and reasons they knew best, for they are now lost) to have observed his Easter at another time, and according unto a different rule. And it is scarcely imaginable how the contests hereabouts troubled the churches both of Europe and Asia, who certainly had things more material to have exercised themselves about. The church of Rome embraced that opinion which at length prevailed over the other, and obtained a kind of catholicism against that which was countenanced only by the authority of St John; as that church was always wondrous happy in reducing other churches unto an acquiescency in its sentiments, as seldom wanting desire or skill dexterously to improve its manifold advantages. Now, this was that Easter was to be celebrated on the Lord's day only, and not by the rule of the Jewish passover, on the fourteenth day of the first month, what day of the week soever it fell out upon. Hereon

Victor, the bishop of that church, being confident that the truth was on his side, — namely, that Easter was to be observed on the Lord's day, — resolved to make it a condition of communion unto all the churches, for otherwise he saw not how there could be either union, peace, or uniformity among them. He did not question but that he had a good foundation to build upon; for that Easter was to be observed by virtue of apostolical tradition was generally granted by all. And he took it as unquestionable, upon a current and prevalent rumour, that the observation of it was confined to the Lord's day by the example of St Peter. Hereupon he refused the communion of all that would not conform unto his resolution for the observation of Easter on the Lord's day, and cast out of communion all those persons and churches who would observe any other day; which proved to be the condition of the principal churches of Asia, amongst whom the apostle John did longest converse. Here was our present case directly exemplified or represented so long beforehand. The success only of this fact of his remaineth to be inquired into. Now, it is known unto all what entertainment this his new rule of communion found among the churches of Christ. The reproof of his precipitancy and irregular fixing new bounds unto church-communion was famous in those days; especially the rebuke given unto him and his practice by one of the most holy and learned persons then living is eminently celebrated, as consonant to truth and peace, by those who have transmitted unto us the reports of those times.

He who himself first condemned others rashly was for his so doing generally condemned by all. Suppose, now, that any persons living at Rome, and there called into communion with the church,

should have had the condition thereof proposed unto them, — namely, that they should assent and declare that the observation of Easter, by apostolical tradition, was to be on the Lord's day only, — and upon their refusal so to do should be excluded from communion, or on their own accords should refrain from it, where should the guilt of this disorder and schism be charged? And thus it fell out, not only with those who came out of Asia to Rome, who were not received by that Diotrephes, but also with sundry in that church itself, as Blastus and others; as what great divisions were occasioned hereby between the Saxons and Britons hath been by many declared. But, in the judgment of the primitive churches, the guilt of these schisms was to be charged on them that coined and imposed these new rules and conditions of communion; and had they not been judged by any, the pernicious consequences of this temerarious attempt are sufficient to reflect no inconsiderable guilt upon it. Neither could the whole observance itself, from first to last, ever compensate that loss of love and peace among Christians and churches which was occasioned thereby; nor hath the introduction of such things ever obtained any better success in the church of God.

How free the churches were until that time, after they were once delivered from the attempt of the circumcised professors to impose upon them the ceremonies of Moses, from any appearance of unwritten conditions of communion, is manifest unto all who have looked into the monuments which remain of those times. It is very true that sundry Christians took upon them very early the observation of sundry rites and usages in religion whereunto they had no guidance or direction by the word of God; for as the corrupted nature of man is prone to the invention and use of sensible present things in religion, especially where persons are not able to find satisfaction in those that are purely spiritual, requiring great intension of mind and affections in their exercise, so were they many of them easily infected by that tincture which remained in them from the Judaism or Gentilism from which they were converted. But these observances were free, and taken up by men of their own accord, not only every church, but every person in the most of them, as far as it appears, being left unto their own liberty. Some ages it was before such things were turned into laws and canons, and that perhaps first by heretics, or at least under such a degeneracy as our minds and consciences cannot be regulated by. The judgment, therefore, and practice of the first churches are manifest against such impositions.

5. Upon a supposition that it should be lawful for any persons or churches to assign unscriptural conditions of their communion, it will follow that there is no certain rule of communion amongst Christians fixed and determined by Christ. That this is otherwise we have before declared, and shall now only manifest the evil consequences of such a supposition: for if it be so, no man can claim an admission into the society or communion of any church, or a participation in the ordinances of the gospel with them, by virtue of the authority of Jesus Christ; for notwithstanding all his pleas of submission to his institutions, and the observation of his commands, every church may propose something, yea, many things, unto him that he hath not appointed, without an admission whereof and subjection thereunto he may be justly excluded from all church privileges among them. Now, this seems not consonant unto the authority that Christ hath over the church, nor that honour which ought to be given unto him therein. Nor, on the same supposition, are his laws sufficient to rule and quiet the consciences, or to provide for the edification of his disciples. Now, if Diotrephes is blamed for not receiving the brethren who were recommended unto the church by the apostle, 3 John 1:9-10, probably because they would not submit to that

pre-eminence which he had obtained among them, they will scarcely escape without reproof who refuse those whom the Lord Christ commends unto them by the rules of the gospel, because they will not submit unto such new impositions as, by virtue of their pre-eminence, they would put upon them. And what endless perplexities they must be cast into who have learned in these things to call him only Lord and Master is apparent unto all. Baptism, with a voluntary credible profession of faith, repentance, and obedience unto the Lord Christ, in his commands and institutions, is all the warranty which he hath given unto any of his disciples to claim their admission into his churches, which are instituted and appointed to receive them, and to build them up in their faith. And if any person who produceth this warranty, and thereon desireth, according to order, the communion of any church, — if he may be excluded from it or forbidden an entrance into it, unless it be on grounds sufficient, in the judgment of charity, to evince the falseness and hypocrisy of his profession, little regard is had to the authority of Christ, and too much unto men's own. Churches, indeed, may more or less insist upon the explicitness of this profession and the evidences of its sincerity, as they find it tend to their peace and edification, with a due attendance unto the rule and example left unto them in this matter in the gospel. And that the exercise of this power in any churches may not turn to the prejudice of any, every professor is allowed, with reference unto particular assemblies, to make his choice of the measure he will comply withal, at least if he will make the choice of his habitation subservient unto his edification. Hereby the peace and duty both of churches and private persons are secured. And this rule of church admission and communion furnished Christians with peace, love, and unity for many ages, setting aside the ruffle given them in the rashness of Victor before mentioned. It was also rendered practicable and easy by virtue of their communion as churches among themselves; for from thence commendatory letters supplied the room of actual profession in them who, having been admitted into one church, did desire the same privilege in any other. And on this rule were persons to be "received," though "weak in the faith," though it may be in some things "otherwise minded" than the generality of the church, though "babes" and "unskilful" as to degrees in the word of truth, Romans 14:1; Php 3:15; Hebrews 5:12-14. But this rule was always attended with a proviso, that men did not contradict or destroy their own profession by any unholy conversation; for such persons never were, nor never are to be, admitted unto the especial ordinances of the church; and a neglect of due attendance hereunto is that which principally hath cast us into all our confusions, and rendered the institutions of Christ ineffectual. And if this warranty, which the Lord Christ hath given unto his disciples, of claiming a participation in all the privileges of his churches, an admission unto a joint performance of all the duties required in them, may, upon the supposition of a power left to impose other conditions of communion on them, be rejected and rendered useless, all church-communion is absolutely resolved into the variable wills of men. The church, no doubt, may judge and determine upon the laws of Christ, and their due application unto particular occasions, — as whether such persons may according to them be admitted into their fellowship; to deprive churches of this liberty is to take away their principal use and service: but to make laws of their own, the subject-matter whereof shall be things not commanded by Christ, and to make them the rule of admitting professed Christians unto their communion, is an assumption that cannot be justified. And it is certain that the assuming of an authority by some churches for such like impositions is that which hath principally occasioned many to deny them so to be; so at once to overthrow the foundation of all that authority which in so many instances they find to be abused. And although the church of Rome may prevail on weak and credulous persons, by proposing unto them an absolute

acquiescency in their dictates and determinations, as the best, readiest, and most facile means of satisfaction, yet there is nothing that doth more alienate wise and conscientious persons from them than doth that unreasonable proposal.

Moreover, it is highly probable that endless disputes will arise on this supposition about what is meet and convenient, and what not, to be added unto the Scripture rules of communion. They have done so in the ages past, and continue yet to do. Nor can any man on this principle know, or probably conjecture, when he hath a firm station in the church, or an indefeasible interest in the privileges thereof; for supposing that he hath concocted the impositions of one church, on the first removal of his habitation he may have new conditions of communion prescribed unto him. And from this perplexity nothing can relieve him but a resolution to do in every place whereunto he may come according to the manner of the place, be it good or bad, right or wrong. But neither hath the Lord Christ left his disciples in this uncertainty which the case supposeth, nor will accept of that indifferency which is in the remedy suggested. They, therefore, who regulate their communion with any churches by the firm stated law of their right and privilege, if they are not received thereon, do not by their abstinence from it contract the guilt of schism or any blamable divisions.

Moreover, upon a supposition of such a liberty and power to prescribe and impose unwritten conditions of church-communion on Christians, who or what law doth or shall prescribe bounds unto men, that they do not proceed in their prescriptions beyond what is useful unto edification, or unto what will be really burdensome and intolerable unto churches? To say that those who claim this power may be securely trusted with it, for they will be sure not to fall into any such excesses, will scarcely give satisfaction; for besides that such a kind of power is exceedingly apt to swell and extend itself unmeasurably, the common experience of Christendom lies against this suggestion. Was not an excess of this kind complained of by Austin of old, when yet the observation of ecclesiastical customs was much more voluntary than in after ages, neither were they made absolutely conditions of communion, unless among a very few? Do not all Protestants grant and plead that the papal church hath exceeded all bounds of moderation and sobriety herein, so that from thence they take the principal warranty of their secession from it? Do not other churches mutually charge one another on the same account? Hath not a charge of this excess been the ball of contention in this nation ever since the Reformation? If, then, there be such a power in any, either the exercise of it is confined unto certain instances by some power superior unto them, or it is left absolutely, as unto all particulars whereunto it may be extended, unto their own prudence and discretion. The first will not be asserted, nor can be so, unless the instances intended can be recounted, and the confirming power be declared. If the latter be affirmed, then let them run into what excesses they please, unless they judge themselves that so they do, which is morally impossible that they should, none ought ever to complain of what they do; for there is no failure in them who attend unto their rule, which in this case is supposed to be men's own prudence and discretion. And this was directly the state of things in the church of Rome; whence they thought it always exceedingly unequal that any of their ecclesiastical laws should be called in question, since they made them according to their own judgment, the sole rule of exercising their authority in such things. Where is the certainty and stability of this rule? Is it probable that the communion and peace of all churches and all Christians are left to be regulated by it? And who will give assurance that no one condition directly unlawful in itself shall be prescribed and imposed by persons enjoying this pretended power? or who can undertake that the number of such conditions as may

be countenanced by a plea of being things in their own nature indifferent, shall not be increased until they come to be such a burden and yoke as are too heavy for the disciples of Christ to bear, and unlawful for them to submit themselves unto? May any make a judgment but themselves who impose them, when the number of such things grows to a blamable excess? If others may judge, at least for themselves and their own practice, and so of what is lawful or not, it is all that is desired. If themselves are the only judges, the case seems very hard, and our secession from the church of Rome scarcely warrantable. And who sees not what endless contests and differences will ensue on these suppositions, if the whole liberty of men's judgments and all apprehensions of duty in professors be not swallowed up in the gulf of atheistical indifferency as to all the concerns of outward worship? The whole of what hath been pleaded on this head might be confirmed with the testimony of many of the learned writers of the church of England, in the defence of our secession from that of Rome; but we shall not here produce them in particular. The sum of what is pleaded by them is, That the being of the catholic church lies in essentials; that for a particular church to disagree from all other particular churches in some extrinsical and accidental things is not to separate from the catholic church, so as to cease to be a church. But still, whatever church makes such extrinsical things the necessary conditions of communion, so as to cast men out of the church who yield not to them, is schismatical in its so doing, and the separation from it is so far from being schism, that being cast out of that church on these terms only returns them unto the communion of the catholic church; and nothing can be more unreasonable than that the society imposing such conditions of communion should be judge whether those conditions be just and equitable or no. To this purpose do they generally plead our common cause. Wherefore, from what hath been discoursed, we doubt not but to affirm that where unscriptural conditions of communion, indispensably to be submitted unto and observed, are by any church imposed on those whom they expect or require to join in their fellowship, communion, and order, if they on whom they are so imposed do thereon withhold or withdraw themselves from the communion of that church, especially in the acts, duties, and parts of worship wherein a submission unto these conditions is expressed either verbally or virtually, they are not thereon to be esteemed guilty of schism; but the whole fault of the divisions which ensue thereon is to be charged on them who insist on the necessity of their imposition. That this is the condition of things with us at present, especially such as are ministers of the gospel, with reference unto the church of England, as it is known in itself, so it may be evidenced unto all by an enumeration of the particulars that are required of us, if we will be comprehended in the communion and fellowship thereof. For, —

1. It is indispensably enjoined that we give a solemn attestation unto the liturgy and all contained in it, by the subscription or declaration of our assent and consent thereunto; which must be accompanied with the constant use of it in the whole worship of God. As was before observed, we dispute not now about the lawfulness of the use of liturgies in the public service of the church, nor of that in particular which is established among us by the laws of the land. Were it only proposed or recommended unto ministers for the use of it in whole or in part, according as it should be found needful unto the edification of their people, there would be a great alteration in the case under consideration. And if it be pretended that such a liberty would produce greater diversity, yea, and confusion in the worship of God, we can only say that it did not so of old, when the pastors of churches were left wholly to the exercise of their own gifts and abilities in all sacred administrations. But it is the making of an assent and consent unto it, with the constant use of it or attendance unto it, a necessary condition of all communion with the church which at present is

called into question. It will not, we suppose, be denied but that it is so made unto us all, both ministers and people, and that by such laws, both civil and ecclesiastical, as are sufficiently severe in their penalties; for we have rules and measures of church-communion assigned unto us by laws merely civil. Were there any colour or pretence of denying this to be so, we should proceed no farther in this instance; but things are evidently and openly with us as here laid down.

Now, this condition of communion is unscriptural; and the making of it to be such a condition is without warranty or countenance from the word of God, or the practice of the apostolical and primitive churches. That there are no footsteps of any liturgy, or prescribed forms for the administration of all church ordinances, to be imposed on the disciples of Christ in their assemblies, to be found in the Scripture, no intimation of any such thing, no direction about it, no command for it, will, we suppose, be acknowledged. Commanded, indeed, we are to make "supplications and prayers" for all sorts of men in our assemblies; to instruct, lead, guide, and "feed the flock of God," 1 Timothy 2:1; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2; to administer the holy ordinances instituted by him; and to do all these things "decently and in order." The apostles also, describing the work of the ministry in their own attendance unto it, affirm that they would "give themselves continually unto prayer, and to the ministry of the word," Acts 6:4. But that all these things should be done (the preaching of the word only excepted) in and by the use or reading of a liturgy and the prescribed forms of it, without variation or receding from the words and syllables of it in any thing, that the Scripture is utterly silent of. If any one be otherwise minded, it is incumbent on him to produce instances unto his purpose. But withal he must remember, that in this case it is required not only to produce a warranty from the Scripture for the use of such forms or liturgies, but also that rules are given therein enabling churches to make the constant attendance unto them to be a necessary condition of their communion. If this be not done, nothing is offered unto the case as at present stated. And whatever confidence may be made use of herein, we know that nothing unto this purpose can be thence produced. It is pleaded, indeed, that our Saviour himself composed a form of prayer, and prescribed it unto his disciples: but it is not proved that he enjoined them the constant use of it in their assemblies, nor that they did so use it, nor that the repetition of it should be a condition of communion in them, though the owning of it as by him proposed, and for the ends by him designed, may justly be made so; least of all is it, or can it be proved, that any rule or just encouragement can hence be taken for other men who are neither Jesus Christ nor his apostles, but weak and fallible as ourselves, to compose entire liturgies, and impose the necessary use of them in all the worship of the Church. Neither is there the least countenance to be obtained unto such impositions from the practice or example of the first churches.

Liturgies themselves were an invention of after ages, and the use of them now inquired after of a much later date: for those which pretend unto apostolical antiquity have long since been convicted to be spurious and feigned, nor is there scarce any learned man who hath the confidence to assert them to be genuine; and on a supposition that so they are, no tolerable reason can be given why the use of them should be neglected, and such others taken up as are of a most uncertain original. The first condition, therefore, of communion proposed unto us is not only unscriptural (which is sufficient unto our present argument), but also destitute of any ancient example or usage among the churches of Christ to give countenance unto it. This if we admit not of, if we attend not unto, we are not only refused communion in other things, but also excommunicated, or cast out of the whole communion of the church, as many are at this day; yet some are so, not only for refusing

compliance with the whole of it in general, but for not observing every particular direction belonging unto it (as might be manifested in instances) of no great importance.

If, therefore, any divisions or schisms do ensue among us on this account, that some indispensably require an assent and consent unto the liturgy and all things contained in it as the condition of complete church-communion, or a necessary attendance on the whole religious worship thereby performed and therein prescribed, which others refuse to admit of as such, and thereon forbear the communion proposed unto them, it is evident, from the rules laid down, where the guilt of them is to be charged. And we do not discourse of what any may do among themselves, judging it meet for their edification, nor of what a civil law may constitute with respect unto public places, employments, and preferments; but only where lies the sin and evil that attends divisions arising on these impositions, and which by their removal would be taken away. And there seems to be an aggravation of this disorder, in that not only all men are refused communion who will not submit unto these terms of it, but also they are sought out and exposed unto severe penalties if they will not admit of them, though expressly contrary to their consciences and persuasions.

2. Canonical submission unto the present ecclesiastical government of the church, and the administration of the discipline thereof, in their hands by whom the power of it is possessed, with an acquiescency therein, are to the same purpose required of us and expected from us. Who these are, and what are the ways and means of their administrations, we shall not repeat, as unwilling to give offence unto any. We cannot but know how and in what sense these things are proposed unto us, and what is expected from us thereon. Neither dare we give another sense of them in our minds than what we judge to be the sense and intention of them who require our submission and obedience unto them. It is not, certainly, their design nor mind that we should look on the offices of the church as unwarrantable, and on their rule as inconvenient, so as to endeavour a reformation in the one and of the other. It is such a conformity they intend as whereby we do, virtually at least, declare our approbation of all these things in the church, and our acquiescency in them. Neither can we be admitted to put in any exception, nor discharge our consciences by a plain declaration of what we dislike or dissent from, or in what sense we can submit unto any of these things. We take it, therefore, for granted, that in the conformity required of us we must cordially and sincerely approve the present ecclesiastical government, and the administration of church discipline thereby, for it is the profession of our acceptance of it as proposed unto us; and if we acquiesce not therein, but express an uneasiness under it, we do it at the hazard of the reputation of our sincerity and honesty in conforming.

Now, this condition of communion with the church of England is also unscriptural, and consequently unlawful to be made so. This is by many now plainly acknowledged; for they say there is no government determined in the Scripture. But this now in force amongst us is erected by the authority of the magistrate, who hath supreme power in things ecclesiastical; and on that ground a lawful government they plead it to be, and lawful to be exercised, and so also by others to be submitted to. But we have now sundry times declared that this is not our present question. We inquire not whether it be lawful or no, or on what account it may be so esteemed, or how far it may be submitted unto, or wherein; but we say, the professed acknowledging of it, with submission unto it, as the government of the church, is required of us as a necessary condition of our communion. If they are not so, give us liberty to declare our sense concerning it without

prejudice; and if it be so, then may we refuse this condition as unscriptural. For in the case of conformity, there is not only a submission to the government required, but expressly (as was said) an approbation of it, that it is such as it ought to be; for in religious things our practice declares a cordial approbation, as being a part of our profession, wherein we ought to be sincere. Some again make some pleas, that bishops, and some government by them, are appointed by the apostles, and therefore a submission unto them may be justly required as a condition of communion. For we will not now dispute but that whatever is so appointed may be so required, although we believe that every particular instance of this nature is not rigidly to be insisted on, if it belong not unto the essentials of the church, and it be dubious to some whether it be so appointed or no; but yet neither doth an admittance of this plea give us any relief in this matter: for suppose it should or might be proved that there ought to be, according to the mind of Christ, in all churches, bishops, with a pre-eminence above presbyters in order or degree, and that the rule of the church doth principally belong unto them that are so, yet will not this concession bear an application to the present question, so as to afford us any relief; for the granting of things so dubious and questionable can never give them such an evidence of truth and firmitude in the church as to warrant the making of them necessary conditions of communion unto all Christians. Neither doth it follow, from any thing that pretendeth to fall under Scripture proof, that such bishops should be diocesan; that they should depend on archbishops over them; that they should assume the whole power of church rule and discipline into their hands; that they should administer it by chancellors, archdeacons, commissaries, and the like; that this should be done by presentments, or indictments, citations, processes, litigious pleadings, after the manner of secular or civil courts, to the exclusion of that rule and discipline which the gospel directs unto, with the management of it in love and brotherly compassion, in the name and by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. But these things we shall not in particular insist upon, for the reason before given. This we must say, that take the whole of the government and the administration thereof together, — which by the conformity required of us we must testify our approbation of and acquiescence in, or we deal hypocritically with them that require it of us, — and we know it to be so far unscriptural as that an acknowledgment of it and submission unto it cannot duly and justly be made a necessary condition of communion unto us. It may be it will be said that submission unto the government of the church is not so much a condition of communion with it as it is that wherein our communion itself with it doth consist, and it is but a fancy to think of communion with a church without it. But this is otherwise; as appears in those churches where all rule and government being left in the hand of the civil magistrate, there communion is merely spiritual in the administration of evangelical ordinances. And might but that be admitted which nature, reason, the law of the Christian faith and gospel obedience, do require, — namely, that church-fellowship and communion be built upon men's own judgment and choice, — this would go a great way towards the pacification of our differences. But if this be so, and that all church-communion consists in submission to the government of it, or at least that it doth so principally, it becomes them by whom it is owned and avowed so to do to take care that that government be derived from the authority of Christ, and administered according to his mind, or all church-communion, properly so called, will be overthrown.

3. We are required to use and observe the ceremonies in worship which the present church hath appointed, or doth use and observe. This also is made a necessary condition of communion unto us; for many are at this day actually cast out of all communion for not observing of them. Some are

so proceeded against for not observing of holy-days, some for not kneeling at the sacrament of the Lord's supper, some for not using the sign of the cross in baptism; and what would become of ministers that should neglect or omit to wear the surplice in sacred administrations is easy to conjecture. But these things are all of them unwritten and unscriptural. Great and many, indeed, have been the disputes of learned men to prove that although they have no divine institution, nor yet example of apostolical or primitive practice, yet that they may be lawfully used, for decency and order in the worship of God. Whether they have evinced what they aimed at is as yet undetermined. But supposing in this case all to be as they would pretend and plead that it should be, yet because they are all granted to be arbitrary inventions of men, and very few of those who make use of them are agreed what is their proper use and signification, or whether they have any or no, they are altogether unmeet to be made a necessary condition of communion; for inquiry may be made, on what warranty or by what rule they may be appointed so to be?

Those who preside in and over the churches of Christ do so in his name and by his authority; and therefore they can impose nothing on them, as a condition of their communion together, but what his name is upon or what they have his authority for, and it will be dangerous to set his seal unto our own appointments. For what men think meet to do themselves in the matters of the house of God and his worship, it may be measured and accepted with him according to their light and design; but for what they impose on others, and that under no less penalty than the deprivation of the outward administration of all the privileges procured for them by Jesus Christ, they ought to have his warrant and authority for. And their zeal is to be bewailed who not only cast men out of all church-communion, so far as in them lieth, for a refusal to observe those voluntarily-imposed ceremonies in sacred worship, but also prosecute them with outward force, to the ruin of them and their families; and we cannot but wonder that any should as yet think meet to make use of prisons, and the destruction of men thereby, as an appendix of their ecclesiastical discipline, exercised in it he highest severity, on no greater occasions than the omission of the observance of these ceremonies. Whether such proceedings are measured by present interest, or the due consideration of what will be pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ at the last day, is not difficult to determine.

4. As we are ministers, there is in some cases required of us, under the same penalty, an oath of canonical obedience. We need not labour to prove this to be unscriptural; nor, to avoid provocations, shall we at present declare the rise, nature, and use of it, with the fierce digladiations that have formerly been about it We can look upon it no otherwise but as that which is contrary to the liberty and unworthy of the office of a minister of the gospel.

We know not any thing else which is required of us unto the end mentioned, unless it be of some a subscription unto the articles of religion. And this, because the Scripture enjoins unto all a consent unto sound doctrine and a form of wholesome words, may be admitted so far as those articles concern only points of faith; but whereas there is annexed unto them and enjoined, with other things, an approbation of all those instances of conditions of communion before insisted on, a subscription unto the whole becomes of the same nature with things themselves therein approved of.

These are the conditions of communion with the church of England which are proposed unto us, and which we are indispensably to submit unto if we intend to be partakers thereof; and these are

all that we know of that nature. That any of these are in particular prescribed in the word of God, much less that they can derive any warranty from thence to be made necessary conditions of church-communion, will not, we suppose, be pretended by any. If, therefore, any divisions do ensue on the refusal of some to admit of these conditions, the guilt of them cannot, by any rule of Scripture, or from any example of the first churches, be charged on them who make that refusal. Other groundless accusations and charges we value not, for this is but man's day, the judgment whereof we neither stand nor fall unto; yea, we esteem ourselves obliged, in all peaceableness and sobriety, to bear witness against such impositions, and unto that liberty wherewith the Lord Christ hath made his churches and disciples free. And if once things were come unto that state that men would assign no other terms of church-communion than what Christ hath appointed, it would quickly appear where the guilt of our divisions would yet remain, if any such divisions would yet remain; but so long as there is a desire to make the wills and wisdoms of some men, fallible even as others, the rule and measure of obedience in spiritual things, an end of strife and contention among Christians will be expected in vain. And this we say with hearts in some measure sensible and pained to see the body of Christ torn in pieces by the lusts, passions, and carnal interests of men. Could we contribute any thing to the healing of the wounds and ruptures that are amongst Christians, provided it may have a consistency with the mind of Christ and the duty we owe unto him (as, indeed, nothing else will really contribute any thing thereunto), we should with all readiness and faithfulness give up our best endeavours therein; and where we can do nothing else, we hope we shall bear with patience those disdainful reproaches which the pride of men, blown up by a confluence of secular, perishing advantages, prompts them to pour out upon us for our noncompliance with their impositions.

Secondly, By the conformity required of us, we must consent unto the omission of sundry duties, which are made so unto us by the command and appointment of Jesus Christ. If we are at any time hindered in the discharge of any necessary duty by others, we have somewhat to plead in our own excuse, but if we ourselves voluntarily consent to the neglect or omission of them, we cannot avoid the guilt of sin; and the worst way whereby such a consent may be expressed is by compact and agreement with others, as though it were in our power to bargain with other men what duties we will observe and what we will omit in the worship of God. Now, in the conformity required of us we are to give this consent, and that as it were by compact and agreement, which deprives us of all pretence of excuse in our omissions. It is no time afterward to plead that we would discharge such duties were we not hindered or forbidden, — we have ourselves antecedently and voluntarily renounced a concern in such forbidden duties; for no man can honestly conform but it is with a declared resolution to accept of all the terms and consequents of it, with an approbation of them. Under this notion it is that we look on conformity; and what others apprehend thereby or understand therein, who seem to press men to conform unto what they do not approve, we know not. If, then, there be any omission of known duties inseparably accompanying our conformity, that thereby we solemnly consent unto.

This, therefore, we are obliged to refuse, because without sin, in the voluntary neglect and omission of duty, we cannot comply with it; which, therefore, can be no schism in us, nor what might in any way render us blamable. The Lord Christ hath prescribed no such law of unity and peace unto his churches as that his disciples should be bound constantly to neglect any known duty which they owe to himself for their sakes; nor do his institutions interfere, that the observance

of any one should exclude a due attendance unto another. Neither doth he by his commands bring any one into a necessity of doing that which is evil, or of omitting any thing that is required of him in the way of duty. However, therefore, we value church peace and union, we dare not purchase it by an abrenunciation of any duty we owe to Jesus Christ; nor would an agreement procured on such terms be of any use unto us, or of advantage to the church itself. Wherefore, that compliance in church-communion which would be obstructive of any necessary duties is not by the Lord Christ enjoined us; and therefore its omission cannot be culpable in us: but it would itself be our sin; especially would it be thus where the duties so to be omitted are such as are incumbent on us by virtue of especial office, wherein we are peculiarly required to be faithful. It remaineth, therefore, only that we declare wherein we should by conformity engage unto the omission of such duties as are indispensably required of us; and this we shall do in some few instances:—

1. Every minister of the gospel hath, by the appointment of Jesus Christ, the whole immediate care of the flock whereof he is overseer committed unto him. That no part hereof which belong unto their edification is exempted from him, the charge that is given unto him and the account which will be expected from him do sufficiently evidence. For as ministers are called overseers, rulers, guides, pastors, and the like, so are they commanded to feed the flock, to take the oversight of it, and to rule the house of God, Acts 20:17; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:5; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17; — a discharge of all which must come into their account. Nor is there any word spoken in the whole Scripture, relating to the rule and government of the church, which is not spoken principally with respect unto them. Nor is there the least intimation of an exemption of any part of the discipline of the gospel from their office or care. If it be pretended that there is, let the places be produced wherein such an exemption is made, or any instances of it among the first churches, and they shall be considered; for hitherto no such thing has been attempted that we know of. Nor is it at all concluded from the plea that some are appointed unto a superior degree above others in the rule of the church; for a man may have the whole rule of his flock committed unto him, although he should be obliged to give an account unto others of his discharge thereof. It is, therefore, the duty of all ministers of the gospel, not only to teach, instruct, and preach to their flocks, but to go before them also in rule and government, and in the exercise of the spiritual discipline appointed in the gospel, in the order wherein it is appointed, for their edification. The keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed unto them, or they are not: if they are not, by what authority do they take upon them to open and shut in the house of God, in ministerial teaching and authoritative administration of sacred ordinances? for these things belong unto the authority which is given by Christ under that metaphorical expression of “the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” the reason of the allusion and its application being obvious. 167And if these are not received by any, they are usurpers if they undertake to administer unto the church authoritatively in the name of Jesus Christ.

If they are given or granted unto them, how may it be made to appear that they are so for the ends mentioned only, but not for the rule and government of the church, which also belongs unto them? where is the exemption in the grant made to them? where are the limits assigned unto their power, that they shall exercise it in some concerns of the kingdom of heaven, but not in others? And whereas the greatest and most necessary parts of this power, such as are ministerial teaching and the administration of the sacraments, are confessedly committed unto them, how comes it to pass that the less should be reserved from them; for whereas the former are necessary to the very

being of the church, the latter are esteemed by some scarcely to belong unto it. To say that bishops only receive these keys, and commit or lend the use of them to others, for such ends and purposes as they are pleased to limit, is both foreign to the Scripture and destructive of all ministerial power. And if ministers are not the ministers of Christ, but of men; if they have not their authority from him, but from others; if that may be parcelled out unto them which they have from him, at the pleasure of any over them, — there needs not much contending about them or their office.

Besides, the relation of these things one to another is such, as that if they were absolutely separated, their efficacy unto edification will be exceedingly impaired, if not destroyed. If those who have the dispensation of the word committed unto them have not liberty and authority; if it be not part of their office-duty to watch over them unto whom it is dispensed, and that accompanied with spiritual weapons, “mighty through God” towards the fulfilling of the obedience of some and the “revenging of disobedience” in others; if they have no power to judge, admonish, or censure them that walk unanswerably to the doctrine of the gospel preached unto them, and whose profession they have taken upon them, — they will be discouraged in the pursuit of their work, and the word itself be deprived of a helpful means appointed by Christ himself to further its efficacy. And those who shall content themselves with the preaching of the word only, without an inquiry after its success in the minds and lives of them that are committed to their charge, by virtue of that care and authoritative inspection which indeed belongs to their office, will find that as they do discharge but one part of their duty, so they will grow cold and languid therein also. And when there hath been better success, — as there hath where some against their wills have been hindered by power from the exercise of the charge laid on them by Christ in this matter, making up as they were able, by private solicitude and persuasion, what they were excluded from attending unto in public ministerial acts, — it hath been an effect of especial favour from God, not to be ordinarily expected on the account of any rule. And thence it is that, for the most part, things openly and visibly do fall out otherwise, the people being little reformed in their lives, and preachers waxing cold and formal in their work. And if the censures of the church are administered by them who preach not the word unto the people, they will be weak and nervous as unto any influence on the consciences of men. Their minds, indeed, may be affected by them so far as they are attended with outward penalties; but how little this tends unto the promotion of holiness or the reformation of men’s lives experience doth abundantly testify. Church discipline and censures are appointed merely and solely to second, confirm, and establish the word, and to vindicate it from abuse and contempt, as expressing the sense that Jesus Christ hath of them by whom it is received, and of them by whom it is despised. And it is the word alone which gives authority unto discipline and censures. Where, therefore, they are so separated, as that those by whom the word is administered are excluded from an interest in the exercise of discipline, and those unto whom the administration of discipline is committed are such as neither do nor for the most part ought to preach the word, it cannot be but that the efficacy and success of them both will be impeded.

2. It is so, also, as to the administration of the sacraments, especially that of the supper of the Lord. These are the principal mysteries of our religion, as to its external form and administration, — the sacred rites whereby all the grace, mercy, and privileges of the gospel are sealed and confirmed unto them who are in a due manner made partakers of them. About them, therefore, and their orderly administration, did the primitive churches always use their utmost care and

diligence; and these in an especial manner did they make use of with respect unto them to whom they were to be communicated: for they feared, partly lest men should be made partakers of them to their disadvantage, being not so qualified as to receive them to their benefit, as knowing that where persons through their own defaults obtain not spiritual profit by them, they are in no small danger of having them turned into a snare; and partly that these holy and sacred institutions themselves might neither be profaned, contaminated, nor exposed unto contempt. Hence, of those who gave up their names unto the church, and took upon them the profession of the gospel, the greatest part were continued for a long season under their care and inspection, but were not admitted into the society of the church in those ordinances until upon good trial they were approved. And if any one after his admittance was found to walk unanswerably unto his profession, or to fall into any known sin, whence offence did ensue among the faithful, he was immediately dealt withal in the discipline of the church, and, in case of impenitency, separated from the congregation. Nor did the guides or pastors of the church think they had any greater trust committed unto them than in this, that they should use their utmost care and diligence that persons unmeet and unworthy might not be admitted into that church relation wherein they should have a right to approach unto the table of the Lord, and to remove from thence such as had demeaned themselves unworthy of that communion. This they looked on as belonging unto their ministerial office, and as a duty required of them in the discharge thereof by Jesus Christ. And herein they had sufficient direction, both in the rule of the word, as also in the nature of the office committed unto them, and of the work wherewith they were intrusted; for all ministers are stewards of the mysteries of Christ, of whom it is required that they should be faithful. Now, as it belongs unto a faithful steward to distribute unto the household of his lord the provisions which he hath made for them and allows unto them in due season; so also to keep off those from partaking in them, who without his master's order and warrant, would intrude themselves into his family, and unjustly possess themselves of the privileges of it. In these things doth the faithfulness of a steward consist. And the same is required in ministers of the gospel with respect unto the household of their Lord and Master, and the provision that he hath made for it.

These, therefore, being undeniably parts of the duty of faithful pastors or ministers, it is evident how many of them we must solemnly renounce a concernment in, upon a compliance with the conformity in matter and manner required of us. Neither are these duties such as are of light importance, or such as may be omitted without any detriment unto the souls of men. The glory of Christ, the honour of the gospel, the purity of the church and its edification, are greatly concerned in them. And they in whose minds a neglect of these things is countenanced, by their attendance unto some outward forms and appearances of order, have scarcely considered Him aright with whom they have to do. Some, therefore, of these duties we shall instance in:— First, it is the duty of all faithful ministers of the gospel to consider aright who are so admitted into the church as to obtain a right thereby unto a participation of all its holy ordinances. Take care they must that none who have that right granted them by the law of Christ be discouraged or excluded, nor any altogether unworthily admitted. And hereunto, as it is generally acknowledged, a credible profession of repentance, faith, and obedience (that is, of those which are sincere and saving) is required. To neglect an inquiry after these things in those that are to be admitted unto the table of the Lord is to prostitute the holy ordinances of the gospel unto contempt and abuse, and to run cross to the constant practice of the church in all ages, even under its greatest degeneracy. And the right discharge of this duty, — if we may be allowed to be in earnest in spiritual things, if it be

believed that it is internal grace and, holiness for the sake whereof all outward administrations are instituted and celebrated, — is of great weight and importance to the souls of men; for on the part of persons to be admitted, if they are openly and visibly unworthy, what do we thereby but what lies in us to destroy their souls? It cannot be but that their hardening and impenitency in sin will be hazarded thereby; for whereas they have granted unto them the most solemn pledge of the Lord Christ's acceptance of them, and of his approbation of their state towards God, that the church is authorized to give, what reason have they to think that their condition is not secure, or to attend unto the doctrine of the church pressing them to look after a change and relinquishment of it? For although the administration of the sealing ordinances doth not absolutely set the approbation of Christ unto every individual person made partaker of them, yet it doth absolutely do so to the profession which they make.

They witness in the name of Christ his approbation of it, and therewithal of all persons, according to their real interest in it and answering of it. But those who in no considerable instances do answer this profession can obtain nothing unto themselves but an occasion of hardening, and rendering them secure in a state of impenitency; for tell men whilst you please of the necessity of conversion to God, of reformation, and a holy life, yet if, in the course of their unholiness, you confirm unto them the love of Christ, and give them pledges of their salvation by him, they will not much regard your other exhortations. And thence it is come to pass in the world that the conformity (worth that we contend about ten thousand times over) which ought to be between the preaching of the word, the administration of the sacraments, and the lives of them who are partakers of them, is for the most part lost. The word still declares that without regeneration, without saving faith, repentance, and obedience, none can enter into the kingdom of God. In the administration of the other ordinances there is an abatement made of this rigorous determination, and men have their salvation assured unto them without a credible profession, yea, or a pretence of these qualifications; and the lives of the most who live in the enjoyment of these things seem to declare that they neither believe the one nor much regard the other. In the meantime, the church itself, as to its purity and the holiness of its communion, is damaged by the neglect of a careful inspection into this duty; for it cannot be but that ignorance, worldliness, and profaneness, will spread themselves as a leprosy over such a church, whence their communion will be of very little use and advantage unto believers. And hereby do churches, which should be the glory of Christ, by their expression of the purity, the holiness, and excellency of his person and doctrine, become the principal means and occasions of his dishonour in the world; and he that shall read that "Christ loved his church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish," Ephesians 5:25-27, will be much to seek after the effects of this design of Christ in his love and death, if he measure them by what appears in churches under the power and influence of this neglect. Nor do those who plead for the continuance of things in such a state, without reformation, sufficiently consider the representation that the Lord Christ made of himself when he was about to deal with his churches, some of which were overtaken with carelessness and negligence in this matter; and yet hath he therein laid down a rule as to what kind of proceedings particular churches are to expect from him in all generations. And it is a matter of no small amazement that any churches dare approve and applaud themselves in such a state of impurity and defection as is evidently condemned by him in those primitive patterns. Do men think he is changed, or that he will approve in them what he

judged and condemned in others? or do they suppose he minds these things no more, and because he is unseen, that he seeth not? But we shall all find at length that he is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” and that as the judge of all he stands at the door.

Now this duty, by conformity, we renounce a concernment in, so as to attend unto it, by virtue of ministerial authority; whence the guilt of all the evil consequents thereof before mentioned must fall on us: for it is known that a mere shadow of the work of this duty, and not so much as a shadow of authority for it, would be left unto us. For what is allowed in case of a sudden emergency, upon an offence taken by the whole congregation at the wickedness of any (which is instructed beforehand that this ought to be no matter of offence unto them), as it may be it cannot be proved ever to have been observed in any one instance, so the allowed exercise of it would yield no relief in this case. And if any should extend the rule beyond the interpretation that is put upon it by the present current administration of church-discipline, there is no great question to be made what entertainment he would meet withal for his so doing. And it is to no purpose to come into the church as it were on purpose to go out again. And if, instead of dealing with the souls and consciences of men in the name and authority of Christ, as stewards of his mysteries, any can content themselves to be informers of crimes unto others, we desire their pardon if we cannot comply with them therein. And this is the sum of what at present we are pleading about: It is the duty of ministers of particular churches to judge and take care concerning the fitness of them, according unto the rule of the gospel and the nature of the duty required of them, who are to be admitted into the fellowship of the church, and thereby into a participation of all the holy ordinances thereof. This charge the Lord Christ hath committed unto them, and hereof will require an account from them. Upon the neglect or right discharge of this duty consequents of great moment do depend; yea, the due attendance unto it hath a great influence into the preservation of the being of the church, and is the hinge whereon the well-being of it doth turn. But the power of exercising ministerial authority, in a just attendance unto this duty, we must renounce in our conformity, if we should submit thereunto; for we have showed before, that after we have conformed, we can pretend no excuse from what is enjoined of us or forbidden unto us by virtue thereof, all being founded in our own voluntary act and consent. Hence, the guilt of this omission must wholly fall on us; which we are not willing to undergo.

There are, we know, many objections raised against the committing of this power and trust unto the ministers of particular congregations. Great inconveniences are pretended as the consequences of it. The ignorance and unfitness of most ministers for the discharge of such a trust, if it should be committed unto them, the arbitrariness and partiality which probably others will exercise therein, the yoke that will be brought on the people thereby, and disorder in the whole, are usually pleaded to this purpose and insisted on. But, —

1. This trust is committed unto some or other by Christ himself; and it is necessary that so it should be. Never did he appoint, nor is it meet, nor was it ever practised in the primitive church, that every one should at his pleasure, on his own presumption, intrude himself into a participation of the holy things of the house of God. The consideration of men’s habitations, with their age, and the like, are of no consideration with respect unto any rule of the gospel. Either, therefore, it must be left unto the pleasure and will of every man, be he never so ignorant, wicked, or profligate, to impose himself on the communion of any church of Christ, or there must be a judgment in the church concerning them who are to be admitted unto their communion.

2. From the first planting of the Christian religion, those who preached the gospel unto the conversion of the souls of men were principally intrusted with this power; and it was their duty to gather them who were so converted into that church order and fellowship wherein they might partake of the sacred mysteries or solemn ordinances of the Christian worship. And this course of proceeding continued uninterrupted, with some little variation in the manner of the exercise of this power and duty, until corruption had spread itself over the face of the whole professing church in the world. But still a shadow and resemblance of it was retained; and in the papal church itself to this day, particular confessors are esteemed competent judges of the meetness of their penitents for an admission unto the sacraments of their church. And who shall now be esteemed more meet for the discharge of this duty than those who succeed in the office and work of preaching the word, whereby men are prepared for church-society? And as it is a thing utterly unheard-of in antiquity, that those who dispensed the word unto the illumination and conversion of men should not have the power of their disposal, as to their being added to the church or suspended for a time, as there was occasion; so it is as uncouth that those who now sustain the same place and office unto several congregations attending on their ministry should be deprived of it.

3. If there be that ignorance and disability in ministers as is pretended, the blame of it reflects on them by whom they are made; and we are not obliged to accommodate any of the ways or truths of Christ unto the sins and ignorance of men. And if they are insufficient for this work, how come they to be so sufficient for that which is greater, — namely, to divide the word aright unto all their hearers? But we speak of such ministers as are competently qualified, according to the rule of the gospel, for the discharge of their office, and no other ought there to be; and such there are, blessed be God, through the watchful care of our Lord Jesus Christ over his church, and his supplies of the gifts of his Spirit unto them. And such as these know it is their duty to study, meditate, pray, ask counsel and advice of others, perhaps of more wisdom and experience than themselves, that they may know how in all things to behave themselves in the house of God. Nor will God be wanting unto them who in sincerity seek direction from him for the discharge of any duty which he calls them unto. Other security of regular, orderly, and useful proceedings in this matter, Christ hath not given us, nor do we need; for the due observance of his appointments will not fail the attaining of his ends, which ought to be ours also.

4. The judgment and acting of the church-officers, in the admission of persons into the complete society of the faithful, is not arbitrary, as is pretended. They have the rule of the Scripture, which they are diligently to attend unto. This is the entire rule which the Lord Christ hath left unto his church, both for their doctrine and discipline; whatever is beyond this or beside it is not his, nor owned by him. What is not done according to this rule is of no force in the consciences of men, though it may stand, until lawfully recalled, for the preservation of outward order. And whatever arbitrariness may be supposed in making a judgment upon the rule of the word, or in the application of its rule unto the present case, it must abide in some or other. And who shall be thought more meet or able to make a right determination thereon than those whose duty it is, and who have the advantage to be acquainted with all the circumstances belonging to the case proposed? Besides, there is the judgment of the church, or the congregation itself; which is greatly to be regarded.

Even in the church of England, a suspension of any from the Lord's supper is allowed unto the curate, upon the offence of the congregation: which is a sufficient evidence that a judgment in this

case is owned to be their due; for none can take offence but upon a judgment of the matter at which he is offended, nor, in this case, without a right to determine that some offences ought to debar persons from a participation of the holy ordinances, as also what those offences are. This, therefore, is to be considered as an aid and assistance unto ministers in the discharge of their duty. It is the church into whose communion persons are to be admitted. And although it be no way necessary that determinations in this case should be always made by suffrage or a plurality of votes in the body of the church, yet, if the sense or mind of the congregation may be known, or is so (upon the inquiry that ought to be made unto that purpose), that any persons are unmeet for their communion, it is not convenient they should be received; nor will their admission, in this case, be of any advantage to themselves or the church. The light of reason, and the fundamental, constitutive principles of all free societies, such as the church is, ascribe this liberty unto it; and the primitive church practised accordingly, Acts 9:26-28; Romans 14:1. So, also, is the judgment and desire of the congregation to be considered in the admission of any, if they are made known to the guides of it; for it is expected from them they should confirm their love unto them without dissimulation, as members of the same body: and, therefore, in their approbation of what is done, their rulers have light and encouragement in their own duty. Besides, there is appointed, and ought to be preserved, a communion among churches themselves. By virtue hereof, they are not only to make use of mutual aid, advice, and counsel, antecedently unto actings of importance, but each particular church is, upon just demand, to give an account unto other churches of what they do in the administration of the ordinances of the gospel among them; and if in any thing it hath mistaken or miscarried, to rectify them upon their advice and judgment. And it were easy to manifest how, through these means and advantages, the edification of the church and the liberty of Christians is sufficiently secured in that discharge of duty which is required in the pastors of the churches about the admission of persons unto a participation of holy ordinances in them.

5. This duty, therefore, must either be wholly neglected, — which will unavoidably tend to the corrupting and debauching of all churches, and in the end unto their ruin, — or it must be attended unto by each particular church under the conduct of their guides and rulers, or some others must take it upon themselves. What hath been the issue of a supposal that it may be discharged in the latter way is too well known to be insisted on: for whilst those who undertake the exercise of church-power are such as do not dispense the word or preach it unto them towards whom it is to be exercised, but are strangers unto their spiritual state, and all the circumstances of it; whilst they have no way to act or exercise their presumed authority but by citations, processes, informations, and penalties, according to the manner of secular courts of judicature in causes civil and criminal; whilst the administration of it is committed unto men utterly unacquainted with and unconcerned in the discipline of the gospel, or the preservation of the church of Christ in purity and order; and whilst herein many, the most, or all of them who are so employed, have thereby outward emoluments and advantages, which they do principally regard, — the due and proper care of the right order of the churches, unto the glory of Christ and their own edification, is utterly omitted and lost.

It is true, many think this the only decent, useful, and expedient way for the government of the church; and think it wondrous unreasonable that others will not submit thereunto and acquiesce therein. But what would they have us do? or what is it that they would persuade us unto? Is it that this kind of rule in and over the church hath institution given it in the Scripture, or countenance

from apostolical practice? Both they and we know that no pretence of any such plea can be made. Is it that the first churches after the apostles, or the primitive church, did find such a kind of rule to be necessary, and therefore erected it among themselves? There is nothing more remote from truth. Would they persuade us that as ministers of the gospel, and such as have or may have the care of particular churches committed unto us, we have no such concernment in these things but what we may solemnly renounce, and leave them wholly to the management of others? We are not able to believe them. The charge that is given unto us, the account that will be required, of us, the nature of the office we are called unto, continually testify other things unto us. Wherefore, we dare not voluntarily engage into the neglect or omission of this duty, which Christ requireth at our hands, and of whose neglect we see so many sad consequents and effects. The Lord Christ, we know, hath the same thoughts, and makes the same judgment of his churches, as he did of old, when he made a solemn revelation and declaration of them; and then we find that he charged the failings, neglects, and miscarriages of the churches principally upon the angels or ministers of them. And we would not willingly, by our neglect, render ourselves obnoxious unto his displeasure, nor betray the churches whereunto we do relate unto his just indignation, for their declension from the purity of his institutions, and the vigour of that faith and love which they had professed. We should, moreover, by the conformity required of us, and according to the terms on which it is proposed, engage ourselves against the exercise of our ministerial office and power, with respect unto them who are already members of particular churches; for this we carry along with us, that by conforming we voluntarily consent unto the whole state of conformity, and unto all that we are to do or not to do by the law thereof. Now, it is not to be expected that all who are duly initiated or joined unto any church shall always walk blameless, according unto the evangelical rule of obedience, without giving offence unto others. The state of the church is not like to be so blessed in this world, that all who belong unto it should be constantly and perpetually inoffensive.

This, indeed, is the duty of all, but it will fall out otherwise. It did so amongst the primitive churches of old; and is not, therefore, otherwise to be expected amongst us, on whom the ends of the world are come, and who are even pressed with the decays and ruins of it. Many hypocrites may obtain an admission into church societies, by the strictest rules that they can proceed upon therein; and these, after they have known and professed the ways of righteousness, may, and often do, turn aside from the holy commandment delivered unto them, and fall again into the pollutions of the world. Many good men, and really sincere believers, may, through the power of temptations, be surprised into faults and sins scandalous to the gospel, and offensive to the whole congregation whereof they are members. Hath the Lord Christ appointed no relief in and for his churches in such cases; no way whereby they may clear themselves from a participation in such impieties, or deliver themselves from being looked on as those who give countenance unto them, as they who continue in this communion may and ought to be; no power whereby they may put forth from among them the old leaven, which would otherwise infect the whole; no way to discharge themselves and their societies of such persons as are impenitent in their sins; no means for the awakening, conviction, humiliation, and recovery of them that have offended; no way to declare his mind and judgment in such cases, with the sentence that he denounceth in heaven against them that are impenitent? 1 Corinthians 5:1-2; 1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 2 Corinthians 2:6; 2 Corinthians 7:11; Matthew 16:19; Matthew 18:15-20; Revelation 2:1-2.

If he hath done none of these things, it is evident that no churches in this world can possibly be preserved from disorder and confusion. Nor can they, by love, and the fruits of a holy communion, be kept in such a condition as wherein he can be pleased with them, or continue to walk amongst them; for let men please themselves whilst they will with the name of the church, it is no otherwise with them where persons obstinately and impenitently wicked, and whose lives are wholly discrepant from the rule of the gospel, are suffered to abide without control. But if he hath made the provision inquired after in this case, as it is evident that he hath, both the authority he hath granted unto his church for these ends, his commands to exercise it with care and watchfulness, with the rules given them to proceed by, with the known end of all instituted churches for the promotion of holiness, being all open and plain in the Scripture, it must then be inquired unto whom this trust is firstly committed, and of whom these duties are principally required. For private members of the church, what is their duty, and the way how they may regularly attend unto the discharge of it, according to the mind of Christ, in case of scandalous sins and offences among them, they are so plainly and particularly laid down and directed, as that, setting aside the difficulties that are cast on the rule herein by the extremely forced and unprovable exceptions of some interested persons, none can be ignorant of what is required of them, Matthew 18:15-20. And a liberty to discharge their duty herein, they are bound by the law of Christ in due order to provide for. If they are abridged hereof, and deprived thereby of so great a means of their own edification, as also of the usefulness required in them towards the church whereof they are members, it is a spiritual oppression that they suffer under. And where it is voluntarily neglected by them, not only the guilt of their own, but of other men's sins also lies upon them. Neither is their own guilt small herein; for suffering sin to abide on a brother without reproof is a fruit of hatred in the interpretation of the law, Leviticus 19:17; and this hatred is a sin of a heinous nature in the sense of the gospel, 1 John 2:9; 1 John 2:11; 1 John 3:15. The duty, also, of the whole church in such cases is no less evidently declared: for from such persons as walk disorderly, and refuse to reform on due admonition, they are to withdraw, and to put from amongst them such obstinate offenders; as also, previously thereunto, to "watch diligently lest any root of bitterness spring up among them, whereby they might be defiled." And hereunto, also, are subservient all the commands that are given them to exhort and admonish one another, that the whole church may be preserved in purity, order, holiness, and faithfulness. But the chief inquiry is, With whom rests the principal care and power, according to the mind of Christ, to see the discipline of the church in particular congregations exercised, and to exercise it accordingly? If this should be found to be in the ministers, and, through their neglect in the administration of it, offenders be left in their sins and impenitency, without a due application of the means for their healing and recovery; if the church itself come to be corrupted thereby, and to fall under the displeasure of Jesus Christ, — as these things, in one degree or other, more or less, will ensue on that neglect, — it will not turn unto their comfortable account at the great day. That this is their duty, that this authority and inspection is committed unto them, the reasons before insisted on in the ease of admission do undeniably evince. And if those ministers who do conscientiously attend unto the discharge of their ministerial office towards particular flocks would but examine their own hearts by the light of open and plain Scripture testimonies, with the nature of their office, and of the work they are engaged in, there would need little arguing to convince them of what trust is committed unto them, or what is required from them. If the consciences of others are not concerned in these things, if they have no light into the duty which seems to be incumbent on them, their principles and practices, or as we

think mistakes and neglects, can be no rule unto us. What we may be forbidden, what we may be hindered in, is of another consideration. But for us voluntarily to engage unto the omission of that duty, which we cannot but believe that it will be required of us, is an evil which we are every way obliged to avoid.

There are also sundry particular duties, relating unto these that are more general, which in like manner, on the terms of communion proposed unto us, must be foregone and omitted. And where, by these means or neglects, some of the principal ways of exercising church-communion are cast out of the church, some of the means of the edification of its members are wholly lost, and sundry duties incumbent on them are virtually prohibited unto them, until they are utterly grown into disuse, it is no wonder if, in such churches where these evils are inveterate and remediless, particular persons do peaceably provide for their own edification by joining themselves unto such societies as wherein the rule of the gospel is more practically attended unto. It is taken for granted that the church is not corrupted by the wicked persons that are of its communion, nor its administrations defiled by their presence and communication in them, nor the edification of others prejudiced thereby, because it hath been so said by some of the ancients, though whether suitably unto the doctrine of the apostles or no is very questionable, 1 Corinthians 5:6; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6. But suppose this should be so, yet where wicked persons are admitted, without distinction or discrimination, unto the communion of the church, where they are tolerated therein, without any procedure with them or against them, contrary to express rules of the Scripture given to that purpose, so that those who are really pious among them can by no means prevail for the reformation of the whole, they may, not only without breach of charity, impairing of faith or love, or without the least suspicion of the guilt of schism, forsake the communion of such a congregation to join unto another, where there is more care of piety, purity, and holiness, but if they have any care of their own edification, and a due care of their salvation, they will understand it to be their duty so to do. And we may a little touch hereon once for all. The general end of the institution of churches, as such, is the visible management of the enmity on the part of the seed of the woman, Christ the head, and the members of his body mystical, against the serpent and his seed. In the pursuit of this end, God ever had a church in the world, separate from persons openly profane doing the work of the devil, their father; and there is nothing in any church-constitution which tends unto or is compliant with the mixing and reconciling these distinct seeds, whilst they are such, and visibly appear so to be. And therefore, as the types, prophecies, and promises of the Old Testament did declare that when all things were actually brought unto a head in Christ Jesus, the church and all things that belong unto it should be holy, — that is, visibly so, — so the description generally and uniformly given us of the churches of the New Testament when actually called and erected is, that they consisted of persons called, sanctified, justified, ingrafted into Christ, Isaiah 26:2; Ezekiel 43:12; Ezekiel 44:9; or saints, believers, faithful ones, purified and separate unto God, Leviticus 11:44; Romans 1:6; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Php 1:1; Colossians 2:11. Such they professed themselves to be, such they were judged to be by them that were concerned in their communion; and as such they engage themselves to walk in their conversation. By what authority so great a change should be now wrought in the nature and constitution of churches, that it should be altogether indifferent of what sort of persons they do consist, we know not. Yea, to speak plainly, we greatly fear that both the worship and worshippers are defiled, 2 Timothy 2:22, where open impenitent sinners are freely admitted unto all sacred administrations without control. And we are sure that as God complaineth that his sanctuary is

polluted, when there are brought into it “strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh,” Ezekiel 44:7; so the true members of the church are warned of the evil and dangers of such defiling mixtures, and charged to watch against them, 1 Corinthians 5:6; Hebrews 12:15-16.

180We might yet farther insist on the great evil it would be in us, if we should give a seeming, outward approbation unto those things and their use which we cannot but condemn and desire to have removed out of the worship of God; and, moreover, there is, as we believe, an obligation upon us to give a testimony unto the truth about the worship of God in his church, and not absolutely to hide the light we have received therein under a bushel. Nor would we render the reformation of the church absolutely hopeless, by our professed compliance with the things that ought to be reformed. But what hath been pleaded already is sufficient to manifest that there neither is nor can be a guilt of schism charged either on ministers or people who withhold themselves from the communion of that church or those churches whereof the things mentioned are made conditions necessary and indispensable, and that wherein they must be denied the liberty of performing many duties made necessary unto them by the command of Jesus Christ. And as the rigid imposition of unscriptural conditions of communion is the principal cause of all the schisms and divisions that are among us, so let them be removed and taken out of the way, and we doubt not but that among all that sincerely profess the gospel there may be that peace and such an agreement obtained, as in observance whereof they may all exercise those duties of love which the strictest union doth require. These we profess ourselves ready for so far as God shall be pleased to help us in the discharge of our duty; as also to renounce every principle or opinion whereof we may be convinced that they are in the least opposite unto or inconsistent with the royal law of love and the due exercise thereof. If men will continue to charge, accuse, or revile us, either out of a causeless distaste against our persons, or misunderstanding of our principles and ways, or upon certain reports, or merely prompted thereunto through a vain elation of mind, arising from the distance wherein, through their secular advantages, they look upon us to stand from them; as we cannot help it, so we shall endeavour not to be greatly moved at it, for it is known that this hath been the lot and portion of those who have gone before us in the profession of the gospel, and sincere endeavours to vindicate the worship of God from the disorders and abuses that have been introduced into it, and probably will be theirs who shall come after us. But the whole of our care is, that “in godly simplicity and sincerity we may have our conversation in the world, not corrupting the word of God, nor using our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness, but as becomes the servants of God.” But perhaps it will yet be pleaded that this is not the whole which we are charged withal: for it is said that we do not only withdraw ourselves from the communion of the church of England, but also that we assemble in separate congregations for the celebration of the whole worship of God; whereby we evidently make a division in the church, and contract unto ourselves the guilt of schism, for what can there be more required thereunto? But what would those who make use of this objection have us to do? Would they have us starve our souls by a wilful neglect of the means appointed for their nourishment? or would they have us live in a constant omission of all the commands of Christ? By them, or those whose cause they plead, we are cast out and excluded from church-communion with them, by the unscriptural conditions of it which they would force upon us. The distance between us that ensues hereon they are the causes of, not we; for we are ready to join with them or any others upon the terms of Christ and the gospel. And do they think it meet that we should revenge their faults upon ourselves by a voluntary abstinence from all the ways and means of our edification? Doth any man think that Jesus Christ leaves any of his

disciples unto such a condition as wherein it is impossible they should observe his commands and institutions without sin? That we should join in some societies, that in them we should assemble together for the worship of God in him, and that we should in him do and observe whatever he hath appointed, we look upon as our indispensable duty, made so unto us by his commands. "These things," say some, "you shall not do with us, if you will do no more; and if you do them among yourselves, you are schismatics." But this is a severity which we know we shall not meet with at the last day. We stand at the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ.

It will, it may be, be demanded by what warrant or authority we do assemble ourselves in church societies, for the administration of gospel ordinances? and who gave us this authority? We answer, that it is acknowledged there is a difference between them and us, so that with them we cannot enjoy the worship of God; but of this difference we are not the cause, nor do give occasion to any blamable divisions by our principles or practices. Where the cause is found, there the guilt remains. This being the state of things with us, it is fond to imagine that any professors of the gospel do absolutely want a warranty or authority to obey Jesus Christ, to observe his commands, and to serve him according to his revealed will. His command in his word, his promise of the acceptance of them, and of his presence among them in all the acts of their holy obedience, the assistance and guidance of his Holy Spirit, which he affords graciously unto them, are a sufficient warranty and authority for what they do in express compliance with his commands; and more they will not plead a power for. Where the Spirit and word of Christ are, there is his authority; and this is no otherwise committed unto men but to enable them to act obedientially towards him and ministerially towards others. And were church actings considered more with respect unto the obedience that in them is performed unto Christ, which is their first and principal consideration, it would quickly be evident whence men might have authority for their performance. And by the same means are we directed in their order and manner. Besides, the ministers, who go before the people in their assemblies, are all of them (so far as we know) solemnly set apart unto their office and work according unto what Christ hath appointed; and their duty it is to teach unto all men the good ways of Christ, and to go before them who are convinced and persuaded by them in their practice. These things hath their Lord and Master required of them; and an account concerning them will he call them unto at the last day. A dispensation is committed unto them, and a necessity is thence incumbent on them to preach the gospel; and who shall excuse them if they neglect so to do? for that all those who are ministers of the gospel are called to preach the gospel, and that diligently, every one according as he hath received the gift of the grace of God, is out of question with them that do believe the gospel. And of the stewardship which is committed unto them herein are they to give an account; and we do know that "it is a fearful thing" for sinners, that is, wilful neglecters of his commands, "to fall into the hands of the living God." Our Lord Jesus Christ also hath testified beforehand that "he who setteth his hand to this plough, and looketh back again, is not fit for the kingdom of God." He alone who calls them to this work can discharge them of it, and that either by the rule of his word or his providence; and when men are invincibly hindered, as many are at this day, it is their suffering, but not their sin. Otherwise none can absolve them from the duty they owe to Jesus Christ in this matter, and that debt which they owe to the souls of men in undertaking the work of the ministry. Some, indeed, suppose, or pretend to suppose, that a prohibition given them by superiors, forbidding them to preach, though not by nor according unto any rule of the gospel, doth discharge them from any obligation so to do, that it shall be no more their duty. It would do so, no doubt, had they received no other command to preach the gospel,

nor from any other authority, than that of and from those superiors by whom they are forbidden; but being persuaded that they have so from Him who is higher than the highest, they cannot acquiesce in this discharge, nor, being “bought with a price,” can they now be servants of men. But by whom are they thus forbidden to preach? It will be supposed that the church which differs from them, and which originally makes itself a party in these differences, by the conditions of communion which it would impose upon them, is no competent judge in this case; nor will their prohibitions, who apparently thereby revenge their own quarrel, influence the consciences of them that dissent from them: for we speak not of what will or may take place, but what the consciences of men will or may be concerned in. By the civil magistrate they are not forbidden to preach, that we know of. It is true they are prohibited to preach in the legal public meeting-places or churches; and these places being in the power and care of the magistrate, it is meet his terms and conditions of their use should be accepted of, or his prohibition observed, or his penalty quietly undergone, where a peaceable occasion is made use of contrary unto it. As to other places, ministers are not absolutely forbid to preach in them, — no such power is as yet assumed or exercised; only, the manner of assemblies for sacred worship, and the number of them that may assemble, are regulated by laws for secular ends or civil security, and that under express penalties incurred on a contrary practice. But the consciences of ministers cannot be concerned in such laws, so far as to be exempted by them from the obligation that lies upon them from the command of Christ to preach the gospel. This they are commanded by him to do, and others know the penalties from men, under the danger whereof they must attend unto them. Besides, the reasons of these legal prohibitions, so far as they do extend, are taken from civil considerations alone, — namely, of the peace and quiet of the nation, — and not from any scripture or religious rules. And were these prohibitions only temporary or occasional, suited unto such emergencies as may give countenance unto their necessity, there might be a proportionable compliance with them. But whereas they respect all times alike, it is no doubt incumbent on them who act any thing contrary unto such prohibitions to secure their own consciences that they no way interfere with the intention and end of the law, by giving the least countenance or occasion unto civil disturbances; and others, also, by their peaceable deportment in all they do. But whereas they have received a talent from the Lord Christ to trade withal, have accepted of his terms and engaged into his service, without any condition of exception in case of such prohibitions, it is not possible they should satisfy their consciences in desisting from their work on such occurrences, any farther than in what they must yield unto outward force and necessity. It is pretended by some that if such a legal prohibition were given unto all the ministers of the gospel, it would not be obligatory unto them; for if it should be so esteemed, it were in the power of any supreme magistrate lawfully to forbid the whole work of preaching the gospel unto his subjects, which is contrary to the grant made by God the Father unto Jesus Christ, that “all nations shall be his inheritance,” and the commission he gave thereon unto his apostles, to 184“teach all nations,” and to “preach the gospel to every creature” under heaven: but it being some only that are concerned in this prohibition, it is their duty, for peace’ sake, to acquiesce in the will of their superiors therein, whilst there are others sufficient to carry on the same work. That peace is or may be secured on other terms hath been already declared; but that one man’s liberty to attend unto his duty, and his doing it accordingly, should excuse another from that which is personally incumbent on himself, is a matter not easily apprehended, nor can be readily digested. Besides, what is pretended of the sufficient number of preachers, without any contribution of aid from the Nonconformists, is indeed but pretended; for if all that are found in the

faith, gifted and called to the work of the ministry, in these nations, were equally encouraged unto and in their work, yet would they not be able to answer the necessities of the souls of men requiring an attendance unto it in a due measure and manner: and those who have exercised themselves unto compassionate thoughts towards the multitudes of poor sinners in these nations will not be otherwise minded. Wherefore, these things being premised, we shall shut up these discourses with a brief answer unto the foregoing objection, which was the occasion of them; and we say, —

1. That schism being the name of a sin, or somewhat that is evil, it can in no circumstances be any man's duty. But we have manifested, as satisfactorily unto our own consciences, so we hope unto the minds of unprejudiced persons, that in our present condition our assemblies for the worship of God are our express duty; and so can have no affinity with any sin or evil. And those who intend to charge us with schism in or for our assemblies must first prove them not to be our duty.

2. Notwithstanding them, or any thing by us performed in them, we do preserve our communion entire with the church of England (that is, all the visible professors of the gospel in this nation), as it is a part of the catholic church, in the unity of the faith owned therein, provided it be not measured by the present opinions of some who have evidently departed from it. Our non-admittance of the present government and discipline of the church, as apprehended national, and as it is in the hands of merely ecclesiastical persons, or such as are pretended so to be, we have accounted for before. But we are one with the whole body of the professors of the protestant religion, in a public avowment of the same faith.

3. Into particular churches we neither are nor can be admitted, but on those terms and conditions which not only we may justly, but which we are bound in a way of duty to refuse; and this also hath been pleaded before. Besides, no man is so obliged unto communion with any particular or parochial church in this nation, but that it is in his own power at any time to relinquish it, and to secure himself also from all laws which may respect that communion, by the removal of his habitation. It is therefore evident that we never had any relation unto any parochial church but what is civil and arbitrary, a relinquishment whereof is practised at pleasure every day by all sorts of men. Continuing, therefore, in the constant profession of the same faith with all other Protestants in the nation, and the whole body thereof as united in the profession of it under one civil or political head; and having antecedently no evangelical obligation upon us unto local communion in the same ordinances of worship numerically with any particular or parochial church; and being prohibited from any such communion, by the terms, conditions, and customs indispensably annexed unto it by the laws of the land and the church, which are not lawful for us to observe, being Christ's freemen; it being, moreover, our duty to assemble ourselves in societies for the celebration of the worship of God in Christ, as that which is expressly commanded; — we are abundantly satisfied that, however we may be censured, judged, or condemned by men in and for what we do, yet that He doth both accept us here and will acquit us hereafter whom we serve and seek in all things to obey. Wherefore, we are not convinced that any principle or practice which we own or allow is in any thing contrary to that love, peace, and unity which the Lord Christ requireth to be kept and preserved among his disciples, or those that profess faith in him and obedience unto him according to the gospel. We know not any thing in them but what is consistent and compliant with that evangelical union which ought to be in and among the churches of Christ; the terms whereof we are ready to hold and observe even with them that in sundry things differ

from us; as we shall endeavour, also, to exercise all duties of the same love, peaceableness, and gentleness towards them by whom we are hated and reviled.

## 03.00. A Display of Arminianism

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THE

WORKS OF

JOHN OWEN, D.D.

EDITED BY THE REV. WILLIAM H. GOOLD, D.D.,

EDINBURGH.

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MDCCCLXII. A DISPLAY OF ARMINIANISM BEING A DISCOVERY OF THE OLD PELAGIAN IDOL FREE-WILL, WITH THE NEW GODDESS CONTINGENCY.

ADVANCING THEMSELVES INTO THE THRONE OF THE GOD OF HEAVEN, TO THE PREJUDICE OF HIS GRACE, PROVIDENCE, AND SUPREME DOMINION OVER THE CHILDREN OF MEN;

WHEREIN THE MAIN ERRORS BY WHICH THEY ARE FALLEN OFF FROM THE RECEIVED DOCTRINE

OF ALL THE REFORMED CHURCHES, WITH THEIR

OPPOSITION IN DIVERSE

PARTICULARS TO THE DOCTRINE ESTABLISHED IN THE CHURCH OF

ENGLAND, ARE DISCOVERED AND LAID OPEN OUT OF THEIR

OWN WRITINGS AND CONFESSIONS, AND CONFUTED

BY THE WORD OF GOD.

Produce your cause, saith the LORD: bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.—Isaiah 41:21 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth.—Isaiah 45:9

Θ■ς, ■ ■κεσ■λας, κλ■μακα κα■ μ■νος ■ν■βηθι ε■ς τ■ν ο■ζαν■ν.—Constant., apud Socrat., lib. i. cap. 10.

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## 03.0000. Prefatory Note by the Editor

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PREFATORY NOTE. THE relation of man to his Creator has engaged the attention of earnest and thoughtful minds, from the days of the patriarch of Uz to the most recent controversies of modern times. The entrance of sin into the world has vastly complicated this relationship; so that, considered in its various bearings, it involves some of the most difficult problems with which the human intellect has ever attempted to grapple. The extent to which the intellect itself has been weakened and beclouded by the corruption of our nature, renders us the less able to penetrate into the deep mysteries of human duty and destiny. Whether man sins now as essentially affected with the taint of the first sin, and involved in the responsibilities of the first sinner, or sins wholly on his own account and by his own free act, under the bias of no connection with Adam, except what connection obtains between example on the one hand and imitation on the other? whether, on the supposition of a scheme of saving grace, grace is simply divine and external aid to the will of man, already operating freely in the direction of what is good, and so establishing a meritorious claim upon God for the bestowal of such aid, or a supernatural influence creating in man the very liberty itself to will and to do what is good? and whether, in the latter view of divine grace, as bestowed in divine sovereignty, and therefore according to a divine purpose, it can be reconciled with human responsibility?—are the questions which produced the sharp encounter of keen and conflicting wits between Pelagius and Augustine of old.

Towards the middle of the ninth century, these questions again assumed distinctive prominence in the history of theological speculation. Gottschalc, a monk of Orbais, distinguished himself by his advocacy of the doctrines of Augustine. It was the doctrine of predestination chiefly on which he insisted; and the controversy in his hands assumed this peculiar modification, that not merely the application of gracious influence, but the reference of the atonement, was exhibited as under the limit and regulation of the divine sovereignty and purpose. Not that in this respect he was at variance with Augustine, but the point seems to have been specially and formally mooted in the discussions of this age. His view of predestination embraced an element which may be reckoned an advance on the Augustinian doctrine; for according to him, predestination was twofold, comprehending the punishment of the reprobate as well as the salvation of the elect; but while he held the predestination of men to the punishment of their sin, he was far from holding, as his opponents alleged, that they were predestinated to the commission of sin. Council warred with council in the case of Gottschalc. Gottschalc himself expiated by a death in prison his audacious anticipation of the rights of private judgment and free inquiry in a dark age. The next revival of the same controversy in substance, though under certain modifications, took place after the Reformation. It is remarkable that at this period discussion on these weighty questions sprang up almost simultaneously in three different parts of Europe, and in three schools of theology, among which a wide diversity existed. The shackles of mediæval ignorance were burst asunder by the awakening intelligence of Europe; and if we except the controversy between Protestantism and Popery, on which the Reformation hinged, no point could more naturally engage the mind, in the infancy of its freedom, than the compatibility of the divine purpose with human responsibility; on

the solution of which problem the nature of redemption seemed to depend, and around which, by the spell of the very mystery attaching to it, human speculation in all ages had revolved. When an interdict still lay on theological inquiry, Thomists and Scotists had discussed it in its metaphysical form, and under a cloud of scholastic subtleties, lest the jealousies of a dominant church should be awakened. But now, when a measure of intellectual freedom had been acquired, and the dispute between free-will on the one hand and efficacious grace on the other involved a practical issue between Rome and Geneva, the question received a treatment almost exclusively theological.

First, perhaps, in the order of time, this discussion was revived in Poland, and in connection with the heresies of Socinus. The divinity of Christ, the nature of the atonement and the corruption of human nature, are all doctrines essentially connected. It is because Christ is divine that an adequate satisfaction has been rendered, in his sufferings, to the claims of divine justice; and such an atonement is indispensable for our salvation, if man, because dead in sin, has no power to achieve salvation by any merit of his own. A denial of the total corruption of our nature seems essential to the Unitarian system; so far there is common ground between the systems of Pelagius and Socinus. It is not wonderful that this measure of identity should develop consequences affecting the doctrine of the divine purposes and of predestination, though it is beyond our limits to trace either the necessary or the historical evolution of these consequences. Spanheim, in his "Elenchus Controversiarum," p. 237, ascribes the origin of the Arminian controversy in Holland to certain emissaries, Ostorodius and Voidovius, despatched by the Polish Socinians into the Low Countries, for the purpose of propagating the tenets of their sect. Their tenets respecting the Trinity and the atonement took no root in these countries; but Spanheim affirms that it was otherwise in regard to certain opinions of Socinus, "quæ ille recoxit ex Pelagii disciplinâ," on predestination, free-will, and the ground of justification before God.

About the same time, the Church of Rome was shaken to its centre by the same controversy. The Jesuits had always Pelagian leanings, and in the Council of Trent their influence was triumphant, and, so far as its decrees stereotype the Romish creed, sealed the doom of the waning authority of Augustine. Louis Molina, in 1588, made an attempt, in his lectures on "The Concord of Grace and Free-will," to unite the conflicting theories. The Jesuits regarded his attempt with no favour. A lengthened controversy arose, in which Molinism, as partly a deviation from, and partly a compromise of, the fundamental principles of the Augustinian system, was effectually assailed by the piety of Jansen, the learning of Arnauld, and the genius of Pascal, till the bull Unigenitus secured a lasting triumph for Jesuitism, by the authoritative condemnation of the doctrines of Augustine, as declared in the collection of extracts from his writings which Jansen had published under the title "Augustinus." But it was in Holland that the controversy on this point arose which had the chief influence on British theology, and reduced the questions at issue to the shape under which they are discussed by Owen in his "Display of Arminianism." On the death of an eminent theologian of the name of Junius, Arminius was called to the vacant chair in the University of Leyden. Gomar, a professor in the same university, and the Presbytery of Amsterdam, opposed his appointment, on the ground of his erroneous principles. On giving a pledge that he would teach nothing at variance with the Belgic Confession and Catechism, he was allowed to enter on his office as professor in 1603. Gomar and he again fell into a dispute on the subject of predestination,—the origin of prolonged troubles and controversies in the Church of Holland. Gomar and his party were supported by the majority of the clergy in the church. Arminius

depended upon the political support of the state. The former sought a national synod to adjudicate on the prevailing controversy. The latter, having the ear of the state, contrived to prevent it. Stormy scenes ensued, amid which Arminius died, and Episcopius became the leader of the Remonstrants, as his followers were called, from a remonstrance which they submitted in 1610 to the States of Holland and West Friesland. The Remonstrants levied soldiers to sustain their cause, and the provinces resounded with military preparations. At last, profiting by the confusion, Maurice, the head of the house of Orange, by a series of daring and reckless movements, seized upon the government of the States. In deference to Gomar and his party, he convened a general synod on the 13th November 1618. The doctrines of Arminius were condemned, and five articles were drawn up and published as the judgment of the synod on the points in dispute. The first asserts election by grace, in opposition to election on the ground of foreseen excellence; in the second God is declared to have willed that Christ should efficaciously redeem all those, and those only, who from eternity were chosen to salvation; the third and fourth relate to the moral impotence of man, and the work of the Spirit in conversion; and the fifth affirms the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. The Church of France embodied these articles among her own standards. The Church of Geneva as cordially acquiesced in them.

Four English deputies, Drs. Carleton, Hall, Davenant, and Ward, together with Dr. Baleanquhal from Scotland, by the command of James VI., repaired to Holland, and took their place in the Synod of Dort, in accordance with a request of the Dutch Church to be favoured with the aid and countenance of some delegates from the British Churches. The proceedings of the Synod of Dort had the sanction of these British divines. No doubt can be entertained that the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England were not Arminian; but on the elevation of Laud to the see of Canterbury, Arminianism grew strong within its pale. A royal prohibition was issued against all discussion of the controverted points in the pulpit. All ecclesiastical preferments at the disposal of the Crown were bestowed on those who leaned to Arminian views. "The fates of our church," says Owen, in the note to the reader prefixed to the following treatise, "having of late devolved the government thereof into the hands of men tainted with this poison, Arminianism became backed with the powerful arguments of praise and preferment, and quickly prevailed to beat poor naked truth into a corner." It would, however, be neither fair nor correct if the statement of these facts left an impression that Arminianism made progress solely through the help of royal and prelatial favour. It was embraced and supported by some authors to whom no sinister motives can be imputed; and the cause has never found an abler advocate than John Goodwin, whose name, for his publications against the royal interest, was associated with that of Milton, in the legal proceedings instituted against them both at the Restoration. At this juncture, Owen felt it his duty to oppose the innovations on the received doctrine of the church, by the publication of a work in which the views of the Arminians are exhibited on all the leading topics of the controversy, with the exception of three points, relating to universal grace, justification, and the perseverance of the saints. He substantiates his statements regarding the Arminian tenets by copious quotations from the works of the Dutch Remonstrants; and contrasts them, at the close of each chapter, with passages from Scripture. Exception may be taken to this course, as the sentence of any author, detached from the context, may convey a meaning which is essentially modified by it. Some of these quotations are so far accommodated by Owen as to present a full statement of a particular opinion, instead of appearing in the parenthetical and incidental form which they present in the original works, as merely parts of a sentence. We did not feel it needful to interfere with them in this shape; for, so far

as we can judge, our author evinces perfect integrity in all the quotations to which he has recourse, and the slight alterations occasionally made on them never superinduce a dishonest or mistaken gloss on the views of the authors from whom the passages are selected. It may be questioned if Owen sufficiently discriminates the doctrine of Arminius from the full development which his system, after his death, received in the hands of his followers. Sometimes, moreover, opinions possessing the distinctive features of Pelagianism are confounded with Arminianism, strictly so called. Our author, perhaps, may be vindicated on the ground that it was his object to exhibit Arminianism as current and common in his day; and his quotations seem to prove that his Display of it was not far from the truth, though, from the refinement of modern discrimination on some of the points, many an Arminian would hardly subscribe to some of the statements as a correct representation of his creed, and a Calvinistic author is under obvious temptation to run up Arminian views into what he may esteem their legitimate consequences in the extravagance of the Pelagian theory. The style is simple; some polish appears in the composition; and occasionally a degree of ornament and pleasantry is employed (as when he enters on the question of Free-will, chap, xii.), which is rare with Owen, who perhaps prided himself on the studious rejection of literary elegance. It could be wished that he had risen superior to the vice of the age in such discussions, by manifesting less acerbity of temper and diction in the refutation of the views which he combats in this work. It was Owen's first publication (1642), and immediately brought him into notice. The living of Fordham in Essex was conferred upon him by the Committee of Religion, to whom the work is dedicated.—ED.

2 Martii, anno Domini 1642.

IT is this day ordered, by the Committee of the House of Commons in Parliament for the Regulating of Printing and Publishing of Books, That this book, entitled "A Display of Arminianism," be printed.

JOHN WHITE.

## 03.0000. Epistle Dedicatory

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORDS AND GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR RELIGION.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This committee was appointed by the House of Lords, March 12, 1640. It sometimes bears the name of the Committee of Accommodation, and consisted of ten earls, ten bishops, and ten barons. To prepare the subjects of discussion, some bishops and several divines of different persuasions were appointed a sub-committee. The duty of the committee was to examine all innovations in doctrine and discipline, illegally introduced into the church since the Reformation. See Neal's History, vol. ii. 395.—ED. THE many ample testimonies of zealous reverence to the providence of God, as well as affectionate care for the privileges of men, which have been given by this honourable assembly of parliament, encourage the adorers of the one, no less than the lovers of the other, to vindicate that also from the encroachments of men. And as it was not, doubtless, without divine disposition that those should be the chiefest agents in robbing men of their privileges who had nefariously attempted to spoil God of his providence; so we hope the same all-ruling hand hath disposed of them to be glorious instruments of re-advancing his right and supreme dominion over the hearts of men whose hearts he hath prepared with courage and constancy to establish men in their inviolated rights, by reducing a sweet harmony between awful sovereignty and a well-moderated liberty. Now, the first of these being demandated to your particular care, I come unto you with a bill of complaint against no small number in this kingdom, who have wickedly violated our interest in the providence of God, and have attempted to bring in the foreign power of an old idol, to the great prejudice of all the true subjects and servants of the Most High. My accusation I make good by the evidence of the fact, joined with their own confessions. And because, to waive the imputation of violent intrusion into the dominion of another, they lay some claim and pretend some title unto it, I shall briefly show how it is contrary to the express terms of the great charter of Heaven to have any such power introduced amongst men. Your known love to truth and the gospel of Christ makes it altogether needless for me to stir you up by any motives to hearken to this just complaint, and provide a timely remedy for this growing evil; especially since experience hath so clearly taught us here, in England, that not only eternal but temporal happiness also dependeth on the flourishing of the truth of Christ's gospel.

Justice and religion were always conceived as the main columns and upholders of any state or commonwealth; like two pillars in a building, whereof the one cannot stand without the other, nor the whole fabric without them both. As the philosopher spake of logic and rhetoric, they are artes ἀντιστροφαι, mutually aiding each other, and both aiming at the same end, though in different manners; so they, without repugnancy, concur and sweetly fall in one with another, for the reiglement and direction of every person in a commonwealth, to make the whole happy and blessed: and where they are both thus united, there, and only there, is the blessing in assurance whereof Hezekiah rejoiced,—truth and peace. An agreement without truth is no peace, but a covenant with death, a league with hell, a conspiracy against the kingdom of Christ, a stout rebellion against the God of heaven; and without justice, great commonwealths are but great

troops of robbers. Now, the result of the one of these is civil peace; of the other, ecclesiastical: betwixt which two there is a great sympathy, a strict connection, having on each other a mutual dependence. Is there any disturbance of the state? it is usually attended with schisms and factions in the church; and the divisions of the church are too often even the subversions of the commonwealth. Thus it hath been ever since that unhappy difference between Cain and Abel; which was not concerning the bounds and limits of their inheritance, nor which of them should be heir to the whole world, but about the dictates of religion, the offering of their sacrifices. This fire, also, of dissension hath been more stirred up since the Prince of Peace hath, by his gospel, sent the sword amongst us; for the preaching thereof, meeting with the strongholds of Satan and the depraved corruption of human nature, must needs occasion a great shaking of the earth. But most especially, distracted Christendom hath found fearful issues of this discord, since the proud Romish prelates have sought to establish their hell-broached errors, by inventing and maintaining uncharitable, destructive censures against all that oppose them: which, first causing schisms and distractions in the church, and then being helped forward by the blindness and cruelty of ambitious potentates, have raised war of nation against nation,—witness the Spanish invasion of '88;2 [and war] of a people within themselves, as in the late civil wars of France, where, after divers horrible massacres, many chose rather to die soldiers than martyrs.

2 He alludes to the attempted invasion of England by the Spanish Armada in 1588. In France the civil wars on account of religion were terminated about 1628, when the Protestants secured the confirmation of the Edict of Nantes, but lost possession of the towns that had been given in guarantee for the faithful observance of it.—ED.

And, oh, that this truth might not, at this day, be written with the blood of almost expiring Ireland! Yea, it hath lastly descended to dissension betwixt private parties,—witness the horrible murder of Diazius, whose brains were chopped out with an axe by his own brother Alphonsus,<sup>3</sup> for forsaking the Romish religion; what rents in [the] State, what grudgings, hatreds, and exasperations of mind among private men, have happened by reason of some inferior differences, we all at this day grieve to behold. “Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum!” Most concerning, then, is it for us to endeavour obedience to our Saviour’s precept, of seeking first the kingdom of God, that we may be partakers of the good things comprised in the promise annexed. Were there but this one argument for to seek the peace of the church, because thereon depends the peace of the commonwealth, it were sufficient to quicken our utmost industry for the attaining of it. Now, what peace in the church without truth? All conformity to any thing else is but the agreement of Herod and Pilate to destroy Christ and his kingdom. Neither is it this or that particular truth, but the whole counsel of God revealed unto us, without adding or detracting, whose embracement is required to make our peace firm and stable. No halting betwixt Jehovah and Baal, Christ and Antichrist; as good be all Philistine, and worshippers of Dagon, as to speak part the language of Ashdod and part the language of the Jews: hence, hence hath been the rise of all our miseries, of all our dissensions, whilst factious men laboured every day to commend themselves to them who sat aloft in the temple of God, by introducing new popish-arminian errors, whose patronage they had wickedly undertaken. Who would have thought that our church would ever have given entertainment to these Belgic semi-Pelagians, who have cast dirt upon the faces and raked up the ashes of all those great and pious souls whom God magnified, in using as his instruments to reform his church; to the least of which the whole troop of Arminians shall never make themselves

equal, though they swell till they break? What benefit did ever come to this church by attempting to prove that the chief part in the several degrees of our salvation is to be ascribed unto ourselves, rather than God?—which is the head and sum of all the controversies between them and us. And must not the introducing and fomenting of a doctrine so opposite to that truth our church hath quietly enjoyed ever since the first Reformation necessarily bring along with it schisms and dissensions, so long as any remain who love the truth, or esteem the gospel above preferment? Neither let any deceive your wisdoms, by affirming that they are differences of an inferior nature that are at this day agitated between the Arminians and the orthodox divines of the reformed church. Be pleased but to cast an eye on the following instances, and you will find them hewing at the very root of Christianity. Consider seriously their denying of that fundamental article of original sin. Is this but a small escape in theology?—why, what need of the gospel, what need of Christ himself, if our nature be not guilty, depraved, corrupted? Neither are many of the rest of less importance. Surely these are not things “in quibus possimus dissentire salva pace ac charitate,” as Austin speaks,—“about which we may differ without loss of peace or charity.” One church cannot wrap in her communion Austin and Pelagius, Calvin and Arminius. I have here only given you a taste, whereby you may judge of the rest of their fruit,—“mors in olla, mors in olla;” their doctrine of the final apostasy of the elect, of true believers, of a wavering hesitancy concerning our present grace and future glory, with divers others, I have wholly omitted; those I have produced are enough to make their abettors incapable of our church-communion. The sacred bond of peace compasseth only the unity of that Spirit which leadeth into all truth. We must not offer the right hand of fellowship, but rather proclaim  $\epsilon\rho\upsilon\ \pi\lambda\epsilon\mu\omicron\nu$ ,<sup>4</sup> “a holy war,” to such enemies of God’s providence, Christ’s merit, and the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit. Neither let any object, that all the Arminians do not openly profess all these errors I have recounted. Let ours, then, show wherein they differ from their masters.<sup>5</sup> We see their own confessions; we know their arts,  $\beta\theta\eta\ \kappa\alpha\ \mu\epsilon\theta\omicron\delta\epsilon\ \alpha\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\ \Sigma\alpha\tau\alpha$ ,—“the depths and crafts of Satan; ” we know the several ways they have to introduce and insinuate their heterodoxies into the minds of men. With some they appear only to dislike our doctrine of reprobation; with others, to claim an allowable liberty of the will: but yet, for the most part,—like the serpent, wherever she gets in her head, she will wriggle in her whole body, sting and all,—give but the least admission, and the whole poison must be swallowed. What was the intention of the maintainers of these strange assertions amongst us I know not,—whether the efficacy of error prevailed really with them or no, or whether it were the better to comply with Popery, and thereby to draw us back again unto Egypt;—but this I have heard, that it was affirmed on knowledge, in a former parliament, that the introduction of Arminianism amongst us was the issue of a Spanish consultation. It is a strange story that learned Zanchius<sup>6</sup> tells us, how, upon the death of the Cardinal of Lorraine there was found in his study a note of the names of divers German doctors and ministers, being Lutherans, to whom was paid an annual pension, by the assignment of the cardinal, that they might take pains to oppose the Calvinists; and so, by cherishing dissension, reduce the people again to Popery. If there be any such amongst us, who, upon such poor inconsiderable motives, would be won to betray the gospel of Christ, God grant them repentance before it be too late! However, upon what grounds, with what intentions, for what ends soever, these tares have been sowed amongst us by envious men, the hope of all the piously learned in the kingdom is, that, by your effectual care and diligence, some means may be found to root them out. Now, God Almighty increase and fill your whole honourable society with wisdom, zeal, knowledge, and all other Christian graces, necessary for your great calling and

employments; which is the daily prayer of your most humble and devoted servant,

JOHN OWEN.

3 Sleid. Com.

4 Greg. Naz.

5 Profitentur Remonst. hasce ad promotionem causæ suæ artes arthibere, ut apud vulgus non ulterius progrediantur quam de articulis vulgo notis, ut pro ingeniorum diversitate quosdam lacte diu alant, alios solidiore cibo, etc.—Festus hom. præstat ad specimen Con. Bel.

6 Hieron. Zanch. ad Holderum. Res. Miscel.

## 03.000000. To the Christian Reader

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TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

READER,—Thou canst not be such a stranger in our Israel as that it should be necessary for me to acquaint thee with the first sowing and spreading of these tares in the field of the church, much less to declare what divisions and thoughts of heart, what open bitter contentions, to the loss of ecclesiastical peace, have been stirred up amongst us about them. Only some few things, relating to this my particular endeavour, I would willingly premonish thee of:—

First, Never were so many prodigious errors introduced into a church, with so high a hand and so little opposition, as these into ours, since the nation of Christians was known in the world. The chief cause I take to be that which Æneas Sylvius gave why more maintained the pope to be above the council than the council above the pope,—because popes gave archbishoprics, bishoprics, &c., but the councils sued “in forma pauperis,” and, therefore, could scarce get an advocate to plead their cause. The fates of our church having of late devolved the government thereof into the hands of men tainted with this poison, Arminianism became backed with the powerful arguments of praise and preferment, and quickly prevailed to beat poor naked Truth into a corner. It is high time, then, for all the lovers of the old way to oppose this innovation, prevailing by such unworthy means, before our breach grow great like the sea, and there be none to heal it. My intention in this weak endeavour (which is but the undigested issue of a few broken hours, too many causes, in these furious malignant days, continually interrupting the course of my studies), is but to stir up such who, having more leisure and greater abilities, will not as yet move a finger to help [to] vindicate oppressed truth. In the meantime, I hope this discovery may not be unuseful, especially to such who, wanting either will or abilities to peruse larger discourses, may yet be allured by their words, which are smoother than oil, to taste the poison of asps that is under their lips. Satan hath βύθι καὶ μεθοδεύας, depths where to hide, and methods how to broach his lies; and never did any of his emissaries employ his received talents with more skill and diligence than our Arminians, labouring earnestly, in the first place, to instil some errors that are most plausible, intending chiefly an introduction of them that are more palpable, knowing that if those be for a time suppressed until these be well digested, they will follow of their own accord. Wherefore, I have endeavoured to lay open to the view of all some of their foundation-errors, not usually discussed, on which the whole inconsistent superstructure is erected, whereby it will appear how, under a most vain pretence of farthering piety, they have prevaricated against the very grounds of Christianity; wherein,—

First, I have not observed the same method in handling each particular controversy, but followed such several ways as seemed most convenient to clear the truth and discover their heresies.

Secondly, Some of their errors I have not touched at all,—as those concerning universal grace, justification, the final apostasy of true believers,—because they came not within the compass of my proposed method, as you may see chap. i., where you have the sum of the whole discourse.

Thirdly, I have given some instances of their opposing the received doctrine of the church of England, contained in divers of the Thirty-nine Articles; which would it did not yield us just cause of farther complaint against the iniquity of those times whereinto we were lately fallen! Had a poor Puritan offended against half so many canons as they opposed articles, he had forfeited his livelihood, if not endangered his life. I would I could hear any other probable reason why divers prelates were so zealous for the discipline and so negligent of the doctrine of the church, but because the one was reformed by the word of God, the other remaining as we found it in the times of Popery.

Fourthly, I have not purposely undertaken to answer any of their arguments, referring that labour to a farther design, even a clearing of our doctrine of reprobation, and of the administration of God's providence towards the reprobates, and over all their actions, from those calumnious aspersions they cast upon it; but concerning this, I fear the discouragements of these woful days will leave me nothing but a desire that so necessary a work may find a more able pen.

JOHN OWEN

## 03.01. Chapter 1 - Of the two main ends aimed at by the Arminians, by their innovations...

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A DISPLAY OF ARMINIANISM.

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CHAPTER 1. Of the two main ends aimed at by the Arminians, by their innovations in the received doctrine of the reformed churches. THE soul of man, by reason of the corruption of nature, is not only darkened<sup>1</sup> with a mist of ignorance, whereby he is disenabled for the comprehending of divine truth, but is also armed with prejudice and opposition against some parts thereof,<sup>2</sup> which are either most above or most contrary to some false principles which he hath framed unto himself. As a desire of self-sufficiency was the first cause of this infirmity, so a conceit thereof is that wherewith he still languisheth; nothing doth he more contend for than an independency of any supreme power, which might either help, hinder, or control him in his actions. This is that bitter root from whence have sprung all those heresies<sup>3</sup> and wretched contentions which have troubled the church, concerning the power of man in working his own happiness, and his exemption from the over-ruling providence of Almighty God. All which wrangling disputes of carnal reason against the word of God come at last to this head, Whether the first and chiefest part, in disposing of things in this world, ought to be ascribed to God or man? Men for the most part have vindicated this pre-eminence unto themselves,<sup>4</sup> by exclamations that so it must be, or else that God is unjust, and his ways unequal. Never did any men, “postquam Christiana gens esse cæpit,” more eagerly endeavour the erecting of this Babel than the Arminians, the modern blinded patrons of human self-sufficiency; all whose innovations in the received doctrine of the reformed churches aim at and tend to one of these two ends:—

1 Eph\_4:18; Joh\_1:5; 1Co\_2:14.

2 Joh\_6:42, Joh\_7:52. “Natura sic apparet vitiata ut hoc majoris vitii sit, non videre.”—Aug.

3 Pelag. Semipelag. Scholastic.

4 “In hac causa non judicant secundum æquitatem, sed secundum affectum commodi sui.”—Luth. de Arbit. Serv.

FIRST, To exempt themselves from God’s jurisdiction,—to free themselves from the supreme dominion of his all-ruling providence; not to live and move in him, but to have an absolute independent power in all their actions, so that the event of all things wherein they have any interest might have a considerable relation to nothing but chance, contingency, and their own wills;—a most nefarious, sacrilegious attempt! To this end,—

First, They deny the eternity and unchangeableness of God’s decrees; for these being established, they fear they should be kept within bounds from doing any thing but what his counsel hath determined should be done. If the purposes of the Strength of Israel be eternal and

immutable, their idol free-will must be limited, their independency prejudiced; wherefore they choose rather to affirm that his decrees are temporary and changeable, yea, that he doth really change them according to the several mutations he sees in us: which, how wild a conceit it is, how contrary to the pure nature of God, how destructive to his attributes, I shall show in the second chapter.

Secondly, They question the prescience or foreknowledge of God; for if known unto God are all his works from the beginning, if he certainly foreknew all things that shall hereafter come to pass, it seems to cast an infallibility of event upon all their actions, which encroaches upon the large territory of their new goddess, contingency; nay, it would quite dethrone the queen of heaven, and induce a kind of necessity of our doing all, and nothing but what God foreknows. Now, that to deny this prescience is destructive to the very essence of the Deity, and plain atheism, shall be declared, chapter the third.

Thirdly, They depose the all-governing providence of this King of nations, denying its energetical, effectual power, in turning the hearts, ruling the thoughts, determining the wills, and disposing the actions of men, by granting nothing unto it but a general power and influence, to be limited and used according to the inclination and will of every particular agent; so making Almighty God a desirer that many things were otherwise than they are, and an idle spectator of most things that are done in the world: the falseness of which assertions shall be proved, chapter the fourth.

Fourthly, They deny the irresistibility and uncontrollable power of God's will, affirming that oftentimes he seriously willeth and intendeth what he cannot accomplish, and so is deceived of his aim; nay, whereas he desireth, and really intendeth, to save every man, it is wholly in their own power whether he shall save any one or no otherwise their idol free-will should have but a poor deity, if God could, how and when he would, cross and resist him in his dominion. Concerning this see chapter the fifth, "His gradibus itur in cœlum." Corrupted nature is still ready, either nefariously, with Adam, to attempt to be like God, or to think foolishly that he is altogether like unto us, Psa\_1:1-6; one of which inconveniences all men run into, who have not learned to submit their frail wills to the almighty will of God, and captivate their understandings to the obedience of faith, [See chapter fifth.]

SECONDLY, The second end at which the new doctrine of the Arminians aimeth is, to clear human nature from the heavy imputation of being sinful, corrupted, wise to do evil but unable to do good; and so to vindicate unto themselves a power and ability of doing all that good which God can justly require to be done by them in the state wherein they are,—of making themselves differ from others who will not make so good use of the endowments of their natures; that so the first and chiefest part in the work of their salvation may be ascribed unto themselves;—a proud Luciferian endeavour! To this end,—

First, They deny that doctrine of predestination whereby God is affirmed to have chosen certain men before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy, and obtain everlasting life by the merit of Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace,—any such predestination which may be the fountain and cause of grace or glory, determining the persons, according to God's good pleasure, on whom they shall be bestowed: for this doctrine would make the special grace of God to be the sole cause of all the good that is in the elect more than [in] the reprobates; would make faith the work and gift of God, with divers other things, which would show their idol to be nothing, of no

value. Wherefore, what a corrupt heresy they have substituted into the place hereof see chapter the sixth.

Secondly, They deny original sin and its demerit; which being rightly understood, would easily demonstrate that, notwithstanding all the labour of the smith, the carpenter, and the painter, yet their idol is of its own nature but an unprofitable block; it will discover not only the impotency of doing good which is in our nature, but show also whence we have it: see chapter the seventh.

Thirdly, If ye will charge our human nature with a repugnancy to the law of God, they will maintain that it was also in Adam when he was first created, and so comes from God himself: chapter the eighth.

Fourthly, They deny the efficacy of the merit of the death of Christ;—both that God intended by his death to redeem his church, or to acquire unto himself a holy people; as also, that Christ by his death hath merited and procured for us grace, faith, or righteousness, and power to obey God, in fulfilling the condition of the new covenant. Nay, this were plainly to set up an ark to break their Dagon's neck; for, "what praise," say they, "can be due to ourselves for believing, if the blood of Christ hath procured God to bestow faith upon us?" "Incepit te Deus, O Satan!" See chapters nine and ten.

Fifthly, If Christ will claim such a share in saving of his people, of them that believe in him, they will grant some to have salvation quite without him, that never heard so much as a report of a Saviour; and, indeed, in nothing do they advance their idol nearer the throne of God than in this blasphemy: chapter eleven.

Sixthly, Having thus robbed God, Christ, and his grace, they adorn their idol free-will with many glorious properties no way due unto it: discussed, chapter twelve, where you shall find how, "mouet cornicula risum, furtivis nudata coloribus."

Seventhly, They do not only claim to their new-made deity a saving power, but also affirm that he is very active and operative in the great work of saving our souls,—

First, In fitly preparing us for the grace of God, and so disposing of ourselves that it becomes due unto us: chapter thirteen.

Secondly, In the effectual working of our conversion together with it: chapter fourteen. And so at length, with much toil and labour, they have placed an altar for their idol in the holy temple, on the right hand of the altar of God, and on it offer sacrifice to their own net and drag; at least, "nec Deo, nec libero arbitrio, sed dividatur,"—not all to God, nor all to free-will, but let the sacrifice of praise, for all good things, be divided between them.

## 03.02. Chapter 2 - Of the eternity and immutability of the decrees of Almighty God...

CHAPTER II. Of the eternity and immutability of the decrees of Almighty God, denied and overthrown by the Arminians.

IT hath been always believed among Christians, and that upon infallible grounds, as I shall show hereafter, that all the decrees of God, as they are internal, so they are eternal, acts of his will; and therefore unchangeable and irrevocable. Mutable decrees and occasional resolutions are most contrary to the pure nature of Almighty God. Such principles as these, evident and clear by their own light, were never questioned by any before the Arminians began κινήτην, and to profess themselves to delight in opposing common notions of reason concerning God and his essence, that they might exalt themselves into his throne. To ascribe the least mutability to the divine essence, with which all the attributes and internal free acts of God are one and the same, was ever accounted υπερβολικήθεότητος, “transcendent atheism,” in the highest degree.<sup>1</sup> Now, be this crime of what nature it will, it is no unjust imputation to charge it on the Arminians, because they confess themselves guilty, and glory in the crime.

1 Phil. lib. quod sit Deus immutabilis.

First, They undermine and overthrow the eternity of God’s purposes, by affirming that, in the order of the divine decrees, there are some which precede every act of the creature, and some again that follow them: so Corvinus,<sup>2</sup> the most famous of that sect. Now, all the acts of every creature being but of yesterday, temporary, like themselves, surely those decrees of God cannot be eternal which follow them in order of time; and yet they press this, especially in respect of human actions, as a certain, unquestionable verity. “It is certain that God willeth or determineth many things which he would not, did not some act of man’s will go before it,” saith their great master, Arminius.<sup>3</sup> The like affirmeth, with a little addition (as such men do always “proficere in pejus”), his genuine scholar, Nic. Grevinchovius. <sup>4</sup>“I suppose,” saith he, “that God willeth many things which he neither would nor justly could will and purpose, did not some action of the creature precede.” And here observe, that in these places they speak not of God’s external works, of those actions which outwardly are of him,—as inflicting of punishments, bestowing of rewards, and other such outward acts of his providence, whose administration we confess to be various, and diversely applied to several occasions,—but of the internal purposes of God’s will, his decrees and intentions, which have no present influence upon, or respect unto, any action of the creature; yea, they deny that concerning many things God hath any determinate resolution at all, or any purpose farther than a natural affection towards them. “God doth or omitteth that towards which, in his own nature and his proper inclination, he is affected, as he findeth man to comply or not to comply with that order which he hath appointed,” saith Corvinus.<sup>5</sup> Surely these men care not what indignities they cast upon the God of heaven, so they may maintain the pretended endowments of their own wills; for such an absolute power do they here ascribe unto them, that God himself cannot determine of a thing whereunto, as they strangely phrase it, he is well affected, before, by an actual concurrence,

he is sure of their compliance. Now, this imputation, that they are temporary, which they cast upon the decrees of God in general, they press home upon that particular which lies most in their way, the decree of election. Concerning this they tell us roundly, that it is false that election is confirmed from eternity; so the Remonstrants in their Apology, notwithstanding that St. Paul tells us that it is the “purpose of God,” Rom\_9:11, and that we were “chosen before the foundation of the world,” Eph\_1:4. Neither is it any thing material what the Arminians there grant,—namely, that there is a decree preceding this, which may be said to be from everlasting: for seeing that St. Paul teacheth us that election is nothing but God’s purpose of saving us, to affirm that God eternally decreed that he would elect us is all one as to say that God purposed that in time he would purpose to save us. Such resolutions may be fit for their own wild heads, but must not be ascribed to God only wise.

2 “In ordine volitorum divinatorum, quædam sunt quæ omnem actum creaturæ præcedunt, quædam quæ sequuntur.”—Corv. ad Molin., cap. v. sect. 1, p. 67.

3 “Certum est Deum quædam velle, quæ non vellet nisi aliqua volitio humana antecederet.”—Armin., Antip., p. 211.

4 “Multa tamen arbitror Deum velle, quæ non vellet, adeoque nec juste velle posset, nisi aliqua actio creaturæ præcederet.”—Ad Ames., p. 24.

5 “Deus facit vel non facit id ad quod, ex se et natura sua ac inclinatione propria est affectus, prout homo cum isto ordine conspirat, vel non conspirat.”—Corv. ad Molin., cap. v. ad sect. 3.

6 “Falsum est quod electio facta est ab æterno.”—Rem. Apol., cap. xviii. p. 190.

Secondly, As they affirm them to be temporary and to have had a beginning, so also to expire and have an ending, to be subject to change and variableness. “Some acts of God’s will do cease at a certain time,” saith Episcopus.<sup>7</sup> What? doth any thing come into his mind that changeth his will? “Yes,” saith Arminius, <sup>8</sup>“He would have all men to be saved; but, compelled with the stubborn and incorrigible malice of some, he will have them to miss it.” However, this is some recompense,—denying God a power to do what he will, they grant him to be contented to do what he may, and not much repine at his hard condition. Certainly, if but for this favour, he is a debtor to the Arminians. Thieves give what they do not take. Having robbed God of his power, they will leave him so much goodness as that he shall not be troubled at it, though he be sometimes compelled to what he is very loath to do. How do they and their fellows, the Jesuits,<sup>9</sup> exclaim upon poor Calvin, for sometimes using the hard word of compulsion, describing the effectual, powerful working of the providence of God in the actions of men; but they can fasten the same term on the will of God, and no harm done! Surely he will one day plead his own cause against them. But yet blame them not, “si violandum est jus, regnandi causâ violandum est.” It is to make themselves absolute that they thus cast off the yoke of the Almighty, and that both in things concerning this life and that which is to come. They are much troubled that it should be said that <sup>10</sup>every one of us bring along with us into the world an unchangeable pre-ordination of life and death eternal; for such a supposal would quite overthrow the main foundation of their heresy,—namely, that men can make their election void and frustrate, as they jointly lay it down in their Apology.<sup>11</sup> Nay, it is a dream, saith Dr. Jackson,<sup>12</sup> to think of God’s decrees concerning things to come as of acts irrevocably finished; which would hinder that which Welsingius lays down for a truth,—to wit,

13 “that the elect may become reprobates, and the reprobates elect.” Now, to these particular sayings is their whole doctrine concerning the decrees of God, inasmuch as they have any reference to the actions of men, most exactly conformable; as,—

7 “Volitiones aliquæ Dei cessant certo quodam tempore.”—Episcop. Disp. de Vol. Dei., thes. 7.

8 “Deus vult omnes salvos fieri, sed compulsus pertinaci et incorrigibili militia quorundam, vult illos jacturam facere salutis.”—Armin. Antip. fol. 195.

9 Bell. Amiss. Grat.; Armin. Antip. Rem. Apol.

10 “(Docent) unumquemque invariabilem vitæ, ac mortis προταγν una cum ipso ortu, in lucem hanc nobiscum adferre.”—Fili Armin. in Epist. Ded. ad Examen Lib. Perk.

11 “Possunt homines electionem suam irritam et frustraneam reddere.”—Rem. Apol., cap. ix. p. 105.

12 Jackson, of the Divine Essence.

13 “Non mirum videri debet quod aliquando ex electis reprobi et ex reprobis electi fiant.”—Welsin. de Of. Ch. Hom.

First, 14 Their distinction of them into peremptory and not peremptory (terms rather used in the citations of litigious courts than as expressions of God's purpose in sacred Scripture), is not, as by them applied, compatible with the unchangeableness of God's eternal purposes. Προσκαιροι, say they, or temporary believers, are elected (though not peremptorily) with such an act of God's will as hath a co-existence every way commensurate, both in its original, continuance, and end, with their fading faith; which sometimes, like Jonah's gourd, is but “filia unius noctis,”—in the morning it flourisheth, in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withereth. A man in Christ by faith, or actually believing (which to do is, as they say, in every one's own power), 15 is, in their opinion, the proper object of election;—of election, I say, not peremptory, which is an act pendent, expecting the final perseverance and consummation of his faith; and therefore immutable, because man having fulfilled his course, God hath no cause to change his purpose of crowning him with reward. Thus also (as they teach), a man according to his infidelity, whether present and removable, or obdurate and final, is the only object of reprobation; which, in the latter case, is peremptory and absolute, in the former conditional and alterable. It is the qualities of faith and unbelief on which their election and reprobation do attend. 16 Now, let a faithful man, elected of God according to his present righteousness, apostate [apostatize] totally from grace (as to affirm that there is any promise of God implying his perseverance is with them to overthrow all religion), and let the unbelieving reprobate depose his incredulity and turn himself unto the Lord; answerable to this mutation of their conditions are the changings of the purpose of the Almighty concerning their everlasting state. Again; suppose these two, by alternate courses (as the doctrine of apostasy maintaineth they may), should return each to their former estate, the decrees of God concerning them must again be changed; for it is unjust with him either not to elect him that believes, though it be but for an hour, or not to reprobate unbelievers. Now, what unchangeableness can we fix to these decrees, which it lies in the power of man to make as inconstant as Euripus; making it, beside, to be possible that all the members of Christ's church, whose names are written in heaven, should within one hour be enrolled in the black book of damnation?

14 “Omnia Dei decreta, non sunt peremptoria, sed quædam conditionata ac mutabilia.”—Concio. ad Cler. Oxon. anu. 1641, Rem. Decla. Sent, in Synod., alibi passim. “Electio sicut et justificatio, et incerta et revocabilis, utramque vero conditionatam qui negaverit, ipsum quoque evangelium negabit.”—Grevinch. ad Ames., pp. 136, 137.

15 “Ad gloriam participandam pro isto tempore quo credunt electi sunt.”—Rem. Apol., p. 190.

16 “Decreta hypothetica possunt mutari, quia conditio respectu hominis vel præstatur vel non præstatur, atque ita existit vel non existit. Et quum extitit aliquandiu, sæpe existere desinit, et rursus postquam aliquandiu desiit, existere incipit.”—Corv. ad Molin., cap. v. sec. 10.

Secondly, As these not-peremptory decrees are mutable, so they make the peremptory decrees of God to be temporal. “Final impenitency,” say they, “is the only cause, and the finally unrepenting sinner is the only object, of reprobation, peremptory and irrevocable.” As the poet thought none happy,<sup>17</sup> so they think no man to be elected, or a reprobate, before his death. Now, that denomination he doth receive from the decrees of God concerning his eternal estate, which must necessarily then be first enacted. The relation that is between the act of reprobation and the person reprobated importeth a co-existence of denomination. When God reprobates a man, he then becomes a reprobate; which if it be not before he hath actually fulfilled the measure of his iniquity, and sealed it up with the talent of final impenitency in his death, the decree of God must needs be temporal, the just Judge of all the world having till then suspended his determination, expecting the last resolution of this changeable Proteus. Nay, that God’s decrees concerning men’s eternal estates are in their judgment temporal, and not beginning until their death, is plain from the whole course of their doctrine, especially where they strive to prove that if there were any such determination, God could not threaten punishments or promise rewards, “Who,”<sup>18</sup> say they, “can threaten punishment to him whom, by a peremptory decree, he will have to be free from punishment?” It seems he cannot have determined to save any whom he threatens to punish if they sin, which [it] is evident he doth all so long as they live in this world; which makes God not only mutable, but quite deprives him of his foreknowledge, and makes the form of his decree run thus:—“If man will believe, I determine he shall be saved; if he will not, I determine he shall be damned,”—that is, “I must leave him in the meantime to do what he will, so I may meet with him in the end.”

17 “Dicique beatus—Ante obitum nemo,” etc.—Ovid.

18 “Quis enim comminetur pœnam ei, quem peremptorio decrelo a pœna immunem esse vult?”—Rem. Apol., cap. xvii. p. 187.

Thirdly, They affirm no decree of Almighty God concerning men is so unalterable<sup>18</sup> but that all those who are now in rest or misery might have had contrary lots;—that those which are damned, as Pharaoh, Judas, etc., might have been saved; and those which are saved, as the blessed Virgin, Peter, John, might have been damned: which must needs reflect with a strong charge of mutability on Almighty God, who knoweth who are his. Divers other instances in this nature I could produce, whereby it would be farther evident that these innovators in Christian religion do overthrow the eternity and unchangeableness of God’s decrees; but these are sufficient to any discerning man. And I will add, in the close, an antidote against this poison, briefly showing what the Scripture and right reason teach us concerning these secrets of the Most High.

First, "Known unto God," saith St. James, "are all his works from the beginning," Act\_15:18; whence it hath hitherto been concluded that whatever God doth in time bring to pass, that he decreed from all eternity so to do. All his works were from the beginning known unto him. Consider it particularly in the decree of election, that fountain of all spiritual blessings, that a saving sense and assurance thereof (2Pe\_1:10) being attained, might effect a spiritual rejoicing in the Lord, 1Co\_15:31. Such things are everywhere taught as may raise us to the consideration of it as of an eternal act, irrevocably and immutably established: "He hath chosen us before the foundation of the world," Eph\_1:4, his "purpose according to election," before we were born, must "stand," Rom\_9:11; for to the irreversible stability of this act of his will he hath set to the seal of his infallible knowledge, 2Ti\_2:19. His purpose of our salvation by grace, not according to works, was "before the world began," 2Ti\_1:9, an eternal purpose, proceeding from such a will as to which none can resist, joined with such a knowledge as to which all things past, present, and to come are open and evident, must needs also be, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, permanent and unalterable.

Secondly, The 19decrees of God, being conformable to his nature and essence, do require eternity and immutability as their inseparable properties. God, and he only, never was, nor ever can be, what now he is not. Passive possibility to any thing, which is the fountain of all change, can have no place in him who is "actus simplex," and purely free from all composition; whence St. James affirmeth that "with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," Jas\_1:17; with him,—that is, in his will and purposes: and himself by his prophet, "I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed," Mal\_3:6; where he proveth the not changing of his gracious purposes, because he is the LORD. The eternal acts of his will not really differing from his unchangeable essence, must needs be immutable.

18 Author of "God's Love to Mankind," p. 4, [a treatise written by Hoard. Davenant, professor of divinity in Cambridge, and afterwards bishop of Salisbury, wrote in reply his "Animadversions" on it. Dr. Hill, in his Lectures on Divinity, pronounces this work of Davenant to be "one of the ablest defences of the Calvinistic system of predestination."—ED.] 19 "Quicquid operatur, operatur ut est."

Thirdly, Whatsoever God hath determined, according to the counsel of his wisdom and good pleasure of his will, to be accomplished, to the praise of his glory, standeth sure and immutable; for "the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent," 1Sa\_15:29. "He declareth the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," Isa\_46:10; which certain and infallible execution of his pleasure is extended to particular contingent events, Isa\_48:14. Yea, it is an ordinary thing with the Lord to confirm the certainty of those things that are yet for to come from his own decree; as, "The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so it shall come to pass; and as I have purposed, it shall stand, that I will break the Assyrian," etc., Isa\_14:24-25;—"It is certain the Assyrian shall be broken, because the Lord hath purposed it;" which were a weak kind of reasoning, if his purpose might be altered. Nay, "He is of one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, that he doeth," Job\_23:13. "The LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?" Isa\_14:27. So that the purpose of God and immutability of his counsel (Heb\_6:17) have their certainty and firmness from eternity, and do not depend on the variable lubricity of mortal men; which we must needs grant, unless we intend

to set up impotency against omnipotency, and arm the clay against the potter.

Fourthly, If God's determination concerning any thing should have a temporal original, it must needs be either because he then perceived some goodness in it of which before he was ignorant, or else because some accident did affix a real goodness to some state of things which it had not from him; neither of which, without abominable blasphemy, can be affirmed, seeing he knoweth the end from the beginning, all things from everlasting, being always the same, the fountain of all goodness, of which other things do participate in that measure which it pleaseth him to communicate it unto them. Add to this the omnipotency of God: there is "power and might in his hand," [so] that none is able to withstand him, 2Ch\_20:6; which will not permit that any of his purposes be frustrate. In all our intentions, if the defect be not in the error of our understandings, which may be rectified by better information, when we cannot do that which we would, we will do that which we can: the alteration of our purpose is for want of power to fulfil it; which impotency cannot be ascribed to Almighty God, who is "in heaven, and hath done whatsoever he pleased," Psa\_115:3. So that the immutability of God's nature, his almighty power, the infallibility of his knowledge, his immunity from error in all his counsels, do show that he never faileth in accomplishing any thing that he proposeth for the manifestation of his glory. To close up this whole discourse, wherein I have not discovered half the poison contained in the Arminian doctrine concerning God's decrees, I will in brief present to your view the opposition that is in this matter betwixt the word of God and the patrons of free-will:—

S. S.

Lib. Arbit.

"He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Eph\_1:4.

"He hath called us according to his own purpose and grace, before the world began," 2Ti\_1:9.

"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Act\_15:18.

"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isa\_46:10.

"For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand," as Rom\_9:11.

"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his," 2Ti\_2:19.

"The counsel of the LORD standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations," Psa\_33:11.

"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," Isa\_46:10.

"I am the LORD, I change not," Mal\_3:6.

"With the Father of lights is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," Jas\_1:17; Exo\_3:13-14; Psa\_102:27; 2Ti\_2:13; 1Sa\_15:29; Isaiah 14:27; Job\_23:13; Psa\_115:3

"It is false to say that election is confirmed from everlasting," Rem. Apol.

"It is certain that God determineth divers things which he would not, did not some act of man's will go before," Armin.

"Some decrees of God precede all acts of the will of the creature, and some follow," Corv.

"Men may make their election void and frustrate," Rem. Apol.

"It is no wonder if men do sometimes of elect become reprobate, and of reprobate, elect," Welsin.

"Election is uncertain and revocable, and whoever denies it overthrows the gospel," Grevinch.

"Many decrees of God cease at a certain time," Episcop.

"God would have all men to be saved, but, compelled with the stubborn malice of some, he changeth his purpose, and will have them to perish," Armin.

"As men may change themselves from believers to unbelievers, so God's determination concerning them changeth," Rem.

"All God's decrees are not peremptory, but some conditionate and changeable," Sermon at Oxford.

### 03.03. Chapter 3 - Of the prescience of foreknowledge of God and how it is questioned...

CHAPTER III. Of the prescience or foreknowledge of God and how it is questioned and overthrown by the Arminians. THE prescience or foreknowledge of God hath not hitherto, in express terms, been denied by the Arminians, but only questioned and overthrown by consequence, inasmuch as they deny the certainty and unchangeableness of his decrees, on which it is founded. It is not a foreknowledge of all or any thing which they oppose, but only of things free and contingent, and that only to comply with their formerly-exploded error, that the purposes of God concerning such things are temporal and mutable; which obstacle being once removed, the way is open how to ascribe the presidentship of all human actions to omnipotent contingency, and her sire free-will. Now, we call that contingent which, in regard of its next and immediate cause, before it come to pass, may be done or may be not done; as, that a man shall do such a thing to-morrow, or any time hereafter, which he may choose whether ever he will do or no. Such things as these are free and changeable, in respect of men, their immediate and second causes; but if we, as we ought to do, look up unto Him who foreseeth and hath ordained the event of them or their omission, they may be said necessarily to come to pass or to be omitted. It could not be but as it was. Christians hitherto, yea, and heathens,<sup>2</sup> in all things of this nature, have usually, upon their event, reflected on God as one whose determination was passed on them from eternity, and who knew them long before; as the killing of men by the fall of a house, who might, in respect of the freedom of their own wills, have not been there. Or if a man fall into the hands of thieves, we presently conclude it was the will of God. It must be so; he knew it before.

<sup>1</sup> Jas\_4:13-15.

<sup>2</sup> Δις δ' ετελετο βουλ, Hom;—"God's will was done."

Divines, for distinction's sake, ascribe unto God a twofold knowledge; one, intuitive or intellective, whereby he foreknoweth and seeth all things that are possible,—that is, all things that can be done by his almighty power,—without any respect to their future existence, whether they shall come to pass or no. Yea, infinite things, whose actual being eternity shall never behold, are thus open and naked unto him; for was there not strength and power in his hand to have created another world? was there not counsel in the storehouse of his wisdom to have created this otherwise, or not to have created it at all? Shall we say that his providence extends itself every way to the utmost of its activity? or can he not produce innumerable things in the world which now he doth not. Now, all these, and every thing else that is feasible to his infinite power, he foresees and knows, "scientiâ," as they speak, "simplicis intelligentiæ," by his essential knowledge.

Out<sup>4</sup> of this large and boundless territory of things possible, God by his decrees freely determineth what shall come to pass, and makes them future which before were but possible. After this decree, as they commonly speak, followeth, or together with it, as <sup>5</sup>others more exactly, taketh place, that prescience of God which they call "visionis," "of vision," <sup>6</sup>whereby he infallibly seeth all things in

their proper causes, and how and when they shall come to pass. Now, these two sorts of knowledge differ, inasmuch as by the one God knoweth what it is possible may come to pass; by the other, only what it is impossible should not come to pass. Things are possible in regard of God's power, future in regard of his decree. So that (if I may so say) the measure of the first kind of science is God's omnipotency, what he can do; of the other his purpose, what certainly he will do, or permit to be done. With this prescience, then, God foreseeeth all, and nothing but what he hath decreed shall come to pass.

3 "Quæcunque possunt per creaturam fieri, vel cogitari, vel dici, et etiam quæcunque ipse facere potest, omnia cognoscit Deus, etiamsi neque sunt, neque erunt, neque fuerunt, scientiâ simplicis intelligentiæ."—Aquin. p. q. 14, a. 1, c. Ex verbis apostoli, Rom\_4:1-25, "Qui vocat ea quæ non sunt tanquam ea quæ; sunt." Sic scholastici omnes. Fer. Scholast. Orthod. Speci. cap. iii., alii passim. Vid. Hieron. Zanch. de Scientia Dei, lib. diatrib. iii., cap. 2, q. 5.

4 Vid. Sam. Rhætorfort. Exercit. de Grat., ex. i. cap. 4.

5 "Res ipsæ nullo naturæ momento possibles esse dicendæ sunt priusquam a Deo intelliguntur, scientiâ quæ dicitur simplicis intelligentiæ, ita etiam scientiâ, quæ dicitur visionis, et fertur in res futuras, nullo naturæ momento, posterior statuenda videtur, ista futuritione, rerum; cum scientia," etc.—Dr. Twiss. ad Errat. Vind. Grat.

6 "Scientia visionis dicitur, quia ea quæ videntur, apud nos habent esse distinctum extra videntem."—Aq. p. q. 14, a. 9, c.

7 "In eo differt præscientia intuitionis, ab ea, quæ approbationis est, quod illa præsciat, quod evenire possibile est; hoc vero quod impossibile est non evenire."—Ferrius. Orthod. Scholast. Speci. cap. xxiii. Cæterum posterior ista scientia non proprie dicitur a Ferrio scientia approbationis, illa enim est, qua Deus dicitur nosse quæ amat et approbat; ab utraque altera distincta. Mat\_7:23; Rom\_11:2; 2Ti\_2:19. "Quamvis infinitorum numerorum, nullus sit numerus, non tamen est incomprehensibilis ei, cujus scientiæ non est numerus."—Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. xii. cap. 18. For every thing to be produced next and under him, 8God hath prepared divers and several kinds of causes, diversely operative in producing their effects, some whereof are said to work necessarily, the institution of their nature being to do as they do, and not otherwise; so the sun giveth light, and the fire heat. And yet, in some regard, their effects and products may be said to be contingent and free, inasmuch as the concurrence of God, the first cause, is required to their operation, who doth all things most freely, according to the counsel of his will. Thus the sun stood still in the time of Joshua, and the fire burned not the three children; but ordinarily such agents working "necessitate naturæ," their effects are said to be necessary. Secondly, To some things God hath fitted free and contingent causes, which either apply themselves to operation in particular, according to election, choosing to do this thing rather than that; as angels and men, in their free and deliberate actions, which they so perform as that they could have not done them;—or else they produce effects κατὰ τὸ συμβεβηκός, merely by accident, and the operation of such things we say to be casual; as if a hatchet, falling out of the hand of a man cutting down a tree, should kill another whom he never saw. Now, nothing in either of these ways comes to pass but God hath determined it, both for the matter and manner, 9even so as is agreeable to their causes,—some necessarily, some freely, some casually or contingently, yet also, as having a certain futurition from his decree, he infallibly foreseeeth that they shall so come to pass. But yet that he doth so in respect of things free and

contingent is much questioned by the Arminians in express terms, and denied by consequence, notwithstanding St. Jerome affirmeth 10that so to do is destructive to the very essence of the Deity.

First, Their doctrine of the mutability of God's decrees, on whose firmness is founded the infallibility of this prescience, doth quite overthrow it. God thus foreknowing only what he hath so decreed shall come to pass, if that be no firmer settled but that it may [be] and is often altered, according to the divers inclinations of men's wills, which I showed before they affirm, he can have at best but a conjectural foreknowledge of what is yet for to come, not founded on his own unchangeable purpose, but upon a guess at the free inclination of men's wills. For instance, 11God willeth that all men should be saved. This act of his will, according to the Arminian doctrine, is his conditionate decree to save all men if they will believe. Well, among these is Judas, as 12equal a sharer in the benefit of this decree as Peter. God, then, will have him to be saved, and to this end allows him all those means which are necessary to beget faith in him, and are every way sufficient to that purpose, and do produce that effect in others; what can God foresee, then, but that Judas as well as Peter will believe? He intendeth he should, he hath determined nothing to the contrary. Let him come, then, and act his own part. Why, he proves so obstinately malicious, 13that God, with all his omnipotency, as they speak, by any way that becomes him, which must not be by any irresistible efficacy, cannot change his obdurate heart. Well, then, he determineth, according to the exigence of his justice, that he shall be damned for his impenitency, and foreseeeth that accordingly. But now, suppose this wretch, even at his last moment, should bethink himself and return to the Lord, which in their conceit he may, notwithstanding his former reprobation (which, 14as they state it, seems a great act of mercy), 15God must keep to the rules of his justice, and elect or determine to save him; by which the varlet hath twice or thrice deceived his expectation.

8 "Quibusdam effectibus præparavit causas necessarias, ut necessario eveniret, quibusdam vero causas contingentes ut evenirent contingenter, secundum conditionem proximarum causarum."—Aquin. p. q. 23, a. 4, in Cor. Zanch. de Natur. Dei, lib. v., qu. 4, thes.

9 "Res et modos rerum."—Aquin.

10 "Cui præscientiam tollis, aufers divinitatem."—Hieron. ad Pelag., lib. v.

11 "Deus ita omnium salutem ex æquo vult, ut illam ex æquo optet et desideret." Corv. ad Molin., cap. xxxi. sect. 1.

12 "Talis gratia omnibus datur quæ sufficiat ad fidem generandam."—Idem, ibid, sect. 15.

13 "Pertinaci quorundam malitia compulsus."—Armin., ubi sup.

14 "Reprobatio populi Judaici fuit actio temporaria et quæ bono ipsorum Judæorum si modo sanabiles adhuc essent, animumque advertere vellent, servire poterat, utque ei fini serviret a Deo facta, erat."—Rem. Apol., cap. xx. p. 221.

15 "Injustum est apud Deum vel non credentem eligere, vel credentem non eligere."—Rem. Apol.

Secondly, 16They affirm that God is said properly to expect and desire divers things which yet never come to pass. "We grant," saith Corvinus, "that there are desires in God that never are



tolerable among Christians or no, let all men judge who have their senses exercised in the word of God; which, I am sure, teaches us another lesson. For,—

19 “Deum futura contingentia, decreto suo determinasse ad alterutram partem (intellige quæ a libera creaturæ voluntate patrantur), falsum, absurdum, et multiplicis blasphemiam prævium abominor et exsecror.”—Armin. Declarat. Senten.

20 “Disquiri permittimus:—1. Operosam illam quæstionem, de scientia futurorum contingentium absoluta et conditionata; 2. Etsi non negemus Deo illam scientiam attribui posse; 3. Tamen an necessarium saluti sit ad hoc ut Deus recte colatur examinari permittimus; 4. Tum merito facessere debent a scholis et ecclesiis, intricatæ et spinosæ istæ quæstiones quæ de ea agitari solent,—quomodo illa cum libertate arbitrii, cum seriis Dei comminationibus, aliisque actionibus, consistere possit: quæ omnia crucem potius miseris mortalibus fixerunt, quam ad religionem cultumque divinum, momenti aliquid inquisitoribus suis attulerunt.”—Episcopus, Disput. iv. sect. 10.; Rem. Apol., pp. 43, 44.

21 Ames. Antisynod, p. 10.

22 “Deus suo modo aliquando metuit, hoc est, merito suspicatur et prudenter conjicit, hoc vel illud malum oriturum.”—Vorsti. de Deo, p. 451.

23 “Deus non semper ex præscientia finem intendit.”—Armin., Antip., p. 667; Corv. Ad Molin., cap. v. sect. 5.

First, It is laid down as a firm foundation, that “known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world,” Act\_15:18. Every thing, then, that in any respect may be called his work, is known unto him from all eternity. Now, what in the world, if we may speak as he hath taught us, can be exempted from this denomination? Even actions in themselves sinful are not; though not as sinful, yet in some other regard, as punishments of others. “Behold,” saith Nathan to David, in the name of God, “I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun; for thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel,” 2Sa\_12:11-12. So, also, when wicked robbers had nefariously spoiled Job of all his substance, the holy man concludeth, “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away,” Job\_1:21. Now, if the working of God’s providence be so mighty and effectual, even in and over those actions wherein the devil and men do most maliciously offend, as did Absalom and the Sabean with the Chaldean thieves, that it may be said to be his work, and he may be said to “do it” (I crave liberty to use the Scripture phrase), then certainly nothing in the world, in some respect or other, is independent of his all-disposing hand; yea, Judas himself betraying our Saviour did nothing but “what his hand and counsel determined before should be done,”<sup>24</sup> Act\_4:28, in respect of the event of the thing itself. And if these actions, notwithstanding these two hinderances,—first, that they were contingent, wrought by free agents, working according to election and choice; secondly, that they were sinful and wicked in the agents,—had yet their dependence on his purpose and determinate counsel, surely he hath an interest of operation in the acts of every creature. But his works, as it appears before, are all known unto him from the beginning, for he worketh nothing by chance or accidentally, but all things determinately, according to his own decree, or “the counsel of his own will,” Eph\_1:11.

24 “Cum et pater tradiderit filium suum, et ipse Christus corpus suum: et Judas dominum suum: cur in hac traditione Deus est pius, et homo reus, nisi quia in re una quam fecerunt, causa non fuit una propter quam fecerunt.”—Aug., Epist. xlvi.

Secondly, The manner of God’s knowing of things doth evidently show that nothing that is, or may be, can be hid from him; 25 which is not by discourse and collection of one thing out of another, conclusions out of principles, but altogether and at once, evidently, clearly, and distinctly, both in respect το<sup>ν</sup> ο<sup>ν</sup>τι and το<sup>ν</sup> δι<sup>ο</sup>τι. By one most pure act of his own essence he discerneth all things: for there is “no creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all are naked and opened unto his eyes,” Heb\_4:13. So that those things concerning which we treat 26 he knoweth three ways:—First, In himself and his own decree, as the first cause; in which respect they may be said to be necessary, in respect of the certainty of their event. Secondly, In their immediate causes, wherein their contingency doth properly consist. Thirdly, In their own nature as future, but to his infinite knowledge ever present.

25 “Deus non particulatim, vel singillatim omnia videt, velut alternanter concepta, hinc illuc, inde huc, sed omnia videt simul.”—Aug., lib. xv. de Trinit., cap. 14. “In scientia divina nullus est discursus, sed omnia perfecte intelligit.”—Tho., p. q. 14, a. 7. c.

26 Tilen. Syntag. de Attrib. Dei, thes. 22; Zanch. de Nat. Dei. Unumquodque quod est, dum est, necesse est, ut sit.

Thirdly, The Scripture<sup>27</sup> is full of expressions to this purpose,—to wit, “That God knoweth all secrets, and revealeth hidden things. he searcheth the reins and the heart: he knoweth the number of the stars, and the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, the falling of sparrows, the number of the hairs of our heads.” Some places are most remarkable, as that of the Psalmist, “He knoweth my thoughts long before;” even before ever they come into our minds, before their first rising. And yet many actions that are most contingent depend upon those thoughts known unto God from eternity; nay,—which breaketh the very neck of the goddess contingency,—those things wherein her greatest power is imagined to consist are directly ascribed unto God, as our words, “the answer of the tongue,” Pro\_16:1; and the directing of an arrow, shot by chance, to a mark not aimed at, 1Ki\_22:34. Surely God must needs foreknow the event of that contingent action; he must needs know the man would so shoot who had determined his arrow should be the death of a king. He maketh men poor and rich, Pro\_22:2; He lifteth up one, and pulleth down another, Psa\_75:7. How many contingencies did γοργ<sup>ν</sup> μ<sup>μα</sup> το<sup>ν</sup> δεσπ<sup>του</sup>, his piercing eye run through to foresee the crowning of Esther for the deliverance of his people! In a word, “Known unto God are all his works.” Now, what can possibly be imagined to be more contingent than the killing of a man by the fall of an axe from out of his hand who intended no such thing? Yet this God assumeth as his own work, Deu\_19:5, Exo\_21:13; and so surely was by him foreknown.

27 Psa\_44:21; Job\_11:11; Dan\_2:47; Psa\_7:9, Psa\_26:2, Psa\_147:4; Luk\_12:27; Mat\_10:29-30; Psa\_139:2.

Fourthly, Do but consider the prophecies in Scripture, especially those concerning our Saviour, how many free and contingent actions did concur for the fulfilling of them; as Isa\_7:14, Isa\_9:6, Isa\_53:1-12; Gen\_3:15, etc. The like may be said of other predictions; as of the wasting of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, which though, in regard of God’s prescience, it was certainly to

come to pass, yet they did it most freely, not only following the counsel of their own wills, but also using divination, or chanceable lots, for their direction, Eze\_21:21. Yet he who made the eye seeth all these things, Psa\_94:9.

Divers other reasons and testimonies might be produced to confirm our doctrine of God's everlasting prescience; which, notwithstanding Episcopius' blasphemy, that it serves for nought but to cruciate poor mortals, we believe to be a good part of the foundation of all that consolation which God is pleased to afford us in this vale of tears. Amidst all our afflictions and temptations, under whose pressure we should else faint and despair, it is no small comfort to be assured that we do nor can suffer nothing but what his hand and counsel guides unto us, what is open and naked before his eyes, and whose end and issue he knoweth long before; which is a strong motive to patience, a sure anchor of hope, a firm ground of consolation. Now, to present in one view how opposite the opinions of the worshippers of the great goddess contingency are to this sacred truth, take this short antithesis:—

S. S.

Lib. Arbit.

"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world," Act\_15:18.

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do," Heb\_4:13.

"He that formed the eye, shall he not see?" Psa\_94:9. "When a man goeth into the wood with his neighbor to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbor that he die," Deu\_19:5. "God delivers him into his hand," Exo\_21:13.

"Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things," Mat\_5:31-32.

"Take away God's prescience and you overthrow his deity," Jerome.

"God sometimes feareth, and prudently conjectureth, that this or that evil may arise," Vorsti.

"God doth not always foresee the event of what he intendeth," Corvin. Ad Mol.

"Future contingencies are not determined unto either part," Armin. That is, God hath not determined, and so, consequently, doth not foreknow, whether they shall come to pass or no.

"God hopeth and expecteth divers things that shall never come to pass," Rem.

"The doctrine of prescience seems to be invented only to vex and cruciate poor mortal men," Episcop.

### 03.04. Chapter 4 - Of the providence of God in governing the world diversely, thrust from ...

CHAPTER IV. Of the providence of God in governing the world diversely, thrust from this pre-eminence by the Arminian idol of free-will.

I COME now to treat of that betwixt which and the Pelagian idol there is bellum ■σπονδον, implacable war and immortal hatred, absolutely destructive to the one side,—to wit, the providence of God. For this, in that notion Christianity hath hitherto embraced it, and that, in such a sense as the Arminians maintain it, can no more consist together than fire and water, light and darkness, Christ and Belial, and he that shall go to conjoin them ploughs with an ox and an ass; they must be tied together with the same ligament “quo ille mortua jungebat corpora vivis,”—wherewith the tyrant tied dead bodies to living men. This strange advancement of the clay against the potter, not by the way of repining, and to say, “Why hast thou made me thus?” but by the way of emulation, “I will not be so, I will advance myself to the sky, to the sides of thy throne,” was heretofore unknown to the more refined Paganism.<sup>1</sup> As these of contingency, so they, with a better error, made a goddess of providence, because, as they feigned, she helped Latona to bring forth in the isle of Delos; intimating that Latona, or nature, though big and great with sundry sorts of effects, could yet produce nothing without the interceding help of divine providence: which mythology of theirs seems to contain a sweeter gust of divine truth than any we can expect from their towering fancies<sup>2</sup> who are inclinable to believe that God for no other reason is said to sustain all things, but because he doth not destroy them. Now, that their proud, God-opposing errors may the better appear, according to my former method, I will plainly show what the Scripture teacheth us concerning this providence, with what is agreeable to right and Christian reason, not what is dictated by tumultuating affections.

1 “Θε■α π■ντον ■ρχ■ δ■ ■ς ■παντα κα■ ■στι κα■ διαμ■νει.”—Theophrastus, apud Picum. Vid. Senecam de Provid. et Plotinum.

2 “An actus divinæ providentiæ omnium rerum conservatrix, sit affirmativus potentiæ, an tantum negativus voluntatis, quo nolit res creatas perdere.”—Rem. Apol., cap. vi.

Providence is a word which, in its proper signification, may seem to comprehend all the actions of God that outwardly are of him, that have any respect unto his creatures, all his works that are not ad intra, essentially belonging unto the Deity. Now, because God “worketh all things according to his decree, or the counsel of his will,” Eph\_1:11, for whatsoever he doth now it pleased him from the beginning, Psa\_115:3; seeing, also, that known unto God are all his works from eternity; therefore, three things concerning his providence are considerable:—1. His decree or purpose,<sup>3</sup> whereby he hath disposed of all things in order, and appointed them for certain ends, which he hath fore-ordained. 2. His prescience, whereby he certainly foreknoweth all things that shall come to pass. 3. His temporal operation, or working in time,—“My Father worketh hitherto,” Joh\_5:17,—whereby he actually executeth all his good pleasure. The first and second of these

have been the subject of the former chapters; the latter only now requireth our consideration.

3 “Providentia seu ratio ordinis ad finem duo præcipue continet: principium decernens seu ipsam rationem ordinis in mente divina, ipsi Deo coæternum, et principium exequens, quo suo modo, per debita media, ipsa in ordine et numero disponit.”—Thom.

This, then, we may conceive as an ineffable act or work of Almighty God, whereby he cherisheth, sustaineth, and governeth the world, or all things by him created, moving them, agreeably to those natures which he endowed them withal in the beginning, unto those ends which he hath proposed. To confirm this, I will first prove this position, That the whole world is cared for by God, and by him governed, and therein all men, good or bad, all things in particular, be they never so small and in our eyes inconsiderable. Secondly, show the manner how God worketh all, in all things, and according to the diversity of secondary causes which he hath created; whereof some are necessary, some free, others contingent, which produce their effects *νεκ πντως*, *νεκ π τ πολ*, *sed κατ συμβεβηκς*, merely by accident. The providence of God in governing the world is plentifully made known unto us, both by his works and by his word, I will give a few instances of either sort:—1. In general, that the almighty *Δημιουργς*, and Framer of this whole universe, should propose unto himself no end in the creation of all things,—that he should want either power, goodness, will, or wisdom, to order and dispose the works of his own hands,—is altogether impossible. 2. Take a particular instance in one concerning accident, the knowledge whereof by some means or other, in some degree or other, hath spread itself throughout the world,—and that is that almost universal destruction of all by the flood, whereby the whole world was well-nigh reduced to its primitive confusion. Is there nothing but chance to be seen in this? was there any circumstance about it that did not show a God and his providence? Not to speak of those revelations whereby God foretold that he would bring such a deluge, what chance, what fortune, could collect such a small number of individuals of all sorts, wherein the whole kind might be preserved? What hand guided that poor vessel from the rocks and gave it a resting-place on the mountains? Certainly, the very reading of that story, Genesis 7:1-24, Genesis 8:1-22, having for confirmation the catholic tradition of all mankind, were enough to startle the stubborn heart of an atheist. The word of God doth not less fully relate it than his works do declare it, Psalms 19:1-14. “My Father worketh hitherto,” saith our Saviour, Joh\_5:17. But did not God end his work on the seventh day, and did he not then “rest from all his work?” Gen\_2:2. True, from his work of creation by his omnipotence; but his work of gubernation by his providence as yet knows no end. Yea, and divers particular things he doth besides the ordinary course, only to make known “that he thus worketh,” Joh\_9:3. As he hath framed all things by his wisdom, so he continueth them by his providence in excellent order, as is at large declared in that golden Psalms 105:1-45 : and this is not bounded to any particular places or things, but “ his eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,” Pro\_15:3; so that “none can hide himself in secret places that he shall not see him,” Jer\_23:24; Act\_17:24; Job\_5:10-11; Exo\_4:11. And all this he saith that men “may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside him. He is the LORD, and there is none else. He formeth the light, and createth darkness: he maketh peace, and createth evil: he doeth all these things,” Isa\_45:6-7. In these and innumerable like places doth the Lord declare that there is nothing which he hath made, that with the good hand of his providence he doth not govern and sustain.

Now, this general extent of his common providence to all doth no way hinder but that he may exercise certain special acts thereof towards some in particular, even by how much nearer than other things they approach unto him and are more assimilated unto his goodness. I mean his church here on earth, and those whereof it doth consist; “for what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them?” Deu\_4:7. In the government hereof he most eminently showeth his glory, and exerciseth his power. Join here his works with his word, what he hath done with what he hath promised to do for the conservation of his church and people, and you will find admirable issues of a more special providence. Against this he promiseth “the gates of hell shall not prevail,” Mat\_16:18;—amidst of these he hath promised to remain, Mat\_28:20; supplying them with an addition of all things necessary, Mat\_6:33; desiring that “all their care might be cast upon him, who careth for them,” 1Pe\_5:7; forbidding any to “touch his anointed ones,” Psa\_105:15, and that because they are unto him as “the apple of his eye,” Zec\_2:8. Now, this special providence hath respect unto a supernatural end, to which that, and that alone, is to be conveyed. For wicked men, as they are excepted from this special care and government, so they are not exempted from the dominion of his almighty hand. He who hath created them “for the day of evil,” Pro\_16:4, and provided a “place of their own” for them to go unto. Act\_1:25, doth not in this world suffer them to live without the verge of his all-ruling providence; but by suffering and enduring their iniquities with great patience and “long-suffering,” Rom\_9:22, defending them oftentimes from the injuries of one another. Gen\_4:15, by granting unto them many temporal blessings. Mat\_5:45, disposing of all their works to the glory of his great name, Pro\_21:1-2, he declareth that they also live, and move, and have their being in him, and are under the government of his providence. Nay, there is not the least thing in this world to which his care and knowledge doth not descend. Ill would it become his wisdom not to sustain, order, and dispose of all things by him created, but leave them to the ruin of uncertain chance. Jerome<sup>4</sup> then was injurious to his providence, and cast a blemish on his absolute perfection, whilst he thought to have cleared his majesty from being defiled with the knowledge and care of the smallest reptiles and vermin every moment; and St. Austin is express to the contrary:<sup>5</sup> “Who,” saith he, “hath disposed the several members of the flea and gnat, that hath given unto them order, life, and motion?” etc.,—even most agreeable to holy Scriptures: so Psa\_104:20-21; Psa\_145:15; Mat\_6:26; Mat\_6:30, “He feedeth the fowls, and clotheth the grass of the field;” Job\_39:1-2; Jon\_4:6-7. Sure it is not troublesome to God to take notice of all that he hath created. Did he use that great power in the production of the least of his creatures, so far beyond the united activity of men and angels, for no end at all? Doubtless, even they also must have a well-disposed order, for the manifestation of his glory. “Not a sparrow falleth on the ground without our Father;” even “the hairs of our head are all numbered,” Mat\_10:29-30. “He clotheth the lilies and grass of the field, which is to be cast into the oven,” Luk\_12:27-28. Behold his knowledge and care of them! Again, he used frogs and lice for the punishment of the Egyptians, Exodus 8:1-32; with a gourd and a worm he exercised his servant Jonah 4:1-11; yea, he calls the locusts his “terrible army;”—and shall not God know and take care of the number of his soldiers, the ordering of his dreadful host?

4 “Majestatem Dei dedecet scire per momenta singula, quot naseantur culices, quæ pulicum et muscarum in terra multitudo.”—Hieron. in cap. i., Hab.

5 “Quis disposuit membra pulicis ac culicis, ut habeant ordinem suum, habeant vitam suam, habeant motum suum,” etc. “Qui fecit in cœlo angelum, ipse fecit in terra vermiculum, sed

angelum in cœlo pro habitatione cœlesti, vermiculum in terra pro habitatione terrestri, nunquid angelum fecit repere in cœno, aut vermiculum in cœlo,” etc.—Aug., tom, viii., in Psalms 148:1-14. That God by his providence governeth and disposeth of all things by him created is sufficiently proved; the manner how he worketh all in all, how he ordereth the works of his own hands, in what this governing and disposing of his creatures doth chiefly consist, comes now to be considered. And here four things are principally to be observed:—First, The sustaining, preserving, and upholding of all things by his power; for “he upholdeth all things by the word of his power,” Heb\_1:3. Secondly, His working together with all things, by an influence of causality into the agents themselves; “for he also hath wrought all our works in us,” Isa\_26:12. Thirdly, His powerful overruling of all events, both necessary free and contingent, and disposing of them to certain ends for the manifestation of his glory. So Joseph tells his brethren, “As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is at this day, to save much people alive,” Gen\_50:20. Fourthly, His determining and restraining second causes to such and such effects: “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will,” Pro\_21:1.

First, His sustentation or upholding of all things is his powerful continuing of their being, natural strength, and faculties, bestowed on them at their creation: “In him we live, and move, and have our being,” Acts 17:1-34. So that he doth neither work all himself in them, without any co-operation of theirs, which would not only turn all things into stocks, yea, and take from stocks their own proper nature, but also is contrary to that general blessing he spread over the face of the whole world in the beginning, “Be fruitful, and multiply,” Gen\_1:22;—nor yet leave them to a self-subsistence, he in the meantime only not destroying them;<sup>6</sup> which would make him an idle spectator of most things in the world, not to “work hitherto,” as our Saviour speaks, and grant to divers things here below an absolute being, not derivative from him: the first whereof is blasphemous, the latter impossible.

6 Rem. Apol., cap. vi.

Secondly, For God’s working in and together with all second causes for producing of their effects, what part or portion in the work punctually to assign unto him, what to the power of the inferior causes, seems beyond the reach of mortals; neither is an exact comprehension thereof any way necessary, so that we make every thing beholding to his power for its being, and to his assistance for its operation.

Thirdly, His supreme dominion exerciseth itself in disposing of all things to certain and determinate ends for his own glory, and is chiefly discerned advancing itself over those things which are most contingent, and making them in some sort necessary, inasmuch as they are certainly disposed of to some proposed ends. Between the birth and death of a man, how many things merely contingent do occur! how many chances! how many diseases! in their own nature all evitable, and, in regard of the event, not one of them but to some proves mortal; yet, certain it is that a man’s “days are determined, the number of his months are with the Lord, he hath appointed his bounds that he cannot pass,” Job\_14:5. And oftentimes by things purely contingent and accidental he executeth his purposes,—bestoweth rewards, inflicteth punishments, and accomplisheth his judgments; as when he delivereth a man to be slain by the head of an axe, flying from the helve in the hand of a man cutting a tree by the way. But in nothing is this more evident than in the ancient

casting of lots, a thing as casual and accidental as can be imagined, huddled in the cap at a venture. Yet God overruleth them to the declaring of his purpose, freeing truth from doubts, and manifestation of his power: Pro\_16:33, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD;"—as you may see in the examples of Achan, Jos\_7:16-18; Saul, 1Sa\_10:20-21; Jonathan, 1Sa\_14:41-42; Jonah, Jon\_1:7; Matthias, Act\_1:26. And yet this overruling act of God's providence (as no other decree or act of his) doth not rob things contingent of their proper nature; for cannot he who effectually causeth that they shall come to pass, cause also that they shall come to pass contingently?

Fourthly, God's predetermination of second causes (which I name not last as though it were the last act of God's providence about his creatures, for indeed it is the first that concerneth their operation) is that effectual working of his, according to his eternal purpose, whereby, though some agents, as the wills of men, are causes most free and indefinite, or unlimited lords of their own actions, in respect of their internal principle of operation (that is, their own nature), [they] are yet all, in respect of his decree, and by his powerful working, determined to this or that effect in particular; not that they are compelled to do this, or hindered from doing that, but are inclined and disposed to do this, or that, according to their proper manner of working, that is, most freely: for truly such testimonies are everywhere obvious in Scripture, of the stirring up of men's wills and minds, of bending and inclining them to divers things, of the governing of the secret thoughts and motions of the heart, as cannot by any means be referred to a naked permission, with a government of external actions, or to a general influence, whereby they should have power to do this or that, or any thing else; wherein, as some suppose, his whole providence consisteth.

Let us now jointly apply these several acts to free agents, working according to choice, or relation, such as are the wills of men, and that will open the way to take a view of Arminian heterodoxies, concerning this article of Christian belief. And here two things must be premised:—First, That they be not deprived of their own radical or original internal liberty; secondly, That they be not exempt from the moving influence and gubernation of God's providence;—the first whereof would leave no just room for rewards and punishments; the other, as I said before, is injurious to the majesty and power of God. St. Augustine<sup>7</sup> judged Cicero worthy of special blame, even among the heathens, for so attempting to make men free that he made them sacrilegious, by denying them to be subject to an overruling providence: which gross error was directly maintained by Damascen,<sup>8</sup> a learned Christian, teaching, "Things whereof we have any power, not to depend on providence, but on our own free will;" an opinion fitter for a hog of the Epicurus herd than for a scholar in the school of Christ. And yet this proud, prodigious error is now, though in other terms, stiffly maintained: for what do they else who ascribe such an absolute independent liberty to the will of man, that it should have in its own power every circumstance, every condition whatsoever, that belongs to operation, so that all things required on the part of God, or otherwise, to the performance of an action being accomplished, it remaineth solely in the power of a man's own will whether he will do it or no? which supreme and plainly divine liberty, joined with such an absolute uncontrollable power and dominion over all his actions, would exempt and free the will of man, not only from all fore-determining to the production of such and such effects, but also from any effectual working or influence of the providence of God into the will itself, that should sustain, help, or co-operate with it in doing or willing any thing; and, therefore, the authors of this imaginary liberty have wisely framed an imaginary concurrence of God's providence, answerable unto it,—namely, a general

and indifferent influence, always waiting and expecting the will of man to determine itself to this or that effect, good or bad; God being, as it were, always ready at hand to do that small part which he hath in our actions, whensoever we please to use him, or, if we please to let him alone, he no way moveth us to the performance of any thing. Now, God forbid that we should give our consent to the choice of such a captain, under whose conduct we might go down again unto Paganism,—to the erecting of such an idol into the throne of the Almighty. No, doubtless, let us be most indulgent to our wills, and assign them all the liberty that is competent unto a created nature, to do all things freely according to election and foregoing counsel, being free from all natural necessity and outward compulsion; but for all this, let us not presume to deny God’s effectual assistance, his particular powerful influence into the wills and actions of his creatures, directing of them to a voluntary performance of what he hath determined: which the Arminians opposing in the behalf of their darling free-will, do work in the hearts of men an overweening of their own power, and an absolute independence of the providence of God; for,—

7 “Qui sic homines voluit esse liberos ut fecit sacrilegos.”—Aug.

8 Τὸ φ’ μὲν οὐ τῆς προνοίας ἄλλ’ τοῦ μεταρροῦ αἰτεξουσίου.—Damascen.

First, they deny that God (in whom we live, and move, and have our being) doth any thing by his providence, 9“whereby the creature should be stirred up, or helped in any of his actions.” That is, God wholly leaves a man in the hand of his own counsel, to the disposal of his own absolute independent power, without any respect to his providence at all; whence, as they do, they may well conclude, 10“that those things which God would have to be done of us freely” (such as are all human actions), “he cannot himself will or work more powerfully and effectually than by the way of wishing or desiring,” as Vorstius speaks; which is no more than one man can do concerning another, perhaps far less than an angel. I can wish or desire that another man would do what I have a mind he should; but, truly, to describe the providence of God by such expressions seems to me intolerable blasphemy. But thus it must be; without such helps as these, Dagon cannot keep on his head, nor the idol of uncontrollable free-will enjoy his dominion.

9 “Deus influxu suo nihil confert creaturæ, quo ad agendum incitetur ae adjuvetur.”—Corv. ad Molin., cap. iii. sect. 15, p. 35.

10 “Quæ Deus libere prorsus et contingenter a nobis fieri vult, ea potentius aut efficacius quam per modum voti aut desiderii, velle non potest.”—Vorst. Parasc, p. 4.

Hence Corvinus will grant<sup>11</sup> that the killing of a man by the slipping of an axe’s head from the helve, although contingent, may be said to happen according to God’s counsel and determinate will; but on no terms will he yield that this may be applied to actions wherein the counsel and freedom of man’s will do take place, as though that they also should have dependence on any such overruling power;—whereby he absolutely excludeth the providence of God from having any sovereignty within the territory of human actions, which is plainly to shake off the yoke of his dominion, and to make men lords paramount within themselves: so that they may well ascribe unto God (as they do<sup>12</sup>) only a deceivable expectation of those contingent things that are yet for to come, there being no act of his own in the producing of such effects on which he can ground any certainty; only, he may take a conjecture, according to his guess at men’s inclinations. And, indeed, this is the Helen for whose enjoyment, these thrice ten years, they have maintained

warfare with the hosts of the living God; their whole endeavour being to prove, that, notwithstanding the performance of all things, on the part of God, required for the production of any action, 13yet the will of man remains absolutely free, yea, in respect of the event, as well as its manner of operation, to do it or not to do it. That is, notwithstanding God's decree that such an action shall be performed, and his foreknowledge that it will so come to pass; notwithstanding his co-operating with the will of man (as far as they will allow him) for the doing of it, and though he hath determined by that act of man to execute some of his own judgments; 14yet there is no kind of necessity but that he may as well omit as do it: which is all one as if they should say, "Our tongues are our own; we ought to speak: who is lord over us? We will vindicate ourselves into a liberty of doing what and how we will, though for it we cast God out of his throne." And, indeed, if we mark it, we shall find them undermining and pulling down the actual providence of God, at the root and several branches thereof; for,—

11 "Deinde etsi in isto casu destinatum aliquod consilium ac voluntas Dei determinata consideranda esset, tamen in omnibus actionibus et in iis quidem quæ ex deliberato hominum consilio et libera voluntate et male quidem fiunt, ita se rem habere inde concludi non possit, puta, quia hic nullum consilium et arbitrii libertas locum habent."—Corv. ad. Molin., cap. iii. sect. 14, p. 33.

12 "Respectu contingentiae quam res habent in se, tum in divina scientia Deo expectatio tribuitur."—Rem. Defen. Sent, in Act. Syn., p. 107.

13 "Potentia voluntatis, ab omni interna et externa necessitate immunis debet manere."—Rem. Confes., cap. vi. sect. 3. Vid. plura. Rem. Apol., cap. vi. p. 69, a.

14 "In arbitrio creaturæ semper est vel influere in actum vel influxum suum suspendere, et vel sic, vel aliter influere."—Corv. ad. Molin., cap. iii. sect. 15.

First, For his conservation or sustaining of all things, they affirm<sup>15</sup> it to be very likely that this is nothing but a negative act of his will, whereby he willeth or determineth not to destroy the things by him created; and when we produce places of Scripture which affirm that it is an act of his power, they say they are foolishly cited. So that, truly, let the Scripture say what it will, (in their conceit,) God doth no more sustain and uphold all his creatures than I do a house when I do not set it on fire, or a worm when I do not tread upon it.

15 "An conservatio ista sit vis sive actus potentiae an actus merus voluntatis negativus, quo vult res creatas non destruere aut annihilare,—posterius non sine magna veri specie affirmatur: locus ad Heb\_1:3 inepte adducitur."—Rem. Apol., cap. vi.sect. 1, p. 68, a.

Secondly, For God's concurring with inferior causes in all their acts and working, they affirm it to be only <sup>16a</sup> general influence, alike upon all and every one, which they may use or not use at their pleasure, and in the use determine it to this or that effect, be it good or bad (so Corvinus), as it seems best unto them. In a word, to the will of man <sup>17</sup>it is nothing but what suffers it to play its own part freely, according to its inclination; as they jointly speak in their Confession. Observe, also, that they account this influence of his providence not to be into the agent, the will of man, whereby that should be helped or enabled to do any thing (no, that would seem to grant a self-sufficiency), <sup>18</sup>but only into the act itself for its production: as if I should help a man to lift a log, it becomes perhaps unto him so much the lighter, but he is not made one jot the stronger;

which takes off the proper work of providence, consisting in an internal assistance.

16 “Curandum diligenter, ut Deo quidem universalis, homini vero particularis influxus in actus tribuatur, quo universalem Dei influxum, ad particularem actum determinet.”—Corv. ad Molin., cap. iii. sect. 5.

17 “Ita concurrat Deus in agendo, cum hominis voluntate, ut istam pro genio suo agere et libere suas partes obire sinat.”—Rem. Confes., cap. vi. sect. 3.

18 “Influxus divinus est in ipsum actum non in voluntatem.”—Armin. Antip., alii passim.

Thirdly, For God’s determining or circumscribing the will of man to do this or that in particular, they absolutely explode it, as a thing destructive to their adored liberty. 19 “It is no way consistent with it,” say they, in their Apology. So also Arminius: 20 “The providence of God doth not determine the will of man to one part of the contradiction.” That is, “God hath not determined that you shall, nor doth by any means overrule your wills, to do this thing rather than that, to do this or to omit that.” So that the sum of their endeavour is, to prove that the will of man is so absolutely free, independent, and uncontrollable, that God doth not, nay, with all his power cannot, determine it certainly and infallibly to the performance of this or that particular action, thereby to accomplish his own purposes, to attain his own ends. Truly, it seems to me the most unfortunate attempt that ever Christians lighted on; which, if it should get success answerable to the greatness of the undertaking, the providence of God, in men’s esteem, would be almost thrust quite out of the world. “Tantæ molis erat.” The new goddess contingency could not be erected until the God of heaven was utterly despoiled of his dominion over the sons of men, and in the room thereof a home-bred idol of self-sufficiency set up, and the world persuaded to worship it. But that the building climb no higher, let all men observe how the word of God overthrows this Babylonian tower.

19 “Determinatio cum libertate vera nullo modo consistere potest.”—Rem. Apol., cap. vii. fol. 82.

20 “Providentia divina non determinat voluntatem liberam ad unam contradictionis vel contrarictatis partem.”—Armin. Artic. Perpen.

First, then, In innumerable places it is punctual that his providence doth not only bear rule in the counsels of men and their most secret resolutions, (whence the prophet declareth that he knoweth that “the way of man is not in himself,”—that “it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,” Jer\_10:23; and Solomon, that “a man’s heart deviseth his way, but the LORD directeth his steps,” Pro\_16:9; David, also, having laid this ground, that “the LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought,” and “maketh the devices of the people of none effect,” but “his own counsel standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations,” Psa\_33:10-11, proceedeth accordingly, in his own distress, to pray that the Lord would infatuate and make 21 “foolish the counsel of Ahithophel,” 2Sa\_15:31,—which also the Lord did, by working in the heart of Absalom—to hearken to the cross counsel of Hushai); but also, secondly. That the working of his providence is effectual even in the hearts and wills of men to turn them which way he will, and to determine them to this or that in particular, according as he pleaseth: “The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD,” saith Solomon, Pro\_16:1;—which Jacob trusted and relied on when he prayed that the Lord would grant his sons to find favour and mercy before that man whom then he supposed to be some atheistical Egyptian, Gen\_43:14; whence we must grant, either that the

good old man believed that it was in the hand of God to incline and unalterably turn and settle the heart of Joseph to favour his brethren, or else his prayer must have had such a senseless sense as this: "Grant, O Lord, such a general influence of thy providence, that the heart of that man may be turned to good towards my sons, or else that it may not, being left to its own freedom." A strange request! yet how it may be bettered by one believing the Arminian doctrine I cannot conceive. Thus Solomon affirmeth that "the king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will," Pro\_21:1. If the heart of a king, who hath an inward natural liberty equal with others, and an outward liberty belonging to his state and condition above them, be yet so in the hand of the Lord as that he always turneth it to what he pleaseth in particular, then certainly other men are not excepted from the rule of the same providence; which is the plain sense of these words, and the direct thesis which we maintain in opposition to the Arminian idol of absolute independent free-will. So Daniel, also, reproving the Babylonian tyrant, affirmeth that he "glorified not the God in whose hand was his breath, and whose were all his ways," Dan\_5:23. Not only his breath and life, but also all his ways, his actions, thoughts, and words, were in the hand of God.

21 "Dominus dissipavit consilium quod dederat Achitophel agendo in corde Absolon, ut tale consilium repudiaret, et aliud quod ei non expediebat eligeret."—Aug. de Grat., et Lib. Arbit., cap. xx.

Yea, thirdly, sometimes the saints of God, as I touched before, do pray that God would be pleased thus to determine their hearts, and bend their wills, and wholly incline them to some one certain thing, and that without any prejudice to their true and proper liberty: so David, Psa\_119:36, "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness." This prayer being his may also be ours, and we may ask it in faith, relying on the power and promise of God in Christ that he will perform our petitions, Joh\_14:14. Now, I desire any Christian to resolve, whether, by these and the like requests, he intendeth to desire at the hand of God nothing but such an indifferent motion to any good as may leave him to his own choice whether he will do it or no, which is all the Arminians will grant him; or rather, that he would powerfully bend his heart and soul unto his testimonies, and work in him an actual embracing of all the ways of God, not desiring more liberty, but only enough to do it willingly. Nay, surely the prayers of God's servants, requesting, with Solomon, that the Lord would be with them, and "incline their heart unto him, to keep his statutes and walk in his commandments," 1Ki\_8:57-58; and with David, to "create in them a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within them," Psa\_51:10; when, according to God's promises, they entreat him "to put his fear into their hearts," Jer\_32:40, "to unite their hearts to fear his name," Psa\_86:11, to work in them both the will and the deed, an actual obedience unto his law;—cannot possibly aim at nothing but a general influence, enabling them alike either to do or not to do what they so earnestly long after.

Fourthly, The certainty of divers promises and threatenings of Almighty God dependeth upon his powerful determining and turning the wills and hearts of men which way he pleaseth; thus, to them that fear him he promiseth that they shall find favour in the sight of men, Pro\_3:4. Now, if, notwithstanding all God's powerful operation in their hearts, it remaineth absolutely in the hands of men whether they will favour them that fear him or no, it is wholly in their power whether God shall be true in his promises or no. Surely when Jacob wrestled with God on the strength of such promise, Gen\_32:12, he little thought of any question whether it were in the power of God to

perform it. Yea, and the event showed that there ought to be no such question, Genesis 33:1-20; for the Lord turned the heart of his brother Esau, as he doth of others when he makes them pity his servants when at any time they have carried them away captives, Psa\_106:46. See, also, the same powerful operation required to the execution of his judgments. Job\_12:17, Job\_20:21, etc. In brief, there is no prophecy nor prediction in the whole Scripture, no promise to the church or faithful, to whose accomplishment the free actions and concurrence of men are required, but evidently declareth that God disposeth of the hearts of men, ruleth their wills, inclineth their affections, and determines them freely to choose and do what he in his good pleasure hath decreed shall be performed;—such as were the prophecies of deliverance from the Babylonish captivity by Cyrus, Isaiah 45:1-25; of the conversion of the Gentiles; of the stability of the church, Matthew 16:1-28; of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, Matthew 24:1-51; with innumerable others. I will add only some few reasons for the close of this long discourse. This opinion, that God hath nothing but a general influence into the actions of men, not effectually moving their wills to this or that in particular,—

First, Granteth a goodness of entity, or being, unto divers things, whereof God is not the author, as those special actions which men perform without his special concurrence; which is blasphemous. The apostle affirms that “of him are all things.”

Secondly, It denieth God to be the author of all moral goodness, for an action is good inasmuch as it is such an action in particular;<sup>22</sup> which that any is so, according to this opinion, is to be attributed merely to the will of man. The general influence of God moveth him no more to prayer than to evil communications tending to the corruption of good manners.

22 “Qui aliquid boni a Deo non effici affirmat, ille Deum esse negat: si namque vel tantillum boni a Deo non est: jam non omnis boni effector est eoque nec Deus.”—Bucer. in cap. ix. ad Rom.

Thirdly, It maketh all the decrees of God, whose execution dependeth on human actions, to be altogether uncertain, and his foreknowledge of such things to be fallible and easily to be deceived; so that there is no reconciliation possible to be hoped for betwixt these following and the like assertions:—

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“In him we live, and move, and have our being,” Act\_17:28.

“He upholdeth all things by the word of his power,” Heb\_1:3.

“Thou hast wrought all our works in us,” Isa\_26:12. “My Father worketh hitherto,” Joh\_5:17.

“The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD,” Pro\_16:1.

“The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will,” Pro\_21:1.

“Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness,” Psa\_119:36. “Unite my heart to fear thy name,” Psa\_84:11. “The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, thou hast not glorified,” Dan\_5:23.

See Mat\_27:1, compared with Act\_2:23, and Act\_4:27-28; Luk\_24:27; Joh\_19:31-36. For the necessity of other events, see Exo\_21:17; Job\_14:5; Mat\_19:7, etc.

“God’s sustaining of all things is not an affirmative act of his power, but a negative act of his will.”

—“Whereby he will not destroy them,” Rem. Apol.

“God by his influence bestoweth nothing on the creature whereby it may be incited or helped in its action,” Corvinus.

“Those things God would have us freely do ourselves; he can no more effectually work or will than by the way of wishing,” Vorstius.

“The providence of God doth not determine the free-will of man to this or that particular, or to one part of the contradiction,” Arminius.

“The will of man ought to be free from all kind of internal and external necessity in its actions,” Rem. That is, God cannot lay such a necessity upon any thing as that it shall infallibly come to pass as he intendeth, See the contrary in the places cited.

### 03.05. Chapter 5 - Whether the will and purpose of God may be resisted, and he be frustrate...

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#### CHAPTER V.

Whether the will and purpose of God may be resisted, and he be frustrate of his intentions. BY the former steps is the altar of Ahaz set on the right hand of the altar of God,—the Arminian idol, in a direct opposition, exalted to an equal pitch with the power and will of the Most High. I shall now present unto you the Spirit of God once more contending with the towering imaginations of poor mortals, about a transcendent privilege of greatness, glory, and power: for having made his decrees mutable, his prescience fallible, and almost quite divested him of his providence, as the sum and issue of all their endeavours, they affirm that his will may be resisted, he may fail of his intentions, be frustrate of his ends,—he may and doth propose such things as he neither doth nor can at any time accomplish, and that because the execution of such acts of his will might haply clash against the freedom of the will of men; which, if it be not an expression of spiritual pride above all that ever the devil attempted in heaven, divines do not well explicate that sin of his. Now, because there may seem some difficulty in this matter, by reason of the several acceptations of the will of God, especially in regard of that whereby it is affirmed that his law and precepts are his will, which, alas! we all of us too often resist or transgress, I will unfold one distinction of the will of God, which will leave it clear what it is that the Arminians oppose, for which we count them worthy of so heavy a charge.

“Divinum velle est ejus esse,” say the schoolmen,<sup>1</sup> “The will of God is nothing but God willing;” not differing from his essence “secundem rem,” in the thing itself, but only “secundem rationem,” in that it importeth a relation to the thing willed. The essence of God, then, being a most absolute, pure, simple act or substance, his will consequently can be but simply one; whereof we ought to make neither division nor distinction. If that whereby it is signified were taken always properly and strictly for the eternal will of God, the differences hereof that are usually given are rather distinctions of the signification of the word than of the thing.

<sup>1</sup> Aquin., p. q. 19, ar. ad. 1. In which regard they are not only tolerable, but simply necessary, because without them it is utterly impossible to reconcile some places of Scripture seemingly repugnant. In Gen\_22:2, God commandeth Abraham to take his only son Isaac, and offer him for a burnt-offering in the land of Moriah. Here the words of God are declarative of some will of God unto Abraham, who knew it ought to be, and little thought but that it should be, performed; but yet, when he actually addressed himself to his duty, in obedience to the will of God, he receiveth a countermand, Gen\_22:12, that he should not lay his hand upon the child to sacrifice him. The event plainly manifesteth that it was the will of God that Isaac should not be sacrificed; and yet notwithstanding, by reason of his command, Abraham seems before bound to believe that it was well-pleasing unto God that he should accomplish what he was enjoined. If the will of God in the Scripture be used but in one acceptation, here is a plain contradiction. Thus God commands Pharaoh to let his people go. Could Pharaoh think otherwise, nay, was he not bound to believe

that it was the will of God that he should dismiss the Israelites at the first hearing of the message? Yet God affirms that he would harden his heart, that he should not suffer them to depart until he had showed his signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. To reconcile these and the like places of Scripture, both the ancient fathers and schoolmen, with modern divines, do affirm that the one will of God may be said to be divers or manifold, in regard of the sundry manners whereby he willeth those things to be done which he willeth, as also in other respects, and yet, taken in its proper signification, is simply one and the same. The vulgar distinction of God's secret and revealed will is such as to which all the others may be reduced; and therefore I have chosen it to insist upon. The secret will of God is his eternal, unchangeable purpose concerning all things which he hath made, to be brought by certain means to their appointed ends: of this himself affirmeth, that "his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure," Isa\_46:10. This some call the absolute, efficacious will of God, the will of his good pleasure, always fulfilled; and indeed this is the only proper, eternal, constant, immutable will of God, whose order can neither be broken nor its law transgressed, so long as with him there is neither change nor shadow of turning. The revealed will of God containeth not his purpose and decree, but our duty,—not what he will do according to his good pleasure, but what we should do if we will please him; and this, consisting in his word, his precepts and promises, belongeth to us and our children, that we may do the will of God. Now this, indeed, is rather τὸ θελήσειν than τὸ θέλημα, that which God willeth, rather than his will, but termed so as we call that the will of a man which he hath determined shall be done: "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life," saith our Saviour, Joh\_6:40; that is, this is that which his will hath appointed. Hence it is called "voluntas signi," or the sign of his will, metaphorically only called his will, saith Aquinas;<sup>2</sup> for inasmuch as our commands are the signs of our wills, the same is said of the precepts of God. This is the rule of our obedience, and whose transgression makes an action sinful; for ἡμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἄνομος, "sin is the transgression of a law," and that such a law as is given to the transgressor to be observed. Now, God hath not imposed on us the observation of his eternal decree and intention; which, as it is utterly impossible for us to transgress or frustrate, so were we unblamable if we should. A master requires of his servant to do what he commands, not to accomplish what he intends, which perhaps he never discovered unto him; nay, the commands of superiors are not always signs that the commander will have the things commanded actually performed (as in all precepts for trial), but only that they who are subjects to this command shall be obliged to obedience, as far as the sense of it doth extend. "Et hoc clarum est in præceptis divinis," saith Durand,<sup>3</sup> etc.,—"And this is clear in the commands of God," by which we are obliged to do what he commandeth; and yet it is not always his pleasure that the thing itself, in regard of the event, shall be accomplished, as we saw before in the examples of Pharaoh and Abraham.

<sup>2</sup> Aquin., q. g. 19, a. 11, c.

<sup>3</sup> Durand, Dist. c. 48, q. 3.

Now, the will of God in the first acceptation is said to be hid or secret, not because it is so always, for it is in some particulars revealed and made known unto us two ways:—

First, By his word; as where God affirmeth that the dead shall rise. We doubt not but that they shall rise, and that it is the absolute will of God that they shall do so. Secondly, By the effects; for when any thing cometh to pass, we may cast the event on the will of God as its cause, and look upon it

as a revelation of his purpose. Jacob's sons little imagined that it was the will of God by them to send their brother into Egypt; yet afterward Joseph tells them plainly it was not they, but God that sent him thither, Gen\_45:5. But it is said to be secret for two causes:—First, Because for the most part it is so. There is nothing in divers issues declarative of God's determination but only the event, which, while it is future, is hidden to them who have faculties to judge of things past and present, but not to discern things for to come. Hence St. James bids us not be too peremptory in our determinations that we will do this or that, not knowing how God will close with us for its performance. Secondly, It is said to be secret in reference to its cause, which for the most part is past our finding out: "His path is in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known."

It appeareth, then, that the secret and revealed will of God are diverse in sundry respects, but chiefly in regard of their acts and their objects. First, In regard of their acts, the secret will of God is his eternal decree and determination concerning any thing to be done in its appointed time; his revealed will is an act whereby he declareth himself to love or approve any thing, whether ever it be done or no. Secondly, They are diverse in regard of their objects. The object of God's purpose and decree is that which is good in any kind, with reference to its actual existence, for it must infallibly be performed; but the object of his revealed will is that only which is morally good (I speak of it inasmuch as it approveth or commandeth), agreeing to the law and the gospel, and that considered only inasmuch as it is good; for whether it be ever actually performed or no is accidental to the object of God's revealed will.

Now, of these two differences the first is perpetual, in regard of their several acts; but not so the latter. They are sometimes coincident in regard of their objects. For instance, God commandeth us to believe; here his revealed will is that we should so do: withal, he intendeth we shall do so; and therefore ingenerateth faith in our hearts that we may believe. Here his secret and revealed will are coincident; the former<sup>4</sup> being his precept that we should believe, the latter his purpose that we shall believe. In this case, I say, the object of the one and the other is the same,—even what we ought to do, and what he will do. And this inasmuch as he hath "wrought all our works in us," Isa\_26:12. They are our own works which he works in us; his act in us and by us is oftentimes our duty towards him. He commands us by his revealed will to walk in his statutes, and keep his laws; upon this he also promiseth that he will so effect all things, that of some this shall be performed: Eze\_36:26-27, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." So that the self-same obedience of the people of God is here the object of his will, taken in either acceptation. And yet the precept of God is not here, as some learned men suppose, declarative of God's intention, for then it must be so to all to whom it is given; which evidently it is not, for many are commanded to believe on whom God never bestoweth faith. It is still to be looked upon as a mere declaration of our duty, its closing with God's intention being accidental unto it. There is a wide difference betwixt "Do such a thing," and, "You shall do it." If God's command to Judas to believe imported as much as, "It is my purpose and intention that Judas shall believe," it must needs contradict that will of God whereby he determined that Judas, for his infidelity, should go to his "own place." His precepts are in all obedience of us to be performed, but do not signify his will that we shall actually fulfil his commands. Abraham was not bound to believe that it was God's intention that Isaac should be sacrificed, but that it was his duty. There was no obligation on

Pharaoh to think it was God's purpose the people should depart at the first summons; he had nothing to do with that: but there was one to believe that if he would please God, he must let them go. Hence divers things of good use in these controversies may be collected:—

4 The words “former” and “latter” evidently refer to the previous sentence,—“former” corresponding with the revealed will, “latter” with the secret will of God. The order is reversed in the first clause of this sentence, and hence the author's meaning; might be mistaken.—ED.

First, That God may command many things by his word which he never decreed that they should actually be performed; because, in such things, his words are not a revelation of his eternal decree and purpose, but only a declaration of some thing wherewith he is well-pleased, be it by us performed or no. In the fore-cited case he commanded Pharaoh to let his people go, and plagued him for refusing to obey his command. Hence we may not collect that God intended the obedience and conversion of Pharaoh by this his precept, but was frustrated of his intention,—for the Scripture is evident and clear that God purposed by his disobedience to accomplish an end far different, even a manifestation of his glory by his punishment,—but only that obedience unto his commands is pleasing unto him; as 1Sa\_15:22.

Secondly, That the will of God to which our obedience is required is the revealed will of God contained in his word; whose compliance with his decree is such, that hence we learn three things tending to the execution of it:—First, That it is the condition of the word of God, and the dispensation thereof, instantly to persuade to faith and obedience. Secondly, That it is our duty by all means to aspire to the performance of all things by it enjoined, and our fault if we do not. Thirdly, That God by these means will accomplish his eternal decree of saving his elect; and that he willeth the salvation of others, inasmuch as he calleth them unto the performance of the condition thereof. Now, our obedience is so to be regulated by this revealed will of God, that we may sin either by omission against its precepts or commission against its prohibitions; although by our so omitting or committing of any thing the secret will or purpose of God be fulfilled. Had Abraham disobeyed God's precept, when he was commanded to sacrifice his son Isaac, though God's will had been accomplished thereby, who never intended it, yet Abraham had grievously sinned against the revealed will of God, the rule of his duty. The holiness of our actions consisteth in a conformity unto his precepts, and not unto his purposes. On this ground Gregory affirmeth,<sup>5</sup> “That many fulfil the will of God” (that is, his intentions) “when they think to change it” (by transgressing his precepts); “and by resisting imprudently, obey God's purpose.” And to show how merely we in our actions are tied to this rule of our duty, St. Austin<sup>6</sup> shows how a man may do good in a thing cross to God's secret will, and evil in that which complieth with it, which he illustrates by the example of a sick parent having two children, the one wicked, who desires his father's death, the other godly, and he prays for his life. But the will of God is he shall die, agreeably to the desire of the wicked child; and yet it is the other who hath performed his duty, and done what is pleasing unto God.

5 “Multi voluntatem Dei faciunt, cum illam nituntur vitare, et resistendo imprudenter obsequuntur divino consilio.”—Greg. Moral, lib. vi. cap. 11.

6 Aug. Enchirid. ad Lauren., cap. ci.

Thirdly, To return from this not unnecessary digression, that which we have now in agitation is the secret will of God, which we have before unfolded; and this it is that we charge the Arminians for affirming that it may be resisted,—that is, that God may fail in his purposes, come short of what he earnestly intendeth, or he frustrated of his aim and end: as if, [when] he should determinately resolve the faith and salvation of any man, it is in the power of that man to make void his determination, and not believe, and not be saved. Now, it is only in cases of this nature, wherein our own free wills have an interest, that they thus limit and circumscribe the power of the Most High. In other things they grant his omnipotence to be of no less extent than others do; but in this case they are peremptory and resolute, without any colouring or tergiversation: for whereas there is a question proposed by the apostle, Rom\_9:19, “Who hath resisted his will?” which that none hath or can he grants in the following verses, Corvinus affirms, 7 “It is only an objection of the Jews, rejected by the apostle;”—which is much like an answer young scholars usually give to some difficult place in Aristotle, when they cannot think of a better, “Loquitur ex aliorum sententia;” for there is no sign of any such rejection of it by the apostle in the whole following discourse; yea, and it is not the Jews that St. Paul disputeth withal here, but weaker brethren concerning the Jews, which is manifest from the first verse of the next chapter, where he distinguisheth between “brethren” to whom and “Israel” of whom he spake. Secondly, He speaks of the Jews in the whole treatise in the third person, but of the disputer in the second. Thirdly, It is taken for a confessed principle between St. Paul and the disputer, as he calls him, that the Jews were rejected, which surely themselves would not readily acknowledge. So that Corvinus rejects, as an objection of the Jews, a granted principle of St. Paul and the other Christians of his time. With the like confidence the same author affirmeth, 8 “That they nothing doubt but that many things are not done which God would have to be done.” Vorstius goes farther, teaching 9 “that not only many things are [not] done which he would have done, but also that many things are done which he would not have done.” He means not our transgressing of his law, but God’s failing in his purpose, as Corvinus clears it, acknowledging that the execution of God’s will is suspended or hindered by man; to whom Episcopius subscribes.10 As, for example, God purposeth and intendeth the conversion of a sinner,—suppose it were Mary Magdalene;—can this intention of his be crossed and his will resisted? “Yea,” say the Arminians, “for God converts sinners by his grace.” “But we can resist God when he would convert us by his grace,”11 say six of them jointly in their meeting at the Hague. “But some one may here object,” say they, “that thus God faileth of his intention, doth not attain the end at which he aims. We answer, This we grant.” Or be it the salvation of men, they say, 12 “they are certain that God intendeth that for many which never obtain it;” that end he cannot compass.

7 “Ea sententia non continet apostoli verba, sed Judæorum objectionem ab apostolo rejectam.”—Corv. ad Molin., cap. iii. per. 19.

8 “Multa non fieri quæ Deus fieri vult, vel non dubitamus.”—Ibid, cap. v. p. 5.

9 “Multa fiunt quæ Deus fieri non vult: nec semper fiunt quæ ipse fieri vult.”—Vorst. de Deo, p. 64.

10 “Ab homine esse agnoscimus, quod voluntatis (divinæ) executio sæpe suspendatur.”—Corv., ubi sup. parag. 12; Episcop. Disput. Pri. de Volun. Dei, corol. 5.

11 “Possumus Deo resistere, cum nos vult per gratiam suam convertere.”—Rem. Coll. Hag., p. 193. “Objiciet quis, ergo illum suum finem Deus non est assecutus, respondemus, nos hoc

concedere.”—Rem. Defens. Sent, in Synod., p. 256.

12 “Nobis certum est, Deum multorum salutem intendere, in quibus eam non assequitur.”—Grevinch. ad Ames., p. 271. And here, methinks, they place God in a most unhappy condition, by affirming that they are often damned whom he would have to be saved, though he desires their salvation with a most vehement desire and natural affection.<sup>13</sup>—such, I think, as crows have to the good of their young ones: for that there are in him such desires as are never fulfilled,<sup>14</sup> because not regulated by wisdom and justice, they plainly affirm; for although by his infinite power, perhaps, he might accomplish them, yet it would not become him so to do.

13 “Vehemens est in Deo affectus ad homini benefaciendum.”—Corv. ad Molin., cap. v. sect. 8.

14 “Esse in Deo desideria quæ non implentur concedimus.”—Idem, sect. 9. “Non decet ut Deus infinita sua potentia utatur ad id efficiendum, quo desiderio suo naturali fertur.”—Armin. Antip., p. 584.

Now, let any good-natured man, who hath been a little troubled for poor Jupiter in Homer, mourning for the death of his son Sarpedon, which he could not prevent, or hath been grieved for the sorrow of a distressed father, not able to remove the wickedness and inevitable ruin of an only son, drop one tear for the restrained condition of the God of heaven, who, when he would have all and every man in the world to come to heaven, to escape the torments of hell, and that with a serious purpose and intention that it shall be so, a vehement affection and fervent natural desire that it should be so, yet, being not in himself alone able to save one, must be forced to lose his desire, lay down his affection, change his purpose, and see the greatest part of them to perish everlastingly,<sup>15</sup> yea, notwithstanding that he had provided a sufficient means for them all to escape, with a purpose and intention that they should so do.

15 “Deus eo fine et intentione remedium præparavit, ut omnes ejus actu fierent participes, quamvis id non actu evenit.”—Rem. Apol., cap. vii. fol. 86. In brief, their whole doctrine on this point is laid down by Corvinus, chap. iii., against Moulin, and the third section; where, first, he alloweth of the distinction of the will of God into that whereby he will have us do something, and that whereby he will do any thing himself. The first is nothing but his law and precepts; which we with him affirm may be said to be resisted, inasmuch as it is transgressed. The latter, he saith, if it respect any act of man’s, may be considered as preceding that act, or following it; if preceding it, then it may be resisted, if man will not co-operate. Now, this is the will of God, whereby himself intendeth to do any thing; the sum of which distinction is this, “The will of God concerning the future being of any thing may be considered as it goeth before the actual existence of the thing itself, and in this regard it may be hindered or resisted; but as it is considered to follow any act of man, it is always fulfilled:” by which latter member, striving to mollify the harshness of the former, he runs himself into inexplicable nonsense, affirming that that act of the will of God whereby he intendeth men shall do any thing cannot be hindered after they have done it,—that is, God hath irresistibly purposed they shall do it, provided they do it! In his following discourse, also, he plainly grants that there is no act of God’s will about the salvation of men that may not be made void and of none effect, but only that general decree whereby he hath established an inseparable connection between faith and salvation, or whereby he hath appointed faith in Christ to be the means of attaining blessedness, which is only an immanent act of God’s will, producing no outward effect; so that every act thereof that hath an external issue by human co-operation is frustrable and may

fall to the ground: which in what direct opposition it stands to the word of God, let these following instances declare:—

First, “Our God is in the heavens,” saith the psalmist: “he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased,” Psa\_115:3. Not only part, but all, whatsoever he pleased should come to pass, by any means. “He ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will,” Dan\_4:17. The transposition of kingdoms is not without the mixture of divers free and voluntary actions of men, and yet in that great work God doth all that he pleaseth. Yea, before him “all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him. What doest thou?” Dan\_4:35. “My counsel,” saith he, “shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,” Isa\_46:10; “I have purposed, I will also do it,” Isa\_46:11. Nay, so certain is he of accomplishing all his purposes, that he confirms it with an oath: “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, Surely as I have thought, so it shall come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand,” Isa\_14:24. And indeed it were a very strange thing, that God should intend what he foreseeeth will never come to pass. But I confess this argument will not be pressing against the Arminians, who question that prescience; but yet, would they also would observe from the Scripture, that the failing of wicked men’s counsels and intentions is a thing that God is said to “deride in heaven,” as Psa\_2:4. He threatens them with it. “Take counsel together,” saith he, “and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand,” Isa\_8:10. See also Isa\_29:7-8. And shall they be enabled to recriminate, and cast the like aspersion on the God of heaven? No, surely. Saith St. Austin, 16“Let us take heed we be not compelled to believe that Almighty God would have any thing done which doth not come to pass.” To which truth, also, that the schoolmen have universally consented is showed by Alvarez, Disput. xxxii. pro. 3. And these few instances will manifest the Arminian opposition to the word of God in this particular:—

16 “Ne credere cogamur aliquid onnipotentem Deum voluisse factumque non esse.”—Aug. En., cap. ciii.

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“Our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased,” Psa\_115:3

“I will do all my pleasure” Isa\_46:10. “None can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” Dan\_4:35.

“I have purposed, I will also do it,” Isa\_46:11.

“As I have purposed, so shall it stand,” Isa\_14:24.

“We nothing doubt but many things which God willeth, or that it pleaseth him to have done, do yet never come to pass,” Corvinus. “We grant that some of God’s desires are never fulfilled” Idem.

“It is in the power of man to hinder the execution of God’s will,” Idem.

“It is ridiculous to imagine that God doth not seriously will any thing but what taketh effect: Episcopius.

“It may be objected that God faileth of his end: this we readily grant,” Rem. Synod.

## 03.06. Chapter 6 - How the whole doctrine of predestination is corrupted by the Arminians

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### CHAPTER VI.

How the whole doctrine of predestination is corrupted by the Arminians. THE cause of all these quarrels, wherewith the Arminians and their abettors have troubled the church of Christ, comes next unto our consideration. The eternal predestination of Almighty God, that fountain of all spiritual blessings, of all the effects of God's love derived unto us through Christ, the demolishing of this rock of our salvation hath been the chief endeavour of all the patrons of human self-sufficiency; so to vindicate unto themselves a power and independent ability of doing good, of making themselves to differ from others, of attaining everlasting happiness, without going one step from without themselves. And this is their first attempt, to attain their second proposed end, of building a tower from the top whereof they may mount into heaven, whose foundation is nothing but the sand of their own free-will and endeavours. Quite on a sudden (what they have done in effect) to have taken away this divine predestination, name and thing, had been an attempt as noted as notorious, and not likely to attain the least success amongst men professing to believe the gospel of Christ; wherefore, suffering the name to remain, they have abolished the thing itself, and substituted another so unlike it in the room thereof, that any one may see they have gotten a blear-eyed Leah instead of Rachel, and hug a cloud instead of a Deity. The true doctrine itself hath been so excellently delivered by divers learned divines, so freed from all objections, that I shall only briefly and plainly lay it down, and that with special reference to the seventeenth article of our church, where it is clearly avowed; showing withal,—which is my chief intention,—how it is thwarted; opposed, and overthrown by the Arminians. Predestination, in the usual sense [in which] it is taken, is a part of God's providence concerning his creatures, distinguished from it by a double restriction:—

First, In respect of their objects; for whereas the decree of providence comprehendeth his intentions towards all the works of his hands, predestination respecteth only rational creatures.

Secondly, In regard of their ends; for whereas his providence directeth all creatures in general to those several ends to which at length they are brought, whether they are proportioned unto their nature or exceeding the sphere of their natural activity, predestination is exercised only in directing rational creatures to supernatural ends: so that, in general, it is the counsel, decree, or purpose of Almighty God concerning the last and supernatural end of his rational creatures, to be accomplished for the praise of his glory. But this also must receive a double restriction before we come precisely to what we in this place aim at: and these again in regard of the objects or the ends thereof. The object of predestination is all rational creatures. Now, these are either angels or men. Of angels I shall not treat. Secondly, The end by it provided for them is either eternal happiness or eternal misery. I speak only of the former,—the act of God's predestination transmitting men to everlasting happiness: and in this restrained sense it differs not at all from election, and we may use them as synonyma, terms of the same importance; though, by some affirming that God

predestinateth them to faith whom he hath chosen, they seem to be distinguished as the decrees of the end, and the means conducing thereunto, whereof the first is election, intending the end, and then takes place predestination, providing the means. But this exact distinction appeareth not directly in the Scripture. This election the word of God proposeth unto us as the gracious, immutable decree of Almighty God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, out of his own good pleasure, he chose certain men, determining to free them from sin and misery, to bestow upon them grace and faith, to give them unto Christ, to bring them to everlasting blessedness, for the praise of his glorious grace; or, as it is expressed in our church articles, "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ unto everlasting salvation, as vessels made unto honour; wherefore, they who are endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose," etc.

Now, to avoid prolixity, I will annex only such annotations as may clear the sense and confirm the truth of the article by the Scriptures, and show briefly how it is overthrown by the Arminians in every particular thereof:—

First, The article, consonantly to the Scripture, affirmeth that it is an eternal decree, made before the foundations of the world were laid; so that by it we must needs be chosen before we were born, before we have done either good or evil. The words of the article are clear, and so also is the Scripture: "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world," Eph\_1:4; "The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, it was said," etc., Rom\_9:11-12; "We are called with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2Ti\_1:9. Now, from hence it would undoubtedly follow that no good thing in us can be the cause of our election, for every cause must in order precede its effect; but all things whereof we by any means are partakers, inasmuch as they are ours, are temporary, and so cannot be the cause of that which is eternal. Things with that qualification must have reference to the sole will and good pleasure of God; which reference would break the neck of the Arminian election. Wherefore, to prevent such a fatal ruin, they deny the principle,—to wit, that election is eternal<sup>1</sup> So the Remonstrants, in their Apology: 2"Complete election regardeth none but him that is dying; for this peremptory election decreeth the whole accomplishment and consummation of salvation, and therefore requireth in the object the finished course of faith and obedience," saith Grevinchovius; which is to make God's election nothing but an act of his justice, approving our obedience, and such an act as is incident to any weak man, who knows not what will happen in the next hour that is yet for to come. And is this post-destination that which is proposed to us in the Scripture as the unsearchable fountain of all God's love towards us in Christ? "Yea,"<sup>3</sup> say they, "we acknowledge no other predestination to be revealed in the gospel besides that whereby God decreeth to save them who should persevere in faith;" that is, God's determination concerning their salvation is pendulous, until he find by experience that they will persevere in obedience. But I wonder why, seeing election is confessedly one of the greatest expressions of God's infinite goodness, love, and mercy towards us, if it follow our obedience, we have it not, like all other blessings and mercies, promised unto us. Is it not because such propositions as these, "Believe, Peter, and continue in the faith unto the end, and I will choose thee before the foundation of the world," are fitter for the writings of the Arminians than

the word of God? Neither will we be their rivals in such an election, as from whence no fruit,<sup>4</sup> no effect, no consolation can be derived to any mortal man, whilst he lives in this world.

1 “Electio non est ab æterno.”—Rem. Apol.

2 “Electio alia completa est, quæ neminem spectat nisi immorientem. Electio peremptoria totum salutis complementum et consummationem decernit, ideoque in objecto requirit totam consummatam fidei obedientiam.”—Grevinch. ad Ames. p. 136, passim. dis.

3 “Non agnoscimus aliam prædestinationem in evangelio patefactam, quam qua Deus decrevit credentes et qui in eadem fide perseverarent, salvos facere.”—Rem. Coll. Hag., p. 34.

4 “Electionis fructum aut sensum in hac vita nullum agnosco.”—Grevinch.

Secondly, The article affirmeth that it is constant,—that is, one immutable decree; agreeably also to the Scriptures, teaching but one purpose, but one foreknowledge, one good pleasure, one decree of God, concerning the infallible ordination of his elect unto glory; although of this decree there may be said to be two acts,—one concerning the means, the other concerning the end, but both knit up in the “immutability of God’s counsel,” Heb\_6:17. “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his,” 2Ti\_2:19; “His gifts and calling are without recalling,” not to be repented of, Rom\_11:29. Now, what say our Arminians to this? Why, a whole multitude of notions and terms have they invented to obscure the doctrine. “Election,” say they,<sup>5</sup> “is either legal or evangelical, general or particular, complete or incomplete, revocable or irrevocable, peremptory or not peremptory,” with I know not how many more distinctions of one single eternal act of Almighty God, whereof there is neither “vola nec vestigium,” sign or token, in the whole Bible, or any approved author. And to these quavering divisions they accommodate their doctrine, or rather they purposely invented them to make their errors unintelligible. Yet something agreeably thus they dictate: 6“There is a complete election, belonging to none but those that are dying; and there is another, incomplete, common to all that believe: as the good things of salvation are incomplete which are continued whilst faith is continued, and revoked when that is denied, so election is incomplete in this life, and revocable.” Again: “There are,” they say in their Confession, 7“three orders of believers and repenters in the Scripture, whereof some are beginners, others having continued for a time, and some perseverants. The first two orders are chosen verè, truly, but not absolutè prorsus, absolutely, but only for a time,—so long as they will remain as they are; the third are chosen finally and peremptorily: for this act of God is either continued or interrupted, according as we fulfil the condition.” But whence learned the Arminians this doctrine? Not one word of it from the word of truth; no mention there of any such desultory election, no speech of faith, but such as is consequent to one eternal irrevocable decree of predestination: They “believed” who were “ordained to eternal life,” Act\_13:48. No distinction of men half and wholly elected, where it is affirmed that it is impossible the elect should be seduced, Mat\_24:24,—that none should snatch Christ’s sheep out of his Father’s hand, Joh\_10:28-29. What would they have more? God’s purpose of election is sealed up, 2Ti\_2:19, and therefore cannot be revoked; it must stand firm, Rom\_9:11, in spite of all opposition. Neither will reason allow us to think any immanent act of God to be incomplete or revocable, because of the mere alliance it hath with his very nature. But reason, Scripture, God himself, all must give place to any absurdities, if they stand in the Arminian way, bringing in their idol with shouts, and preparing his throne, by claiming the cause of their predestination to be in themselves.

5 *Episcop. Thes.*, p. 35; *Epist. ad Walach.*, p. 38; *Grevinch. ad Ames.*, p. 133.

6 “Electio alia completa est, quæ neminem spectat nisi morientem, alia incompleta, quæ omnibus fidelibus communis est; ut salutis bona sunt incompleta quæ continuantur, fide continuatâ, et abnegatâ revocantur, sic electio est incompleta in hac vita, non peremptoria, revocabilis.”—*Grevinch. ad Ames.*

7 “Tres sunt ordines credentium et resipiscentium in Scripturis, novitii, credentes aliquandiu, perseverantes. Duo priores ordines credentium eliguntur vere quidem, at non prorsus absolute, nec nisi ad tempus, puta quamdiu et quatenus tales sunt,” etc.—*Rem. Confess.*, cap. xviii. sect. 6, 7.

Thirdly, The article is clear that the object of this predestination is some particular men chosen out of mankind; that is, it is such an act of God as concerneth some men in particular, taking them, as it were, aside from the midst of their brethren, and designing them for some special end and purpose. The Scripture also aboundeth in asserting this verity, calling them that are so chosen a “few,” *Mat\_20:16*, which must needs denote some certain persons; and the “remnant according to election,” *Rom\_11:5*; those whom “the Lord knoweth to be his,” *2Ti\_2:19*; men “ordained to eternal life,” *Act\_13:48*; “us,” *Rom\_8:39*; those that are “written in the Lamb’s book of life,” *Rev\_21:27*;—all which, and divers others, clearly prove that the number of the elect is certain, not only materially, as they say,<sup>8</sup> that there are so many, but formally also, that these particular persons, and no other, are they, which cannot be altered. Nay, the very nature of the thing itself doth so demonstratively evince it, that I wonder it can possibly be conceived under any other notion. To apprehend an election of men not circumscribed with the circumstance of particular persons is such a conceited, Platonical abstraction, as it seems strange that any one dares profess to understand that there should be a predestination, and none predestinated; an election, and none elected; a choice amongst many, yet none left or taken; a decree to save men, and yet thereby salvation destined to no one man, either “re aut spe,” in deed or in expectation. In a word, that there should be a purpose of God to bring men unto glory, standing inviolable, though never any one attained the purposed end, is such a riddle as no *Œdipus* can unfold. Now, such an election, such a predestination, have the Arminians substituted in the place of God’s everlasting decree. “We deny,”<sup>9</sup> say they, “that God’s election extendeth itself to any singular persons as singular persons;” that is, that any particular persons, as Peter, Paul, John, are by it elected. No; how, then? Why, <sup>10</sup>“God hath appointed, without difference, to dispense the means of faith; and as he seeth these persons to believe or not to believe by the use of those means, so at length he determineth of them,” as saith *Corvinus*. Well, then, God chooseth no particular man to salvation, but whom he seeth believing by his own power, with the help only of such means as are afforded unto others who never believe; and as he maketh himself thus differ from them by a good use of his own abilities, so also he may be reduced again unto the same predicament, and then his election, which respecteth not him in his person, but only his qualification, quite vanisheth. But is this God’s decree of election? “Yes,” say they; and make a doleful complaint that any other doctrine should be taught in the church. <sup>11</sup>“It is obtruded,” say the true-born sons of *Arminius*, “on the church as a most holy doctrine, that God, by an absolute, immutable decree, from all eternity, out of his own good pleasure, hath chosen certain persons, and those but few in comparison, without any respect had to their faith and obedience, and predestinated them to everlasting life.” But what so great exception is this doctrine liable unto, what wickedness doth it include, that it

should not be accounted most holy? Nay, is not only the matter but the very terms of it contained in the Scripture? Doth it not say the elect are few, and they chosen before the foundation of the world, without any respect to their obedience or any thing that they had done, out of God's mere gracious good pleasure, that his free purpose according to election might stand, even because so it pleased him; and this that they might be holy, believe, and be sanctified, that they might come unto Christ, and by him be preserved unto everlasting life? Yea, this is that which galls them: 12 "No such will can be ascribed unto God, whereby he so willeth any one to be saved as that thence their salvation should be sure and infallible," saith the father of those children.

8 Aquinas.

9 "Nos negamus Dei electionem ad salutem extendere sese ad singulares personas, qua singulares personas."—Rem. Coll. Hag., fol. 76.

10 "Deus statuit indiscriminatim media ad fidem administrare, et prout has, vel illas personas, istis mediis credituras vel non credituras videt, ita tandem de illis statuit."—Corv. ad Tilen., 76.

11 "Ecclesiæ tanquam sacrosancta doctrina obtruditur, Deum absolutissimo et immutabili decreto ab omni retro æternitate, pro puro suo beneplacito, singulares quosdam homines, eosque, quoad cæteros, paucissimos, citra ullius obedientiæ aut fidei in Christum intuitum prædestinasse ad vitam."—Præfat. Lib. Armin. ad Perk.

12 "Nulla Deo tribui potest voluntas, qua ita velit hominem ullum salvari, ut salus inde illis constet certo et infallibiliter."—Armin. Antip., p. 583.

Well, then, let St. Austin's definition be quite rejected, 13 "That predestination is a preparation of such benefits whereby some are most certainly freed and delivered from sin and brought to glory;" and that also of St. Paul, "That (by reason of this) nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ." What is this election in your judgment? 14 "Nothing but a decree whereby God hath appointed to save them that believe in Christ," saith Corvinus, be they who they will; or a general purpose of God, whereby he hath ordained faith in Christ to be the means of salvation. Yea, but this belongs to Judas as well as to Peter. This decree carrieth as equal an aspect to those that are damned as to those that are saved. Salvation, under the condition of faith in Christ, was also proposed to them; but was Judas and all his company elected? How came they, then, to be seduced and perish? That any of God's elect go to hell is as yet a strange assertion in Christianity. Notwithstanding this decree, none may believe, or all that do may fall away, and so none at all be saved; which is a strange kind of predestination: or all may believe, continue in faith, and be saved; which were a more strange kind of election.

13 "Prædestinatio est præparatio beneficiorum quibus certissime liberantur quicumque liberantur."—Aug. de Bono Per. Sen., cap. xiv.

14 "Decretum electionis nihil aliud est quam decretum quo Deus constituit credentes in Christo justificare et salvare."—Corv. ad Tilen., p. 13.

We, poor souls, thought hitherto that we might have believed, according unto Scripture, that some by this purpose were in a peculiar manner made the Father's ("Thine they were"), and by him given unto Christ, that he might bring them unto glory; and that these men were so certain and unchangeable a number, that not only God "knoweth them" as being "his," but also that Christ

“calleth them by name,” Joh\_10:3, and looketh that none taketh them out of his hand. We never imagined before that Christ hath been the mediator of an uncertain covenant, because there are no certain persons covenanted withal but such as may or may not fulfil the condition. We always thought that some had been separated before by God’s purpose from the rest of the perishing world, that Christ might lay down his life for his “friends,” for his “sheep,” for them that were “given him” of his Father. But now it should seem he was ordained to be a king when it was altogether uncertain whether he should ever have any subjects, to be ahead without a body, or to such a church whose collection and continuance depend wholly and solely on the will of men.

These are doctrines that I believe searchers of the Scripture had scarce ever been acquainted withal, had they not lighted on such expositors as teach, 15“That the only cause why God loveth” (or chooseth) “any person is, because the honesty, faith, and piety wherewith, according to God’s command and his own duty, he is endued, are acceptable to God;” which, though we grant it true of God’s consequent or approving love, yet surely there is a divine love wherewith he looks upon us otherwise, when he gives us unto Christ, else either our giving unto Christ is not out of love, or we are pious, just, and faithful before we come unto him,—that is, we have no need of him at all. Against either way, though we may blot these testimonies out of our hearts, yet they will stand still recorded in holy Scripture,—namely, that God so loved us when we were his “enemies,” Rom\_5:10, “sinners,” Rom\_5:8, of no “strength,” Rom\_5:6; that “he gave his only-begotten Son” to die, “that we should not perish, but have everlasting life,” Joh\_3:16. But of this enough.

15 “Ratio dilectionis personæ est, quod probitas, fides, vel pietas, qua ex officio suo et præscripto Dei ista persona prædita est, Deo grata sit.”—Rem. Apol, p. 13.

Fourthly, Another thing that the article asserteth according to the Scripture is, that there is no other cause of our election but God’s own counsel. It recounteth no motives in us, nothing impelling the will of God to choose some out of mankind, rejecting others, but his own decree,—that is, his absolute will and good pleasure; so that as there is no cause, in any thing without himself, why he would create the world or elect any at all,—for he doth all these things for himself, for the praise of his own glory,—so there is no cause in singular elected persons why God should choose them rather than others. He looked upon all mankind in the same condition, vested with the same qualifications, or rather without any at all; for it is the children not yet born, before they do either good or evil, that are chosen or rejected, his free grace embracing the one and passing over the other. Yet here we must observe, that although God freely, without any desert of theirs, chooseth some men to be partakers both of the end and the means, yet he bestoweth faith, or the means, on none but for the merit of Christ; neither do any attain the end or salvation but by their own faith, through that righteousness of his. The free grace of God notwithstanding, choosing Jacob when Esau is rejected, the only antecedent cause of any difference between the elect and reprobates, remaineth firm and unshaken; and surely, unless men were resolved to trust wholly to their own bottoms, to take nothing gratis at the hands of God, they would not endeavour to rob him of his glory, of having mercy on whom he will have mercy, of loving us without our desert before the world began. If we must claim an interest in obtaining the temporal acts of his favour by our own endeavours, yet, oh, let us grant him the glory of being good unto us, only for his own sake, when we were in his hand as the clay in the hand of the potter. What made this piece of clay fit for comely service, and not a vessel wherein there is no pleasure, but the power and will of the Framer? It is enough, yea, too much, for them to repine and say, “Why hast thou made us thus?”

who are vessels fitted for wrath. Let not them who are prepared for honour exalt themselves against him, and sacrifice to their own nets, as the sole providers of their glory. But so it is: human vileness will still be declaring itself, by claiming a worth no way due unto it; of a furtherance of which claim if the Arminians be not guilty, let the following declaration of their opinions in this particular determine:—

“We confess,” say they,<sup>16</sup> “roundly, that faith, in the consideration of God choosing us unto salvation, doth precede, and not follow as a fruit of election.” So that whereas Christians have hitherto believed that God bestoweth faith on them that are chosen, it seems now it is no such matter, but that those whom God findeth to believe, upon the stock of their own abilities, he afterward chooseth. Neither is faith, in their judgment, only required as a necessary condition in him that is to be chosen, but as a cause moving the will of God to elect him that hath it, <sup>17</sup>“as the will of the judge is moved to bestow a reward on him who according to the law hath deserved it,” as Grevinchovius speaks: which words of his, indeed, Corvinus strives to temper, but all in vain, though he wrest them contrary to the intention of the author; for with him agree all his fellows. <sup>18</sup>“The one only absolute cause of election is, not the will of God, but the respect of our obedience,” saith Episcopius. At first they required nothing but faith, and that as a condition, not as a cause;<sup>19</sup> then perseverance in faith, which at length they began to call obedience, comprehending all our duty to the precepts of Christ: for the cause, say they, of this love to any person, is the righteousness, faith, and piety wherewith he is endued; which being all the good works of a Christian, they, in effect, affirm a man to be chosen for them,—that our good works are the cause of election; which whether it were ever so grossly taught, either by Pelagians or Papists, I something doubt.

<sup>16</sup> “Rotunde fatemur, fidem in consideratione Dei in eligendo ad salutem antecedere, et non tanquam fructum electionis sequi.”—Rem. Hag. Coll., p. 35.

<sup>17</sup> Grevinch. ad Ames., p. 24; Corv. ad Molin., p. 260.

<sup>18</sup> “Electionis et reprobationis causa uniea vera et absoluta non est Dei voluntas, sed respectus obedientiæ et inobedientiæ.”—Epis. Disput. viii.

<sup>19</sup> “Cum peccatum pono causam meritoriam reprobationis, ne existimato e contra me ponere justitiam causam meritoriam electionis.”—Armin. Antip. ; Rem. Apol., p. 73. And here observe, that this doth not thwart my former assertion, where I showed that they deny the election of any particular persons, which here they seem to grant upon a foresight of their faith and good works; for there is not any one person, as such a person, notwithstanding all this, that in their judgment is in this life elected, but only as he is considered with those qualifications of which he may at any time divest himself, and so become again to be no more elected than Judas. The sum of their doctrine in this particular is laid down by one of ours in a tract entitled “God’s Love to Mankind,” etc.; a book full of palpable ignorance, gross sophistry, and abominable blasphemy, whose author seems to have proposed nothing unto himself but to rake all the dunghills of a few of the most invective Arminians, and to collect the most filthy scum and pollution of their railings to cast upon the truth of God; and, under I know not what self-coined pretences, belch out odious blasphemies against his holy name. The sum, saith he, of all these speeches (he cited to his purpose) is, <sup>20</sup>“That there is no decree of saving men but what is built on God’s foreknowledge of the good actions of men.” No decree? No, not that whereby God determineth to give some unto Christ, to

ingraft them in him by faith, and bring them by him unto glory; which giveth light to that place of Arminius, where he affirmeth, 21 “That God loveth none precisely to eternal life but considered as just, either with legal or evangelical righteousness.” Now, to love one to eternal life is to destinate one to obtain eternal life by Christ, and so it is coincident with the former assertion, that our election, or choosing unto grace and glory, is upon the foresight of our good works; which contains a doctrine so contradictory to the words and meaning of the apostle, Rom\_9:11, condemned in so many councils, suppressed by so many edicts and decrees of emperors and governors, opposed as a pestilent heresy, ever since it was first hatched, by so many orthodox fathers and learned schoolmen, so directly contrary to the doctrine of this church, so injurious to the grace and supreme power of Almighty God, that I much wonder any one, in this light of the gospel and flourishing time of learning, should be so boldly ignorant or impudent as to broach it amongst Christians. To prove this to be a heresy exploded by all orthodox and catholic antiquity were to light a candle in the sun; for it cannot but be known to all and every one who ever heard or read any thing of the state of Christ’s church after the rising of the Pelagian tumults.<sup>22</sup> 20 God’s Love, p. 6.

21 “Deum nullam creaturam præcise ad vitam æternam amare, nisi consideratam ut justam sive justitia legali sive evangelica.”—Armin. Artic. Perpend., fol. 21.

22 Vid. Prosp. ad Excep. Gen. ad Dub., 8, 9. Vid. Car. de Ingratis., c. 2, 3. To accumulate testimonies of the ancients is quite beside my purpose. I will only add the confession of Bellarmine,<sup>23</sup> a man otherwise not over-well affected to truth. “Predestination,” saith he, “from the foresight of works, cannot be maintained unless we should suppose something in the righteous man, which should make him differ from the wicked, that he doth not receive from God; which truly all the fathers with unanimous consent do reject.” But we have a more sure testimony, to which we will take heed, even the holy Scripture, pleading strongly for God’s free and undeserved grace.

First, our Saviour Christ, Mat\_11:26, declaring how God revealeth the gospel unto some, which is hidden from others (a special fruit of election), resteth in his will and good pleasure as the only cause thereof: “Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.” So, comforting his “little flock,” Luk\_12:32, he bids them fear not, “for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom;”—“His good pleasure is the only cause why his kingdom is prepared for you rather than others.” But is there no other reason of this discrimination? No; he doth it all “that his purpose according to election might stand” firm, Rom\_9:11; for we are “predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,” Eph\_1:11. But did not this counsel of God direct him to choose us rather than others because we had something to commend us more than they? No; “The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; but because the LORD loved you,” Deu\_7:7-8. “He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy;” yea, “the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger: as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,” Rom\_9:11-13. In brief, wherever there is any mention of election or predestination, it is still accompanied with the purpose, love, or will of God; his foreknowledge, whereby he knoweth them that are his; his free power and supreme dominion over all things. Of our faith, obedience, or any thing importing so much, not one syllable, no mention, unless it be as the fruit and effect thereof. It is the sole act of his free grace and good pleasure,

that “he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy,” Rom\_9:23. For this only end hath he “saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” 2Ti\_1:9. Even our calling is free and undeserved, because flowing from that most free grace of election, whereof we are partakers before we are [i.e., exist]. It were needless to heap up more testimonies in a thing so clear and evident. When God and man stand in competition who shall be accounted the cause of an eternal good, we may be sure the Scripture will pass the verdict on the part of the Most High. And the sentence, in this case, may be derived from thence by these following reasons:—

23 “Non potest defendi prædestinatio ex operibus prævisis, nisi aliquid boni ponatur in homine justo, quo discernatur ab impio, quod non sit illi a Deo, quod sane patres omnes summa consensione rejiciunt.”—Bellar. de Grat., et Lib. Arbit.,cap. xiv.

First, If final perseverance in faith and obedience be the cause of, or a condition required unto, election, then none can be said in this life to be elected; for no man is a final perseverer until he be dead, until he hath finished his course and consummated the faith. But certain it is that it is spoken of some in the Scripture that they are even in this life elected: “Few are chosen,” Mat\_22:14; “For the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened,” Mat\_24:22; “And shall, if it were possible, deceive the very elect,” Mat\_24:24,—where it is evident that election is required to make one persevere in the faith, but nowhere is perseverance in the faith required to election; yea, and Peter gives us all a command that we should give all diligence to get an assurance of our “election,” even in this life, 2Pe\_1:10; and, therefore, surely it cannot be a decree presupposing consummated faith and obedience.

Secondly, Consider two things of our estate, before the first temporal act of God’s free grace (for grace is no grace if it be not free), which is the first effect of our predestination, comprehendeth us:—First, “Were we better than others? No, in no wise: both Jews and Gentiles were all under sin,” Rom\_3:9. “There is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” Rom\_3:23; being all “dead in trespasses and sins,” Eph\_2:1; being “by nature the children of wrath, even as others,” Eph\_2:3; “far off,” until we are “made nigh by the blood of Christ,” Eph\_2:13. We were “enemies” against God, Rom\_5:10; Tit\_3:3. And look what desert there is in us with these qualifications, when our vocation, the first effect of our predestination, as St. Paul showeth, Rom\_8:30, and as I shall prove hereafter, separateth us from the world of unbelievers. So much there is in respect of predestination itself; so that if we have any way deserved it, it is by being sinners, enemies, children of wrath, and dead in trespasses. These are our deserts; this is the glory, whereof we ought to be ashamed. But, secondly, When they are in the same state of actual alienation from God, yet then, in respect of his purpose to save them by Christ, some are said to be his: “Thine they were, and thou gavest them me,” Joh\_17:6;—they were his before they came unto Christ by faith; the sheep of Christ before they are called, for he “callesh his sheep by name,” Joh\_10:3 before they come into the flock or congregation, for “other sheep,” saith he, “I have, which are not of this fold, them also must I bring,” Joh\_10:16;—to be beloved of God before they love him: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us,” 1Jn\_4:10. Now, all this must be with reference to God’s purpose of bringing them unto Christ, and by him unto glory; which we see goeth before all their faith and obedience.

Thirdly, Election is an eternal act of God's will: "He hath chosen us before the foundation of the world," Eph\_1:4; consummated antecedently to all duty of ours, Rom\_9:11. Now, every cause must, in order of nature, precede its effect; nothing hath an activity in causing before it hath a being. Operation in every kind is a second act, flowing from the essence of a thing which is the first. But all our graces and works, our faith, obedience, piety, and charity, are all temporal, of yesterday, the same standing with ourselves, and no longer; and therefore cannot be the cause of, no, nor so much as a condition necessarily required for, the accomplishment of an eternal act of God, irrevocably established before we are.

Fourthly, If predestination be for faith foreseen, these three things, with divers such absurdities, will necessarily follow:—First, That election is not of "him that calleth," as the apostle speaks, Rom\_9:11,—that is, of the good pleasure of God, who calleth us with a holy calling,—but of him that is called; for, depending on faith, it must be his whose faith is, that doth believe. Secondly, God cannot have mercy on whom he will have mercy, for the very purpose of it is thus tied to the qualities of faith and obedience, so that he must have mercy only on believers antecedently to his decree. Which, thirdly, hinders him from being an absolute free agent, and doing of what he will with his own,—of having such a power over us as the potter hath over his clay; for he finds us of different matter, one clay, another gold, when he comes to appoint us to different uses and ends.

Fifthly, God sees no faith, no obedience, perseverance, nothing but sin and wickedness, in any man, but what himself intendeth graciously and freely to bestow upon him; for "faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God;" it is "the work of God, that we believe," Joh\_6:29; he "blesseth us with all spiritual blessings in Christ," Eph\_1:3. Now, all these gifts and graces God bestoweth only upon those whom he hath antecedently ordained to everlasting life: for "the election obtained it, and the rest were blinded," Rom\_11:7; "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved," Act\_2:47. Therefore, surely, God chooseth us not because he foreseeth those things in us, seeing he bestoweth those graces because he hath chosen us. "Wherefore,"<sup>24</sup> saith Austin, "doth Christ say, 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,' but because they did not choose him that he should choose them; but he chose them that they might choose him." We choose Christ by faith; God chooseth us by his decree of election. The question is, Whether we choose him because he hath chosen us, or he chooseth us because we have chosen him, and so indeed choose ourselves? We affirm the former, and that because our choice of him is a gift he himself bestoweth only on them whom he hath chosen.

24 "Non ob aliud dicit, 'Non vos me eligistis, sed ego vos elegi,' nisi quia non elegerunt cum ut eligeret eos; sed ut eligerent cum elegit eos."—Aug. de Bono Perse., cap. xvi.

Sixthly, and principally, The effects of election, infallibly following it, cannot be the causes of election, certainly preceding it. This is evident, for nothing can be the cause and the effect of the same thing, before and after itself. But all our faith, our obedience, repentance, good works, are the effects of election, flowing from it as their proper fountain, erected on it as the foundation of this spiritual building; and for this the article of our church is evident and clear. "Those," saith it, "that are endued with this excellent benefit of God are called according to God's purpose, are justified freely, are made the sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of Christ; they walk religiously in good works," etc. Where, first, they are said to be partakers of this benefit of election, and then by virtue thereof to be entitled to the fruition of all those graces. Secondly, it

saith, "Those who are endued with this benefit enjoy those blessings;" intimating that election is the rule whereby God proceedeth in bestowing those graces, restraining the objects of the temporal acts of God's special favour to them only whom his eternal decree doth embrace. Both these, indeed, are denied by the Arminians; which maketh a farther discovery of their heterodoxies in this particular. 25 "You say," saith Arminius to Perkins, "that election is the rule of giving or not giving of faith; and, therefore, election is not of the faithful, but faith of the elect: but by your leave this I must deny." But yet, whatever it is the sophistical heretic here denies, either antecedent or conclusion, he falls foul on the word of God. "They 'believed,'" saith the Holy Ghost, "who were 'ordained to eternal life,'" Act\_13:48; and, "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved," Act\_2:47. From both which places it is evident that God bestoweth faith only on them whom he hath pre-ordained to eternal life; but most clearly, Rom\_8:29-30, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." St. Austin interpreted this place by adding in every link of the chain, "Only those." However, the words directly import a precedency of predestination before the bestowing of other graces, and also a restraint of those graces to them only that are so predestinated. Now, the inference from this is not only for the form logical, but for the matter also; it containeth the very words of Scripture, "Faith is of God's elect," Tit\_1:1.

25 "Dicis electionem divinam esse regulam fidei dandæ vel non dandæ; ergo, electio non est fidelium, sed fides electorum; sed liceat mihi tua bona venia hoc negare."—Armin. Autip., p. 221. For the other part of the proposition, that faith and obedience are the fruits of our election, they cannot be more peremptory in its denial than the Scripture is plentiful in its confirmation: "He hath chosen us in Christ, that we should be holy," Eph\_1:4; not because we were holy, but that we should be so. Holiness, whereof faith is the root and obedience the body, is that whereunto, and not for which, we are elected. The end and the meritorious cause of any one act cannot be the same; they have divers respects, and require repugnant conditions. Again; we are "predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ," Eph\_1:5. Adoption is that whereby we are assumed into the family of God, when before we are "foreigners, aliens, strangers, afar off;" which we see is a fruit of our predestination, though it be the very entrance into that estate wherein we begin first to please God in the least measure. Of the same nature are all those places of holy writ which speak of God's giving some unto Christ, of Christ's sheep hearing his voice, and others not hearing, because they are not of his sheep; all which, and divers other invincible reasons, I willingly omit, with sundry other false assertions and heretical positions of the Arminians about this fundamental article of our religion, concluding this chapter with the following scheme:—

S. S.

Lib. Arbit.

"Whom he did foreknow, he also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." So that "nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus," Rom\_8:29-30, Rom\_8:39 "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy," Eph\_1:4.

“Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” 2Ti\_1:9.

“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth,” etc., Rom\_9:11. “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me,” Joh\_6:37.

“Many are called, but few are chosen,” Mat\_22:14. “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom,” Luk\_12:32.

“What has thou that thou didst not receive?” 1Co\_4:7. “Are we better than they? No, in no wise,” Rom\_3:9. But we are “predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will,” Eph\_1:5; Joh\_6:37-39; Joh\_10:3; Joh\_13:18; Joh\_17:6; Act\_13:48; Tit\_1:1; 2Ti\_2:19; Jas\_1:17-18, etc.

“No such will can be ascribed unto God, whereby he so would have any to be saved, that from thence his salvation should be sure and infallible,” Armin. “I acknowledge no sense, no perception of any such election in this life,” Grevinch. “We deny that God’s election unto salvation extended itself to singular persons,” Rem. Coll. Hag.

“As we are justified by faith, so we are not elected but by faith,” Grevinch.

“We profess roundly that faith is considered by God as a condition preceding election, and not following as a fruit thereof,” Rem. Coll. Hag.

“The sole and only cause of election is not the will of God, but the respect of our obedience,” Episcop. “For the cause of this love to any person is, [that] the goodness, faith, and piety, wherewith, according to God’s command and his own duty, he is endued, are pleasing to God,” Rem. Apol.

“God hath determined to grant the means of salvation unto all without difference; and according as he foreseeeth men will use those means, so he determineth of them,” Corv. The sum of their doctrine is: God hath appointed the obedience of faith to be the means of salvation. If men fulfil this condition, he determineth to save them, which is their election; but if, after they have entered the way of godliness, they fall from it, they lose also their predestination. If they will return again, they are chosen anew; and if they can hold out to the end, then, and for that continuance, they are peremptorily elected, or postdestinated, after they are saved. Now, whether these position may be gathered from those places of Scripture which deliver this doctrine, let any man judge.

## 03.07. Chapter 7 - Of original sin and the corruption of nature

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CHAPTER VII. Of original sin and the corruption of nature.

HEROD the Great, imparting his counsel of rebuilding the temple unto the Jews, they much feared he would never be able to accomplish his intention,<sup>1</sup> but, like an unwise builder, having demolished the old before he had sat down and cast up his account whether he were able to erect a new, they should (by his project) be deprived of a temple. Wherefore, to satisfy their jealousies, he resolved, as he took down any part of the other, presently to erect a portion of the new in the place thereof. Right so the Arminians, determining to demolish the building of divine providence, grace, and favour, by which men have hitherto ascended into heaven, and fearing lest we should be troubled, finding ourselves on a sudden deprived of that wherein we reposed our confidence for happiness, they have, by degrees, erected a Babylonish tower in the room thereof, whose top, they would persuade us, shall reach unto heaven. First, therefore, the foundation-stones they bring forth, crying, "Hail, hail," unto them, and pitch them on the sandy, rotten ground of our own natures. Now, because heretofore some wise master-builders had discovered this ground to be very unfit to be the basis of such a lofty erection, by reason of a corrupt issue of blood and filth arising in the midst thereof, and overspreading the whole platform, to encourage men to an association in this desperate attempt, they proclaim to all that there is no such evil fountain in the plain which they have chosen for the foundation of their proud building, setting up itself against the knowledge of God in plain terms. Having rejected the providence of God from being the original of that goodness of entity which is in our actions, and his predestination from being the cause of that moral and spiritual goodness wherewith any of them are clothed, they endeavour to draw the praise of both to the rectitude of their nature and the strength of their own endeavours. But this attempt, in the latter case, being thought to be altogether vain, because of the disability and corruption of nature, by reason of original sin, propagated unto us all by our first parents, whereby it is become wholly void of integrity and holiness, and we all become wise and able to do evil, but to do good have no power, no understanding; therefore, they utterly reject this imputation of an inherent, original guilt, and demerit of punishment, as an enemy to our upright and well-deserving condition. And oh, that they were as able to root it out of the hearts of all men, that it should never more be there, as they have been to persuade the heads of divers that it was never there at all!

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Antiq. Judæ., lib, xv. cap. 11, sect. 6.

If any would know how considerable this article concerning original sin hath ever been accounted in the church of Christ, let him but consult the writings of St. Augustine, Prosper, Hilary, Fulgentius, any of those learned fathers whom God stirred up to resist, and enabled to overcome, the spreading Pelagian heresy, or look on those many councils, edicts, decrees of emperors, wherein that heretical doctrine of denying this original corruption is condemned, cursed, and exploded. Now, amongst those many motives they had to proceed so severely against this heresy, one especially inculcated deserves our consideration, namely,— That it overthrew the necessity of Christ's coming into the world to redeem mankind. It is sin only that makes a Saviour necessary;

and shall Christians tolerate such an error as, by direct consequence, infers the coming of Jesus Christ into the world to be needless? My purpose for the present is not to allege any testimonies of this kind; but, holding myself close to my first intention, to show how far in this article, as well as others, the Arminians have apostated from the pure doctrine of the word of God, the consent of orthodox divines, and the confession of this church of England. In the ninth article of our church, which is concerning original sin, I observe especially four things:—First, That it is an inherent evil, the fault and corruption of the nature of every man. Secondly, That it is a thing not subject or conformable to the law of God, but hath in itself, even after baptism, the nature of sin. Thirdly, That by it we are averse from God, and inclined to all manner of evil. Fourthly, That it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. All which are frequently and evidently taught in the word of God, and every one denied by the Arminians, as it may appear by these instances, in some of them:—

First, That it is an inherent sin and pollution of nature, having a proper guilt of its own, making us responsible to the wrath of God, and not a bare imputation of another's fault to us his posterity: which, because it would reflect upon us all with a charge of a native imbecility and insufficiency to good, is by these self-idolizers quite exploded.

2“Infants are simply in that estate in which Adam was before his fall,” saith Venator. 3“Neither is it at all considerable whether they be the children of believers or of heathens and infidels; for infants, as infants, have all the same innocency,” say they jointly, in their Apology: nay, more plainly, 4“*It can be no fault wherewith we are born.*” In which last expression these bold innovators, with one dash of their pens, have quite overthrown a sacred verity, an apostolic, catholic, fundamental article of Christian religion. But, truly, to me there are no stronger arguments of the sinful corruption of our nature than to see such nefarious issues of unsanctified hearts. Let us look, then, to the word of God confounding this Babylonish design.

2 “*Infantes sunt simplices, et stantes in eodem statu in quo Adamus fuit ante lapsum.*”—Venat. Theol. re. et me., fol. 2.

3 “*Nec refert an infantes isti sint fidelium, an ethnicorum liberi, infantium enim, qua infantium, eadem est innocentia.*”—Rem. Apol., p. 87.

4 “*Malum culpæ non est, quia nasci plane est involuntarium,*” etc.—Ibid, p. 84.

First, That the nature of man, which at first was created pure and holy, after the image of God, endowed with such a rectitude and righteousness as was necessary and due unto it, to bring it unto that supernatural end to which it was ordained, is now altogether corrupted and become abominable, sinful, and averse from goodness, and that this corruption or concupiscence is originally inherent in us and derived from our first parents, is plentifully delivered in holy writ, as that which chiefly compels us to a self-denial, and drives us unto Christ. “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me,” saith David, Psa\_51:5. Where, for the praise of God's goodness towards him, he begins with the confession of his native perverseness, and of the sin wherein he was wrapped before he was born. Neither was this peculiar to him alone; he had it not from the particular iniquity of his next progenitors, but by an ordinary propagation from the common parent of us all; though in some of us, Satan, by this Pelagian attempt for hiding the disease, hath made it almost incurable: for even those infants of whose innocency the Arminians boast are unclean in the verdict of St. Paul, 1Co\_7:14, if not sanctified by an interest in the

promise of the covenant; and no unclean thing shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. 5“The weakness of the members of infants is innocent and not their souls;” they want nothing, but that the members of their bodies are not as yet ready instruments of sin. They are not sinful only by external denomination,—accounted so because of the imputation of Adam’s actual transgression unto them; for they have all an uncleanness in them by nature, Job\_14:4, from which they must be “cleansed with the washing of water by the word,” Eph\_5:20. Their whole nature is overspread with such a pollution as is proper only to sin inherent, and doth not accompany sin imputed; as we may see in the example of our Saviour, who was pure, immaculate, holy, undefiled, and yet “the iniquity of us all” was imputed unto him. Hence are those phrases of “washing away sin,” Act\_22:16; of “cleansing filth,” 1Pe\_3:21, Tit\_3:5. Something there is in them, as soon as they are born, excluding them from the kingdom of heaven; for except they also be born again of the Spirit, they shall not enter into it, Joh\_3:5.

5 “Imbecillitas membrorum infantilium innocens est, non animus.”—Aug.

Secondly, The opposition that is made between the righteousness of Christ and the sin of Adam, Romans 5:1-21, which is the proper seat of this doctrine, showeth that there is in our nature an inbred sinful corruption for the sin of Adam holds such relation unto sinners, proceeding from him by natural propagation, as the righteousness of Christ doth unto them who are born again of him by spiritual regeneration. But we are truly, intrinsically, and inherently sanctified by the Spirit and grace of Christ; and therefore there is no reason why, being so often in this chapter called sinners, because of this original sin, we should cast it off, as if we were concerned only by an external denomination, for the right institution of the comparison and its analogy quite overthrows the solitary imputation.

Thirdly, All those places of Scripture which assert the proneness of our nature to all evil, and the utter disability that is in us to do any good, that wretched opposition to the power of godliness, were with from the womb we are replenished, confirms the same truth. But of these places I shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

Fourthly, The flesh, in the Scripture phrase, is a quality (if I may so say) inherent in us; for that, with its concupiscence, is opposed to the Spirit and his holiness, which is certainly inherent in us. Now, the whole man by nature is flesh; for “that which is born of the flesh is flesh,” Joh\_3:6;—it is an inhabiting thing, a thing that “dwelleth” within us, Rom\_7:17. In brief, this vitiosity, sinfulness, and corruption of our nature is laid open,—First, By all those places which cast an aspersion of guilt, or desert of punishment, or of pollution, on nature itself; as Eph\_2:1, Eph\_2:3, we are “dead in trespasses and sins,” being “by nature the children of wrath, even as others,” being wholly encompassed by a “sin that doth easily beset us.” Secondly, By them which fix this original pravity in the heart, will, mind, and understanding, Eph\_4:18; Rom\_12:2; Gen\_6:5. Thirdly, By those which positively decipher this natural depravation, 1Co\_2:14; Rom\_8:7;—or, Fourthly, That place it in the flesh, or old man, Rom\_6:6; Gal\_5:16. So that it is not a bare imputation of another’s fault, but an intrinsical adjacent corruption of our nature itself, that we call by this name of original sin. But, alas! it seems we are too large carvers for ourselves, in that wherewith we will not be contented. The Arminians deny all such imputation, as too heavy a charge for the pure, unblamable condition wherein they are brought into this world. They deny, I say, that they are guilty of Adam’s sin, as sinning in him, or that his sin is any way imputed unto us; which is their

second assault upon the truth of this article of faith.

6“Adam sinned in his own proper person, and there is no reason why God should impute that sin of his unto infants,” saith Boræus. The nature of the first covenant, the right and power of God, the comparison instituted by the apostle between Adam and Christ, the divine constitution, whereby Adam was appointed to be the head, fountain, and origin of all human kind, are with him no reasons at all to persuade it. 7“For it is against equity,” saith their Apology, “that one should be accounted guilty for a sin that is not his own,—that he should be reputed nocent who, in regard of his own will, is truly innocent.” And here, Christian reader, behold plain Pelagianism obtruded on us without either welt<sup>8</sup> or guard; men on, sudden made pure and truly innocent, notwithstanding all that natural pollution and corruption the Scripture everywhere proclaims them to be replenished withal. Neither is the reason they intimate of any value, that their wills assented not to it, and which a little before they plainly urge. “It is,” say they, 9“against the nature of sin that that should be counted a sin to any by whose own proper will it was not committed:” which being all they have to say, they repeat it over and over in this case,—“It must be voluntary, or it is no sin.” But I say this is of no force at all; for,—first, St. John, in his most exact definition of sin, requires not voluntariness to the nature of it, but only an obliquity, a deviation from the rule. It is an anomy,—a discrepancy from the law, which whether voluntary or no it skills not much; but sure enough there is in our nature such a repugnancy to the law of God. So that, secondly, if originally we are free from a voluntary actual transgression, yet we are not from an habitual voluntary digression and exorbitancy from the law. But, thirdly, in respect of our wills, we are not thus innocent neither; for we all sinned in Adam, as the apostle affirmeth. Now, all sin is voluntary, say the Remonstrants, and therefore Adam’s transgression was our voluntary sin also, and that in divers respects,—first, in that his voluntary act is imputed to us as ours, by reason of the covenant which was made with him on our behalf. But because this, consisting in an imputation, must needs be extrinsical unto us, therefore, secondly, we say that Adam, being the root and head of all human kind, and we all branches from that root, all parts of that body whereof he was the head, his will may be said to be ours. We were then all that one man,<sup>10</sup>—we were all in him, and had no other will but his; so that though that be extrinsical unto us, considered as particular persons, yet it is intrinsical, as we are all parts of one common nature. As in him we sinned, so in him we had a will of sinning. Thirdly, original sin is a defect of nature, and not of this or that particular person:<sup>11</sup> whereon Alvarez grounds this difference of actual and original sin,—that the one is always committed by the proper will of the sinner; to the other is required only the will of our first parent, who was the head of human nature. Fourthly, It is hereditary, natural, and no way involuntary, or put into us against our wills. It possesseth our wills and inclines us to voluntary sins.

6 “Adamus in propria persona peccavit, et nulla est ratio cur Deus peccatum illud infantibus imputet.”—Bor. in Artic, xxxi.

7 “Contra æquitatem est, ut quis reus agatur propter peccatum non suum ut vere nocens judicetur, qui quoad propriam suam voluntatem innocens est.”—Rei. Apol., c. vii. p. 84.

8 An old Saxon word denoting a fence or border—ED.

9 “Contra naturam peccati est, ut censeatur peccatum, aut ut proprie in peccatum imputetur, quod propria voluntate commissum non est.”—Rem. Apol., c. vii. p. 84.

10 “Onines eramus unus ille homo.”—Aug.

11 “Est voluntarium, voluntate primi originantis, non voluntate contrahentis: ratione naturæ, non personæ.”—Thom. i. ii., q. 81, a.

I see no reason, then, why Corvinus should affirm, as he doth, 12“That it is absurd, that by one man’s disobedience many should be made actually disobedient,” unless he did it purposely to contradict St. Paul, teaching us that “by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,” Rom\_5:19. Paulus ait, Corvinus negat; eligite cui credatis;—Choose whom you will believe, St. Paul or the Arminians. The sum of their endeavour in this particular is, to clear the nature of man from being any way guilty of Adam’s actual sin, as being then in him a member and part of that body whereof he was the head, or from being obnoxious unto an imputation of it by reason of that covenant which God made with us all in him. So that, denying, as you saw before, all inherent corruption and pravity of nature, and now all participation, by any means, of Adam’s transgression, methinks they cast a great aspersion on Almighty God, however he dealt with Adam for his own particular, yet for casting us, his most innocent posterity, out of paradise. It seems a hard case, that having no obliquity or sin in our nature to deserve it, nor no interest in his disobedience whose obedience had been the means of conveying so much happiness unto us, we should yet be involved in so great a punishment as we are; for that we are not now by birth under a great curse and punishment, they shall never be able to persuade any poor soul who ever heard of paradise, or the garden where God first placed Adam. And though all the rest, in their judgment, be no great matter, but an infirmity and languor of nature, or some such thing, yet, whatever it be, they confess it lights on us as well as him. 13“We confess,” say they, “that the sin of Adam may be thus far said to be imputed to his posterity, inasmuch as God would have them all born obnoxious to that punishment which Adam incurred by his sin, or permitted that evil which was inflicted on him to descend on them.” Now, be this punishment what it will, never so small, yet if we have no demerit of our own, nor interest in Adam’s sin, it is such an act of injustice as we must reject from the Most Holy, with a “God forbid.” Far be it from the Judge of all the world to punish the righteous with the ungodly. If God should impute the sin of Adam unto us, and thereon pronounce us obnoxious to the curse deserved by it,—if we have a pure, sinless, unspotted nature,—even this could scarce be reconciled with that rule of his proceeding in justice with the sons of men, “The soul that sinneth it shall die;” which clearly granteth an impunity to all not tainted with sin. Sin and punishment, though they are sometimes separated by his mercy, pardoning the one and so not inflicting the other, yet never by his justice, inflicting the latter where the former is not. Sin imputed, by itself alone, without an inherent guilt, was never punished in any but Christ. The unsearchableness of God’s love and justice, in laying the iniquity of us all upon him who had no sin, is an exception from that general rule he walketh by in his dealing with the posterity of Adam. So that if punishment be not due unto us for a solely imputed sin, much less, when it doth not stand with the justice and equity of God to impute any iniquity unto us at all, can we justly be wrapped in such a curse and punishment as woful experience teaches us that we lie under. Now, in this act of injustice, wherewith they charge the Almighty, the Arminians place the whole nature of original sin. 14“We account not,” say they, “original sin for a sin properly so called, that should make the posterity of Adam to deserve the wrath of God, nor for an evil that may properly be called a punishment, but only for an infirmity of nature;” which they interpret to be a kind of evil that, being inflicted on Adam, God suffereth to descend upon his posterity. So all the depravation of nature, the pollution, guilt,

and concupiscence we derive from our first parents, the imputation of Adam's actual transgression, is all straitened to a small infirmity inflicted on poor innocent creatures. But let them enjoy their own wisdom, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish. The Scripture is clear that the sin of Adam is the sin of us all, not only by propagation and communication (whereby not his singular fault, but something of the same nature, is derived unto us), but also by an imputation of his actual transgression unto us all, his singular disobedience being by this means made ours. The grounds of this imputation I touched before, which may be all reduced to his being a common person and head of all our nature; which investeth us with a double interest in his demerits, whilst so he was:—1. As we were then in him and parts of him; 2. As he sustained the place of our whole nature in the covenant God made with him;—both which, even according to the exigence of God's justice, require that his transgression be also accounted ours. And St. Paul is plain, not only that "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," Rom\_5:19, by the derivation of a corrupted nature, but also that "by one man's offence judgment came upon all," Rom\_5:18. Even for his one sin all of us are accounted to have deserved judgment and condemnation; and therefore, Rom\_5:12, he affirmeth that by one man sin and death entered upon all the world; and that because we have all sinned in him: which we no otherwise do but that his transgression in God's estimation is accounted ours. And the opposition the apostle there maketh between Christ and his righteousness, and Adam and his disobedience, doth sufficiently evince it; as may appear by this figure:—15

12 "Absurdum est ut ex unius inobedientia multi actu inobedientes, facti essent."—Corv. ad Molin., cap. vii. sect. 8.

13 "Fatemur peccatum Adami, a Deo posse dici imputatum posteris ejus, quatenus Deus posteros Adami eidem malo, cui Adamus per peccatum obnoxium se reddidit, obnoxios nasci voluit; sive quatenus Deus, malum, quod Adamo inflictum erat in pœnara, in posteros ejus dimanare et transire permisit."—Rem. Apol., p. 84.

14 "Peccatum itaque originale nec habent pro peccato proprie dicto, quod posteros Adami odio Dei dignos faciat, nec pro malo, quod per modum proprie dictæ pœnæ ab Adamo in posteros dimanet sed pro infirmitate," etc.—Rem. Apol., fol. 84.

15 Paræus., ad Rom. v. The whole similitude chiefly consists in the imputation of Adam's sin and Christ's righteousness, unto the seed of the one by nature, and of the other by grace. But that we are counted righteous for the righteousness of Christ is, among Protestants (though some differ in the manner of their expressions), as yet without question; and, therefore, are no less undoubtedly accounted sinners by, or guilty of, the first sin of Adam.

I shall not show their opposition unto the truth in many more particulars concerning this article of original sin, having been long ago most excellently prevented, even in this very method, by the way of antithesis to the Scripture and the orthodox doctrine of our church, by the famously learned Master Reynolds, in his excellent treatise, "Of the Sinfulness of Sin;" where he hath discovered their errors, fully answered their sophistical objections, and invincibly confirmed the truth from the word of God. Only, as I have showed already how they make this we call original sin no sin at all, neither inherent in us nor imputed unto us, nor no punishment truly so called; so, because our church saith directly that it meriteth damnation, I will briefly show what they conceive to be the desert thereof.

First, For Adam himself, they affirm “that the death threatened unto him if he transgressed the covenant, and due unto him for it,<sup>16</sup> was neither death temporal, for that before he was subject unto, by the primary constitution of his nature; nor yet such an eternal death as is accompanied with damnation or everlasting punishment.” No! why, then, let us here learn some new divinity. Christians have hitherto believed that whatsoever may be comprised under the name of death, together with its antecedents, consequents, and attendants, was threatened to Adam in this commination; and divines, until this day, can find but these two sorts of death in the Scripture, as penal unto men, and properly so called; and shall we now be persuaded that it was neither of these that was threatened unto Adam? It must be so, if we will believe the Arminians; it was neither the one nor the other of the former; but whereas he was created mortal, and subject to a temporal death, the sanction of his obedience was a threatening of the utter dissolution of his soul and body, or a reduction to their primitive nothing. But what if a man will not here take them at their words, but believe, according to St. Paul, That death entered by sin; that if we had never sinned, we had never died; that man, in the state of innocency, was, by God’s constitution, free even from temporal death, and all things directly conducing thereunto? secondly, That this death, threatened to our first parents, comprehended damnation also of soul and body for evermore, and that of their imaginary dissolution there is not the least intimation in the word of God?—why, I confess they have impudence enough, in divers places, to beg that we would believe their assertions, but never confidence enough to venture once to prove them true. Now, they who make so slight of the desert of this sin in Adam himself will surely scarce allow it to have any ill merit at all in his posterity.

16 “Cum de æterna morte loquuntur Remonstrantes in hac de Adamo quæstione, non intelligunt mortem illam, quæ æterna pœna sensus—dicitur,” etc.—Rem. Apol., cap. iv. p. 57.

17“Whether ever any one were damned for original sin, and adjudged to everlasting torments, is deservedly doubted of. Yea, we doubt not to affirm that never any was so damned,” saith Corvinus. And that this is not his sole opinion he declares by telling you no less of his master, Arminius. 18“It is most true,” saith he, “that Arminius teacheth that it is perversely said that original sin makes a man guilty of death.” Of any death, it should seem, temporal, eternal, or that annihilation they dream of. And he said true enough. Arminius doth affirm it, adding this reason, 19“Because it is only the punishment of Adam’s actual sin.” Now, what kind of punishment they make this to be I showed you before. But truly I wonder, seeing they are everywhere so peremptory that the same thing cannot be a sin and a punishment, why they do so often nickname this “infirmity of nature,” and call it a sin; which they suppose to be as far different from it as fire from water. Is it because they are unwilling, by new naming it, to contradict St. Paul in express terms, never proposing it under any other denomination? or, if they can get a sophistical elusion for him, is it lest, by so doing, Christians should the more plainly discern their heresy? Or whatever other cause it be, in this I am sure they contradict themselves, notwithstanding in this they agree full well, 20“That God rejecteth none for original sin only,” as Episcopius speaks. And here, if you tell them that the question is not “de facto,” what God doth, but “de jur,” what such sinners deserve, they tell us plainly, 21“That God will not destinate any infants to eternal punishment for original sin, without their own proper actual sins; neither can he do so by right or in justice.” So that the children of Turks, Pagans, and the like infidels, strangers from the covenant of grace, departing in their infancy, are far happier than any Christian men, who must undergo a hard warfare against sin and Satan, in danger to fall finally away at the last hour, and through many

difficulties entering the kingdom of heaven, when they, without farther trouble, are presently assumed thither for their innocency; yea, although they are neither elected of God (for, as they affirm, he chooseth none but for their faith, which they have not); nor redeemed by Christ (for he died only for sinners, “he saveth his people from their sins,” which they are not guilty of); nor sanctified by the Holy Ghost, all whose operations they restrain to a moral suasion, whereof infants are not a capable subject;—which is not much to the honour of the blessed Trinity, that heaven should be replenished with them whom the Father never elected, the Son never redeemed, nor the Holy Ghost sanctified.

17 “An ullus omnino homo, propter peccatum originis solum damnetur, ac æternis cruciatibus addicatur, merito dubitari potest: imo nullum ita damnari affirmare non veremur.”—Corv. ad Molin., cap. ix. sect. 5.

18 “Verissimum est Arminium docere, perverse dici peccatum originis reum facere mortis.”—Corv. ad Tilen., p. 388.

19 “Perverse dicitur peccatum originis, reum facere mortis, quum peccatum illud pœna sit peccati ætualis Adami.”—Armin. Resp. ad Quæst. ix. a. 3.

20 “Deus neminem ob solum peccatum originis rejecit.”—Episcop., disp. ix. thes. 2.

21 “Pro certo statuunt Deum nullos infantes, sine actualibus ac propriis peccatis morientes, æternis cruciatibus destinare velle, aut jure destinare posse ob peccatum quod vocatur originis.”—Rem. Apol., p. 87. And thus you see what they make of this original pravity of our nature, at most an infirmity or languor thereof,—neither a sin, nor the punishment of sin properly so called, nor yet a thing that deserves punishment as a sin; which last assertion, whether it be agreeable to holy Scripture or no, these three following observations will declare:—

First, There is no confusion, no disorder, no vanity in the whole world, in any of God’s creatures, that is not a punishment of our sin in Adam. That great and almost universal ruin of nature, proceeding from the curse of God overgrowing the earth, and the wrath of God revealing itself from heaven, is the proper issue of his transgression. It was of the great mercy of God that the whole frame of nature was not presently rolled up in darkness, and reduced to its primitive confusion. Had we ourselves been deprived of those remaining sparks of God’s image in our souls, which vindicate us from the number of the beasts that perish,—had we been all born fools and void of reason,—by dealing so with some in particular, he showeth us it had been but justice to have wrapped us in the same misery, all in general. All things, when God first created them, were exceeding good, and thought so by the wisdom of God himself; but our sin even compelled that good and wise Creator to hate and curse the work of his own hands. “Cursed is the ground,” saith he to Adam, “for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee,” Gen\_3:17-18. Hence was that heavy burden of “vanity,” that “bondage of corruption,” under which to this day “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain” until it be delivered, Rom\_8:20-22. Now, if our sin had such a strange malignant influence upon those things which have no relation unto us but only as they were created for our use, surely it is of the great mercy of God that we ourselves are not quite confounded; which doth not yet so interpose itself, but that we are all compassed with divers sad effects of this iniquity, lying actually under divers pressing miseries, and deservedly obnoxious to everlasting destruction. So that,—

Secondly, Death temporal, with all its antecedents and attendants,—all infirmities, miseries, sicknesses, wasting destroying passions, casualties that are penal, all evil conducing thereunto or waiting on it,—is a punishment of original sin; and this not only because the first actual sin of Adam is imputed to us, but most of them are the proper issues of that native corruption and pollution of sin which is stirring and operative within us for the production of such sad effects, our whole nature being by it thoroughly defiled. Hence are all the distortures and distemperatures of the soul by lusts, concupiscence, passions, blindness of mind, perverseness of will, inordinateness of affections, wherewith we are pressed and turmoiled, even proper issues of that inherent sin which possesseth our whole souls.

Upon the body, also, it hath such an influence, in disposing it to corruption and mortality, as it is the original of all those infirmities, sicknesses, and diseases, which make us nothing but a shop of such miseries for death itself. As these and the like degrees are the steps which lead us on apace in the road that tends unto it, so they are the direct, internal, efficient causes thereof, in subordination to the justice of Almighty God, by such means inflicting it as a punishment of our sins in Adam. Man before his fall, though not in regard of the matter whereof he was made, nor yet merely in respect of his quickening form, yet in regard of God's ordination, was immortal, a keeper of his own everlastingness. Death, to which before he was not obnoxious, was threatened as a punishment of his sin: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" the exposition of which words, given by God at the time of his inflicting this punishment, and pronouncing man subject to mortality, clearly showeth that it comprehended temporal death also: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Our return to dust is nothing but the soul leaving the body, whereby before it was preserved from corruption. Farther, St. Paul opposeth that death we had by the sin of Adam to the resurrection of the body by the power of Christ: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," 1Co\_15:21-22. The life which all shall receive by the power of Christ at the last day is essentially a reunion of soul and body; and therefore their separation is a thing we incurred by the sin of Adam. The same apostle also, Romans 5:1-21, describeth a universal reign of death over all, by reason of the first transgression. Even diseases, also, in the Scripture, are attributed unto sin, as their meritorious cause, Joh\_5:14; 1Co\_11:30; Rev\_2:22. And, in respect of all these, the mercy of God doth not so interpose itself but that all the sons of men are in some sort partakers of them.

Thirdly, The final desert of original sin, as our article speaketh, is damnation,—the wrath of God, to be poured on us in eternal torments of body and soul. To this end, also, many previous judgments of God are subservient,—as the privation of original righteousness (which he took and withheld upon Adam's throwing it away), spiritual desertion, permission of sin, with all other destroying depravations of our nature, as far as they are merely penal; some of which are immediate consequents of Adam's singular actual transgression, as privation of original righteousness; others, as damnation itself, the proper effects of that derived sin and pollution that is in us. There is none damned but for his own sin. When divines affirm that by Adam's sin we are guilty of damnation, they do not mean that any are actually damned for this particular fact; but that by his sin, and our sinning in him, by God's most just ordination, we have contracted that exceeding pravity and sinfulness of nature which deserveth the curse of God and eternal damnation. It must be an inherent uncleanness that actually excludes out of the kingdom of heaven, Rev\_21:27; which uncleanness the apostle shows to be in infants not sanctified by an interest in the covenant.

In brief, we are baptized unto the “remission of sins,” that we may be saved, Act\_2:38. That, then, which is taken away by baptism is that which hinders our salvation; which is not the first sin of Adam imputed, but our own inherent lust and pollution. We cannot be washed, and cleansed, and purged from an imputed sin; which is done by the laver of regeneration. From that which lies upon us only by an external denomination, we have no need of cleansing; we may be said to be freed from it, or justified, but not purged. The soul, then, that is guilty of sin shall die, and that for its own guilt. If God should condemn us for original sin only, it were not by reason of the imputation of Adam’s fault, but of the iniquity of that portion of nature in which we are proprietaries.

Now here, to shut up all, observe, that in this inquiry of the desert of original sin, the question is not, What shall be the certain lot of those that depart this life under the guilt of this sin only? but, What this hereditary and native corruption doth deserve in all those in whom it is? for, as St. Paul saith, “We judge not them that are without” (especially infants), 1Co\_5:13. But for the demerit of it in the justice of God, our Saviour expressly affirmeth, that “except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” Joh\_3:3, Joh\_3:5; and let them that can, distinguish between a not going to heaven and a going to hell: a third receptacle of souls in the Scripture we find not. St. Paul also tells us that “by nature we are the children of wrath,” Eph\_2:3. Even originally and actually we are guilty of and obnoxious unto that wrath, which is accompanied with fiery indignation, that shall consume the adversaries. Again, we are assured that no unclean thing shall enter into heaven, Rev\_21:27; with which hell-deserving uncleanness children are polluted: and, therefore, unless it be purged with the blood of Christ, they have no interest in everlasting happiness. By this means sin is come upon all to condemnation; and yet do we not peremptorily censure to hell all infants departing this world without the laver of regeneration,—the ordinary means of waiving the punishment due to this pollution. That is the question “de facto,” which we before rejected. Yea, and two ways there are whereby God saveth such infants, snatching them like brands out of the fire:—

First, By interesting them in the covenant, if their immediate or remote parents have been believers. He is a God of them and of their seed, extending his mercy unto a thousand generations of them that fear him.

Secondly, By his grace of election, which is most free, and not tied to any conditions; by which I make no doubt but God taketh many unto him in Christ whose parents never knew, or had been despisers of, the gospel. And this is the doctrine of our church, agreeable to the Scripture, affirming the desert of original sin to be God’s wrath and damnation. To both which how opposite is the Arminian doctrine may thus appear:—

S. S.

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“By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation,” Rom\_5:18.

“By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,” Rom\_5:19.

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me,” Psa\_51:5.

“Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy,” 1Co\_7:14. “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one,” Job\_14:4. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom

of God," Joh\_3:3. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," Joh\_3:6.

"By nature the children of wrath, even as others," Eph\_2:3. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned," to wit, in him, Rom\_5:12. "For I know that in me (that is, my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing," Rom\_7:18.

"In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," Gen\_2:17. "For as in Adam all die, even so," etc., 1Co\_15:22. "By nature the children of wrath," Eph\_2:3. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth," Rev\_21:27.

"Adam sinned in his own proper person only, and there is no reason why God should impute that sin unto infants." Boræus.

"It is absurd that by one man's disobedience many should be made actually disobedient," Corvinus.

"Infants are simply in that estate on which Adam was before his fall," Venator.

"Neither is it considerable whether they be the children of believers or of heathens; for all infants have the same innocency," Rem. Apol. "That which we have by birth can be no evil of sin, because to be born is plainly involuntary," Idem.

"Origin sin is neither a sin properly so called, which should make the posterity of Adam guilty of God's wrath, nor yet a punishment of any sin on them," Rem. Apol. "It is against equity that one should be accounted guilty of a sin that is not his own, that he should be judged nocent who in regard of his own will is truly innocent," Idem.

"God neither doth nor can in justice appoint any to hell for original sin," Rem. Apol. "It is perversely spoken, that original sin makes any one guilty of death," Armin. "We no way doubt to affirm, that never any one was damned for original sin," Corv.

## 03.08. Chapter 8 - Of the state of Adam before the fall, or of original righteousness

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CHAPTER VIII. Of the state of Adam before the fall, or of original righteousness. IN the last chapter we discovered the Arminian attempt of readvancing the corrupted nature of man into that state of innocency and holiness wherein it was at first by God created; in which design, because they cannot but discern that the success is not answerable to their desires, and not being able to deny but that for so much good as we want (having cast it away), or evil of sin that we are subject unto more than we were at our first creation, we must be responsible to the justice of God, they labour to draw down our first parents, even from the instant of their forming, into the same condition wherein we are engaged by reason of corrupted nature. But, truly, I fear they will scarce obtain so prosperous an issue of their endeavour as Mohammed had when he promised the people he would call a mountain unto him; which miracle when they assembled to behold, but the mountain would not stir for all his calling, he replied, "If the mountain will not come to Mohammed, Mohammed will go to the mountain," and away he packed towards it. For we shall find that our Arminians can neither themselves climb the high mountain of innocency, nor yet call it down into the valley of sin and corruption wherein they are lodged. We have seen already how vain and frustrate was their former attempt: let us now take a view of their aspiring insolence, in making the pure creatures of God, holy and undefiled with any sin, to be invested with the same wretchedness and perverseness of nature with ourselves.

It is not my intention to enter into any curious discourse concerning the state and grace of Adam before his fall, but only to give a faithful assent to what God himself affirmed of all the works of his hands,—they were exceeding good. No evil, no deformity, or anything tending thereunto, did immediately issue from that Fountain of goodness and wisdom; and therefore, doubtless, man, the most excellent work of his hands, the greatest glory of his Creator, was then without spot or blemish, endued with all those perfections his nature and state of obedience was capable of. And careful we must be of casting any aspersions of defect on him that we will not with equal boldness ascribe to the image of God.

Nothing doth more manifest the deviation of our nature from its first institution, and declare the corruption wherewith we are polluted, than that propensity which is in us to every thing that is evil; that inclination of the flesh which lusteth always against the Spirit; that lust and concupiscence which fomenteth, conceiveth, hatcheth, bringeth forth, and nourisheth sin; that perpetual proneness that is in unregenerate nature to every thing that is contrary to the pure and holy law of God. Now, because neither Scripture nor experience will suffer Christians quite to deny this pravity of our nature, this averseness from all good and propensity to sin, the Arminians extenuate as much as they are able, affirming that it is no great matter, no more than Adam was subject unto in the state of innocency. But, what! did God create in Adam a proneness unto evil? was that a part of his glorious image in whose likeness he was framed? Yea, saith Corvinus, 1 "By reason of his creation, man had an affection to what was forbidden by the law." But yet this seems injustice, that

2“God should give a man a law to keep, and put upon his nature a repugnancy to that law;” as one of them affirmed at the synod of Dort. “No,” saith the former author; 3“man had not been fit to have had a law given unto him, had he not been endued with a propension and natural inclination to that which is forbidden by the law.” But why is this so necessary in men rather than angels? No doubt there was a law, a rule for their obedience, given unto them at their first creation, which some transgressed, when others kept it inviolate. Had they also a propensity to sin concreated with their nature? had they a natural affection put upon them by God to that which was forbidden by the law? Let them only who will be wise beyond the word of God affix such injustice on the righteous Judge of all the earth. But so it seems it must be. 4“There was an inclination in man to sin before the fall, though not altogether so vehement and inordinate as it is now,” saith Arminius. Hitherto we have thought that the original righteousness wherein Adam was created had comprehended the integrity and perfection of the whole man; not only that whereby the body was obedient unto the soul, and all the affections subservient to the rule of reason for the performance of all natural actions, but also a light, uprightness, and holiness of grace in the mind and will, whereby he was enabled to yield obedience unto God for the attaining of that supernatural end whereunto he was created. No; but 5“original righteousness,” say our new doctors, “was nothing but a bridle to help to keep man’s inordinate concupiscence within bounds:” so that the faculties of our souls were never endued with any proper innate holiness of their own. 6“In the spiritual death of sin there are no spiritual gifts properly wanting in the will, because they were never there,” say the six collocutors at the Hague.

1 “Ex ratione creationis homo habebat affectum ad ea quæ vetabantur.”—Corv. ad Molin., cap. vi. sect. 1.

2 “Deus homini repugnantiam indidit adversus legem.”—Joh. Gest. in Synod. Confes.

3 “Homo non est idoneus cui lex feratur, quando in eo, ad id quod lege vetatur, non est propensio, ac inclinatio naturalis.”—Corv. ad Molin., cap. x. sect. 15.

4 “Inclinatio ad peccandum ante lapsum in homine fuit, licet non ita vehemens ac inordinata ut nunc est.”—Armin. ad Artic. Rcspon.

5 “Justitia originalis instar fræni fuit, quod præstabat internæ concupiscentiæ ordinationem.”—Corv. ad Molin., cap. viii. sect. 1.

6 “In spiritali morte non separantur proprie dona spiritalia a voluntate, quia illa nunquam fuerunt ei insita.”—Rem. Coll. Hag., p. 250. The sum is, man was created with a nature not only weak and imperfect, unable by its native strength and endowments to attain that supernatural end for which he was made, and which he was commanded to seek, but depraved also with a love and desire of things repugnant to the will of God, by reason of an inbred inclination to sinning. It doth not properly belong to this place to show how they extenuate those gifts also with which they cannot deny but that he was endued, and also deny those which he had, as a power to believe in Christ, or to assent unto any truth that God should reveal unto him; and yet they grant this privilege to every one of his posterity, in that depraved condition of nature whereinto by sin he cast himself and us. We have all now a power of believing in Christ; that is, Adam, by his fall, obtained a supernatural endowment far more excellent than any he had before. And let them not here pretend the universality of the new covenant until they can prove it; and I am certain it will be long enough.

But this, I say, belongs not to this place; only, let us see how, from the word of God, we may overthrow the former odious heresy:—

God in the beginning “created man in his own image,” Gen\_1:27,—that is, “upright,” Ecc\_7:29, endued with a nature composed to obedience and holiness. That habitual grace and original righteousness wherewith he was invested was in a manner due unto him for the obtaining of that supernatural end whereunto he was created. A universal rectitude of all the faculties of his soul, advanced by supernatural graces, enabling him to the performance of those duties whereunto they were required, is that which we call the innocency of our first parents. Our nature was then inclined to good only, and adorned with all those qualifications that were necessary to make it acceptable unto God, and able to do what was required of us by the law, under the condition of everlasting happiness. Nature and grace, or original righteousness, before the fall, ought not to be so distinguished as if the one were a thing prone to evil, resisted and quelled by the other; for both complied, in a sweet union and harmony, to carry us along in the way of obedience to eternal blessedness. [There was] no contention between the flesh and the Spirit; but as all other things at theirs, so the whole man jointly aimed at his own chiefest good, having all means of attaining it in his power. That there was then no inclination to sin, no concupiscence of that which is evil, no repugnancy to the law of God, in the pure nature of man, is proved, because,—

First, The Scripture, describing the condition of our nature at the first creation thereof, intimates no such propensity to evil, but rather a holy perfection, quite excluding it. We were created “in the image of God,” Gen\_1:27,—in such a perfect uprightness as is opposite to all evil inventions, Ecc\_7:29; to which image when we are again in some measure “renewed” by the grace of Christ, Col\_3:10, we see by the first-fruits that it consisted in “righteousness and true holiness,”—in truth and perfect holiness, Eph\_4:24.

Secondly, An inclination to evil, and a lusting after that which is forbidden, is that inordinate concupiscence wherewith our nature is now infected; which is everywhere in the Scripture condemned as a sin; St. Paul, in the seventh to the Romans, affirming expressly that it is a sin, and forbidden by the law, Rom\_7:7, producing all manner of evil, and hindering all that is good,—a “body of death,” Rom\_7:24; and St. James maketh it even the womb of all iniquity, Jas\_1:14-15. Surely our nature was not at first yoked with such a troublesome inmate. Where is the uprightness and innocency we have hitherto conceived our first parents to have enjoyed before the fall? A repugnancy to the law must needs be a thing sinful. An inclination to evil, to a thing forbidden, is an anomaly,—a deviation and discrepancy from the pure and holy law of God. We must speak no more, then, of the state of innocency, but only of a short space wherein no outward actual sins were committed. Their proper root, if this be true, was concreated with our nature. Is this that obediential harmony to all the commandments of God which is necessary for a pure and innocent creature, that hath a law prescribed unto him? By which of the ten precepts is this inclination to evil required? Is it by the last, “Thou shalt not covet?” or by that sum of them all, “Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart,” etc.? Is this all the happiness of paradise,—to be turmoiled with a nature swelling with abundance of vain desires, and with a main stream carried headlong to all iniquity, if its violent appetite be not powerfully kept in by the bit and bridle of original righteousness? So it is we see with children now;7 and so it should have been with them in paradise, if they were subject to this rebellious inclination to sin.

7 “Vidi ego zelantem parvulum qui nondum loquebatur, et intuebatur pallidus, amaro aspectu colluctaneum suum.”—Aug.

Thirdly, and principally, Whence had our primitive nature this affection to those things that were forbidden it,—this rebellion and repugnancy to the law, which must needs be an anomaly, and so a thing sinful? There was as yet no demerit, to deserve it as a punishment. What fault is it to be created? 8The operation of any thing which hath its original with the being of the thing itself must needs proceed from the same cause as doth the essence or being itself; as the fire’s tending upwards relates to the same original with the fire: and, therefore, this inclination or affection can have no other author but God; by which means he is entitled not only to the first sin, as the efficient cause, but to all the sins in the world arising from thence. Plainly, and without any strained consequences, he is made the author of sin; for even those positive properties which can have no other fountain but the author of nature, being set on evil, are directly sinful. And here the idol of free-will may triumph in this victory over the God of heaven. Heretofore all the blame of sin lay upon his shoulders, but now he begins to complain, Οκ γὰρ ἀτιμῶς ἐμὶ λλ Ζεῶς καμῶρα. “It is God and the fate of our creation that hath placed us in this condition of naturally affecting that which is evil. Back with all your charges against the ill government of this new deity within his imaginary dominion; what hurt doth he do but incline men unto evil, and God himself did no less at the first?” But let them that will, rejoice in these blasphemies: it sufficeth us to know that “God created man upright,” though he “hath sought out many inventions;” so that in this following dissonancy we cleave to the better part:—

8 “Operatio quæ simul incipit cum esse rei, est ei ab agente, a quo habet esse, sicut moveri sursum inest igni a generante.”—Alvar., p. 199.

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“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them,” Gen\_1:27. “Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him,” Col\_3:10. “—which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,” Eph\_4:24.

“Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but he hath sought out many inventions,” Ecc\_7:29. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin,” Rom\_5:12.

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God tempteth no man: but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust,” Jas\_1:13-14.

“There was in man before the fall an inclination to sinning, though not so vehement and inordinate as now it is,” Armin. “God put upon man a repugnancy to his law,” Gesteramus in the Synod. “Man, by reason of his creation had an affection to those things that are forbidden by the law,” Corv.

“The will of man had never any spiritual endowments,” Rem. Apol.

“It was not fit that man should have a law given him, unless he had a natural inclination to what was forbidden by the law,” Corv.

### 03.09. Chapter 9 - Of the death of Christ, and of the efficacy of his merits

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CHAPTER IX. Of the death of Christ, and of the efficacy of his merits. The sum of those controversies, wherewith the Arminians and their abettors have troubled the church, about the death of Christ, may be reduced to two heads:—First, Concerning the object of his merit, or whom he died for; secondly, Concerning the efficacy and end of his death, or what he deserved, procured, merited, and obtained, for them for whom he died. In resolution of the first, they affirm that he died for all and every one; of the second, that he died for no one man at all in that sense Christians have hitherto believed that he laid down his life, and submitted himself to bear the burden of his Father’s wrath for their sakes. It seems to me a strange extenuation of the merit of Christ, to teach that no good at all by his death doth redound to divers of them for whom he died. What participation in the benefit of his suffering had Pharaoh or Judas? Do they not at this hour, and shall they not to eternity, feel the weight and burden of their own sins? Had they either grace in this world, or glory in the other, that they should be said to have an interest in the death of our Saviour? Christians have hitherto believed, that for whom Christ died, for their sins he made satisfaction, that they themselves should not eternally suffer for them. Is God unjust to punish twice for the same fault? his own Son once, and again the poor sinners for whom he suffered? I cannot conceive an intention in God that Christ should satisfy his justice for the sin of them that were in hell some thousands of years before, and yet be still resolved to continue their punishment on them to all eternity. No, doubtless: Christ giveth life to every one for whom he gave his life; he loseth not one of them whom he purchased with his blood. The first part of this controversy may be handled under these two questions:—First, Whether God giving his Son, and Christ making his soul a ransom for sin, intended thereby to redeem all and every one from their sins, that all and every one alike, from the beginning of the world to the last day, should all equally be partakers of the fruits of his death and passion; which purpose of theirs is in the most frustrate? Secondly, Whether God had not a certain infallible intention of gathering unto himself a “chosen people,” of collecting a “church of first-born,” of saving his “little flock,” of bringing some certainly to happiness, by the death of his only Son; which in the event he doth accomplish? The second part also may be reduced to these two heads:—First, Whether Christ did not make full satisfaction for all their sins for whom he died, and merited glory, or everlasting happiness, to be bestowed on them upon the performance of those conditions God should require? Secondly (which is the proper controversy I shall chiefly insist upon), Whether Christ did not procure for his own people a power to become the sons of God, merit and deserve at the hands of God for them, grace, faith, righteousness, and sanctification, whereby they may be enabled infallibly to perform the conditions of the new covenant, upon the which they shall be admitted to glory? To the first question of the first part of the controversy, the Arminians answer affirmatively,—to wit, that Christ died for all alike; the benefit of his passion belongs equally to all the posterity of Adam. And to the second negatively,—that God had no such intention of bringing many chosen sons unto salvation by the death of Christ, but determined of grace and glory no more precisely to one than to another, to

John than Judas, Abraham than Pharaoh? Both which, as the learned Molin observed,<sup>1</sup> seemed to be invented to make Christianity ridiculous, and expose our religion to the derision of all knowing men: for who can possibly conceive that one by the appointment of God should die for another, and yet that other, by the same justice, be allotted unto death himself, when one's death only was due; that Christ hath made a full satisfaction for their sins who shall everlastingly feel the weight of them themselves; that he should merit and obtain reconciliation with God for them who live and die his enemies, grace and glory for them who are graceless in this life and damned in that which is to come; that he should get remission of sins for them whose sins were never pardoned? In brief, if this sentence be true, either Christ by his death did not reconcile us unto God, make satisfaction to his justice for our iniquities, redeem us from our sins, purchase a kingdom, an everlasting inheritance for us,—which I hope no Christian will say; or else all the former absurdities must necessarily follow,—which no rational man will ever admit.

1 Molin. Suffrag. ad Synod. Dordra.

Neither may we be charged as straiteners of the merit of Christ; for we advance the true value and worth thereof (as hereafter will appear) far beyond all the Arminians ascribe unto it. We confess that that “blood of God,” Act\_20:28, of the “Lamb without blemish and without spot,” 1Pe\_1:19, was so exceedingly precious, of that infinite worth and value, that it might have saved a thousand believing worlds, Joh\_3:16; Rom\_3:22. His death was of sufficient dignity to have been made a ransom for all the sins of every one in the world. And on this internal sufficiency of his death and passion is grounded the universality of evangelical promises; which have no such restriction in their own nature as that they should not be made to all and every one, though the promulgation and knowledge of them are tied only to the good pleasure of God's special providence. Mat\_16:17; as also that economy and dispensation of the new covenant whereby, the partition-wall being broken down, there remains no more difference between Jew and Gentile, the utmost borders of the earth being given in for Christ's inheritance. So that, in some sense, Christ may be said to die for “all,” and “the whole world;”—first, Inasmuch as the worth and value of his death was very sufficient to have been made a price for all their sins; secondly, Inasmuch as this word “all” is taken for some of all sorts (not for every one of every sort), as it is frequently used in the holy Scripture: so Christ being lifted up, “drew all unto him,” Joh\_12:32; that is, believers out of all sorts of men. The apostles cured all diseases, or some of all sorts: they did not cure every particular disease, but there was no kind of disease that was exempted from their power of healing. So that where it is said that Christ “died for all,” it is meant either, first, All the faithful; or, secondly, Some of all sorts; thirdly, Not only Jews, but Gentiles. For,—

Secondly, The proper counsel and intention of God in sending his Son into the world to die was, that thereby he might confirm and ratify the new covenant to his elect, and purchase for them all the good things which are contained in the tenure of that covenant,—to wit, grace and glory; that by his death he might bring many (yet some certain) children to glory, obtaining for them that were given unto him by his Father (that is, his whole church) reconciliation with God, remission of sins, faith, righteousness, sanctification, and life eternal. That is the end to which they are to be brought, and the means whereby God will have them attain it. He died that he might gather the dispersed children of God, and make them partakers of everlasting glory,—to “give eternal life to as many as God gave him,” Joh\_17:2. And on this purpose of himself and his Father is founded the intercession of Christ for his elect and chosen people; performed partly on the earth, John 17:1-26,

partly in heaven, before the throne of grace: which is nothing but a presentation of himself and his merits, accompanied with the prayers of his mediatorship before God, that he would be pleased to grant and effectually to apply the good things he hath by them obtained to all for whom he hath obtained them. His intercession in heaven is nothing but a continued oblation of himself. So that whatsoever Christ impetred, merited, or obtained by his death and passion, must be infallibly applied unto and bestowed upon them for whom he intended to obtain it; or else his intercession is vain, he is not heard in the prayers of his mediatorship. An actual reconciliation with God, and communication of grace and glory, must needs betide all them that have any such interest in the righteousness of Christ as to have it accepted for their good. The sole end why Christ would so dearly purchase those good things is, an actual application of them unto his chosen: God set forth the propitiation of his blood for the remission of sins, that he might be the justifier of him which believeth on Jesus, Rom\_3:25-26. But this part of the controversy is not that which I principally intend; only, I will give you a brief sum of those reasons which overthrow their heresy in this particular branch thereof:—

First, The death of Christ is in divers places of the Scripture restrained to his “people,” and “elect,” his “church,” and “sheep,” Mat\_1:21; Joh\_10:11-18; Act\_20:28; Eph\_5:25; Joh\_11:51-52; Rom\_8:32; Rom\_8:34; Heb\_2:9; Heb\_2:14; Rev\_5:9; Dan\_9:26;—and therefore the good purchased thereby ought not to be extended to “dogs,” “reprobates,” and “those that are without.”

Secondly, For whom Christ died, he died as their sponsor, in their room and turn, that he might free them from the guilt and desert of death; which is clearly expressed Rom\_5:6-8. “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed,” Isa\_53:5-6, etc. “He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,” Gal\_3:13. “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin,” 2Co\_5:21. Evidently he changeth turns with us, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Yea, in other things, it is plain in the Scripture that to die for another is to take his place and room, with an intention that he should live, 2Sa\_18:33; Romans 5:1-21. So that Christ dying for men made satisfaction for their sins, that they should not die. Now, for what sins he made satisfaction, for them the justice of God is satisfied; which surely is not done for the sins of the reprobates, because he justly punisheth them to eternity upon themselves, Mat\_5:26.

Thirdly, For whom Christ “died,” for them also he “rose again,” to make intercession for them: for whose “offences he was delivered,” for their “justification he was raised,” Rom\_4:25; Rom\_5:10. He is a high priest “to make intercession for them” in the holy of holies for whom “by his own blood he obtained eternal redemption,” Heb\_9:11-12. These two acts of his priesthood are not to be separated; it belongs to the same mediator for sin to sacrifice and pray. Our assurance that he is our advocate is grounded on his being a propitiation for our sins. He is an “advocate” for every one for whose sins his blood was a “propitiation,” 1Jn\_2:1-2. But Christ doth not intercede and pray for all, as himself often witnesseth, John 17.; he “maketh intercession” only for them who “come unto God by him,” Heb\_7:25. He is not a mediator of them that perish, no more than an advocate of them that fail in their suits; and therefore the benefit of his death also must be restrained to them who are finally partakers of both. We must not so disjoin the offices of Christ’s mediatorship, that one of them may be versated about some towards whom he exerciseth not the other; much less ought we so to separate the several acts of the same office. For whom Christ is a priest, to offer himself a sacrifice for their sins, he is surely a king, to apply the good things purchased by his

death unto them, as Arminius himself confesseth; much more to whom he is a priest by sacrifice, he will be a priest by intercession. And, therefore, seeing he doth not intercede and pray for every one, he did not die for every one.

Fourthly, For whom Christ died he merited grace and glory, faith and salvation, and reconciliation with God; as I shall show hereafter. But this he hath not done for all and every one. Many do never believe; the wrath of God remaineth upon some; the wrath of God abideth on them that do not believe, Joh\_3:36. To abide argueth a continued, uninterrupted act. Now, to be reconciled to one, and yet to lie under his heavy anger, seem to me **■σ■στατα**,—things that will scarce consist together. The reasons are many; I only point at the heads of some of them.

Fifthly, Christ died for them whom God gave unto him to be saved: “Thine they were, and thou gavest them me,” Joh\_17:6. He layeth down his life for the sheep committed to his charge, Joh\_10:11. But all are not the sheep of Christ, all are not given unto him of God to be brought to glory; for of those that are so given there is not one that perisheth, for “he giveth eternal life to as many as God hath given him,” Joh\_17:2. “No man is able to pluck them out of his Father’s hand,” Joh\_10:28-29.

Sixthly, Look whom, and how many, that love of God embraced that was the cause of sending his Son to redeem them; for them, and so many, did Christ, according to the counsel of his Father, and in himself, intentionally lay down his life. Now, this love is not universal, being his “good pleasure” of blessing with spiritual blessings and saving some in Christ, Eph\_1:4-5; which good pleasure of his evidently comprehendeth some, when others are excluded, Mat\_11:25-26. Yea, the love of God in giving Christ for us is of the same extent with that grace whereby he calleth us to faith, or bestoweth faith on us: for “he hath called us with an holy calling, according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus,” 2Ti\_1:9; which, doubtless, is not universal and common unto all.

Innumerable other reasons there are to prove, that seeing God hath given his elect only, whom only he loved, to Christ to be redeemed; and seeing that the Son loveth only those who are given him of his Father, and redeemeth only whom he loveth; seeing, also, that the Holy Spirit, the love of the Father and the Son, sanctifieth all, and only them, that are elected and redeemed,—it is not our part, with a preposterous liberality, against the witness of Christ himself, to assign the salvation attained by him as due to them that are without the congregation of them whom the Father hath loved and chosen, without that church which the Son loved and gave his life for, nor none of the members of that sanctified body whereof Christ is the Head and Saviour, I urge no more, because this is not that part of the controversy that I desire to lay open.

I come now to consider the main question of this difference, though sparingly handled by our divines, concerning what our Saviour merited and purchased for them for whom he died. And here you shall find the old idol playing his pranks, and quite divesting the merit of Christ from the least ability or power of doing us any good; for though the Arminians pretend, very speciously, that Christ died for all men, yet, in effect, they make him die for no one man at all, and that by denying the effectual operation of his death, and ascribing the proper issues of his passion to the brave endeavours of their own Pelagian deity.

We, according to the Scriptures, plainly believe that Christ hath, by his righteousness, merited for us grace and glory; that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings, in, through, and for him; that he is made unto us righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that he hath procured for us, and that God for his sake bestoweth on us, every grace in this life that maketh us differ from others, and all that glory we hope for in that which is to come; he procured for us remission of all our sins, an actual reconciliation with God, faith, and obedience. Yea, but this is such a desperate doctrine as stabs at the very heart of the idol, and would make him as altogether useless as if he were but a fig-tree log. What remaineth for him to do, if all things in this great work of our salvation must be thus ascribed unto Christ and the merit of his death? Wherefore the worshippers of this great god. Lib. Arbit., oppose their engines against the whole fabric, and cry down the title of Christ's merits to these spiritual blessings, in the behalf of their imaginary deity.

Now, because they are things of a twofold denomination about which we contend before the King of heaven, each part producing their evidence, the first springing from the favour of God towards us, the second from the working of his grace actually within us, I shall handle them severally and apart;—especially because to things of this latter sort, gifts, as we call them, enabling us to fulfil the condition required for the attaining of glory, we lay a double claim on God's behalf; first. As the death of Christ is the meritorious cause procuring them of him; secondly, As his free grace is their efficient cause working them in us;—they also producing a double title, whereby they would invest their beloved darling with a sole propriety in causing these effects; first. In regard that they are our own acts, performed in us and by us; secondly, As they are parts of our duty which we are enjoined to do. So that the quarrel is directly between Christ's merits and our own free-will about procuring the favour of God, and obtaining grace and righteousness. Let us see what they say to the first.

They affirm that 2“the immediate and proper effect or end of the death and passion of Christ is, not an actual ablation of sin from men, not an actual remission of iniquities, justification and redemption of any soul;” that is, Christ's death is not the meritorious cause of the remission of our sins, of redemption and justification. The meritorious cause, I say: for of some of them, as of justification, as it is terminated in us, we confess there are causes of other kinds, as faith is the instrument and the Holy Spirit the efficient thereof; but for the sole meritorious procuring cause of these spiritual blessings, we always took it to be the righteousness and death of Christ, believing plainly that the end why Christ died, and the fruit of his sufferings, was our reconciliation with God, redemption from our sins, freedom from the curse, deliverance from the wrath of God and power of hell,—though we be not actual partakers of these things, to the pacification of our own consciences, without the intervening operation of the Holy Spirit, and faith by him wrought in us.

2 “Immediata mortis Christi effectio, ac passionis, illa est non actualis peccatorum ab his aut illis ablatio, non actualis remissio, non justificatio, non actualis horum aut illorum redemptio.”—Armin. Antip., p. 76. But if this be not, pray what is obtained by the death of Christ? Why, 3“a potential, conditionate reconciliation, not actual and absolute,” saith Corvinus. But yet this potential reconciliation being a new expression, never intimated in the Scripture, and scarce of itself intelligible, we want a farther explanation of their mind, to know what it is that directly they assign to the merits of Christ. Wherefore they tell us that the fruit of his death was 4“such an impetration or obtaining of reconciliation with God, and redemption for us, that God thereby hath a power, his justice being satisfied, and so not compelling him to the contrary, to grant remission of sins to

sinful men on what condition he would;" or, as another speaketh it, 5 "There was, by the effusion of Christ's blood, a right obtained unto and settled in God, of reconciling the world, and of opening unto all a gate of repentance and faith in Christ." But now, whereas the Scripture everywhere affirmeth that Christ died for our good, to obtain blessings for us, to purchase our peace, to acquire and merit for us the good things contained in the promise of the covenant, this opinion seems to restrain the end and fruit thereof to the obtaining of a power and liberty unto God of prescribing us a condition whereby we may be saved. But yet, it may be, thus much at least Christ obtained of God in our behalf, that he should assign faith in him to be this condition, and to bestow it upon us also. No; neither the one nor the other. 6 "After all this, had it so seemed good unto his wisdom, God might have chosen the Jews, and others, following the righteousness of the law, as well as believers; because he might have assigned any other condition of salvation besides faith in Christ," saith Grevinchovius. Notwithstanding, then, the death of Christ for us, we might have been held to the old rule, "Do this, and live." But if this be true, I cannot perceive how it may be said that Christ died to redeem us from our sins, to save our souls, and bring us unto glory. Neither, perhaps, do they think this to be any great inconvenience; for the same author affirmeth that 7 "Christ cannot be said properly to die to save any one." And a little after he more fully declares himself, that 8 "after Christ had obtained all that he did obtain by his death, the right remained wholly in God to apply it, or not to apply it, as it should seem good unto him; the application of grace and glory to any man was not the end for which Christ obtained them, but to get a right and power unto God of bestowing those things on what sort of men he would;"—which argues no redemption of us from our sins, but a vindication of God from such a condition wherein he had not power to forgive them; not an obtaining of salvation for us, but of a liberty unto God of saving us on some condition or other.

3 "Reconciliatio potentialis et conditionata non actualis et absoluta, per mortem Christi impetratur."—Corv. ad Molin., cap. xxviii. sect. 11.

4 "Remissionis, justificationis, et redemptionis, apud Deum impetratio, qua factum est, ut Deus jam possit, utpote justitia cui satisfactum est non obstante, hominibus peccatoribus peccata remittere."—Armin., ubi sup.

5 "Autoris mens non est alia, quam effuso sanguine Christi reconciliandi mundum Deo jus impetratum fuisse, et inito novo fœdere et gratioso cum hominibus, Deum gratiæ ostium omnibus denuo, pœnitentiæ ac veræ in Christum fidei lege, adaperuisse."—Epistol. ad Wal, p. 93.

6 "Potuisset Deus, si ita sapientiæ suæ visum fuisset, operarios, Judæos, vel alios etiam præter fideles eligere, quia potuit aliam salutis conditionem, quam fidem in Christum exigere."—Grevinch. ad Ames., p. 415.

7 "Christus non est proprie mortuus ad aliquem salvandum."—Idem, ibid, p. 8.

8 "Postquam impetratio præstita ac peracta esset, Deo jus suum integrum mansit, pro arbitrio suo, eam applicare, vel non applicare; nec applicatio finis impetrationis propriè fuit, sed jus et potestas applicandi, quibus et qualibus vellet."—P. 9. But now, after God hath got this power by the death of Christ, and out of his gracious good pleasure assigned faith to be the means for us to attain those blessings, he hath procured himself a liberty to bestow. Did Christ obtain this faith for us of him, if it be a thing not in our own power? No; 9 "faith is not obtained by the death of Christ," saith Corvinus.

So that there is no good thing, no spiritual blessing, into which any man in the world hath any interest by the death of Christ: which is not so great an absurdity but that they are most ready to grant it. Arnoldus confesseth, 10<sup>9</sup>“that he believes that the death of Christ might have enjoyed its end, or his merit its full force, although never any had believed: ” and again,11<sup>11</sup> “The death and satisfaction of Christ being accomplished, it might come to pass that, none fulfilling the condition of the new covenant, none should be saved.” So also saith Grevinchovius. O Christ! that any pretending to profess thy holy name should thus slight the precious work of thy death and passion! Surely never any before, who counted it their glory to be called Christians, did ever thus extenuate (their friends the Socinians only excepted) the dignity of his merit and satisfaction. Take but a short view of what benefit they allow to redound to us by the effusion of his precious blood, and you may see what a pestilent heresy these men have laboured to bring into the church. Neither faith nor salvation, grace nor glory, hath he purchased for us,—not any spiritual blessing, that by our interest in his death we can claim to be ours! It is not such a reconciliation with God as that he thereupon should be contented again to be called our God; it is not justification, nor righteousness, nor actual redemption from our sins; it did not make satisfaction for our iniquities, and deliver us from the curse; 12<sup>12</sup>“only it was a means of obtaining such a possibility of salvation, as that God, without wronging of his justice, might save us if he would, one way or other.” So that, when Christ had done all that he could, there was not one man in the world immediately the better for it; notwithstanding the utmost of his endeavour, every one might have been damned with Judas to the pit of hell; for 13<sup>13</sup>“he died as well for Simon Magus and Judas as he did for Peter and Paul,” say the Arminians. Now, if no more good redound to us by the death of Christ than to Simon Magus, we are not much obliged to him for our salvation. Nay, he may be rather said to have redeemed God than us; for he procured for him immediately a power to redeem us if he would; for us only, by virtue of that power, a possibility to be redeemed;—which leaves nothing of the nature of merit annexed to his death, for that deserveth that something be done, not only that it may be done; the workman deserveth that his wages be given him, and not that it may be given him. And then what becomes of all the comfort and consolation that is proposed to us in the death of Christ? But it is time to see how this stubble is burned and consumed by the word of God, and that established which they thought to overthrow.

9 “Fides non est impetrata merito Christi,” etc.—Corv. ad Molin., cap. xxviii. p. 419.

10 “Se omnino credere, futurum fuisse, ut finis mortis Christi constaret, etiamsi nemo credidisset.”—Idem. cap. xxvii. sect. 3, 4.

11 “Posita et præstita Christi morte et satisfactione, fieri potest, ut, nemine novi fœderis conditionem præstante, nemo salvaretur.”—Idem. Grevinch. ad Ames. p. 9.

12 “Impetratio salutis pro omnibus, est æquisitio possibilitatis, ut nimirum Deus, illæsa sua justitia, hominem peccatorem possit recipere in gratiam.”—Rem. Coll. Hag., p. 172.

13 “Pro Juda ac Petro mortuus est Christus, et pro Simone Mago et Juda tam quam pro Paule et Petro.”—Rem, Synod, p. 320.

First, It is clear that Christ died to procure for us an actual reconciliation with God, and not only a power for us to be reconciled unto him; for “when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,” Rom\_5:10. We enjoy an actual reconciliation unto God by his death. He is

content to be called “our God” when we are enemies, without the intervening of any condition on our part required; though the sweetness, comfort, and knowledge of this reconciliation do not compass our souls before we believe in him. Again, we have remission of sins by his blood, and justification from them; not a sole vindication into such an estate wherein, if it please God and ourselves, our sins are pardonable: for we are “justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins,” Rom\_3:24-25. Yea, he obtained for us by his death righteousness and holiness. “He gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it,” Eph\_5:25-26; “that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle;” that we should be “holy and without blemish,” Eph\_5:27. Where, first, we have whom Christ died or gave himself for, even his church; secondly, what he obtained for it,—holiness and righteousness, a freedom from the spots and blemishes of sin, that is, the grace of justification and sanctity: “He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” 2Co\_5:21. And, lastly, he died to purchase for us “an eternal inheritance,” Heb\_9:15. So that both grace and glory are bestowed on them for whom he died, as the immediate fruits of his death and passion.

Secondly, See what the Scripture ■ητ■ς, “expressly,” assigneth as the proper end and immediate effect (according to the purpose of God and his own intention) of the effusion of the blood of Jesus Christ, and you shall find that he intended by it to take away the sins of many; to “make his soul an offering for sin,” that he might “see his seed,” that “the pleasure of the Lord might prosper in his hand,” Isa\_53:10; to be “a ransom for many,” Mat\_20:28; to “bear the sins of many,” Heb\_9:28. He “bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we should live unto righteousness,” 1Pe\_2:24; that “we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” 2Co\_5:21; thereby reconciling us unto God, 2Co\_5:19. He died to “reconcile us unto God, in the body of his flesh through death,” that we might be “holy and unblamable,” Col\_1:21-22; to “purge our sins,” Heb\_1:3; to “obtain eternal redemption for us,” Heb\_9:12. So that if Christ by his death obtained what he did intend, he hath purchased for us not only a possibility of salvation, but holiness, righteousness, reconciliation with God, justification freedom from the guilt and condemning power of sin, everlasting redemption, eternal life and glory in heaven.

Thirdly, I appeal unto the conscience of all Christians,—First, Whether they do not suppose the very foundation of all their consolation to be stricken at, when they shall find those places of Scripture<sup>14</sup> that affirm Christ to have died to take away our sins, to reconcile us unto God, to put away or abolish our transgressions, to wash and regenerate us, perfectly to save us, and purchase for us an everlasting redemption, whereby he is become unto us righteousness, and redemption, and sanctification, the Lord our righteousness, and we become the righteousness of God in him, to be so wrested as if he should be said only to have done something from which these things might happily follow?

14 Heb\_9:12; Heb\_9:14-15; Heb\_9:24; Heb\_9:28; Isa\_53:10; 1Jn\_2:2, etc.

Secondly, Whether they think it not a ready way to impair their love and to weaken their faith in Christ, when they shall be taught that Christ hath done no more for them than for those that are damned in hell; that, be their assurance never so great that Christ died for them, yet there is enough to be laid to their charge to condemn them; that though God is said to have reconciled

them unto himself in Christ, Col\_1:19-20, yet indeed he is as angry with them as with any reprobate in the world; that God loveth us not first, but so long as we continue in a state of enmity against him, before our conversion, he continues our enemy also, so that the first act of friendship or love must be performed on our part, notwithstanding that the Scripture saith, “When we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God,” Rom\_5:10?

Thirdly, Whether they have not hitherto supposed themselves bound to believe that Christ died for their sins, and rose for their justification? Do they not think it lawful to pray that God would bestow upon them grace and glory for Christ’s sake? and to believe that Jesus Christ was such a mediator of the new covenant as procured for the persons covenanted withal all the good things comprehended in the promise of that covenant?

I will not farther press upon this prevarication against Christian religion; only, I would desire all the lovers of Jesus Christ seriously to consider whether these men do truly aim at his honour and advancing the dignity of his merit, and not rather at the crying up of their own endeavours, seeing the sole cause of their denying these glorious effects of the blood of Christ is to appropriate the praise of them unto themselves; as we shall see in the next chapter.

These charges are never to be waived by the vanity of their sophistical distinctions, as of that of impetration and application; which, though it may be received in an orthodox meaning, yet not in that sense, or rather nonsense, whereunto they abuse it;—namely, as though Christ had obtained that for some which shall never be imparted unto them; that all the blessings procured by his death are proper to none, but pendent in the air for them that can or will catch them: whereupon, when we object 15that by this means all the efficacy of the merit of Christ is in our own power, they readily grant it, and say it cannot otherwise be. Let them that can, receive these monsters in Christianity; for my part, in these following contradictory assertions I will choose rather to adhere to the authority of the word of God than of Arminius and his sectaries:—

15 “Sic efficacia meriti Christi tota penes nos stabit, qui vocationem alioqui inefficacem, efficacem reddimus; sane, fieri aliter non potest.”—Rem. Apol, p. 93.

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“He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” 2Co\_5:21. “He loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,” Eph\_5:25, Eph\_5:27.

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,” 2Co\_5:19.

“When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand,” Isa\_53:10.

“By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities,” Isa\_53:11.

“Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many,” Heb\_9:28. “By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,” Heb\_9:12. “He hath

reconciled you in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouable,” Col\_1:21-22.

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins,” etc.: “that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus,” Rom\_3:25-26.

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we were healed,” 1Pe\_2:24.

The immediate effect of the death of Christ is not the remission of sins, or the actual redemption of any,” Armin. “Christ did not properly die to save any one,” Grevinch.

“A potential and conditionate reconcilia- tion, not actual and absolute, is obtained by the death of Christ,” Corv.

“I believe it might have come to pass that the death of Christ might have had its end, though never any man had believed,” Corv.

“The death and satisfaction of Christ being accomplished, yet it may so come to pass that, none at all fulfilling the condition of the new covenant, none might be saved,” Idem.

“The impetration of salvation for all, by the death of Christ, is nothing but the obtaining of a possibility thereof; that God, without wronging his justice, may open unto them a gate of mercy, to be entered on some condition,” Rem. Coll. Hag.

“Notwithstanding the death of Christ, God might have assigned any other condition of salvation as well as faith, or have chosen the Jews following the righteous- ness of the law,” Grevinch.

“Why, then the efficacy of the death of Christ depends wholly on us.” “True; it cannot otherwise be,” Rem. Apol.

### 03.10. Chapter 10 - Of the cause of faith, grace, and righteousness

CHAPTER X. Of the cause of faith, grace, and righteousness. THE second part of this controversy is in particular concerning grace, faith, and holiness, sincere obedience to the precepts of the new covenant, all whose praise we appropriate to the Most High by reason of a double interest,—first, Of the merit of Christ, which doth procure them for us; secondly, Of the Holy Spirit, which works them in us. The death of Christ is their meritorious cause; the Spirit of God and his effectual grace their efficient, working instrumentally with power by the word and ordinances. Now, because this would deprive the idol of his chiefest glory, and expose him to open shame, like the bird “furtivis nudata coloribus,” the Arminians advance themselves in his quarrel, and in behalf of their darling quite exclude both merit of Christ and Spirit of God from any title to their production.

First, For the merit of Christ. Whereas we affirm that God “blesseth us with all spiritual blessings in him,” or for his sake, Eph\_1:3, amongst which, doubtless, faith possesseth not the lowest room; that “he is made unto us righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;” that “he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;” that he is “the Lord our righteousness,” and glories to be called by that name (and whatever he is unto us, it is chiefly by the way of merit); that “to us it is given **■π■ρ Χριστο■**, for Christ’s sake, to believe on him,” Php\_1:29, where **■π■ρ Χριστο■** is plainly referred to **δ■δοται**, [**■χαρ■σθη**,?] “is given,”—as if the apostle should have said, “Christ is the meritorious cause of the bestowing of those good gifts, faith and constancy unto martyrdom, upon you;”—when, I say, we profess all these to be the proper and immediate products of the passion and blood of Christ, these turbulent Davusses come in with a prohibition, and quite expel it from having any interest therein.

1“There is nothing more vain, nothing more foolish,” say they in their Apology, “than to attribute our regeneration and faith unto the death of Christ; for if Christ may be said to have merited for us faith and regeneration, then faith cannot be a condition whose performance God should require at the hands of sinners under the pain of eternal damnation.” And again, 2“If faith be the effect of the merit of Christ, it cannot be our duty.” No? Suppose, then, that the church should pray that it would please God, for Christ’s sake, to call home those sheep that belong to his fold not as yet collected,—that he would grant faith and repentance, for the merit of his Son, to them that are as yet afar off,—were this an altogether vain and foolish prayer? Let others think as they please, it is such a vanity as I desire not to be weaned from; nor any one else, I believe, that loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity. Oh, that Christians should patiently endure such a diminution of their Saviour’s honour, as with one dash of an Arminian pen to have the chief effects of his death and passion quite obliterated! If this be a motive to the love and honour of the Son of God, if this be a way to set forth the preciousness of his blood, by denying the efficacy thereof in enabling us by faith to get an interest in the new covenant, most Christians in the world are under a necessity of being new catechised by these seraphical doctors. Until when, they must give us leave to believe, with the apostle, that God “blesseth us with all spiritual blessings in Christ,” Eph\_1:3; and we will take leave to account faith a spiritual blessing, and, therefore, bestowed on us for Christ’s sake. Again; since our regeneration is nothing but a “purging of our consciences from dead works that we may serve

the living God,” which being done by “the blood of Christ,” as the apostle witnesseth, Heb\_9:14, we will ascribe our new birth, or forming anew, to the virtue of that grace which is purchased by his blood; that “precious blood” it is which “redeemeth us from our vain conversation,” 1Pe\_1:18-19, by whose efficacy we are vindicated from the state of sin and corrupted nature wherein we are born.

1 “Nihil ineptius, nihil vanius, quam regenerationem et fidem merito Christi tribuere; si enim Christus nobis meritis dicatur fidem et regenerationem, tum fides conditio esse non poterat quam a peccatoribus Deus sub comminatione mortis æternæ exigeret.”—Rem. Apol., cap. viii. p. 95.

2 “Si fides sit effectum meriti Christi, non potest esse actus officii nostri.”—Idem. The Arminians have but one argument, that ever I could meet with, whereby they strive to rob Christ of this glory of meriting and procuring for us faith and repentance; and that is, because they are such acts of ours as in duty and obedience to the precepts of the gospel we are bound to perform;<sup>3</sup> and this they everywhere press at large, “usque et usque.” In plain terms, they will not suffer their idol to be accounted defective in any thing that is necessary to bring us unto heaven. Now, concerning this argument, that nothing which God requireth of us can be procured for us by Christ, I would have two things noted:—First, That the strength of it consists in this, that no gift of God bestowed upon us can be a thing well-pleasing to him, as being in us, for all his precepts and commands signify only what is well-pleasing unto him that we should be or do; and it is not the meriting of any thing by Christ, but God’s bestowing of it as the effect thereof, which hinders it from being a thing requirable of us as a part of our duty: which I shall consider hereafter. Only now observe, that there being nothing in us, by the way of habit or act, from the beginning of our faith to the consummation thereof, from our new birth until we become perfect men in Christ by the finishing of our course, that is not required of us in the gospel, all and every grace whereof we are in this life partakers are, by this means, denied to be the gifts of God. Secondly, Consider the extent of this argument itself. Nothing whose performance is our duty can be merited for us by Christ. When the apostle beseecheth us to be “reconciled unto God,” I would know whether it be not a part of our duty to yield obedience to the apostle’s exhortation? If not, his exhortation is frivolous and vain: if so, then to be reconciled unto God is a part of our duty; and yet the Arminians sometimes seem to confess that Christ hath obtained for us a reconciliation with God. The like may be said in divers other particulars. So that this argument either proveth that we enjoy no fruit of the death of Christ in this life, or (which is most true) it proveth nothing at all; for neither the merit of Christ procuring nor God bestowing any grace in the habit doth at all hinder but that, in the exercise thereof, it may be a duty of ours, inasmuch as it is done in us and by us. Notwithstanding, then, this exception,—which cannot stand by itself alone without the help of some other not as yet discovered,—we will continue our prayers, as we are commanded, in the name of Christ; that is, that God would bestow upon us those things we ask for Christ’s sake, and that by an immediate collation, yea, even then when we cry with the poor penitent, “Lord, help our unbelief,” or with the apostles, “Lord, increase our faith.”

3 Rem. Apol., ubi sup.; Corv. ad Molin., cap. xxviii. sect. 9.

Secondly, The second plea on God’s behalf, to prove him the author and finisher of all those graces whereof in this life we are partakers, ariseth from what the Scripture affirmeth concerning his working these graces in us, and that powerfully, by the effectual operation of his Holy Spirit. To

which the Arminians oppose a seeming necessity that they must needs be our own acts, contradistinct from his gifts, because they are in us and commanded by him. The head, then, of this contention betwixt our God and their idol about the living child of grace is, whether he can work that in us which he requireth of us. Let us hear them pleading their cause:—

3 Rem. Apol., ubi sup.; Corv. ad Molin., cap. xxviii. sect. 9.

4 “It is most certain that that ought not to be commanded which is wrought in us; and that cannot be wrought in us which is commanded. He foolishly commandeth that to be done of others who will work in them what he commandeth,” saith their Apology. O foolish St. Prosper, who thought that it was the whole Pelagian heresy to say, 5 “That there is neither praise nor worth, as ours, in that which Christ bestoweth upon us!” Foolish St. Augustine, praying, 6 “Give us, O Lord, what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt!” Foolish Benedict, bishop of Rome, who gave such a form to his prayer as must needs cast an aspersion of folly on the Most High! 7 “O Lord,” saith he, “teach us what we should do; show us whither we should go; work in us what we ought to perform.” O foolish fathers of the second Arausican council, affirming, 8 “That many good things are done in man which he doth not himself; but a man doth no good which God doth not so work that he should do it!” And again, “As often as we do good, God worketh in us and with us, that we may so work.” In one word, this makes fools of all the doctors of the church who ever opposed the Pelagian heresy, inasmuch as they all unanimously maintained that we are partakers of no good thing in this kind without the effectual powerful operation of the almighty grace of God, and yet our faith and obedience, so wrought in us, to be most acceptable unto him. Yea, what shall we say to the Lord himself, in one place commanding us to fear him, and in another promising that he will put his fear into our hearts, that we shall not depart from him? Is his command foolish, or his promise false? The Arminians must affirm the one or renounce their heresy. But of this, after I have a little farther laid open this monstrous error from their own words and writings.

4 “Illud certissimum est, nec jubendura esse quod efficitur, nec efficiendum quod jubetur. Stulte jubet et vult ab alio fieri aliquid, qui ipse quod jubet in eo efficere vult.”—Rem. Apol., cap. ix. p. 105, a.

5 At exigua conclusione pene tu totum Pelagianum dogma confirmas, dicendo, nullius laudis esse ac meriti; si id in eo Christus quod ipse donaverat prætulisset.”—Prosp. ad Collat., cap. xxxvi.

6 “Da, Domine, quod jubes, et jube quod vis.”—Aug.

7 “O Domine, doce nos quid agamus; quo gradiamur ostende; quid efficiamus operare.”—Ben. Pap. in Concil. Legunstad.

8 “Multa in homine bona fiunt, quæ non facit homo: nulla vero facit homo bona, quæ non Deus præstet ut faciat.”—Consil. Arau. ii. can. 20. “ Quoties enim bona agimus, Deus in nobis et nobiscum, ut operemur, operatur.”—Can. 9.

9 “Can any one,” say they, “wisely and seriously prescribe the performance of a condition to another, under the promise of a reward and threatening of punishment, who will effect it in him to whom it is prescribed? This is a ridiculous action, scarce worthy of the stage.” That is, seeing Christ hath affirmed that “he that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned,” Mar\_16:16, whereby faith is established the condition of salvation, and unbelief

threatened with hell, if God should by his Holy Spirit ingenerate faith in the hearts of any, causing them so to fulfil the condition, it were a mere mockery, to be exploded from a theatre as an unlikely fiction; which, what an aspersion it casts upon the whole gospel of Christ, yea, on all God's dealings with the children of men ever since, by reason of the fall, they became unable of themselves to fulfil his commands, I leave to all men's silent judgment. Well, then, seeing they must be accounted **■σ■στατα**, things inconsistent, that God should be so righteous as to show us our duty, and yet so good and merciful as to bestow his graces on us, let us hear more of this stuff. 10“Faith and conversion cannot be our obedience, if they are wrought in us by God,” say they at the Hague; and Episcopius, 11“That it is a most absurd thing to affirm that God either effects by his power, or procureth by his wisdom, that the elect should do those things that he requireth of them.” So that where the Scripture calls faith the gift and work of God, they say it is an improper locution, inasmuch as he commands it; properly, it is an act or work of our own. And for that renowned saying of St. Augustine, that 12“God crowneth his own gifts in us,” “ it is not to be received without a grain of salt;” that is, some such gloss as wherewith they corrupt the Scripture. The sum at which they aim is, that to affirm that God bestoweth any graces upon us, or effectually worketh them in us, contradicteth his word requiring them as our duty and obedience. By which means they have erected their idol into the throne of God's free grace and mercy, and attribute unto it all the praise due to those many heavenly qualifications the servants of God are endowed withal, for they never have more good in them, no, nor so much, as is required; all that they have or do is but their duty;—which, how derogatory it is to the merit of Christ, themselves seem to acknowledge, when they affirm that he is no otherwise said to be a Saviour than are all they who confirm the way to salvation by preaching, miracles, martyrdom, and example. So that, having quite overthrown the merits of Christ,13 “they grant us to be our own saviours in a very large sense,” Rem. Apol., fol. 96. All which assertions, how contrary they are to the express word of God, I shall now demonstrate.

9 “Anne conditionem quis serio et sapienter præscribet alteri, sub promisso præmii et pœnæ gravissimæ comminatione, qui eam, in eo cui præscribit efficere vult? Hæc actio tota ludicra, et vix scenâ digna est.”—Rem. Apol., cap. ix. p. 105, a.

10 “Fides et conversio non possunt esse obedientia, si tantum ab aliquo, in alio, efficiantur.”—Rem. Coll. Hag., p. 196.

11 “Absurdem est statuere Deum aut efficere per potentiam, aut procurare per sapientiam, ut electi ea faciant, quæ ab ipsis, ut ipsi ea faciant, exigat et postulat.”—Episcop., Disp. Pri. viii. thes. 7.

12 Apol., cap. ix. ubi. sup.—“Deum dona sua in nobis coronare, dictum hoc Augustini nisi cum grano sais accipiatur, neutiquam est admittendum.”—Idem, ibid p. 115.

13 “Atqui dices, sic servatores nostri essent omnes,”—eodem sensu quo Christus,—“saltem ex parte qui præconio, miraculis, et exemplo salutis viam, confirmant; esto, quid turn?”—Rem. Ajjol., cap. viii. [p. 94.]

There is not one of all those plain texts of Scripture, not one of those innumerable and invincible arguments, whereby the effectual working of God's grace in the conversion of a sinner, his powerful translating us from death to life, from the state of sin and bondage to the liberty of the

sons of God, which doth not overthrow this prodigious error. I will content myself with instancing in some few of them which are directly opposite unto it, even in terms:—

First, Deu\_10:16, The Lord commandeth the Israelites to “circumcise the foreskin of their hearts, and to be no more stiff-necked;” so that the circumcising of their hearts was a part of their obedience,—it was their duty so to do, in obedience to God’s command. And yet, in Deu\_30:6, he affirmeth that “he will circumcise their hearts, that they might love the LORD their God with all their hearts.” So that, it seems, the same thing, in diverse respects, may be God’s act in us and our duty towards him. And how the Lord will here escape that Arminian censure, that if his words be true in the latter place, his command in the former is vain and foolish, “ipse viderit,”—let him plead his cause, and avenge himself on those that rise up against him.

Secondly, Eze\_18:31, “Make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” The making of a new heart and a new spirit is here required under a promise of a reward of life, and a great threatening of eternal death; so that so to do must needs be a part of their duty and obedience. And yet, Eze\_36:26-27, he affirmeth that he will do this very thing that here he requireth of them: “A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh; and I will cause you to walk in my statutes,” etc. In how many places, also, are we commanded to “fear the Lord!” which, when we do, I hope none will deny it to be a performance of our duty; and yet, Jer\_32:40, God promiseth that “he will put his fear in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him.”

Thirdly, Those two against which they lay particular exceptions, faith and repentance, are also expressly attributed to the free donation of God: He “granteth unto the Gentiles repentance unto life,” Act\_11:18; and of faith directly, “It is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God,” Eph\_2:8. To which assertion of the Holy Spirit I shall rather fasten my belief than to the Arminians, affirming that it is no gift of God because it is of ourselves; and yet this hindereth not but that it may be styled, “Our most holy faith,” Jud\_1:20. Let them that will, deny that any thing can properly be ours which God bestoweth on us; the prophet accounted them not inconsistent when he averred that “the LORD worketh all our works in us,” Isa\_26:12. They are our works, though of his working. The apostle laboured; though it was not he, but “the grace of God that was with him,” 1Co\_15:10. He “worketh in us κατὰ τὸ ἰθέλην κατὰ τὸ ἐργεῖν of his good pleasure,” Php\_2:13; and yet the performance of our duty may consist in those acts of our wills and those good deeds whereof he is the author. So that, according to St. Austin’s counsel,<sup>14</sup> we will still pray that he would bestow what he commandeth us to have.

14 “Petamus ut det quod ut habeamus jubet.”—Aug.

Fourthly, 1Co\_4:7, “Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” Every thing that makes us differ from others is received from God; wherefore, the foundation of all difference in spiritual things between the sons of Adam being faith and repentance, they must also of necessity be received from above. In brief, God’s “circumcising our hearts,” Col\_2:11, his “quickenings us when we are dead,” Eph\_2:1-2, begetting us anew, Joh\_1:13, making us in all things such as he would have us to be, is contained in that promise of the new covenant, Jer\_32:40, “I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me;” and is no way repugnant to the holy Scripture, declaring our duty to be all this that the

Lord would have us. And now, let all men judge whether, against so many and clear testimonies of the Holy Ghost, the Arminian reasons, borrowed from the old philosophers, be of any value. The sum of them all you may find in Cicero, his third book *De Natura Deorum*. 15“Every one,” saith he, “obtaineth virtue for himself; never any wise man thanked God for that: for our virtue we are praised; in virtue we glory, which might not be were it a gift of God.” And truly this, in softer terms, is the sum of the Remonstrants’ arguments in this particular.

15 “*Virtutem autem nemo unquam acceptam dec retulit. Nimirum rectè: propter virtutem enim jure laudamur, et in virtute rectè gloriamur. Quod non contingeret, si id donum à Deo, non à nobis haberemus.*”—Cicero *De Nat. Deor.* iii. 36,

Lastly, Observe, that this error is that which, of all others, the orthodox fathers did most oppose in the Pelagian heretics; yea, and to this day, 16the more learned schoolmen stoutly maintain the truth herein against the innovating Jesuits. With some few of the testimonies of the ancients I will shut up this discourse. 17“It is certain that when we do any thing, we do it,” saith St. Augustine; “but it is God that causeth us so to do.” And in another place, 18“Shall we not account that to be the gift of God, because it is required of us under the promise of eternal life? God forbid that this should seem so, either to the partakers or defenders of grace;” where he rejecteth both the error and the sophism wherewith it is upholden. So also Cœlestius, bishop of Rome, in his epistle to the bishops of France. 19“So great,” saith he, “is the goodness of God towards men, that he will have those good things to be our good duties” (he calls them merits, according to the phrase of those days) “which are his own gifts;” to which purpose I cited before two canons out of the Arausican council. And St. Prosper, in his treatise against Cassianus the semi-Pelagian, affirmeth it to be a foolish complaint of proud men 20“that free-will is destroyed, if the beginning, progress, and continuance in good be said to be the gifts of God.” And so the imputation of folly, wherewith the Arminians in my first quotation charge their opposers, being retorted on them by this learned father, I refer you to these following excerpta for a close:

16 Alvarez, *Disput.* lxxxvi., ubi Aug., Thom., alios, citat.

17 “*Certum est nos facere cum facimus; sed ille facit ut faciamus.*”—Aug. *dc Grat., et Lib. Arbit., cap.* xvi.

18 “—*Neque id donum Dei esse fateamur, quoniam exigi audivimus a nobis, præmio vitæ si hoc fecerimus oblato? Absit, ut hoc placeat participibus et defensoribus gratiæ.*”—Aug. *de Prædest. Sanc, cap.* xx.

19 “*Tanta est erga homines bonitas Dei, ut nostra velit esse merita quæ sunt ipsius dona.*”—Cœlest. *Epist. ad Ep. Gal., cap.* xii.

20 “*Non enim conturbat nos superbientium inepta querimonia; quia liberum arbitrium causantur auferri: si et principia, et profectus, et perseverantia in bonis usque ad finem Dei dona esse dicantur.*”—Prosp. *ad Collat., p.* 404.

S. S.

*Lib. Arbit.*

“Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked,” Deu\_10:16. “And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed,” Deu\_30:6—“Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” Eze\_18:31. “A new heart will I put within you,” Eze\_36:26.

“If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, then shall ye continue following the LORD your God,” 1Sa\_12:14. “I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me,” Jer\_32:40.

“Thou hast wrought all our works in us,” Isa\_26:12. “God worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure,” Php\_2:13.

“He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ,” Eph\_1:3.

“Unto it is given in the behalf of Christ to believe on him,” Php\_1:29. “The blood of Christ purgeth our consciences from dead works to serve the living God,” Heb\_9:14.

“This is most certain, that that ought not to be commanded which is wrought in us. He foolishly commandeth that to be done of others who will work in them what he commandeth,” Rem. Apol.

“It is absurd to affirm that God either worketh by his power, or procureth by his wisdom, that the elect should do those things which God requireth of them,” Episcop.

“Faith and conversion cannot be acts of our obedience if they are wrought by God in us,” Rem. Coll. Hag. “That God should require that of us which himself will work in us is a ridiculous action, scarce fit for a stage,” Rem. Apol.

“That saying of Augustine, that ‘God crowneth his own gifts in us,’ is not easily to be admitted,” Ibid.

“There is nothing more vain and foolish than to ascribe faith and regeneration to the merit of Christ,” Idem.

## 03.11. Chapter 11 - Whither salvation may be attained without the knowledge of, or faith in...

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### CHAPTER XI.

Whither salvation may be attained without the knowledge of, or faith in, Jesus Christ.

I SHALL shut up all this discourse concerning the meritorious cause of salvation, with their shutting out of Christ from being the only one and absolutely necessary means to bring us unto heaven, to make us happy. This is the last pile they erect upon their Babylonish foundation, which makes the idol of human self-sufficiency every way perfect, and fit to be sacrificed unto. Until these proud builders, to get materials for their own temple, laid the axe to the root of Christianity, we took it for granted that “there is no salvation in any other,” because “there is none other name under heaven given unto men whereby we must be saved,” Act\_4:12. Neither yet shall their nefarious attempts frighten us from our creed, nor make us be wanting to the defence of our Saviour’s honour. But I shall be very brief in the consideration of this heterodoxy, nothing doubting but that to have repeated it is fully to have confuted it, in the judgment of all pious Christians.

First, then, They grant salvation to the ancient patriarchs and Jews, before the coming of Christ, without any knowledge of or faith in him at all; nay, they deny that any such faith in Christ was ever prescribed unto them or required of them. 1 “It is certain that there is no place in the Old Testament from whence it may appear that faith in Christ as a Redeemer was ever enjoined or found in any of them,” say they jointly in their Apology; the truth of which assertion we shall see hereafter. Only they grant a general faith, involved under types and shadows, and looking on the promise as it lay hid in the goodness and providence of God, which indirectly might be called a faith in Christ: from which kind of faith I see no reason why thousands of heathen infidels should be excluded. Agreeable unto these assertions are the dictates of their patriarch Arminius, affirming, 2 “that the whole description of the faith of Abraham, Romans 4:1-25, makes no mention of Jesus Christ, either expressly or so implicitly as that it may be of any one easily understood.” And to the testimony of Christ himself to the contrary, Joh\_8:56, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad,” he answereth, “He rejoiced to see the birth of Isaac, who was a type of me,”—a goodly gloss, corrupting the text.

1 “Certum est locum nullum esse, unde appareat fidem istam, sub Vet. Test., præceptam fuisse aut viguissc.”—Rem. Apol., cap. vii. p. 91.

2 “Consideretur omnis descriptio fidei Abrahæ, Romans 4:1-25 et apparebit in illa Jesu Christi non fieri mentionem, expresse, sed illa tantum implicatione, quam explicare cuius non est facile.”—Armin. “Gavisus est videre natalem Isaac, qui fuit typus mei.”—Idem.

Secondly, What they teach of the Jews, that also they grant concerning the Gentiles living before the incarnation of Christ; they also might attain salvation, and be justified without his knowledge. 3 “For although,” saith Corvinus, “the covenant was not revealed unto them by the same means

that it was unto the Jews, yet they are not to be supposed to be excluded from the covenant" (of grace), "nor to be excluded from salvation; for some way or other they were called."

3 "Gentes sub Veteri Testamento viventes licet ipsis ista ratione qua Judæis non fuit revelatum, non tamen inde continuo ex fædere absolute exclusæ sunt, nec a salute præcise exclusi judicari debent, quia aliquo saltern modo vocantur."—Corv. Defens. Armin. ad Tilen., p. 107.

Thirdly, They are come at length to that perfection in setting out this stain of Christianity, that Bertius, on good consideration, denied this proposition, 4 "That no man can be saved that is not ingrafted into Christ by a true faith;" and Venator to this question, 5 "Whether the only means of salvation be the life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ?" answereth, "No." Thus they lay men in Abraham's bosom who never believed in the Son of Abraham; make them overcome the serpent who never heard of the Seed of the woman; bring goats into heaven, who never were of the flock of Christ, never entered by him, the door; make men please God without faith, and obtain the remission of sins without the sprinkling of the blood of the Lamb,—to be saved without a Saviour, redeemed without a Redeemer,—to become the sons of God, and never know their elder Brother;—which prodigious error might yet be pardoned, and ascribed to human imbecility, had it casually slipped from their pens, as it did from some others.<sup>6</sup> But seeing it hath foundation in all the grounds of their new doctrine, and is maintained by them on mature deliberation,<sup>7</sup> it must be looked on by all Christians as a heresy to be detested and accursed. For, first, deny the contagion and demerit of original sin; then make the covenant of grace to be universal, and to comprehend all and every one of the posterity of Adam; thirdly, grant a power in ourselves to come unto God by any such means as he will appoint, and affirm that he doth assign some means unto all,—and it will naturally follow that the knowledge of Christ is not absolutely necessary to salvation, and so down falls the pre-eminence of Christianity; its heaven-reaching crown must be laid level with the services of dunghill gods.<sup>8</sup>

4 "Nego hanc propositionem: neminem posse salvari, quam qui Jesu Christo per veram fidem sit insitus."—Bert. ad Sibrand., p. 133.

5 "Ad hanc quæstionem an unica via salutis, sit vita, passio, mors, rcsurrectio, et ascension Jesu Christi? respondeo, Non."—Venat., apud Fest. Hom. et Peltium.

6 Zuing. Profcs. Fid. ad Reg. Gall.

7 Art. of the Church of Eng., art. xvii.

8 "Nihil magis repugnat fidei, quam sine fide salvum esse posse quempiam hominum."—Acost. de Indo. Salu. Proc.

It is true, indeed, some of the ancient fathers, before the rising of the Pelagian heresy,—who had so put on Christ, as Lipsius speaks, that they had not fully put off Plato,—have unadvisedly dropped some speeches seeming to grant that divers men before the incarnation, living μετὰ λ■γου, "according to the dictates of right reason," might be saved without faith in Christ; as is well showed by learned Casaubon in his first exercitation on Baronius. But let this be accounted part of that stubble which shall burn at the last day, wherewith the writings of all men not divinely inspired may be stained. It hath also since (as what hath not?) been drawn into dispute among the wrangling schoolmen; and yet, which is rarely seen, their verdict in this particular almost

unanimously passeth for the truth. Aquinas<sup>9</sup> tells us a story of the corpse of a heathen, that should be taken up in the time of the Empress Irene and her son Constantine, with a golden plate on his breast, wherein was this inscription:—"Christ is born of a virgin, and I believe in him. O sun, thou shalt see me again in the days of Irene and Constantine." But the question is not, Whether a Gentile believing in Christ may be saved? or whether God did not reveal himself and his Son extraordinarily to some of them? for shall we straiten the breast and shorten the arm of the Almighty, as though he might not do what he will with his own; but, Whether a man by the conduct of nature, without the knowledge of Christ, may come to heaven? the assertion whereof we condemn as a wicked, Pelagian, Socinian heresy, and think that it was well said of Bernard,<sup>10</sup> "That many labouring to make Plato a Christian, do prove themselves to be heathens." And if we look upon the several branches of this Arminian novel doctrine, extenuating the precious worth and necessity of faith in Christ, we shall find them hewed off by the two-edged sword of God's word.

9 Aquin. 2, 2æ q. 2, a. 7, c.—"Christus nascitur ex virgine, et ego credo in eum. O sol, sub Irenæ et Constantini temporibus iterum me videbis."

10 "Dum multum sudant nonnulli, quomodo Platonem faciant Christianum, se probant esse ethnicos."—Bern. Epist.

FIRST, For their denying the patriarchs and Jews to have had faith "in Christum exhibendum et moriturum," as we in him "exhibitum et mortuum," it is disproved,—

First, By all evangelical promises made from the beginning of the world to the birth of our Saviour; as that, Gen\_3:15, "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head;" and Gen\_12:3; Gen\_49:10; Psa\_2:7-8; Psa\_110:1-7; with innumerable others concerning his life, office, and redeeming of his people: for surely they were obliged to believe the promises of God.

Secondly, By those many clear expressions of his death, passion, and suffering for us, as Gen\_3:15; Isa\_53:6-10, etc., Isa\_63:1-3; Dan\_9:26. But what need we reckon any more? Our Saviour taught his disciples that all the prophets from Moses spake concerning him, and that the sole reason why they did not so readily embrace the faith of his passion and resurrection was because they believed not the prophets, Luk\_24:25-26; showing plainly that the prophets required faith in his death and passion.

Thirdly, By the explicit faith of many Jews, as of old Simeon, Luk\_2:34; of the Samaritan woman, who looked for a Messiah, not as an earthly kmg, but as one that should "tell them all things,"—redeem them from sin, and tell them all such things as Christ was then discoursing of, concerning the worship of God, Joh\_4:25.

Fourthly, By the express testimony of Christ himself. "Abraham," saith he, "rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad," Joh\_8:56. His day, his hour, in the Scripture, principally denote his passion. And that which he saw surely he believed, or else the father of the faithful was more diffident than Thomas, the most incredulous of his children.

Fifthly, By these following, and the like places of Scripture: Christ is a "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev\_13:8; slain in promises, slain in God's estimation and in the faith of believers. He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," Heb\_13:8, under the law and the

gospel. “There is none other name under heaven given unto men, whereby we must be saved,” Act\_4:12. Never any, then, without the knowledge of a Redeemer, participation of his passion, communication of his merits, did ever come to the sight of God; no man ever came to the Father but by him. Hence St. Paul tells the Ephesians that they were “without Christ,” because they were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,” Eph\_2:12; intimating that God’s covenant with the Jews included Christ Jesus and his righteousness no less than it doth now with us. On these grounds holy Ignatius called Abel 11 “A martyr of Christ;” he died for his faith in the promised Seed. And in another place, 12 “All the saints were saved by Christ; hoping in him, and waiting on him, they obtained salvation by him.” So Prosper, also, 13 “We must believe that never any man was justified by any other faith, either before the law or under the law, than by faith in Christ coming to save that which was lost.” Whence Eusebius contendeth 14 that all the old patriarchs might properly be called Christians; they all ate of the same spiritual meat, and all drank of the same spiritual drink, even of the rock that followed them, which rock was Christ.

11 Παραδοθε■ς γε, τ■ν δι■ Χριστ■ν ■ναιρουμ■νων, ■π■ το■ α■ματος ■βελ το■ δικα■ου.—Ignat. Epist. ad Ephes. [cap. xii.]

12 Π■ντες ο■ν ο■ ■γιοι ■ν Χριστ■ ■σ■θησαν, ■λπ■σαντες ε■ς α■τ■ν κα■ α■τ■ν ■ναμε■ναντες, κα■ δ■ α■το■ σωτηρ■ας ■τυχον.—Epist. ad Phil. [cap. v.]

13 “Non alia fide quemquam hominum, sive ante legem sive legis tempore, justificatum esse, credendum est, quam hac eadem qua Dominus Jesu,” etc.—Prosp. ad Ob. viiL, Gallorum.

14 “Omnes ergo illos qui ab Abraham sursum versus ad primum hominem, generationis ordine conscribuntur, etsi non nomine, rebus tamen, et religione Christianos fuisse, si quis dicat, non mihi videtur errare.”—Euseb. Hist. Eccles., lib. i. cap. 4.

SECONDLY, If the ancient people of God, notwithstanding divers other especial revelations of his will and heavenly instructions, obtained not salvation without faith in Christ, much less may we grant this happiness without him to them who were deprived of those other helps also. So that though we confess the poor natural endeavours of the heathen not to have wanted their reward (either positive in this life, by outward prosperity, and inward calmness of mind, in that they were not all perplexed and agitated with furies, like Nero and Caligula; or negative in the life to come, by a diminution of the degrees of their torments,—they shall not be beaten with so many stripes), yet we absolutely deny that there is any saving mercy of God towards them revealed in the Scripture, which should give us the least intimation of their attaining everlasting happiness. For, not to consider the corruption and universal disability of nature to do any thing that is good (“without Christ we can do nothing,” Joh\_15:5), nor yet the sinfulness of their best works and actions, the “sacrifice of the wicked being an abomination unto the LORD,” Pro\_15:8 (“Evil trees cannot bring forth good fruit; men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles,” Mat\_7:16-17);—the word of God is plain, that “without faith it is impossible to please God,” Heb\_11:6; that “he that believeth not is condemned,” Mar\_16:16; that no nation or person can be blessed but in the Seed of Abraham, Gen\_12:3. And the “blessing of Abraham” comes upon the Gentiles only “through Jesus Christ,” Gal\_3:14. He is “the way, the truth, and the life,” Joh\_14:6. “None cometh to the Father but by him.” He is the “door,” by which those that do not enter are “without,” with “dogs and idolaters,” Rev\_22:15. So that “other foundation” of blessedness “can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1Co\_3:11. In brief, do but compare these two places of St. Paul, Rom\_8:30, where

he showeth that none are glorified but those that are called; and Rom\_10:14-15, where he declares that all calling is instrumentally by the preaching of the word and gospel; and it will evidently appear that no salvation can be granted unto them on whom the Lord hath so far poured out his indignation as to deprive them of the knowledge of the sole means thereof, Christ Jesus. And to those that are otherwise minded, I give only this necessary caution,—Let them take heed, lest, whilst they endeavour to invent new ways to heaven for others, by so doing they lose the true way themselves.

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Lib. Arbit.

“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things?” Luk\_24:25-26.

“Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad,” Joh\_8:56. “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities,” Isa\_53:11. See the places before cited.

“At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world,” Eph\_2:12.

“There is none other name under heaven given unto men whereby we must be saved,” but only by Christ, Act\_4:12.

“The blessing of Abraham cometh on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ,” Gal\_3:14. “He that believeth not is condemned,” Mar\_16:16. “Without faith it is impossible to please God,” Heb\_11:6. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1Co\_3:11.

“There is no place in the Old Testament whence it may appear that faith in Christ as a Redeemer was either enjoined or found in any then,” Rem. Apol, “Abraham’s faith had no reference to Christ,” Armin.

“The Gentiles living under the Old Testament, though it was not revealed unto them as unto the Jews, yet were not excluded from the covenant of grace, and from salvation,” Corv.

“I deny this proposition, That one can be saved that is not ingrafted into Christ by a true faith,” Bert.

“To this question, Whether the only way of salvation be the life, passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ? I answer No,” Venat.

## 03.12. Chapter 12 - Of free-will, the nature and power thereof

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CHAPTER XII. Of free-will, the nature and power thereof. OUR next task is to take a view of the idol himself, of this great deity of free-will, whose original being not well known, he is pretended, like the Ephesian image of Diana, to have fallen down from heaven, and to have his endowments from above. But yet, considering what a nothing he was at his first discovery in comparison of that vast giant-like hugeness to which now he is grown, we may say of him as the painter said of his monstrous picture, which he had mended or rather marred according to every one's fancy, "Hunc populus fecit,"—it is the issue of the people's brain. Origen<sup>1</sup> is supposed to have brought him first into the church; but among those many sincere worshippers of divine grace, this setter forth of new demons found but little entertainment. It was looked upon but like the stump of Dagon, with his head and hands laid down before the ark of God, without whose help he could neither know nor do that which is good in any kind, still accounted but "truncus ficulnus, inutile lignum,"—"a fig-tree log, an unprofitable piece of wood." "Incerti patres scamnum facerentne?" The fathers of the succeeding ages had much debate to what use they should put it, and though some exalted it a degree or two above its merits, yet the most concluded to keep it a block still; until at length there arose a stout champion<sup>2</sup> challenging on his behalf the whole church of God, and, like a knight-errant, wandered from the west to the east to grapple with any that should oppose his idol; who, though he met with divers adversaries,<sup>3</sup> one especially,<sup>4</sup> who in the behalf of the grace of God continually foiled him and cast him to the ground, and that in the judgment of all the lawful judges assembled in councils,<sup>5</sup> and in the opinion of most of the Christian bystanders,<sup>6</sup> yet, by his cunning insinuation, he planted such an opinion of his idol's deity and self-sufficiency in the hearts of divers, that to this day it could never be rooted out.

1 Hieron. ad Ruf.

2 "Pelagius: Dogma quod—Pestifero vomuit coluber sermone Britannus."—Prosper. de Ingrat., cap. i.

3 "Aduit, exhortante Deo provisa per orbem, Sanctorum pia cura patrum:—1. Pestem subeuntem Prima recidit, Sedes Roma Petri. 2. Non segnior inde, orientis Rectorum cura emicuit. Synod. Palest. 3. Hieronymus libris valde excellentibus hostem Dissecuit. 4. Atticus Constantinop. 5. Duæ Synodi Africanæ."—Prosper, de Ingrat.

4 "Concilium cui dux Aurelius ingcniumque Augustinus erat. Quem Christi gratia cornu Uberiore rigans, nostro lumen dedit ævo."—Prosp., ibid.

5 "Dixit Pelagius, quis est mihi Augustinus? Universi acclamabant blasphemantem in episcopum, ex ejus ore, dominus universæ Africæ, unitatis indulserit felicitatem, non solum a conventu illo, sed ab omni ecclesia pellendum."—Oros. Apologet., p. 621, de Synod. Palest. "Præ omnibus studium gerite libros. S. Aug. quos ad Prosp. et Hilar, scripsit, memoratis fratribus legendos ingerere," etc.—Epist. Synod. Byzac.

6 “Imo noverunt, non solum Romanam Africanamque ecclesiam, sed per omnes mundi partes, universæ promissionis filios, cum doctrina liujus viri, sieut in tota fide, ita in gratiæ confessione congruere.”—Prosp. ad Rutin. “Augustinum sanctæ recordationis virum pro vita sua, et meritis, in nostra communione semper habuimus, nec unquam hunc sinistræ suspicionis saltem rumor suspexit.”—Cœlest., Epist. ad Gal. Episcop. These I have cited to show what a heavy prejudice the Arminian cause lies under, being professedly opposite to the doctrine of St. Austin, and they continually slighting of his authority.

Now, after the decease of his Pelagian worshippers, some of the corrupter schoolmen, seeing him thus from his birth exposed without shelter to wind and weather, to all assaults, out of mere charity and self-love built him a temple, and adorned it with natural lights, merits, uncontrolled independent operations, with many other gay attendances. But in the beginning of the Reformation,—that fatal time for idolatry and superstition, together with abbeys and monasteries,—the zeal and learning of our forefathers, with the help of God’s word, demolished this temple, and brake this building down to the ground; in the rubbish whereof we well hoped the idol himself had been so deeply buried as that his head should never more have been exalted, to the trouble of the church of God, until not long since some curious wits, whose weak stomachs were clogged with manna and loathed the sincere milk of the word, raking all dunghills for novelties, lighted unhappily upon this idol, and presently, with no less joy than did the mathematician at the discovery of a new geometrical proportion, exclaim, “We have found it! we have found it!” And without more ado, up they erected a shrine, and until this day continue offering of praise and thanks for all the good they do to this work of their own hands. And that the idol may be free from ruin, to which in himself they have found by experience that he is subject, they have matched him to contingency, a new goddess of their own creation, who, having proved very fruitful in monstrous births upon their conjunctions, they nothing doubt they shall never want one to set on the throne and make president of all human actions: so that after he hath, with various success, at least twelve hundred years, contended with the providence and grace of God, he boasteth now as if he had obtained a total victory. But yet all his prevailing is to be attributed to the diligence and varnish of his new abettors, with (to our shame be it spoken!) the negligence of his adversaries. In him and his cause there is no more real worth than was when by the ancient fathers he was exploded and cursed out of the church: so that they who can attain, through the many winding labyrinths of curious distinctions, to look upon the thing itself, shall find that they have been, like Egyptian novices, brought through many stately frontispieces and goodly fabrics, with much show of zeal and devotion, to the image of an ugly ape.

Yet here observe, that we do not absolutely oppose free-will, as if it were “nomen inane,” a mere figment, when there is no such thing in the world, but only in that sense the Pelagians and Arminians do assert it. About words we will not contend. We grant man, in the substance of all his actions, as much power, liberty, and freedom as a mere created nature is capable of. We grant him to be free in his choice from all outward coercion, or inward natural necessity, to work according to election and deliberation, spontaneously embracing what seemeth good unto him. Now, call this power free-will, or what you please, so you make it not supreme, independent, and boundless, we are not at all troubled. The imposition of names depends upon the discretion of their inventors. Again; even in spiritual things, we deny that our wills are at all debarred, or deprived of their proper liberty: but here we say, indeed, that we are not properly free until the Son

makes us free;—no great use of freedom in that wherein we can do nothing at all. We do not claim such a liberty as should make us despise the grace of God,<sup>7</sup> whereby we may attain true liberty indeed; which addeth to, but taketh nothing from, our original freedom. But of this after I have showed what an idol the Arminians make of free-will. Only take notice in the entrance that we speak of it now, not as it was at first by God created, but as it is now by sin corrupted; yet, being considered in that estate also, they ascribe more unto it than it was ever capable of. As it now standeth, according to my formerly-proposed method, I shall show,—first, what inbred native virtue they ascribe unto it, and with how absolute a dominion and sovereignty over all our actions they endow it; secondly, what power they say it hath in preparing us for the grace of God; thirdly, how effectually operative it is in receiving the said grace, and with how little help thereof it accomplisheth the great work of our conversion;—all briefly, with so many observations as shall suffice to discover their proud errors in each particular.

7 “Homo non libertate gratiam, sed gratia libertatem, assequitur.”—Aug.

8“Herein,” saith Arminius, “consisteth the liberty of the will, that all things required to enable it to will any thing being accomplished, it still remains indifferent to will or not.” And all of them at the synod: 9“There is,” say they, “accompanying the will of man an inseparable property, which we call liberty, from whence the will is termed a power, which, when all things pre-required as necessary to operation are fulfilled, may will any thing, or not will it;” that is, our free-wills have such an absolute and uncontrollable power in the territory of all human actions, that no influence of God’s providence, no certainty of his decree, no unchangeableness of his purpose, can sway it at all in its free determinations, or have any power with his highness to cause him to will or resolve on any such act as God by him intendeth to produce. Take an instance in the great work of our conversion. 10“All unregenerate men,” saith Arminius, “have, by virtue of their free-will, a power of resisting the Holy Spirit, of rejecting the offered grace of God, of contemning the counsel of God concerning themselves, of refusing the gospel of grace, of not opening the heart to him that knocketh.” What a stout idol is this, whom neither the Holy Spirit, the grace and counsel of God, the calling of the gospel, the knocking at the door of the heart, can move at all, or in the least measure prevail against him! Woe be unto us, then, if when God calls us our free-will be not in good temper, and well disposed to hearken unto him! for it seems there is no dealing with it by any other ways, though powerful and almighty. 11“For grant,” saith Corvinus, “all the operations of grace which God can use in our conversion, yet conversion remaineth so in our own free power that we can be not converted; that is, we can either turn or not turn ourselves;”—where the idol plainly challengeth the Lord to work his utmost, and tells him that after he hath so done he will do what he please. His infallible prescience, his powerful predetermination, the moral efficacy of the gospel, the infusion of grace, the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit, all are nothing, not at all available in helping or furthering our independent wills in their proceedings. Well, then, in what estate will you have the idol placed? 12“In such a one wherein he may be suffered to sin, or to do well, at his pleasure,” as the same author intimates. It seems, then, as to sin, so nothing is required for him to be able to do good but God’s permission? No! For the Remonstrants<sup>13</sup> (as they speak of themselves) “do always suppose a free power of obeying or not obeying, as well in those who do obey as in those who do not obey;”—“that he that is obedient may therefore be counted obedient, because he obeyeth when he could not obey, and so on the contrary:” where all the praise of our obedience, whereby we are made to differ from others, is ascribed to ourselves

alone, and that free power that is in us. Now, this they mean not of any one act of obedience, but of faith itself, and the whole consummation thereof. 14“For if a man should say, that every man in the world hath a power of believing if he will, and of attaining salvation, and that this power is settled in his nature, what argument have you to confute him?” saith Arminius triumphantly to Perkins; where the sophistical innovator as plainly confounds grace and nature as ever did Pelagius. That, then, which the Arminians claim here in behalf of their free-will is, an absolute independence on God’s providence in doing any thing, and of his grace in doing that which is good,—a self-sufficiency in all its operations, a plenary indifferency of doing what we will, this or that, as being neither determined to the one nor inclined to the other by any overruling influence from heaven. So that the good acts of our wills have no dependence on God’s providence as they are acts, nor on his grace as they are good; but in both regards proceed from such a principle within us as is no way moved by any superior agent. Now, the first of these we deny unto our wills, because they are created; and the second, because they are corrupted. Their creation hinders them from doing any thing of themselves without the assistance of God’s providence; and their corruption, from doing any thing that is good without his grace. A self-sufficiency for operation, without the effectual motion of Almighty God, the first cause of all things, we can allow neither to men nor angels, unless we intend to make them gods; and a power of doing good, equal unto that they have of doing evil, we must not grant to man by nature, unless we will deny the fall of Adam, and fancy ourselves still in paradise. But let us consider these things apart.

8 “Libertas Arbitrii consistit in eo, quod homo, positus omnibus requisitis ad volendum, indifferens tamen sit, ad volendum vel nolendum, hoc vel illud.”—Armin. Art. Perpend., p. 11.

9 “Voluntatem comitatur proprietas quædam inseparabilis, quam libertatem vocamus; a qua voluntas dicitur potentia, quæ positus omnibus prærequisitis ad agendum necessariis, potest velle et nolle, aut velle et non velle.”—Remon. in Act. Synod, p. 16.

10 “Omnes irrogeniti habent Lib. Arbit. et potentiam Spiritui Sancto resistendi, gratiam Dei oblatam repudiandi, consilium Dei adversus se contemnendi, evangelium gratiæ repudiandi, ei qui eos pulsat non aperiendi.”—Armin. Artic. Perpend.

11 “Positis omnibus operationibus gratiæ, quibus Deus in conversione nostri uti possit, manet tamen conversio ita in nostra potestate libera, ut possimus non converti; hoc est, nosmet ipsos convertere vel non convertere.”—Corv. ad Bog., p- 263.

12 “Non potest Deus Lib. Arbit. integrum servare, nisi tam peccare hominem sineret, quam bene agere.”—Corv. ad Molin., cap. vi.

13 “Semper Remonstrantes supponunt liberam obediendi potentiam et non obediendi; ut qui obediens est ideirco obediens censeatur, quia cum possit non obedire obedit tamen, et e contra.”—Rem. Apol., p. 70.

14 “Quod si quis dicat omnes in universum homines, habere potentiam credendi si velint, et salutem consequendi: et hanc potentiam esse naturæ hominum divinitus collatam, quo tuo argumento eum confutabis?”—Armin. Antip., p. 272.

FIRST, I shall not stand to decipher the nature of human liberty, which perhaps would require a larger discourse than my proposed method will bear. It may suffice that, according to my former

intimation, we grant as large a freedom and dominion to our wills over their own acts as a creature, subject to the supreme rule of God's providence, is capable of. Endued we are with such a liberty of will as is free from all outward compulsion and inward necessity, having an elective faculty of applying itself unto that which seems good unto it, in which it is a free choice; notwithstanding, it is subservient to the decree of God, as I showed before, chap. iv. Most free it is in all its acts, both in regard of the object it chooseth and in regard of that vital power and faculty whereby it worketh, infallibly complying with God's providence, and working by virtue of the motion thereof; but surely to assert such a supreme independency and every way unbounded indifferency as the Arminians claim, whereby, all other things requisite being pre-supposed, it should remain absolutely in our own power to will or not to will, to do any thing or not to do it, is plainly to deny that our wills are subject to the rule of the Most High. It is granted that in such a chimerical, fancied consideration of free-will, wherein it is looked upon as having no relation to any act of God's but only its creation, abstracting from his decree, it may be said to have such a liberty in regard of the object; but the truth is, this divided sense is plain nonsense, a mere fiction of such an estate as wherein it never was, nor ever can be, so long as men will confess any deity but themselves, to whose determinations they must be subject. Until, then, more significant terms may be invented for this free power in our nature, which the Scripture never once vouchsafed to name, I shall be content to call it with Prosper, a <sup>15</sup>"spontaneous appetite of what seemeth good unto it," free from all compulsion, but subservient to the providence of God. And against its exaltation to this height of independency, I oppose,—

15 "Lib. Arbit. est rei sibi placitæ spontaneus appetitus."—Prosp. ad Collat., cap. xviii. p. 379.

First, Every thing that is independent of any else in operation is purely active, and so consequently a god; for nothing but a divine will can be a pure act, possessing such a liberty by virtue of its own essence. Every created will must have a liberty by participation, which includeth such an imperfect potentiality as cannot be brought into act without some premotion (as I may so say) of a superior agent. Neither doth this motion, being extrinsical, at all prejudice the true liberty of the will, which requireth, indeed, that the internal principle of operation be active and free, but not that that principle be not moved to that operation by an outward superior agent. Nothing in this sense can have an independent principle of operation which hath not an independent being. It is no more necessary to the nature of a free cause, from whence a free action must proceed, that it be the first beginning of it, than it is necessary to the nature of a cause that it be the first cause.

Secondly, If the free acts of our wills are so subservient to the providence of God as that he useth them to what end he will, and by them effecteth many of his purposes, then they cannot of themselves be so absolutely independent as to have in their own power every necessary circumstance and condition, that they may use or not use at their pleasure. Now, the former is proved by all those reasons and texts of Scripture I before produced to show that the providence of God overruleth the actions and determineth the wills of men freely to do that which he hath appointed. And, truly, were it otherwise, God's dominion over the most things that are in the world were quite excluded; he had not power to determine that any one thing should ever come to pass which hath any reference to the wills of men.

Thirdly, All the acts of the will being positive entities, were it not previously moved by God himself, "in whom we live, move, and have our being," must needs have their essence and existence solely

from the will itself; which is thereby made αὐτὸν ἑαυτοῦ, a first and supreme cause, endued with an underived being. And so much to that particular.

Let us now, in the SECOND place, look upon the power of our free-will in doing that which is morally good; where we shall find not only an essential imperfection, inasmuch as it is created, but also a contracted effect, inasmuch as it is corrupted. The ability which the Arminians ascribe unto it in this kind, of doing that which is morally and spiritually good, is as large as themselves will confess to be competent unto it in the state of innocency, even a power of believing and a power of resisting the gospel, of obeying and not obeying, of turning or of not being converted. The Scripture, as I observed before, hath no such term at all, nor any thing equivalent unto it. But the expressions it useth concerning our nature and all the faculties thereof, in this state of sin and unregeneration, seem to imply the quite contrary; as, that we are in “bondage,” Heb\_2:15; “dead in sins,” Eph\_2:1, and so “free from righteousness,” Rom\_6:20; “servants of sin,” Rom\_6:17; under the “reign” and “dominion” thereof, Rom\_6:12, Rom\_6:14; all “our members being instruments of unrighteousness,” Rom\_6:13; not “free indeed,” until “the Son make us free.” So that this idol of free-will, in respect of spiritual things, is not one whit better than the other idols of the heathen. Though it look like “silver and gold,” it is the “work of men’s hands.” “It hath a mouth, but it speaketh not; it hath eyes, but it seeth not; it hath ears, but it heareth no; a nose, but it smelleth not; it hath hands, but it handleth not; feet, but it walketh not; neither speaketh it through its throat. They that made it are like unto it; and so is every one that trusteth in it. O Israel, trust thou in the LORD,” etc., Psa\_115:4-9. That it is the work of men’s hands, or a human invention, I showed before. For the rest, it hath a mouth unacquainted with the “mystery of godliness,” “full only of cursing and bitterness,” Rom\_3:14; “speaking great swelling words,” Jude 1:16; “great things, and blasphemies,” Rev\_13:5; a “mouth causing the flesh to sin,” Ecclesiastes 5:6;—his eyes are blind, not able to perceive those things that are of God, nor to know those things that are “spiritually discerned,” 1Co\_2:14; “eyes before which there is no fear of God,” Rom\_3:18;—his “understanding is darkened, because of the blindness of his heart,” Ephesians 4:18; “wise to do evil, but to do good he hath no knowledge,” Jer\_4:22; so that without farther light, all the world is but a mere “darkness,” Joh\_1:5;—he hath ears, but they are like the ears of the “deaf adder” to the word of God, “refusing to hear the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely,” Psa\_58:5; being “dead” when his voice first calls it, Joh\_5:25; “ears stopped that they should not hear,” Zec\_7:11; “heavy ears” that cannot hear, Isa\_6:10;—a nose, to which the gospel is “the savour of death unto death,” 2Co\_2:16;—“hands full of blood,” Isaiah 1:15; and “fingers defiled with iniquity,” Isaiah 59:3;—feet, indeed, but, like Mephibosheth, lame in both by a fall, so that he cannot at all walk in the path of goodness; but “swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in his ways, and the way of peace hath he not known,” Rom\_3:15-17. These, and divers other such endowments and excellent qualifications, doth the Scripture attribute to this idol, which it calls “The old man,” as I shall more fully discover in the next chapter. And is not this a goodly reed whereon to rely in the paths of godliness? a powerful deity whereunto we may repair for a power to become the sons of God, and attain eternal happiness? The abilities of free-will in particular I shall consider hereafter; now only I will, by one or two reasons, show that it cannot be the sole and proper cause of any truly good and spiritual act, well-pleasing unto God.

First, All spiritual acts well-pleasing unto God, as faith, repentance, obedience, are supernatural; flesh and blood revealeth not these things: “Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will

of man; but of God,” Joh\_1:13; “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” Joh\_3:6. Now, to the performance of any supernatural act it is required that the productive power thereof be also supernatural; for nothing hath an activity in causing above its own sphere. “Nec imbelles generant feroces aquilas columbæ.” But our free-will is a merely natural faculty, betwixt which and those spiritual, supernatural acts there is no proportion, unless it be advanced above its own orb, by inherent, habitual grace. Divine, theological virtues, differing even in the substance of the act from those moral performances about the same things to which the strength of nature may reach (for the difference of acts ariseth from their formal objects, which to both these are diverse), must have another principle and cause above all the power of nature in civil things and actions morally good, inasmuch as they are subject to a natural perception, and do not exceed the strength of our own wills. This faculty of free-will may take place, but yet not without these following limitations:—First, That it always requireth the general concurrence of God, whereby the whole suppositum in which free-will hath its subsistence may be sustained, Mat\_10:29-30. Secondly, That we do all these things imperfectly and with much infirmity; every degree, also, of excellency in these things must be counted a special gift of God, Isa\_26:12. Thirdly, That our wills are determined by the will of God to all their acts and motions in particular; but to do that which is spiritually good we have no knowledge, no power.

Secondly, That concerning which I gave one special instance, in whose production the Arminians attribute much to free-will, is faith. This they affirm (as I showed before) to be inbred in nature, every one having in him from his birth a natural power to believe in Christ and his gospel; for Episcopius denies that 16“any action of the Holy Spirit upon the understanding or will is necessary, or promised in the Scripture, to make a man able to believe the word preached unto him.” So that it seems every man hath at all times a power to believe, to produce the act of faith upon the revelation of its object: which gross Pelagianism is contrary,—

16 “An ulla actio S. S. immediata in mentem aut voluntatem necessaria sit, aut in Scriptura promittatur ad hoc, ut quis credere possit verbo extrinsecus proposito, negativam tuebimur.”—Episcop., Disput. Privat.

First, To the doctrine of the church of England, affirming that a man cannot so much as prepare himself by his own strength to faith and calling upon God, until the grace of God by Christ prevent him, that he may have a good will.—Artic. x.

Secondly, To the Scripture, teaching that it is “the work of God that we do believe,” Joh\_6:29. It is “not of ourselves; it is the gift of God,” Eph\_2:8. To some “it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,” Mat\_13:11. And what is peculiarly given to some cannot be in the power of every one: “To you it is given in the behalf of Christ to believe on him,” Php\_1:29. Faith is our access or coming unto Christ; which none can do “except the Father draw him,” Joh\_6:44; and he so draweth, or “hath mercy, on whom he will have mercy,” Rom\_11:18. And although Episcopius rejects any immediate action of the Holy Spirit for the ingenerating of faith, yet St. Paul affirmeth that there is no less effectual power required to it than that which raised Christ from the dead; which, sure, was an action of the almighty Godhead. “That ye may know,” saith he, “what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead,” Eph\_1:18-20. So that, let the Arminians say what they please, recalling that I write to Christians, I will spare my labour of

farther proving that faith is the free gift of God; and their opposition to the truth of the Scripture in this particular is so evident to the meanest capacity that there needs no recapitulation to present the sum of it to their understandings.

### 03.13. Chapter 13 - Of the power of free-will in preparing us for our conversion unto God

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CHAPTER XIII. Of the power of free-will in preparing us for our conversion unto God. THE judgment of the Arminians concerning the power of free-will about spiritual things in a man unregenerate, merely in the state of corrupted nature, before and without the help of grace, may be laid open by these following positions:—

First, That every man in the world, reprobates and others, have in themselves power and ability of believing in Christ, of repenting and yielding due obedience to the new covenant; and that because they lost not this power by the fall of Adam. 1“Adam after his fall,” saith Grevinchovius, “retained a power of believing; and so did all reprobates in him.” 2“He did not lose” (as they speak at the synod) “the power of performing that obedience which is required in the new covenant considered formally, as it is required by the new covenant; he lost not a power of believing, nor a power of forsaking sin by repentance.” And those graces that he lost not are still in our power. Whence they affirm, that 3“faith is called the work of God only because he requireth us to do it.” Now, having appropriated this power unto themselves, to be sure that the grace of God be quite excluded, which before they had made needless, they teach,—

1 “Adamus post lapsum potentiam credendi retinuit, et reliqui reprobati etiam in illo.”—Grevinch. ad Ames., p. 183.

2 “Adamus non amisit Yircs eam obedientiam præstandi quæ in novo fœdere exigitur, prout puta ea consideratur formaliter, hoc est, prout novo fœdere exacta est, nec potentiam credendi amisit; nec amisit potentiam, per resipiscentiam, ex peccato resurgendi”—Rem. Declar. Sent, in Synod., p. 107.

3 “Fides vocatur opus Dei, quia Deus ipse id a nobis fieri postulat.”—Rem. Apol., cap. x. p. 112.

Secondly, That for the reducing of this power into act, that men may become actual believers, there is no infused habit of grace, no spiritual vital principle, necessary for them, or bestowed upon them; but every one, by the use of his native endowments, doth make himself differ from others. 4“Those things which are spoken concerning the infusion of habits before we can exercise the act of faith, we reject,” saith the epistle to the Walachians. 5“That the internal principle of faith required in the gospel is a habit divinely infused, by the strength and efficacy whereof the will should be determined, I deny,” saith another of them. Well, then, if we must grant that the internal vital principle of a supernatural spiritual grace is a mere natural faculty, not elevated by any divine habit,—if it be not God that begins the good work in us, but our own free-wills,—let us see what more goodly stuff will follow. One man by his own mere endeavours, without the aid of any received gift, makes himself differ from another. 6“What matter is it in that, that a man should make himself differ from others? There is nothing truer; he who yieldeth faith to God commanding him, maketh himself differ from him who will not have faith when he commandeth.” They are the words of their Apology, which, without question, is an irrefragable truth, if faith be not a gift

received from above; for on that ground only the apostle proposeth these questions, “Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received?” The sole cause why he denies any one by his own power to make himself differ from another is, because that wherein the difference consisteth is “received,” being freely bestowed upon him. Deny this, and I confess the other will fall of itself. But until their authority be equal with the apostles’, they would do well to forbear the naked obtrusion of assertions so contradictory to theirs; and so they would not trouble the church. Let them take all the glory unto themselves, as doth Grevinchovius. 7“I make myself,” saith he, “differ from another when I do not resist God and his divine predetermination; which I could have resisted. And why may I not boast of this as of mine own? That I could is of God’s mercy” (endowing his nature with such an ability as you heard before); “but that I would, when I might have done otherwise, is of my power,” Now, when, after all this, they are forced to confess some evangelical grace, though consisting only in a moral persuasion by the outward preaching of the word, they teach,—

4 “Ea quæ de habitum infusione dicuntur, ante omnem fidei actum, rejiciuntur a nobis.”—Epist. ad Wal., p. 67.

5 “Principium internum fidei a nobis in evangelio requisitum, esse habitum quendam divinitus infusum, cujus vi ac efficacitate voluntas determinetur; hoc negavi.”—Grevinch. ad Ames., p. 324.

6 “Quid in eo positum est, quod homo discriminare seipsum dicitur? Nihil verius; qui fidem Deo præcipienti habet, is discriminat se ab eo qui Deo præcipienti fidem habere non vult.”—Rem. Apol., cap. xiv. p. 144.

7 “Ego meipsum discerno, cum enim Deo ac divinæ prædeterminationi resistere possem, non restiti tamen. Atqui in eo quidni liceat mihi tanquam de meo gloriari? Quod enim potui Dei miserentis est, quod autem volui cum possem nolle, id meæ potestatis est.”—Grevinch. ad Ames., p. 253.

Thirdly, That God sendeth the gospel, and revealeth Christ Jesus unto men, according as they well dispose themselves for such a blessing. 8“Sometimes,” say they in their synodical writings, “God calleth this or that nation, people, city, or person, to the communion of evangelical grace, whom he himself pronounceth worthy of it, in comparison of others.” So that whereas, Act\_18:10, God encourageth Paul to preach at Corinth by affirming that he had “much people in that city” (which, doubtless, were his people then only by virtue of their election), in these men’s judgments 9“they were called so because that even then they feared God, and served him with all their hearts, according to that knowledge they had of him, and so were ready to obey the preaching of St. Paul.” Strange doctrine, that men should fear God, know him, serve him in sincerity, before they ever heard of the gospel, and by these means deserve that it should be preached unto them! This is that pleasing of God before faith that they plead for. Act. Synod., p. 66; that 10“preparation and disposition to believe, which men attain by the law and virtuous education;” that “something which is in sinners,<sup>11</sup> whereby though they are not justified, yet they are made worthy of justification.” For 12“conversion and the performance of good works is,” in their apprehension, “a condition pre-required to justification,” for so speak the children of Arminius; which if it be not an expression not to be paralleled in the writings of any Christian, I am something mistaken. The sum of their doctrine, then, in this particular concerning the power of free-will in the state of sin and

unregeneration, is, That every man having a native, inbred power of believing in Christ upon the revelation of the gospel, hath also an ability of doing so much good as shall procure of God that the gospel be preached unto him; to which, without any internal assistance of grace, he can give assent and yield obedience; the preparatory acts of his own will always proceeding so far as to make him excel others who do not perform them, and are therefore excluded from farther grace;—which is more gross Pelagianism than Pelagius himself would ever justify. Wherefore we reject all the former positions, as so many monsters in Christian religion, in whose room we assert these that follow:—

8 “Interdum Deus hanc vel illam gentem, civitatem, personam, ad evangelicæ gratiæ communionem vocat, quam ipse dignam pronuntiat comparative,” etc.—Rem. Declarat. Sent. Synod.

9 “Illi, in quorum gratiam, Dominus Paulum in Corinthum misit, dicuntur Dei populus, quia Deum timebant, eique, secundum cognitionem quam de eo habebant, serviebant ex animo, et sic ad prædicationem Pauli,” etc.—Corv. ad Molin. iii. sect. 27.

10 “Per legem, vel per piam educationem vel per institutionem—per hæc enim hominem præparari et disponi ad credendum, planissimum est.”—Rem. Act. Synod.

11 “Præcedit aliquid in peccatoribus, quo quamvis nondum justificati sunt, digni efficiantur justificatione.”—(Grevinch. ad Ames., p. 434.

12 “Tenendum est, veram conversionem præstationemque bonorum operum esse conditionem prærequisitam ante justificationem.”—Filii Arm. Præf. ad cap. vii. ad Rem.

First, That we, being by nature dead in trespasses and sins, have no power to prepare ourselves for the receiving of God's grace, nor in the least measure to believe and turn ourselves unto him. Not that we deny that there are any conditions pre-required in us for our conversion, dispositions preparing us in some measure for our new birth or regeneration; but we affirm that all these also are the effects of the grace of God, relating to that alone as their proper cause, for of ourselves, “without him, we can do nothing,” Joh\_15:5. “We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves,” 2Co\_3:5, much less do that which is good. In respect of that, “every one of our mouths must be stopped;” for “we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God,” Rom\_3:19; Rom\_3:23. We are “by nature the children of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins,” Eph\_2:1-3; Rom\_8:6. Our new birth is a resurrection from death, wrought by the greatness of God's power. And what ability, I pray, hath a dead man to prepare himself for his resurrection? Can he collect his scattered dust, or renew his perished senses? If the leopard can change his spots, and the Ethiopian his skin, then can we do good who by nature are taught to do evil, Jer\_13:23. We are all “ungodly,” and “without strength” considered, when Christ died for us, Rom\_5:6; “wise to do evil,” but “to do good we have no strength, no knowledge.” Yea, all the faculties of our souls, by reason of that spiritual death under which we are detained by the corruption of nature, are altogether useless, in respect of any power for the doing of that which is truly good. Our understandings are blind or “darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us, because of the blindness of our hearts,” Eph\_4:18; whereby we become even “darkness” itself, Eph\_5:8, So void is the understanding of true knowledge, that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him,” 1 Corinthians 2:14. [He is] nothing but

confounded and amazed at spiritual things; and, if he doth not mock, can do nothing but wonder, and say, "What meaneth this?" Act\_2:12-13. Secondly, we are not only blind in our understandings, but captives also to sin in our wills, Luk\_4:18; whereby "we are servants of sin," Joh\_8:34; "free" only in our obedience to that tyrant, Rom\_6:20. Yea, thirdly, all our affections are wholly corrupted, for "every imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man is only evil continually," Gen\_6:5. While we are "in the flesh, the motions of sin do work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death," Rom\_7:5.

These are the endowments of our nature, these are the preparations of our hearts for the grace of God, which we have within ourselves. Nay,—

Secondly, There is not only an impotency but an enmity in corrupted nature to any thing spiritually good: The things that are of God are "foolishness unto a natural man," 1Co\_2:14. And there is nothing that men do more hate and contemn than that which they account as folly. They mock at it as a ridiculous drunkenness, Act\_2:13. And would to God our days yielded us not too evident proofs of that universal opposition that is between light and darkness, Christ and Belial, nature and grace,—that we could not see every day the prodigious issues of this inbred corruption swelling over all bounds, and breaking forth into a contempt of the gospel and all ways of godliness! So true it is that "the carnal mind is enmity against God: it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom\_8:7. So that,—

Thirdly, As a natural man, by the strength of his own free-will, neither knoweth nor willeth, so it is utterly impossible he should do any thing pleasing unto God. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then can he do good," Jer\_13:23. "An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit." "Without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb\_11:6; and "that is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God," Eph\_2:8. So that though Almighty God, according to the unsearchableness of his wisdom, worketh divers ways and in sundry manners, for the translating of his chosen ones from the power of darkness into his marvellous light,—calling some powerfully in the midst of their march in the way of ungodliness, as he did Paul,—preparing others by outward means and helps of common restraining grace, moralizing nature before it be begotten anew by the immortal seed of the word,—yet this is certain, that all good in this kind is from his free grace; there is nothing in ourselves, as of ourselves, but sin. Yea, and all those previous dispositions wherewith our hearts are prepared, by virtue of common grace, do not at all enable us to concur, by any vital operation, with that powerful, blessed, renewing grace of regeneration whereby we become the sons of God. Neither is there any disposition unto grace so remote as that possibly it can proceed from a mere faculty of nature, for every such disposition must be of the same order with the form that is to be introduced; but nature, in respect of grace, is a thing of an inferior alloy, between which there is no proportion. A good use of gifts may have a promise of an addition of more, provided it be in the same kind. There is no rule, law, or promise that should make grace due upon the good use of natural endowments. But you will say, here I quite overthrow free-will, which before I seemed to grant. To which I answer, that in regard of that object concerning which now we treat, a natural man hath no such thing as free-will at all, if you take it for a power of doing that which is good and well-pleasing unto God in things spiritual, for an ability of preparing our hearts unto faith and calling upon God, as our church article speaks, a home-bred self-sufficiency, preceding the change of our wills by the almighty grace of God, whereby any good should be said to dwell in us; and we utterly deny that there is any such thing in the world. The will, though in itself radically free,

yet in respect of the term or object to which in this regard it should tend, is corrupted, enthralled, and under a miserable bondage; tied to such a necessity of sinning in general, that though unregenerate men are not restrained to this or that sin in particular, yet for the main they can do nothing but sin. All their actions wherein there is any morality are attended with iniquity: "An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit;" even "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD." These things being thus cleared from the Scripture, the former Arminian positions will of themselves fall to the ground, having no foundation but their own authority; for any pretence of proof they make none from the word of God. The first two I considered in the last chapter, and now add only concerning the third,—that the sole cause why the gospel is sent unto some and not unto others is, not any dignity, worth, or desert of it in them to whom it is sent, more than in the rest that are suffered to remain in the shadow of death, but only the sole good pleasure of God, that it may be a subservient means for the execution of his decree of election: "I have much people in this city," Act\_18:20; "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight," Mat\_11:25-26. So that the Arminian opposition to the truth of the gospel in this particular is clearly manifest:—

S. S.

Lib. Arbit.

"Of ourselves we can do nothing," Joh\_15:5. "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves," 2Co\_3:5. "We are by nature the children of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins," Eph\_2:1-3.

"Faith is not of ourselves: it is the gift of God," Eph\_2:8.

"Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?" 1Co\_4:7.

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, who are taught to do evil," Jer\_13:23.

"Believing on him that justifieth the ungodly," Rom\_4:5. "Being justified freely by his grace," Rom\_3:24.

"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight," Mat\_11:25-26.

"We retain still after the fall a power of believing and of repentance, because Adam lost not this ability," Rem. Declar. Sen. in Synod.

"Faith is said to be the work of God, because he commandeth us to perform it," Rem. Apol. "There is no infusion of any habit or spiritual vital principle necessary to enable a man to believe," Corv.

"There is nothing truer than that one man maketh himself differ from another. He who believeth when God commandeth maketh himself differ from him who will not," Rem. Apol.

“I may boast of mine own, when I obey God’s grace, which it was in my power not to obey, as well as to obey,” Grevinch.

“True conversion and the performance of good works is a condition required on our part before justification,” Filii Armin.

“God sendeth the gospel to such persons or nations, that in comparison of others may be said to be worthy of it,” Rem. Apol.

## 03.14. Chapter 14 - Of our conversion to God

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### CHAPTER XIV. Of our conversion to God.

HOW little or nothing at all it is that the Arminians assign to the grace of God, in performing the great work of our conversion, may plainly appear from what I have showed already that they ascribe to our own free-will, so that I shall briefly pass that over, which otherwise is so copiously delivered in holy Scripture that it would require a far larger discussion. A prolix confirmation of the truth we profess will not suit so well with my intention; which is merely to make a discovery of their errors, by not knowing the depths whereof so many are deceived and inveigled.

Two things, in this great conjunction of grace and nature, the Arminians ascribe unto free-will:—first, A power of co-operation and working with grace, to make it at all effectual; secondly, A power of resisting its operation, and making it altogether ineffectual; God in the meantime bestowing no grace but what awaits an act issuing from one of these two abilities, and hath its effect accordingly. If a man will co-operate, then grace attains its end; if he will resist, it returns empty. To this end they feign all the grace of God bestowed upon us for our conversion to be but a moral persuasion by his word, not an infusion of a new vital principle by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit. And, indeed, granting this, I shall most willingly comply with them in assigning to free-will one of the endowments before recited,—a power of resisting the operation of grace; but instead of the other, must needs ascribe to our whole corrupted nature, and every one that is partaker of it, a universal disability of obeying it, or coupling in that work which God by his grace doth intend. If the grace of our conversion be nothing but a moral persuasion, we have no more power of obeying it in that estate wherein we are dead in sin, than a man in his grave hath in himself to live anew and come out at the next call. God's promises and the saints' prayers in the holy Scripture seem to design such a kind of grace as should give us a real internal ability of doing that which is spiritually good. But it seems there is no such matter; for if a man should persuade me to leap over the Thames, or to fly in the air, be he never so eloquent, his sole persuasion makes me no more able to do it than I was before ever I saw him. If God's grace be nothing but a sweet persuasion (though never so powerful), it is a thing extrinsical, consisting in the proposal of a desired object, but gives us no new strength at all to do any thing we had not before a power to do. But let us hear them pleading themselves to each of these particulars concerning grace and nature. And,—

First, for the nature of grace: 1“God hath appointed to save believers by grace,—that is, a soft and sweet persuasion, convenient and agreeing to their free-will,—and not by any almighty action,” saith Araminius. It seems something strange, that “the carnal mind being enmity against God,” and the will intrahled to sin, and full of wretched opposition to all his ways, yet God should have no other means to work them over unto him but some persuasion that is sweet, agreeable, and congruous unto them in that estate wherein they are. And a small exaltation it is of the dignity and power of grace, when the chief reason why it is effectual, as Alvarez observes, may be reduced to a well-digested supper or an undisturbed sleep, whereby some men may be brought into better

temper than ordinary to comply with this congruous grace. But let us for the present accept of this, and grant that God doth call some by such a congruous persuasion, at such a time and place as he knows they will assent unto it. I ask whether God thus calleth all men, or only some? If all, why are not all converted? for the very granting of it to be congruous makes it effectual. If only some, then why them, and not others? Is it out of a special intention to have them obedient? But let them take heed, for this will go near to establish the decree of election; and out of what other intention it should be they shall never be able to determine. Wherefore 2Corvinus denies that any such congruity is required to the grace whereby we are converted, but only that it be a moral persuasion; which we may obey if we will, and so make it effectual. Yea, and Arminius himself, after he had defended it as far as he was able, puts it off from himself, and falsely fathers it upon St. Austin. So that, as they jointly affirm, 3“they confess no grace for the begetting of faith to be necessary, but only that which is moral;” which one of them interpreteth to be 4“a declaration of the gospel unto us;”—right like their old master, Pelagius. “God,” saith he, 5“worketh in us to will that which is good and to will that which is holy, whilst he stirs us up with promise of rewards and the greatness of the future glory, who before were given over to earthly desires, like brute beasts, loving nothing but things present, stirring up our stupid wills to a desire of God by a revelation of wisdom, and persuading us to all that is good.” Both of them affirm the grace of God to be nothing but a moral persuasion, working by the way of powerful, convincing arguments; but yet herein Pelagius seems to ascribe a greater efficacy to it than the Arminians, granting that it works upon us when, after the manner of brute beasts, we are set merely on earthly things. But these, as they confess that, for the production of faith,<sup>6</sup> it is necessary that such arguments be proposed on the part of God to which nothing can probably be opposed why they should not seem credible; so there is, say they, required on our part a pious docility and probity of mind. So that all the grace of God bestowed on us consisteth in persuasive arguments out of the word; which, if they meet with teachable minds, may work their conversion.

1 “Deus statuit salvare credentes per gratiam, id est, lenem ac suavem liberoque ipsorum arbitrio convenientem seu congruam suasionem, non per omnipotentem actionem seu motionem.”—Armin. Antip., p. 211.

2 Corv. ad Molin.—“His ita expositis ex mente Augustini,” etc.—Armin. Antip. De Elec.

3 “Fatemur, aliam nobis ad actum fidei eliciendum necessariam gratiam non agnosci quam moralem.”—Rem. Act. Synod, ad Art. iv.

4 “Annuntiatio doctrinæ evangelicæ.”—Popp. August. Port. p. 110.

5 “Operatur in nobis velle quod bonum est, velle quod sanctum est, dum nos terrenis cupiditatibus deditos mutorum more animalium, tantummodo præsentia diligentes, futuræ gloriæ magnitudine et præmiorum pollicitatione, succendit: dum revelatione sapientiæ in desiderium Dei stupentem suscitatur voluntatem, dum nobis suadet omne quod bonum est.”—Pelag., ap. Aug. de Grat. Ch. cap. x.

6 “Ut autem assensus hic eliciatur in nobis, duo in primis necessaria sunt:—1. Argumenta talia ex parte Dei, quibus nihil verisimiliter opponi potest cur credibilia non sint. 2. Pia docilitas animique probitas.”—Rem. Declar., cap. xvii. sect. 1.

Secondly, Having thus extenuated the grace of God, they affirm, 7“that in operation the efficacy thereof dependeth on free-will:” so the Remonstrants in their Apology. 8“And to speak confidently,” saith Grevinchovius, “I say that the effect of grace, in an ordinary course, dependeth on some act of our free-will.” Suppose, then, that of two men made partakers of the same grace,—that is, [who] have the gospel preached unto them by the same means,—one is converted and the other is not, what may be the cause of this so great a difference? Was there any intention or purpose in God that one should be changed rather than the other? “No; he equally desireth and intendeth the conversion of all and every one.” Did, then, God work more powerfully in the heart of the one by his Holy Spirit than of the other? “No; the same operation of the Spirit always accompanieth the same preaching of the word.” But was not one, by some almighty action, made partaker of real infused grace, which the other attained not unto? “No; for that would destroy the liberty of his will, and deprive him of all the praise of believing.” How, then, came this extreme difference of effects? who made the one differ from the other? or what hath he that he did not receive? “Why, all this proceedeth merely from the strength of his own free-will yielding obedience to God’s gracious invitation, which, like the other, he might have rejected: this is the immediate cause of his conversion, to which all the praise thereof is due.” And here the old idol may glory to all the world, that if he can but get his worshippers to prevail in this, he hath quite excluded the grace of Christ, and made it “nomen inane,” a mere title, whereas there is no such thing in the world.

7 “Ut gratia sit efficax in actu secundo pendet a libera voluntate.”—Rem. Apol., p. 164.

8 “Imo ut confidentius agam, dico effectum gratiæ, ordinaria lege, pendere ab actu aliquo arbitrii.”—Grevinch. ad Ames., p. 198.

Thirdly, They teach, that notwithstanding any purpose and intention of God to convert, and so to save, a sinner,—notwithstanding the most powerful and effectual operation of the blessed Spirit, with the most winning, persuasive preaching of the word,—yet it is in the power of a man to frustrate that purpose, resist that operation, and reject that preaching of the gospel. I shall not need to prove this, for it is that which, in direct terms, they plead for; which also they must do, if they will comply with their former principles. For granting all these to have no influence upon any man but by the way of moral persuasion, we must not only grant that it may be resisted, but also utterly deny that it can be obeyed. We may resist it, I say, as having both a disability to good and repugnancy against it; but for obeying it, unless we will deny all inherent corruption and depravation of nature, we cannot attribute any such sufficiency unto ourselves.

Now, concerning this weakness of grace, that it is notable to overcome the opposing power of sinful nature, one testimony of Arminius shall suffice: 9“It always remaineth in the power of free-will to reject grace that is given and to refuse that which followeth; for grace is no almighty action of God, to which free-will cannot resist.” Not that I would assert, in opposition to this, such an operation of grace as should, as it were, violently overcome the will of man, and force him to obedience, which must needs be prejudicial unto our liberty; but only consisting in such a sweet effectual working as doth infallibly promote our conversion, make us willing who before were unwilling, and obedient who were not obedient, that createth clean hearts and reneweth right spirits within us.

9 “Manet semper in potestate Lib. Arbit. gratiam datam rejicere et subsequentem repudiare, quæ gratia non est omnipotentis Dei actio, cui resisti a libero hominis arbitrio non possit.”—Armin.

Antip., p. 243.

That, then, which we assert, in opposition to these Arminian heterodoxies, is. That the effectual grace which God useth in the great work of our conversion, by reason of its own nature,—being also the instrument of and God’s intention for that purpose,—doth surely produce the effect intended, without successful resistance, and solely, without any considerable co-operation of our own wills, until they are prepared and changed by that very grace. The infallibility of its effect depends chiefly on the purpose of God. When by any means he intends a man’s conversion, those means must have such an efficacy added unto them as may make them fit instruments for the accomplishment of that intention, that the counsel of the Lord may prosper, and his word not return empty. But the manner of its operation,—that it requires no human assistance, and is able to overcome all repugnance,—is proper to the being of such an act as wherein it doth consist. Which nature and efficacy of grace, in opposition to an indifferent influence of the Holy Spirit, a metaphorical motion, a working by the way of moral persuasion, only proposing a desirable object, easy to be resisted, and not effectual unless it be helped by an inbred ability of our own (which is the Arminian grace), I will briefly confirm, having premised these few things:—

First, Although God doth not use the wills of men, in their conversion, as malign spirits use the members of men in enthusiasms, by a violent wrested motion, but sweetly and agreeably to their own free nature; yet in the first act of our conversion the will is merely passive, as a capable subject of such a work, not at all concurring co-operatively to our turning. It is not, I say, the cause of the work, but the subject wherein it is wrought, having only a passive capability for the receiving of that supernatural being, which is introduced by grace. The beginning of this “good work” is merely from God, Php\_1:6. Yea, faith is ascribed unto grace, not by the way of conjunction with, but of opposition unto, our wills: “Not of ourselves; it is the gift of God,” Eph\_2:8. “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves; our sufficiency is of God,” 2Co\_3:5. “Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned,” Lam\_5:21.

Secondly, Though the will of man conferreth nothing to the infusion of the first grace, but a subjective receiving of it, yet in the very first act that is wrought in and by the will, it most freely co-operateth (by the way of subordination) with the grace of God; and the more effectually it is moved by grace, the more freely it worketh with it. Man being converted, converteth himself.

Thirdly, We do not affirm grace to be irresistible, as though it came upon the will with such an overflowing violence as to beat it down before it, and subdue it by compulsion to what it is no way inclinable [unto.] But if that term must be used, it denoteth, in our sense, only such an unconquerable efficacy of grace as always and infallibly produceth its effect; for who is it that can “withstand God?” Act\_11:17. As also, it may be used on the part of the will itself, which will not resist it: “All that the Father giveth unto Christ shall come to him,” Joh\_6:37. The operation of grace is resisted by no hard heart; because it mollifies the heart itself. It doth not so much take away a power of resisting as give a will of obeying, whereby the powerful impotency of resistance is removed.

Fourthly, Concerning grace itself, it is either common or special. Common or general grace consisteth in the external revelation of the will of God by his word, with some illumination of the mind to perceive it, and correction of the affections not too much to contemn it; and this, in some degree or other, to some more, to some less, is common to all that are called. Special grace is the

grace of regeneration, comprehending the former, adding more spiritual acts, but especially presupposing the purpose of God, on which its efficacy doth chiefly depend.

Fifthly, This saving grace, whereby the Lord converteth or regenerateth a sinner, translating him from death to life, is either external or internal. External consisteth in the preaching of the word, etc., whose operation is by the way of moral persuasion, when by it we beseech our hearers “in Christ’s stead that they would be reconciled unto God,” 2Co\_5:20; and this in our conversion is the instrumental organ thereof, and may be said to be a sufficient cause of our regeneration, inasmuch as no other in the same kind is necessary. It may also be resisted in sensu diviso, abstracting from that consideration wherein it is looked on as the instrument of God for such an end.

Sixthly, Internal grace is by divines distinguished into the first or preventing grace, and the second following co-operating grace. The first is that spiritual vital principle that is infused into us by the Holy Spirit, that new creation and bestowing of new strength, whereby we are made fit and able for the producing of spiritual acts, to believe and yield evangelical obedience: “For we are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,” Eph\_2:10. By this God “gives us a new heart, and a new spirit he puts within us;” he “takes the stony heart out of our flesh, and gives us an heart of flesh;” he “puts his Spirit within us, to cause us to walk in his statutes,” Eze\_36:26-27.

Now, this first grace is not properly and formally a vital act, but causaliter only, iu being a principle moving to such vital acts within us. It is the habit of faith bestowed upon a man, that he may be able to eliciate and perform the acts thereof, giving new light to the understanding, new inclinations to the will, and new affections unto the heart: for the infallible efficacy of which grace it is that we plead against the Arminians. And amongst those innumerable places of holy Scripture confirming this truth, I shall make use only of a very few, reduced to these three heads:—

First, Our conversion is wrought by a divine, almighty action, which the will of man will not, and therefore cannot resist. The impotency thereof ought not to be opposed to this omnipotent grace, which will certainly effect the work for which it is ordained, being an action not inferior to the greatness of his “mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead,” Eph\_1:19-20. And shall not that power which could overcome hell, and loose the bonds of death, be effectual for the raising of a sinner from the death of sin, when by God’s intention it is appointed unto that work? He accomplisheth “the work of faith with power,” 2Th\_1:11. It is “his divine power that giveth unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,” 2Pe\_1:3. Surely a moral, resistible persuasion would not be thus often termed the “power” of God, which denoteth an actual efficacy to which no creature is able to resist.

Secondly, That which consisteth in a real efficiency, and is not at all but when and where it actually worketh what it intendeth, cannot without a contradiction be said to be so resisted that it should not work, the whole nature thereof consisting in such a real operation. Now, that the very essence of divine grace consisteth in such a formal act may be proved by all those places of Scripture that affirm God by his grace, or the grace of God, actually to accomplish our conversion: as Deu\_30:6, “And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” The circumcision of our hearts, that we may love the Lord with all our hearts, and with all our souls, is our conversion, which the Lord affirmeth here that he himself will do; not only enable us to do it, but he himself

really and effectually will accomplish it. And again, “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts,” Jer\_31:33. “I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me,” Jer\_32:40. He will not offer his fear unto them, but actually put it into them. And most clearly, Eze\_36:26-27, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.” Are these expressions of a moral persuasion only? Doth God affirm here he will do what he intends only to persuade us to, and which we may refuse to do if we will? Is it in the power of a stony heart to remove itself? What an active stone is this, in mounting upwards! What doth it at all differ from that heart of flesh that God promiseth? Shall a stony heart be said to have a power to change itself into such a heart of flesh as shall cause us to walk in God’s statutes? Surely, unless men were wilfully blind, they must needs here perceive such an action of God denoted, as effectually, solely, and infallibly worketh our conversion; “opening our hearts, that we may attend unto the word,” Act\_16:14; “giving us in the behalf of Christ to believe on him,” Php\_1:29. Now, these and the like places prove both the nature of God’s grace to consist in a real efficiency, and the operation thereof to be certainly effectual.

Thirdly, Our conversion is a “new creation,” a “resurrection,” a “new birth.” Now, he that createth a man doth not persuade him to create himself, neither can he if he should, nor hath he any power to resist him that will create him,—that is, as we now take it, translate him from something that he is to what he is not. What arguments do you think were sufficient to persuade a dead man to rise? or what great aid can he contribute to his own resurrection? Neither doth a man beget himself; a new real form was never yet introduced into any matter by subtle arguments. These are the terms the Scripture is pleased to use concerning our conversion:—“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,” 2Co\_5:17. The “new man after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,” Eph\_4:24. It is our new birth: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” Joh\_3:3. “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth,” Jas\_1:18. And so we become “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever,” 1Pe\_1:23. It is our vivification and resurrection: “The Son quickeneth whom he will,” Joh\_5:21, even those “dead,” who “hear his voice and live,” Joh\_5:25. “When we were dead in sins,” we are “quicken together with Christ by grace,” Eph\_2:5; for “being buried with him by baptism, we are also risen with him through the faith of the operation of God,” Col\_2:12. And “blessed and holy is he that hath part in that first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

Τ■ Θε■ ριστομεγ■στ■ δ■ξα.

### 03A.00.1. Apostasy from the Gospel

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THE NATURE OF APOSTASY FROM THE PROFESSION OF THE GOSPEL AND THE PUNISHMENT OF APOSTATES DECLARED, IN AN EXPOSITION OF Hebrews 6:4-6; WITH An Inquiry Into The Causes And Reasons Of The Decay Of The Power Of Religion In The World, Or The Present General Defection From The Truth, Holiness, And Worship Of The Gospel; Also, Of The Proneness Of Churches And Persons Of All Sorts Unto Apostasy. WITH REMEDIES AND MEANS OF PREVENTION.

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## 03A.00.2. TO THE READER.

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### TO THE READER.

SOME brief account of the occasion and design of the ensuing discourse I judge due unto the reader, that, upon a prospect of them, he may either proceed in its perusal or desist, as he shall see cause. That the state of religion is at this day deplorable in most parts of the Christian world is acknowledged by all who concern themselves in any thing that is so called; yea, the enormities of some are come to that excess that others publicly complain of them, who, without the countenance of their more bold provocations, would themselves be judged no small part or cause of the evils to be complained of. However, this, on all hands, will, as I suppose, be agreed unto, that among the generality of professed Christians, the glory and power of Christianity are faded and almost utterly lost, though the reasons and causes thereof are not agreed upon; for however some few may please themselves in supposing nothing to be wanting unto a good state of things in religion, but only security in what they are and enjoy, yet the whole world is so evidently filled with the dreadful effects of the lusts of men, and sad tokens of divine displeasure, that all things from above and here below proclaim the degeneracy of our religion, in its profession, from its pristine beauty and glory. Religion is the same that ever it was, only it suffers by them that make profession of it. Whatever disadvantage it falls under in the world, they must at length answer for in whose misbelief and practice it is corrupted. And no man can express a greater enmity unto or malice against the gospel, than he that should assert or maintain that the faith, profession, lives, ways, and walkings of the generality of Christians are a just representation of its truth and holiness. The description which the apostle gives of men in their principles, dispositions, and actings, before there hath been any effectual influence on their minds and lives from the light, power, and grace of the gospel, is much more applicable unto them than any thing that is spoken of the disciples of Christ in the whole book of God: "Foolish are they, and disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." The way, paths, and footsteps of gospel faith, love, meekness, temperance, self-denial, benignity, humility, zeal, and contempt of the world, in the honors, profits, and pleasures of it, with readiness for the cross, are all [so] overgrown, and almost worn out amongst men, that they can hardly be discerned where they have been. But in their stead the "works of the flesh" have made a broad and open road, that the multitude travel in, which, though it may be right for a season in their own eyes, yet is the way to hell, and goeth down to the chambers of death; for these "works of the flesh are manifest" in the world, not only in their nature, what they are, but in their open perpetration and dismal effects: such are "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like," as they are reckoned up by the apostle. How these things have spread themselves over the face of the Christian world, among all sorts of persons, is manifest beyond all contradiction or pretense to the contrary. And that so it should come to pass in the latter times is both expressly and frequently foretold in the Scripture, as in the ensuing discourse will be more fully declared.

Many, indeed, there are who are not given up in the course of their lives unto the open practice of such abominations; and therefore, in that grand defection from the truth and holiness of the gospel which is so prevalent in the world, the grace of God is greatly to be admired, even in the small remainders of piety, sobriety, and modesty, and common usefulness that are yet left among us. But those openly flagitious courses are not the only way whereby men may fall off from, and even renounce, the power, grace, and wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. For even of those who will not "run out to the same excess of riot" with other men, the most are so ignorant of the mysteries of the gospel, so negligent or formal in divine worship, so infected with pride, vanity, and love of the world, so regardless of the glory of Christ and honor of the gospel, that it is no easy thing to find Christian religion in the midst of professed Christians, or the power of godliness among them who openly avow the form thereof. By this means is Christianity brought into so great neglect in the world, that its great and subtle adversary seems encouraged to attempt the ruining of its very foundations, that the name of it should no more be had in remembrance; for wherever religion is taken off from a solid consistency by its power in the lives and minds of men, when it hath no other tenure but an outward, unenlivened profession, and the secular interest of its professors, it will not long abide the shock of that opposition which it is continually exposed unto. And whilst things are in this state, those who seem to have any concernment therein are so engaged in mutual charging one another with being occasions thereof, mostly on such principles of difference in judgment as have no considerable influence thereinto, as that a joint endeavor after proper remedies is utterly neglected. And there is yet another consideration rendering the present state of Christian religion in the world yet more deplorable. The only principle of evangelical obedience is sacred truth, and our faith therein. That alone is "the doctrine which is according to godliness;" and all acceptable obedience unto God is "the obedience of faith." Whatever men do or pretend unto in a way of duty unto him, whereof the truth of the gospel is not the spring and measure, which is not guided and animated thereby, it is not what God at present requireth, nor what he will eternally reward. Wherefore, although men may, and multitudes do, under a profession of that truth, live in open rebellion against its power, yet the wounds of religion are not incurable nor its stains indelible, whilst the proper remedy is owned and wants only due application. But if this truth itself be corrupted or deserted, if its most glorious mysteries be abused or despised, if its most important doctrines be impeached of error and falsehood, and if the vain imaginations and carnal reasonings of the serpentine wits of men be substituted in their room or exalted above them, what hope is there of a recovery? the breach will grow like the sea, until there be none to heal it. If the fountains of the waters of the sanctuary be poisoned in their first rising, they will not heal the nations unto whom they come. Where the doctrine of truth is corrupted, the hearts of men will not be changed by it nor their lives reformed.

How all this hath come to pass in the apostasy of the Roman church, and what multitudes of professed Christians are carried down the stream of that defection, is acknowledged among us who are called Protestants. How, therein, by various degrees, the corruption of the doctrine of the gospel gave occasion unto the depravation of men's manners on the one hand, and the wickedness of men's lives on the other hand, led the way unto, and served to make necessary, a farther perverting of the doctrine itself, until at length it is hard to determine whether the multiplied errors of that church have made the reintroduction of true holiness and evangelical obedience, or the corrupt, worldly conversation of the generality of the members of its communion has rendered the restoration of truth, more difficult and unpracticable in their present station, is in part declared

in the ensuing discourses, and deserves yet a more particular and distinct inquiry into. In general, certain it is that as error, with superstition, on the one hand, in the minds of the teachers or guides of the church, and sin, with conformity unto the ways, manners, and course of the present evil world in the body of the people, were mutually assistant unto their joint introduction into the profession and lives of Christians; so having possessed themselves of the visible church-state of many nations, they are so interwoven in their interests as to be mutually assistant to the exclusion of that truth and holiness which they have dispossessed. And whereas, moreover, they have found out the pretense of infallibility, stretched wide enough, in their own apprehensions, to cover, patronize, and justify the most enormous errors and highest inconformity of life unto the gospel, all hopes of their recovery are utterly defeated, but what are placed on the sovereign grace and almighty power of God. That there is also another endeavor of the same kind, and for the same general end, — namely, to corrupt the doctrine of the gospel, — though in another way, and unto another extreme, vigorously carried on in the world by the Socinians, and those who either absolutely or for the most part comply with them in their pernicious ways, is no less known, nor ought to be much less bewailed; for this endeavor also is attended with many advantages to give it success. The corruption of the doctrine of the gospel in the Roman church, as it sprang out of the ignorance, darkness, superstition, and carnal affections of the minds of men, so it is by the same means preserved. But although those things, in those ages and places where they abounded, gave sufficient and effectual advantage to its gradual introduction, and although the principles of it be now so inlaid with the secular interests of the generality of mankind in most of the nations in Europe as to secure its station and possessions; yet, in that emancipation of reason from under the bond of superstition and tradition, in that liberty of rational inquiry into the true nature and causes of all things, in that refusal to captivate their understandings in religion to the bare authority of men no wiser than themselves, which all pretend unto at present who dare venture on an ordinary converse in the world, it may seem marvellous how it should get ground and enlarge its territories, unless it be among them who are evidently bought off from themselves and from under the conduct of their own minds by some outward advantages, which they look upon as a valuable consideration. The true reasons hereof are inquired into in the ensuing discourse. But this new attempt, despising the baffled aids of superstition and carnal affections, which were in former ages predominant and effectual, takes shelter under a pretense of reason, and the suitability of what is proposed in it unto the natural light and understandings of men. Whatever there is or is not in this matter of the relation that is between religion and reason, yet this being grown, through the increase of learning and converse, with a decay of the true fear of God, the very idol of this age, whoever will prepare a sacrifice unto it, though it be of the most holy mysteries of the gospel, he shall not fail of good entertainment and applause; and whoever shall refuse to cast incense on its altar shall be sure to be exploded, as one that professeth himself to be a fool, and even a common enemy unto mankind. Tell men that there are some things in religion that are above reason as it is finite and limited, and some things contrary unto it as it is depraved and corrupted, and they will reply (what is true in itself, but woefully abused) that yet their reason is the best, yea, only means which they have to judge of what is true or false. The liberty of men's own rational faculties having got the great vogue in the world (as indeed it is that which is most excellent therein of what is merely in and of it), it is fond to expect that it should not meet with a pernicious abuse, as every thing that hath any worth in it hath always done, when advanced unto such a reputation as might render it liable thereunto; for no man will ever adventure to prevail himself of that which others

have no respect unto or do despise.

Herein, then, lies the advantage of this sort of men, — the Socinians I mean, and their adherents, — in attempting to corrupt the doctrine of the gospel, and hereon depends all their success therein: First, they get the advantage of the ground in general, by pretending to reduce all men unto right reason, as the just measure and standard of truth. Put in any exceptions unto this proposal, endeavor to affix its bounds and proper measure, offer the consideration of divine revelation in its proper use and place, and you give away the cause among the many, who design at least to come in as common sharers in the reputation that reason hath got above all things in the world. By the confident use of this artifice, and the most absurd application of this principle unto things infinite and the most holy mysteries of divine revelation, have this sort of men, otherwise, for the most part, as weak and insufficient in their reasonings as their predecessors in the like attempts, got the reputation of the most rational handlers of sacred things! And when, being harnessed with this advantage, they proceed to the proposal of their opinions in particular, they have such an interest beforehand in the minds of men by nature, and have things so disposed and prepared for their reception, that it is no wonder if oftentimes they obtain success. For they are all of them designed unto one of these two heads: — first, "That there is no reason why we should believe any thing that reason cannot comprehend; so that we may safely conclude that whatever is above our reason is contrary unto it; and for what is so, it is destructive to the very natural constitution of our souls not to reject:" and, secondly, "That the mind of man is, in its present condition, every way sufficient unto the whole of its duties, both intellectual and moral, with respect unto God, and to answer whatever is required of us." Upon the matter, they pretend only to undertake the patronage of human nature, and the common reason and honesty of mankind, against those imputations of weakness, depravation, and corruption, in things spiritual, wherewith by some it is charged and defamed. And although it be contrary unto the universal experience of the whole world, yet might this design be allowed what commendation men please, so that the defense of nature were not undertaken expressly against the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the redemption that is in his blood, and the whole mystery of the gospel. But whereas it is a part of the depravation of our nature not to discover its own depravations, and all those opinions are suited to give it countenance against what it is not sensible of, and whereof it is not willing to own the charge, it is no wonder if with very many they receive a ready entertainment. And whereas they seem to interest men in that reputation which reason in the things of God hath obtained in the world, and thereby to countenance them in the contempt of others as weak and irrational, — things pleasing to the depraved minds of men, — it is more than probable that they will make a pernicious progress in one degree or another. So doth the subtle enemy of our salvation make his advantage of the disposition, inclination, and state of every age and season. Without his interposition, devotion of old might have been carried on without superstition, and in this age the use of reason might be vindicated without a rejection of the necessity of supernatural illumination and the great truths of the gospel. But the better any thing is, the more noisome it will be when once he hath mixed his poison with it.

It were to be wished that the defection from the truth of the gospel complained of were confined unto the instances already mentioned, though in them the event be deplorable among multitudes of professed Christians. But the same, in some measure and degree, is come to pass among Protestants also. Men grow weary of the truths which have been professed ever since the

Reformation, yea, of those in particular which gave occasion thereunto, and without which it had never been attempted; for besides that many fall off unto those extremes of error before insisted on, some on the one hand, and some on the other, the reformed religion is by not a few so taken off from its old foundations, so unhinged from those pillars of important truths which it did depend upon, and so sullied by a confused medley of noisome opinions, as that its loss in reputation of stability and usefulness seems almost irreparable. Hence are divisions, debates, and animosities multiplied about the principal articles of our religion, whereby those tongues are divided and hands engaged in mutual intestine conflicts, which all united were few enough to preserve the remainders of the protestant profession from the artifices and power of him who doth not despair once more to impose his yoke on the neck of the whole Christian world; for nothing can more prepare the way of his success than the shaking of the doctrine of the reformed churches from that consistency wherein for so long a time it stood firm and stable against all opposition. But there is in this matter nothing absolutely new under the sun. No instance can be given of any church or nation in the world, which ever received the profession of the gospel, that did not, sooner or later, either totally or in some considerable degrees, fall off from the doctrine which it reveals and the obedience which it requireth. Men do but deceive themselves who suppose that the purity of religion will be preserved in confessions and canons, whilst some make it their business to corrupt its truth, and few or none make it their business to preserve its power. And, therefore, at this day, on one account or other, the defection is almost catholic; for it is in vain for any to pretend that the present general visible profession of Christianity doth in any tolerable measure answer the original pattern of it in the Scripture, or the first transcript thereof in the primitive believers. And that which, in this degenerate state of things, doth principally exercise the minds of considerate men is, whether there ought to be an immediate endeavor to reduce as many as will or can comply therewith unto the original standard in profession, obedience, and worship, or whether the present posture of things be not so far to be complied withal as to preserve therein the small remainders of religion among the community of Christians, who are not capable of such a reduction. The difference that is in the judgments of men herein is the ground of all those lesser controversies and opinions, which will be composed and have an end put unto them when God shall graciously afford unto us all a fresh revival of evangelical faith, love, and holiness, and, I fear, not before.

Upon some considerations of this state of things in the world, and under fears, perhaps not altogether groundless, that a farther progress will yet be made in this woeful declension from the power and purity of evangelical truth, I set myself unto a general inquiry what might be the secret causes and reasons whence it is that all sorts of persons, in all ages, have been so prone to apostatize from the sincere profession of the gospel in faith and obedience, as experience in the success of things manifests them to have been. And, moreover, an occasion was administered unto thoughts of that nature from my engagement in the exposition of the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, wherein the apostle so eminently describes the nature of total apostasy, with the end of apostates in the righteous judgment of God; for considering the greatness of that sin, and the terror of the Lord with respect thereunto, and not knowing whereunto the daily advance of impiety, profaneness, and abominable lusts, with ignorance, error, and superstition, might at length arrive, thoughtfulness of what might be required at the last day of myself, though cast in a men and obscure condition in the world, did not a little exercise my mind. The glory of God, the honor of Christ and the gospel, and the eternal welfare of the souls of men, being eminently concerned, I knew not how he could have the least satisfaction in the truth and reality of

his own Christianity who was not greatly affected with, and did not really mourn for, their suffering in this woful apostasy. What I have attained unto in that kind I have no reason to declare, but hope I may say, without the offense of any, that as I verily believe neither my prayers nor tears have been proportionable unto the causes of them in this matter, so I can and will say that they have been real and sincere.

I was not ignorant of the weakness and impertinency of all thoughts that a person of my mean condition in the world, disadvantaged by all imaginable circumstances that might prejudice the most sincere endeavors, should attempt any thing with respect unto the relief of nations or national churches, which yet are not without the verge of this fatal evil. To mourn for them in secret, to labor in prayers and supplications for a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit of Christ upon them for their good, are things which, although they may despise, yet God will accept in and from the meanest of them that call on his name in sincerity. Unto whom other opportunities and advantages are granted, from them other things will be required; and it is, no doubt, a great account they have to give who are admitted and esteemed as those whose place and duty it is to stem the current of overflowing impiety and profaneness, and effectually to apply the sovereign remedies of all those evils unto the souls and consciences of men. Sad will it be for them under whose hand this breach shall be, if they endeavor not to prevent it with their utmost diligence, and the open hazard of all their earthly concerns. A learned writer of the church of England affirms, "That there were two no small sins of noisome hypocrisy that he had espied among others; — the one, an opinion that there can be no fit matter of martyrdom in a state authorizing the true profession of that religion which among many we like best, and, left unto ourselves, would make choice of; the other, which in part feeds this, a persuasion that mere errors in doctrine or opinion are more pernicious than affected indulgence to lewd practices, or continuance in sinful courses, or open breaches of God's commandments." And after he had declared that "ministers of the gospel may deny Christ, or manifest their being ashamed of the gospel, by not opposing his word at they ought unto the sins of men," he adds, "That any age, since Christian religion was first propagated, hath wanted store of martyrs, is more to be attributed unto the negligence, ignorance, and hypocrisy, or want of courage in Christ's ambassadors, or appointed pastors, than unto the sincerity, mildness, or fidelity of the flock, especially of the bell-weather or chief ringleaders," Jac. tom. 1 b. 4. c. 4; with much more to the same purpose, which well deserve some men's consideration before all things of this nature be too late. But there is a duty of trading with a single talent; and if there be a ready mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not. And this alone hath made me adventure the proposal of my thoughts about the nature, causes, and occasions of the present defection from the gospel and decay of holiness, with the means of preservation from its infection, and prevention of its prevalency in private persons; for it is to no purpose to shut up all endeavors under fruitless complaints, nor yet to attempt an opposition unto effects whose causes are not well known and considered. Wherefore the investigation and declaration of the causes of this evil are the principal subject of the ensuing discourses. And if I have attained but thus much, that persons of more understanding and abilities to find out the hidden springs of the inundation of sin and errors in the Christian world, and who have more advantages to improve their discoveries unto public good, shall be hereby excited to undertake so necessary a work and duty, I shall esteem myself to have received a full reward.

There is one thing yet whereof I must advise those readers which are pleased to concern themselves in any writings of mine. The publishing of this exposition of some verses of the sixth chapter of the Epistle unto the Hebrews may have an appearance of my deserting that continued exposition of the whole epistle which I had designed. But as I know not what I may attain unto in the very near approach of that season wherein I must lay down this tabernacle, and the daily warning which, through many infirmities, I have thereof, so I am resolved whilst I live to proceed in that work as God shall enable, and other present necessary duties will allow. And the sole reason, added unto the seasonableness, as I supposed, of this discourse, why this part of the Exposition is singly proposed unto public view, was because the thoughts which arose thereon were drawn forth into such a length as would have been too great a digression from the context and design of the apostle.

## 03A.01. THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF APOSTASY FROM THE GOSPEL.

THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF APOSTASY FROM THE GOSPEL.

CHAPTER 1. THE NATURE OF APOSTASY FROM THE GOSPEL DECLARED, IN AN EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS 6:4-6.

INTENDING an inquiry into the nature, causes, and occasions of the present defection that is in the world from the truth, holiness, and worship of the gospel, I shall lay the foundation of my whole discourse in an exposition of that passage in the Epistle of Paul the apostle unto the Hebrews, wherein he gives an account both of the nature of apostasy and of the punishment due unto apostates; for as this will lead us naturally unto what is designed, so an endeavor to free the context from the difficulties wherewith it is generally supposed to be attended, and to explain the mind of the Holy Ghost therein, may be neither unacceptable nor unuseful. And this is chap. 6:4-6, whose words are these that follow: —

VAdu,naton ga.r tou.j a[pax fwtisque,ntaj( geusame,nouj te th/j dwrea/j th/j evpourani,ou( kai. meto,couj genhqe,ntaj Pneu,matoj a`gi,ou( kai. kalo.n geusam,nouj Qeou/ r`h/ma( duna,meij te me,llontoj aivw/noj( kai. parapeso,ntaj( pa,lin avnakaini,zein eivj meta,noian(avnastaurou/ntaj e`autoi/j to.n Uio.n tou/ Qeou/ kai. paradeigmati,zontaj.)

VAdu,naton ga,r. "Impossibile enim," that is, "est;" — "It is impossible." Syr., !yxik.v.m, al' aL'a,, — "But they cannot." This respects the power of the persons themselves, and not the event of things; it may be not improperly as to the sense. Beza and Erasmus, "Fieri non potest," — "It cannot be;" the same with "impossible." But the use of the word avdu,naton in in the New Testament, which signifies sometimes only what is very difficult, not what is absolutely denied, makes it useful to retain the same word, as in our translation, "For it is impossible."

Tou.j a[pax fwtisque,ntaj. Wtxen. at'ydiWm[]m\l. !b\z> !Wnh'; — "Those who one time," or "once descended unto baptism;" of which intepretation we must speak afterward. All others, "Qui semel fuerint illuminati;" — "Who were once enlightened." Only the Ethiopic follows the Syriac. Some read "illustrati" to the same purpose.

Geusame,nouj te th/j dwrea/j th/j evpourani,ou. Vulg. Lat., "Gustaverant etiam donum coeleste;" "etiam," for "et." Others express the article by the pronoun, by reason of its reduplication: "Et gustaverint donum illud coeleste;" — "And have tasted of that heavenly gift." Syr., "The gift that is from heaven." And this the emphasis in the original seems to require: "And have tasted of that heavenly gift."

Kai. meto,couj genhqe,ntaj Pneu,matoj a`gi,ou. "Et participes facti sunt Spiritus Sancti," Vulg. Lat.; — "And are made partakers of the Holy Ghost." All others, "facti fuerint," "have been" made partakers of the Holy Ghost. Syr., av`d.WqD. ax'Wr, — The Spirit of holiness."

Kai. kalo.n geusam,nouj Qeou/ r`h/ma. Vulg. Lat., "Et gustaverunt nihilominus bonum Dei verbum." Rhem., "Have moreover tasted the good word of God." But "moreover" doth not express "nihilominus." [It must be rendered,] "And have notwithstanding," etc., which hath no place here. Kalo.n r`h/ma, — "verbum pulchrum."

Duna,meij te me,llontoj aivw/noj. "Virtutesque seculi futuri."

Syr., al'y/x\, — "virtutem," the "power." Vulg., "seculi venturi." We cannot in our language distinguish between "futurum" and "venturum," and so render it "the world to come."

Kai. parapeso,ntaj. Vulg., "Et prolapsi sunt." Rhem., "And are fallen." Others, "Si prolabantur," which the sense requires; "If they fall," that is, "away," as our translation, properly. Syr., woWjx.y<bWtD., 'That sin again," — somewhat dangerously, for it is one kind of sinning only that is included and expressed.

Pa,lin avnakaini,zein eivj meta,noian. Vulg., "Rursus renovari ad poenitentiam," — "To be renewed again to repentance," rendering the active verb passively. So Beza also, "Ut denuo renouentur ad resipiscentiam;" — "That they should again be renewed to repentance." The word is active as rendered by ours, "To renew them again to repentance."

VAnastaurou/ntaj e`autoi/j to.n Uio.n tou/ Qeou/. "Rursom crucifigentes sibimetipsis Filium Dei." Kai. paradeigmati,zontaj. Vulg., "Et ostentui habentes." Rhem., "And making him a mockery." Erasmus, "Ludibrio habentes" Beza, "Ignominiae exponentes." One of late, "Ad exemplum Judaeorum excruciaut;" — "Torment him as did the Jews."

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away," (for any) "to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify again to themselves the Son of God, and put him to open shame" (or treat him ignominiously.) That this passage in our apostle's discourse hath been looked upon as accompanied with great difficulties is known to all, and many have the differences been about its interpretation; for both doctrinally and practically, sundry have here stumbled and miscarried. It is almost generally agreed upon that from these words, and the colorable but indeed perverse interpretation and application made of them by some in the primitive times, occasioned by the then present circumstances of things, to be mentioned afterwards, the Latin church was so backward in receiving the epistle itself, that it had not absolutely prevailed therein in the days of Jerome, as we have elsewhere declared. Wherefore it is necessary that we should a little inquire into the occasion of the great contests which have been in the church, almost in all ages, about the sense of this place.

It is known that the primitive church, according to its duty, was carefully watchful about the holiness and upright walking of all that were admitted into the society and fellowship of it. Hence, upon every known and visible failing, they required an open repentance from the offenders before they would admit them unto a participation of the sacred mysteries. But upon flagitious and scandalous crimes, such as murder, adultery, or idolatry, in many churches they would never admit those who had been guilty of them into their communion any more. Their greatest and most signal trial was with respect unto them who, through fear of death, complied with the Gentiles in their idolatrous worship in the time of persecution; for they had fixed no certain general rule

whereby they should unanimously proceed, but every church exercised severity or lenity according as they saw cause, upon the circumstances of particular instances. Hence Cyprian, in his banishment, would not positively determine concerning those of the church in Carthage who had so sinned and fallen, but deferred his thoughts until his return, when he resolved to advise with the whole church, and settle all things according to the counsel that should be agreed on amongst them. Yea, many of his epistles are on this subject peculiarly: and in them all, if compared together, it is evident that there was no rule agreed upon herein; nor was he himself well resolved in his own mind, though strictly on all occasions opposing Novatianus; wherein it had been well if his arguments had answered his zeal. Before this, the church of Rome was esteemed in particular more remiss in their discipline, and more free than other churches in their re-admission unto communion of notorious offenders. Hence Tertullian, in his book de Poenitentia, reflects on Zephyrinus, the bishop of Rome, that he had "admitted adulterers unto repentance, and thereby unto the communion of the church." But that church proceeding in her lenity, and every day enlarging her charity, Novatus and Novatianus, taking offense thereat, advanced an opinion in the contrary extreme: for they denied all hope of church pardon or of a return unto ecclesiastical communion unto them who had fallen into open sin after baptism; and, in especial, peremptorily excluded all persons whatsoever who had outwardly complied with idolatrous worship in time of persecution, without respect unto any distinguishing circumstances; yea, they seem to have excluded them from all expectation of forgiveness from God himself. But their followers, terrified with the uncharitableness and horror of this persuasion, tempered it so far as that, leaving all persons absolutely to the mercy of God upon their repentance, they only denied such as we mentioned before a re-admission unto church communion, as Acesius speaks expressly in Socrates, lib. 1 cap. 7. Now, this opinion they endeavored to confirm, as from the nature and use of baptism, which was not to be reiterated, — whereon they judged that no pardon was to be granted unto them who fell into those sins which they lived in before, and were cleansed from at their baptism, — so principally from this place of our apostle, wherein they thought their whole opinion was taught and confirmed. And so usually doth it fall out, very unhappily, with men who think they clearly see some peculiar opinion or persuasion in some singular text of Scripture, and will not bring their interpretation of it unto the analogy of faith, whereby they might see how contrary it is to the whole design and current of the word in other places. But the church of Rome, on the other side, though judging rightly, from other directions given in the Scripture, that the Novatians transgressed the rule of charity and gospel discipline in their severities, yet, as it should seem, and is very probable, knew not how to answer the objection from this place of our apostle. Therefore did they rather choose for a season to suspend their assent unto the authority of the whole epistle than to prejudice the church by its admission. And well was it that some learned men afterward, by their sober interpretations of the words, plainly evinced that no countenance was given in them unto the errors of the Novatians; for without this it is much to be feared that some would have preferred their interest in their present controversy before the authority of it: which would, in the issue, have proved ruinous to the truth itself; for the epistle, being designed of God unto the common edification of the church, would have at length prevailed, whatever sense men, through their prejudices and ignorance, should put upon any passages of it. But this controversy is long since buried, the generality of the churches in the world being sufficiently remote from that which was truly the mistake of the Novatians; yea, the most of them do bear peaceably in their communion, without the least exercise of gospel discipline towards them, such persons as

concerning whom the dispute was of old, whether they should ever in this world be admitted into the communion of the church, although upon their open and professed repentance. We shall not therefore at present need to labor in this controversy. But the sense of these words hath been the subject of great contests on other occasions also; for some do suppose and contend that they are real and true believers who are deciphered by the apostle, and that their character is given us in and by sundry inseparable adjuncts and properties of such persona Hence they conclude that such believers may totally and finally fall from grace, and perish eternally; yea, it is evident that this hypothesis of the final apostasy of true believers is that which influenceth their minds and judgments to suppose that such are here intended. Wherefore others who will not admit that, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus, true believers can perish everlastingly, do say that either they are not here intended, or if they are, that the words are only comminatory, wherein, although the consequence in them in a way of arguing be true, namely, that on the supposition laid down the inference is certain, yet the supposition is not asserted in order unto a certain consequent, whence it should follow that true believers might so really fall away and absolutely perish. And these things have been the matter of many contests among learned men.

Again; there have been sundry mistakes in the practical application of the intention of these words unto the consciences of men, mostly made by themselves who are concerned; for whereas, by reason of sin, they have been surprised with terrors and troubles of conscience, they have withal, in their darkness and distress, supposed themselves to be fallen into the condition here described by our apostle, and consequently to be irrecoverably lost. And these apprehensions usually befall men on two occasions; for some having been overtaken with some great actual sin against the second table, after they have made a profession of the gospel, and having their consciences harassed with a sense of their guilt (as it will fall out where men are not greatly hardened through the deceitfulness of sin), they judge that they are fallen under the sentence denounced in this Scripture against such sinners, as they suppose themselves to be, whereby their state is irrecoverable. Others do make the same judgment of themselves, because they have fallen from that constant compliance with their convictions which formerly led them unto a strict performance of duties, and this in some course of long continuance.

Now, whereas it is certain that the apostle in this discourse gives no countenance unto that severity of the Novatians whereby they excluded offenders everlastingly from the peace and communion of the church; nor to the final apostasy of true believers, which he testifieth against in this very chapter, in compliance with innumerable other testimonies of Scripture to the same purpose; nor doth he teach any thing whereby the conscience of any sinner who desires to return to God and to find acceptance with him should be discouraged or disheartened; we must attend unto the exposition of the words in the first place, so as not to break in upon the boundaries of other truths, nor transgress against the analogy of faith. And we shall find that this whole discourse, compared with other scriptures, and freed from the prejudices that men have brought unto it, is both remote from administering any just occasion to the mistakes before mentioned, and is a needful, wholesome commination, duly to be considered by all professors of the gospel. In the words we consider, — 1. The connection of them unto those foregoing, intimating the occasion of the introduction of this whole discourse. 2. The subject described in them, or the persons spoken of, under sundry qualifications, which may be inquired into jointly and severally. 3. What is

supposed concerning them. 4. What is affirmed of them on that supposition.

The connection of the words is included in the causal conjunction, *ga,r*, "for." It respects the introduction of a reason for what had been before discoursed, as also of the limitation which the apostle added expressly unto his purpose of making a progress in their farther instruction, "If God permit." And he doth not herein express his judgment that they to whom he wrote were such as he describes, for he afterward declares that he "hoped better things" concerning them; only, it was necessary to give them this caution, that they might take due care not to be such. And whereas he had manifested that they were slow as to the making of a progress in knowledge and a suitable practice, he lets them here know the danger that there was in continuing in that slothful condition; for not to proceed in the ways of the gospel and obedience thereunto is an untoward entrance into a total relinquishment of the one and the other. That therefore they might be acquainted with the danger hereof, and be stirred up to avoid that danger, he gives them an account of the miserable condition of those who, after a profession of the gospel, beginning at a non-proficiency under it, do end in apostasy from it. And we may see that the severest comminations are not only useful in the preaching of the gospel, but exceeding necessary, towards persons that are observed to be slothful in their profession.

The description of the persons that are the subject spoken of is given in five instances of the evangelical privileges whereof they were made partakers; notwithstanding all which, and against their obliging efficacy to the contrary, it is supposed that they may wholly desert the gospel itself. And some things we may observe concerning this description of them in general; as, — (1.) The apostle, designing to express the fearful state and judgment of these persons, describes them by such things as may fully evidence it to be, as unavoidable, so righteous and equal. Those things must be some eminent privileges and advantages, whereof they were made partakers by the gospel. These, being despised in their apostasy, do proclaim their destruction from God to be rightly deserved. (2.) That all these privileges do consist in certain especial operations of the Holy Ghost, which were peculiar unto the dispensation of the gospel, such as they neither were nor could be made partakers of in their Judaism; for the Spirit in this sense was not received by "the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith," Galatians 3:2. And this was a testimony unto them that they were delivered from the bondage of the law, namely, by a participation of that Spirit which was the great privilege of the gospel. (3.) Here is no express mention of any covenant grace or mercy in them or towards them, nor of any duty of faith or obedience which they had performed. Nothing of justification, sanctification, or adoption, is expressly assigned unto them. Afterwards, when he comes to declare his hope and persuasion concerning these Hebrews, that they were not such as those whom he had before described, nor such as would so fall away unto perdition, he doth it upon three grounds, whereon they were differenced from them; as, — [1.] That they had such things as did accompany salvation, — that is, such as salvation is inseparable from. None of these things, therefore, had he ascribed unto those whom he describeth in this place; for if he had so done, they would not have been unto him an argument and evidence of a contrary end, that these should not fall away and perish as well as those. Wherefore he ascribes nothing to these here in the text that doth peculiarly "accompany salvation," Galatians 3:9. [2.] He describes them by their duties of obedience and fruits of faith. This was their "work and labor of love" towards the name of God, Galatians 3:10. And hereby also doth he difference them from these in the text, concerning whom he supposeth that they may perish eternally, which these fruits of saving faith

and sincere love cannot do. [3.] He adds, that in the preservation of those there mentioned the faithfulness of God was concerned: "God is not unrighteous to forget." For they were such he intended as were interested in the covenant of grace, with respect whereunto alone there is any engagement on the faithfulness or righteousness of God to preserve men from apostasy and ruin; and there is so with an equal respect unto all who are so taken into that covenant. But of these in the text he supposeth no such thing, and thereupon doth not intimate that either the righteousness or faithfulness of God was any way engaged for their preservation, but rather the contrary. This whole description, therefore, refers unto some especial gospel privileges, which professors in those days were promiscuously made partakers of; and what they were in particular we must in the next place inquire.

The FIRST thing in the description is, that they were a[pax fwtisqe,ntej, "once enlightened." Saith the Syriac translation, as we observed, "once baptized." It is very certain that, early in the church, baptism was called fwtismo,j, "illumination;" and fwti,zein, to "enlighten," was used for to "baptize." And the set times wherein they solemnly administered that ordinance were called h`me,rai tw/n fw,twn, "the days of light." Hereunto the Syriac interpreter seems to have had respect; and the word a[pax, "once," may give countenance hereunto. Baptism was once only to be celebrated, according to the constant faith of the church in all ages. And they called baptism "illumination," because it being one ordinance of the initiation of persons into a participation of all the mysteries of the church, they were thereby translated out of the kingdom of darkness into that of light and grace. And it seems to give farther countenance hereunto in that baptism really was the beginning and foundation of a participation of all the other spiritual privileges that are mentioned afterwards; for it was usual in those times, that, upon the baptizing of persons, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and endowed them with extraordinary gifts, peculiar to the days of the gospel, as we have showed in our consideration of the order between baptism and imposition of hands. And this opinion hath so much of probability in it, that, having nothing therewithal unsuited unto the analogy of faith or design of the place, I should embrace it, if the word itself, as here used, did not require another interpretation; for it was good while aider the writing of this epistle and all other parts of the New Testament, at least an age or two, if not more, before this word was used mystically to express baptism. In the whole Scripture it hath another sense, denoting an inward operation of the Spirit, and not the outward administration of an ordinance. And it is too much boldness to take a word in a peculiar sense in one single place, diverse from its proper signification and constant use, if there be no circumstances in the text forcing us thereunto, as here are not. And for the word a[pax "once," it is not to be restrained unto this particular, but refers equally unto all the instances that follow, signifying no more but that those mentioned were really and truly partakers of them.

Fwti,zomai is to give light or knowledge by teaching, the same with hr"wOh, which is therefore so translated oftentimes by the Greeks; as by Aquila, Exodus 4:12, Psalms 119:33, Proverbs 4:4, Isaiah 27:11, as Drusius observes. And it is so by the LXX., Judges 13:8, 2 Kings 12:2, 2 Kings 17:27. Our apostle useth it for to "make manifest," — that is, to "bring to light," 1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Timothy 1:10. And the meaning of it, John 1:9, where we render it "lighteth," is to teach. And fwtismo,j is knowledge upon instruction; 2 Corinthians 4:4, Eivj to. mh. auvga,sai auvtoi/j to.n fwtismo.n tou/ euvaggeli,ou — "That the light of the gospel should not shine into them," — that is, the knowledge of it. So 2 Corinthians 4:4, Pro.j fwtismo.n th/j gnw,sewj — "The light of the knowledge." Wherefore, to be "enlightened" in this place is to be instructed in the doctrine of the

gospel, so as to have a spiritual apprehension thereof; and this is so termed on a double account:

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Of the objects, or the things known or apprehended; for "life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel," 2 Timothy 1:10. Hence it is called "light," — "The inheritance of the saints in light." And the state which men are thereby brought into is so called in opposition to the darkness that is in the world without it, 1 Peter 2:9. The world without the gospel is the kingdom of Satan: —O ko,smoj o[loj evn tw/| ponhrw/| kei/tai, 1 John 5:19. The whole of the world, and all that belongs unto it, in distinction from and opposition unto the new creation, is under the power of the wicked one, the prince of the power of darkness, and so is full of darkness. It is to,poj auvcmhro,j, 2 Peter 1:19, — "a dark place," wherein ignorance, folly, errors, and superstition do dwell and reign. By the power and efficacy of this darkness are men kept at a distance from God, and know not whither they go. This is called "walking in darkness," 1 John 1:6, whereunto "walking in the light," — that is, the knowledge of God in Christ by the gospel, — is opposed, verse 7. On this account is our instruction in the knowledge of the gospel called "illumination," because itself is light.

On the account of the subject, or the mind itself, whereby the gospel is apprehended; for the knowledge which is received thereby expels that darkness, ignorance, and confusion which the mind before was filled and possessed withal. The knowledge, I say, of the doctrines of the gospel concerning the person of Christ, of God's being in him reconciling the world to himself, of his offices, work, and mediation, and the like heads of divine revelation, doth set up a spiritual light in the minds of men, enabling them to discern what before was utterly hid from them, whilst alienated from the life of God through their ignorance. Of this light and knowledge there are several degrees, according to the means of instruction which men do enjoy, the capacity they have to receive it, and the diligence they use to that purpose; but a competent measure of the knowledge of the fundamental and most material principles or doctrines of the gospel is required unto all that may thence be said to be illuminated, — that is, freed from the darkness and ignorance they once lived in, 2 Peter 1:19-21.

This is the first property whereby the persons intended are described: they are such as were illuminated by the instruction they had received in the doctrines of the gospel, and the impression made thereby on their minds by the Holy Ghost; for this is a common work of his, and is here so reckoned. And the apostle would have us know that, —

I. It is a great mercy, a great privilege, to be enlightened with the doctrine of the gospel by the effectual working of the Holy Ghost. But, —

It is such a privilege as may be lost, and end in the aggravation of the sin, and condemnation of those who were made partakers of it. And, —

Where there is a total neglect of the due improvement of this privilege and mercy, the condition of such persons is hazardous, as inclining towards apostasy.

Thus much lies open and manifest in the text. But that we may more particularly discover the nature of this first part of the character of apostates, for their sakes who may look after their own concernment therein, we may yet a little more distinctly express the nature of that illumination and knowledge which is here ascribed unto them; and how it is lost in apostasy will afterward appear. And, —

There is a knowledge of spiritual things that is purely natural and disciplinary, attainable and attained without any especial aid or assistance of the Holy Ghost. As this is evident in common experience, so especially among such as, casting themselves on the study of spiritual things, are yet utter strangers unto all spiritual gifts. Some knowledge of the Scripture and the things contained in it is attainable at the same rate of pains and study with that of any other art or science.

The illumination intended, being a gift of the Holy Ghost, differs from and is exalted above this knowledge that is purely natural; for it makes nearer approaches unto the light of spiritual things in their own nature than the other doth. Notwithstanding the utmost improvement of scientific notions that are purely natural, the things of the gospel, in their own nature, are not only unsuited unto the wills and affections of persons endued with them, but are really foolishness unto their minds. And as unto that goodness and excellency which give desirableness unto spiritual things, this knowledge discovers so little of them that most men hate the things which they profess to believe. But this spiritual illumination gives the mind some satisfaction, with delight and joy in the things that are known. By that beam whereby it shines into darkness, although it be not fully comprehended, yet it represents the way of the gospel as a "way of righteousness," 2 Peter 2:21, which reflects a peculiar regard of it on the mind.

Moreover, the knowledge that is merely natural hath little or no power upon the soul, either to keep it from sin or to constrain it to obedience. There is not a more secure and profligate generation of sinners in the world than those who are under the sole conduct of it. But the illumination here intended is attended with efficacy, so as that it doth effectually press in the conscience and whole soul unto an abstinence from sin and the performance of all known duties. Hence persons under the power of it and its convictions do oftentimes walk blamelessly and uprightly in the world, so as not with the other to contribute unto the contempt of Christianity. Besides, there is such an alliance between spiritual gifts, that where any one of them doth reside, it hath assuredly others accompanying of it, or one way or other belonging unto its train; as is manifest in this place. Even a single talent is made up of many pounds. But the light and knowledge which is of a mere natural acquirement is solitary, destitute of the society and countenance of any spiritual gift whatever. And these things are exemplified unto common observation every day.

There is a saving, sanctifying light and knowledge which this spiritual illumination riseth not up unto; for though it transiently affect the mind with some glances of the beauty, glory, and excellency of spiritual things, yet it doth not give that direct, steady, intuitive insight into them which is obtained by grace. See 2 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Corinthians 4:6. Neither doth it renew, change, or transform the soul into a conformity unto the things known, by planting of them in the will and affections, as a gracious, saving light doth, 2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 6:17, Romans 12:2.

These things I judged necessary to be added, to clear the nature of the first character of apostates. The SECOND thing asserted in the description of them is, that they have "tasted of the heavenly gift," — *geusame,nouj te th/j dwrea/j th/j evpoupani,ou*. The doubling of the article gives emphasis to the expression. And we must inquire, — 1. What is meant by the "heavenly gift;" and, 2. What by "tasting" of it.

The gift of God, *dwrea,* is either *do,sij*, "donatio," or *dw,rhma*, "donum." Sometimes it is taken for the grant or giving itself, and sometimes for the thing given. In the first sense it is used, 2

Corinthians 9:15, "Thanks be unto God evpi. th?| avnekdiugh<tw?| auvtou/ dwrea/|," — for his gift that cannot be declared;" that is, fully or sufficiently. Now this gift was his grant of a free, charitable, and bountiful spirit to the Corinthians in ministering unto the poor saints. The grant hereof is called "God's gift." So is the gift of Christ used also: Ephesians 4:7, "According to the measure of the gift of Christ;" that is, "According as he is pleased to give and grant of the fruits of the Spirit unto men." See Romans 5:15-17; Ephesians 3:7. Sometimes it is taken for the thing given, properly dw/ron or dw,rhma, as James 1:17. So it is used John 4:10, "If thou knewest the gift of God," th.n dwrea.n tou/ Qeou/, "The gift of God," — that is, the thing given by him, or to be given by him. It is, as many judge, the person of Christ himself which in that place is intended; but the context makes it plain that it is the Holy Ghost, for he is that "living water" which the Lord Jesus in that place promiseth to bestow. And, so far as I can observe, dwrea,, the "gift," with respect unto God, as denoting the thing given, is nowhere used but only to signify the Holy Ghost; and if it be so, the sense of this place is determined, Acts 2:38, "Ye shall receive th.n dwrea.n tou/ a`gi,ou Pneu,matoj, — the gift of the Holy Ghost;" not that which he gives, but that which he is. Acts 8:20, "Thou hast thought dwrea.n tou/ Qeou/, — that the gift of God may be purchased with money;" that is, the power of the

Holy Ghost in miraculous operations. So expressly Acts 10:45, Acts 11:17. Elsewhere dwrea,, so far as I can observe, when respecting God, doth not signify the thing given, but the grant itself. The Holy Spirit is signally the gift of God under the new testament. And he is said to be evpoura,nioj, "heavenly," or from heaven. This may have respect unto his work and effect, — they are heavenly, as opposed to carnal and earthly; but principally it regards his mission by Christ, after his ascension into heaven: Acts 2:33, being exalted, and having received the promise of the Father, he sent the Spirit. The promise of him was, that he should be sent from heaven, or l[;M;mi, "from above," as God is said to be above, which is the same with "heavenly," Deuteronomy 4:39; 2 Chronicles 6:23; Job 31:28; Isaiah 32:15, ~worM'mi, and Isaiah 24:18. When he came upon the Lord Christ to anoint him for his work, "the heavens were opened," and he came from above, Matthew 3:16. So Acts 2:2, at his first coming on the apostles, there came "a sound from heaven." Hence he is said to be avpostalei.j avp v ouvranou/, — that is, to be h` dwrea. tou/ Qeou/, "sent from heaven," 1 Peter 1:12. Wherefore, although he may be said to be "heavenly" upon other accounts also, which therefore are not absolutely to be excluded, yet his being sent from heaven by Christ, after his ascension thither and exaltation there, is principally here regarded. He therefore is this h` dwrea. h` evpoura,nioj, the "heavenly gift" here intended, though not absolutely, but with respect unto an especial work. That which riseth up against this interpretation is, that the Holy Ghost is expressly mentioned in the next clause: "And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." It is not therefore probable that he should be here also intended.

Ans. (1.) It is ordinary to have the same thing twice expressed, in various words, to quicken the sense of them; and it is necessary it should be so, when there are divers respects unto the same thing, as there are in this place.

(2.) The following clause may be exegetical of this, declaring more fully and plainly what is here intended; which is usual also in the Scripture: so that nothing is cogent from this consideration to disprove an interpretation so suited to the sense of the place, and which the constant use of the word makes necessary to be embraced. But, —

(3.) The Holy Ghost is here mentioned as the great gift of the gospel times, as coming down from heaven, not absolutely, not as unto his person, but with respect unto an especial work, — namely, the change of the whole state of religious worship in the church of God, — whereas we shall see in the next words, he is spoken of only with respect unto external actual operations. But he was the great, the promised heavenly gift, to be bestowed under the new testament, by whom God would institute and ordain a new way and new rites of worship, upon the revelation of himself and his will in Christ. Unto him was committed the reformation of all things in the church, whose time was now come, chap. 9:10. The Lord Christ, when he ascended into heaven, left all things standing and continuing in religious worship as they had done from the days of Moses, though he had virtually put an end unto it [the Mosaic dispensation]; and he commanded his disciples that they should attempt no alteration therein until the Holy Ghost were sent from heaven to enable them thereunto, Acts 1:4-5. But when he came as the great gift of God, promised under the new testament, he removes all the carnal worship and ordinances of Moses, and that by the full revelation of the accomplishment of all that was signified by them, and appoints the new, holy, spiritual worship of the gospel, that was to succeed in their room. The Spirit of God, therefore, as bestowed for the introduction of the new gospel state in truth and worship, is the "heavenly gift" here intended. Thus our apostle warneth these Hebrews that they "turn not away from him who speaketh from heaven," Hebrews 12:25, — that is, from Jesus Christ speaking in the dispensation of the gospel by the "Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." And there is an antithesis included herein between the law and the gospel, the former being given on earth, the latter being immediately from heaven. God, in giving of the law, made use of the ministry of angels, and that on the earth; but he gave the gospel church-state by that Spirit which, although he worketh in men on earth, and is said in every act or work to be sent from heaven, yet is he still in heaven, and always speaketh from thence, as our Savior said of himself with respect unto his divine nature, John 3:13.

We may inquire what it is to "taste" of this heavenly gift, The expression of "tasting" is metaphorical, and signifies no more but to make a trial or experiment; for so we do by tasting naturally and properly of that which is tendered unto us to eat. We taste such things by the sense given us to discern our food, and then either receive or refuse them, as we find occasion. It doth not therefore include eating, much less digestion and turning into nourishment of what is so tasted; for its nature being only thereby discerned, it may be refused, yea, though we like its relish and savor, upon some other consideration. Some have observed, that "to taste is as much as to eat; as 2 Samuel 3:35, 'I will not taste bread, or ought else.'" But the meaning is, "I will not so much as taste it," whence it was impossible he should eat it. And when Jonathan says that he only tasted a little of the honey, 1 Samuel 14:29, it was an excuse and extenuation of what he had done. But it is unquestionably used for some kind of experience of the nature of things: Proverbs 31:18,

Hr"x.s; bwOj-yKi hm'[]j', — "She tasteth that her merchandise is good," or hath experience of it, from its increase. Psalms 34:8, "O taste and see that the LORD is good;" which Peter respects, 1 Peter 2:3, "If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," or found it so by experience. It is therefore properly to make an experiment or trial of any thing, whether it be received or refused, and is sometimes opposed to eating and digestion, as Matthew 27:34. That, therefore, which is ascribed unto these persons is, that they had had an experience of the power of the Holy Ghost, that gift of God, in the dispensation of the gospel, the revelation of the truth, and institution of the spiritual worship of it, Of this state, and of the excellency of it, they had made some trial and had

some experience; a privilege that all men were not made partakers of. And by this taste they were convinced that it was far more excellent than what they had been before accustomed unto, although now they had a mind to leave the finest wheat for their old acorns. Wherefore, although tasting contains a diminution in it, if compared with that spiritual eating and drinking, with that digestion of gospel truths, turning them into nourishment, which are in true believers, yet, absolutely considered, it denotes that apprehension and experience of the excellency of the gospel as administered by the Spirit, which is a great privilege and spiritual advantage, the contempt whereof will prove an unspeakable aggravation of the sin, and the remediless ruin of apostates. The meaning, then, of this character given concerning these apostates is, that they had some experience of the power and efficacy of the Holy Spirit from heaven, in gospel administrations and worship. For what some say of faith, it hath here no place; and what others affirm of Christ, and his being the gift of God, comes in the issue unto what we have proposed. And we may observe, farther to clear the design of the apostle in this commination, —

I. That all the gifts of God under the gospel are peculiarly heavenly, John 3:12; Ephesians 1:3; — and that in opposition, 1. To earthly things, Colossians 3:1-2. To carnal ordinances, Hebrews 9:23. Let them beware by whom they are despised.

The Holy Ghost, for the remission of the mysteries of the gospel, and the institution of the ordinances of spiritual worship, is the great gift of God under the new testament.

There is a goodness and excellency in this heavenly gift which may be tasted or experienced in some measure by such as never receive them in their life, power, and efficacy. They may taste,

— 1. Of the word in its truth, not its power; 2. Of the worship of the church in its outward order, not in its inward beauty; 3. Of the gifts of the church, not its graces.

IV. A rejection of the gospel, its truth and worship, after some experience had of their worth and excellency, is a high aggravation of sin, and a certain presage of destruction. The THIRD property whereby these persons are described is added in these words, Kai. meto,couj genhqe,ntaj Pneu,matoj a`gi,ou,

— "And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost," This is placed in the middle or center of the privileges enumerated, two preceding it and two following after, as that which is the root and animating principle of them all. They all are effects of the Holy Ghost, in his gifts or his graces, and so do depend on the participation of him. Now, men do so partake of the Holy Ghost as they do receive him; and he may be received either as unto personal inhabitation or as unto spiritual operations. In the first way, "the world cannot receive him," John 14:17, — where the world is opposed unto true believers; and therefore those here intended were not in that sense partakers of him. His operations respect his gifts. So to partake of him is to have a part, share, or portion in what he distributes by way of spiritual gifts; in answer unto that expression, "All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will," 1 Corinthians 12:11. So Peter told Simon the magician that he had no part in spiritual gifts; he was not partaker of the Holy Ghost, Acts 8:21. Wherefore, to be partaker of the Holy Ghost is to have a share in and benefit of his spiritual operations. But whereas the other things mentioned are also gifts or operations of the Holy Ghost, on what ground or for what reason is this mentioned here in particular, that they were "made partakers of him," which, if his operations only be intended, seems to be expressed in the

other instances?

Ans. 1. It is, as we observed before, no unusual thing in the Scripture to express the same thing under various notions, the more effectually to impress a consideration and sense of it on our mind, especially where an expression hath a singular emphasis in it, as this hath here used; for it is an exceeding aggravation of the sins of those apostates, that in these things they were "partakers of the Holy Ghost."

As was before intimated also, this participation of the Holy Ghost is placed, it may be, in the midst of the several parts of this description, as that whereon they do all depend, and that they are all but instances of it. They were "partakers of the Holy Ghost" in that they were "once enlightened;" and so of the rest.

It expresseth their own personal interest in these things. They had an interest in the things mentioned not only objectively, as they were proposed and presented to them in the church, but subjectively, as they themselves in their own persons were made partakers of them. It is one thing for a man to have a share in and benefit by the gifts of the church, another to be personally himself endowed with them.

To mind them in an especial manner of the privilege, they enjoyed under the gospel, above what they had in their Judaism: for whereas they had not then so much as heard that there was a Holy Ghost, — that is, a blessed dispensation of him in spiritual gifts, Acts 19:2, — now they themselves in their own persons were made partakers of him; than which there could be no greater aggravation of their apostasy. And we may observe, in our way, that the Holy Ghost is present with many as unto powerful operations with whom he is not present as to gracious inhabitation; or, many are made partakers of him in his spiritual gifts who are never made partakers of him in his saving graces, Matthew 7:22-23.

FOURTHLY, It is added in the description, that they had tasted *kalo.n Qeou/ r`hma*, "the good word of God." And we must inquire,

— 1. What is meant by the "word of God;" 2. How it is said to be "good;" and, 3. In what sense they "taste" of it.

*`Rh/ma* is properly "verbum dictum," a word spoken; and although it be sometimes used in another sense by our apostle, and by him alone, — Hebrews 1:3, Hebrews 11:3, where it denotes the effectual active power of God, — yet both the signification of the word and its principal use elsewhere denote words spoken, and, when applied unto God, his word as preached and declared. See Romans 10:17; John 6:68. The word of God, — that is, the word of the gospel as preached, — is that which they thus tasted of. But it may be said, that they enjoyed the word of God in their state of Judaism. They did so as to the written word, for "unto them were committed the oracles of God," Romans 3:2; but it is the word of God as preached in the dispensation of the gospel that is eminently thus called, and concerning which such excellent things are spoken, Romans 1:16; Acts 20:32; James 1:21.

This word is said to be *kalo.n*, "good," desirable, amiable, as the word here used signifieth. Wherein it is so we shall see immediately. But whereas the word of God preached under the dispensation of the gospel may be considered two ways, — (1.) In general, as to the whole system

of truths contained therein; and, (2.) In especial, for the declaration made of the accomplishment of the promise in sending Jesus Christ for the redemption of the church, — it is here especially intended in this latter sense. This is emphatically called *ῥῆμα Κυρίου*, 1 Peter 1:25. So the promise of God in particular is called his "good word." Jeremiah 29:10, "After seventy years be accomplished I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you;" as he calls it the "good thing that he had promised," Jeremiah 33:14. The gospel is the "good tidings" of peace and salvation by Jesus Christ, Isaiah 52:7.

Hereof they are said to "taste," as they were before of the heavenly gift. The apostle, as it were, studiously keeps himself to this expression, on purpose to manifest that he intendeth not those who by faith do really receive, feed, and live on Jesus Christ as tendered in the word of the gospel, John 6:35, John 6:49-51, John 6:54-56. It is as if he had said, "I speak not of those who have received and digested the spiritual food of their souls, and turned it into spiritual nourishment, but of such as have so far tasted of it as that they ought to have desired it as sincere milk, to have grown thereby; but they had received such an experiment of its divine truth and power as that it had various effects upon them." And for the farther explication of these words, and therein of the description of the state of these supposed apostates, we may consider the ensuing observations, which declare the sense of the words, or what is contained in them.

I. There is a goodness and excellency in the word of God able to attract and affect the minds of men who yet never arrive at sincere obedience unto it.

There is an especial goodness in the word of the promise concerning Jesus Christ and the declaration of its accomplishment.

For the first of these propositions, we may inquire what is that goodness, and wherein it doth consist; as also, how apostatizing backsliders may taste thereof: which things tend to the explanation of the words, and what is designed by the apostle in them.

(1.) This goodness and excellency of the word of God consists in its spiritual, heavenly truth. All truth is beautiful and desirable; the perfection of the minds of men consists in the reception of it and conformity unto it; and although "true" be one consideration of any thing, and "good" another, yet they are inseparable properties of the same subject. Whatever is true is also good. So are these things put together by the apostle, Php 4:8. And as truth is good in itself, so is it in its effects on the minds of men; it gives them peace, satisfaction, and contentment. Darkness, errors, falsehood, are evils in themselves, and fill the minds of men with vanity, uncertainty, superstition, dread, and bondage. It is truth that makes the soul free in any kind, John 8:32. Now, the word of God is the only pure, unmixed, and solid truth: "Thy word is truth," John 17:17. In most other things, as to the best evidence attainable, men wander in the wilderness of endless conjectures. The truth of the word of God alone is stable, firm, infallible; which gives rest to the soul. As God is a "God of truth," Deuteronomy 32:4, the "only true God," John 17:3, so he is, and he alone is, essentially truth, and the eternal spring of it unto all other things. Hereof is this word the only revelation. How excellent, how desirable, therefore, must it needs be! and what a goodness, to be preferred above all other things, must it be accompanied withal! As it is infallible truth, giving light to the eyes and rest to the soul, it is the "good word of God."

(2.) It is so in the matter of it, or the doctrines contained in it; as, — [1.] The nature and properties of God are declared therein. God being the only good, the only fountain and cause of all goodness, and in whose enjoyment all rest and blessedness do consist, the revelation made of him, his nature and attributes, reflects a singular goodness on it, John 17:3. If it be incomparably better to know God than to enjoy the whole world and all that is in it, that word must be good whereby he is revealed unto us, Jeremiah 9:23-24. [2.] It is exceeding good in the revelation of the glorious mystery of the Trinity, therein alone contained. This is that mystery the knowledge whereof is the only means to have a right apprehension of all other sacred truths; and without it no one of them can be understood in a due manner, nor improved unto a due end. This is that alone which will give true rest and peace to the soul. And there is not the meanest true believer in the world, who is exercised in faith and obedience, but he hath the power of this truth in and upon his mind, though he be not able to speak much of the notions of it. All grace and truth are built hereon and do center herein, and thence derive their first power and efficacy. Not one saving apprehension can we have of any gracious dispensation of God towards us, but it is resolved into the existence of God in a trinity of persons, and the economy of their operations with respect unto us. It is a "good word" whereby that mystery is revealed. [3.] It is so in the revelation of the whole mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God, with all the effects of infinite wisdom and grace thereunto belonging. What a satisfactory goodness this is accompanied withal, it is the most part of my business in this world to inquire and declare. [4.] It is so in the declaration of all the benefits of the mediation of Christ, in mercy, grace, pardon, justification, adoption, etc.

(3.) It is a good word with respect unto its blessed effects, Psalms 19:7-9; Acts 20:32; James 1:21. On this account the psalmist assures us that it is "more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold;" that it is "sweeter than honey and the honey-comb," Psalm 19:10; — that is, there is an incomparable excellency, worth, and goodness in it. And he who discerns not this goodness in the word of God is a stranger unto all real benefits by it.

How apostatizing persons do taste of this good word of God may be briefly declared. And their so doing hath respect unto the threefold property of it mentioned, whence it is denominated "good:" (1.) Its truth; (2.) Its subject-matter; (3.) Its effects.

And, — (1.) They taste of it as it is true, in the convictions they have thereof, in their knowledge in it, and acknowledgment of it. This gives (as it is the nature of truth to do) some serenity and satisfaction unto their minds, although they are not renewed thereby. They that heard John preach the truth rejoiced in his light, as finding much present satisfaction therein, John 5:35. So was it with them, Luke 4:22, John 7:46, and others innumerable, on the like occasion of hearing our Savior preach. When men, through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, do escape the pollutions that are in the world through lust, and them that live in error, they taste a goodness, a sweetness, in the rest and satisfaction of their minds, so as that they suppose they are really possessed of the things themselves.

(2.) With respect unto the matter of the word, they have a taste of its goodness in the hopes which they have of their future enjoyment. Mercy, pardon, life, immortality, and glory, are all proposed in the "good word of God." These, upon those grounds which will fail them at last, they have such hopes to be made partakers of as that they find a great relish and satisfaction therein, especially when they have relief thereby against their fears and convictions; for, even in those ways wherein

they deceive themselves, they have a taste of what sweetness and goodness there is in these things unto them by whom they are enjoyed. And as those who really believe and receive Jesus Christ in the word do thereon "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," 1 Peter 1:8, so those who only taste of the word do feel in themselves a great complacency in their affections, Matthew 13:20; for, —

(3.) By this taste they may receive many effects of the word on their minds and consciences, and therein have an experience of the word as unto its power and efficacy. It belongs unto the exposition of the place to speak a little hereunto, and withal to declare what the difference is between them, and wherein this tasting comes short of that receiving and feeding on the word by faith which is peculiar unto true believers.

[1.] This taste is accompanied, or it may be so, with delight, pleasure, and satisfaction in hearing of the word preached, especially when it is dispensed by any skillful "master of assemblies," who finds out "acceptable words," or "words of delight," which yet are "upright, and words of truth," Ecclesiastes 12:10-11. So was it with those naughty Jews, Ezekiel 33:31-32; and with Herod, who heard John the Baptist gladly, finding delight and pleasure in his preaching. So was it with multitudes that pressed after Christ to hear the word; and so it is to be feared that it is with many in the days wherein we live.

[2.] It gives not only delight in hearing, but some joy in the things heard. Such are the hearers of the word whom our Savior compared to the stony ground; they receive it with joy, Matthew 13:20, as it was with the hearers of John the Baptist, John 5:35. The word, as tasted only, hath this effect on their minds, that they shall rejoice in the things they hear, not with abiding solid joy, not with joy unspeakable and full of glory, but with that which is temporary and evanid. And this ariseth from that satisfaction which they find in hearing of the good things declared; such are mercy, pardon, grace, immortality, and glory. They cannot but rejoice sometimes at the hearing of them, though they will not be at the pains of getting an interest in them.

[3.] The word only thus tasted of will work on men a change and reformation of their lives, with a readiness unto the performance of many duties, 2 Peter 2:18, 2 Peter 2:20; Mark 6:20. And, —

[4.] What inward effects it may have on the minds and affections of men, in illumination, conviction, and humiliation, I have declared at large elsewhere. But, all this while, this is but tasting. The word of the gospel, and Christ preached therein, is the food of our souls; and true faith cloth not only taste it, but feed upon it, whereby it is turned into grace and spiritual nourishment in the heart. And hereunto is required: — 1st. The laying it up, or treasuring of it in the heart, Luke 1:66, Luke 2:19. No nourishment will ever be obtained by food unless it be received into the stomach, where the means and causes of digestion and communication are placed; and if the word be not placed in the heart by fixed meditation and delight, it may please for a season, but it will not nourish the soul. 2dly. Food must be mixed and incorporated with the digestive humor, power, and faculty of the stomach, whereinsoever it consists, or it will not nourish. Give a man never so much food, if there be any noxious humor in the stomach hindering it from mixing itself with the means of digestion, it will no way profit him; and until the word in the heart be mixed and incorporated with faith, it will not advantage us, Hebrews 4:2; — and there is nothing hereof where there is a taste of the word only. 3dly. When men feed on the word, it is turned into a principle of life, spiritual strength, and growth within; which a taste of it only will not give. As food, when it is digested, turns into flesh and blood

and spirits, so doth the word, and Christ therein, unto the souls of men spiritually. Hence Christ becometh "our life," and "liveth in us," as the efficient cause of our spiritual life, Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:3; and we grow and increase by the word, 1 Peter 2:2. A mere taste, though it may yield present refreshment, yet it communicates no abiding strength. Hence multitudes relish the word when it is preached, but never attain life, or strength, or growth by it. 4thly. The word received as it ought will transform the soul into the likeness of God, who sends us this food to change our whole spiritual constitution, and to render our nature like unto his, in "righteousness and true holiness," Ephesians 4:21-24; 2 Corinthians 3:18. This a taste only will effect nothing towards; nor, to conclude, will it give us such a love of the truth as to abide by it in trials or temptations, 2 Thessalonians 2:10, nor bring forth the fruits of it in universal obedience. And I might farther discourse from hence of the deplorable condition of them who satisfy their minds in mere notions. of the truth, and empty speculations about it, without once attaining so much as a taste of the goodness of the word, — of which sort there are many in the world; as also show the necessity, which all the hearers of the word lie under, of a severe scrutiny into their own souls, whether they do not rest in a taste only of the word, but come short of feeding upon it and of Christ therein, but that I must not divert from the text. What hath been here spoken was needful to declare the true state and condition of the persons spoken of. The second proposition mentioned hath been treated of elsewhere.

LASTLY, It is added, Duna,meij te me,llontoj aivw/noj, — "And the powers of the world to come." Duna,meij are twOrWbG.h; or twOal'p.ni, the mighty, great, miraculous operations and works of the Holy Ghost. What they were, and how they were wrought among these Hebrews, hath been declared in our Exposition on chap. 2:4, whither I refer the reader; and they are known from the Acts of the Apostles, where sundry instances of them are recorded. I have also proved on that chapter, that by "The world to come," our apostle in this epistle intends the days of the Messiah, that being the usual name of it in the church at that time, as the new world which God had promised to create. Wherefore these "powers of the world to come" were the gifts whereby those signs, wonders, and mighty works, were then wrought by the Holy Ghost, according as it was foretold by the prophets that they should be so. See Joel 2:28-32 compared with Acts 2:16-21. These the persons spoken of are supposed to have tasted, for the particle te refers to geusame,nouj foregoing. Either they had been wrought in and by themselves, or by others in their sight, whereby they had had an experience of the glorious and powerful working of the Holy Ghost in the confirmation of the gospel. Yea, I do judge that themselves in their own persons were partakers of these powers, in the gift of tongues and other miraculous operations; which was the highest aggravation possible of their apostasy, and that which peculiarly rendered their recovery, impossible: for there is not in the Scripture an impossibility put upon the recovery of any but such as peculiarly sin against the Holy Ghost; — and although that guilt may be otherwise contracted, yet in none so signally as by this of rejecting that truth which was confirmed by his mighty operations in them that rejected it; which could not be done without an ascription of his divine power unto the devil. Yet would I not fix on extraordinary gifts exclusively unto those that are ordinary. They also are of the "powers of the world to come;" so is every thing that belongs to the erection or preservation of the new world, or the kingdom of Christ. To the first setting up of a kingdom great and mighty power is required; but being set up, the ordinary dispensation of power will preserve it. So it is in this matter. The extraordinary miraculous gifts of the Spirit were used in the erection of Christ's kingdom, but it is continued by ordinary gifts; which therefore also belong

unto the "powers of the world to come." From the consideration of this description in all the parts of it, we may understand what sort of persons it is that is here intended by the apostle. And it appears, yea, is evident, —

That the persons here intended are not true and sincere believers in the strict and proper sense of that name, at least they are not described here as such; so that from hence nothing can be concluded concerning them that are so, as to the possibility of their total and final apostasy: for, — (1.) There is in their full and large description no mention of faith or believing, either expressly or in terms equivalent. And in no other place of the Scripture are such intended, but [except where] they are mentioned by what belongs essentially to their state. And, (2.) There is not any thing ascribed to these persons that is peculiar to them as such, or discriminative of them, as taken either from their especial relation unto God in Christ, or any such property of their own as is not communicable unto others. For instance, they are not said to be called according to God's purpose; to be born again, not of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God; not to be justified, or sanctified, or united unto Christ, or to be the sons of God by adoption; nor have they any other characteristical note of true believers ascribed to them. (3.) They are in the following verses compared to the ground on which the rain often falls, and beareth nothing but thorns and briers. But this is not so with true believers; for faith itself is an herb peculiar to the enclosed garden of Christ, and meet for him by whom we are dressed. (4.) The apostle, discoursing afterwards of true believers, doth in many particulars distinguish them from such as might be apostates, which is supposed of the persons here intended, as was in part before declared; for, — [1.] He ascribes unto them in general "better things," and such as "accompany salvation," as we observed, verse 9. [2.] He ascribes unto them a "work and labor of love," as it is true faith alone which worketh by love, verse 10, whereof he speaks not one word concerning these. [3.] He asserts their preservation, on the account, — 1st. Of the righteousness and faithfulness of God, verse 10; 2dly. Of the immutability of his counsel concerning them, verses 17, 18. In all these and sundry other instances doth he put a difference between these apostates and true believers. And whereas the apostle intends to declare the aggravation of their sin in falling away by the principal privileges whereof they were made partakers, here is not one word, in name or thing, of those which he expressly assigns to be the chief privileges of true believers, Romans 8:27-30.

Our next inquiry is more particularly whom he doth intend; and, — (1.) They were such as not long before were converted from Judaism unto Christianity, upon the evidence of the truth of its doctrine, and the miraculous operations wherewith its dispensation was accompanied. (2.) He intends not the common sort of them, but such as had obtained especial privileges among them; for they had received extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, as speaking with tongues or working of miracles. And, (3.) They had found in themselves and others convincing evidences that the kingdom of God and the Messiah, which they called "The world to come," was come unto them, and had satisfaction in the glories of it. (4.) Such persons as these, as they have a work of light on their minds, so, according unto the efficacy of their convictions, they may have such a change wrought upon their affections and in their conversation, as that they may be of great esteem among professors; and such these here intended might be. Now, it must needs be some horrible frame of spirit, some malicious enmity against the truth and holiness of Christ and the gospel, some violent love of sin and the world, that could turn off such persons as these from the faith, and blot out all that light and conviction of truth which they had received. But the least grace is a better

security for heaven than the greatest or privileges whatever.

These are the persons concerning whom our apostle discourseth; and of them it is supposed by him that they may "fall away," kai. parapeso,ntaj. The especial nature of the sin here intended is afterward declared in two instances or aggravating circumstances. This word expresseth the respect it had to the state and condition of the sinners themselves; they "fall away," — do that whereby they do so. I think we have well expressed the word, "If they shall fall away." Our old translations rendered it only, "If they shall fall," which expressed not the sense of the word, and was liable unto a sense not at all intended; for he doth not say, "If they shall fall into sin," this or that, or any sin whatever that can be named, suppose the greatest sin imaginable, — namely, the denial of Christ in the time of danger and persecution. This was that sin (as we intimated before) about which so many contests were raised of old, and so many canons were multiplied about the ordering of them who had contracted the guilt thereof. But one example, well considered, had been a better guide for them than all their own arbitrary rules and imaginations. But Peter fell into this sin, and yet was renewed again to repentance, and that speedily. Wherefore we may lay down this, in the first place, as to the sense of the words: There is no particular sin that any man may fall into occasionally, through the power of temptation, that can cast the sinner under this commination, so that it should be impossible to renew him to repentance. It must, therefore, secondly, be a course of sin or sinning that is intended. But there are various degrees herein also, yea, there are divers kinds of such courses in sin. A man may so fall into a way of sin as still to retain in his mind such a principle of light and conviction as may be suitable to his recovery. To exclude such from all hopes of repentance is expressly contrary to Ezekiel 18:21, Isaiah 55:7, yea, and to the whole sense of the Scripture. Wherefore, men, after some conviction and reformation of life, may fall into corrupt and wicked courses, and make a long abode or continuance in them. Examples hereof we have every day amongst us, although, it may be, none to parallel that of Manasseh. Consider the nature of his education under his father Hezekiah, the greatness of his sins, the length of his continuance in them, with his following recovery, and he is a great instance in this case. Whilst there is in such persons any seed of light, or conviction of truth which is capable of an excitation or revival, so as to put forth its power and efficacy in their souls, they cannot be looked on to be in the condition intended, though their case be dangerous.

Our apostle makes a distinction between ptai,w and pi,ptw, Romans 11:11, between "stumbling" and "falling," and would not allow that the unbelieving Jews of those days were come so far as pi,ptein, — that is, to fall absolutely: Le,gw ou=n( Mh. e;ptaisan i[na pe,swsi\* mh. ge,noito — "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid!" that is, absolutely and irrecoverably. So, therefore, doth that word signify in this place. And parapi,ptw increaseth the signification, either as to perverseness in the manner of the fall, or as to violence in the fall itself. From what hath been discoursed, it will appear what falling away it is that the apostle here intendeth. And, —

(1.) It is not a falling into this or that actual sin, be it of what nature it will; which may be, and yet not be a "falling away."

(2.) It is not a falling upon temptation or surprisal, for concerning such fallings we have rules of another kind given us in sundry places, and those exemplified in especial instances; but it is that which is premeditated, of deliberation and choice.

(3.) It is not a falling by relinquishment or renunciation of some, though very material, principles of Christian religion, by error or seduction, as the Corinthians fell in denying the resurrection of the dead, and the Galatians by denying justification by faith in Christ alone. Wherefore, —

(4.) It must consist in a total renunciation of all the constituent principles and doctrines of Christianity, whence it is denominated. Such was the sin of them who relinquished the gospel to return unto Judaism, as it was then stated, in opposition unto it and hatred of it. This it was, and not any kind of actual sins, that the apostle manifestly discourseth concerning.

(5.) For the completing of this falling away, according to the intention of the apostle, it is required that this renunciation be avowed and professed, as when a man forsaketh the profession of the gospel and falls into Judaism, or Mohammedanism, or Gentilism, in persuasion and practice; for the apostle discourseth concerning faith and obedience as professed, and so, therefore, also of their contraries. And this avowment of a relinquishment of the gospel hath many provoking aggravations attending it. And yet whereas some men may in their hearts and minds utterly renounce the gospel, but, upon some outward, secular considerations, either dare not or will not profess that inward renunciation, their falling away is complete and total in the sight of God; and all they do to cover their apostasy, in an external compliance with Christian religion, is in the sight of God but a mocking of him, and the highest aggravation of their sin. This is the "falling away" intended by the apostle, — a voluntary, resolved relinquishment of, and apostasy from, the gospel, the faith, rule, and obedience thereof; which cannot be without casting the highest reproach and contumely imaginable upon the person of Christ himself, as it is afterward expressed.

Concerning these persons, and their thus "falling away," two things are to be considered in the text: — 1. What is affirmed of them; 2. The reason of that affirmation.

The first is, That it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. The thing intended is negative; to "renew them again unto repentance," this is denied of them. But the modification of that negation turns the proposition into an affirmation, "It is impossible so to do."

vAdu,naton ga.r. The importance [import] of this word is dubious; some think an absolute, and others only a moral impossibility is intended thereby. This latter most fix upon, so that it is a matter rare, difficult, and seldom to be expected, that is intended, and not that which is absolutely impossible. Considerable reasons and instances are produced for either interpretation. But we must look farther into the meaning of it.

(1.) All future events depend on God, who alone doth necessarily exist. Other things may be or may not be, as they respect him or his will; and so things that are future may be said to be impossible, to be so either with respect unto the nature of God, or his decrees, or his moral rule, order, and law. Things are impossible with respect unto the nature of God, either absolutely, as being inconsistent with his being and essential properties; so it is impossible that God should lie; — or on some supposition; so it is impossible that God should forgive sin without satisfaction, on the supposition of his law and the sanction of it. In this sense, the repentance of these apostates, it may be, is not impossible. I say it may be. It may be there is nothing in it contrary to any essential properties of the nature of God, either directly or reductively, but I will not be positive herein; for the things ascribed unto these apostates are such, — namely, their "crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame," — as that I know not but that it may be contrary to the

holiness, and righteousness, and glory of God, as the supreme ruler of the world, to have any more mercy on them than on the devils themselves or those that are in hell But I will not assert this to be the meaning of the place.

(2.) Again; things possible in themselves and with respect unto the nature of God are rendered impossible by God's decree and purpose; he hath absolutely determined that they shall never be. So it was impossible that Saul and his posterity should be preserved in the kingdom of Israel It was not contrary to the nature of God, but God had decreed that it should not be, 1 Samuel 15:28-29. But the decrees of God respecting persons in particular, and not qualifications in the first place, they cannot be here intended; because they are free acts of his will, not revealed, neither in particular nor by virtue of any general rule, as they are sovereign acts, making differences between persons in the same condition, Romans 9:11-12. What is possible or impossible with respect unto the nature of God we may know in some good measure, from the certain knowledge we may have of his being and essential properties; but what is so, one way or other, with respect unto his decrees or purposes, which are sovereign, free acts of his will, knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, Isaiah 40:13-14; Romans 11:34.

(3.) Things are possible or impossible with respect unto the rule and order of all things that God hath appointed. When in things of duty God hath neither expressly commanded them, nor appointed means for the performance of them, then are we to look upon them as impossible; and then, with respect unto us, they are so absolutely, and so to be esteemed. And this is the impossibility here principally intended. It is a thing that God hath neither commanded us to endeavor, nor appointed means to attain it, nor promised to assist us in it. It is therefore that which we have no reason to look after, attempt, or expect, as being not possible by any law, rule, or constitution of God. The apostle instructs us no farther in the nature of future events but as our own duty is concerned in them. It is not for us either to look, or hope, or pray for, or endeavor the renewal of such persons unto repentance. God gives law unto us in these things, not unto himself. It may be possible with God, for ought we know, if there be not a contradiction in it unto any holy properties of his nature; only he will not have us to expect any such things from him, nor hath he appointed any means for us to endeavor it. What he shall do we ought thankfully to accept; but our own duty towards such persons is absolutely at an end, — and indeed they put themselves wholly out of our reach. That which is said to be thus impossible with respect unto these persons is, *pa,lin avnakaini,zein eivj meta,noian*, "to renew them again unto repentance." *Meta,noia* in the New Testament, with respect unto God, signifies a "gracious change of mind" on gospel principles and promises, leading the whole soul into conversion unto God. *hb'WvT.*, this is the beginning and entrance of our turning to God, without which neither the will nor the affections will be engaged unto him, nor is it possible for sinners to find acceptance with him.

It is impossible *avnakaini,zein*, "to renew." The construction of the words is defective, and must be supplied. *Se*, may be added, to renew "themselves," — it is not possible they should do so: or *tina,j*, that "some" should, that any should renew them; and this I judge to be intended, for the impossibility mentioned respects the duty and endeavors of others. In vain shall any attempt their recovery, by the use of any means whatever. And we must inquire what it is to be "renewed," and what it is to be "renewed again."

Now our avnakainismo,j is the renovation of the image of God in our nature, whereby we are dedicated again unto him; for as we had lost the image of God by sin, and were separated from him as things profane, this avnakainismo,j respects both the restoration of our nature and the dedication of our persons to God. And it is twofold: —

(1.) Real and internal, in regeneration and effectual sanctification: "The washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Titus 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:23. But this is not that which is here intended; for this these apostates never had, and so cannot be said to be renewed again unto it, for no man can be renewed again unto that which he never had.

(2.) It is outward in the profession and pledge of it. Wherefore renovation in this sense consists in the solemn confession of faith and repentance by Jesus Christ, with the seal of baptism received thereon; for thus it was with all those who were converted unto the gospel. Upon their profession of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, they received the baptismal pledge of an inward renovation, though really they were not partakers thereof. But this estate was their avnakainismo,j, their renovation. From this state they fell totally, renouncing Him who is the author of it, his grace which is the cause of it, and the ordinance which is the pledge thereof.

Hence it appears what it is pa,lin avnakaini,zein, "to renew them again." It is to bring them again into this state of profession by a second renovation, and a second baptism as a pledge thereof. This is determined impossible, and so unwarrantable for any to attempt; and, for the most part, such persons do openly fall into such blasphemies against, and engage (if they have power) into such persecution of the truth, as that they give themselves sufficient direction how others should behave themselves towards them. So the ancient church was satisfied in the case of Julian. This is the sum of what is affirmed concerning these apostates — namely, that "it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance;" that is, so to act towards them as to bring them to that repentance whereby they may be instated in their former condition.

Hence sundry things may be observed for the clearing of the apostle's design in this discourse; as,  
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(1.) Here is nothing said concerning the acceptance or refusal of any upon repentance, or the profession thereof after any sin, to be made by the church; whose judgment is to be determined by other rules and circumstances. And this perfectly excludes the pretense of the Novatians from any countenance in these words; for whereas they would have drawn their warranty from hence for the utter exclusion from church communion of all those who had denied the faith in times of persecution, although they expressed a repentance whose sincerity they could not evince, those only are intended who neither do nor can come to repentance itself, nor make a profession of it; with whom the church had no more to do. It is not said that men who ever thus fell away shall not, upon their repentance, be admitted again into their former state in the church, but that such is the severity of God against them that he will not again give them repentance unto life.

(2.) Here is nothing that may be brought in bar against such as, having fallen by any great sin, or any course in sinning, and that after light, convictions, and gifts received and exercised, desire to repent of their sins and endeavor after sincerity therein; yea, such a desire and endeavor exempt any one from the judgment here threatened.

There is therefore in it that which tends greatly to the encouragement of such sinners; for whereas it is here declared, concerning those who are thus rejected of God, that "it is impossible to renew them," or to do any thing towards them that shall have a tendency unto repentance, those who are not satisfied that they do yet savingly repent, but only are sincerely exercised how they may attain thereunto, have no concernment in this commination, but evidently have the door of mercy still open unto them, for it is shut only against those who shall never endeavor to turn by repentance. And although persons so rejected of God may fall under convictions of their sin, attended with despair (which is unto them a foresight of their future condition), yet as unto the least attempt after repentance, on the terms of the gospel, they do never rise up unto it. Wherefore, the impossibility intended, of what sort soever it be, respects the severity of God, not in refusing or rejecting the greatest sinners which seek after and would be renewed unto repentance (which is contrary unto innumerable of his promises); but in the giving up such sinners as these are, here mentioned, unto such obdurateness and obstinacy in sinning, that blindness of mind and hardness of heart, as that they neither will nor shall ever sincerely seek after repentance, nor may any means, according to the mind of God, be used to bring them thereunto. And the righteousness of the exercise of this severity is taken from the nature of this sin, or what is contained in it, which the apostle declares in the ensuing instances. And we may in our passage observe, that, — In the preaching of the gospel, it is necessary to propose unto men, and to insist on, the severity of God in dealing with provoking sinners against it. And indeed the severity of God is principally, though not solely, exercised with respect unto sins against the gospel. This our apostle calls us to the consideration of in the case of the unbelieving Jews: Romans 11:22, ;Ide ou=n crhsto,thta kai. avpotomi,an tou/ Qeou\ evpi. me.n tou.j peso,ntaj avpotomi,an\ — "Behold the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell" (those in the text), "severity." VApotomi,a is a sharp direction or cutting off. I do not, therefore, understand by it an essential property of the nature of God. It is not the same with his holiness, righteousness, or vindictive justice. These are essential properties of the divine nature, whence it is that he neither will nor can absolutely suffer men to sin and let them go for ever unpunished, without any satisfaction or atonement made for their sins; whereof we have treated elsewhere. But by God's "severity" is intended the free act of his will, acting according unto these properties of his nature in an eminent manner, when and how he pleaseth; and therefore into them it is resolved. So our apostle, when he would intimate this severity unto us, to ingenerate in us a holy fear and reverence of God in his worship, adds as his motive, "For our God is a consuming fire," Hebrews 12:29; that is, of an infinitely pure, holy, righteous nature, according to which he will deal with us, and so may unexpectedly break forth upon us in severity if we labor not for "grace to serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Wherefore, this severity of God is his exemplary dealing with provoking sinners, according to the exigence of his holiness and wisdom, without an interposition of longer patience or forbearance. There are some sins, or degrees in sinning, that neither the holiness, nor majesty, nor wisdom of God can so bear withal as to suffer them to pass unpunished or unremarked on in this world. In such cases is God said to exercise his severity; and he doth so, —

(1.) In extraordinary, outward judgments upon open, profligate sinners, especially the enemies of his church and glory. Hence on such an occasion doth God give that description of himself, Nahum 1:2, "God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies." When God acteth towards his adversaries according to the description here given of himself, he deals

with them in severity. And two things are required to make these judgments of God against his adversaries in this world to be instances thereof: — [1.] That they be unusual, such as do not commonly and frequently fall out in the ordinary dispensation of divine providence, Numbers 16:29-30. God doth not, in the government of the world, suffer any thing to fall out or come to pass that in the issue shall be contrary to his justice or inconsistent with his righteousness; but yet he beareth with things so, for the most part, as that he will manifest himself to be exceedingly full of patience and long-suffering, as also to exercise the faith of them that believe in the expectation of a future judgment. Wherefore there must be somewhat extraordinary in those judgments wherein God will exercise and manifest severity. So it is expressed, Isaiah 28:21, "The LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act." The work he will do is his work, but it is his "strange work;" — that is, not strange from or opposite unto his nature, for so he will do nothing; but that which is unusual, which he doth but seldom, and is therefore marvelous. Thus, in sudden destructions of persecutors or persons of a flagitious wickedness, in great desolations of provoking families, cities, and nations, in fire from heaven, in inundations, plagues, earthquakes, and such sudden, extraordinary, consuming judgments, God giveth instances of his severity in the world, Romans 1:18. [2.] In this case it is required that such judgments be open, visible, and manifest, both unto those who are punished and to others who wisely consider them. So God speaketh of himself, Deuteronomy 7:10, "God that re-payeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face;" — that is, he will do it openly and manifestly, so that themselves and all others shall take notice of his severity therein. This, I say, is one way whereby God acts his severity in this world. And hereby he poureth everlasting contempt upon the security of his proudest and haughtiest adversaries; for when they think they have sufficiently provided for their own safety, and stopped all avenues of evil, according to the rules of their policy and wisdom, with the best observations they are able to make of the ordinary effects of his providence, and so give up themselves to take satisfaction in their lusts and pleasures, he breaks in upon them with an instance and example of his severity to their utter destruction. So, "when they say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman With child; and they shall not escape," 1 Thessalonians 5:3. This will be the state one day of the whole Babylonish interest in the world, Revelation 18:7-10. But this is not directly intended in this place, although even this effect of God's severity overtook these apostates afterward.

(2.) In spiritual judgments. By these God in his severity leaveth unprofitable, provoking, and apostate professors under the impossibility here intended of being renewed unto repentance. And this is the sorest of all God's judgments. There is in it a sentence of eternal damnation denounced on men aforehand in this world. So our apostle tells us, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment," 1 Timothy 5:24. God so passeth judgment concerning them in this world as that there shall be no alteration in their state and condition to eternity. And this severity of God towards sinners under the gospel, shutting them up under final impenitency, consists in these four things: —

[1.] God puts an end unto all his expectation concerning them; he looks for no more from them, and so exerciseth no more care about them. Whilst God is pleased to afford the use of means for conversion and repentance unto any, he is said to look for and expect answerable fruits: "I did,"

saith he, "so and so to my vineyard; and I looked that it should bring forth grapes," Isaiah 5:2, Isaiah 5:4. Wherefore, when God takes away all means of grace and repentance from any, then he puts an end unto his own expectation of any fruits; for if a man can have no fruit from his vineyard whilst he dresseth it, or from his field whilst he tilleth it, he will never look for any after he hath given them up and laid them waste. And, on the other side, when he utterly ceaseth to look for any fruit from them, he will till them no more; for why should he put himself to charge or trouble to no purpose? Woe unto the souls of men when God in this sense looks for no more at their hands! — that is, when he puts an end unto that patience or long-suffering towards them from whence all supplies of the means of conversion and repentance do arise and spring. This God doth by some, and that in such ways as we shall afterward declare.

[2.] God will actually punish them with, or inflict on them, hardness of heart and blindness of mind, that they never shall repent or believe: John 12:39-40, "Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." God will now judicially blind them and harden them, and, by one means or other, every thing that befalls them shall promote their induration. So it was with these Jews; the doctrine of Christ filled them with envy, his holiness with malice, and his miracles with rage and madness. Their table was a snare to them, and that which should have been for their good turned to their hurt. So is it with all them whom God in his severity hardeneth. Whether the outward means be continued unto them or no, all is one; every thing shall drive them farther from God, and increase their obstinacy against him. From hence they become scoffers and persecutors, avowedly scorning and hating the truth; and herein, it may be, they shall please themselves until they are swallowed up in despair or the grave.

[3.] God usually in his severity gives them up unto sensual lusts. So he dealt with the idolaters of old: he "gave them up unto vile affections," Romans 1:26, such as those there described by the apostle; and in the pursuit of them "gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient," Romans 1:28; whence they were "filled with all unrighteousness," Romans 1:29. So doth God frequently deal with apostates from the gospel, or from the principal truths of it, unto idolatry and superstition. And when they are engaged in the pursuit of these lusts, especially when they are judicially given up unto them, they are held assuredly, as under cords and chains, unto final impenitency.

[4.] God gave such persons up unto Satan, to be blinded, and led by him into pernicious delusions: "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness," 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. This was the state and condition of the persons here prophesied of. The truth of the gospel was preached unto them, and for some time professed by them. They received the truth; but they received not the love of it, so as to comply with it and improve it unto its proper end. This kept them barren and unfruitful under their profession; for where the truth is not loved, as well as believed or assented unto, it will bring forth no fruit. But this was not all; they had pleasure in their sins, lusts, and unrighteousnesses, resolving not to part with them on any terms. Whereas, therefore, these are all of them absolutely and without limitation judged and condemned by the truth of the gospel, they began to dislike and secretly to hate the truth itself. But whereas, together with their lusts and unrighteousnesses,

wherein they had pleasure, they found a necessity of a religion, one or other, or the pretense of some religion or other, to give them countenance against the truth which they rejected, they were in a readiness to any thing that should offer itself unto them. In this condition, in the way of punishment, and as a revenge of their horrible ingratitude and contempt of his gospel, God gives them up to the power of Satan, who blinds, deludes, and deceives them with such efficacy as that they shall not only readily embrace, but obstinately believe and adhere to, the lies, errors, and falsehoods that he shall suggest unto them. And this is the way and course whereby so many carnal gossellers are turned off unto Romish idolatry every day.

Other instances of the severity of God on this occasion might be given, but these are fully sufficient to declare the manner of his dealing with such as those described in the text: whence it follows that their renovation unto repentance is impossible; for what hopes or expectations should we have concerning such as God hath utterly forsaken, whom he hath judicially smitten with blindness and hardness of heart, whom he hath given up not only to the power and efficacy of their own lusts and vile affections, but also immediately unto Satan, to be deluded and led captive at his pleasure? In vain shall the repentance of such persons be either expected or endeavored. And this severity of God ought to be preached and insisted on in the declaration of the gospel. Let the reader consult what hath been already offered concerning the use of gospel threatenings and comminations on the third and fourth chapters. There is a proneness in corrupted nature to "despise the riches of the goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering of God, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth them to repentance;" and thereon, "after their hardness and impenitent heart, they treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath," as our apostle speaks, Romans 2:4-5. Considering nothing in God but mercy and long-suffering, and nothing in the gospel but grace and pardon, they are ready to despise and turn them into lasciviousness, or from them both to countenance themselves in their sins. By this means, on such mistaken apprehensions, suited to their lusts and corrupt inclinations, heightened by the craft of Satan, do multitudes under the preaching of the gospel harden themselves daily to destruction. And others there are who, although they will not on such wicked pretenses give up themselves to their lusts and carnal affections, yet, for want of constant vigilancy and watchfulness, are apt to have sloth and negligence, with many ill frames of spirit, to increase and grow upon them. Both sorts are to be stirred up by being put in mind of this severity of God. They are to be taught that there are secret powers, accompanying the dispensation of the gospel, continually "in a readiness to revenge all disobedience," 2 Corinthians 10:6; — that "God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting," Galatians 6:7-8. But I have elsewhere already showed the necessity there was of arming the gospel with threatenings, as well as confirming of it with promises, so as that it may not be here again at large insisted on. From what hath been discoursed, it is evident how necessary and wholesome a warning or threatening is here expressed by the apostle. It is the open mistakes of men that have drawn undue entanglements out of it; in itself it is both plain and necessary. Shall we be afraid to say that God will not renew such sinners as those before described unto repentance? or to declare unto sinners that without repentance they cannot be saved? or shall we preach to men, that whatever light they have had, whatever gifts they have received, whatever privileges they have been made partakers of, whatever profession they have made, or for how long a season soever, if they fall totally and despitefully from the gospel into that which is most opposite both to its truth and holiness, yet there

is no doubt but they may again repent and be saved? God forbid so great a wickedness should fall from our mouths! Nay, we are to warn all persons in danger of such apostasies that "if any one so draw back, God's soul shall have no pleasure in him;" that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" that he will harden such sinners, and "give them up to strong delusions, that they may be damned;" that he is not under the engagement of any promise to give them repentance, but hath rather given many severe threatenings to the contrary. He hath told us that such persons are as "trees twice dead, plucked up by the roots," of which there is no hope; that "denying the Lord that bought them, they bring on themselves, swift destruction, — whose damnation slumbereth not;" with the like declarations of severity against them innumerable. But what shall be said unto them who, having through great temptations, and it may be fears and surprises, for a season renounced the gospel, or such as, by reason of great sins against light and backsliding in profession, do apprehend themselves to be fallen into this condition, and yet are greatly desirous of a recovery, and do cry to God for repentance and acceptance? I answer as before, they are not at all concerned in this text. Here is nothing excluding them from acceptance with God and eternal salvation, be they who or what they will that seek it by repentance; only there are some who are excluded by God, and do obstinately shut up themselves from all endeavors after repentance itself, with whom we have not any thing to do.

It is true, those alone are here firstly and directly intended who in those days had received extraordinary or miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost. But this, by just analogy, may be extended unto others, now those gifts are ceased in the church; for those gifts and privileges which are yet continued unto men do lay (in present circumstances) the same obligation upon them unto perseverance in profession, and give the same aggravation unto their apostasy, as did those extraordinary gifts formerly conferred upon profession. "Let us not, then, be high-minded, but fear." It is not good approaching too near a precipice. Let unprofitable hearers and backsliders in heart and ways be awaked, lest they may be nearer falling under God's severity than they are aware of. But we must return unto our apostle, giving an account of the nature of this sin, which is attended with so sore a judgment. And this he doth in a double instance.

VA<sup>n</sup>astaurou/ntaj e`autoi/j to.n Uio.n tou/ Qeou/. Beza affirms that e`autoi/j "to themselves," is absent from some copies, and then the words may admit of a sense diverse from that which is commonly received; for avnastaurou/ntaj, "crucifying again;" may refer unto tina,j included and supposed in avnakini,zein, that some or any should renew them. It is impossible that any should renew them to repentance; for this cannot be done without crucifying the Son of God again, since these apostates have utterly rejected all interest in and benefit by his death, as once undergone for sinners. This none can do. We ought not, we cannot, crucify Christ again, that they may be renewed and saved. Who can entertain a thought tending towards a desire that so it might be? And this sense, in the same or an alike case, the apostle plainly expresseth, chap. 10:26, 27, "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Christ cannot be offered again, and so crucified again, without which the sins of such persons cannot be expiated; for the unbloody sacrificing of Christ every day in the mass was not as yet invented, and it is a relief fit only for them to trust unto who have no interest in that sacrifice which he offered once for all. But there is in that other place an allusion to the sacrifices under the law. Because they could legally expiate no sins but what were past before their offering, they were to be frequently repeated, upon reiterated sinning. So from time to time they sinned (as

no man liveth and sinneth not), and had sacrifices renewed for their sins, applied unto the particular sins they had committed. This could now be so no more. Christ being once offered for sin, whoever loseth his interest in that one offering, and forfeiteth the benefit of it, there is no more sacrifice for him: "Christ henceforth dieth no more." It cannot be hence imagined that the grace of the gospel is restrained, as being all confined unto that one sacrifice, from what was represented in the multiplied sacrifices of the law; for, —

(1.) The one sacrifice of Christ extended farther, as to sins and persons, than all those of the law with all their repetitions put together: "By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses," Acts 13:39. There were some sins under the law for which no sacrifice was provided, seeing he who was guilty of them was to die without mercy, as in the cases of murder and adultery, with respect whereunto David saith, "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt-offering," Psalms 51:16, — namely, in such cases as his then was. But, —

(2.) In case of apostasy from the one and the other, the event was the same. There was under the law no sacrifice appointed for him who had totally apostatized from its fundamental principles, or sinned hq"z"x] dy"b., "presumptuously," with a hand high and stubborn. This was that "despising of Moses' law," for which those that were guilty thereof were to "die without mercy," Hebrews 10:28. And so it is under the gospel. Willful apostates forfeiting all their interest in the sacrifice of Christ, there is no relief appointed for them, but God will cut them off and destroy them; as shall, God willing, be declared on that place. And this may be the sense of the words, supposing e`autoi/j not to belong originally unto this place. God hath confined all hopes of mercy, grace, and salvation, unto the one single offering and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This our apostle insisteth on and presseth, Hebrews 9:25-228, Hebrews 10:12, Hebrews 10:14. Infinite wisdom and sovereign pleasure have centered all grace, mercy, and blessedness in him alone, John 1:14, John 1:16-17; Acts 4:12; Colossians 1:19. And this "one offering" of his is so sufficient and effectually powerful unto all that by faith seek an interest therein, that this restraint is no restraint, nor hath any sinner the least cause to complain of it. If they reject and despise it, it is their own fault, and at their own peril; nor is it the reiterated sacrifice of the mass, or whatever else they may betake themselves unto, that will afford them any relief. But the word is constant enough in ancient copies to maintain its own station, and the context requires its continuance; and this makes the work of "crucifying again" to be the act of the apostates themselves, and to be asserted as that which belongs unto their sin, and not denied as belonging to a relief from their sin: "They crucify him again to themselves." They do it not really, they cannot do so; but they do it to themselves morally. This is in their sin of falling away, part of it comprised in it, which renders it unpardonable; they again crucify the Son of God, not absolutely, but in and to themselves. And we must inquire how they did it, or in what sense it is by the apostle charged on them. Now, this (to omit all other things that may be thought to concur herein) was —

(1.) Principally by an accession in suffrage unto them who had crucified him once before. Hereby they went over the same work with them, and did that for their own parts which the others had done before for theirs. They approved of and justified the fact of the Jews in crucifying him as a malefactor; for there is no medium between these things. The Lord Christ must be esteemed to be the Son of God, and consequently his gospel to be indispensably obeyed, or be supposed to be justly crucified as a seducer, a blasphemer, and a malefactor; for professing himself to be the Son

of God, and witnessing that confession unto his death, he must be so received or rejected as an evil-doer. And this was done by these apostates; for, going over to the Jews, they approved of what they had done in crucifying of him as such an one.

(2.) They did it by declaring, that having made trial of him, his gospel and ways, they found nothing of substance, truth, or goodness in them, for which they should continue their profession. Thus that famous or infamous apostate, Julian the emperor, gave this as the motto of his apostasy, VAne,gnwn( e;gnwn( kate,gnwn, — "I have read, known, and condemned" your Gospel. And this hath been the way of apostates in all ages. In the primitive times they were the Gentiles' intelligencers, and, like the spies of old, brought up a false report upon the land; for they were not satisfied, for the most part, to declare their disapprobation of what was really taught, believed, and practiced among the Christians, but, the more to countenance their apostasy, not only invidiously represented and odiously traduced what was really professed, but withal invented lies and calumnies about conspiracies, seditions, and inconsistencies with public peace among them, so [as], if it were possible, to ruin the whole interest and all that belonged unto it. This is to "crucify Christ afresh, and to put him to an open shame." And such is the manner of them unto this day. If any have made an accession to the more intimate duties of religion, as prayer and preaching, by virtue of spiritual gifts, with other acts of mutual spiritual communion, which the generality of men concern not themselves in, when, in compliance with their occasions and temptations, they fall from them and renounce them, they aim at nothing more than, by malicious, scurrilous representations of them, and false additions unto them of things perverse or ridiculous, to expose them to open shame and ignominy. Their language is, VAnegnwmn, e;gnwmn, kate,gnwmn, — "We have known and tried these things, and declare their folly;" so hoping to be believed, because of their pretended experience, which alone is sufficient to render them suspected with all persons of wisdom and sobriety. Now, no man living can attempt a higher dishonor against Jesus Christ, in his person or in any of his ways, than openly to profess that upon trial of them they find nothing in them for which they should be desired. But "it had been better for such persons not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." And this is the first aggravation of the sin mentioned, taken from the act ascribed unto the sinners, "they crucify him again;" they do it as much as in them lieth, and declare that they would actually do it if it were in their power. He adds another from the consideration of the person who was thus treated by them. It was the "Son of God" whom they dealt thus withal. This they did, not when he had "emptied himself, and made himself of no reputation," so that it was not an easy matter to look through all the veils of his outward weakness and condition in this world, to "behold his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father" (in which state he was crucified by the Jews); but now when he had been "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," and when his divinity was variously attested unto in the world and among themselves. And this is the great aggravation of sin against the gospel, namely, of unbelief, that it is immediately against the "Son of God." His person is despised in it, both absolutely and in the discharge of all his offices; and therefore is God himself so, because he hath nothing to do with us but by his Son. Thirdly, The apostle adds, as another aggravation of their sin, kai. paradeigmati,zontaj, "exposing him again to public ignominy," or "shame." Paradeigmati,zw is to bring any supposed offenders unto such open punishment as is shameful in the eyes of men, and renders them vile who are so traduced and punished. The word is but once more used in the New Testament, namely, Matthew 1:19, where it is spoken of Joseph

in reference unto his espoused wife, the holy Virgin: Mh. qe,lwn auvth.n paradeigmati,sai, — "Not willing to make her a public example;" that is, by bringing of her forth unto a shameful punishment, for the terror of others.

According unto this sense, our apostle, expressing the death of Christ as inflicted by men, reduces the evils that accompanied it unto two heads, — (1.) The pain of it; and, (2.) The shame: Hebrews 12:2, "He endured the cross and despised the shame;" for as the death of the cross was penal, or painful and dolorous, so in the manner of it, in all its circumstances of time, place, person, it was most highly shameful. He was in it paradeigmati,sai, "ignominiously traduced," or "put to an open shame;" yes, the death of the cross amongst all people was peculiarly shameful. Thus in calling over his death in this place, he refers it unto the same heads of suffering and shame, — "crucifying him," and "putting him to an open shame." And in this latter he was not spared by these apostates more than in the former, so far as it lay in their power. And hence we may raise a sufficient answer unto an objection of no small importance that ariseth against our exposition of this place: for it may be said, "That if those, or many of them, or any of them, who actually and really crucified the Son of God in his own person, and put him to open shame, did yet obtain mercy and pardon of that and all other sins, as it is confessed they did, whence is it that those who renounce him, and do so crucify him and put him to shame only metaphorically and to themselves, should be excluded from all hopes of repentance and pardon?"

I answer, That the sin of those who forsake Christ and the gospel, after their conviction of its truth and profession of it, is on many accounts far greater than that of those who crucified him in the days of his flesh. And there are sundry reasons whereon God will exercise more severity towards this latter sort of sinners than towards the former: —

The sin is greater, because no way to be extenuated by ignorance. This is everywhere allowed as that which made the sin of crucifying of Christ pardonable upon their repentance, and their repentance possible. So Peter, in his sermon to them, lays down this as the foundation of his exhortation unto repentance: "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers," Acts 3:17. "Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," 1 Corinthians 2:8; which our apostle pleads also in his own case, 1 Timothy 1:13. This put their sin among the number of those which sacrifices were allowed for of old, and which fell under the care of Him who knows how to have "compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way."

But it may be inquired, "How they could be excused by ignorance who had so many means and evidences of conviction as to the truth of his person, that he was the Messiah, and of his doctrine, that it was from heaven? for besides the concurrent testimony of Moses and the prophets given unto him, the holiness of his person and life, the efficacy of his doctrine, and the evidence of his miracles, did abundantly prove and confirm the truth of those things, so that they could be no otherwise ignorant but by willful obstinacy."

Ans. First, These were indeed such means of conviction as that their sin and unbelief against them had no real excuse, as himself everywhere expresseth, John 15:22, John 12:47-48; John 10:36-38. Secondly, Nothing is allowed unto this ignorance, but that it left their repentance possible and their sin pardonable. Thirdly, This it will do until God hath used all the means of conviction which he intendeth, and no longer. This as yet he had not done. He had yet two farther testimonies unto the truth which he would graciously afford: — First, His resurrection from the

dead, Romans 1:4, which was always afterward pleaded as the principal evidence of God's approbation of him; Second, The effusion of the Holy Spirit in his miraculous operations, Acts 2:32-33; Acts 5:32; 1 Timothy 3:16. But where at any time God hath granted all the means of conviction that he pleaseth, be they ordinary or extraordinary, if they are rejected, there is no hope, Luke 16:29-31. On the other side, this sin of rejecting Christ and the gospel after profession is absolutely willful and with a high hand, against all the light and conviction that God will give of the truth unto any of the children of men in this world.

These persons had an experience of the truth, goodness, and excellency of the gospel, which those others had not, nor could have; for they had "tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," and had received great satisfaction in the things they were convinced of, as was before at large declared. Wherefore, in their rejection of him and them, an unconquerable hatred and malice must be granted to be predominant. And let men take heed what they do when they begin to sin against their own experience, for evil lies at the door.

In and under the crucifying of the Lord Christ God had yet a design of mercy and grace, to be communicated unto men by the dispensation of his Spirit. Therefore there was a way set open unto those who were guilty of that sin to repentance and pardon. But now, having made use of this also, that being sinned against, there is no place left for any thing but severity. Wherefore, —

There was in the sin of these persons blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; for they had received in themselves, or seen in others, those mighty operations of his whereby he gave attestation unto Christ and the gospel. Therefore they could not renounce the Lord Christ without an ascription of these works of the Holy Ghost unto the devil, which the devil acted them unto. So saith our apostle, "No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus anathema," or "accursed," 1 Corinthians 12:3. To call him anathema is to declare and avow that he was justly crucified as an accursed person, as a public pest. This was done by these persons who went over to the Jews, in approbation of what they had done against him. This no man can do speaking by the Holy Ghost, — that is, whosoever doth so is acted by the spirit of the devil; and if he have known the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the contrary, he doth it in despite of him, which renders the sin irremissible.

## 03A.02. CHAPTER 2.

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### CHAPTER 2.

#### PARTIAL APOSTASY FROM THE GOSPEL — PRETENSES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME AGAINST THE CHARGE OF THIS EVIL EXAMINED AND REJECTED.

APOSTASY from the gospel is either total or partial. Of the former we have treated in a high and signal instance. When men willfully and maliciously (for they cannot do it willfully but they must do it maliciously) renounce Jesus Christ as a seducer and malefactor, going over in their suffrage unto the Jews, by whom he was crucified, they enter into that part of hell and darkness which properly constitutes this sin. It were well for such persons if their guilt had no other aggravation than theirs who actually "with wicked hands slew him, and hanged him on a tree." But rising up unto a contempt of all the means of conviction and evidences of truth that God will grant us in this world, they cast themselves without that line of divine mercy and pardon which some of the others were encompassed withal. So is it with many at this day in the world, who with wicked hearts and blinded minds, in the pursuit of carnal lusts, voluntarily and obstinately embrace Mohammedanism, with an open renunciation of Christ and the gospel. Unto such persons there is nothing left but "a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." Not that I would cast all persons who may be actually hurried into this abomination under the same dreadful doom, seeing the case in general will admit of many circumstantial differences, if not altering the nature of the crime, yet disposing of things unto various events. Not only surprisals by mighty temptations, with dread and terror, so shaking the powers of nature as to intercept the influence of light and convictions of truth, do claim an exemption from a decretory determination under this sentence; but other cases may also be attended with some such alleviating circumstances as, preserving their minds and souls from willful malice, leave room for the exercise of sovereign grace. I myself knew one, yea, was conversant with him, and assisting of him in the concerns of his soul, who in the Indies turned Mohammedan, was actually initiated by circumcision into their superstition, and lived in its outward practice a year or two, who yet was sincerely recovered unto repentance, and died in the faith of the Son of God.

Partial apostasy is every crime against the gospel which partakes of the nature of the other in any measure or degree; and whatever doth so makes an accession towards the guilt of "crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame:" for it is in his gospel and church alone wherein he can now suffer from the sons of men. When any important principle of evangelical truth is forsaken and renounced, especially when many of them are so; when the rule of obedience which the gospel prescribeth is habitually neglected; when men believe otherwise than it teacheth, and live otherwise than it requireth, — there is a partial apostasy from it, whose guilt and danger answer the degrees and measures which in each kind it proceeds unto. And this is that which we may charge, yea, which the Lord Christ in his word doth charge, on every nation under heaven where the gospel is publicly professed. Men are apt to please themselves, to approve of their own state and condition, wherein they have framed unto themselves rest and satisfaction. Churches

content themselves with their outward order and administrations, especially when accompanied with secular advantages, and contend fiercely that all is well, and the gospel sufficiently complied withal, whilst their outward constitution is preserved and their laws of order kept inviolate. About these is the world filled with endless digladiations, wherein the most aim at no more but success in their especial contests. Only a few remain who fruitlessly complain that, under all these conflicts, the glory, power, and purity of Christian religion are lost in the world. And it is known that the judgment of Christ concerning churches, as unto their good or bad spiritual estate, is oftentimes very distant from their own concerning themselves. It was not only for their sakes, but as a warning unto all others in all ages, that it is entered on an everlasting record, that when the church of Laodicea judged and declared without hesitation that she was "rich, and increased with goods, and had need of nothing," the Lord Christ, "the Amen, the faithful and true witness," pronounced her "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." That things at this day are in no better a condition in many, in most churches in the world, is too evident to be denied with any pretense of reverence to the word of God, and it will be afterward made to appear.

Certainly the Lord Christ may say to the churches and nations among whom his name is yet owned in the world, what God said of old concerning that of the Jews, then his only church, "I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou trained into the degenerate plant of a wild vine unto me?" Jeremiah 2:21. Yea, to most of them as in another place, "How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water," Isaiah 1:21-22. The greatness of the evil complained of, the secret mystery of its accomplishment, the unreasonableness, folly, and ingratitude of the fact, the strangeness of the event, make the complaint to be formed into a scheme of admiration. And, indeed, if a man be able to consider the nature of the gospel, with the benefits communicated thereby unto mankind, he cannot but be astonished to find the generality of them to be so soon weary of it, and so ready on all occasions to relinquish it; for as future glory and a blessed immortality are attainable only thereby, so all that true freedom, tranquility, peace, and blessedness, whereof our nature in this life is capable, are by no other means communicable unto the souls of men. In brief, whatever is of advantage in any gracious communication from God unto us, — without which we are nothing but the very worst and most malignant product of sin and misery, — it is all confined unto the gospel and the contents thereof. Wherefore, the carelessness of men in neglecting of it, their wickedness in its relinquishment as to its principles and obedience, may well be expressed as God doth in the inferior instance of the apostasy of the Jewish church: Jeremiah 2:11-12, "Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD." Yet thus is it, and no otherwise, as we shall afterward manifest, amongst the generality of them that are called Christians in the world. The church of Rome violently pleads an exemption from this charge by virtue of special privilege; — not an internal privilege of efficacious grace into their minds and wills, to preserve it and all that belongs unto it always in saving faith and obedience, wherein alone a compliance with the gospel consists; but an outward privilege of indefectibility, keeping them in the state the gospel requireth they know not how, but, as it were, whether they will or no! But there is no party or society of men under heaven (considering the notoriety of matter of fact to the contrary) but can with less violence unto common modesty make use of this pretense. So when the Jews of old were charged by the prophets with apostasy from the law and the obedience which it required, with threats of

destruction for their sins, they warded themselves from a conviction of guilt and fear of punishment by an unreasonable, yea, outrageous confidence in church privileges, then not only appropriated but confined unto them, crying out, "The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these." This they thought sufficient to repel the charge of the prophets, to vindicate their innocency, and secure their peace. The reply of the prophet unto them will equally serve in both cases, "Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?" Jeremiah 7:8-10. A plea of innocency and hope of impunity, under an evident guilt of the highest immoralities and the vilest of superstitions, do equally participate of folly and impudence.

It is fallen out with this church of Rome somewhat in like manner as it did with him from whom she falsely pretends to derive her wonderful privilege of indefectibility; for when our Lord Christ foretold that all men should forsake him, he alone, with the highest confidence and in a singular manner, undertook the contrary for himself. But all the prerogative which he pretended unto issued only in this, that when all the other disciples forsook their Master and fled, according to his prediction, he alone forsook him and denied him. And that impossibility of failing which this church appropriates unto itself as its singular and incommunicable privilege hath possibly been a means of, but assuredly is accompanied with, a peculiar apostasy, above all other churches in the world. Nothing, certainly, can be more vain in itself, nor more pernicious unto the souls of them who are under the power of such an apprehension, than this pretense, when all evidences in matter of fact do openly testify to the contrary. The principal nations of its communion are at this day engaged in fierce, bloody, and causeless wars, and these so managed as to be accompanied with a confluence of all those evils and flagitious wickednesses which have a tendency to make mankind sinful and miserable. Is this that love and peace which, according to the rule of the gospel, ought to be among the disciples of Christ, and without which it is impossible they should have any evidences in themselves, or give any testimony unto the world, that so they are? Doth this answer the promises to be accomplished in the days of the Messiah, Isaiah 2:2-4, or the innumerable precepts given by Jesus Christ himself as to unity, love, and peace? "But wars," they say, "are lawful, and so no argument that those engaged in them are revolters from the rule of the gospel." I say, It may be so; but it is far safer to judge all war unlawful than to justify all the wars that rage in Christendom, or to suppose them consistent with the rule or doctrine of the gospel. The truth is, many things must concur to reconcile any of them unto that obedience which we owe to the Prince of Peace; nor is any of them of that nature or necessity, but that, if the gospel had its proper efficacy on the minds of all that are called Christians, and its due authority over their consciences, they would be all prevented. However, in a church pretending to be no way fallen off or apostatized from the evangelical rule, it is justly expected that another representation be made of the religion taught by Jesus Christ than that which appears in the desolations that are wrought in the earth through the lusts and rage of the members of it. The state of things amongst them seems not to constitute that kingdom of righteousness, love, and peace, which Christ came to set up in the world, and which indeed at present, by reason of the general apostasy of the nations, is little elsewhere to be found but in the souls of his sanctified ones; and those particular churches are blessed in a peculiar manner who endeavor, in their profession and obedience, in any measure to rise up unto an expression thereof.

Besides, the lives of the generality of them who adhere unto the communion of that church, [and] of the most who preside therein, are openly contradictory unto the evangelical rule of obedience. It may for the most part be said concerning them with respect unto the whole, as one of them said of a part of the New Testament, "Either this is not gospel, or we are not Christians." In brief, if the kingdom of Christ, — which was once a kingdom of light, and truth, and holiness; of separation, in principles, affections, and conversation, from the world; of communion with God and loving-kindness among men; of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, — may become, and is become, a kingdom of darkness, pride, ignorance, ambition, persecution, blood, superstition, and idolatry, then and not else doth it visibly remain among them, and they have nothing apostatized from the laws and government of it. But they can easily discharge themselves of the guilt of this imputation: for notwithstanding that the things mentioned be in part acknowledged to be so, (as to what purpose is it to deny the sun to shine at noonday?) yet the peace, love, and unity, the holiness and righteousness, that ought, according to the gospel, to be and reside in the church, are found amongst them on other accounts; — for the whole body of the church and all the members of it agree and are united in one head, even the pope of Rome, which is the only evangelical unity required of the disciples of Christ! and the holiness of the worship, with that of the saints that have been among them, as also of their present retired devotionists, and the charity of many, testified by magnificent works of piety and bounty, do sufficiently answer that sanctification, holiness, and love, that conformity unto Christ in heavenly-mindedness and obedience, which the gospel requireth. But this is no other but an account of the true nature of that apostasy of the latter times which is foretold by the apostle, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Under the power of the most filthy and outrageous lusts, men frame to themselves an outward shape, image, and representation of holiness; they delineate a form of religion by a substitution of other things in the room of the life and substance of it, which are lost. The power of Christianity is openly denied in their being acted by the power of all those lusts which are contrary unto it; for the grace of God in the gospel teacheth them by whom it is received to "deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." This men cannot more perfectly renounce than in being "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another;" such persons being sufficiently remote from being "saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Whilst men live in this state and condition, wherein a complete denial or renunciation of the power of godliness or religion doth consist, if, to supply the absence thereof, they draw and take on themselves a scheme, form, and appearance of it, by the application of the names, offices, and properties of gospel effects unto outward, lifeless duties, or appearances of them, the apostasy foretold is completely accomplished. This is to let David go, and to foist an image covered with goats' hair in his stead; or at best, like Rehoboam, to make brazen shields in the room of those of gold taken away by Shishak. No otherwise doth the church of Rome deal in this matter. The power of faith, love, peace, holiness, conformity unto Christ, self-denial, and all the principles of a heavenly conversation, being lost and denied among the generality of its members, and all the real glory of Christianity thereby forfeited and despised, they have set up a

form or image of it, wherewith they content themselves, and attempt to deceive others. Instead of that mystical, spiritual union with himself and among themselves which Christ prayed for and purchased for his disciples, they have substituted the morphosis or mormo of an agreement in professing subjection to the pope of Rome. For that heavenly love of one another in him, and for his sake, which he renews the souls of believers unto by his grace, we are presented in their profession with outward works of charity and bounty, measured and valued by the advantage which redounds unto the principal actors in this show. Peace (the great legacy of Christ unto his followers) with God in their own minds, with the whole creation not shut up under the curse, that comprehensive grace and mercy wherein is comprised all the blessedness which in this world we can be made partakers of, is preserved in the flourishing prosperity and temporal successes of the court of Rome. The internal, effectual operations of the Spirit of grace have the outward dispensations of ordinances shuffled in their place and stead; regeneration is baptism; growth in grace is episcopal confirmation; the application, by faith, of the blood of Christ, once offered in a holy sacrifice for us, must give way unto the daily sacrifice of the mass offered for the sins of the quick and the dead; disciplines and some outward bodily severities must supply the place of the mortification of sin, the power whereof is never more lost and denied than it is under the highest external pretenses of it. So the whole work of the Spirit as a Spirit of grace and supplication in the church must be, and is unto themselves, satisfactorily represented by reading, saying, chanting with voices and musical instruments, prayers and praises invented and composed by they know not whom, and in a language which the most of those who are obliged to comply with them understand not at all. And even the worst part of their image is in what they have fixed on as the delineation and representation of the rule and discipline of Christ in the gospel; for, rejecting that humble, holy, meek, diligent endeavor to preserve all the faithful in obedience, love, unity, and fruitful walking, by the application of the commands of Christ unto their souls and consciences through his Spirit, and with his authority, they have erected a worldly domination over God's heritage, in whose exercise more force, fraud, extortion, oppression, violence, and bloodshed, have been acted and perpetrated, than it may be in the secular government of any tyrannical state in the world.

Other instances of the like nature might be given. This is that *mo,rfwsij th/j euvsezei,aj*, or *avlhqei,aj th/j katV euvse,zeian*, that figure and representation of evangelical truth and holiness wherewith these men would countenance themselves in, and cover from others, that apostasy from the gospel which predominant lusts have cast them into and keep them under the power of, according as it was foretold it should come to pass in the latter days.

It is yet replied, "That whatever apprehensions others may have, or whatever judgment shall be made, of the predominant evils reigning among the generality of them, and their seeming inconsistency with the doctrine of the gospel, yet the promise of the Spirit to lead into all truth is not only granted but confined unto them, so as that they are eternally secured as to faith and belief, whatever other miscarriages they may fall into." And the nature of this plea is so effectual, that if it could be made good and confirmed on their behalf, notwithstanding I see not as yet how it is possible to solve other difficulties that occur in this case, yet would it with me determine all things in controversy between them and us. Let them but evince that they alone do inherit the promised Spirit of Christ exclusively unto all others, — that he dwells, resides, works, guides in and among them alone, — and in other things we will spare them the trouble of farther pleading their cause.

But their pretense hereunto is impotent and contemptible; for what they insist upon amounts to no more but this, that they being "the church," the promise of giving the Spirit is made and fulfilled unto them alone; which only begs the matter that is in principal difference between us, and the disputes about it are endless. If, indeed, they argued, on the other hand, that they are the only church of Christ because they alone enjoy the promise of the Spirit, as the inference were undoubtedly certain (for it is the presence of Christ by his Spirit that gives being or existence unto the church), so the truth of the assertion were capable of an easy trial and a satisfactory determination; for where the Spirit doth so reside, according to the promise of Christ, and abide with any, as he doth with no others in the same kind, he will infallibly manifest his presence by his operations, and sufficiently evidence them with whom he is to be the church of Christ, seeing, as he is the promised Spirit of truth, the world cannot receive him. His operations are all of them either in a way of grace or gifts; and his gifts are either extraordinary or ordinary. When, therefore, those of the church of Rome can manifest that they enjoy such gracious operations of the Spirit as others enjoy nothing of the same kind, or that they are furnished and supplied with such spiritual gifts, either ordinary or extraordinary, as no others do participate of with them or besides them, — not proving it by saying they alone are "the church," and therefore it must be so, but by the evidence of the things themselves, as it was in the primitive times, — they shall not only free themselves from the charge of any dangerous apostasy from the gospel, but enjoy moreover all that their hearts can wish. But this pretense hath been so often and so fully evinced of falsehood, and that by all means of conviction, in the examination of causes and effects (it being undeniably demonstrated that as no such promise was ever peculiarly made unto them, much less on such terms of security as they imagine, and that in the issue, as unto matter of fact, instead of being "led into all truth," they have departed almost from all), that it needs not again to be insisted on. And, indeed, such a promise as is pretended is altogether inconsistent with the glory and honor of the gospel of God. The word of the gospel, — that is, the truth contained therein, — is the sole external instrument of the reconciliation of sinners unto God, and of their walking before him in obedience unto his glory; other end and use it hath none. To give by irrevocable grant the possession of this truth, and not in order unto that end, and so to continue it whether ever that effect be produced or no, yea, where it is not, corresponds not with other fruits of the wisdom of God in the dispensation of his grace. And whereas the gospel, as to the nature of its doctrine, will and may be interpreted by its fruits and effects in the lives of men, to allow them the security of its truth on a supposition of a course of sin, and a continuance in a state of irreconciliation or enmity against God, is to expose the doctrine of it, and the law of obedience contained in it, to just censure and reproach.

Wherefore, notwithstanding these or any other pretenses of an alike nature, we may safely proceed to show how the generality of Christians have partially apostatized from the gospel, and to inquire into the ways, means, causes, and reasons thereof.

### 03A.03. CHAPTER 3.

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#### CHAPTER 3.

APOSTASY FROM THE MYSTERY, TRUTH, OR DOCTRINE OF THE GOSPEL — PRONENESS OF PERSONS AND CHURCHES THEREUNTO — PROVED BY ALL SORTS OF INSTANCES.

THERE are three things in the gospel which are as the essentially constitutive parts of it: — 1. The mystery of its doctrine, which is the object of faith; 2. The holiness of its precepts, which are the matter of our obedience; and, 3. The purity of its institutions of worship, which is the trial of our faith and obedience as to their profession. With respect unto these we are to make our inquiry, both as unto matter of fact, and as unto the reasons, causes, and occasions of it, in the apostasy from them that is in the world. Instances hereof, in every one of the particulars mentioned, we shall find in our own days, and those both deplorable and of ill abode. But I shall not confine myself unto the present age, nor unto what is done or come to pass among ourselves, but consider things with respect unto the whole course and progress of religion since the first preaching and declaration of the gospel.

FIRST, The mystery of the truth or doctrine of the gospel, which is the object of our faith, is the foundation of its precepts and institutions, of the holiness it requireth and of the worship that it appointeth. Where this is forsaken, the others cannot be retained. Men may profess the truth, and yet not yield obedience unto it, Titus 1:16, 2 Timothy 3:5; but without the real belief of it, no man can be obedient as he ought. The obedience which the gospel requireth is the "obedience of faith," Romans 1:5, or being "obedient to the faith," Acts 6:7. It is this "grace of God" alone which "teacheth men to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," so as to find acceptance with God therein, Titus 2:11-12. Wherever, therefore, this is rejected, renounced, forsaken, declined from by any, so far as it is so, so far there is and will be an apostasy from all other concernments of the gospel. This, therefore, we are to inquire into. And we shall find in our inquiry that all sorts of persons, all churches, are, and always have been, exceedingly prone to turn aside from the mystery and truth of the doctrine of the gospel, that they have done so accordingly, and that those which are now in the world continue to be of the same temper and inclination. And as it will appear that no evil practices are indulged unto on this supposition, so it is desirable that those who are secure in this matter, on such principles as wherewith they are satisfied, would not with too much severity reflect on them who cannot but be jealous over themselves and others. The great apostle himself makes this the principal ornament in the preparation of his triumph upon the success of his ministry, that he had "kept the faith:" 2 Timothy 4:6-8, "I am," saith he, "now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." Of all that made way for that triumphant glory which he now had a prospect of, he insists on this only in particular, that he had "kept the faith;" which he did not do without a severe

warfare and conflict: so great a matter was that in his esteem, which most suppose so common, so easy, that little diligence or watchfulness is required thereunto. And the frequent solemn charges, with pathetic exhortations, which he gives unto his son Timothy to be careful herein, manifest both the weight he laid upon it, the difficulty that was in it, and the danger of miscarriage wherewith it was attended: 1 Timothy 6:20-21, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith." 2 Timothy 1:13-14, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." And the same apostle expressly mentions the proneness of some to relinquish the truth of the gospel; whom, therefore, he would have rebuked sharply, "that they might be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men, turning from the truth," Titus 1:13, Neither would there be any need that some should "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints," Jude 1:3, but that others are very ready to corrupt it and turn away from it.

Examples of this state and event of things among all the churches in the world, since the first planting of them in and by the doctrine of the gospel, will give more evidence unto the truth of our assertion, and a clear account of that matter of fact, whose reasons and causes we are to inquire into. And because I would confine myself unto the full declaration of the mystery of Christ, I shall not insist on the church of the Jews under the old testament. But it is known unto all how, from their first transgression in making the golden calf, — whereon, as God complains, they quickly, in a few days, turned out of the way, — they were continually prone unto all sorts of apostasy; and in the issue, the generality of them fell off from the promise and covenant of Abraham by their unbelief, as the apostle declares, Romans 11:1-36. And it is to be feared that the appearance and pretense of some Christian churches unto better success have this only advantage, that their ways and practices are not recorded by the Spirit of God, as theirs were. But I shall not insist on that instance. Of all the churches that are or ever were in the world, those gathered and planted by the apostles themselves had the greatest advantage to know the mystery and truth of the gospel, and the most forcible reasons unto constancy and perseverance therein. Considering the ability of their teachers to reveal unto them "all the counsel of God," with their faithfulness in "withholding nothing that was profitable unto them," Acts 20:18-21, Acts 20:26-27; their authority, as being sent immediately by Jesus Christ, and their absolute infallibility in all that they delivered; a man would rationally think that there were no room, no pretense, left for any to decline in the least from the doctrine wherein they were instructed by them, nor any advantage for Satan or seducers to practice upon them. There is no doubt but most of us suppose that had we been so taught by the apostles themselves, nothing could ever tempt us to doubt or waver, much less to relinquish any truth wherein we were so instructed. But, alas! this thought is not unlike the apprehension of the rich man in hell, who judged that if one rose from the dead to warn his brethren, they would repent and be converted unto God. But as Abraham told him, "if they would not believe Moses and the prophets, neither would they believe should one rise from the dead," no more would we, if we be not constant and steadfast in the doctrine of the gospel as revealed in the Scripture, be so, if we had been taught it by all the apostles together. An example of this proneness to relinquish evangelical principles we have in most of the churches called and gathered by them, whose faith and practice are recorded in their writings. The church of Corinth was planted by the apostle Paul, and watered by Apollos, that great evangelist; and none can question but that they were fully

instructed by them in all the principles of the gospel; which is evident also from that abundance of spiritual gifts which, above any other church, they had received. But yet, within a few years, before the writing of his first epistle unto them, which was not above five or six years at the most, many of them fell into that fundamental error of denying the resurrection of the dead; whereby they wholly annihilated, as the apostle declares, the whole death and resurrection of Christ, rendering what appeared to remain of their faith altogether vain, 1 Corinthians 15:12-18. The churches of the Galatians are yet a more pregnant instance. Converted they were unto the faith of Christ and planted in their church-state by the ministry of the same apostle; and although he instructed them in the whole counsel of God, yet it may be justly supposed that he labored in nothing more than to establish them in the knowledge and faith of the grace of God in Christ, and the free justification of believers by faith in him or his blood alone: for this he everywhere declareth to have been his principal aim and design, in the whole course of his ministry. The doctrine hereof they received with so much joy and satisfaction that they valued the apostle as an angel of God, received him as Jesus Christ, and esteemed him above the sight of their own eyes, 1 Corinthians 4:14-15. But yet after all this, upon a sudden, so as that he was surprised with it and amazed at it, they fell from the doctrine of grace and justification by faith alone, to seek after righteousness as it were by the works of the law: Galatians 3:1, "O foolish Galatians," saith he, "who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" Notwithstanding the evident demonstration of the truth which they had received, and experience of the power of the word, which he mentions, Galatians 3:2, yet all on a sudden they apostatized from it. And as the foundation hereof lay in the uncured folly and vanity of their minds (as we shall see afterward that it doth in all alike cases), yet the strangeness of the manner of it, that it should be so sudden, and, it may be, universal, makes him ask if there were not some strange fascination or spiritual witchcraft in it. have we seen persons among ourselves, who in a day or two have renounced all those principles of truth wherein they have been instructed, and embraced a system of notions diametrically opposite unto them, insomuch as some have supposed that there hath been a real diabolical fascination in the matter. Now, this apostasy of the Galatians was such as the apostle peremptorily declares that Christ and all the benefits of his death were renounced therein.

Wherefore, although we may be troubled at it and bewail it, that sundry persons are so ready to fall off from the same truth in the same manner, yet ought we not to think strange of it or be moved by it, seeing that whole churches called and instructed therein, and that particularly, by the apostle himself, did so fall in a short time after their first plantation.

It is more than probable that those who endeavored to make a spoil of the Colossians "by philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men," Colossians 2:8, had no small success among them. And such things they were wherewith they were attempted and beguiled as took them off from "holding the Head," turning them aside unto the curious speculations of men "vainly puffed up by their own fleshly minds," Colossians 2:18-19. Things of the like nature may be observed in most of the other churches unto whom the epistles are directed. And in those unto particular persons, as unto Timothy and Titus, he warns them of this readiness of all sorts of persons to apostatize from the truth, giving express instances in some by name who had done so themselves, and sedulously endeavored the overthrow of the faith of others. The holy apostle John lived to see more of these woful turnings aside from the truth and relinquishments of

evangelical mysteries. Hence in his epistles he gives an account expressly of the apostasies that were among professors of the gospel, of the seducers, and their pretenses whereby they were promoted, warning believers of the danger thereof, and of sundry duties incumbent on them necessary to their preservation. And the Epistle of Jude is written to the same purpose. It is known, also, how most of the churches unto whom the Lord Jesus Christ granted the favor of his visitation, wherein he tried and judged their state and condition, their stability in and declensions from the truth, were found guilty by him as to some degrees of backsliding and apostasy, for which they were severely reproved.

Certainly we can never enough admire the profound negligence and security of most churches and professors in the world with respect unto a due adherence unto the mysteries and truths of the gospel. Some think that they have such a privilege as that they can never decline from them or mistake about them, nor have done so in the long tract of sixteen hundred years, although they have been plunged into all manner of wickedness and carnal security. Others are wanton and careless under their profession, making little difference between truth and error; or, however, suppose that it is no great achievement to abide in the truth wherein they have been instructed. And these things have brought most churches and places under the power of that apostasy which shall afterwards be discovered. But if the churches thus planted by the apostles themselves were liable unto such defections, and many of them did actually, at least for a season, fall away from most important doctrines of the gospel (from whence, it may be, they had never been recovered if healing had not been timely applied by apostolical authority and wisdom), can we, who have not their advantages, nor some of the evidences of the truth which they enjoyed, having all the same causes of apostasy, inward and outward, which they had to be tried withal, expect that we shall be preserved, unless we watchfully and carefully attend unto all the ways and means whereby we may so be? But these things will be spoken unto afterward.

We may, in the next place, inquire what was the state of the churches after the ending and finishing of the sacred records, and the death of the apostles with all other persons divinely inspired. Here some would have us believe that all things were well, at least for a long season, and some that they are so to this very day. All that was believed and practiced among them must be esteemed almost as sacred as the gospel itself, and be made a part of the rule of our faith and worship. It seems those very churches which, during the days of the apostles, and whilst they were under their inspection, were so prone to mistakes, to follow their own imaginations, or comply with the inventions of others, yea, in sundry instances so as to apostatise from the most important doctrines of the gospel, were all on a sudden, on no other advantage but being delivered from apostolical care and oversight, so changed, established, and confirmed, that they declined not in any thing from the truth and rule of the gospel. For my part, I pay as great a respect and reverence unto the primitive churches of the first, second, and third centuries, as I think any man living can justly do; but that they did in nothing decline from the grace, mystery, truth, or rule of the gospel, that they gave no admittance unto "vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world," there are such evidences unto the contrary as none can believe it but those who have a great mind it should be so, and [have] their credulity at their disposal. I shall therefore briefly inquire what was foretold that would ensue among those churches, and what came to pass accordingly. The apostle Paul tells the elders of the church of Ephesus that "he knew that after his departing grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock," Acts 20:29. Though

he compares them to devouring wolves, yet are they not bloody persecutors by external force that he doth intend; for that expression, "Shall enter in among you," denotes an admission into the society and converse of the church, under pretense of the same profession of religion. They are, therefore, heretics and seducers, who lie in wait to deceive through various sleights and cunning craftiness, being not (whatever they pretended) really of the church, not of the flock of sheep, no, not in profession, but devouring wolves. The same persons are intended who by Peter are called "false teachers," such as should "privily bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them," 2 Peter 2:1. But the apostle adds, moreover, in the next place, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them," Acts 20:30. I do not think that the apostle in that expression, "Also of your own selves," intended precisely any of those who were then personally present with him, or at least it is not necessary that we should so judge; but some that were quickly to succeed in their room and office are intended. And all the perverse things which they would teach, being contradictory to the doctrine of the gospel, contained some degrees of apostasy in them. That they prevailed in this attempt, that the church was leavened and infected by them, is evident from hence, that not long after that church is charged by our Savior to be fallen in sundry things from its first purity, Revelation 2:4-5. So he assures Timothy that the time would come, and that speedily, as appears by the prescription he makes for its prevention, 2 Timothy 4:1-2, that men "would not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts should heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;" whereby they should "be turned from the truth, and be turned unto fables," 2 Timothy 4:3-4; — a plain prediction of that defection from evangelical truth and purity which was to befall the churches, and did so. And this, with the danger of it, he doth more vehemently urge, as from a spirit of prophecy, 1 Timothy 4:1-2, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." By that phrase of speech, "The Spirit speaketh expressly," the apostle understands not a plain, distinct revelation made thereof unto himself alone, but that the infallible Spirit of God, whereby himself and the rest of the apostles were guided, did everywhere testify the same. It is an expression not unlike that he useth, Acts 20:23, "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city;" that is, in all places those who were divinely inspired agreed on the same prediction. And I judge the apostles did everywhere, by joint consent, acquaint the churches that after the gospel had been received and professed for a while, there would ensue a notable apostasy from the truth and worship of it. So Jude tells them, Jude 1:17-18, that "the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ told them that in the last time there should be mockers, who should walk after their ungodly lusts." This all the apostles agreed in the prediction of, and warned all the churches concerning it, So John expresseth it, 1 John 4:3, "This is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come." He speaks of the coming of antichrist, and therewithal an apostasy from the faith, as that which they had been fully instructed in. And the apostle Paul mentioneth it as that which not only they were forewarned of, but also acquainted with some particulars concerning; which it was not, it may be, convenient in those days to mention publicly, for fear of offense. "There must," saith he, "be a falling away," or an apostasy from the faith, under the leading of "the man of sin." And saith he, "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? and now ye know what withholdeth," 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 2 Thessalonians 2:5-6. He had both told them of the apostasy, and also acquainted them with one particular about it, which he will not now mention. This being the great testimony of the Spirit of God in those days, that the visible church should so fall away from the faith, one of the chief ways whereby Satan brought it to pass was by the

advancing of a contrary revelation and principle,

— namely, that this or that church, the church of Rome for instance, was infallible and indefectible, and could never fall away from the faith. By this means he obliterated out of the minds of men the former warnings given by the Spirit unto the churches, so rendering them secure, defeating the ends of the prediction; for hereby he not only led men insensibly into the greatest apostasy, but taught them to adhere invincibly unto what they had done, and with the highest confidence to justify themselves therein. But all those and many other warnings did the Holy Ghost give concerning the defection from the mystery of the gospel which the churches would in succeeding times fall into; which being neglected by secure professors, whilst their faith was weakened and undermined by innumerable artifices, issued in their apostasy. For these things being thus expressly foretold by the Spirit of God himself, we may briefly inquire into the event of the predictions mentioned, and whether indeed they came to pass or no. An account in general of the state of the church after the days of the apostles we have given us by Hegesippus, who lived in the next age after them, as his words are recorded by Eusebius, lib. 3 cap. 32. Relating the martyrdom of Simon, the son of Cleopas, he adds: "Unto these times the church continued a pure and incorrupted virgin, those who endeavored to corrupt the rule of saving truth, where any such were, lying hid in obscurity. But after that the holy company of the apostles came to their several ends, and that generation was past who heard the divine Wisdom with their own ears, a conspiracy of wicked error, by the seductions of those that taught strange doctrines, began to take place; and when none of the apostles were remaining, they began to set up their science, falsely so called, with open face against the preaching of the truth." We have already seen that there were many declensions in the clays of the apostles themselves; but as they were jealous over all the churches with godly jealousy, — for having "espoused them to one husband," they took care "to present them as a chaste virgin unto Christ" (the words which Hegesippus alludes unto), and thereon watched against all ways and means whereby as "the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ," by the teaching of other doctrines than what they had received from them, as Paul speaks, 2 Corinthians 11:2-4, — so by their wisdom, diligence, and watchfulness, they were for the most part soon reduced from their wanderings and recovered from their mistakes. Hence this holy man pronounceth the church a pure virgin during the days of the apostles and their inspection, at least comparatively as to what ensued thereon, for immediately after he acknowledgeth that they were much corrupted and defiled, — that is, fallen off from "the simplicity that is in Christ," — intending, probably, those very things wherein after ages made them their example; for things quickly came unto that state in the world, and which yet with the most continueth therein, that men desired no greater warranty for their practice in religion than the shadow or appearance of any thing that was in use or prevailed among those churches, though themselves therein went off evidently from the simplicity that is in Christ. This account and unquestionable testimony we have in general of the accomplishment of the predictions before mentioned, concerning a declension that was to ensue from the power, purity, and simplicity of the gospel. But whatever is here intended, it must be looked on as the very beginning and entrance of the apostasy that ensued; which can scarce be taken notice of in comparison of that excess which it quickly proceeded unto. In particular, the parts of the sacred predictions mentioned may be reduced unto four heads:

— 1. "Men from among themselves speaking perverse things." 2. "Grievous wolves entering in, not sparing the flock." 3. Weariness, and "not enduring of sound doctrine," but turning the mind unto fables, and from the truth. 4. A gradual, secret, mysterious work of a general apostasy in the whole visible church. And it might be easily demonstrated by instances how all these had their particular accomplishment, until the whole apostasy foretold was formed and completed. We may give some short remarks upon them all: —

It cannot be denied but that many of the principal teachers in the first ages of the church after the apostles, especially among those whose writings remain unto posterity, did, in a neglect of the gospel and its simplicity, embrace and teach sundry things, perverse, curious, and contrary to the form of wholesome words committed unto them; whilst, for any thing that appears, they were not so duly conversant in evangelical mysteries, with reverence and godly fear, as it was their duty to have been. It is known how instances hereof might be multiplied out of the writings of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clemens, Origen, Tatianus, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Lactantius, and others; but I shall not reflect with any severity on their names and memories who continued to adhere unto the fundamental principles of Christian religion, though, what by curious speculations, what by philosophical prejudices and notions, by wrested allegorical expositions of Scripture, by opinions openly false and contradictory to the word of God, they much corrupted and debased the pure and holy doctrine of Jesus and his apostles.

The "grievous wolves" foretold of, who were to "spoil the flock," I look on as heretics in their various kinds. And on this account it would seem to exceed all belief what multitudes and shoals of all sorts of persons fell off from the mystery and truth of the gospel, after they had been declared unto them and professed by them, which is a full confirmation of the assertion before laid down. But they may in general be reduced unto two heads: —

(1.) Of those who, in a regardlessness and contempt of the gospel which they had received and professed, fell away unto foolish, extravagant, heathenish imaginations, unintelligible endless fancies, for the most part (as is supposed) accompanied with wicked practices, whereby, although they would retain the name of Christians, they completely and absolutely fell off from Christ and his gospel. Such were the Gnostics in all their branches and under their several appellations, Marcionites, Manichees, and others almost innumerable, with whose names, rise, opinions, and course of lives, Epiphanius, Austin, and Philastrius, have filled up their catalogues. It may be said, "They were all of them persons of so great abominations that they deserve no consideration among such as own Christian religion." But the greater the abominations were which they fell into, the more wild, senseless, and wicked were their imaginations, considering the multitudes of professed Christians which fell into them, the more effectual is the testimony they give unto the truth of our assertion; for were there not an inexpressible proneness in the minds of men to relinquish the mystery of the gospel, were it not promoted by unutterable folly and secret enmity against the truth, would it have been possible that so early in the church, taking date immediately from the decease of the apostles, such multitudes of professed Christians should openly renounce those sacred truths for such noxious, foolish imaginations? These are they who are expressly prophesied of, that they should "bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction, many following their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth was to be evil spoken of," 2 Peter 2:1-2 : for all their impious opinions and practices were by the heathen objected unto, and charged on Christian religion, as is evident in

Origen's reply to Celsus, among others; and so by reason of them "the way of truth was evil spoken of."

(2.) There was another sort of heresies, and so of real apostasy from the mystery of the gospel, whose authors and followers yet pretended an adherence unto and profession thereof. And these may be reduced to two heads: — [1.] Concerning the person; and, [2.] Concerning the grace of Christ. Of the first sort, the principal and most prevalent was that of the Arians in denying his deity; of the latter, that of the Pelagians in opposing his satisfaction, merit, and grace. The first of these was poured out as a flood from the mouth of the old serpent, and bare all before it like a torrent; the latter insinuated itself as poison into the very vitals of the church. The first, as a burning fever, carried present death with it and before it; the latter, as a gangrene or hectic distemper, insensibly consumed the vital spirits of religion. In the flint we have a most woful evidence of the instability of professors, and their readiness to forego the saving mysteries of the gospel; for in little more than half an age after its first rise, the generality of Christians in the world, bishops, priests, and people, fell under the power of it, and in their public confessions renounced and denied the true eternal deity of the Son of God: for, having obtained the patronage of some emperors, as Constantius and Valens, and the suffrage of innumerable prelates, who jointly promoted this heresy by force and fraud, almost the whole world, as to outward profession, was for a season led into this apostasy, wherein some whole nations (as the Goths and Vandals) continued for sundry ages afterward. And for the latter, or Pelagianism, it secretly, subtly, and gradually, so insinuated itself into the minds of men, that, for the substance of it, it continues to be no small part of that religion which the generality of Christians do at this day profess, and is yet upon a prevalent progress in the world. This is the second way of the apostasy of professors which was foretold by the Holy Ghost, which so came to pass as that the wounds which Christianity received thereby are not healed unto this day.

Another way was, that men should grow weary of sound doctrine, and not being able, for the reasons afterward to be insisted on, to endure it any longer, should hearken after fables, and be turned away from the truth. And this no less eminently came to pass than any of the former. About the third century it was that monkish fables began to be broached in the world. And this sort of men, instead of the doctrines of the grace of God, of justification by the blood of Christ, of faith and repentance, of new obedience and walking before God according to the commands of Christ and rule of the gospel, which men grew weary of and could not well longer endure, filled their minds and satisfied their itching ears with stories of dreams and visions, of angelical perfection in themselves, of self-invented devotions, of uncommanded mortifications, and a thousand other foolish superstitions. By such fables were innumerable souls turned from the truth and simplicity of the gospel, thinking that in these things alone religion consisted, despising the whole doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles in comparison of them. These are particularly prophesied of and declared, 1 Timothy 4:1-3. By the hypocrisy and lies, fabulous stories and doctrines of devils, of this sort of men, the body of the Christian people was so leavened and infected with the belief of vain delusions and the practice of foolish superstitions that little or nothing was left sound or wholesome among them.

Lastly, The secret working of the "mystery of iniquity," in, under, and by all these ways, and other artifices innumerable, which the subtlety of Satan, with the vanity of the minds and lusts of the hearts of men, made use of, wrought out that fatal apostasy which the world groaned under and

was ruined by when it came unto its height in the Papacy. The rise and progress of this catholic defection, the ways, means, and degrees of its procedure, its successful advance in several ages, have been so discovered and laid open by many, so far as the nature of so mysterious a work is capable of a discovery in this world, that I shall not need to repeat here any instance of it. In brief, the doctrine of the gospel was so depraved, and the worship of it so far corrupted, that the waters of the sanctuary seemed, like the river Jordan, to run and issue in a dead sea, or, like those of Egypt, to be turned into blood, that would yield no refreshment unto the souls of men. So was that prophetic parable of our Savior fulfilled, Luke 19:12-15, etc.

Before I proceed to particulars among ourselves in this kind, I shall yet farther confirm our assertion in general by the consideration of the second venture, if I may so say, that God gave the gospel in the world, the second trial which he hath made of many churches and nations, and what hath been the event and success thereof.

During the season spoken of the church was driven into the wilderness, as to its visible profession, where it was secretly nourished by the Spirit and word of God, and the few witnesses unto the truth which yet remained prophesied in sackcloth, oftentimes sealing their testimony (whereby the world was disquieted and tormented) with their blood. But when the time came that God would again graciously visit the remnant of his inheritance, he stirred up, gifted, and enabled many faithful servants of Christ, by whom the work of reformation was successfully begun and carried on in many nations and churches. It is true, they arrived not therein at the purity and peace of the apostolical churches; nor was it by some of them absolutely aimed at. And this quickly manifested itself by the great differences that were among them both in doctrine and worship; whereon those mutual contests and divisions ensued which proved the principal means of obstructing the progress of their whole work, and continueth to do so to this very day. But a state of a blessed and useful recovery it was from that apostasy into errors, heresies, superstitions, and idolatries, which the whole professing church of these parts of the world was fallen into. And many ways did it manifest itself so to be. For, —

The doctrine taught by them generally was agreeable to the Scripture, which they strenuously vindicated from the corruptions of the foregoing apostasy, and the worship of the churches was freed from open idolatry.

The consciences of men, pressed, harassed, and distorted with innumerable vain affrightments, superstitions, foolish imaginations, and false opinions, whereby they were brought into bondage to their pretended guides of all sorts, and forced unto services, under the name of religious duties, merely subservient unto their carnal interests, were set at liberty by the truth, and directed into the ways of gospel obedience.

Multitudes had it given unto them on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him; so that no less numbers sealed their testimony with their blood, under the power of those who undertook the patronage of the present apostasy, than did under the rage of the heathens at the first introduction of Christian religion into the world.

The fruit which it hath brought forth in many nations, by the real conversion of multitudes to God, their edification and holy obedience, their solid spiritual consolation in life and death, with many other things, do give testimony unto this work that it was of God.

It cannot therefore be denied but that many churches were by the reformation brought into a state of revalency or recovery from that mortal disease they had been under the power of. But all men know what care and diligence is required to attain perfect health and soundness in such a condition, and to prevent a relapse; which if it should fall out, the last error would be worse than the first. It might therefore have been justly expected from them, and it was their duty, to have gone on in the work of reformation until they had come to a perfect recovery of spiritual health. But instead thereof, things are so fallen out (by whose default God knows) that not only the work hath received little or no improvement among themselves, in the increase of light, truth, and holiness, nor been progressive or successful in the world towards others, but also hath visibly and apparently lost its force, and gone backwards on all accounts. Wherefore, we have here also another sad evidence of the proneness of men to forego the truths of the gospel after they have been instructed in them. I shall instance only in the known doctrines of the reformed churches, aiming especially at what is of late years fallen out among ourselves in a sort of men whom the preceding generations were unacquainted withal, which I shall therefore insist on apart and by itself afterward.

It is not unknown how ready many, yea, multitudes, are in all places to desert the whole protestant faith and religion, casting themselves into the baffled, prostituted remainders of the old apostasy. Every slight occasion, every temptation of pleasure, profit, favor, preferment, turns men unto the Papacy; and some run the same course merely to comply with the vanity of their minds in curiosity, novelty, and conformity unto what is in fashion among men. Some flee unto it as a sanctuary from guilt, as that which tendereth more ready ways for the pacification of conscience than that faith and repentance which the gospel doth require. Some having lost the sense of all religion in the pursuit of their lusts, finding themselves uneasy in their atheism, or disadvantaged by the reputation of it, take shelter in the Roman dress. Some are really entangled and overcome by the power and subtlety of numerous seducers who lie in wait to deceive. By one way and means or another, on motives known to themselves and him who useth them as his engines to subvert the faith, many in all places fall off daily to the Papacy, and the old superstition seems to be upon a new advance, ready to receive another edition in the world; yea, it is to be feared that there is in many places such a general inclination unto a defection, or such an indifferency to all religion, that multitudes want nothing but a captain to conduct them back into Egypt: for whereas they have lost all sense of the power, use, and excellency of that religion, or profession of truth, wherein they have been educated and instructed, and that by giving up themselves unto their lusts and pleasures, which will not fail to produce that cursed effect, they either embrace the Roman religion, to supply the place of that no religion which they had left unto themselves, or if they pretend to soar to such a pitch of reason as to disown the vanity and folly of that profession, and its inconsistency with all the principles of free, generous, and rational minds, they betake themselves for a while unto a kind of skeptical atheism, which, having given them a sorry talkative entertainment for a little space, by debasing and corrupting their minds, gives them up again unto what they did before despise. By such means are the numbers of apostates multiplied amongst us every day. But there are yet other instances of the proneness of men in foregoing the faith that the church was retrieved unto at the first reformation. How great an inroad hath been made on our first profession, at least an alteration made therein (whether for better or for worse the great day will discover), by that system of doctrines which from its author, and for distinction's sake, is called Arminianism! I am not bound to believe what. Polinburgh affirms in his preface to the second part

of Episcopius' works, namely, "That the most of the prelates and learned men in England are of their way and judgment," which, as stated by Episcopius, hath many Racovian additions made unto what it was at first; nay, I do believe that what he asserts is false and calumnious unto the persons he intends; — but yet I wish withal that too much countenance were not given by many unto his insinuation. A late writer, in a treatise which he calls "A sober and compassionate Inquiry," etc., among other things of the like nature, fancieth that some dislike the church of England on the account of its doctrine; and this they do, as he farther supposeth, because it "doth not so punctually agree with the synod of Dort as they could wish." To evidence the unreasonableness hereof, he informs us, "That no one father or writer of the church, whether Greek or Latin, before St Austin's time, agreed in doctrine with the determinations of that synod; and as for St Austin, he was a devout, good man, but whose piety was far more commendable than his reason;" — and therefore he rejects it with indignation (as he well may), that "a novel Dutch synod should prescribe doctrines to the church of England, and outweigh all antiquity;" and so closeth his discourse with some unworthy calumnies cast on the divines of that assembly, which were esteemed of the best that all the reformed churches of Europe (that of France alone excepted) could afford at that time. But the interest of the present design which he had in hand was more regarded in these assertions than that of the truth. It is but a pretense, that those whom he reflects upon do dislike the doctrine of the church of England; for, look upon it as it is contained in the Articles of Religion, the Books of Homilies, and declared in the authenticated writings of all the learned prelates and others for sixty years after the reformation, wherein the doctrine taught, approved, and confirmed in this church was testified unto all the world, and the generality of those reflected on by him do sacredly adhere unto it. It is a defection from this doctrine that is by some complained of, and not the doctrine itself. And how the doctrine of the person before mentioned, or of Curcellaeus, — of whose works Limborch, in his preface unto them, boasts that they were so earnestly desired in England, — can be brought into a consistency with that of this church so confirmed and declared, will require a singular faculty in the reconciliation of open multiplied contradictions, and those in the most weighty points of religion, to declare. Let but the doctrine established at the first reformation, as explained and declared in the writings of the principal persons who presided, lived, and died in the communion of this church, — which are the measure of it in the judgment of all other churches in the world, — be continued and adhered unto, and there will be neither difference nor complaint on this matter. For the disputes which have been, and which it may be always will be, among learned men, concerning some abstruse and philosophical notions about the order of the divine decrees, predetermination, the nature of human liberty, and the like innumerable, neither ever did nor ever will much disturb the peace of the church; for as they are understood by very few, if by any at all, so the community of Christians are altogether unconcerned with them, either as to their faith or obedience. Differences about them will be ended at the last day; and it may be, as to the great end of the gospel, that is time enough. But the pretense of this author, "That no one father or writer of the church, Greek or Latin, before St Austin's time, agreed with the determinations of the synod of Dort," is of little importance in this cause; for as I suppose he may not speak this absolutely on his own trial and experience, but rather on the suggestions of others, so it is no more than what is strongly pretended concerning the doctrine of the holy Trinity itself with respect unto the determination and declaration made of it at the council of Nice. And it were to be wished that too much countenance had not been given unto this imagination by Petavius and some others, whose collections of ambiguous expressions

out of the ancient writers of the church, and observations upon them, are highly boasted of by our present Photinians. And as, it may be, it will not be easy for this author positively to declare what was the judgment of any one ancient writer on all points of Christian belief, especially on such as had not received an especial discussion from oppositions made unto them in their own days or before them: so it is confessed by all that an allowance is to be given unto general expressions of such writers as seem occasionally to declare their present thoughts on any particular doctrines about which there had never been any controversy in the church; for the proper signification of words themselves, whereby men express their minds, is never exactly stated until the things themselves which they would signify have been thoroughly discussed. Hence the same words have had various uses and divers significations in several ages. And by this rule, whatever be supposed that none of the ancients before Austin were of the same mind with those who assembled at Dort, it may with more truth be affirmed that none of them were otherwise minded but Origen only, and those who were influenced by him, he being by many, on evident grounds, accused to have prepared the way and opened the door both unto Arianism and Pelagianism. The censure passed on Austin, namely, "That his piety was far more commendable than his reason," is at least as novel as the Dutch synod; for it is not the commendation of his piety, but the disparagement of his reason, that is intended. And I must take the liberty to say, that either this author hath not been much conversant in the writings of this great and holy person, or he is a very incompetent judge of the rational abilities of them in whose writings he is conversant. This confidence in pronouncing a censure so contrary to the concurrent sense of the generality of learned men of all sorts in the church for twelve hundred years savors too much of partiality and prejudice. But it is some relief, that the adversaries of the truth with whom he had to do were never able to discover nor make advantage of the weakness of his reason. It was sufficient for the work whereunto God designed him; which was, not only to check and suppress the many instances wherein sundry crafty persons apostatized from the truths of the gospel, both in his own days and before, but also to give over the light of truth, clearly discovered and strenuously vindicated, unto posterity, for the benefit of the church in all ages. Persons may freely despise the men of their present contests, against whom they have all the advantages which may prompt them thereunto, and they have so much countenance in casting contemptuous reflections on the principal first reformers as not to think therein they invade the bounds of Christian modesty; but what will be the apology for their confidence in such censures of the rational abilities of Austin I cannot conjecture, though the reason of it I can easily guess at. However, it needeth not be much taken notice of, seeing a censure somewhat more severe hath not long since been passed on St Paul himself, by a writer of the same strain and judgment.

There is little ground of fear, as I suppose, that a "novel Dutch synod," as it is called, though consisting of persons delegated from all the principal reformed churches of Europe (that of France only excepted), "should prescribe doctrines to the church of England," seeing in that synod the church of England did rather prescribe doctrines to the Dutch than receive any from them; for the divines which had the pre-eminence of suffrage and authority in that assembly were those of the church of England, sent thither by public authority to testify the doctrine of this church, and to lead the Dutch into the same confession with themselves. But to return; it is to be feared that as Pelagianism, in its first edition, did secretly and gradually insinuate itself into the animal and vital spirits of the body of the church in those days, proving a poison unto it, so under its new varnish and gilding it will be received, until it diffuse itself into the veins and vitals of the present reformed

church-state in the world. This I know, that some pretending a zeal for holiness and reformation of life do yet, with a shameful partiality, charge those doctrines as a principal means of the decay of piety, which they cannot but know were generally believed and avowed then when piety most flourished in this nation. But this is part of that entertainment which the church of England meets with at this day from her degenerate offspring. The doctrine of all the ancient bishops must be traduced, as the means of the decay of piety; and, which increaseth the wonder, it had not this effect till it began to be publicly deserted and renounced I for whether they are the one the cause of the other or no, yet there is a demonstrative coincidence between the originals of our visible apostasy from piety and the admission of these novel opinions, contrary to the faith of the first reformed churches, and that they both bear the same date among us. But there is yet a greater abomination effectually taking place among us, to the utter overthrow of the faith of some, and the corrupting of the minds of others from the truth of the gospel. This is the leprosy of Socinianism, which secretly enters into the walls and timber of the house, whence it will not be scraped out. It commenced in the world some time before the other spring of a partial apostasy before mentioned; but for a good space it lay fermenting in some obscure places of Poland and the countries adjacent. When the books and writings of the authors and promoters of the opinions called by that name came once to be known and read in other places, they were continually all of them abundantly answered and confuted by learned men of all sorts, so as it was justly hoped it would obtain no great success or progress in the world. But, —

"*Latus excisae serpit contagio gentis Victoresque suos natio victa premit.*" The vanity of the minds of men, their weariness of sound doctrine, which they will endure no longer, whatever they embrace, have given it admission, either in part or in whole, among multitudes who once professed the faith of the gospel: for whereas the whole system of the opinions of those men is but a collection of such errors as formerly perplexed the church and overthrew the faith of many, the principal and most material of them may be referred unto two heads, — 1. Photinianism; and, 2. Pelagianism. Unto the first are referred their denial of the Trinity, and consequently of the divine person and incarnation of the Son of God. Under the latter, their opposition unto the satisfaction of Christ, the true nature of his priesthood and sacrifice, justification by faith in his blood and the imputation of his righteousness, the efficacy of his grace, and the corruption of our nature by the fall, may be comprised. The denial of the resurrection of the same bodies, the eternity of the punishment of the damned in hell, with other of their imaginations, were also traduced from some of old. The first part of their heresy as yet takes no great place but only among themselves, the doctrine opposite unto it being secured by law, and the interest of men therein who have advantage by the public profession. But yet it is to be feared that the coldness of many in asserting and defending those fundamental doctrines of the gospel which they oppose, yea, their indifferency about them, and the horrid notions, with strange expositions, that some have embraced and do use concerning the person of Christ, do proceed from some secret influence on the minds of men, which the venom of their opinions and sophistical disputes have had upon them. And from a just improvement of their sentiments have proceeded those bold efforts of atheistical imaginations and oppositions unto the Scripture, both the letter and sense of it, which have of late been divulged in public writing; which, being brought from the neighbor nation, do find no slack entertainment by many among us. But as to the latter branch of their profession, or their Pelagianism, it hath diffused itself among multitudes of persons who were some time of another persuasion, and have yet engagements on them so to be. All that unreasonable advancement of

reason in matters of religion which we have amongst us; the new notions men have of the satisfaction of Christ, pretending to the acknowledgment of it, indeed destructive unto it; the noisome conception of the little use of the person of Christ in religion beyond the revelation and confirmation of the gospel; doctrines of the possibility, yea, facility of yielding acceptable obedience unto all evangelical commands without the aids of effectual grace, of the powers and incorruption of our nature, of justification by and upon our own obedience, of the suitableness of all gospel mysteries to unrenewed reason or an unsanctified mind, of regeneration as consisting only in the reformation of our lives; with a rejection of all internal real efficacy in converting grace, and the substitution of morality in the room of grace; with the denial of any influences of grace from Jesus Christ unto the holiness of truth; and many other opinions wherewith men even pride themselves, to the contempt of the doctrine received and established in the reformed churches of old, — are borrowed out of the storehouses of their imaginations, shall I say, or raked out of their dunghill. And whither the infection may diffuse itself I know not. The resurrection of the same bodies substantially, the subsistence and acting of the soul in its separate state and condition, the eternity of hell torments, the nature of Christ's sacerdotal office as distinguished from his regal, begin to be either questioned or very faintly defended amongst many. And many other noisome opinions there are, about the Scriptures, the nature of God, his attributes and decrees, the two covenants, our union with Christ, the gifts and operations of the Spirit, which some vent as pure mysteries and discoveries of truth, and value themselves for being the authors or maintainers of them, that came all from the same forge, or are emanations from the same corrupt fountain of Socinianism.

We have, as I suppose, sufficiently demonstrated the truth of what we before observed concerning the proneness and readiness of mankind to relinquish and fall off from the mystery and doctrine of the gospel, after it hath been declared unto them and received by them. Withal we have stated the matter of fact, — namely, that such a defection there hath been, and is in the world at this day; the reasons and causes whereof we are now to inquire into. Only I must premise, that the principal instance designed, and which is among ourselves, I have referred to an especial consideration by itself, wherein we shall inquire into the especial reasons of it, which are superadded unto those more general, which equally respect apostasies of this kind.

## 03A.04. CHAPTER 4.

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CHAPTER 4. THE REASONS AND CAUSES OF APOSTASY FROM THE TRUTH OR DOCTRINE OF THE GOSPEL, AND THE INCLINATION OF ALL SORTS OF PERSONS THEREUNTO IN ALL AGES, INQUIRED INTO AND DECLARED — UNCURED ENMITY IN THE MINDS OF MANY AGAINST SPIRITUAL THINGS, AND THE EFFECTS OF IT IN A WICKED CONVERSATION, THE FIRST CAUSE OF APOSTASY. FOR an entrance into the ensuing discourse, I shall lay down that principle which, I presume, all men will give their assent unto, — namely, that a defection from the truth of the gospel once professed is a sin of the highest guilt, and that which will issue in the most pernicious events. God himself did frequently complain, by his prophets of old, that his people "had forsaken him," and were gone away from him, — that is, from the doctrine and institutions of his law, the only means of conjunction and communion between him and them, Deuteronomy 28:20; 1 Samuel 8:8; 2 Chronicles 34:25; Jeremiah 5:7, Jeremiah 5:9,

Jeremiah 16:11. To convince them of their horrible folly and iniquity herein, he demands of them what iniquity they had seen in him, what inequality in his ways, what disappointments they had met withal, that they should grow weary of his laws and worship, so as to relinquish them for such things and ways as would end in their temporal and eternal ruin, Jeremiah 2:5, Ezekiel 18:25 : for if there were nothing in them whereof they had cause to complain; if they were all holy, just, and good; if in the observance of them there was great reward; if by them God did them good and not evil all their days, — there was no apology or excuse to be made for their folly and ingratitude. That so it was with them, that their defection from the law and institutions of God was the highest folly and greatest wickedness imaginable, is by all acknowledged: yea, it will be so by them who at the same time are under a greater guilt of the same kind; for the judgments of men are oftentimes so bribed by their present interests, or corrupted by the power of depraved affections, as to justify themselves in worse evils than those which they condemn in others. But as it was with the people of old, so it is at present with them who decline from the mysteries or renounce the doctrines of the gospel, after they have been received and professed by them, or have done so at any time: yea, their guilt hath greater aggravations than accompanied the idolatrous revolts of the Jews of old; for the gospel is a clearer revelation of God, and much more glorious, than that which was made by the law. There is therefore no reason to be taken from itself why men should desert it, either in its doctrines and precepts or the worship which it doth require. Nothing can be charged on the gospel, nothing on any thing contained in it or produced by it, which should countenance any in a defection from it. It is in itself a blessed emanation from the eternal Fountain of wisdom and truth, and hath more impressions and characters upon it of divine excellencies than the whole creation besides. Neither hath it any proper operations or effects on the souls of men but what are means and causes of deliverance from their original apostasy from God, with all the evil that ensued thereon, which is all that is evil; for the recovery of lost mankind from a state of darkness, bondage, and misery, into that of liberty, light, and peace, the present favor and future enjoyment of God, with order and mutual usefulness in this world whilst they continue therein, is the great and immediate design of the truths of the gospel. Neither is there any thing that is truly good, holy, just, benign, or

useful among men, but what is influenced by them and derived from them. Some there have been, indeed, perhaps in all ages, who, pretending unto the liberty of it, have really been servants of corruption, and have turned the grace of God into lasciviousness; and some have charged the principal doctrines of it as those which give men a discharge from a necessity of holy obedience and the utmost use of their own endeavors therein. And there are those who, being given up to sensuality of life, living under the power of darkness, in the pursuit of secular ends, have no other thoughts of it But what the devils in the possessed man had of our Lord Jesus Christ, — that it comes to "torment them before the time." And there are not wanting some who fear no evil But from the gospel, who suppose that the minds of all men would be serene and peaceable, that all things would be quiet, flourishing, and orderly in the world, if the gospel were out of it; for whatever disturbances men make themselves, in envy, wrath, malice, persecution of others, the guilt and blame of them shall be charged on the gospel itself. And it is notoriously known how a false pretense of some grants made in, and appointments settled by, the gospel, hath been made use of to countenance some sorts of men in the crafty acquisition and violent possession of worldly power, grandeur, and wealth, venting themselves in ambition, cruelty, luxury, and pride of life. But the iniquity and folly of all these abominations, cursed artifices of the father of lies and fountain of malice, shall be, if God will, elsewhere discovered. At present I shall take it for granted that in itself it is a glorious representation of divine wisdom, goodness, grace, and love; neither doth it produce any effects but whereof God is the immediate author, and will be the everlasting rewarder. Wherefore the reasons and causes of apostasy from the part of the gospel under present consideration, — that is, the mysteries and truth of its doctrine, — must be searched for in the minds of them by whom it is forsaken, with the external furtherances that do accompany them.

It is not unnecessary such an inquiry should be engaged into; for things are in that posture and condition in the Christian world in this present age, that if it should be supposed that the lives of professed Christians do make a due representation of the gospel, that the generality of men were led and influenced into that course of life and conversation which they openly pursue by the doctrines and principles of it, it could scarce stand in competition with heathenish philosophy for usefulness unto the glory of God and the good or advantage of mankind. It is not, therefore, the gospel, but it is apostasy from it, which hath produced so many deplorable effects in the world, and which, by drenching mankind in wickedness, makes way for their misery and ruin. And this, in the vindication of the gospel, will be made in some measure to appear in the discovery of the causes and reasons of this apostasy; for let men pretend what they please, unless they have first forsaken the gospel in their hearts and minds, they would not, they could not, forsake all rules of holiness and morality also in their lives.

Again; the prevalency of this defection is so great, and the neglect of men (either intent on their private occasions, desires, and interests, or captivated under the power of it unto the approbation of the greatest and most dangerous evils) so visible and shameful, as that every sincere attempt to warn them of their danger, to excite them unto their duty, or direct them in its performance, whereby the progress of this product of the counsels of hell may be obstructed and themselves defeated, ought to have a candid reception of all those who have a due regard unto the interest of Christ and the gospel in the world, or the everlasting concernments of their own souls.

These are the general ends which are aimed at in the ensuing discourses; and if any one of greater abilities for this work shall be hereby provoked, or take occasion from hence, to make a

more diligent inquiry into the causes and reasons of that defection from the glory and power of Christian religion which prevails in the world, and shall thereon prescribe more suitable and effectual remedies for the healing of this epidemical distemper, I shall rest abundantly satisfied in the success of this attempt and essay. And the reasons which present themselves to my thoughts are these that follow.

I. That rooted enmity which is in the minds of men by nature unto spiritual things, abiding uncured under the profession of the gospel, is the original and first spring of this apostasy. So the apostle tells us that "the carnal mind is enmity against God," Romans 8:7; that is, unto the revelation of the will and mind of God in Christ, with the obedience which he requireth thereunto; for of these things doth he there discourse. The nature of this enmity, and how it operateth on the minds of men, I have elsewhere f6 declared at large, and shall not here again insist upon it. It is sufficient unto our present purpose that men, on various accounts, may take upon them the profession of the truths of the gospel whilst this enmity unto spiritual things abides uncured, yea, predominant in their minds. So was it with them of whom the apostle complains that under their profession they manifested themselves, by their wicked lives, to be "enemies of the cross of Christ," Php 3:18; as those also are who, "professing that they know God, do yet in works deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate," Titus 1:16.

Thus, upon the first preaching of the gospel, many were convinced of its truth, and took upon them its profession, merely on account of the miracles that were wrought in its confirmation, whose hearts and minds were not in the least reconciled unto the things contained in it. See John 2:23-24; Acts 8:13.

Some are so far prevailed with as to acknowledge its truth, by the efficacy of its dispensation as an ordinance of God for their conviction and instruction, and yet do not part with their enmity against it. Thus John was among the Jews as "a burning and a shining light," and they rejoiced for a season in his ministry, John 5:35, insomuch that the body of the people were initiated into his doctrine by the token and pledge of it in baptism,

Matthew 3:5-6; but though all of them confessed their sins, according to his direction, very few forsook them, according to their duty. When both these concurred, preaching and miracles, in an eminent manner, as when our Savior preached on his feeding five thousand with five barley loaves and two small fishes, being prepared in their minds by the miracle they saw, they were so affected with his doctrine about "the bread of life that came down from heaven," that they cried out, "Lord, evermore give us this bread," John 6:34; but, their natural enmity unto spiritual things being yet uncured, upon his procedure to instruct them in heavenly mysteries, they put in exceptions to his doctrine, John 6:41, John 6:52, John 6:60, and immediately forsook both him and it, verse 66. And our Savior assigns the reason of their defection to have been their unbelief, and that it was not given unto them of the Father to come unto him, John 6:64-65, or the enmity of their carnal minds was yet unremoved. Hence what they esteemed a hard and unintelligible saying, John 6:52, John 6:60, his true disciples understood to be "the words of eternal life," John 6:38. In process of time, many are prepossessed with notions of the truth of the gospel in their education, by the outward means of instruction that have been applied unto them; but yet, notwithstanding this advantage, they may. still abide under the power of this depravation of their minds.

Evangelical truths being by these or the like means entertained in the minds of men, which are also variously affected with them, they will move and act towards their proper end and design. And hereof there are three parts: —

To take off the soul of man from rest and satisfaction in itself, as unto present peace in the condition wherein it is, and hope of future blessedness by its own endeavors; for neither of these are we capable of in our depraved, apostate state. Wherefore the first work of the gospel is to influence, guide, and direct the minds of men to renounce themselves as to these ends, and to seek after righteousness, life, peace, and blessedness, by Jesus Christ.

The renovation of our minds, wills, and affections, into the image or likeness of God, is another part of its design. And this it doth by presenting spiritual things unto us in that light and evidence, with that power and efficacy, as to transform us into their likeness, or to bring the substantial image of them upon our whole souls, 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:23-24; Colossians 3:10.

It engageth the whole soul, in all its powers and faculties, through the whole course of its activity, or in all it doth, to live unto God in all holy obedience, Romans 12:1.

But when this work, or any part of it, is urged on the consciences and practice of men, they like it not in any measure. The uncured enmity whereof we speak riseth up in opposition unto them all. It begins to suppose that it hath admitted a troublesome inmate, that came in, as it were, to sojourn, and will now be a judge. Whilst the mind is exercised only about the notions of truth in speculation and reasonings, it is satisfied and pleased with them; yea, it will come unto a compliance with its guidance in sundry things and duties which it may perform, and yet abide upon its old foundations of self-sufficiency and satisfaction, Mark 6:20. But when, in pursuit of the ends before mentioned, the gospel presseth to take men off wholly from their old foundations and principles of nature, to work them unto a universal change in powers, faculties, operations, and ends, to make them new creatures, it proves irksome unto that enmity which is predominant in them; which therefore stirreth up all the lusts of the mind and the flesh, all the deceitful policies of the old man and powers of sin, all carnal and unmortified affections, in opposition unto it. Hence spiritual truths are first neglected, then despised, and at last, on easy terms, parted withal. For men, by conviction, and on rational grounds or motives, whether natural or spiritual, may receive that as truth, and give an assent unto it, which, when it should be reduced unto practice, the will and affections will not comply withal. So it is said of some, that οὐκ εὐδοκίμασαν τὸν θεόν ἐπειδή κεινὸν εὐπίσταν, sei, Romans 1:28, — "it liked them not," it pleased them not, they approved not of it, "to hold," retain, or keep, "God in their knowledge," or to continue in that acknowledgment of him whereof they were convinced. The inbred notions which they had by the light of nature, with their consideration of the works of creation and providence, gave them conceptions and apprehensions of the being and power of God, Romans 1:19-20. Hereby they are said to "know God," as they did with respect to the things mentioned; that is, the essential properties of his nature, — "his eternal power and Godhead," Romans 1:21. This knowledge, these notions and conceptions, did immediately direct them to "glorify him as God," in holy worship and obedience, as it is expressed in the same verse; but this, through the depravation of their minds and affections, they liked not, and therefore would not retain this knowledge of him, but gave themselves up unto all abominable idolatries and brutish lusts, which were inconsistent therewithal, as the apostle at large declares. Wherefore, even as unto divine things that are conveyed unto us by natural light, and such as is unavoidable unto all

mankind, the will, the affections, and the practical understanding are more vitiated and corrupted than are the preceptive and directive powers of the mind; and hence it was that all the world, who had nothing to conduct them but the light of nature, apostatized from its guidance, and lived in contrariety unto it. They were all rebels against that light which they had; and so will all mankind be without the especial grace of God.

It is so also with respect unto truths communicated by supernatural revelation. It is given as the character of those who were to carry on the great apostasy from the mysteries and worship of the gospel, that "they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," 2 Thessalonians 2:10. The truth itself, as to the profession of it, they did receive and own for a time; but such an approbation of it, such a love unto it, as should incline them unto obedience, or the improvement of it unto its proper ends, that so they might be saved, they neither had nor endeavored after. This made them prone, on all occasions and temptations, to forego and relinquish the profession of it, to change it for the vilest errors and grossest superstitions; for in such a posture of mind, men's corruptions will prevail against their convictions. First they will stifle the truth as to its operation, and then reject it as to its profession. Let other notions be proposed unto them more suited unto the vanity of their minds or the sensuality of their affections, and they will not fail of a ready entertainment.

There are instances among all sorts of men, how, when they have imbibed persuasions and opinions, even such as are false, vain, and foolish, and have them riveted in their minds by powerful interests or inveterate prejudices, neither the evidence of truth nor the fear of danger can prevail with them for their renunciation or relinquishment. All false ways in Christianity, and that of Mohammedanism, give us examples hereof. But we have two general instances of it that may well fill the minds of men with astonishment. The first is of the Jews, who for so many successive generations, under all manner of difficulties and calamities, continue obstinate in the most irrational unbelief and apostasy from the faith of Abraham their forefather and the expectation of all their ancestors that can enter into the heart of any man to imagine. For many generations, those who from among them have been so convinced of their folly as really and sincerely to embrace the gospel do scarce answer one unto a century of years. The other is in the church of Rome. It is known how that communion aboundeth with men otherwise wise and learned, what kings and rulers of the earth do adhere thereunto; and this they continue to do, and will do so, notwithstanding that the errors, impieties, superstitions, and idolatries of that church are so many and so manifest. Other instances there are sufficiently pregnant to evince that no opinions in religion can be so foolish or contemptible but that some will be found pertinaciously to adhere unto them against all endeavors for their relief, either in the way of God by rational and spiritual convictions, or in the way of the world by persecution.

It may be more may and will be found to be obstinate in error upon trials, with difficulties, dangers, and oppositions, than will on the like trials be constant in the profession of the truth, — I mean among them who together with its external profession have not received its internal power and efficacy, with the love of it in their hearts: for both sorts receive their notions and apprehensions of things in the same way, and on the same grounds of appearing reasons, though the understanding be imposed on and deceived in the one and not in the other; but error once received under the notion of truth takes firmer root in the carnal minds of men than truth doth or can whilst their minds are so carnal. And the reason of it is, because all error is some way suited unto the mind as thus

depraved, and there is nothing in it that is enmity thereunto. Neither in itself nor any of its effects doth the mind dislike it, for being fallen off from the first Truth and Goodness, it wanders and delights to wander in crooked or by paths of its own; for "God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions," Ecclesiastes 7:29. These it pleaseth itself withal and is conformed unto; for there is somewhat in every error to recommend itself unto the vanity, or curiosity, or pride, or superstition of the carnal mind. But it is otherwise with evangelical truths, which the mind disreliseth because of its innate enmity unto the things which they propose and exhibit. Hence it is easier, for the most part, to draw off a thousand from the profession of it, who have no experience of its power and efficacy in their souls, than to turn one from an erroneous way, especially if he be confirmed in it by interest and prejudice. And so it is at present in the world. Every sort or party of false professors, as Papists and others, do carry off multitudes of common professors from the truth which they had owned, but seldom do we hear of any one recovered from their snares. Nor need any seducers desire a greater advantage than to have admittance unto their work where persons live in an outward profession of the truth and inward enmity unto it. They shall be filled with proselytes unto satiety. This was the fundamental cause of that apostasy from the doctrine and truths of the gospel which has prevailed in almost the whole visible church. Had the generality of men received the truth in the love thereof, had they not had a secret enmity in their hearts and minds against it, had not things vain, curious, and superstitious been suited unto the prevailing principles of their minds and affections, they would not, they could not, upon any suggestions or temptations, so easily, so universally, have forsaken the gospel for the traditions of men, nor gone away from Christ to follow after Antichrist, as we know them to have done. But when an external profession of the truth became to be transmitted from one generation to another, the spirit and power of it being wholly neglected, men did but wait for opportunities gradually to part with it, and give it up for any thing else that was suggested unto them, many in the meantime setting their wits on work to find out inventions suited to their lusts and corrupt affections. That it was thus with them who were carried away with the great apostasy, that they did by all outward ways and means, in their lives and conversations, manifest that so it was with them, shall be afterward declared; and had it not been so with them, the event complained of had not ensued. And herein lies the present danger of the persons, churches, and nations, which at this day make profession of the gospel: for if a pressing trial or vigorous temptation, if a coincidence of various ways and means of seduction, do befall them who have received the truth, but not in the love and power of it, they will be hardly preserved from a general apostasy; for when any attempts shall be made from without upon them, they have treachery from the deceitfulness of their own hearts at the same time working in them, for their uncured enmity against the truth doth but watch for an opportunity to part with it and reject it. Any thing that will but free them from the efficacy of those convictions or power of the traditions under which they are held captive unto the profession of the truth, as it were whether they will or no, shall be cheerfully embraced and complied withal. And the danger hereof doth sufficiently evidence itself in that open dislike of the rule and conduct of the truth which most men testify in the whole course of their lives.

It is plain, therefore, that unless this enmity be conquered or cast out of the mind; unless the mind be freed from its corrupt agency and effects; unless the truth obtain its real power and efficacy upon the soul; unless it be so learned "as it is in Jesus," whereby men, "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and are renewed in the spirit of their minds, putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness

and true holiness;" unless they love and value it for the effects of spiritual peace, power, and liberty, which it produceth in them, — there will be found among them little constancy or perseverance in their profession when temptations shall concur with opportunities for a revolt: for who can give security that what hath formerly fallen out amongst the generality of mankind shall not in any place do so again, where the same causes of it do again concur?

Having discovered this first cause of defection from the gospel, we may easily discern what are the only true effectual ways and means of the preservation and continuance of the true religion in any place or among any people where it hath been professed, especially if temptations unto a revolt should abound, and the season be made perilous by advantageous opportunities. Love of the truth, and experience of its power in the hearts of men, will produce this effect, and nothing else [will.] All other means, where these have been wanting, have failed in all places in the world, and will do so again when a time of trial shall come. True religion may be established by law, countenanced by authority, have a prescription of a long profession, or be on other accounts so fixed on the minds of men as that multitudes shall promise the firmest stability in the profession thereof; but there is no security in things of this nature, and we shall quickly see all the hopes that are built upon them vanish into nothing. Convictions or traditions, unto whose power a secret enmity is retained, may make a bluster and noise for a season, but every breath of temptation will carry them away before it. Were it not so with the most of men, had it been possible that so many nations in less than an age should fall into Arianism, after the truth had been so long known and professed among them; or that the body of this nation after a blessed reformation should again relapse into Popery, as in the days of Queen Mary, when many who had professed the gospel east others into flames who continued so to do?

It is greatly complained of that Popery doth increase in this nation; and some express their fears of its farther prevalency, and that perhaps not without cause. And although there are several other ways whereby men may and do apostatize from the truth, yet all those who take any other measure of things besides their own secular interests, with the corrupt affections of their minds, in wrath, envy, and revenge, do look on this as far the most dangerous, as that which will be most compliant with the predominant lusts of the present age, and most comprehensive to receive the community of men. Besides, by what it hath done formerly, it sufficiently instructs what it is likely enough to do again. Wherefore very many industriously attempt its prevention, as that which would prove (if it should prevail) deplorably ruinous unto the nation and their posterity therein. To this end some implore the aid of authority for the enacting of severe laws for the prohibition of it. This, according to the opinion of late ages, some suppose the most effectual means for the preservation of the truth; for if they can but destroy all that are otherwise minded, the rest of mankind will have the face of peace unto them who are advantaged thereby. Some write books in the confutation of the errors of it, and that to very good purpose. But in the meantime, if there be any thing of truth in reports, the work is as effectually progressive as if no opposition had been made unto it; and we may assure ourselves that these and such like means as these, if they are alone, will never keep Popery out of England, if it should ever have an advantage and opportunity for a return, nor prevent the entrance of any other false way in religion. As for the use and severity of penal laws, I meddle not with it, as that which is to be referred to the wisdom of our governors. But I must needs say, it seems not to be unto the advantage of truth, or, at least, not unto the reputation of them by whom it is professed, that they should no otherwise be able to preserve its

station amongst men. Neither can it be honorable unto any religion, that where it pretends unto all the advantages and rights of truth, and [is] in the real possession of all outward emoluments and supportments, yet that it cannot secure itself or maintain its profession without outward force and violence, things so remote from the first introduction and planting of truth in the world. But these things are not of our present consideration. [As] for the confutation of the errors, superstitions, and idolatrous practices of the church of Rome, in books of controversy, it is no doubt a work good, useful, and necessary in its kind; but when all is done, these things reach but a few, nor will many divert from other occasions to the serious consideration of them. Wherefore some other way must be fixed on and engaged in to secure the truth and interest of protestant religion among us; and this is no other but the effectual communication of the knowledge of it unto the minds, and the implantation of the power of it on the hearts of the people. This is that alone which will root out of them that enmity unto evangelical mysteries and spiritual things which betrays the souls of men into apostasy.

Unless men know what they are to value religion for, and what benefit they really receive by its profession, it is irrational to expect that they will be constant therein when a trial shall befall them. If once they come to say, "It is in vain thus to serve God," or, "What profit is it that we have kept his ordinances?" they will easily admit the yoke of any falsehood or superstition that pretends to gratify them with greater advantages. And at one time or other it will be no otherwise with them with whom this enmity is predominant.

But, on the other side, when God by the gospel "shines in the hearts of men, to give them the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ;" when they find their consciences set free thereby from the intolerable yokes of superstition and tradition; and that by the word of truth which they do profess they are begotten anew unto the hope of eternal life, their inward man being renewed and their lives reformed thereby; that their expectation of a blessed immortality is well founded on it and safely resolved into it, — they will, through the effectual supplies of the Spirit of Christ, abide constant in the profession of it, whatever may befall them. On these terms, on these experienced evidences of truth and goodness, was the gospel first entertained among men, and the reformation of religion first introduced into this nation; for although sundry other things concurred unto its reception and establishment, yet if the minds of multitudes had not received an experience of its power and efficacy unto the ends mentioned, it would never have been of any permanency among us. The mere outward form of true religion is not able to contend with that appearance which error and superstition will represent unto the minds of men, as knowing how much they stand in need thereof.

These things I know are by some despised. They suppose they have surer ways and better expedients for the preservation of the profession of the gospel amongst us than its own power and efficacy. What those ways are we need not conjecture, seeing themselves declare them continually; but they shall not be here spoken unto. But it is to be feared that they may be filled with the fruit of their own imaginations when those things shall fail them wherein they have placed their confidence. Wherefore, if there be a neglect about these things in the ministry and others whose duty it is to promote them, the issue will be sad, it may be beyond what is feared: for if the body of the people be suffered to live without any evidence of an acquaintance with the power of that truth which they do profess, or any demonstrative fruits of it in a holy conversation, we may cry out, "Popery, Popery," as long as we please; but when temptations, opportunities, and

interests do concur, their profession will fall from them as dry leaves from a tree when they are moved with the wind. The apostle tells us that those who "went out from them were not of them, for if they had been of them they would have continued with them," 1 John 2:19. They were among them by the profession of the truth, or they could not have gone out from them; — but they were "not of them" in the participation of the power of the truth, and "communion thereby with the Father and the Son;" for if they had, "they would have continued with them," — that is, steadfast in their profession. This is that which ought to be fixed on the minds of all persons concerned, of all that are zealous for the truth of the protestant religion, or are obliged, what lies in them, to provide for its preservation. When things are come unto the appointed season, when they are issuing in that period which they have a natural tendency unto, all other expedients and devices will be of none effect. A diligent communication unto the body of the people, through the dispensation of the word, or preaching of it, of the power of the truth they profess in all its blessed effects, — whereon they will have an experience and witness within themselves of the reasons why they ought to abide constantly in its profession, — will alone secure the continuance of the gospel in succeeding generations. All other means will be ineffectual unto that end; and so far as without this they are or may be effectual, it will be of no advantage unto the souls of men. That there is a danger at all times of a defection among professed Christians from the truth hath been before evinced. That this danger at present hath many especial circumstances rendering it dangerous in a peculiar manner is in like manner acknowledged by all such as call these things into serious consideration. And it will not, I presume, be denied but that every man, according as he is called and warranted by especial duty, is obliged to his utmost endeavors for the prevention of a revolt from the truth. The whole inquiry is, What is the best way, means, or expedient, to be plied unto this end? And this, I say, is only by the diligent ministerial dispensation of the word, with such an exemplary zeal and holiness in them by whom it is dispensed, and all other things requisite unto the discharge of that work, as may reconcile the hearts of the people unto evangelical truths, beget in them a delight in obedience, and implant the power of the word in their whole souls. Want hereof was that which lost the gospel in former ages, and will do so wherever it is, in this or those which are to come. And I shall not, in my own thoughts, blamably digress from my present subject, if I confirm this opinion with some few obvious considerations; for, —

It is the way, the only way, which God hath ordained, and which he blesseth to this end and purpose. None will pretend, as I suppose, that God hath appointed any other way to bring men unto the profession of the truth but by the preaching and dispensation of the word alone. When they are wrought upon or convinced thereby, so as to give up themselves unto the profession of it, it will be hard to find an ordinance of God of another kind for their preservation therein. When the apostle took his last farewell of them who were converted by his ministry at Ephesus, he "commended them to the word of God's grace, which," as he judged, "was able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among all them which are sanctified," Acts 20:32.

A man would think it were a more difficult work to convert men from Judaism or Paganism, or any false religion, unto the profession of the gospel, than to retain them in that profession when they are initiated thereinto: for in that first work there are all sorts of prejudices and difficulties to be conflicted withal, and not the least advantage from any acknowledged principles of truth; but as to the preservation of men in the profession of truth which they have received and owned, the work on many accounts seems to be more expedite and easy. If, therefore, the dispensation of the

word, as it is God's ordinance unto that end, hath been a sufficient and effectual means for the former, what reason can be assigned that it should not be so for the latter also, without farther force or violence?

It will be said that the first preachers of the gospel were furnished with extraordinary gifts, whereby their ministry was rendered effectual unto the first conversion of the nations; but whereas now those gifts do cease, the efficacy of the ministry doth so also, and therefore stands in need of such outward assistance as the former did not. I say, for my part, I wish it all the assistance which those unto whom it is committed can desire, so that no force be offered to the consciences or persons of other men. But why shall we not think that the ordinary gifts of the ministry are as sufficient for the ordinary work of it as the extraordinary were for that which was extraordinary? To speak the truth, the difference lieth in persons in the discharge of their duty, and not in the things, gifts, or duties themselves. Were all those who are called, or profess themselves to be called, unto the preservation of the truth of the gospel in the work of the ministry, as conscientiously diligent in the discharge of their duty, as well fitted, according to the rules of the gospel, with those ordinary spiritual gifts which are necessary unto their work and calling, did as fully represent the design and nature of their message unto men in a holy conversation, as those first appointed unto the conversion of the nations were and did, according to their larger measures of grace and gifts, the work would have a proportionate success in their hands unto what it had in the beginning. But whilst those unto whom this charge is committed do neglect the use of this means, which is the ordinance of God unto this purpose, that the truths of the gospel be preserved amongst men; whilst either they judge that the principal end of their office is to capacitate them for secular advantages, and to give them outward rest therein, with the enjoyment of those things which unto the most in this world seem desirable; and therewithal think meet to betake themselves unto other expedients for the preservation of the truth, which God hath not appointed nor sanctified to that end, — it is no wonder if faith and truth fail from amongst men. The apostle Paul foresaw that a time would come wherein some men would "not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts would heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears," who should "turn them away from the truth, and turn them unto fables," 2 Timothy 4:3-4; and we may see what course he prescribeth for the prevention of this evil, that it might not proceed unto a general apostasy. It must also be observed that the advice he gives in this case, though originally directed unto one individual person, who was immediately concerned, yet it lies in charge on all that are or shall be called unto the rule of or ministry in the church. This course he proposeth, 2 Timothy 4:1-2, 2 Timothy 4:5 : "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. Watch in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." This is that course and way which he prescribeth for the preservation of the truth against the corruptions of men's minds and the craft of seducers; and the charge of this duty he giveth with so great a solemnity, and urgeth with so many motives emphatically expressed, as manifest of how great moment he conceived it to be.

Perhaps this way of the preservation of the truth and the salvation of the souls of men, by continual laboring in the word and doctrine, with an undergoing of all those difficulties which attend it, is not esteemed so advisable as formerly; for what good would men's lives or preferments do unto them if they should be obliged thus to labor in this sweaty kind of preaching? But if it be so,

they must at one time or another be contented to part with the truth and all the advantages they have by the profession of it; for let men turn themselves which way they please, let them traverse their methods and multiply their counsels, to secure religion according to their apprehension, however they may hereby chain their idols, as the heathens did their gods of old to prevent their departure from them, and fix a profession of lies, the truth of the gospel, as unto any useful end of it, will be no otherwise preserved in a nation, church, or people, but by this means of God's appointment.

This is such a way and expedient for the preservation of the truth and the profession of the gospel as none can have the impudence to complain of or except against. There is in all places, among all sorts of persons, a pretense of zeal for the retaining of what they conceive to be the truth or right in religion. But the ways which, for the most part, they have chosen unto that purpose have been full of scandal unto Christian religion; so far from being rational means of preserving men in it as that they are effectual to deter them from it. Such is that outward force which hath been now tried in this nation, as elsewhere by all sorts of persons; and wise men may easily observe what it is arrived unto. In the meantime, it is openly evident that, let the end aimed at be never so good, the means used for the attaining of it are accompanied with much evil. What peace or satisfaction they have in themselves who are the prosecutors of this way I know not. It is above my understanding to apprehend that the minds of any Christians can be thoroughly at ease, rejoicing in God through Jesus Christ, whilst they cause others to be terrified, pursued, ruined, and destroyed, merely for that which is their faith and hope in Christ Jesus. But I know not the principles of the minds of other men, the make or constitution of their consciences, nor the rules of their walking before God, much less their prevailing prejudices and interests, that influence them beyond all evidence of reason to the contrary; and therefore they may have a satisfactory peace in this way, though I understand not how. On the other side, those who are practiced upon and forced to suffer in this course of proceeding are filled with alienation from them and their profession by whom they suffer. Hence it is known what mutual animosities, hatreds, contentions, severe reflections, and dreadful scandals, this way is attended withal. We see at this day what clamors and contests are raised about it, what pleas are managed against such procedures, how uncouth it is unto human nature to suffer all extremities for that which men are fully persuaded they deserve well in of mankind; nor can any man give assurance but that, at one time or other, the wheat shall be plucked up instead of tares.

But as to the way now proposed, of preserving the truth by the diligent, effectual dispensation of the word of the gospel unto the generality of the people, who can pretend a provocation by it or take offense at it? No mortal man will be prejudiced by it in any thing that he dares own a concernment in. The devil, indeed, will be enraged at it, not only as that which is designed unto the ruin of his interest and kingdom in the issue, but as that wherein he hath no share, nor can interpose his endeavors; for he is a spirit as restless and active as he is malicious, and loves not to be excluded out of any business that is on foot in the world. Wherefore, although he equally hates the truth in the management of all men, yet in the way of preserving of it before mentioned he can and doth so apparently immix himself and his effectual workings that he is very well satisfied with it; for what he may possibly lose on the one hand in point of truth, he gains ten times more on the other in the loss of love, peace, holiness, with all the fruits of goodness, meekness, and benignity, which ought to be among men. And let him have but his hand effectually in the promotion of this

loss, and have the contrary fruits to feed upon, he is little concerned with the profession of truth in this or that way of worship amongst men. Be it, therefore, that he is or will be enraged at this way of preserving the truth, we know that the kingdom of Christ will be no otherwise maintained in the world but by a conquest of his rage; and for those who manage the same design with him, their wrath and envy, which they dare not manifest, will but torment and consume themselves.

Setting aside some few instances of violence and blood, consuming the persons of men, as among the Waldenses, Bohemians, and some others, which yet were never totally prevalent, and revolutions of government attended with the like cruelties, as in the days of Queen Mary in England, which was but of short continuance, no instance can be given of the defection of any church or nation from the truth but where there was a neglect of implanting the power of the gospel on the minds and hearts of men by those unto whom that charge was committed. This sinful neglect was that which constantly opened the door unto all apostasy. Wherefore on this foundation the weight of all useful profession of the gospel among us doth depend. And if God will be pleased to put it into the hearts of all them who are concerned in this duty to labor effectually therein, and to give unto the people an example of the power of the gospel in their own holy, humble, useful, fruitful conversation among them, and shall be pleased, moreover, to furnish them with the gifts of his Spirit, enabling them unto a successful discharge of their duty, evangelical truth would certainly receive an unconquerable establishment among us. And it may be it is not suited unto the exigence of this season that any of those who are called and enabled unto this work, being willing to engage their utmost in defense of the truth, especially in this way of its preservation, by leavening the minds of men with a sense of its power and worth, should be prohibited the discharge of their duty. But the purposes of God in all things must stand, and himself be humbly adored, where "his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out."

Again: this innate and yet uncured enmity unto things spiritual and heavenly becomes a cause and means of apostasy from the truths of the gospel, by filling the hearts of men with a love of sin, and their lives with the fruits of it in wicked works; for men are "alienated and enemies in their mind," in or "by wicked works," Colossians 1:21. The enmity which is in their minds doth operate and manifest itself in wicked works. And the alienation wherewith this enmity is accompanied is from the "life of God:" Ephesians 4:18, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God;" that is, from the spiritual, heavenly life of faith and holiness, which God requireth, and whereof he is the end and object. Of this life the truths of the gospel are the spring, rule, and measure. See Acts 5:20; Ephesians 4:20-21. Wherefore, when men are "alienated from the life of God," and through the love of sin are given up unto wicked works, they cannot but secretly dislike and hate that truth, that spiritual and heavenly doctrine, which is the spring and rule of holiness, and whereby both the love of sin and the fruits of it in wicked works are everlastingly condemned. Let, then, men pretend and profess what they please, whilst this enmity is in them as a predominant principle of sin and wicked conversation, they are practically and really enemies unto the gospel itself; and where any persons are so, it is easily imaginable how ready and prone they will be to part with it on any occasion, for none will retain that in their minds which is useless to them, and troublesome unto their principal inclinations, any longer than they have a fair opportunity to part with it. That this frame of mind is an effectual obstruction unto the due receiving of the gospel, our Savior expressly declares: John 3:19-20, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For

every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." Wherever the power of sin abideth, and men are engaged in the practice of it, so as that their deeds are evil, they will not receive the light of the gospel, — that is, in its own nature and power, and for its proper ends; and when they are, by conviction or any other means, wrought unto a compliance with it, yet they do it but partially and hypocritically, nor can do it otherwise whilst their deeds are evil. So was it with them who are said to believe in Christ. Being some way convinced of the truth of his doctrine, yet would they not confess him, because "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God," John 12:42-43. By the reigning power of this one sin of ambitious hypocrisy most of them were kept off from any assent unto the gospel; as our Savior speaks unto them, "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" John 5:44. With the residue, who were not able wholly to withstand their convictions, it prevailed so far as that they should not receive it sincerely, but partially and hypocritically. Now, that which so effectually keeps the most from giving any admission at all unto the gospel, and which suffers none to receive it in a due manner, will easily prevail, where it abides in its power, unto a total relinquishment of it when occasion is offered.

Seeing, therefore, that all those whose deeds are evil, who through the enmity that is in their minds do give up themselves in their lives unto wicked works, are really alienated from the truths of the gospel, they are and will be ready at all times for a defection from them; for being kept under the dominion of sin, they have no real benefit by them, but rather find them inconsistent with their principal interests and chiefest joys.

Hence is that description which the apostle giveth of those who were evangelically converted unto God: Romans 6:17-18, "God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." There is no obedience from the heart unto the gospel, no possibility of being cast into the mould of the doctrine delivered in it, unless we be made free from the service of sin.

We may therefore, without scruple, fix [on] this as one principal means and cause of that apostasy from the truth of the gospel which hath been in the world, and which is yet deplorably progressive. Men who love sin and live in sin, whose works are wicked and whose deeds are evil, are all of them in their hearts alienated from the spiritual, holy doctrines of the gospel, and will undoubtedly, on any occasion of temptation or trial, fall away from the profession of them.

What reason have we to hope or judge that drunkards, swearers, unclean persons, covetous, proud, ambitious, boasters, vain, sensualists, and the like enemies of the cross of Christ, should adhere unto the truth with any constancy if a trial should befall them? "Look diligently," saith the apostle, "lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright," Hebrews 12:15-16. Esau's birthright was his right unto and interest in the promise of the gospel made unto Abraham. This he, being a profane person, when he was pressed with a little hunger, parted withal for one morsel of meat. And if others, saith the apostle, are like him, profane persons, fornicators, or such as live in any course of sin, if a temptation befall them, and their lusts call to be satisfied, they will for morsels of bread, for the smallest earthly advantages, part with their interest in and profession of the gospel. So he tells us of them who, having put away a good conscience, did make shipwreck of the faith, 1 Timothy 1:19. After men have debauched

their consciences by living in sin, they may for a while speed on their voyage with full sails of profession; but if a storm come, if a trial befall them, if they meet with a rock or shelf in their way, they quickly make shipwreck of the faith, and lose that, whatever else they labor to preserve.

What should secure such persons unto any constancy in profession for whilst they are in this condition, it is altogether indifferent unto them, as to their present or future advantage, what religion they are of, or whether they are of any at all or no. It is true, one way of religion may more harden them in sin, lay more prejudices against and hinderances of their conversion, than another; but no religion can do them good or yield them the least eternal advantage whilst they abide in that condition. It will be all one at the last day what religion wicked and ungodly sinners have been of, unless it be that the profession of the truth will prove an aggravation of their sins, Romans 2:11-12.

Besides, when a temptation unto the relinquishment of the truth doth befall them, it hath nothing but a few traditional prejudices to contend withal. When they are taken off from them, and begin to search themselves for reasons why they should adhere unto the truth which they have outwardly professed, they quickly find in their own hearts a predominant dislike and hatred of that light and truth which they are solicited to part withal; for every man, as our Savior testifieth, hateth the light whose deeds are evil. This is that which abroad in the world hath lost the gospel so many princes, nobles, and great men, who for a while made profession of it. This is that which is of such dismal abode at this day as to the danger of a general apostasy. All sorts of persons do give up themselves unto the service of sin. The complaint of the prophet is not unsuited to our occasion, Isaiah 1:4-6. Many are openly flagitious, beyond precedent or example among the heathen. Worldliness, pride, ambition, vanity, in all its variety of occasions and objects, with sensuality of life, have even overrun the world. And that which is of the most dreadful consideration is, that the sins of many are accompanied with the highest aggravation of all provocations, — namely, that they proclaim them like Sodom, and hide them not, but glory in their shame. In all these things men do really, though not in words, proclaim that they are weary of the gospel, and are ready to leave it; some for any pretense of religion, some for none at all. And this is the most dangerous posture that any place, church, or people can be found in; for whereas men are of themselves ready and prone unto a spiritual revolt and defection, when this ariseth from and is promoted by the love of sin and a life therein, God is ready also penally to give them up unto such delusions as shall turn them off from the gospel. So the apostle expresseth it, 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, "They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Where men, under the profession of the truth, will continue profligate in sin, and take pleasure in unrighteousness, God will not always suffer the gospel to be prostituted to give them countenance in their wickedness, but will judiciously give them up unto such delusions as shall flood them away into an open apostasy from it. This was the great cause of that general and almost catholic apostasy that was in the world before the reformation. The body of the Christian people, by such means and on such occasions as shall be afterward declared, were grown worldly, sensual, wicked, and obstinate in sin. The complaints hereof are left on record in the writings of many in those days. And in vain it was for any to attempt to reduce them unto a conformity unto the gospel, especially considering that the most of their guides were no less infected than themselves. Chrysostom was almost the only person, at least he was the most eminent, who set himself in his ministry to stem, if it were possible, the rising tide of impiety

and wickedness among all sorts of persons; but instead of any success, his holy endeavors ended in his own banishment and death. All degrees and orders of men undertook the patronage of public sinning against him, and to his ruin. Wherefore there remained but two ways of dealing with the generality of men in such a condition. The one was, according to the advice of the apostle, to "turn away" or withdraw from them, 2 Timothy 3:5, so leaving them out of the communion of the church; the other was, to accommodate religion unto their temper and lusts, whereby a face and appearance of Christianity might be preserved among them. And the generality of their leaders preferring their interest before their duty, the latter way was chosen and gradually promoted.

Hence were opinions and practices invented, advanced, and taken into religion, that might accommodate men in their lusts, or give countenance and pretended relief unto them who were resolved to live in their sins. Such were auricular confession, penances, absolutions, commutations of all sorts, missatical sacrifices for the living and the dead, the church's treasury of merit and power of pardon, suffrage and help of saints, especially purgatory, with all its appendages.

Hereby was the apostasy completed; for men being grown carnal and wicked, there appeared no way to keep them up unto the profession of the gospel but by corrupting the whole doctrine and worship of it, that their lusts might be some way accommodated. To this end external things were substituted in the room of things internal, having the same names given unto them; ecclesiastical things in the room of things spiritual; outward offices, orders, and multiplied sacraments, with their efficacy by virtue of the work wrought, in the place of real conversion unto God, purity of heart, with strict universal holiness; disciplines and corporeal severities in the room of evangelical repentance and mortification; — nor could the lusts of men have possibly a higher accommodation, whilst any pretense of religion was necessary to be preserved. So formerly did wickedness of life lead the way unto apostasy from the truth. And the whole of the papal apostasy may be reduced unto these two heads: — First, An accommodation of the doctrine and worship of the gospel unto the carnal minds and lusts of men, with the state of their consciences that ensued thereon; and, secondly, The accommodation of the lusts, ignorance, and superstition of men unto the interests and worldly advantage of the pope and his clergy. And herein lieth the danger of this age. The great design of the generality of men is, to live in sin with as little trouble at present, and as little fear of what is future, as they can arrive unto. And there are but two ways whereby such a posture of mind may be attempted. The one is by obliterating all notions of good and evil, all sense of future rewards and punishments, or of God's government in the world. This some in all ages have endeavored: for "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God;" and thereon are "they corrupt, and do abominable works," Psalms 14:1. And no age could ever give more instances of this affected atheism than that wherein we live. Neither do any deceive themselves into it, but merely with this design, to live in sin without control from themselves; which is the last restraint they can acquit themselves of. And some of them do please themselves with the attainment of them in the psalmist: "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts," Psalms 10:4. But God hath inlaid the minds of men, antecedently unto all actings of their wills and affections, with such a tenacious and unanswerable witness to the contrary, that it is very difficult for any to bring themselves unto any tolerable satisfaction this way: for "that which may be known of God is manifest in themselves," whether they will or no, Romans 1:19; neither can they free themselves from prevailing apprehensions that it is "the judgment of

God, that they who commit sin are worthy of death," Romans 1:32. Wherefore we have not many instances of men who pretend a senselessness of these things out of principle, or that find no disquietment on the account of sin. And by the most of them this is but pretended. Their outward boasting is but a sorry plaster for their inward fears and vexations; nor will the pretended security of such impious persons endure the shock of the least of those surprisals, calamities, and dangers, which human nature is obnoxious unto in this life, much less of death itself. The end therefore mentioned, be it never so earnestly desired, is not this way to be attained.

Another way, therefore, must be found out unto the same end, and this must be by a religion. Nothing but religion can convert men from sin, and nothing but religion can secure them therein. To this purpose is that of our apostle: "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," 2 Timothy 3:1-5. Had they the power of religion in them, they could not give themselves up unto the pursuit of such brutish lusts; and had they not some form or other of it, they could not be secure in their practice: for, —

Sin and conscience are stubborn in their conflict whilst immediately opposed, conscience pleading that there should be no sin, and sin contending that there may be no conscience; but, as nature is corrupted, they will both comply with an accommodation. Wherefore a device to satisfy sin and to deceive conscience will not fail of a ready entertainment; and this is the design in part or in whole of every false way in religion that men apostatize unto from the purity and simplicity of the gospel. See 2 Peter 2:18-19. One way or other is proposed to take men off from the necessity of regeneration and the renovation of their nature into the image of God, in the first place; for this is that lion in the way which deters all sorts of sluggards from attempting any thing seriously in religion. And whereas our Lord Jesus Christ hath placed the necessity of it at the first entrance into the kingdom of God, there is no false way of religion but its first design is to destroy its nature or take away its necessity. Hence some would have it to be only baptism, with the grace it confers by the work wrought; some substitute a moral reformation of life in the room of it, which, as they suppose, is sufficiently severe; and the light within makes all thoughts of it useless; — for if this point be not well secured, all ensuing attempts to accommodate men with a religion will be in vain; it will still be returning on them, that "except they be born again, they cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Internal sanctification of the whole person, the mortification of all the motions of sin that are in the flesh, with that universal obedience which is required unto the life of God, must also be provided for or against, and yet conscience be satisfied therewithal. Wherefore, if you can obtain that persons who live in sin, and are resolved so to do, not troubling themselves about these things, shall suppose that they may be secured eternally in such a way of religion as you propose unto them, — that what is wanting in themselves shall be done for them by absolutions and masses, and various supplies out of the church's treasury, with the great reserve of purgatory when things come to the worst, — there is no great fear (especially if some other circumstances fall in also to promote the design) but that you will find them very ductile and pliable unto your desires. Add hereunto, that the ways whereby any may be interested in these efficacious means of eternal salvation, — namely, by confession, penances, and alms, — are possible, yea, easy to

persons who never intend to leave their sins. Of this sort are the most of those visibly who every day fall off to the Roman church. And it were to be desired that the wickedness of men did not give grounds of fearing additions to their number; for if there be no assurance of the constancy of men in the profession of the truth, unless their souls and lives are transformed into the image of it (as there is not), certainly those ways wherein men are furiously engaged in the pursuit of their lusts must needs be perilous, and may, without the especial help of divine grace, bring forth a fatal defection.

## 03A.05. CHAPTER 5.

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### CHAPTER 5.

#### DARKNESS AND IGNORANCE ANOTHER CAUSE OF APOSTASY.

THE second spring or cause of defection from the gospel in any kind, is that spiritual darkness and ignorance which abides in the minds of men under the profession of the truth. The gospel may fall under a double consideration: First, Of the things themselves that are contained, revealed, and proposed therein; — these are the material objects of our faith. Secondly, With respect unto the doctrinal way of their declaration. With respect unto the first, there is a spiritual darkness on the minds of all men by nature, so as that they cannot discern them in their own native form and beauty. With respect unto the latter, men are said to be ignorant, namely, when they do not in a due manner understand and comprehend the doctrines of the gospel, and so perish for want of knowledge. These things being of a distinct consideration, and of different influence into this pernicious event, the first shall be first spoken unto.

That there is such a spiritual darkness on the minds of men by nature, and wherein their depravation by sin cloth principally consist, is fully testified in the Scripture, as I have at large elsewhere evinced. Hence all men grant, so far as I know, that there is need of spiritual illumination to enable us to discern spiritual things in a due manner, though all are not agreed in the nature and causes of that illumination. But to deny the thing itself is to deny the gospel, and to make the promises of God of none effect. Now, where illumination is needful, there darkness is to be removed; for the end of the bringing in of light is to dispel darkness. Wherefore, such a depravation of the minds of men in spiritual darkness must be acknowledged, or the gift and grace of God in illumination must be rejected; and they by whom it is done do by their own blindness give new evidence unto the truth which they do oppose, there being no more certain demonstration of the power of darkness in any than for them to affirm that they stand in no need of light to be communicated unto them by the effectual operation of the Spirit of God. As to the nature of this illumination I shall not here dispute, but take it at present for granted that it is an act of His power who of old "commanded light to shine out of darkness, shining in our hearts, to give us the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Corinthians 4:6.

There is a glory and beauty in those spiritual things which are the subjects of the truths of the gospel. There is in them the wisdom of God, "the wisdom of God in a mystery,"

1 Corinthians 2:6-7, yea, "the manifold wisdom of God," Ephesians 3:10; the glory of the Lord, which is represented unto believers in the glass of the gospel, 2 Corinthians 3:18, or "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Corinthians 4:6; — things expressly beyond discovery by the use of any means whatever merely natural, 1 Corinthians 2:9-10. Even the philosophers of old contended that there was a beauty in all truth, which would engage the minds and affections of men unto it were they able to discern it; and if they saw and granted this in things natural and moral, which are earthly and exposed unto the common reason of mankind, how much more must

it be granted of the truth of things heavenly, spiritual, and divine! See John 3:12. In brief, whatever there is of divine glory or excellency in the divine nature itself, in any or all of its holy properties, in the great and most glorious effect of them in the person and grace of Christ, in the renovation of our nature into the image of God, in the divine life of faith and obedience, it is proposed unto us in the truths of the gospel.

Whatever doctrinal proposition may be made of these things unto the minds of men, yet the things themselves cannot be comprehended nor spiritually discerned without the illumination of the Holy Ghost before mentioned. Hence it follows that men may be instructed in the doctrines of truth, yet, continuing under the power of natural darkness, not discern the things themselves in their own spiritual nature and glory, nor have any experience of their power and efficacy. This all the prayers of holy men in the Scripture for spiritual light and instruction, all the promises of God savingly to enlighten the minds of men, and the descriptions given of that work of his grace whereby he doth effect it, do undeniably evince. One consideration will be sufficient unto our purpose. Whosoever hath a spiritual view and knowledge of these things, his mind will be, and is, certainly changed and transformed into the image of them. So the apostle tells us expressly, 2 Corinthians 3:18, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." They are cast into the same mould with the doctrine whereunto they are given up, Romans 6:17. The mind is united unto the things so discerned, and the image of them is so brought forth therein as that there is an exact conformity between them. But we see by open and palpable experience, that notwithstanding the knowledge which many have of spiritual things, their minds continue carnal and fleshly, filled with corrupt and depraved affections, and are no way changed into the image or likeness of the things themselves. There needs no farther demonstration that men have never had a spiritual view of or insight into the glory of gospel truths, be their doctrinal knowledge of them what it will, than this, that their minds are not renewed thereby, nor transformed into the likeness of them.

Where it is thus with men, they have no stable grounds whereon to abide in the profession of the truth against temptation, opposition, or seduction; for their steadfastness must be an effect of such an assurance in their minds of the truth of the things which they do believe, as will be prevalent against all that force and artifice wherewith they may be assaulted, and such as will not suffer their own minds to be indifferent, careless, or negligent about them. But whence should this arise? Assurance from outward natural sense in spiritual things we are not capable of, nor are they evidenced unto our minds by rational demonstration. All the full persuasion or assurance we can have of them, which will be prevalent against temptations and oppositions, ariseth from such a spiritual view of them as gives an experience of their reality, power, and efficacy upon our minds: and this respects both the renovation of the mind itself in light and faith; the adhesion of the will unto the things known and believed, with a holy, heavenly, unconquerable love; and the constant approbation of the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God in all things. Hence this assurance, though it be neither that of sense nor that of reason, yet in the Scripture is compared with them and preferred above them, as that which giveth the mind a more certain satisfaction than they can do, although it be of another kind. And without this it is impossible that men should attain any such evidence or full persuasion of that evangelical truth which they may profess, as to secure them in their profession in such a juncture of circumstances and occasions as they may fall into.

Here, therefore, I place another means and cause of apostasy from the truth of the gospel after it hath been received and professed. Multitudes in all ages have been instructed in the truth, some have been learned and knowing in the doctrines of it; but whereas, by reason of their darkness, as being destitute of spiritual illumination, they did not discern the things themselves which they assented unto, in their supernatural, heavenly nature and glory, and therefore had no experience of their proper power and efficacy on their own minds, affections, and lives, they could not have any such evidence of their truth as would upon trials confirm their adherence unto them or secure them from apostasy. Had the minds of men been transformed in their renovation to "prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," — had they by beholding of spiritual things "been changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord," — they would not have abandoned the most important doctrines of the gospel, as we know them to have done, nor have embraced foolish imaginations in their stead, on every plausible courtship and address unto their fancies. How came men under the papal apostasy gradually to desert the principal truths of the gospel and all the spiritual glory of its worship? Not discerning the internal glory and beauty of things evangelical and purely divine, not having an experience of the power of them in and upon their own minds, they chose to comply with, and give admission unto, such things whose outward painted beauty they could discern, and whose effects on their natural and carnal affections they had experience of.

We have seen, in all ages, men learned and skilled in the doctrines of the truth, so as that they might have been looked on as pillars of it, yet to have been as forward as any unto apostasy from it when they have been tried; yea, such have been the leaders of others thereinto. So many of this sort fell into Arianism and Pelagianism of old, as some have done into Socinianism, and many into Popery in our days. When such fall away, usually they overthrow the faith of some, and shake the confidence of others. But the apostle gives a double relief against this temptation: — first, The stability of God's purpose in the preservation of the elect; and, secondly, The means of preservation in holiness of them that believe, 2 Timothy 2:19. And we may be assured concerning them all, that they never had that intuition into nor comprehension of spiritual things which alone could secure their stability. They never saw so much or that in them for which they should be preferred above all other things. No man who forsakes the truth ever saw the glory of it, or had experience of its power. "They went out from us, but they were not of us," saith the apostle of such persons; "for if they had been of us" (whose fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ), "they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us," 1 John 2:19.

Thus when the apostle had described the woeful apostasy of some among the Hebrews, he adds concerning them whose preservation he believed, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation," Hebrews 6:9. Whatever knowledge men may have of the doctrines of the gospel, and whatever profession they may make, unless they have withal those things which are inseparable from salvation, such as is the saving illumination of the Holy Ghost, whereby the darkness of our minds is removed, there can be no assurance that they will always "quit themselves like men," and "stand fast in the faith." And this consideration doth not a little evidence the danger of a defection from the truth which attends the days wherein we live.

For, first, it is from hence that we have such a numerous generation of sceptics in religion among us, — a sort of men who pretend not to renounce or forsake the truth, only they will talk and

dispute about it with the greatest indifferency as to what is true or false. The Scripture, the holy Trinity, the person of Christ, his offices, the nature of justification and grace, whether it be or be not, this or that church, all or any in the world, as to their profession and worship, are weighed in the defiled, tottering scales of bold, irreverent discourses. For some reasons known to themselves, this sort of persons will own the public profession of religion, perhaps be teachers in it. But on all occasions they fully manifest that they are utterly ignorant of the fundamental difference between truth and error, and so give no firm assent unto what they do profess; for this difference lieth in their glory and beauty in themselves, and in their power and efficacy towards us. Spiritual, heavenly truth, by its relation unto the being, infinite wisdom, goodness, love, and grace of God, by the characters of all these things impressed on it and represented by it, is glorious, amiable, and desirable; — all error, as an effect of darkness, and by its relation unto Satan as the head of the apostasy which drew off our minds from the original essential Truth, is distorted, deformed, and brings the mind into confusion. Truth is powerful and effectual to conform the soul unto God, and to principle it with a love of and power unto obedience; — error turns the mind aside into crooked and by paths of folly or superstition, or pride and self-advancement. Were men practically acquainted with this difference between truth and error, it would take away that indifferency in their minds unto them which this skeptical humor doth discover. Truth so known in its nature and efficacy will beget that reverence, that love, that sacred esteem of itself, in the souls of men, as they shall not dare to prostitute it to be bandied up and down with every foolish imagination. And from this sort of men, who are commonly the most bold and forward in undertaking the conduct of others, by a pretended generous contempt of their narrow principles, groundless scruples, and pusillanimous fears, nothing is to be expected but a wise and safe compliance with any ways or means of apostasy from the truth which shall be advantageously presented unto them. And by the means of this darkness, it is easy to conceive how uncertain and unstable the minds of the generality of men, who perhaps also are somewhat ignorant (whereof we shall treat afterward), must needs be in their assent unto the truth and the profession of it, They are no way able to discover it in such a way or manner as to give them an assurance which will be infallibly victorious against temptations and oppositions; nor can they have that holy love unto it which will secure their minds and affections from being enticed and ravished from it. But, all the difference between truth and error which they can discern lying in bare different notions and apprehensions, wherein also they are dark and unskilled, it is no wonder if at any time they make an easy transcurion from the one to the other. So did the body of the people lose the truth gradually under the papal defection without any great complaint, yea, with much complacency and satisfaction; and it is to be feared that multitudes are ready at once to steer the same course if occasion be offered unto them. From this consideration we may rectify the seeming solecism that is in the profession of religion, or the professors of it. Truth in every kind is the only guide of the mind in all its actings; wherein it proceeds not according unto it, it is always out of the way. Divine truth is the sole conduct of the mind in all its actings towards God; it is the only fountain, immediate cause, and rule of all our obedience. But yet, whereas in other things men generally walk in the light of those sparks of truth which they have received, we see that many by whom divine truth is owned and professed in its greatest purity and highest discovery are oftentimes no less wicked and vicious in their lives, no less enemies unto holiness, no less barren and unfruitful in those good and useful works it guides and directs unto, than those who, having the greatest aversation from it, are, under the conduct of other principles, erroneous and superstitious. Thus the lives of the common sort of Protestants are

no better than those of the Papists, nor are theirs to be compared with those of some of the Mohammedans; yea, by the power of false and superstitious apprehensions imposed on their minds and consciences, some are carried out unto greater and more frequent acts of bounty and charity, of the mortification of the flesh, the denial of its sensual appetites and satisfactions, than are to be found among the most who profess themselves to be under the conduct and rule of truth. Hence no profession of religion, be it never so corrupt or foolish, is advanced amongst us, but instantly (at least for a season, and while it is new) it pretends an advantage as unto life and conversation against the truth, measured by the lives of its common professors; yea, this is made the principal motive and argument to prevail with honest and well-meaning people unto a compliance with the profession of their way, because of the effects which (as it is pretended) it produceth in their lives and conversations above those which profess the truth. And how prevalent this pretense hath been among us is known unto all.

Wherefore, I say, we cannot allow that the lives of the common sort of professors should be esteemed a just and due representation of the doctrine which they do profess. It is true, that where it is not so men will have no benefit by their profession, nor will they be steadfast in it when a trial shall befall them. Where the mind is internally and really conformed unto the truth, there the actions of the life may be allowed to represent sincerely, though not perfectly, the truths which are believed; and he is no firm Christian in any kind, he is brought into no spiritual order, whose mind doth not receive by the Spirit of Christ the transforming influence of evangelical truth, and who exerts not the power of it in a holy conversation, so as that he is not unwilling that what he believeth may be impartially judged by what he liveth, as to sincerity, though not as to perfection. But if we should allow the lives of men in general to be a rule whereby judgment might be safely passed in these things, it cannot be denied but that sometimes, and in some ages and places, error would, at least for a season, carry it in glory and reputation from the truth, yea, the light of nature from grace, tradition from the Scripture, and the Alcoran from the Gospel. But we have sufficient ground of exceptions unto this interpretation and exposition of the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that without the least apology for the ungodly lives of its professors. Among these, that now insisted on is of the first rank and evidence. Multitudes of those who profess the truth never had a view of its spiritual glory because of the darkness of their minds, and therefore have no experience of its power and efficacy, nor are their hearts and lives influenced or guided by it; for the gospel will not have its effects on the minds of men unless it first communicates unto them those internal spiritual principles which are necessary unto all the operations that it doth require. Put this new wine into old bottles and all is lost, both bottles and wine also. The doctrine of the gospel, taken notionally into the old, unrenewed, corrupt minds of men, is utterly lost as unto all the proper ends of it. And wherever there is a reformation of life, with any diligent attendance unto duties moral or religious, wrought in persons by the light and dispensation of the gospel, they are the immediate effects of those doctrines which it hath in common with the light of nature and the law in its power, and not of those which are peculiarly its own. And this they seem to understand well enough who, finding, either in their own experience, or from the observation they have made of others, how ineffectual the truth of gospel mysteries is towards the minds of carnal men, have upon the matter abandoned the preaching of it, and have taken up only with those principles which are suited unto the light of nature and convictions of the law. The holiness which the gospel requireth is the transforming of our whole souls into the image and likeness of God, with the actings of renewed nature in a universal approbation of his "good, and acceptable, and

perfect will," Romans 12:2. But this will not be effected unless we can "behold the glory of the Lord" in it, whereby alone we may be "changed into the same image from glory to glory," 2 Corinthians 3:18. Nor can we so behold that glory unless he "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness do shine in our hearts to give us the knowledge of it," 2 Corinthians 4:6. Hence is the doctrine of it ineffectual in the hearts and upon the lives of many by whom its truth is openly professed.

It is otherwise with every false religion. The motives which they make use of, and the instruments they apply, unto the hearts of men, to effect the reformation of their lives, and to engage them unto such works and duties as they require, are all of them suited either unto their natural light, or unto their superstitions, fears, desires, pride, and other depraved affections. Those of the first sort, — namely, such as are suited unto natural light, — are common, in some degree or measure, unto all religion whatever, be it on other accounts true or false. Every thing that is called religion pretends at least unto the improvement of natural light, as did the philosophers among the heathen of old. It urgeth also the law so far as it is made known unto them, though by other presumptions and prejudices some do abate and take off from its force and efficacy, making void the commandments of God through their own traditions. Whatever change is wrought or effected on the minds and lives of men by virtue of these principles, and motives taken from them, doth not belong unto any one way in religion more than another; nor is it to be accounted unto the glory or advantage of any of them. In these things Mohammedanism and all false ways in Christianity have an equal share and interest, unless where, by some corrupt opinions of their own, men deprave the light of nature and the rule of the law itself.

Some finding, as they say, more of justice, temperance, veracity, righteousness in dealings, with common usefulness unto mankind, among Turks and Banians, than among the common sort of Christians, do foolishly begin to think that their religion is better than Christianity. But as this scandal will be surely required at the hands of them who give it by their flagitious lives, so it is foolishly and wickedly taken by others; for those truths and laws which produce these effects in them are common unto all religions, and are equally suited unto the light and reason of all mankind, and have more evidence and efficacy communicated unto them by the gospel than by any other kind of religion whatever. And so it is with them among ourselves who would plead an advantage unto their profession by the effects of it in their lives as to a moral conversation, when they can pretend unto no real motive thereunto, — namely, unto what is good and useful, and not mere affectation and hypocrisy, — but what is owned and pressed in the doctrine of the gospel which we adhere unto. The differences, therefore, that are in this kind are not from the doctrines men profess, but they arise from the persons themselves who embrace them, with their various lusts, inclinations, and temptations.

It is evident, therefore, that whatever there is of moral good, duty, or usefulness among men in any false way of religion, it all proceeds from those principles and is the effect of those motives which are owned and improved in that which is true; and it may be easily evinced that they are more cultivated and cleared, have more evidence, life, light, and power given them, by the truths of the gospel, than by any other means or way whatever. And where they have not an equal effect upon those who profess that truth which they have on some by whom it is deserted, it is from the power of their own cursed lusts and carnal security. The difference on the part of religion itself consists in what is superadded unto these general principles by any notions of it. Now this, in every false

religion, is what is suited unto the natural principles of men's minds, their innate pride, vanity, curiosity, superstition, irregular hopes and fears. Such among the Romanists are the doctrines of merit, of outward disciplines, of satisfactions for sin, of confession, penances, of purgatory, and the like. They were all of them found out to put some awe on the minds, and to have some influence on the lives of men, who had lost all sense of the principles and motives of gospel obedience, though some considerable respect was had unto the benefit and advantage of them by whom they were invented; for why should men labor and beat their brains merely for others, without some income and revenue of advantage unto themselves? And it is no wonder if they produce in many, as they have done, great appearing acts of devotion, many outward works of bounty and charity, yea, in some, real austerities of life and renunciations of the pleasures of the world. I doubt not but that the sensual, wicked paradise of Mohammed doth effectually prevail in the minds of many of his followers unto that kind of virtuous and devout life which they suppose may bring them unto its enjoyment. The inquiry, then, on the whole matter is, wherefore the truths of the gospel do not produce, in all by whom they are professed, effects as much more excellent than those mentioned as truth is more excellent than error, heavenly light than superstition, faith than frightful apprehensions of feigned torments, true peace and tranquility of mind than outward reputation and glory. And the principal reason hereof is, because such persons as are barren in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ do not discern those truths in their spiritual nature, nor can therefore take in the power and efficacy of them on their souls.

There is a holiness, obedience, and fruitfulness in good works, wrought, preserved, and maintained by the truth of the gospel, in them who are truly regenerated and sanctified thereby, who receive the proper efficacy of it on their minds and souls, which differ in the whole kind and nature from any thing which the principles and motives before mentioned, which have their efficacy from their suitableness unto the depraved affections of men's minds, can produce; and this alone is acceptable with God. But it must be granted, that where men are ignorant of the power made unacquainted with the internal efficacy of the gospel, their lives under the profession of the truth may be as bad, and it is a great wonder they are not worse than those of the Papists, of the most erroneous persons, or even of the Mohammedans themselves: for they have many superstitious imaginations and false principles that are suited to put some outward restraint upon their lusts, and to press them unto actions praiseworthy in themselves; but these being no way influenced by such apprehensions, and being not under the power of gospel truth, it is a wonder, I say, if they exceed them not in all manner of wicked conversation. It is not merely the outward profession of the truth, but the inward power of it, that is useful either unto the world or the souls of men. And hence it is that the preaching of any person which principally dwelleth on and argueth from the things which the light of nature can of itself reach unto, and the convictions which are by the law, is better accepted with, and appears more useful unto, multitudes of common professors, than the declaration of the mysteries of the gospel is: for such things are suited unto the natural conceptions of men and the working of their own reason, which gives them a sense of what efficacy they have; but being in the dark unto the mysteries of the gospel, they neither see their excellency nor experience their power. Nevertheless, they and they only are the true spring, cause, and rule of all acceptable obedience, even "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." From the whole it appears how prone such persons must be unto an apostasy from the truth who have no spiritual light to discern its glory nor to let in the power of it upon their souls.

If, then, we would be established in the truth, if we would stand fast in the faith, if we would be preserved from the danger of that defection from the gospel which the world is prone, disposed, and inclined unto, it must be our principal endeavor to have a spiritual acquaintance with the things themselves that are declared in the doctrine of truth which we do profess, and to have an experience of their efficacy upon our own souls. Mere notions of truth, or the knowledge of the doctrines of it, enabling us to talk of them or dispute for them, will not preserve us. And although this spiritual light be the grace, promise, and gift of God, yet is it that which we are to endeavor after in a way of duty; and the directions ensuing may contribute somewhat towards the right discharge of our duty herein: —

Pray earnestly for the Spirit of truth go lead us into all truth. For this end is he promised by our Savior unto his disciples; and there are no teachings like his. If we learn and receive the truths of the gospel merely in the power and ability of our natural faculties, as we do other things, we shall not abide constant unto them in spiritual trials. What we learn of ourselves in spiritual things, we receive only in the outward form of it; what we are taught by the Spirit of God, we receive in its power. The apostle grants that "the spirit of man," his mind, reason, and understanding, is able to conceive of and apprehend "the things of a man," things merely natural, civil, or moral, which are cognate unto human nature; but saith he, "The things of God," the mystery of his wisdom, love, and grace in Christ Jesus, "knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God," and by him are they revealed unto them that do believe, 1 Corinthians 2:9-12. Without his especial aid, men may, by their natural sagacity and industry, attain an acquaintance with the doctrines of truth, so as to handle them (like the schoolmen) with incredible subtilty and curiosity; but they may be far enough for all that from an establishing knowledge of spiritual things. That horrible neglect which is among Christians of this one duty of earnest prayer for the teaching of the Spirit of Christ, that scorn which is cast upon it by some, and that self-confidence in opposition unto it which prevails in the most, sufficiently manifest of what nature is their knowledge of the truth, and what is like to become of it when a trial shall befall them. The least spark of saving knowledge inlaid in the minds of the poorest believers, by the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost, will be more effectual unto their own sanctification, and more prevalent against oppositions, than the highest notions or most subtle reasonings that men have attained in leaning unto their own understanding. Wherefore the Scripture abounds in examples, instances, and directions for prayer, unto this end, that we may have the assistance of the Holy Spirit in learning of the truth of the mysteries of the gospel, without which we cannot do so in a due manner: Ephesians 1:16-20, "Making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Ephesians 3:14-19, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." Colossians 2:1-3, "I would that ye knew what great

conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Rest not in any notions of truth, unless you find that you have learned it as it is in Jesus. What it is to learn the truth as it is in Jesus, the apostle fully declares, Ephesians 4:20-25, "But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." This it is to learn the truth as it is in Jesus, — namely, together with the knowledge of it, to have an experience of its power and efficacy in the mortification of sin, in the renovation of our nature, and transforming of the whole soul into the image of God in righteousness and the holiness of truth. When men learn that they may know, and are satisfied with what they know, without an endeavor to find the life and power of what they know in their own hearts, their knowledge is of little use, and their assent unto the truth will have no stability accompanying of it. The immediate end (with respect unto us) of the whole revelation of the mind and will of God in the Scripture is, that it may put forth a spiritual, practical power in our souls, and that we may do the things which are so revealed unto us. Where this is neglected, where men content themselves with a bare speculation of spiritual truths, they do what lies in them to frustrate the end, and "reject the counsel of God" in them. If, therefore, we would know any evangelical truths in a due manner, if we would have that evidence and assurance of them in our minds which may secure our profession against temptations and oppositions, let us not rest in any apprehensions of truth whose efficacy we have no experience of in our hearts, nor think that we know any more of the mysteries of the gospel than we find effectually working in the renovation of our minds, and the transforming of our souls into the image of the glory of God in Christ.

Learn to esteem more of a little knowledge which discovers itself in its effects to be sanctifying and saving, than of the highest attainments in notions and speculations, though gilded and set off by the reputation of skill, subtilty, eloquence, wit, and learning, which do not evidence themselves by alike operations. We are fallen into days wherein men of all sorts, sects, and parties, are vying for the reputation of skill, ability, knowledge, subtilty, and cunning in disputes about religion. And few there are who are cast under such disadvantages by apparent want of learning, but that they hope to make it up one way or other, so as to think as well of their own knowledge and abilities as of other men's. He who hath learned to be meek, humble, lowly, patient, self-denying, holy, zealous, peaceable, to purify his heart, and to be useful in his life, is indeed the person who is best acquainted with evangelical truth. Wherefore, let this knowledge be esteemed, both in ourselves and others, above all that proud, presumptuous, notional, puffing knowledge, which sets up for so great a reputation in the world, and we shall have experience of a blessed success in our pursuit of it.

Be not satisfied without a discovery of such a goodness, excellency, and beauty in spiritual things, as may attract your hearts unto them, and cause you to cleave unto them with unconquerable love and delight. This is that necessary, inseparable adjunct, property, fruit, or effect of faith, without which it is not essentially differenced from the faith of devils. That knowledge, that perception and

understanding of the truth, which doth not present the things known, believed, perceived, as lovely, excellent, and desirable unto the will and affections, is a "cloud without water," which every wind of temptation will scatter and blow away. Do not, therefore, suppose that you have learned any thing of God in Christ, of the mystery of his grace, of his acceptable and perfect will, unless you see therein such evidence of infinite wisdom, goodness, holiness, love, in all things so suited unto the eternal glory of God and advantage of your own souls, in the uttermost rest, peace, and satisfaction that they are capable of, as that you may admire, adore, delight in them, and cleave unto them with a holy, prevalent, unconquerable love. When you do so, then will you be established in the truth, and be able to bid defiance unto the artifices of Satan, with the solicitations of men, that would withdraw or separate you from it. But I will not farther digress in these discourses.

Ignorance is another occasion of apostasy from the truth, which was named under this head of the depravation of the minds of men. It is the want of a due perception, understanding, or knowledge of the principal doctrines of the gospel, with the evidence which is given unto them, and the use of them in the Scriptures, that we intend hereby. A general knowledge of some doctrines, without an acquaintance with their grounds and reasons, their use and effects in the life of God, is of no value in these things. When persons know not in religion what they ought to know, as they ought to know it, or what it is their duty to know, and without the knowledge whereof they can perform no other duty of religion in a right manner, then are they culpably ignorant, and so as to be exposed unto all other evils that may befall them; for whether this be for want of due instruction from others, or want of diligence in themselves to learn, the event is equally pernicious. In the first way, the Holy Ghost assures us that "where there is no vision, the people perish," Proverbs 29:18. The people will suffer where those whose duty it is so to do are not able to instruct them; for "if the blind lead the blind, both must fall into the ditch." And in general it is affirmed, that the "people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," Hosea 4:6. Of such ruinous consequence, by one means or other, is the people's ignorance of what it is their duty to know; and by no one way doth it so effectually operate unto their destruction as by this of disposing them to a defection from the truth which they have professed when any trial or temptation doth befall them.

Multitudes, yea, whole nations, are often brought unto an outward general profession of the truth of religion, especially with respect unto the opposition of any other that is made thereunto. The influence and example of some that are in power and esteem among them, falling in with a season of encouraging circumstances, may produce this effect, where men have little knowledge of what they profess, and less sense of its power and efficacy. So the body of the people of old turned unto the profession of the true religion under the reformation made by Josiah; nevertheless, as the prophet observes, "they did it not with their whole hearts, but feignedly," Jeremiah 3:10. They did it not out of love to the truth, or a cordial respect unto the ways of God, but in a hypocritical compliance with their ruler. The conversion of the northern nations after they had possessed the western parts of the Roman empire was a pledge of what their future profession was like to prove. The first conversion of the world was by the laborious preaching of apostles, evangelists, and others, accompanied with many miraculous operations, exemplified in holiness of life, and patience under all sorts of persecutions; and by this means none were received or admitted into the profession of Christian religion but such as were personally convinced of its truth, instructed in its mysteries, conformed in their lives to its precepts, and engaged unto its profession against

persecution. But in these latter conversions, some kings, rulers, or potentates, being dealt withal by popes or other princes, and thereon (perhaps with no small influence from secular considerations) admitting of the Christian religion in opposition unto Paganism, their allies, kindred, and subjects, usually followed them therein; having indeed little more of Christianity than the administration of some external rites, and a relinquishment of their old idols for the new saints proposed unto them. By this means their first profession of Christianity was laid in profound ignorance of the principles and most important doctrines and duties of the gospel. Hence it became most easy for them who were looked on as their guides to lead them into all those foolish opinions, idolatrous practices, superstitious devotions, and blind subjection to themselves, whence at length issued the fatal apostasy. Knowing but little of what they ought to have known, and delighting not in obedience unto what they did know, they willingly embraced themselves, and God judicially gave them up unto, those strong delusions which turned them wholly from the gospel.

Thus the generality of this nation hath received and professed the protestant religion in opposition unto Popery; and no doubt many did so through a sincere and effectual conviction of its truth, upon the first reformation. But it is so come to pass, that what through their own supine negligence and carelessness about all things invisible and eternal, what through the sloth, ignorance, laziness, and wretched indifferency in religion, of some of those that should instruct them, multitudes are become shamefully ignorant of the rudiments and principles of that religion which they account themselves to profess. So hath it been almost in all ages and places after profession became national. Many will not make use of the means of instruction which they have, and more want that means in an effectual measure. Nor, it may be, can there be an instance given where there hath been sufficient care taken, or at least sufficient provision made, for the instruction of the body of the people in all parts of it; neither is that ordinary course of the ministry which is passant in the world sufficient to this purpose. Can any man who knows any thing of the gospel, or of the nature of men with respect unto spiritual things, once suppose that the reading of prayers unto a people, or the rehearsing of a sermon without zeal, life, power, or evidence of compassion for the souls of men, accompanied with a light, vain, worldly conversation (as it is with many), should answer the apostolical pattern of laying the foundation, and then carrying on of men by continual instruction unto perfection? From hence (as also from other reasons obvious unto all impartial observers) it is that "darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people," ignorance prevailing on all sorts of men. Some will not learn, some have none to teach them, some are engaged in the pursuit of sensual lusts and vanities, some swallowed up in the love of and cares about the things of the world; few in any age have been conscientiously diligent in the things which are of eternal concernment unto them. This was that which facilitated the papal apostasy, from whence it took its rise, and by which it received its progress. Those who would on the motives mentioned be accounted Christians, and which it was the interest of the pretended presidents in religion to have so esteemed, being profoundly ignorant, they first accommodated the practices of religion unto their carnal, superstitious minds, and then gradually led them into all errors and fables; for they were blind, and knew not whither they went. So were the important truths of the gospel abandoned for monkish dreams, for legends of foolish, lying miracles, and other heathenish superstitions. It was by ignorance, I say, principally, that the people gave themselves up unto the power of seducers; which enabled the architects of the Roman apostasy to carry them into opinions, ways, and practices, suited unto their secular interest: and so sensible have they been of their advantage hereby, as that some of them have commended ignorance, as the most useful qualification of the

people in religion!

We may therefore well fix this as another cause, or occasion at least, of apostasy. When men are ignorant of the religion which themselves profess, as to its doctrines, and the principal grounds of them; when they are like the Samaritans, who understood not their own religious worship, which they had received by tradition, but "worshipped they knew not what," John 4:22, — they are no way able to defend themselves against the least impressions of seducers. They may plod on in the old track of some formal outward duties, but if any one meet them in their way, it is easy for him to turn them out of it. So the apostle, showing the danger that professors were in because of apostatical seducers, assigns the means of their preservation to be "the unction which they had received, whereby they knew all things," 1 John 2:19,20,27. Had they not been taught and instructed in the truth, they could not, at such a season, have persevered in the profession of the faith. Yea, such persons are very ready to think that there is something worthy their consideration in what is proposed unto them by the most corrupt seducers, whereas they have really found nothing in what themselves have so long professed; for no man can find any real benefit, profit, or advantage, in that whereof he is ignorant. So it is said that some by "good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple," Romans 16:18. Every thing they say hath a plausible pretense and appearance unto persons under that character, so as that they are apt to be taken and pleased with it. Hence is that advice of the apostle unto them who design establishment in faith and order: "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men," 1 Corinthians 14:20. Te,leioi gi,nesqe tai/j fresi., Be ye complete, perfect," well instructed in your minds, fully initiated into the doctrines of the gospel. Such the apostle calls telei,ouj, "perfect men," 1 Corinthians 2:6; Hebrews 5:14. Those who, in opposition hereunto, are "children," — that is, weak and ignorant, — will also be uncertain and unstable. They will be as children, "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive," Ephesians 4:14. For let some crafty papal emissaries come among this sort of people, and let them confidently tell them that they neither have, nor ever will have, any benefit by the religion they profess, and that they have no evidence or assurance of the truth of it; — they tell them no more but what they will know to be true if once they take it into consideration; for whereas they have seemed to be "always learning," by resorting to church, and the like outward means whereby religion is expressed, yet they "never came to the knowledge of the truth." Wherefore, when by any means they are put unto a stand, and are forced to consider themselves, they are amazed to find how little it is that they believe of the religion which they profess, or know of the ground of what they would be thought to believe.

Let such persons add (as they will not fail to do) that with them of Rome is full assurance, that none ever mistook the way who accompanied them that are of the old religion, which their forefathers professed so many ages before this new-fangledness came up, which hath filled all things with confusion, disorder, sects, and divisions, whereas before all were of one mind (which was the most plausible argument of Paganism against Christianity), every troublesome personal circumstance of their present condition makes them inclinable to believe that it may be as they say. Let them tell them, moreover, of the power granted unto the priesthood of their church to pardon all sorts of sins; of the effectual intercession of saints and angels, among whom they may choose out particular patrons and guardians for themselves; of the mercy, grace, goodness, power, and interest in heaven of the blessed Virgin, all continually exercised in the behalf of

Catholics; of the miracles that are daily wrought among them; of the wondrous sanctity and devotion which some among them have attained; — they begin to think that there is somewhat in these things which they can feel or see, whereas in their own religion they can understand little or nothing at all. The "great things" of the gospel are "strange things" unto them; they neither do nor can understand them by all the diligence they think meet to use in this case. But the things now proposed unto them have the nature of tales, which the mind of man is accustomed unto, and apt both to receive and retain. And it is not imaginable how easy a transition will prove from a religion whereof men know little or nothing at all, unto that which at one view presents unto their fancies and senses all that they need believe or do that they may be eternally happy.

Suppose one of another sort to come among such persons, and at once call them off from the profession of that religion which they pretend unto, confidently requiring them to attend wholly unto a light within them, which will be their guide and direct them unto God; — they find by natural experience that there is some such light within them as that which he seems to propose unto them; for there is so in all men, as the apostle declares, even the light of conscience, accusing or excusing as unto sin or duty, Romans 2:14,15. Having, therefore, by reason of their ignorance, no experience of any power or efficacy in that religion which themselves profess, they begin to think there is a reality in what is proposed unto them, and so are easily inveigled; for there is no security of his constancy for one moment, when a trial or temptation shall befall him, who hath not light or knowledge enough of the truth to give him some inward experience of the efficacy of what he doth profess. But it is no way necessary to insist any longer on that which is so evident, both in matter of fact and in the reasons of it. An apostasy from a traditional profession of those truths which indeed men understand not, is easy, and in a time of temptation unavoidable. In all ages, multitudes have thus perished for want of knowledge; for such persons are destitute of defense against any external cause or means of defection. They have nothing in their minds to oppose to force, nothing unto seductions or fraud, nothing to the examples of great leaders, nothing to conflict with the superstition of their own minds; and will therefore, when wind and tide suit the design, comply with any fair pretense for a revolt. And herein lieth no small part of the danger of the public profession of the protestant religion among us. By whose defect principally God knows, but it is incredible how stupidly ignorant multitudes are. Such there are who know no difference in religion, whilst the same names of God and Christ are commonly used, and the same places frequented for worship. Yet will this sort of men show great zeal and earnestness against Popery and other heresies! None more forward to revile, contemn, and prosecute them to their power; as ready as Mohammedans are to persecute Christians, or Papists sincere believers, and that on the same grounds. But if at any time they are put unto a stand, and necessitated to give an account unto themselves of the reason of their own religion, what it is they believe, and why they do so, their confidence will fail them, and, like unto men fallen into cross-paths and ways, they will not know what to do. And on such occasions they are the readiest of all men, in a kind of shame of themselves, to give up the religion which they have professed for any other, wherein it is promised they shall have more skill, and by which they may have some benefit, as it is pretended, whereas by their own they have had none at all.

Whatever, therefore, is amongst us or elsewhere an occasion of ignorance among the people, it doth expose them unto a fatal defection from the truth. If those upon whom it is incumbent to instruct them in the knowledge of the truths and mysteries of the gospel are unskillful or negligent

in the discharge of their duty, they do what lieth in them to give them up bound hand and foot to the power of their spiritual adversaries; and they will be found chargeable with no less guilt who lay obstructions in the way of others who would willingly labor in the instruction of them unto their power. A man would think, from all circumstances, and all indications of the present inclinations of the minds of men, that it were the chief interest of all that really love the protestant religion to preserve its professors from apostasy or any disposition thereunto. That this will be done effectually without a continual instruction of them in the truths which are to be professed, with their grounds, reasons, and effects, is so fond an imagination as that it deserves no consideration. It is but to build castles in the air, to suppose that men will be kept constant in the profession of religion by outward laws, the observance of external forms, and the secular advantage of some persons by it, wherein they are not concerned. They will not be so, I say, when a trial shall befall them. There is no other means that is appointed of God, or is rational in itself, for the attaining of this end, but that those who are so concerned do what in them lies personally to instruct the people in the truth, encouraging them unto obedience by their own example; and to prevail with them who have the same design to be assisting with them therein. But to cry out of the great danger of protestant religion in the growth of Popery, and at the same time not only to be negligent themselves in the great duty of communicating the real effectual knowledge of it unto the souls of men, but also to lay needless obstructions in the way of others who would sincerely endeavor so to do, is an unaccountable solecism in religion. Either we are not in earnest in our pretended zeal for the truth and our fears of the prevalency of Popery, or we believe not that instruction in the truth is the only means to preserve men in the useful profession of it; which is to renounce the gospel and all rational consideration therewithal, or we are influenced by other things, which we far more esteem than evangelical truth and the purity of religion. The reformation of the church consisted principally in the deliverance of the people from darkness and ignorance; and if through our neglect they should be reduced again into the same state and condition, they would be a ready prey for the Papacy to seize upon. The advice of the apostle, as to the duty of all gospel ministers and officers in such a season as we are fallen into, is that alone which will preserve us, 2 Timothy 4:1-5. But it may be supposed that so much labor and diligence in the instruction and teaching of the people, as some assert, is altogether unnecessary. It is enough if they be taught what are the general principles of religion, and do thereon comply with the conduct of the church whereunto they do belong. Besides, if this burden be incumbent on the ministry, that those called thereunto are to have no relaxation from constant, sedulous "laboring in the word and doctrine," and are moreover required to exemplify what they teach in the whole course of their conversation, who would ever take upon him that office that can advantage himself in the world any other way? It must needs prove very burdensome if we have a religion that will not be preserved in the minds of men without all this constant, endless toil and labor. In the Roman church we see how easy a thing it is to keep up the people unto its profession, whilst the clergy are at liberty to pursue and use the pleasures and honors of this world, nor are any of them obliged unto those irksome and endless pains which we seem to require; yea, they find by experience that ignorance in the people is the best expedient to keep them in subjection to the priests, and then all things are secure. I wish that such thoughts as these do not influence the minds of some unto a readiness for a change, if so be it might be effected without hazard. But if more pains, diligence, labor, with perseverance therein, be required by us in the ministers of the gospel and guides of the church, than the Holy Ghost in the Scripture doth plainly, positively, frequently enjoin, let it be rejected and despised. Alas! the best of us, of all

that are alive, do come short in many things of the rules and examples that are proposed unto us therein, nor do I know on what grounds or by what measures the most of us do intend to give in our accounts at the last day. Nor is there any more impious opinion, nor more contradictory to the gospel, than that it is enough for the people to be instructed only in the general principles of religion, without any farther improvement or growth in knowledge: for those who are thus called "The people" are, I suppose, esteemed Christians, — that is, disciples of Jesus Christ, and members of his mystical body; and if they are so, their growth in understanding, their edification in knowledge, their being carried on unto perfection, their acquaintance with the whole counsel of God, with the mysteries of his love and grace in Christ Jesus, are as necessary for them as the "saving of their souls," indispensably depending thereon, can render them. And if we will be ministers of the gospel, it will not be best for us to prescribe unto ourselves our rules and measures of duty. It will be our wisdom to accept of that office on the terms limited by the Holy Ghost, or utterly to let it alone. And we must know, that the more exactly our profession is suited unto the gospel, the less mixture there is in it of any thing human, the more difficult it is thoroughly to instruct men in the knowledge of it. The mind of man is far more apt and able to comprehend and retain fables, errors, and superstitions, than evangelical truths. The former are natural unto it; against the latter it hath a dislike and enmity, until they are removed by grace. Hence, some will make a more appearing proficiency in a false religion in four or five days than others will do in the knowledge of the truth almost in so many years. We may have well-grown Papists in a month's time, that shall be expert in the mysteries of their devotion; and there is another profession that two or three days will bring men unto a perfection in: but slow is the progress of most in learning the truth and mysteries of the gospel. If peculiar diligence and constant sedulity be not used in their instruction, they will be made a prey unto the next opportunity for a defection from the truth.

## 03A.06. CHAPTER 6.

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### CHAPTER 6.

PRIDE AND VANITY OF MIND, SLOTH AND NEGLIGENCE, LOVE OF THE WORLD, CAUSES OF APOSTASY — THE WORK OF SATAN, AND JUDGMENTS OF GOD IN THIS MATTER.

THE innate pride and vanity of the minds of men is another means whereby they are disposed and inclined unto an apostasy from the profession of evangelical truth. With respect hereunto the design and work of the gospel is, to "cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God," taught therein, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," 2 Corinthians 10:4-5. The mind of man is naturally lifted up with high thoughts in itself and of itself. That it is sufficient unto all the ends of its being, all the duties of its condition, without any special aid or assistance from above, is the prevailing principle whereby it is acted. Men do not only by nature say, "With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" Psalms 12:4, — "We have a sovereignty over all our outward actions;" but also, that nothing is, or can, or ought to be required of us, but what we have power in ourselves to comprehend, comply withal, and perform. This in all ages of the church, under various forms and pretenses, hath been contended for. The true state of all controversies about the powers of nature and grace is this, That, on the one hand, the minds and wills of men are asserted to be self-sufficient as to internal abilities unto all duties of obedience necessary unto eternal blessedness; on the other, that we have no sufficiency of ourselves, but that all our sufficiency is of God. See 2 Corinthians 3:5, 2 Corinthians 9:8. This principle, which sprung immediately out of that pride whereby, aiming at an enlargement of our self-sufficiency, we utterly lost what we had, was never yet rooted out of the minds of the generality of professed Christians.

In all things the mind of man would be its own measure, guide, and rule, continually teeming with these two evils: —

It exalts imaginations of its own, which it loves, applauds, dotes on, and adheres unto. This is the original of heresy, this hath given birth, growth, and progress, to error; for "God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions," Ecclesiastes 7:29. Seeking out and exalting inventions of our own, in things spiritual and religious, is the principal and most pernicious consequent of our fall from that state of uprightness wherein of God we were created.

It makes itself the sole and absolute judge of what is divinely proposed unto it, whether it be true or false, good or evil, to be received or rejected, without desire or expectation of any supernatural guidance or assistance; and whatever is unsuited unto its own prejudicate imaginations, it is ready to scorn and despise.

That, therefore, which we are now to demonstrate is, that where this pride and principle are predominant, where the one is not mortified by grace nor the other eradicated by spiritual light, there men can never receive the truths of the gospel in a due manner, and are ready to renounce them when they have by any means been brought unto the profession of them for a season; for, —

The gospel, — that is, the doctrines of it and truths contained in it, — is proposed unto us in the name and on the authority of God, having his image and superscription upon it. It hath such impressions of divine wisdom, goodness, grace, holiness, and power upon it, as manifests it to be the "glorious gospel of the blessed God," 1 Timothy 1:11. Hence it ought to be received with a holy reverence, with a due sense of the glory of God, and as his voice speaking unto us from heaven. Hence is the caution of the apostle, that we would "not refuse" or "turn away from him that speaketh from heaven," Hebrews 12:25. Without this it will never be duly received, truly understood, nor steadfastly believed. It is not to be received as "the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God," 1 Thessalonians 2:13. It must be received with that frame of spirit, with that submission, that subjection of soul and conscience, which becomes poor worms of the earth when they have to do with the great and holy God, expressed Genesis 18:27. So our Savior tells us that "unless we be converted, and become as little children, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Unless we deny ourselves and all our own imaginations, unless we become humble and teachable, we can never arrive at a useful acquaintance with the mysteries of it. And he convinced the learned Pharisees that by reason of their pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy, they could not perceive or understand the doctrine which he taught.

God promiseth that he will teach the meek or humble in judgment: "The meek will he teach his way," Psalms 25:9. "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant," Psalms 25:14. "Whom shall he teach knowledge? whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts," Isaiah 28:9. Unless men become as weaned children, as David affirms of himself, Psalms 131:2, when "his heart was not haughty, nor his eyes lofty," Psalms 31:1, God will not teach them. There is, therefore, no such effectual obstruction of divine teachings as the pride of men's minds, which is utterly inconsistent with them. Hence it is that men come with carnal confidence in themselves, the ability and sagacity of their own minds, to the consideration of the gospel and the things contained in it, without the least peculiar awe or reverence of God from whom it is; and hence do they suppose themselves, without more ado, competent judges of the mind of the Holy Ghost in all divine revelations. Can men who have once read the Scripture imagine that this is the way to learn heavenly truth or to partake of the teachings of God? Will the same frame of spirit suffice them in this design as that which they have when they are exercised about their other occasions? When we consider how men for the most part learn the truth, we need not wonder to see how easily they unlearn and forsake it. If the truth at any time be entertained by a soul whose mind is unhumiliated and whose affections are unmortified, it is a troublesome inmate, and will, on the first occasion, be parted withal. It is true, we ought to employ the utmost of our rational abilities in the investigation of sacred truth; but yet if therein we follow the conduct of our own minds, diving perhaps into subtleties and niceties, forsaking a humble dependence on the teachings of God, it may be under apprehensions of singular wisdom, we betray ourselves into ruinous folly. This was that which corrupted all the endeavors of the schoolmen, and left them, in the height of their inquiries, to wax vain in their imaginations. The way of handling spiritual things in a spiritual manner, in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, — that is, not with curious, subtile reasonings and inventions of carnal, unsanctified minds, but with that evidence and plainness in argumentation, suited practically to affect the minds and consciences of men, which the Scripture giveth us both example and rule for, — was despised by them; but they came to the study of sacred things with their minds stuffed and prepossessed with philosophical notions and conceptions, with sophisms, distinctions,

and various expressions of the serpentine wits of men, which they mixed with divinity, or the doctrine of the Scripture, woefully corrupting, debasing, and perverting it thereby. Most of their disputes were such as had never had foundation nor occasion in the world, if Aristotle had not invented some odd terms and distinctions, remote from the common understanding and reason of men wiser than himself. To inquire into divine revelation with a holy, humble frame of heart, waiting and praying for divine teaching and illumination of mind, that themselves might be made wise in the knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel, and able to instruct others in the knowledge and fear of God, it never came into their minds; but being furnished and puffed up with a conceit of their own sagacity, philosophical ability, and disputing faculty, harnessed with syllogisms, distinctions, solutions, and most preposterous methods of craft, they came with boldness on Christian religion, and forming it to their own imaginations, dressing it up and exposing of it in foolish terms of art, under a semblance of wondrous subtilty they wholly corrupted it, and drew off the minds of men from the simplicity of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Not one article of religion did this proud, self-conceited generation of men leave, that (whether their conclusions were true or false about it) any man could come to the understanding of it who had not been a better proficient in the school of Aristotle than of Christ. To believe and teach the doctrine of the Scripture, though with sound reason and judgment, and in the way of the Scripture to affect the minds and consciences of men, without their philosophical notions, niceties, and distinctions, whereby they had carved a corrupt, depraved, monstrous image of all things, and the knowledge of them, was, among them, to be a heretic or a blockhead. By the pride, confidence, and pretended subtilty of these men was religion totally corrupted, and the fountains poisoned from whence others sought for the waters of the sanctuary. Even what was left of truth among them was so debased, so divested of its native heavenly glory, beauty, and majesty, was rendered so deformed and unsuited unto that spiritual light wherein alone it can be usefully discerned, as to render it altogether useless and inefficacious unto its proper ends. Nor are we ever in more danger to subduct ourselves from under the teachings of God than when we lean unto our own understandings in our inquiries into spiritual things, so as to forget that humble, lowly frame of heart wherein alone we are meet to be taught or to learn in a due manner. And this is one way whereby men, through the innate pride of their minds, are obstructed in the receiving and disposed unto the relinquishment of evangelical truths.

Again; it is confessed that there is nothing proposed unto us in the gospel that is contrary unto reason, as reason is the due comprehension and measure of things as they are in their own nature; for how should there be so, seeing it is in itself the principal external effect of the reason or wisdom of God, which hath given unto all things their natures, properties, and measures? But yet there are things revealed in it which are above the comprehension of reason, as planted in the finite, limited understanding of man; nor is the ground hereof the accidental corruption of our nature, but the essential constitution of its being. There are, I say, divine mysteries in the gospel whose revelation we may understand, but the nature of the things themselves we cannot comprehend. And this reason itself cannot but acknowledge; for whereas it knows itself to be finite, limited, and bounded, how should it be able perfectly to comprehend things infinite, or all the effects of infinite wisdom? "Can we by searching find out God? can we find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what can we do deeper than hell; what can we know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea," Job 11:7-9. These things so exceed the natural and duly proportionate objects of our understandings as that we cannot find them out to perfection. The reason of man hath nothing here to do, but humbly to comply with the

revelations that are made of them.

Moreover, there are in the gospel things that are unsuited, yea, contradictory unto reason as it is corrupted. Reason in us is now no longer to be considered merely as it is finite and limited, but as, in the subject and exercise of it, it is impaired, depraved, and corrupted. To deny this, is to deny the fundamental principle and supposition that, in all things, the gospel proceedeth on; that is, that Jesus Christ came into the world to restore and repair our nature. In this state, as it is unable of itself to discern and judge of spiritual things in a due manner, so it is apt to frame unto itself vain imaginations, and to be prepossessed with innumerable prejudices, contrary unto what the gospel doth teach and require; and whatever it doth so fancy or frame, the mind esteems as proper acts and effects of reason as any it exerciseth or is capable of. With respect unto both these, — namely, the weakness of reason as it is finite and limited, and the depravation of reason as it is corrupted, — it is the design of the gospel to bring every thought into captivity unto the obedience of faith; for, —

As to the former, it requires men to believe things above their reason, merely on the authority of divine revelation. Things they must believe which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man to conceive;" only they are "revealed unto us by the Spirit," 1 Corinthians 2:9-10. It will not admit of an inquiry how those things may be which the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. The sense and meaning of the revelation it may inquire into, but cannot comprehend the things revealed. "Nobis curiositate opus non est post Jesum Christum, nec inquisitione post evangelium; cum credimus nihil desideramus ultra credere, hoc enim prius credimus, non esse quod ultra credere debemus," Tertull. Praescrip. adv. Haeres. And when of old the wise, the scribes, the disputers of this world, would not submit hereunto, under the supposed conduct of their reason, they fell into the most brutish unreasonableness, in judging the wisdom of God to be folly and his power to be weakness, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. And it is an unparalleled attempt of atheism which some in our days (who would yet be accounted Christians) have engaged in; — they would exalt philosophy or human reason into a right of judicature over all divine revelations. Nothing must be supposed to be contained in them but what is measurable by its principles and rules. What pretends to be above them, they say ought to be rejected; which is to make itself infinite, or the wisdom and understanding of God finite and limited. Wherefore, as to the things that are revealed in the gospel, because many of them are absolutely above the comprehension of our minds or reasons, they are not the judges of them, but are the servants of faith only in bearing witness unto them; for "the things of a man knoweth the spirit of man which is in him; but the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God," 1 Corinthians 2:11. In brief, to affirm that we can be obliged to believe no more than we can comprehend, or nothing but what we can perfectly understand the nature of in itself, or that we may reject what is really above reason, on a supposition that it is contrary unto reason, is to renounce the gospel, and therewith all divine revelations. And this is spoken not of reason as it is corrupted, but merely as it is human reason, finite and limited.

As in things infinite, spiritual, and heavenly, the gospel proposeth unto men things quite above their comprehension, supposing their reason to be pure and incorrupted, only allowing it to be that which is finite and limited; so in things which practically respect the obedience of faith which it doth require, it prescribeth things contrary unto our natural conceptions, or reason as it is in us depraved: for the natural conceptions of our minds about religious duties and the way of living unto

God are all of them suited unto the covenant of works, for they are the effects of the remainders of that light which did direct us to walk with God thereby. But hereunto the disposal of things in the covenant of grace is diametrically opposed, so that their accounts will never intermix, Romans 11:6; yea, the carnal mind, — that is, reason as it is corrupted, — acts its contradiction unto the will of God as revealed in the gospel with enmity and hatred, Romans 8:7. And [as] for those duties which are suited unto the light of nature, the gospel doth so change them, with the respect it gives them unto the mediation of Christ and the efficiency of the Holy Spirit, as that corrupted reason defies them, being so qualified, as foreign unto its conceptions. The duties themselves it can approve of, but not of their respect unto Jesus Christ, whereunto they are disposed by the gospel.

Hence it is that of old those who pretended such an absolute sovereignty of their own reason as to admit of nothing as truth but what its dictates complied withal, were of all men the slowest to receive and the forwardest to oppose the mysteries of the gospel; because they were above it in some things, and contrary unto it in more, as it is in most things corrupted, they looked on them as folly, and so despised them. This the apostle declares and records, 1 Corinthians 1:2. Especially was it so among them who, unto the vain imaginations wherein in general "their foolish heart was darkened," had superadded some peculiar sect in philosophy which was of reputation among the wise men of the world; for they conceived and maintained all the maxims of their sect as the absolute dictates of right reason, though most of them were foolish fancies, either taken up by tradition or sophistically imposed on their understandings.

Hence, every thing that was contrary unto such principles or inconsistent with them, they looked on as opposite unto reason, and so despised it. Nor is it much otherwise at this day with many Christians, who make the traditional principles of their sect or party the rule whereby every thing that is in religion proposed unto them may be examined. Thus, though the generality of philosophers and wise men at Athens rejected the doctrine of the apostle, yet were there none so forward and fierce in their opposition unto him, so contemptuously proud in their censures of him, as were the Epicureans and Stoics, Acts 17:18; and the reason hereof was, because the doctrine which he taught was eminently contrary to the maxims of their peculiar sects: for whereas the Epicureans denied the providence of God in the government of the world, the existence of the souls of men after this life, all eternal rewards or punishments, there was no admission of any one word of the apostle's doctrine without a renunciation of all their impious sentiments, and so the ruin of their sect. And as for the Stoics, the fundamental principle of their philosophy was, that a man should look for all blessedness or happiness in and from himself alone, and from the things that were in his own power, as being every way sufficient unto himself for that end. All that the apostle taught concerning the mediation of Christ and the grace of God by him was also diametrically opposite unto this principle. Wherefore those of these two sects opposed him in a peculiar manner, not only from the pride and darkness that are naturally in the minds of men, and are improved by the advancement of corrupted reason above its own proper place and dignity, but from the prejudicate opinions which, on the reputation of their sects, they adhered unto, as assured dictates of right reason in general. And when some such persons as these afterward, upon a general conviction of its truth, took upon them a profession of the gospel, they were the men who corrupted its principal mysteries by their vain philosophy, as the apostle intimates, Colossians 2:8. So Tertullian, "Haereses a philosophia subornantur. Inde Æones et formae, et nescio quae, et Trinitas hominum apud Valentinum, [qui] Platonius fuerat. Inde Marcionis Deus

melior de tranquillitate, a Stoicis venerat; et ubi anima interire dicatur ab Epicuraeis observatur; et ut carnis restitutio negatur, de una omnium philosophorum schola sumitur."

We may apply these things unto our present purpose. The design of the gospel, in all its especial truths and mysteries, is to bring every thought into subjection unto the obedience of faith. Hence is that direction which flesh and blood will never comply withal, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise," 1 Corinthians 3:18. Unless men renounce their carnal wisdom, in all its principles, effects, and operations, they will never become wise with that wisdom which is from above; and he who knoweth not what it is so to become a fool, be he who he will, was never yet wise towards God. Wherefore, when men have taken on them the outward profession of the gospel, they begin to find, upon inquiry, that the mysteries and principles of its doctrine are unsuited unto the natural pride of their minds, and inconsistent with that absolute sovereignty which they would in all things give unto their own reason. Hereon "many inventions are sought out" to cast off the yoke of faith, and to re-enthroned reason in the room thereof; — not that men depart from the faith with this express design, but this is that which secretly influenceth them thereunto. Hence the generality of those who forsake the truth on this ground and occasion are such as, trusting too soon to their own rational abilities, having neither will, nor humility, nor industry to inquire into the principles and reasons of truth in a due manner, do give up themselves unto the conduct and teaching of others, who have invented opinions more suited unto the innate pride of their minds and carnal reasonings; and some, by an over-earnest pursuit of the workings of their own rational faculties in spiritual things, having subducted their minds from that humble frame wherein alone they are capable of divine teaching, are betrayed into the same miscarriage. All ancient heresies sprung from this root, yea, those of them which are most absurd and foolish, and most diametrically opposite unto right reason, arose from a pretense thereof: for when men will have reason to have an absolute supremacy in religion, it is unavoidable but they must judge that their own is the reason which is intended; and that some may be led hereby into very foolish imaginations is easy to be conjectured, unless we shall suppose all men to be equally wise and sober.

I shall briefly exemplify these things in one instance, and that in a prevalent apostasy from the truth, and which at present is visibly progressive in the world; this is that of Socinianism. And I shall give an instance herein, because the poison of it is highly efficacious where it meets with the complexion and constitution of mind before described, and is more diffused than many are aware of: for although the name of it be generally condemned, and there are some opinions comprised under it whose profession is inconsistent with the interest of the most, yet all those deviations from the truth which we have amongst us, under several denominations, are emanations from that corrupt fountain; yea, the whole of it being a system of opinions craftily suited unto the first notions and conceptions of corrupted reason, and the inbred pride of men's minds, in them who on any account own divine revelation, the first proposal of them finds ready entertainment with many of those whose souls are not prepared and fortified against them by a spiritual experience of the excellency, power, and efficacy, of the mysteries of the gospel. They no sooner hear of them but they know they express what they would have, as gratifying all the corrupt desires and carnal reasonings of their minds.

There are, as was observed before, two sorts of things in the doctrines of the gospel: — 1. Such as are above the comprehension and measure of reason in its best condition, as it is in us limited

and confined; 2. Such as are contrary unto it as corrupted and depraved. And unto these two heads is this kind of apostasy reducible.

What is above reason, incomprehensible by it, those of this way do absolutely reject. Such are the doctrines of the Trinity and of the incarnation of the Son of God. Because the things taught in these doctrines are not comprehensible by their reason, they conclude that they are repugnant unto right reason. And by others the same doctrines are refused, as not compliant with the light that is within them; for the existence of the divine nature in three distinct persons, with the hypostatical union of the natures of God and man in the same person, they cannot acknowledge. These things, so fully, so plainly, so frequently revealed and asserted in the Scripture, so attested by the primitive catholic church, are rejected on no other reason but that they are against reason; nor is there any pretense that they are so, but because they are above it. When they have puzzled themselves with Nicodemus' question, "How can these things be?" they peremptorily deny their existence, because they cannot comprehend the manner of it.

As unto those things which are contrary unto reason as corrupted, these they deprave and wrest unto a compliance therewithal. So they deal with the doctrines of the attributes of God, of his eternal decrees, of the office and mediation of Christ, of justification by his righteousness, of the power and efficacy of the grace of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of sinners, and of the resurrection of the dead. Because they cannot bring their reason as corrupted and depraved unto a compliance with these truths, they will force, hale, torture, and rack the truths themselves, to bring them into slavery unto their own reasons, or carnal, fleshly conceptions of spiritual things; for, allowing the words, terms, and propositions wherein they are expressed, they put absurd senses upon them, destructive unto the faith and contrary to the whole scope and design of the Scripture. So do they endeavor expressly to bring every divine revelation into captivity unto the bondage of their own perverse reasonings and imaginations.

It is, therefore, evident that this kind of apostasy springs from no other root but the pride of the minds of men, refusing to admit of evangelical truths on the mere authority of divine revelation, where they are above reason as it is limited, or contrary unto it as corrupted. On these terms the gospel can nowhere keep its station, nor will it forego its prerogative by subjecting itself to be tried by these uncertain measures or weighed in these uneven, tottering balances. The humble, the meek, the teachable, those who are made free and willing to captivate their understandings unto the obedience of faith, are those alone with whom it will abide and continue. But it may be said, that, this being only one private heresy, of no great extent or acceptance in the world, there is no danger of any influence from it unto a more general defection. So, it may be, it seems unto many; but I must acknowledge myself to be otherwise minded, and that for two reasons: —

Because of the advance which it maketh every day in the addition of new, bold, proud imaginations unto what it hath already made its successful attempts in: for, in the pursuit of the same principles with those of the men of this way and persuasion, not a few begin absolutely to submit the Scripture, and every thing contained in it, to the judgment and sentence of their own reason; which is the true form and spirit of Socinianism, visibly acting itself with some more than ordinary confidence. What is suited unto their reason they will receive, and what is not so, let it be affirmed a hundred times in the Scripture, they will reject with the same ease and confidence as if they were imaginations of men like themselves. Both books that are written unto this purpose, and

the common discourses of many, do fully testify unto this advance of the pride of the minds of men; and he is careless about these things who seeth not that the next stage is downright atheism. This is that dunghill which such blazing exhalations of pride do at last fall into. And herein do many countenance themselves with a false and foolish pretense that all those whom they differ from are fanatical enemies of reason, when they ascribe unto it all that any man in his wits can so do who believeth divine revelation, and doth not absolutely disavow the corruption of nature by the fall.

The poison of these principles is greatly diffused in the world; for hence it is that all those doctrines of the gospel which have any thing of spiritual mystery in them, which are constituent principles of, or do any way belong unto, the covenant of grace, and so not absolutely reconcilable unto reason as corrupt and carnal, are by many so laden with contempt and scorn that it is sufficient to expose any man unto the contumelies of "ignorant, irrational, and foolish," who dares to avow them. Such are the doctrines of eternal predestination, of the total corruption of the nature of men as unto spiritual things by the fall, of the power and efficacy of the grace of God in the conversion of sinners, of the nature and necessity of regeneration, of union with Christ, of justification by the imputation of his righteousness, of the nature of internal, inherent righteousness or evangelical holiness, of the necessity of continual supplies of the Spirit in actual grace unto all duties of obedience, of the power of the Holy Ghost evidencing the divine authority of the Scriptures in and by themselves, with sundry others. Many can see no reason for the admittance of these things, or they cannot see the reason of them; and therefore, although they are fully and plainly declared in the Scriptures, yet are they, by no small generation among us, so derided and exploded as that the very names of them are grown into contempt. But why all this scorn, all this severity? Men may do well to consider, that not long since all the prelates of England owned those doctrines as articles of faith which now they so deride; and although they are not obliged by any divine precept to be of the same judgment with them because it was theirs, yet it may be they are under some obligation from the laws of the land not to renounce the ancient doctrines of the church, and are certainly bound by the laws of Christian modesty and sobriety not to vilify and scorn the doctrines they owned, and all that do profess them.

But it is warrant sufficient unto some for the utmost detestation of any principles in religion, that they have a seeming incompliance with their reason, though apparently corrupted by prejudice and weakened by ignorance. Hence they will not admit that there can be a consistency between the unchangeableness of God's decrees and the freedom of our wills; that justification by the blood of Christ doth not render our own obedience needless; that the efficacy of God's grace and the necessity of our duty are reconcilable. And herein they seem to take along with them, as their security, these two principles, seeing without them they have no foundation to build upon: —

(1.) That reason as it acts in them is the same with right reason in general, — that whatever respect is due to the one is so to the other. It were well, in the meantime, if prejudices, corrupt affections, and gross ignorance, did not, on great variety of occasions, manifest themselves among this sort of persons; and not only so, but such a course of conversation among some of them as none can think consistent with the divine teachings who believe the Scriptures. But it is so come to pass, that all that humility, meekness, self-diffidence, all that conscientious fear of sinning and practice of holiness, which the word of God makes so necessary unto them who would learn the truth as it is in Jesus, are by many (puffed up with a conceit of their own ability to know all

things) utterly disregarded.

(2.) That there is no time or instance wherein those thoughts which seem to us most rational are to be captivated unto the obedience of faith; and yet without this there is no true knowledge of the mind of God in the gospel to be attained. What such principles will carry men out unto in religion were easy to conjecture, if experience did not render conjecture useless in this case.

Wherefore, this pride of the minds of men, refusing to bow or subject themselves unto the authority of divine revelation, designing to exalt self, in its intellectual and moral abilities, in its powers to know what it should and do what it ought, hath in all ages been a great principle of opposition unto and apostasy from evangelical truth: nor was it ever more rampant than in the days wherein we live; for besides that it hath openly spawned that whole brood of errors which some entire sects do espouse, it diffuseth itself in its effects among all sorts of professors of Christianity. An humble subjection of mind and conscience unto the authority of God in his word, — which alone, upon trial, will be found to answer the experience of believers, — is the only security against this distemper. This we may, this we ought to, pray for, not only for ourselves, but that it might be given of God unto them who scarce believe that God gives any thing that is spiritual and supernatural unto the souls of men, in any such way as that the effect should depend on the efficiency of grace, and not on their own wills.

Unto this pride, as inseparable from it, we may adjoin that vanity and curiosity that are in the minds of men. These are those which the apostle marketh under the outward sign and effect of them, namely, "itching ears," 2 Timothy 4:3; for hence an inclination and hankering of mind after things novel, vain, and curious, doth arise. Under the power of these affections, men "cannot endure sound doctrine," nor will abide in the simplicity of the gospel. They know not how to be wise unto sobriety, and to keep their speculations about spiritual things within the bounds of sober modesty; but they are still intruding themselves into things they have not seen, being vainly puffed up by their own fleshly minds, Colossians 2:18. And as this curiosity hath produced many of these needless, vain opinions, subtle, nice, philosophical disputations and distinctions, wherewith some have filled religion; so from the uncured vanity of mind doth proceed that levity and inconstancy which are in many, whereby they are "tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine" that blows upon them, from the "cunning sleights of men who lie in wait to deceive."

Unto all we may add carnal pride and ambition (where the outward affairs of the church or the profession of religion are accompanied with such secular advantages of wealth, honor, and rule, as to stir up envy and emulation among men of earthly minds); which, as they have occasioned many scandalous outrages in religion, so they have been the rise and occasion of many heresies also.

IV. Careless security and groundless confidences do betray men into apostasies from the gospel when unexpected trials do befall them. To give evidence hereunto we may do well to consider the things that ensue: —

The Holy Spirit hath sufficiently warned us all that defections and backslidings from the truth would fall out among the professors of it. This hath been already abundantly manifested in the express instances of such warnings and predictions before produced and insisted on. And there is in the word a vehement application made of all these warnings unto us and our duties. Hence are those

exhortations and precepts multiplied, to "watch," to "stand fast in the faith," to "be strong and quit ourselves like men" in this matter. Nothing but a diligent attendance unto all gospel duties and a vigorous acting of all gospel graces will preserve us, if the Scripture may be believed. And as for those by whom these things are despised, it is no matter at all what religion they are of.

We are foretold and forewarned of the great danger that will attend the professors of the gospel when such a season of apostasy shall by any means come upon them. So prevalent shall the means of it be as that many shall be deceived, and if it were possible even the elect themselves, Matthew 24:11, Matthew 24:24. Such a season is an "hour of temptation that cometh on all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth," Revelation 3:10; and the woful event in them that shall be overtaken with the power of it, in their utter and eternal destruction, is in many instances set before us.

It is also plainly intimated that such a season of the prevalency of a defection from the truth shall be a time of great security among the generality of professed Christians. Churches shall be asleep, persons shall cry, "Peace, peace," when that day cometh as a snare.

We are not, therefore, left without sufficient warning in this case, both of the certainty of our trial, the greatness of our concernment, and the danger of security; and yet, notwithstanding all these means of excitation unto a vigorous attendance unto our condition, danger, and duty, it is evident unto every discerning eye how desperately secure are the generality of professors of the gospel with respect unto this evil and the consequents of it. Nothing can awake them unto the consideration of their own state, although their neighbors' houses are set on fire from hell. Love of the world, with prosperity and ease, on the one hand, or the cares and businesses of it on the other, do so take up the minds of men that they are not sensible of any concernment in these things. And we may briefly consider the various ways whereby this security puts forth its efficacy in disposing men unto apostasy when they fall into the occasions of it: —

(1.) It doth so by possessing and overpowering them with a proud, careless, supine negligence. Men hear of this evil and the danger of it, but, like Gallio, they "care for none of these things." They know not of any concernment they have in them, nor of any need they have to provide against them. Unto some others, perhaps, these things may belong, but unto them not at all. Those who would press them on their minds and consciences they look on as persons causelessly importunate, or troubled with groundless suspicions and fears. If there be any danger about religion, they doubt not but sooner or later provision will be made against it by law; but as unto any special duty incumbent on themselves with respect unto their own souls, they know nothing of it, nor will consider it. Had not the world been asleep in this security, had not men been utterly regardless of their interest in the truth, it had not been possible that religion should have been so totally corrupted as it was in the Papacy, and yet so few take any notice thereof. At some seasons God raised up among them witnesses for the truth, who not only declared and professed it, but also sealed their confession with their blood; but the generality of Christians were so far from being excited thereby to the consideration of their own concern and duty as that they opposed and persecuted them unto destruction, as the disturbers of the public tranquillity. And it is no otherwise at this day. Many complain of, more fear, a defection from the gospel. It is also evident in how many things the doctrine of it is already by some corrupted by whom it was formerly professed. Instances of as great apostasies as the name of Christianity is capable of are multiplied among us;

and yet how few are there that do at all regard these things, or once consider what is either their duty or their danger in such a season!

(2.) It worketh and is effectual by a wicked indifferency as unto all things in religion. Men under the power of this security neither see, nor will understand, nor can be made sensible of, the difference that is between truth and error, piety and superstition, so as to value one more than another. "It is all religion, and it is no more but so. If persons change from one way to another, so as they do not utterly renounce Jesus Christ, they may be saved in the way they betake themselves unto." The profession of such persons attends on all occasions, and an apostasy from the mysteries of the gospel will be but a useful compliance with opportunity.

We judge no men, no party of men, as to their eternal state and condition, upon the account of their outward profession in religion, unless they are open idolaters or flagitious in their lives God only knows how it is between him and their souls The framing of churches (as the church of Rome) according unto men's minds, fancies, opinions, or interests, and then confining salvation unto them, is an effect of pride and folly, as contradictory to the gospel as any thing that can be imagined. But yet there is a wide difference to be made between apostates and others. "Better men had never known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment." Those who have been instructed in the truth of the gospel, and have made profession of it, are for the most part acted by such depraved principles, moved by such corrupt lusts, and do show so much ingratitude against the Lord Jesus Christ in their defection, "denying the Lord that bought them," that they put a peculiar character and mark upon themselves; and although we will not judge any, yet is it our duty to put men in remembrance of the danger that attends such apostasies. So the apostle expressly tells the Galatians, that upon their admittance of legal ceremonies, and falling from the grace of the gospel in the one point of justification, "Christ should profit them nothing," or they should have no benefit by what they yet retained of the profession of the gospel, chap. 5:2-6. And as to those who are carried away by the "strong delusion" of the grand apostasy, foretold 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12, he says plainly that "they shall be damned," 2 Thessalonians 2:12; and Peter also affirms that those who introduce "damnable heresies" do bring on themselves, and those that follow their pernicious ways, "swift destruction,"

2 Peter 2:1-2. So little countenance doth the Scripture give unto this effect of cursed security.

(3.) It likewise worketh by vain confidences. Most men think with Peter, and on no better grounds than he did (nor so good neither, as not being conscious unto themselves of so much sincerity as he was), that though all men should forsake the truth and purity of religion, yet they will not do so. But they understand not at all what it is to be preserved in an hour of temptation, nor what is required thereunto. They scorn to fall away, and yet they scorn all the means whereby they may be preserved from so doing. Tell them that they stand in need of the power of God for their preservation, of the intercession of Christ, of the constant supplies of the Spirit, of an experience of the goodness and efficacy of the truth, with the benefits which their own souls have received thereby; and that for this end they are to watch, pray, and live in a constant attendance unto all evangelical duties; and they despise them all through their pride, or neglect them through their spiritual sloth that they are given up unto. Such persons as these, if they meet with any thing that mates f9 their confidence, fall at once under the power of the next temptation they are assaulted withal.

Wherefore, whereas the generality of professed Christians are influenced, one way or other, by this woful security, it is no wonder if they are surprised and hurried away from their profession by seducers, or that they will be easily carried down the stream when they fall into a general inclination unto a defection.

V. Love of this present world and the perishing satisfactions of it betrays innumerable souls into frequent apostasies from the gospel. So the apostle assures us in the instance of Demas: 2 Timothy 4:10, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." And as he forsook the apostle, so also the work of the ministry, and it may be Christianity therewithal. I shall not insist on that love of the world which works by covetousness in the course of men's lives, though this be a means also disposing them unto apostasy; for our Savior affirms that the "seed which falls among thorns is choked," — the word which is received by men whose hearts are filled with the cares of this present world never comes to the perfection of fruit-bearing. I shall only make mention of two seasons wherein the predominancy of this love in the hearts of men multiplies apostates from the truth. The first is that of persecution, wherein the professors compared by our Savior unto the stony ground do presently fall away. "Such persons," saith he, "have no root in themselves, but, during for a while, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, they are offended," Matthew 13:20-21. The first thing that persecution attacks the minds of men withal is their secular interests in this world; their wealth, their houses, lands, and possessions, are put into hazard by it. Willing, it may be, this sort of men are to follow Christ for a while, with the young man in the gospel; but when they hear that all they have will be hazarded, it may be must be parted withal, they go away sorrowful. Sorry they are for a while to leave that word or doctrine which before they had received with joy, as Matthew 13:20, but sorrowful as they are, love of the world overcomes all other considerations, and away they go. What multitudes such seasons have driven from the truth, what stars they have cast down from heaven, no nation hath had greater experience than our own in the days of Queen Mary. I pray God it never meet with another trial, and also hope that it is not likely so to do! The other season when love of the world gives up men unto this fatal evil is, when and where superstition and error are enthroned. We may look into some foreign nations where the gospel had once taken great place, especially a great part of the nobles were obedient unto the faith; but the supreme power of the nations abiding in the hands of those of the Roman profession, and therewith the disposal of authority, riches, and honor, those vain bubbles of the world, and idols of corrupted minds, it is known what influence it hath had upon the profession of religion, most of the posterity of those great and truly noble persons which once professed the protestant religion being in most places fallen back into the old apostasy: for, their minds being filled with the love of this world, and precipitated by ambition into a fierce pursuit of their desires, finding the way to worldly honor and wealth shut up unto all that would steadfastly adhere unto the truth, they have generally sacrificed their convictions, consciences, and souls, unto this predominant lust. And such a season as this is more to be feared than persecution itself. Many have a generous stoutness not to be violently forced out of their persuasion and profession; but when these cursed baits are laid before men, with various pretenses to stifle their consciences and advantages to keep up their reputation, there is no setting up a dam against the torrent of their love of this world. The warmth of the sun caused him to cast away his garment which the blustering of the wind did but wrap closer about him. The rays of power in honors and favors have made more cast away their religion in the neighboring nations than persecutors ever could do. Whilst, therefore, the world is enthroned in the minds of men, whilst it is made their idol, whilst hopes of advance and

fears of loss are the principal affections whereby their course of life is steered, profession of the truth stands upon very uncertain and ticklish terms. And therefore, whilst we see that the minds of multitudes are under the power of this lust, all the security which can be had of their continuance in the profession of the truth is their not being led into either of the temptations mentioned.

I shall not insist on other depraved affections of the minds of men. The truth is, there is no one prevalent lust, no one predominant sin no spiritual or moral disorder indulged unto, but it disposeth the soul first unto an under-valuation and then to a relinquishment of the truth, as occasions are offered.

VI. The hand of Satan is in this matter. He was the head of the first apostasy from God. Having himself fallen away from that place and order in the obediential part of the creation wherein he was made, the first work he engaged in (and he did it effectually) was, to draw mankind into the guilt of the same crime and rebellion; and ever since the revelation of the means of recovery for man (from which he was justly excluded), he hath pursued the same design towards all unto whom that way of recovery is proposed. Thus he quickly carried away the whole old world upon the matter into idolatry. And ever since God hath been pleased to make known the way of life and salvation by Jesus Christ, his two great designs and works in the world have been to keep men off from receiving the gospel, and to turn them aside who have received it. The first he managed two ways, — first, by stirring up raging, bloody persecutions against them that professed it, to deter others from engaging into the like way; and the other, by blinding the eyes of men, and filling them with prejudices against the truth, as the apostle declares, 2 Corinthians 4:4. By what ways and means in particular he carried on this first design, in both parts of it, belongs not unto our present inquiry. Failing herein, his principal design in the world hath been, and continueth yet to be, the corrupting of the minds of men about the truth, and drawing them off from it, in part or in whole. So the apostle intimates, 2 Corinthians 11:3, "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." It was the serpent by whom Eve was beguiled, but who is it the apostle is jealous that the Corinthians might have their minds corrupted by, from the simplicity that is in Christ; that is, by false doctrine, or, as it were, "another gospel," as he speaks, 2 Corinthians 11:4? It was the same serpent, by himself and in his agents, as he expresseth it, 2 Corinthians 11:14-15. And he compareth his attempt to draw off professors from the gospel unto his attempt on Eve, whereby he began the apostasy from God in the state of nature. The tenor of the covenant was proposed unto our first parents in the prohibition of eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the threatening annexed thereunto; and he beguiled Eve by corrupting the threatening by his false interpretation of it, whereby he corrupted her mind. The tenor of the covenant of grace is proposed unto us principally in the promises of the gospel, which are the center of the whole doctrine of it. These, therefore, he endeavors by all means to pervert, in opposition unto the wisdom and grace of God in them. Hereby he hopes to draw off men from the simplicity that is in Christ, or the plain declaration of the will of God in the gospel, unto false and foolish imaginations of his own suggestion. And what a hand he was to have in the great apostasy the apostle foretells, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. There was to be the working of Satan in it, and strong or effectual delusions, unto the belief of lies; which are all from him, who is the father of them. So men departed from the faith by "giving heed to seducing spirits," 1 Timothy 4:1, — that is, to the devil and his agents. It would be too long a digression, to engage into a particular inquiry how, by what

ways and means, Satan prevails with men to turn them off from the truth, and turn them unto fables. How he blinds their minds, how he inflames their lusts, how he presents occasions, how he suggests temptations, with false and corrupt reasonings; what colors and pretenses he puts upon his designs when he transforms himself into an angel of light; with what power, signs, and lying wonders, he gives countenance to his delusions; how he works on the minds of seducers, how on the minds of them that are to be seduced; how he stirs up persecution against the truth and its profession, — would require a discourse, fully to declare, longer than the whole of this is designed to be. It may suffice to know that he is not weary nor wanting unto any of those manifold advantages which are administered unto him. He is at work in all places at this day; in some, making havoc of the churches; in others, by various wiles and artifices, filling the minds of men with prejudices against the truth, and turning them from it.

Lastly, God doth not look on all these things as an unconcerned spectator. He, indeed, "is not tempted with evil;" he tempteth none, he seduceth none; but he rules them all, and overrules all events unto his own glory. He will not suffer men first to undervalue and despise, and then to reject and forsake, the chiefest of his mercies, such as his word and truth are, without reflecting on them with some acts of his severity. Wherefore, when men, from the corrupt principles mentioned, seduced by the lusts of their own hearts and entangled by the deceits of Satan, do relinquish the truth, God, in his holy, righteous judgment, gives them up unto farther delusions, so that they shall complete their apostasy, and grow obstinate therein unto their destruction. When a people, a nation, a church, or private persons, have received the gospel and the profession thereof, not walking answerably thereunto, God may forsake them, and withdraw from them the means of their edification and preservation. The rule of his continuance with any people or church, as to the outward dispensation of his providence and the means of grace, is that expressed 2 Chronicles 15:2, "The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." He judicially forsakes them by whom he is wilfully forsaken.

God may be forsaken by men in one way, and he may righteously forsake them in another. For instance; under the profession of the truth, men may give up themselves unto all ungodliness and unrighteousness, unto a flagitious course of life in all abominations, so holding the truth captive in unrighteousness. In this case God oftentimes, in a way of punishment, gives men up unto an apostasy from the truth which they have professed, to show that he will not always have it prostituted unto the lusts of men. So the apostle speaks expressly, 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. Although they received the truth in the profession of it, yet they loved it not; they yielded not obedience unto it, but took pleasure in sin: therefore God ordered things so that they should reject the truth itself also, and believe lies, unto their own destruction. Herein at this day lies the danger of a total and ruinous apostasy. Multitudes, the generality of all sorts, the body of the people, do yet assent unto and profess the truth; but, alas! what are the lives and conversations of many under that profession? How do all manner of sins abound among us! The profession of the truth by not a few is the greatest dishonor and disparagement that can be cast upon it. The best service many can do it is by forsaking it, and declaring that the belief of it is inconsistent with their cursed wicked lives. And may we not justly fear lest such persons should speedily be given up, by one means or other, to "strong delusion, to believe a lie," unto their just damnation? And on the other hand, also, God sometimes gives men up to sins and wickednesses in practice, because of the rejection of the truth which they have received. So he dealt with them who liked not those notions

of truth which they had concerning him, his being and his providence, from the light of nature, Romans 1:28. And so he usually deals with all apostates. If they will forsake the truth, they shall forsake righteousness and holiness, which are the proper fruits of it, and be given up unto all abominable lusts and practices.

We may therefore inquire by what ways and means God doth so punish and revenge the beginnings of wilful apostasy from the gospel, so that men shall complete them and prove obstinate in them unto their eternal destruction. And this he doth, —

First, By removing his candlestick from among them. This the Lord Jesus threatens his backsliding church withal, Revelation 2:5. God will, by one means or another, deprive them of the light and means of the knowledge of the truth, so that ignorance and darkness shall cover them and irresistibly increase upon them. Some of the instruments of light, it may be, shall be taken away by death, and some shall lie under prejudices; the gifts of the Spirit shall be restrained or withheld from others, that they shall have darkness for vision, and "the sword of the LORD shall be upon their right eye, that it shall be quite dried up." In this condition of things, the minds of apostates, already bent upon backsliding, are, by their ignorance and darkness, more and more filled with prejudices against the truth, and alienated from it; for as they lose the knowledge and faith of any part of truth, their minds are possessed with what is opposite thereunto.

Secondly, In this condition God "sends them strong delusion, that they may believe a lie," 2 Thessalonians 2:11. God is, as it were, now resolved on the end of these persons, — what they have righteously deserved; and therefore he makes use of any means, as it is merely penal, to bring them thereunto. And as by the former act of his displeasure he took from them the knowledge of his truth, so by this he gives them up irrecoverably to adhere unto alia They shall not only profess it, but believe it; which is the cruellest slavery the mind of man is capable of. Now, God's sending on men "strong delusion, that they may believe a lie," consists in these things: —

Delivering them up to the power of Satan. He is the grand seducer, the deluder of the souls of men, the first author of lying, whose principal design it is to win over the faith and assent of men thereunto. This work he stands continually ready for, but that God is pleased to limit, bound, and restrain him, with respect unto those who are yet under his especial care. But as to these apostates, God breaks down all his fences about them, and by his efficacious permission suffers Satan to act his part to the utmost for their delusion. This was the state of things under the papal apostasy, wherein Satan had deluded men, as it should seem, to the satisfaction of his utmost malice; and to show how absolute he was in his success, he did, as it were, make sport with the deluded souls of men. There was nothing so foolish and sottish that he did not impose on their credulity. Many volumes will not contain the stories of those ridiculous follies which he so imposed on the minds of poor deluded mortals, wherein he seemed to sport himself in the misery of blinded mankind. God grant that he never receive a commission to act the same part among us, whose sins seem to cry aloud for it, and men live as if they longed to be again given up to the power of the devil!

By suffering seducers and false teachers to come among a people with such advantageous outward circumstances as shall further their success. These seducers prepare themselves for their work by their own inclinations and the suggestions of Satan; but God, for the executing of his just displeasure, will, by his providence, put advantages into their hands of prevailing over the minds of

men. So the chief seducers in the world at this day, — namely, the pope and those acting with or under him, — have possessed such place and obtained such reputation among men as gives them oftentimes an uncontrollable success in their work. Did men stand upon even ground with them who were in the profession of the truth, should any so come unto them to persuade them unto the errors, superstitions, and idolatry of the Papacy, they could not but despise their offer; but these men having once gotten the name of "The temple of God," and showing themselves to the people in the stead and place of God, what could they not draw and seduce them unto? Neither is their superstition or profession continued on any other grounds on the minds of the multitude, but only by that power over the consciences of men which names, titles, and the places they seem to possess in the church, do give unto them. Then, therefore, doth God give up men to delusions, when in his providence he affords such advantages unto them by whom they are to be deluded; for those who possess the places of outward veneration may lead a backsliding multitude unto what they please.

Lastly, God doth judicially smite such persons with blindness of mind and hardness of heart, that they shall not see, nor perceive, nor understand, even when the means of light and truth are proposed unto them. This effect of God's severity is declared, Isaiah 6:9-10; and application is made of it unto the Jews under the ministry of our Savior himself, John 12:39-41, and that of the apostles, Acts 28:25-27, and is expounded, Romans 11:7-8. When things are come to this issue; when God subducts the means of grace from men in whole or in part, or as unto their efficacy; when he permits Satan to deceive them by strong delusions; and, moreover, himself smites them with hardness of heart and blindness of mind, — then is the state of such apostates miserable and irrecoverable. We are not, therefore, to think it strange that the light of the gospel diffuses itself no more in the world, — that so eminent a stop is put unto its progress. God hath put an end unto his gracious dealings with some kinds of apostates, and they are reserved for another dispensation of his providence.

These are some of the general principles of that defection which is in the world from the mystery and truth of the gospel, with the reasons and causes of them; unto which more, I doubt not, of the like nature may be added. But there is, moreover, a particular consideration to be had of those especial truths which any turn away from, and the imaginations they fall into; whereof the especial grounds and reasons, super-added unto those we have considered, as equally respecting every kind of defection from the gospel, are also to be inquired into; and it shall be done in one instance among ourselves.

## 03A.07. CHAPTER 7.

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### CHAPTER 7.

INSTANCE OF A PECULIAR DEFECTION FROM THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL; WITH THE REASONS OF IT.

BESIDES the reasons insisted on, which have a general influence into all apostasies from the doctrine or mystery of the gospel, each especial defection in every kind hath reasons and causes peculiarly suited unto its rise and furtherance. There are, indeed, not a few who forsake the truth which they have professed merely on the impressions of outward circumstances, in the encouraging examples of some who go before them in the same paths, from whom they expect advantage. And every age giveth us, in one place or another, renewed evidence, that, — where either secular interest or weariness of the truth, through the love of the present world and hatred of holiness or strict evangelical obedience, doth give a propensity unto a declension from any doctrines of the gospel unto persons whose grandeur and outward advantages are sufficient to attract a compliance from the minds of men under the power of ambition, or any importunate desire of earthly things, — multitudes of all sorts suppose there is nothing left for them but to crowd who shall come nearest the leaders in the apostasy. And it is not seldom that, meeting with new temptations, they outrun both them and themselves also into such extremes as at first they designed not; for hence it is that so many do even at present issue their recessions from the truth, under the conduct of those "ignes fatui" or erratic exhalations of countenance and favor, in the undesigned bogs of Popery on the one hand, or Socinianism on the other. But I shall not at present take them into farther consideration; nor, indeed, are they worthy of any at all whose minds are visibly biassed, in the profession of things spiritual and heavenly, with those that are earthly and carnal.

They are of another sort from whom we may take an instance of the especial reasons of a peculiar defection from the gospel; for it is manifest how some among ourselves are fallen off from the whole mystery of it, with respect unto the person and grace of Christ, the satisfaction for sin made by his death, the atonement by the blood of his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and sanctification by his Spirit. If any shall think themselves unduly charged herein, they may be pleased to know that none are intended but those who are really guilty. Whosoever owns the things mentioned, though he will causelessly make use of peculiar words of his own for their expression, neither scriptural nor proper, nor such as believers have in former ages been accustomed unto, yet whilst the things themselves are believed and received, at present we lay nothing to his charge. But unless, to secure a groundless, useless, irrational charity, we wilfully shut our eyes and stop our ears, we cannot avoid the evidence that these things are by many even totally renounced: yea, and this is done by them to the greatest disadvantage of themselves and dishonor of the truth that can be well imagined; for their profession is, that they have tried Christ and the gospel in these things, and find there is nothing in them for which they should abide in the faith of them or place their confidence in them.

I hope none of them have gone unto such length as to cast themselves under the dreadful doom in the apostolical, passage insisted on; but that their condition is dangerous cannot be denied. To prevent the like state in ourselves and others, we may do well to consider what are the true, real, next and immediate springs and reasons of such men's apostasy from the mystery of the gospel, as added unto the general reasons of all apostasy of this kind before mentioned; for so it is, that besides those general reasons and causes which have their efficacy and influence in all apostasies, and must always be considered in this matter, there are also reasons that are peculiar unto every especial instance of backsliding in any kind.

First, Ignorance of the necessity of Jesus Christ and the benefits of his mediation unto life and salvation hath betrayed them first into an indifferency about them, and then into a defection from them. They want a true, and in their own souls a full, conviction of their personal want of these things. Such apostates arise out of loose, notional professors, who never had any sound convictions of the want of Christ, like them [mentioned in] Acts 2:37, or him, Acts 16:30. And although they lived, some of them, a long time in the outward profession that such a conviction of the worth and use of Christ and his grace was necessary unto them that would be saved, yet dare they not own that ever themselves had any such conviction; for if they had, why do they now forsake him as unto those ends for which they were convinced he was so to be desired? That faith alone will never forsake Christ which springs out of or is built on a conviction of the want of him. They who are well and in health will not always esteem the physician.

Unto this conviction of the want of Christ two things are required in all men, according to the measure of the light which they have received: —

The knowledge of the nature, guilt, filth, and desert of sin: for he came to save us from our sins; and no man will look after him to be delivered from he knows not what, or look to the brazen serpent who is not stung. Few have any knowledge hereof but what they cannot avoid, and fewer are sensible of these things in a due manner. The great design of Satan at this day in the world is, to extenuate sin in opinion, and so countenance it in practice. Indeed, it ever was so; but it is in a peculiar manner at present visible and open, though the conspiracy be so strong that a public resistance unto it is scarcely maintainable. His aim in it is, and ever was, to take off from the necessity and usefulness of Christ and his grace, against which his malice is principally bent; and when once he can convey away the relief, he will be ready enough to aggravate the evil. Hence are those opinions so diligently advanced and greedily embraced against the guilt and power of original sin and the depravation of our nature, wherein men of all sorts conspire. Whatever some men may design, his end in them all is no other but to prevent a conviction of the want we have of Christ. So, also, are sins in practice extenuated; spiritual sins against the gospel are made nothing of, yea, laughed at, and immoralities against the law are lightly esteemed and easily passed over. To take off at present a sense of the want of Christ, and to make way for future apostasy, is the end of these and the like corrupt opinions. Accordingly it is come to pass in the world. Never was there less regard of the person and offices of Christ, of his grace, and benefits of his mediation, among them that are called Christians, than is found among many at this day. Unless God graciously relieve, the world is like to lose Christ out of the gospel, as to the true glory of his person and use of his mediation. Thus was it with the generality of them concerning whom we speak. They never had a thorough practical conviction of the want of Christ; for if they had had, they would not so shamefully have left him as they have done. The general notions they had

hereof serve only to entitle them unto a defection I know these things are despised by many, unto whom the want of Christ and the receiving of him, or an interest in him, are contemptible things. But that is all one. We must not forego the gospel, with our own experience, and ruin our souls, to escape their reproaches. Sin will be sin, and Christ will be Christ, and salvation by him will be what it is, when they have done what they can.

Hereunto is required a knowledge and sense of the weakness of the best of our duties, and their utter insufficiency to abide the trial in the sight of God. Without the former we cannot have, and without the latter we can never abide in, a sense of the want of Christ. A right consideration of the instability of our minds in them, the weak actings of grace for the most part, the weariness of the flesh that accompanies them, secret impressions from self, and inward oppositions from sin, that attend them, with the greatness and holiness of God with whom we have to do in them, is indispensably necessary to keep the Lord Christ and his grace always desirable unto us. Want hereof makes some dream of a perfection in themselves, and others of a justification by their own obedience; the first tending to the contempt, the latter unto the neglect, of Christ and his grace. This is the beginning of transgression unto many apostates. They never had a due sense of the want of Christ, either as to their deliverance from the guilt of sin, or as to the procuring of a righteousness wherewith they might appear in the presence of God. This are they to inquire after who shall endeavor their recovery. To contend with them about their own imaginations is, for the most part, endless and fruitless. Let it be inquired whether they ever had any conviction of the want of Christ for the pardon of sin, or for the obtaining of life and salvation. If they shall grant they had, it may be asked why they do not make use of him unto the ends with respect whereunto they were convinced of the want of him; and if they do so, we have no contest with them in this matter. If they acknowledge that they never had any such conviction, this is that which we are to confirm, that such a conviction of the want of Christ is indispensably necessary unto the salvation of all that are adult; and herein we have the testimony, upon the matter, of the whole Scripture, the law and the gospel, to confirm the truth we contend for. Want, therefore, hereof was one spring of this defection. For those who have owned the necessity of him, or an interest in him, for the ends mentioned, and afterward declare that there is nothing of goodness or truth in what they have found and discovered for which they should continue so to do, their profession is, that they have considered this matter, known it, and do condemn it; wherein the formal nature of apostasy doth consist. And all those disciples which they draw after them, they do it by hiding from them, or drawing them off from, any sense of a want of Christ or of his mediation. That which is the foundation of our profession, in opposition hereunto, which we lay the weight of all our eternal concerns upon, is, that without Christ, before we receive him as set forth by God to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, we are in a lost, undone, and accursed condition; that our closing with him, our believing in him, is upon a conviction of our want of him for life, righteousness, and acceptance with God, both before and after believing. And it is in vain for Satan himself to attempt the faith of God's elect herein. A concurrence of plain revelation and evident experience is invincible. But he who never knew, who never was made deeply sensible of, the want of an interest in Christ, will never persevere in the pin, suit of it, nor abide in what he hath attained, when attacked by any vigorous temptation.

Secondly, Want of a spiritual view of the excellency of Christ, both in his person and offices, is another spring and cause of this declension from the faith of the gospel. This view of him in types,

shadows, and promises, was the life of the faith of the saints under the old testament. Herein "Abraham saw his day, and rejoiced," John 8:56. So Song of Solomon 2:8, Song of Solomon 2:17. And it is mentioned as their chiefest privilege, Isaiah 33:17. These things they diligently inquired into, 1 Peter 1:11, and longed after, desiring, if it were possible, to see them, Matthew 13:17; for the glory and life of all religion, of all intercourse with God, lay in them from the giving of the first promise. Christ was "all and in all" unto them, no less than unto us. Take a respect unto him and his offices out of the old administrations, and they are things of no value or signification. And it was better for them who were inquiring after Christ diligently under dark types and shadows, than it will be for those among us who shut their eyes at the glorious light of the gospel. And the reason why he was rejected by the Jews at his coming (for "he came unto his own, and his own received him not," John 1:11), was, because they could "see neither form, nor comeliness, nor beauty in him, why he should be desired," Isaiah 53:2. None can or will abide constant in his doctrine who is not able spiritually to discern the glory of his person and offices. Hence the apostles lay it down as the foundation of their faith, that "they beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," John 1:14; and that which they had in themselves they endeavored to communicate unto others, that they also might believe through their word, and have fellowship with him, 1 John 1:3. So he himself makes this the foundation of his church, the rock upon which he will build it; for on the confession of Peter that he was "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (which expresseth the glory both of his person as the Son of the living God, and of his offices as the Christ), he says, "On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Matthew 16:16-18. Whosoever builds not hereon builds on the sand, and will be prevailed against. So our apostle declares that those that hold him not as the Head will be beguiled, and vainly puffed up by their fleshly minds, falling into foolish errors and vain curiosities, Colossians 2:18-19. And he rests the whole foundation of all gospel faith in this glory of his person and offices, Hebrews 1:2-3; Colossians 1:15-19. It is this knowledge of him alone that will make us disesteem and despise all other things in comparison of him, Php 3:8-10.

Wherefore, a spiritual view of him, an acquaintance with him, as "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," as him in whom all the perfections of the divine nature, as wisdom, goodness, and grace, do center, as to their manifestation, even in the union of his natures, the glory of his offices, the suitableness of his person and grace unto all the wants and desires of the souls of men, is indispensably necessary unto our preservation from apostasy. And I could easily manifest by particular instances that a failing herein hath had a principal and prevalent influence into all the apostasies that have been in the Christian world, both as unto faith and worship. It is, though a new, yet a most wicked attempt that Satan is making by some against the whole of our religion; whilst allowing his person to be what it is (which for secular ends they dare not deny), they endeavor to render him of little or no use in our profession. This is to "fight neither against small nor great, but against the King of Israel;" and if such serpentine attempts be not prevented, the public profession of religion among us will issue in atheism, or somewhat of a near alliance thereunto.

Thus it seems to be with some of them of whom we speak. They had, among other notional professors, an historical knowledge of Christ, and thereof made profession, but they were never spiritually acquainted with the glorious excellencies of his person and offices; for if they had, they would not have forsaken the "great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh," for other

uncouth notions of their own. Who can think it possible that any one who hath known the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, the Son of God incarnate, receiving our nature into a hypostatical union with himself and a blessed subsistence in his own person, as proposed unto us in the gospel, as evidently therein crucified before our eyes, as the apostle and high priest of our profession, as our advocate with the Father, as making peace for us and reconciliation through the blood of his cross, as made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; — who that ever had experience or benefit, in his temptations and trials, of his love, care, tenderness, compassion, readiness and ability to succor them that come to God by him, — can renounce all these things, to betake himself to vain notions of a light and perfection of his own in their stead? I hope they are few who do so practically, but the expressions of many have a dangerous aspect that way; and it is certain there is nothing more necessary unto all that are called Christians than to have clear, distinct notions in themselves of the person of Christ, and plainly to declare how they place their whole faith, hope, and trust in him. And for such as really do so, though not able to express themselves in a due manner, yea, though unduly captivated unto some novel conceptions and expressions, the good Lord pardon them, and let mercy and peace be on them, and on the whole Israel of God! Whereas, therefore, some who have made a profession of these things do now relinquish them, I shall pray they may take heed that they do not thereby "crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Neither is it a verbal acknowledgment, in owning that Christ which suffered at Jerusalem, which will free any from this charge and guilt. Unless the Lord Christ, that Christ which is God and man in one person, be owned, received, believed in, loved, trusted unto, and obeyed in all things, as he is proposed unto us in the Scripture, and with respect unto all the ends of righteousness, holiness, life, and salvation, for which he is so proposed, he is renounced and forsaken. Who can sufficiently express the cunning sleights of Satan? who can sufficiently bewail the foolishness of the hearts of men, that after they have, at least doctrinally, known and professed these things, they should be turned aside from the glory, truth, and holiness of them? Let Christians therefore know and beware, that if they find any decay in faith, love, delight, and trust in the person and mediation of Christ, they are in the way that leads to some cursed apostasy of one kind or another. But where the divine person of Christ is denied, or all acquaintance with him is despised; where the communication of grace from him unto believers is scorned; where no use by faith of his love, care, compassion, and power, as our high priest and advocate with the Father, in our duties, sins, temptations, and sufferings, is allowed, — we need not represent the danger of falling into apostasy; such persons are already in the depth of it. I speak this with the more earnestness, because, of all the evils which I have seen in the course of my pilgrimage (now hastening unto its period), there hath been none more grievous than the public contempt I have lived to see cast on the person of Christ, as to its concernment in our religion, and the benefits we receive from him. But God taketh care of these things.

Thirdly, Want of experience of the power and efficacy of the Spirit and grace of Christ, of his life and death, for the mortification of sin, hath been another spring of this apostasy. How it is wrought by these means, and can be no otherwise accomplished, I have showed elsewhere at large, and must not here assume the same argument again; only, two things may be observed concerning this work and duty: as, —

It is that wherein or whereunto the greatest wisdom and exercise of faith doth consist, or is required. It is a matter purely evangelical, to derive strength and ability from Christ for the mortification of sin, by virtue of his death, in a way of believing. Unenlightened reason can neither see nor understand any thing of this matter; yea, it is foolishness unto it, as are all other mysteries of the gospel. There is not any other way for the same end which it will not more willingly embrace.

It is a work and duty whereunto there is a great reluctancy in the flesh, in corrupted nature. There is nothing it had rather be freed from, and that whether we respect the inward nature of it or the constant continuance in it that is required of us. Yet is it such as that without it we can never attain life and salvation; for "if we by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, we shall live," and not otherwise. Wherefore, when men once begin to be sensible of the powerful inward workings of sin, they will take one of these two ways, nor can they do otherwise: for either they will yield themselves up "servants unto sin," and make "provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof," according as they are able, and as far as consists with their secular interest, as do the most; or they will betake themselves to some way or other for its restraint and mortification, either in part or in whole. And here many things will present themselves unto such persons, some, it may be, of their own devising, and some of God's appointment, but for other ends than what they apply them unto. Hence multitudes faint in this work, and at length utterly give it over. They begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh; for, not striving lawfully nor in the right way, sin gets ground and strength against them, and they yield up themselves to the service of it. Hence have we so many who, having under their convictions contended against their lusts in their youth, do give up themselves unto them in their age. But so it is in this matter, that those who, through their unbelief, cannot rise or attain unto an experience of the power and efficacy of the grace of Christ for the mortification of sin will betake themselves to somewhat else for their relief; and this is that principally which hath brought forth that light within among some, which must do all this work for them, and much more. If any will betake themselves thereunto, they shall find that remedy against sin, and that perfection of holiness, in a few days, which they had been looking for from Christ a long season to no purpose. So would they have us to think who, it may be, never had experience what it is to derive spiritual strength from Christ, or to wait on him for it; only they have been wearied by the successlessness of their convictions, and the burdensomeness of lifeless duties. For some of them were for a season not only sober in their conversation (which I hope they yet continue to be), but diligent in duties of religion; but finding neither life, power, nor success in them, through their own uncured unbelief, they seem to have grown weary of them: for nothing is more grievous than the outward form of spiritual duties where there is no experience of inward power and sweetness. Wherefore, the corrupt minds of men will be ready to relinquish them for any thing that pretends a better relief.

What was the reason that so many in the Papacy betook themselves to penances, severe disciplines, and self-macerations, for the relief of their consciences with respect unto the mortification of sin? It all sprang from this root, or ignorance of the power and efficacy of the Spirit and grace of Christ for that end. Somewhat must be done unto this purpose, and not knowing the right way and gospel method of it, they betook themselves unto what they could invent, or what was imposed on them by the superstition of others, that pretended to afford them a relief. Somewhat hereof those among us seemed for a while to make an appearance of, in an outward gravity and seeming austerity of life; but the things themselves they had no mind unto, as not compliant with other interests they had to pursue. But the light within shall do all of this kind for

them; wherefore, in comparison thereof, and as unto this end at least, they reject the Lord Christ, and do what in them lies to "put him to an open shame;" for what do they less who declare that that is done in a few days for them by another means which could not be effected by the faith which for so long a season they professed in him? But the cause of the whole lies solely in their own ignorance and want of experience of the things which themselves professed.

Fourthly, Ignorance of the righteousness of God hath been another spring of this apostasy. This the apostle expressly declares to be the reason why men go about to establish a righteousness of their own: Romans 10:3, "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." And this he speaks of the Jews, and that the best of them, who "followed after the law of righteousness, but sought it as it were by the works of the law," Romans 9:31-32. Of all men they thought themselves most knowing of the "righteousness of God;" for they "made their boast of God, and knew" (as they thought and professed) "his will, and approved the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and were confident that they themselves were guides of the blind, and the light of them which are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, and teachers of babes, having the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law," Romans 2:17-20. Yet these men submitted not unto the righteousness of God, but went about to establish their own righteousness, because they were ignorant of the righteousness of God. And wheresoever this ignorance is, men will do so.

Take the "righteousness of God" in any sense wherein it is mentioned in the Scripture, and this event will follow upon the ignorance thereof; for it must be either the righteousness that is in him, or the righteousness he requires of us in the law, or the righteousness he hath provided for us in the gospel. Consider it any of these ways, and the ignorance of it is that which countenanceth men in betaking themselves unto a righteousness of their own, yea, unavoidably casteth them upon it; for, —

A right understanding of the infinite purity, the glorious essential holiness, of the nature of God, of his absolute eternal righteousness as the Lord and judge of all, will teach men what apprehensions they ought to have of any thing done in them or by them. "Our God is a consuming fire," Hebrews 12:29; "a God of purer eyes than to behold evil," Habakkuk 1:13; "who will by no means clear the guilty," Exodus 34:7; "whose judgment it is, that they which commit sin are worthy of death," Romans 1:32; "an holy God, a jealous God, who will not forgive transgressions and sins," Joshua 24:19. Whilst the dread and terror of the excellency of his holiness and righteousness is before men, they will not easily betake themselves and their trust unto a righteousness of their own. There are two sorts of persons that the Scripture represents under an apprehension of this righteousness of God. The first are, convinced, guilty sinners; and the other, humble, holy believers. And what thoughts of themselves each sort is thereon filled withal it doth declare. For the former sort, we have an instance in Adam, Genesis 3:10; in others, Isaiah 33:14, as also Micah 6:6-7. The sum is, they can think of nothing, have no other conceptions in their minds, but how either they may flee from him and hide themselves, or feign to themselves impossible ways of atonement, or be swallowed up in horror and despair. Send them in this condition unto a righteousness of their own, and they will easily understand you do but reproach their misery. And for the other sort, or humble, holy believers, we may see also how on this occasion they express themselves in this matter, Job 4:17-19, Job 9:2; Psalms 130:3, Psalms 143:2. They all jointly

acknowledge that, such is the glorious holiness and righteousness of God, such the imperfection of our righteousness and impurity of our works, there is no appearance or standing before him on their account. It is the want of a due meditation hereon that hath produced the many presumptuous opinions in the world concerning the justification of sinners. The Scripture, speaking of justification, directs us to conceive it "in God's sight," Psalms 143:2, or "before him," Romans 3:20; teaching us that in this matter we should set ourselves as in the presence and under the eye of this holy God, and then consider on what ground we may stand before him. But when men are "ignorant of the righteousness of God," when they have secret thoughts that he is "altogether such an one as themselves," as the psalmist speaks, — that is, one who is either not so holy in himself as is pretended, or one who doth not require a suitableness in us unto his holiness, but is little concerned in our duties, less in our sins, — is it any wonder if men think they can of themselves do that which is satisfactory unto him, and so "go about to establish their own righteousness?" And this way even in teaching have some betaken themselves unto. They endeavor to satisfy their disciples that there is no such severity in God against sin as some pretend, no such holiness in his nature as necessarily to infer an indignation against every sin; that they are but vain frights and needless disquietments which either their own consciences or the preaching of some men do put them unto. And if they can prevail to be credited herein, there is no doubt but that those whom they so persuade will be pleased with their own righteousness: but whether God, in this matter of justification, will be pleased with it or no is not so easy to be determined.

And hence it is that all opinions of a self-righteousness, or justification by works, have always produced licentiousness of life, though they who assert it clamorously pretend to the contrary. So when a righteousness of works was absolutely enthroned in the Papacy, before the Reformation, the lives of the generality of men were flagitiously wicked, and most of the good works that were performed amongst them were but barterings with God and conscience for horrible vices and impieties. According, also, unto the growth of the same opinion, in its various degrees, among us, is the progress of all sorts of impiety and licentiousness of life. And if the masters of these opinions would but open their eyes, they would see that whereas they assert their justification by works under a pretense of a necessity so to do, for the maintenance of holiness and righteousness among men, unholiness, unrighteousness, intemperance of life, and all abominations, do grow upon them, such as were not heard of in former days among them who made any profession of religion. And the reason hereof is, because the very same notions of God which will allow men to suppose that they may be justified in his sight by their own duties, will also accommodate their lusts with several apprehensions that he will not be so severe against their sins as is supposed. However, this is plain in matter of fact, that the opinion of self-righteousness and looseness of conversation in the practice of sin have gone together generally, from the days of the Pharisees to this present season. And as this proud conceit receives daily advancement in several degrees, under various pretenses, it is to be feared the world will be more and more filled with the bitter fruits thereof. It is grace, and the doctrine of it, as well as its power, that must put a stop to sin. He that drives men into a righteousness of their own at one door opens another unto their sins. And all that we have got hitherto by fierce disputations about justification as it were by works, is only that the faith of some hath been weakened, the peace of multitudes disquieted, differences increased, without the least evidence of holiness improved or the vices of men reformed by them. And it will not be granted that the strictest professors in these days (whether they have imbibed these opinions or no) do in real holiness and fruitfulness of life exceed those of the foregoing age, who

firmly, and without hesitation, trusted unto the Lord Christ alone for life, righteousness, and salvation.

Suppose the righteousness God requires of us in the law to be intended; the ignorance thereof also is a great reason why men venture on a righteousness of their own, and go about to establish it. Were they indeed acquainted with the purity, spirituality, severity, and inexorableness of the law, they would never be possessed with imaginations that the perfection which they dream of in themselves would endure its trial. But when men shall suppose that the law respects only outward duties, and those also of the greatest notoriety, as to sin and obedience, and can relieve themselves in sundry things by pharisaical distinctions and expositions of it; when they consider not, or understand not, the extent of it, — unto an exacting of the entire image of God in us, wherein we were created, unto the regulating of all the frames, figments, and first motions of the heart, and its application of the curse unto the least deviation from it, — they may please or some way satisfy themselves by establishing a righteousness of their own, as it were by the works of the law.

But the "righteousness of God" in this place is taken principally for that righteousness which he hath provided for us in the gospel; and what this is the apostle declares in the next verse: "For," says he, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believeth," Romans 10:4. And this he calls "The righteousness which is of faith," Romans 9:30. Wherefore, the "righteousness of God" is Christ as fulfilling the law and answering the end of it, received by faith. This is that righteousness of God, which whosoever are ignorant of and submit not unto, they will go about to establish a righteousness of their own, and trust unto it. And thus hath it openly and visibly fallen out with them concerning whom we treat. They will not deny but that, under their convictions, they were solicitous after a righteousness with which God might be well pleased; — and if they should deny it, they were not to be believed, because it is impossible it should be otherwise with any in that condition; for conviction is principally a sense of the want of a righteousness. In this state, the gospel which they had, and which it may be they heard preached, presented unto them "Christ as the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believeth," as it is fully declared, Romans 3:21-26, with Romans 5:18-19. This divers of them for a season professed themselves to embrace and acquiesce in. But when things came to the trial, it generally appeared that they had all along been ignorant of this righteousness of God; for they have left it for a righteousness of their own, which, had they truly and really known it, they could not have done. He who hath ever truly and really made Christ the end of the law for righteousness unto himself, by believing, will not cast contempt and scorn upon his righteousness imputed unto us, as is the manner of some to do. But herein is the Son of God in some measure "crucified afresh, and put to an open shame." When men shall profess that they did look after righteousness by him, and would have received him as the end of the law for righteousness, but not finding that therein which they expected, they have betaken themselves to a righteousness wholly within them, and so wholly their own, they will not easily contrive a way whereby they may reflect more dishonor upon him. Whatever pretences may be made to the contrary, whatever maze of words any may lead men into and tire them withal, whatever reviling and reproaching of others they may compass them with, they cannot but know in their own consciences that it is thus with them. Notwithstanding any profession that they ever made, they never did come, nor ever could attain unto, a real knowledge of and acquaintance with this righteousness of God, so as to receive it by faith, and obtain thereby

rest unto their souls. And hence it is that, as unto profession at least, they have betaken themselves unto an endeavor to establish their own righteousness; which, if it produce and effect a real holy conversation and righteousness in them of any long continuance, they are the first in whom it ever had that effect in this world, and will be the last in whom it shall find that success.

Fifthly, Want of submission unto the sovereignty of God hath contributed unto the furtherance of this evil. The sovereignty of God acting itself in infinite wisdom and grace is the sole foundation of the covenant of grace, and runs through the whole mystery of the gospel. Thence proceedeth the incarnation of the Son of God, and his being filled with all grace to be a Savior, John 3:16; Colossians 1:19; John 1:16. Other account thereof none can be given. Thence was his substitution as the surety of the covenant in our stead, to undergo the punishment due to our sins, Isaiah 53:6, Isaiah 53:10; 2 Corinthians 5:21. Eternal election flows from thence, and is regulated thereby, Romans 9:11, Romans 9:18; so doth effectual vocation, Matthew 11:25-26, and justification by faith, Romans 3:30. The like may be said of all other mysteries of the gospel. Love, grace, goodness, dispensed in a way of sovereign, unaccountable pleasure, are in them all proposed as the objects of our faith. The carnal mind is pleased with nothing of all this, but riseth up in opposition unto every instance of it. It will not bear that the will, wisdom, and pleasure of God should be submitted unto and adored in the paths which it cannot trace. Hence the incarnation and cross of the Son of God are foolishness unto it, 1 Corinthians 1:23-25; the decrees of God as to election and reprobation unjust and unequal, overthrowing all religion, Romans 9:17-21; justification through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ that which everts the law, and renders all our own righteousness unnecessary. So in the whole mystery, in all the doctrines, precepts, or promises of the gospel, that spring from or are resolved into the sovereignty of God, — the carnal mind riseth up in opposition unto them all; for whereas the formal nature of faith consisteth in giving glory to God by believing the things that are above reason as it is ours, and against it as it is carnal, Romans 4:18-21, this sets up an enmity unto it in all things. It is therefore always tumultuating against the mysteries of the gospel; and if it once come to make itself the judge of them, taking aid from sensual affections and the vain imaginations of the mind, it will make havoc of all the articles of faith. And thus it seems to have fallen out in this matter. Those concerning whom we treat seem to have cast off a due regard unto the sovereignty of God, because themselves were never bowed by faith savingly thereto. Wherefore, in an opposition unto it, they have set up their light within, as the rule, measure, and judge, of the truths and doctrines of the gospel. Instead of becoming fools, by a resignation of their reason and wisdom to the sovereignty of God, that so they might in the issue be really wise, they have become wise in their own conceit, and have waxed vain in their foolish imaginations. Neither, indeed, is there any broader way of apostasy. from the gospel than a rejection of God's sovereignty in all things concerning the revelation of himself and our obedience, with a refusal to "bring into captivity every thought unto the obedience of faith;" which first brought forth Pelagianism, and of late Socinianism, as hath been showed, from which two the whole of the present defection is derived.

Sixthly, We may add hereunto, as another spring of this partial apostasy, want of an evidence in themselves of the divine authority of the Scriptures. It is not enough, to establish any man in the profession of the gospel, to own in general that the Scripture is the word of God, or a divine revelation of his will. He that hath not an experience of a divine authority in it upon his own soul and conscience will not be steadfast when his trial shall come. God looks with regard unto them

alone who tremble at his word, as owning his present authority in it. Where this doth not abide upon them, "unlearned and unstable men," as the apostle speaks, will be bold to "wrest the Scriptures, to their destruction," or to prefer other things before them, or at least to equalize them with them. It is not, therefore, enough that we assent unto the truth of the word of God, unless also we are sensible of its power, and of that claim which it makes in the name of God to the absolute subjection of our whole souls and consciences unto it. Now, this evidence in themselves of this present; divine authority, differing it unconceivably from all other real or pretended conveyances of truth, these persons either never had or have insensibly lost, or cast off openly the yoke of God therein. Hereon every imagination of their own exalts itself into an equality of right and authority with it. The end of these things is, that God gives men up to "strong delusion, to believe a lie," because they "received not," or retained not, "the truth in the love thereof,"

2 Thessalonians 2:10-11. And when once it comes unto this, it is the work of Satan (which, he easily accomplisheth) both to suggest unto them endless delusions, and to render them so obstinate therein as that they shall despise every thing that is tendered unto conviction. This is the FIRST way whereby men fall away from the gospel, — namely, from the mystery and doctrine of it as it is the object of our faith; wherein they do what in them lies "to crucify the Son of God afresh, and to put him to an open shame."

## 03A.08. CHAPTER 8.

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### CHAPTER 8.

APOSTASY FROM THE HOLINESS OF THE GOSPEL; THE OCCASION AND CAUSE OF IT — OF THAT WHICH IS GRADUAL, ON THE PRETENSE OF SOMEWHAT ELSE IN ITS ROOM.

THERE is, **SECONDLY**, a falling away from the gospel with respect unto the holiness of its precepts, which are to be the matter, as they are the rule, of our obedience. And this also is of a nature no less perilous, and attended with consequents and effects no less dangerous, than the former, and doth no less than that expose the Son of God to open shame: yea, an apostasy from the holiness of the gospel is, on many accounts, more dreadful and dangerous than a partial apostasy from its truth; for as it is more spreading and catholic than that is, and of less observation or esteem, so it is usually more irrecoverable, most men under it being greatly hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Besides, commonness hath taken off the sense of its evil and danger. If there be an error broached against the doctrine of the gospel, it is odds but some or other will take notice of it, confute it, and warn all men of the danger wherewith it is attended; but let the whole world, as it were, lie in evil, let the generality of mankind drown themselves in lusts and pleasures, let the lives and conversations of men be as contrary to the rule of the gospel as darkness is to light, so they make no disorder in this or that way of outward worship, and be either good Catholics or good Protestants, or any thing else of that kind, he shall scarcely escape the censure of peevishness and severity (it may be of self-conceitedness and hypocrisy) who shall reflect any great blame on these things. And yet, notwithstanding this partiality in judgment or practice with respect unto these evils, it is generally acknowledged that it is possible that men may please God and be accepted with him, notwithstanding many mistakes, errors, and misconceptions of their minds about spiritual things: but that any one should ever come unto the enjoyment of him who lives and dies impenitently in any sin, against the rule and tenor of that holiness which the gospel requireth, I know as yet none that pleadeth; for, once to pretend that men may live in, and habitually act any known sin, without striving against it, laboring for repentance, and endeavoring its mortification, is all one as avowedly to attempt the overthrow of Christian religion. Wherefore, on these and sundry other considerations, this latter sort of apostasy from the holiness of the gospel is at least as perilous, as much to be opposed and contended against, as that which is from the mystery and doctrine of it, and that whereof the generality of men are more earnestly to be warned, as the evil whereunto they are more obnoxious than to the other. And we do conjoin both these together, not only as those which are of the same tendency, and do alike both ruin the souls of men and put the Lord Christ to open shame, but also as those concerning which we are forewarned that they shall enter and come into the world together in the "latter times." And whatever sense the "latter times" mentioned in the Scripture may be taken in, either those of the world and of religion in general, or of the particular churches whereunto men may belong, they are unquestionably come upon us; whose danger and duty, therefore, are declared in these pre-admonitions. Wherefore of the first our apostle speaketh, 1 Timothy 4:1, "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits

and doctrines of devils." I doubt not but this prediction had its signal accomplishment in the Papacy, and am well persuaded that the Holy Ghost had respect in particular unto those principles and practices which a learned person of this nation hath laid open, under the title of "The Apostasy of the Latter Times." But we find also, by woful experience, and that renewed almost every day, that it hath respect unto us also and the times wherein we live. The entrance and coming of that kind of apostasy which we have now designed to treat of is in like manner foretold, 2 Timothy 3:1-5. The sum of what the apostle there instructeth us is, That in these "latter times," under an outward profession of the gospel, men should give up themselves unto the pursuit of the vilest lusts and the practice of the most abominable sins. And we fear this prediction is in like manner fulfilled.

Now, although these things are evil and dangerous, both in their own nature and tendency, especially as they come together and make their joint attempt against the honor of Christ and the salvation of the professors of the gospel, yet this prediction of them and pre-admonition concerning them may be of advantage unto them that are sincere and upright, if duly improved. For, —

If this twofold ruinous apostasy will and doth press upon us, on whom the ends of the world are come, we ought surely to stand upon our guard, that we be not surprised with it nor overcome by it. How ought we to "pass the time of our sojourning here in fear!" It was the advice of him whose confidence had like to have been his ruin. It is assuredly no time for any to be careless and secure who design, or so much as desire, to be preserved from this fatal evil. However, we cannot any of us plead that we were not warned of our danger, nor called on for that circumspection and watchfulness, that care and diligence, that earnestness for divine help and assistance, which our condition requireth, and which will be a means of deliverance and safety. And, —

Being found in the way of our own duty, we need not be greatly moved or "shaken in our minds" when we see these things come to pass. It may be a prospect of the state of religion at this day in the world is ready to terrify the minds of some, at least to fill them with amazement; for if things should always so proceed, they may be afraid lest Christian religion should at length lose all its beauty and glory. But these things are all of them punctually foretold, whereby the efficacy of the temptation from their coming to pass is prevented. Yea, considering that all our faith is resolved into the Scripture, and built on the infallibility of its prophecies and predictions, seeing they are foretold, the temptation would be accompanied with more vigor and efficacy if we saw them not come to pass than it is now we do, seeing it is evident from other circumstances that we are fallen into the "latter times," which the accomplishment of these predictions renders unquestionable. See Matthew 24:9-13, Matthew 24:25; Acts 20:29-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-5. And the truth is, there was never any persuasion more pernicious befell the minds of men, than that churches, this or that church, or any church, are not, or is not liable or obnoxious unto these decays, declensions, and apostasies, or that any in them or of them can be preserved from them without the utmost care and diligence in attending unto the means appointed for their preservation. When the Jews fell into such a foolish confidence with respect unto their temple and worship, God was wont to bid them go to Shiloh and see what was become thereof, as assuring them that what fell out in one time and place might do so in another. And we know how it was in this matter with the first Christian churches, and how soon (as hath been declared), Revelation 2:4-5, Revelation 3:1-3, Revelation 3:14-17. We may go to them and learn how vain are all the

pretenses of outward privileges and exemptions; for assuredly, "unless we repent, we shall all likewise perish."

That, therefore, which we shall now inquire into is, the nature, the causes, and occasions, of that apostasy or falling off from the holiness of the gospel, in churches and by particular persons, which is thus foretold to fall out in the "latter times," and hath done so accordingly. And we shall have respect herein Both unto that general apostasy of this kind which fell out in former ages under the conduct of the Roman church principally, and that also which, by various ways and means, is at present prevailing in the world. And some things must be premised unto our consideration hereof:

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The doctrine of the gospel is a doctrine of holiness. This it teacheth, requireth, and commandeth; this the mysteries and grace of it lead unto; this the precepts of it require; and this the great example of its Author, proposed in it unto us, doth enjoin. And it doth not this as that which is convenient for us, or some way or other necessary unto us, but as that without which we can have no interest in any of its promises. No unholy person hath any ground to expect the least advantage by the gospel, here or hereafter. When all things come to their issue, and shall fall under eternal judgment according to the gospel, all other pleas and pretenses will utterly and for ever fail them who are "workers of iniquity," Matthew 7:22-23.

The holiness which the gospel requireth is an obedience of another nature and kind than what is required by any other doctrine or way of instruction. The law of nature continueth to suggest unto us many important duties towards God, ourselves, and other men; the written law is an exact representation of all those moral duties which were required of us in the state wherein we were created; — but there is a holiness required by the gospel, which, although it include these things within the compass of its law and order, yet (on sundry considerations) is of another kind than what is required by those laws, in the manner wherein it is required in them; for it proceedeth from other principles, on another formal reason and motives, hath other essential properties, acts, duties, and ends, than the obedience by them required hath. This hath been so fully evinced in our discourse of the nature and necessity of gospel holiness that it need not be here again insisted on.

Together with the light and doctrine of the gospel, or the preaching of it, there is an administration of the Spirit, to convince men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. This God hath promised, Isaiah 59:21, and this the Lord Christ doth effect wherever the word is orderly dispensed according unto his mind and will, John 16:7-11. Hereby are men wrought upon unto a profession of this holiness, and expression of it in outward duties; for all that religion which hath any thing of truth and reality in it in the world is an effect of the word and Spirit of Christ. Multitudes in all ages have hereby been made really holy, and many yet continue so to be. These (as we believe) shall never fall utterly from it, but shall be preserved by the power of God through faith unto salvation. But yet such as these also may decay as unto degrees in holiness and the fruitfulness of it; and in every such decay there is a partial apostasy and much dishonor unto Jesus Christ; nor doth any man know in that condition but that in the issue, as to his particular, it may be total, and destructive to his soul. Thus was it with those churches and persons whom our Lord Jesus Christ chargeth to have lost their first faith and love, whom he admonisheth to remember whence they are fallen, and to repent. And it is principally for the sake of these, that Christ and the gospel be not dishonored by them nor their eternal concernments hazarded, and those who, in the use of means, are in a thriving

progress towards the same condition, that the ensuing cautions and warnings are prepared. And others there are who are brought only unto a profession of this holiness in inward convictions and outward duties; and although they are not yet arrived unto a full possession of its power and conformity unto its rule, yet are they in the way of attaining thereunto. Such as these may, on various occasions, first decay in their profession and duties, and afterward utterly fall from them into the open service of sin and the world.

Thus also it is with churches. At their first planting, they were set in a pure and holy state as to the doctrine, professed holiness, and worship of the gospel. They were all planted noble vines, wholly of a right seed, however they turn afterwards "into the degenerate plant of a strange vine." They may lose of this order and beauty, part with truth, decay in holiness, and the faithful city thereby become a harlot. How this hath come to pass; how thereby Christianity hath lost its glory, power, and efficacy in the world; how that blessing which it brought along with it unto the nations is lost and forfeited, and by what means, — shall in some principal instances be declared.

Where this holiness is professed, and the power of it evidenced in its fruits, there, and then alone, is Christ glorified and honored in the world. It is true, there are other things that belong unto that revenue of glory which our Lord and King requireth of us, — such are the profession of the truth and observance of the worship of the gospel, — but if these things are disjoined and separated (as they may be) from holy obedience, they no way advance the glory of Christ. But where churches and persons professing the gospel are changed and renewed into the image of God; where their hearts are purified within, and their lives made fruitful without; where they are universally under the conduct of a spirit of peace, love, meekness, benignity, self-denial, heavenly-mindedness, and are fruitful in good works, — in which things and others of an alike nature this holiness doth consist, — there do they make a due representation of the gospel and its Author in the world; then do they evidence the power, purity, and efficacy of his doctrine and grace, whereby he is glorified. Herein doth he "see of the travail of his soul and is satisfied;" this is "his portion and the lot of his inheritance" in this world. But where it is otherwise, where men, where churches, are called by his name, and, under a profession of his authority and expectation of mercy and eternal blessedness from him, do come short of this holiness, and walk in paths contrary unto it, there is the holy Son of God "crucified afresh, and put to an open shame."

These things being premised, way is made for the due consideration of what was before proposed; for whereas there is an open, shameful, manifest apostasy from the holiness of the gospel among the most who are called Christians at this day in the world, it is worth our while to inquire a little into the reasons or causes of it, and the means whereby a stop may be put unto it, or at least particular persons may be preserved from the guilt of it, and the judgments wherein it will issue. If any shall think that there is not such an apostasy in the world, but that the face of things in Europe and among ourselves doth make a due representation of the gospel, and that those things which we hear of and see continually amongst the generality of Christians are the true and genuine effects of the doctrine and principles of our religion, I shall no way contend with them, so as that they will but a little stand out of our way, and not hinder us in our progress.

Now, the apostasy that is in the world from gospel holiness, or evangelical obedience, is of two kinds; for some fall from it as formally such, and others as to the matter of it. Of the first sort are they who would advance another kind of obedience, a course of another sort of duties, or the

same as to the substance of them, but as proceeding from other principles and carried on by other motives than what it requireth, in the stead thereof. Thus it is with many in the world. They pretend unto a strictness in some duties, and a multiplication of others, at least unto a great appearance thereof; but it is hard for any one to discover how that which they do belongeth to evangelical holiness, if its nature depend on evangelical principles and ends. Others fall from it openly and visibly, into a sinful, worldly, flagitious course of life. This is that apostasy which the Christian world groans under at this day, and which, as it is to be feared, will bring the judgments of God upon it. The very profession of piety is much lost, yea, much derided, amongst many. Duties of holiness, strictness of conversation, communication unto edification, are not only neglected, but scorned. It is in many places a lost labor to seek for Christianity among Christians; and the degeneracy seems to be increasing every day. It is the latter of these which I principally intend, as that which is of most universal concernment. But the former also, though under many specious pretenses, being of no less pernicious event unto many, must not be wholly passed by. I shall therefore first give some instances of men's declension from the holy ways of gospel obedience into paths of pretended duties of their own finding out, and add those reasons of their dislike of the good old way which give them occasion so to do.

I. The first and most signal instance of this kind is given us by the Romanists. None boast more than they of holiness, — that is, of their church, making its sanctity a note of its truth. But because the wicked and flagitious lives, not only of the body of the people among them, but of many of their chief rulers and guides, is openly manifest, in the defense of their confident claim, as that alone which will give countenance unto it, they betake themselves unto their votaries, or those who dedicate themselves by vow unto more strict exercises in religion than others attain or are obliged unto; and this sort of people have obtained alone the name and reputation of Religious among them. What is their way and manner of life, what the devotion wherein they spend their hours, what the duties they oblige themselves unto in great variety, and the manner wherein they perform them, I shall take for granted, and pass by as generally known. Many have already discovered the vanity, superstition, and hypocrisy, of the whole outward course wherein they are generally engaged; though they neither do nor ought to judge of the hearts, minds, and state of individuals, unless where by their deeds they manifest themselves. I shall only evince that what at best they pretend unto (though boasted of not only to be all, but more than God requireth of them) is not that holiness or obedience which is prescribed unto us in the gospel, but somewhat substituted in the room of it, and, consequently, in opposition unto it. And, —

It hath not that evidence of spiritual freedom and liberty which gospel holiness, in all the duties of it, is accompanied withal. The first effect of the truth upon our minds is to "make us free," John 8:32. It is the principle of all holiness, and enlargeth the mind and spirit unto it, whence it is called "The holiness of truth," Ephesians 4:24. So, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," 2 Corinthians 3:17. Men are naturally the "servants of sin," willingly giving up themselves unto the fulfilling of its lusts and commands, and are only "free from righteousness." But where the Holy Spirit worketh with the word of truth, men are made "free from sin, and become servants to God, having their fruit unto holiness," Romans 6:20, Romans 6:22. So it is said of all believers that they "have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father," Romans 8:15; not "the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind," 2 Timothy 1:7. The meaning of all these and the like testimonies is, that God by his grace

enlargeth, makes free and ready, the hearts of believers unto all gospel obedience, so as that they shall walk in it, and perform all the duties of it, willingly, cheerfully, freely, without that fear and dread which is an effect of the power of the law. They are not in a scrupulous bondage unto outward duties and the manner of their performance, but do all things with delight and freedom. They have by the Spirit of adoption, as the reverential fear of children, so their gracious inclination unto obedience. But in that exercise of devotion, and multiplied outward duties of religion, which the Romanists boast of as their especial sanctity, there are great evidences of a servile bondage or slavish frame of spirit; for they are forced to bind themselves, and to be bound unto it, by especial vows, in whose observation they no more act as their own guardians, or as those who are "sui juris," but are under the coercive discipline of others, and outward punishment in case of failure. And those who are so servants of men in religious duties are not God's freemen, nor have they Christ for their Lord in that cage who have another. The foundation of all these duties, and which alone obligeth them unto their performance, are vows nowhere required by God or our Lord Christ in the gospel; and the principal regard which any have in their strict attendance unto them is the obedience which they owe unto the superintendents of those vows. It is easy to apprehend how inconsistent this way is with that spiritual freedom and liberty of mind which inseparably accompanieth true gospel holiness. Besides, the opinion of merit, which not only goeth along with them, but also animates them in all these services, makes them servile in all they do; for they cannot but know that every thing in merit must not only be tried by the touchstone of sincerity, but weighed in the balance to the utmost scruple, to find out what it amounts or comes unto. And this is perfectly destructive of that liberty in obedience which the gospel requireth. So also is that tormenting persuasion which they are under the power of, — namely, That they have no grounds of confidence or assurance that either they are accepted with God here, or shall come to the blessed enjoyment of him hereafter. Hence, in all duties, they must of necessity be acted with a "spirit of fear," and not "of power and of a sound mind."

The rule of their duties and obedience, as to what is, in their own judgment, eminent therein, is not the gospel, but a system of peculiar laws and rules that they have framed for themselves. So some obey the rule of Benedict, some of Francis, some of Dominic, some of Ignatius, and the like. This utterly casts out their whole endeavor from any interest in gospel holiness; for the formal nature of that consists herein, that it is a conformity unto the rule of the gospel as such, or a compliance with the will of God as manifested therein. Hence do they multiply unrequited duties, yea, the principal parts of their devotion and sanctity consist in them which are of their own devising, for which they have no gospel precept or command; and such, in particular, are those vows which are the foundation of all that they do. In this case, our Savior, reproving the Pharisees for their additional duties beyond the prescript of the word, shows them how they "made the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition," and that "in vain they worshipped God, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," Matthew 15:6, Matthew 15:9. And when they were offended at his rejection of one of their new imposed duties, he replies that "every plant which his heavenly Father hath not planted should be rooted up," Matthew 15:13; so wholly rejecting all those religious duties which they had framed by rules of their own devising. Nor are these of the Roman devotionists of any better constitution; they are plants of men's own planting, and shall be rooted up accordingly and cast into the fire. Let the number of false invented duties of religion be never so great, let the manner of their performance be never so exact or severe, they serve to no other end but to divert the minds of men from the obedience which the gospel requireth.

There is nothing in all that is prescribed by the masters of this devotion, or practiced by the disciples, but it may all be done and observed without either faith in Christ or a sense of his love unto our souls. The obedience of the gospel is the "obedience of faith;" on that and no other root will it grow; — and the principal motive unto it is the "love of Christ," which "constraineth" unto it. But what is there in all their prescriptions that these things are necessary unto? May not men rise at midnight to repeat a number of prayers, or go barefoot, or wear sackcloth, or abstain from flesh at certain times or always, or submit to discipline from themselves or others, and (if they have bodily strength to enable them) undergo all the horrid, and indeed ridiculous, hardships of standing on a pillar continually, or bearing great logs of wood on their shoulders all the day long, that are told or fabled of the Egyptian monks, without the least dram of saving faith or love? All false religions have ever had some amongst them who have had an ambition to amuse others with these self-inflictions and macerations, wherein the devotions among the Banians do exceed at this day whatever the Romanists pretend unto.

The whole of what they do is so vitiated and corrupted with the proud opinion of merit and supererogation as renders it utterly foreign unto the gospel. It is not my present business to dispute against these opinions. It hath been already abundantly manifested (and may be yet so again where it is necessary) that they wholly enervate the covenant of grace, are injurious to the blood and mediation of Christ, and are utterly inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the gospel. Whereas, therefore, these proud imaginations do animate their whole course of duties, the gospel is not concerned in what they do. And we may add unto what hath been remarked already, the consideration of that gross superstition, yea, and idolatry, which they give up themselves unto almost in most of their devotions. This is not the least of their transgressions in these things, but is sufficient to violate all they do besides.

Wherefore, notwithstanding their pretense unto sanctity and a more strict attendance unto duties of obedience than other men, yet it is manifest that the best of them are under a defection from the holiness of the gospel, substituting an obedience unto their own imaginations in the room thereof.

Again; others confine the whole of their obedience unto morality, and deride whatever is pleaded as above it and beyond it, under the name of evangelical grace, as "enthusiastical folly." And the truth is, if those persons who plead for the necessity of gospel grace and holiness, which is more than so, do understand each other, and if somewhat of the same things are not intended by them under different expressions and diverse methods of their management, they are not of the same religion. But if they mistake the meaning of each other, and differ only in the manner of teaching the same truth, I suppose they steer the safest course, and are freest from just offense, who follow and comply with the manner wherein the things intended are taught in the Scripture, rather than those who accommodate their discourses unto the phraseology of heathen philosophers. But the truth is, the difference seems to be real, and the principles men proceed upon in these things are contradictory to each other; for some do plainly affirm that the whole of gospel obedience consists in the observance of moral virtue, which they so describe as to render it exclusive of evangelical grace. This others judge to contain an open declension from and waiving of gospel holiness. It is granted freely, that the performance of all moral duties evangelically, — that is, in the power of the grace of Christ, unto the glory of God by him, — is an essential part of gospel obedience. And whoever they are who (under the pretense of grace or any thing else) do neglect the improvement of moral virtues, or the observance of the duties of morality, they are so far disobedient unto the

gospel and the law thereof. And some men do not understand how contemptible they render themselves in the management of their cause, when they charge others with an opposition unto morality or moral virtue, and setting up they know not what imaginary holiness in the room thereof; for those whom they so calumniate are not only immediately discharged from any sense of guilt herein by the testimony of their own consciences, but all other men, so far as the rule of ingenuity is extended, do, from the knowledge of their doctrine and observation of their practice, avouch their innocence.

"But is it not so, then, that men do condemn morality, as that which is not to be trusted unto, but will deceive them that rest in or upon it?" I answer, They do so when it is made (as it is by some) the whole of religion, and as it is obtruded into the place of evangelical grace and holiness by others. They take moral virtue, as it always was taken until of late, for natural honesty, or such a conformity of life unto the light of nature as to be useful and approved among men. But this may be, — men may do what is morally good, and yet never do any thing that is accepted with God; for they may do it, but not for the love of God above all, but for the love of self. And therefore they charge morality with an insufficiency unto the end of religion, or the saving of the souls of men, —

Where nothing is intended by it but that whereof the rule and measure is the light of nature: for that doth direct unto every duty that is properly moral; and what it doth not direct unto, what is not naturally by the law of our creation obligatory unto all mankind, cannot be called moral. Now, to confine all religion, as to the preceptive and obediencial part of it, unto the light of nature, is to evacuate one half of the gospel.

Where it is in practice an effect of conviction only, and performed in the innate strength of the rational faculties of our souls, without the especial supernatural aid of the Spirit and grace of God, Whatever name any thing may be called by that is not wrought in us by the grace of God, as well as by us in a way of duty, is foreign unto evangelical obedience. And those who reject morality as insufficient unto acceptation with God and eternal salvation, intend only what is of that kind performed in the power of our natural faculties externally excited and directed, without any supernatural influence or operation of especial grace; and, indeed, so to place a confidence in such duties is open Pelagianism.

Where it proceedeth not from the spiritual, supernatural renovation of our souls. The rule and method of the gospel is, that the tree be first made good, and then the fruit will be so also. Unless a person be first regenerate, and his nature therein renewed into the image and likeness of God, — unless he be endued with a new principle of spiritual life from above, enabling him to live unto God, he can do nothing, of whatsoever sort it be, that is absolutely acceptable unto God. And it is especially under this consideration that any reject morality as not comprehensive of gospel obedience, yea, as that which is apt to draw off the mind from it, and which will deceive them that trust to it, — namely, that it proceedeth not from the principle of grace in a renewed soul; for whatever doth so, though it may be originally of a moral nature in itself, yet from the manner of its performance it becomes gracious and evangelical. And we need not fear to exclude the best works of unrenewed persons from being any part of gospel holiness or obedience.

Where those in whom it is, or who pretend unto it. are really destitute of the internal light of saving grace, enabling them to discern spiritual things in a spiritual manner, and to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. That there is such a saving light wrought in the minds of believers by the Holy

Ghost, that without it men cannot discern spiritual things, so as to favor, like, and approve of them, hath been elsewhere at large demonstrated. But this belongs not unto the morality contended about. It is not only independent of it, but is indeed set up in competition with it and opposition unto it. No man need fear to judge and censure that morality, as unto its interest in gospel obedience and sufficiency unto the salvation of the souls of men, which may be obtained, practiced, and lived up unto, where God doth not "shine in the hearts of men, to give them the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ;" where no work of spiritual illumination hath been in their minds, enabling them to discern and know the mind of God, which none knoweth originally but the Spirit of God, by Whom it is made [known] unto us, 1 Corinthians 2:11-12. Yet this is that which some men seem to take up withal and rest in, unto the rejection of evangelical obedience.

Lastly, The same censure is to be passed on it wherever it is separable from those fundamental gospel graces which, both in their nature, acts, and objects, are purely supernatural, having no principle, rule, or measure, but truth supernaturally revealed. Such, in particular, is the whole regard we have unto the mediation of Christ, as also unto the dispensation of the Spirit, promised to abide with the church for ever as its comforter, with all the duties of obedience which depend thereon. He is ignorant of the gospel that knows not that in these things do lie the fundamental principles of its doctrine and precepts, and that in the exercise of those graces in a way of duty which immediately concern them, consist the principal parts of the life of God, or of that obedience unto him by Jesus Christ which is indispensably required of all that shall be saved. Whereas, therefore, these things cannot be esteemed merely moral virtues, nor do at all belong unto, but are considered as separate from, all that morality which is judged insufficient unto life and salvation, it is evident that it is not in the least dealt withal too severely, nor censured more harshly than it doth deserve. If, therefore, any betake themselves hereunto as to the whole of their duty, it comes under the account of that partial defection from the gospel which we inquire into.

Some there are who, as unto themselves, pretend they have attained unto perfection already in this world; such a perfection in all degrees of holiness as the gospel is but an introduction towards. But this proud imagination, destructive of the covenant of grace, of all use of the mediation and blood of Christ, contrary to innumerable testimonies of Scripture and the experience of all that do believe, and concerning which their own consciences do reprove the pretenders unto it, needs not detain us in its examination. It is sufficient unto our present design to have given these instances how men may, in a pretended conscientious discharge of many duties of obedience, yet fall off and decline from that which the gospel requireth. The occasions and reasons hereof (supposing those more general before considered with respect unto the truth of the gospel, which all of them take place here, and have their influence upon their dislike of its holiness) may be briefly inquired into and represented; nor shall we confine ourselves unto the instances given, but take in the consideration of every declension from it which on any account befalls them who, having had a conviction of its necessity, yet refuse to come unto its universal practice. And to this end we may observe, —

That the holiness which the gospel requireth will not be kept up or maintained, either in the hearts or lives of men, without a continual conflict, warring, contending; and that with all care, diligence, watchfulness, and perseverance therein. It is our warfare, and the Scripture abounds in the discovery of the adversaries we have to conflict withal, their power and subtlety, as also in directions and encouragements unto their resistance. To suppose that gospel obedience will be

maintained in our hearts and lives without a continual management of a vigorous warfare against its enemies, is to deny the Scripture and the experience of all that do believe and obey God in sincerity. Satan, sin, and the world, are continually assault-hag of it, and seeking to ruin its interest in us. The devil will not be resisted (which it is our duty to do, 1 Peter 5:8, without a sharp contest and conflict; in the management whereof we are commanded to "take unto ourselves the whole armor of God," Ephesians 6:12-13. "Fleshly lusts" do continually "war against our souls," 1 Peter 2:11; and if we maintain not a warfare unto the end against them, they will be our ruin. Nor will the power of the world be any otherwise avoided than by a victory over it, 1 John 5:4; which will not be carried without contending. But I suppose it needs no great confirmation unto any who know what it is to serve and obey God in temptations, that the life of faith and race of holiness will not be preserved nor continued in without a severe striving, laboring, contending, warring with diligence, watchfulness, and perseverance; so that I shall at present take it as a principle, notionally at least, agreed upon by the generality of Christians. If we like not to be holy on these terms, we must let it alone; for on any other we shall never be so. If we faint in this course, if we give it over, if we think what we aim at herein not to be worth the obtaining or preserving by such a severe contention all our days, we must be content to be without it. Nothing doth so promote the interest of hell and destruction in the world as a presumption that a lazy, slothful performance of some duties and abstinence from some sins, is that which God will accept of as our obedience. Crucifying of sin, mortifying our inordinate affections, contesting against the whole interest of the flesh, Satan, and the world, and that in inward actings of grace and all instances of outward duties, and that always while we live in this world, are required of us hereunto.

Here lies the first spring of the apostasy of many in the world, of them especially who betake themselves unto and take up satisfaction in another way of duties than what the gospel requireth. They had, it is possible, by their light and convictions, made so near approaches unto it as to see what an incessant travail of soul is required unto its attainment and preservation.

They are like the Israelites travelling in the wilderness towards the land of Canaan. When they came near unto the borders and entrance of it, they sent some to spy it out, that they might know the nature and state of the land and country whither they were going. These, for their encouragement, and to evince the fruitfulness of the earth, bring unto them "a branch with one cluster of grapes," so great and fair that "they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought also pomegranates and figs," Numbers 13:23. But withal, they told them of the hideous difficulties they were to conflict withal, in that the people were strong, their cities walled, and the Anakims dwelling amongst them, Numbers 13:28. This utterly disheartens the carnal people, and, notwithstanding the prospect they had of the "land that flowed with milk and honey," back again they go into the wilderness, and there they perish. So it is with these persons. Notwithstanding the near approach they have made, by light and convictions, unto the kingdom of God (as our Savior told the young man, who was as one of them, Mark 12:34), and the prospect they have of the beauty of holiness, yet they turn off from it again, and perish in the wilderness: for upon the view they have of the difficulties which lie in the conflict mentioned, they fall under many disadvantages, which at length utterly divert them from its pursuit; as, —

(1.) Weariness of the flesh, not enduring to comply with that constant course of duties continually returning upon it which is required thereunto. Various pleas will be made for an exemption from them, at least in some troublesome instances; and the carnal mind will not want pretenses to

countenance the flesh in its weariness. Hereon one duty after another is first omitted and then utterly foregone. Neglect of a vigorous constancy in subduing the body and bringing of it into subjection, commended by the apostle in his own example, 1 Corinthians 9:27, is with many the beginning of this kind of apostasy. These things, I say, will oftentimes fall out, that through the weariness and aversion of the flesh, countenanced by various pretenses of the carnal mind, sundry duties will be omitted. But this is the faith and trial of the saints; here is the difference between sound believers and those who are acted only by convictions: Those of the first sort will, sooner or later (for the most part speedily), be humbled for such omissions, and recover their former diligence, according to the prayer of the psalmist, Psalms 119:176; but where this ground is won by the flesh, and men grow satisfied under the loss of any duty, it is an evidence of a hypocritical, backsliding heart.

(2.) When men are come unto the height of their convictions, and proceed no farther, indwelling sin, with its lusts and corrupt affections (which have for a while been checked and mated by light), will insensibly prevail, and weary the mind with sollicitations for the exercise of its old dominion; for the spring of it being not dried, the bitter root of it being not digged up nor withered, it will not cease until it hath broke down all the bounds that were fixed unto it, and bear down convictions with force and violence.

(3.) Ignorance of the true way of making application unto the Lord Christ for grace and supplies of the Spirit, to bring them unto or preserve them in a state of gospel holiness, is of the same importance. Without this, to dream of being holy according unto the mind of God is to renounce the gospel. We need not look farther for men's apostasy than this, if they are satisfied with such a holiness, such an obedience, as is not derived unto us by the grace of Christ, nor wrought in us by the Spirit of Christ, nor preserved in us by the power of Christ. The way hereof such persons are always ignorant of, and at length do openly despise; yet may men as well see without the sun or light, or breathe without the air, or live without natural spirits, as engage into or abide in the practice of gospel holiness without continual applications unto Christ, the fountain of all grace, for spiritual strength enabling thereunto. The way and means hereof these persons being ignorant of and unacquainted withal, the holiness which the gospel requireth becomes unto them a thing strange and burdensome; which therefore they desert and refuse. If, therefore, it be true that without Christ we can do nothing, — that in our life unto God he liveth in us, and efficiently is our life; if from him, as the head, nourishment is supplied unto every living member of the body; if the life which we lead be by the faith of the Son of God; and if the only way of deriving these things and all supplies of spiritual strength from him be by the exercise of faith in him, — it follows unavoidably that all those who are unacquainted with this way, who know not how to make their application unto him for this end and purpose, can never persevere in a pursuit of gospel holiness. So hath it fallen out and no otherwise with them concerning whom we speak. As ignorance of the righteousness of God, or of Christ being the end of the law for righteousness unto them that do believe, is the reason why men go about to establish a righteousness of their own, and will not submit to the righteousness of God; so ignorance of the grace which is continually to be received from Christ in a way of believing, that we may be holy with gospel holiness, is the reason why so many turn off from it unto another kind of holiness of their own framing, which yet is not another, because it is none at all. But many are so far from endeavoring after or abiding in gospel holiness on this foundation of continual supplies of grace from Jesus Christ to that end, as that they

avowedly despise all holiness and obedience springing from that fountain or growing on that root; in which case God will judge. In the meantime, I say (and the matter is evident) that one principal reason why men turn off from it upon the prospect of the difficulties that attend it, and the oppositions that are made unto it, is their unbelief and ignorance of the way of making application unto Christ by faith for supplies of spiritual strength and grace.

(4.) Unacquaintedness with the true nature of evangelical repentance is another cause hereof. This is that grace which comfortably carrieth the souls of believers through all their failings, infirmities, and sins; nor are they able to live to God one day without the constant exercise of it. They find it as necessary unto the continuance of spiritual life as faith itself. It is not only a means of our entrance into, but it belongs essentially unto, our gospel state and our continuance therein. Hereunto belongs that continual humble self-abasement, from a sense of the majesty and holiness of God, with the disproportion of the best of our duties unto his will, which believers live and walk in continually; and he that is not sensible of a gracious sweetness and usefulness therein knows not what it is to walk with God. Hereby doth God administer several encouragements unto our souls to abide in our way of obedience, notwithstanding the many discouragements and despondencies we meet withal. In brief, take it away, and you overthrow faith, and hope, and all other graces. Those, therefore, who are unacquainted with the nature and use of this grace and duty, who can taste no spiritual refreshment in all its sorrows, who know nothing of it but legal troubles, anguish, fear, and distraction, will not endure the thought of living in the practice of it all their days; which yet is as necessary unto gospel holiness as faith itself. Men, I say, falling into this condition, finding all these difficulties to conflict withal, and lying under these disadvantages, if any thing will offer itself in the room of this costly holiness, will readily embrace it. Hence, as some betake themselves unto a pretense of morality (which as unto many is a mere pretense, and made use of only to countenance themselves in a neglect of the whole of that obedience which the gospel openly requireth), so others do, under other expressions, retreat unto the mere duties of their own light, and these as only required therein, with some peculiar reliefs unto the flesh in what is burdensome unto it. As, for instance: There is nothing that the flesh more riseth up in a dislike of and opposition unto than constancy in the duty of prayer, in private, in families, on all occasions, especially if attended unto in a spiritual manner, as the gospel doth require; but in itself, and as to the substance of it, it is a duty which the light of nature exacteth of us; — but whereas this may prove burdensome to the flesh, a relief is borrowed from a pretense of gospel light and liberty, that men need not pray at any time unless their own spirits or light do previously require it of them: which is to turn the grace of God into an occasion of sinning. By this means some have gotten a holiness, wherein, for the most part, it seems indifferent to them whether they pray at any time or no. And other instances of the like kind might be given. Upon the whole matter, to free themselves from this state, so uneasy to flesh and blood, so contrary unto all the imaginations of the carnal mind, some men have betaken themselves unto another, wherein they have, or pretend to have, no conflict against sin, nor to need any application unto the Lord Christ for supplies of spiritual strength; which belongs not unto that holiness which the gospel requires and which God accepts. It may be said that in some of the instances before given, especially in that of the Papacy, there is an appearance of a greater conflict with and more hardships put on the flesh than in any other way of obedience that is pleaded for; and there is indeed such an appearance, but it is no more. The oppositions that arise against their austerities are from without, or from nature as it is weak, but not as it is carnal. It is possible that sin may not be concerned in what they do, neither in its power nor

reign; yea, so far as it is leavened by superstition, it acts itself therein no less than it doth in others by fleshly lusts. But it is an internal, spiritual, immediate opposition unto its being and all its actings, that it riseth up with such rage against as to weary those who have not that living principle of faith whereto) the victory over it doth peculiarly appertain.

This evangelical holiness will not allow of nor will consist with the constant, habitual omission of any one duty, or the satisfaction of any one lust of the mind or of the flesh. As we are, in all instances of duty, to be "perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 Corinthians 7:1, so "no provision is to be made for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof," Romans 13:14. This is that which loseth it so many friends in the world. Would it barter with the flesh, would it give and take allowances in any kind, or grant indulgence unto any one sin, multitudes would have a kindness for it which now bid it defiance. Every one would have an exemption for that sin which he likes best, and which is most suited to his inclinations and carnal interests. And this would be virtually a dispensation for all unholiness whatever. But these are the terms of the gospel: No one duty is to be neglected, no one sin is to be indulged; and they are looked upon as intolerable. Naaman would not give himself up unto the worship of the God of Israel but with this reserve, that he might also bow in the house of Rimmon, whereon his power and preferment did depend. Many things the young man in the Gospel boasted himself to have done, and was doubtless willing to continue in the performance of them; but yet, through his whole course, the love of the world had the prevalency in him, and when he was tried in that instance, rather than relinquish it he gave up the whole. But this is the law of the gospel. Although it provide a merciful relief against those daily sins which we are overtaken withal by our frailty and weakness, or surprised into by the power of temptations, against the bent of our minds and habitual inclination of our wills, 1 Peter 4:1-2, yet it alloweth not the cherishing or practice of any one sin whatever, internal or external. An habitual course in any sin is utterly inconsistent with evangelical obedience, 1 John 3:6-9, yea, it requireth indispensably that we be engaged, in our minds and wills, in an opposition unto all sin, and in a constant endeavor after its not- being in us, either in the root or in the fruit thereof. It will not connive at or comply with any inordinate affection, any habitual sinful distemper, nor the first motions of sin that are in the flesh. This is that perfection which is required in the new covenant, Genesis 17:1, that sincerity, integrity, freedom from guile, walking after the Spirit, and not after the flesh, and that newness of life, which the gospel everywhere prescribeth unto us. On no other terms but universality in obedience and opposition unto sin will it approve of us, 1 John 3:7-10.

And this occasioneth the turning aside of many from the pursuit of an endeavor to be holy, according unto the rule of the gospel. When by light and convictions they come to take a view of what is required thereunto, it disliketh them, they cannot bear it; and therefore they either at once or gradually give over all ways of pursuing their first design. And men break with the gospel on this account by the means ensuing: —

(1.) They cannot make the same judgment of sin that the gospel doth, nor will judge all those things to be sin and evil which the gospel declares so to be; yea, we have some come unto that pharisaism, that they scarce think any thing to be sinful or worth taking notice of unless it be openly flagitious. Under this darkness and ignorance, all sorts of filthy, noisome lusts may be cherished in the hearts of men, keeping them at as great and real a distance from the holiness of truth as the most outrageous outward sins can do. And this neglect or refusal to comply with the rule of the gospel before laid down is grounded in and promoted by two occasions: —

[1.] They have a willing insensibility of the guilt of some unmortified lust. This they will abide in and cherish; for their minds being habituated unto it, they find no great evil in it, nor do see any cogent reason why they should forego it. So was it with the young man with respect unto the love of the world. He was sorry that he could not be evangelically obedient whilst he retained it; but seeing that could not be, he did not discern any such evil in, nor was sensible of any such guilt from it, nor could apprehend any such equality in or necessity of gospel holiness, that he should renounce the one for the embracing the other. So will it be when any lust is made familiar unto the mind; it will not be terrified with it, nor can see any great danger in it. It is between such a soul and sin as it is between the devil and the witch, or one that hath a familiar spirit, as we render the Hebrew "ob" [bwOa] and "yideoni," [ynl[oD>yl]. At the first appearance of the devil, be it in what shape it will, it cannot but bring a tremor and fear on human nature, but after a while he becomes a familiar; and when alone he is to be feared, he is not feared at all. The poor deceived wretch then thinks him in his power, so that he can use or command him as he sees good, whereas he himself is absolutely in the power of the devil. Men may be startled with sin in its first appearance, on their first convictions, or its first dangerous efforts; but when it is become their familiar, they suppose it a thing in their own power, which they can use or not use as they see occasion, though indeed themselves are the servants of corruption, being overcome thereby and brought into bondage. Hence it is inconceivable how little sense of guilt in some sins men find after they are habituated unto them. In some sins, I say, for with respect unto sins absolutely against the light of nature, conscience will not easily be bribed not to condemn them. It will not in such cases be speechless, until it be seared and made senseless. But there are sins not accompanied with so great an evidence, yet attended with no less guilt than those which directly militate against the light of nature. In this case, when the word of the gospel comes as it is "living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, as a discoverer and judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" when it comes and discovers the secret frames, figments, imaginations, and inclinations of the mind, and condemneth what is in the least measure or manner irregular; when it will not be put off, nor accept of any composition or compensation by the most strict and rigid profession in other things, — men are ready to withdraw themselves to the rule of their own light and reason, which they find more gentle and tractable.

[2.] A dereliction of the gospel on this account, with respect unto the inwardness, spirituality, and extent of its commands, is much increased under the influence of corrupt opinions. And of this nature are all those which tend unto the extenuation of sin; for some there are who suppose that there is not such a provoking guilt, such a spiritual outrage in sin, as others pretend. Hence multitudes, as they judge, are needlessly troubled and perplexed about it. "A generous mind, free from superstitious fears and dark conceits imbibed in education, will deliver the mind of man from the trouble of such apprehensions; — a great sense of the guilt of small sins is an engine to promote the interest of preachers, and those who pretend to the conduct of conscience; — the filth and pollution of sin is a metaphor which few can understand, and none ought to be concerned in; — that the power of the remainders of indwelling sin is a foolish notion; and that the disorderly frames of the heart and the mind, through darkness, deadness, spiritual indisposition, or other secret irregularities, are fancies, not sins, which we need not be troubled at ourselves, nor make any acknowledgment of unto God;" — these and the like opinions are the pharisaical corban of our age, corrupting the whole law of our obedience. And it were easy to manifest how perilous and

ruinous they are unto the souls of men; what powerful instruments in the hand of Satan to eclipse the glory of the grace of Christ on the one hand, and to promote apostasy from holiness in the hearts and lives of men on the other. I shall only say, set the corrupt heart of men by any means at liberty from an awe and reverence of the holiness of God and his law with respect unto the inward actings and frames of the soul, with a sense of guilt where they are irregular, and a necessity of constant humiliation before God thereon, and an equally constant application of itself unto the Lord Christ for grace and mercy, and it is wholly in vain to think of fixing any bounds unto the progress of sin. The ignorance hereof is that which hath produced in some the proud imagination of perfection, when they are far enough from bringing their consciences and lives to the rule of the gospel, but only aggravate their guilt by attempting to bend that inflexible rule unto their own perverse and crooked minds.

(2.) In this case, carnal interest, which takes in and compriseth all the circumstances of men, calls for an indulgence unto some one sin or other, which the gospel will not admit of. Pride or ambition, covetousness or love of this present evil world and the perishing things of it, uncleanness or sensuality in eating and drinking, self-exaltation and boasting, vain-glory, idleness, one or other must be spared. One thing or other, I say, on the account of carnal interest,

— either because small, or useful, or general, or suited unto a natural temper, or, as is supposed, made necessary by the occasions of life, — must be reserved. Where this resolution prevails, as men are absolutely excluded from any real interest in gospel holiness, which will admit of no such reserves, so it will not fail to lead them into open apostasy of one kind or other; for, —

[1.] Such persons are unapproved of God in all that they do, and so have no ground for expectation of his blessing or assistance; for the allowance of the least sin is such an impeachment of sincerity as casteth a man out of covenant communion with God. This is that "offending in one point" which ruins a man's obedience, and renders him guilty against the whole law, James 2:10. Any one actual sin makes a man guilty of the curse of the whole law as it contains the covenant of works; and the willing allowance of a man's self in any one sin habitually breaks the whole law as it contains the rule of our obedience in the covenant of grace. And if in this disapproved condition men meet with outward prosperity in the world, their danger will be increased as well as their guilt aggravated. And the utmost care of professors is required in this matter; for there seems to be among many an open indulgence unto habitual disorders, which hazards their whole covenant interest, and must fill them with uncertainty in their own minds. High time it is for all such persons to shake off "every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset them, and to run with redoubled diligence" the remainder of "the race that is set before them."

[2.] This indulgence unto any one sin will make way in the minds, consciences, and affections of men, for the admission of other sins also. It will be like a thief that is hidden in a house, and only waits an opportunity to open the doors unto his other companions; to this end he watcheth for a season of sleep and darkness, when there is none to observe his actings. Let a person who thus alloweth himself to live in any sin fall into temptation whilst he is a little more than ordinary careless, his allowed corruption shall open his heart unto any other sin that offers for admission. "Look not," saith the wise man, "upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things," Proverbs 23:31, Proverbs 23:33. One sin liked and loved will make way for every

other. There is a kindred and alliance between sins of all sorts, and they agree in the same end and design. Where any one is willingly entertained, others will intrude themselves beyond all our power of resistance.

[3.] It will divert the soul from the use of those means whereby all other sins should be resisted, and thereby apostasy prevented; for there is no means appointed or sanctified by God for the resistance or mortification of sin, but it opposeth sin as sin, and consequently every thing that is so, and that because it is so. Wherefore, whoever willingly reserves any one sin from the efficacy of the means God hath appointed for its mortification doth equally reserve all. And as those means do lose their power and efficacy towards such persons, so they will insensibly fall off from a conscientious attendance unto any of those ways and duties whereby sin should be opposed and ruined.

Many of the graces in whose exercise this evangelical holiness doth principally consist are such as are of no reputation in the world. The greatest moralists that ever were, whether Pharisees or philosophers, could never separate between their love and practice of virtue on the one hand, and their own honor, glory, and reputation on the other. There was in them, as the poet expresseth it in one instance, —

"*amor patriae, laudumque immensam cupido.*"

Hence they always esteemed those virtues the most excellent which had the best acceptance and the greatest vogue of praise among men. And it seems to be ingrafted in the nature of man to have some kind of desire to be approved in what men judge themselves to do well and laudably. Neither is this desire so evil in itself but that it may be managed in subordination unto the glory of God; which nothing that is absolutely evil, or in its own nature or any considerations or circumstances, can be. But when at any time it swells into an excess, and the pharisaical leaven of being seen and praised of men puffeth it up, it is the worst poison that the mind can be infected withal. In what degree soever it be admitted, in the same it alienates the mind from gospel holiness; and it doth so effectually, — I mean this self-love and love of the praise of others doth so, — for the reason mentioned, namely, that the graces in whose exercise it doth principally consist are of no reputation in the world. Such are meekness, gentleness, self-denial, poverty of spirit, mourning for sin, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, mercy and compassion, purity of heart, openness and simplicity of spirit, readiness to undergo and forgive injuries, zeal for God, contempt of the world, fear of sin, dread of God's judgment for sin, and the like. These are those adornings of the inner man of the heart which with God are of great price. But as unto their reputation in the world, "weakness, softness of nature, superstitious folly, madness, hypocritical preciseness," is the best measure they meet withal. When men begin to discern that as unto this holiness of the gospel, its principal work lies within doors, in the heart and mind, in the things that no mortal eye seeth and few commend so much as in the notion of them, and which in their outward exercise meet with no good entertainment in the world, they betake themselves unto and rest in those duties which make a better appearance and meet with better acceptance; and many of them are such as, in their proper place, are diligently to be attended unto, provided they draw not off the mind from an attendance unto those despised graces and their exercise wherein the life of true holiness doth consist. And it is well if we are all sufficiently aware of the deceits of Satan in this matter. In the beginnings of the general apostasy from the power and purity of Christian religion, to countenance

all sorts of persons in a neglect of the principal graces of the gospel, the necessity of regeneration, and a heavenly principle of spiritual life, they were put wholly on outward splendid works of piety and charity, as they were esteemed. Let their minds be defiled, their lusts unmortified, their hearts un-humbled, their whole souls unfurnished of spiritual and heavenly graces, yet (as they would have it) these outward works should assuredly bring them all unto a blessed immortality and glory! But this face of the covering, this veil that was spread over many nations, being now in many places (particularly among us) rent and destroyed, both wisdom and much circumspection are required, that, either under a pretense or under a real endeavor after the inward spiritual graces of Christ and their due exercise, we do not countenance ourselves in the neglect of those outward duties which are any way useful unto the glory of God and the good of mankind.

These are some of the causes, and others there are of an alike nature, from the powerful influence whereof upon their minds men have changed gospel holiness for other ways of obedience, which also they give other names unto.

## 03A.09. CHAPTER 9.

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### CHAPTER 9.

APOSTASY INTO PROFANENESS AND SENSUALITY OF LIFE — THE CAUSES AND OCCASIONS OF IT, — DEFECTS IN PUBLIC TEACHERS AND GUIDES IN RELIGION. THAT which yet remaineth to be considered under this head of backsliding from the commands of the gospel and the obedience required of them is of a worse kind and of a more pernicious consequence; and this is that open apostasy into profaneness and sensuality of life which the generality of them who are called Christians are in most places of the world visibly fallen into. If any be otherwise minded, if they suppose and judge that the ways and walkings of the generality of churches and individual Christians, of whole nations that profess themselves to be so, are such as the gospel requireth and approveth of, they seem either to be ignorant of the true state of these things in the world, or to be highly injurious unto the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. To suppose that he by his gospel giveth countenance unto or conniveth at that darkness, profaneness, sensuality, those bloody contentions and oppressions, in a word, all those filthy and noxious lusts, which at this day have overwhelmed the Christian world, is to do what we can to render and represent it not only useless, but extremely pernicious unto mankind; for we do say therein that by him and his doctrine countenance is given unto that degeneracy in wickedness which heathenism would not allow, whereby the world is filled with confusion, and in danger to be precipitated into ruin. I shall therefore at present take it for granted (with the highest readiness to give up that concession when any tolerable evidence shall be given to the contrary) that there is, among and in the churches whereunto the generality of Christians do reckon themselves to belong, a visible apostasy from that piety, holiness, and righteousness, which the gospel indispensably requireth in all the disciples of Christ, and which the primitive Christians did earnestly follow and eminently abound in. An inquiry into the means and causes hereof is that which now lies before us. And that especial instance which I shall always regard is the church of Rome; which, as it hath given the most eminent example of apostasy in this kind of any church in the world, so whatever of the same nature befalleth others, it is sufficiently represented therein. The immediate internal causes (which are, as the rise and original of all sins, so of those wherein this apostasy doth consist, because they are not peculiar hereunto, but equally respect all sins at all times) belong not unto our present inquiry. By these causes I intend, in general, the depravation of nature; the power and deceitfulness of sin; love of the world, the profits, honors, and pleasures of it; the rage of the flesh after the satisfaction of its sensual lusts; with the aversation of the minds of men from things spiritual and heavenly, as being "alienated from the life of God" through the darkness and ignorance that is in them: for these and the like depraved affections, being excited and acted by the crafty influences of Satan, and inflamed with temptations, do incline, induce, and carry men into all manner of wickedness with delight and greediness, James 1:14-15. But whereas all these things in general respect equally all times, occasions, and sins; and whereas it is the constant work of the ministers of the gospel (those, I mean, who understand their employment, with the account they must give of the souls committed unto their charge) to discover the nature,

detect the deceit, and warn men of the danger, of these principles and occasions of sin within them and without them, — I shall not need particularly here to insist upon them. It is the more public external means and causes which have produced, furthered, and promoted the apostasy complained of, that we shall take under consideration.

I. The first occasion hereof, in all ages, hath been given by or taken from the public readers, guides, or leaders of the people in the matter of religion. I intend them of all sorts, however called, styled, or distinguished, into what forms or orders soever they are cast by themselves or others; and I name them so at large, because it is known how variously they are multiplied, especially in the church of Rome, where, as to these parts of the world, this apostasy began, and by which it is principally promoted, and that by all sorts of them. These at all times have, and must have, an especial influence into the holiness or unholiness of the people; yea, the purity or apostasy of the church, as to outward means, doth principally depend upon them, with the discharge of their office and duty. In many things they succeed into the room of the priests of old, and frequently fall under the command and rebuke given unto them, Malachi 2:1-9, "O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it. And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law." That holy, humble, laborious ministry, which Christ first instituted in the church, was the great means of converting men unto evangelical obedience and the preserving of them therein. This their doctrine, their spirit, their example, their manner and course of life, their prayers: preaching, and entire endeavors, tended unto, and were blessed and prospered of God unto that purpose. Then were the lives of Christians a transcript of the truth of the gospel. But through the degeneracy of the following ages, those who succeeded them became troubled fountains, polluting and corrupting all the streams of Christian religion. It is no uneasy thing to observe, in the course of ecclesiastical records and stories, how, by various degrees, the leaders of the church became corrupt, and did corrupt the people, giving them in themselves an example of strifes, divisions, ambition, worldly-mindedness; and, by their negligence in discharge of their duty, depriving them of the means of being made better by the power of the doctrine and commands of the gospel. Under the old testament, the priests and prophets led the people into a double apostasy: — First, Into that of superstition and idolatry, Jeremiah 23:9-15; and this continued prevailing among them until their sin issued in a desolating calamity. This was the Babylonish captivity, wherein all their idols were buried in the land of Shinar, Zechariah 5:11. Secondly, After the return of the people from thence, when they would no more be inveigled into idolatry, whereof God designed that captivity for an effectual cure, the same sort of persons, by negligence, ignorance, and their evil example in profaneness, turned

them off from God and his law. This was begun in the days of Malachi, the last of the prophets, and ended in the total apostasy and destruction of that church and people. And when the whole came unto its last issue in the rejection of the Lord Christ, the Son of God, the same sort of persons, even the guides and teachers, led, and even forced, the body of the people into that great rebellion and impenitency therein, as is evidently declared in the gospel. And it is to be feared that something of the like nature hath fallen out among Christians also. The first apostasy the Christian world fell into was by superstition and idolatry, principally under the conduct of the church of Rome; and this, as it will always be, was accompanied with wickedness of life in all sorts of persons. Many churches and nations being delivered from this abomination, it is well if, by the same means, they are not falling into that of a worldly, sensual, profane conversation. The Scripture is so full on this subject, and the nature of the thing itself is such, as seems to require a deep and thorough consideration of it; but the nature of my design will not admit of enlargement on any particular head, for I intend only to point at the chief springs and occasions of this evil, and accordingly this part of our subject must be only briefly (as that preceding) treated on.

What was before asserted in general, namely, that the well-being of the church depends on the right discharge of the office of the ministry, will, I suppose, be acknowledged by all; and it is plainly declared by the apostle, Ephesians 4:11-15. In proportion thereunto it will thrive or decay. The nature of this office, the ends of its institution, the works and duties of it, with the universal experience of all ages and places, do evince this observation beyond all contradiction. If, therefore, those who undertake the exercise of this office do eminently and notoriously fail in the performance and discharge of the duties thereof, especially if they do so generally, and in any long succession of time, it cannot be but that the people will be corrupt, and degenerate from the rule of the gospel. The flocks will not be preserved where the shepherds are negligent; and fields will be overrun with weeds, thorns, and briars, if they be not duly tilled. I shall therefore, in the first place, call over some of those things which are indispensably required in and of the ministers and teachers of the church, that it may be preserved in its purity, and kept up unto its duty in evangelical obedience; and I shall insist only on those which all men will acknowledge to be such duties, or which none who own the gospel can or dare deny so to be: —

First, It is required of them that they keep pure and uncorrupted the doctrine of the gospel, especially that concerning the holiness enjoined in it, both as to its nature, causes, motives, and ends. So of old, the "priest's lips were to keep knowledge," and "the people were to seek the law at his mouth." This was one main end for which the Lord Christ gave unto, and instituted the office of the ministry in the church: Ephesians 4:11-15, "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." The preservation of the truth, the declaration, vindication, and defense of it, so as the members of the church, the disciples of Christ, committed to their charge, be neither through weakness or ignorance as children, nor through the delusions of seducers, turned off from it or unsettled in it, was one great end why the Lord Christ instituted this office therein. And upon their discharge of

this duty depend the growth, the obedience, the edification, and salvation, of the whole body. And therefore doth the apostle give this principally in charge unto the elders of the church of Ephesus, in his solemn giving of it up unto their care and inspection, when he himself was no more to come among them: Acts 20:28-30, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." As he hath a regard unto other things, so in an especial manner to the introduction of perverse and corrupt opinions, contrary to the truth wherein they had been instructed by him, which comprised "all the counsel of God" concerning their faith and obedience, with his own worship, Acts 20:27. This they were to do by their careful, faithful, diligent declaration, vindication, and defense, of the doctrine which they had received. Especially doth he press this upon his beloved Timothy. He being for a season fixed in the ministry of the church, he was chosen out by the wisdom of the Holy Ghost to be a pattern and example, in the instructions given unto him, unto all ministers of the gospel in succeeding generations. This charge is expressly committed unto him, 1 Timothy 6:13-14, "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Timothy 6:20, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called. 2 Timothy 2:13-14, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers." And what he was enjoined in his own person, that also he was directed to commit unto others with the same charge, that the truth of the gospel might be preserved incorrupt in succeeding generations,

2 Timothy 2:1-2, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." The vehemency of the apostle in this charge, and his pathetical exhortations, do sufficiently evince the moment and necessity of this duty, as that without which the church would not be continued to be "the pillar and ground of the truth."

There are three repositories of sacred truth, or of the truths of the mystery of the gospel, — the Scripture, the minds and hearts of believers, and the ministry of the present age. In the first, God preserveth them by his providence; in the second, by his Spirit and grace; in the last, by way of an ordinance or especial institution for that end. In the first way they have been kept, and shall be kept, safe against all oppositions of hell and the world, unto the consummation of all things. And if this way might fail, we acknowledge that the others would do so also, whatever some pretend of their traditions, and others of their present inspirations. And whilst this doth abide (as it shall always do), the loss that may befall in the other ways may be retrieved; and so it hath been several times, when the faith of the church hath been recovered and its profession reformed by the light and knowledge derived afresh from the Scripture. This fountain, therefore, of truth shall never be dry, but men may always draw sufficiently, yea, abundantly from it, whilst they use the means appointed thereunto. But yet this alone will not secure the public interest of truth and holiness.

There must be other means also of communicating what is contained therein unto the minds and consciences of men; and the Scripture itself doth both appoint and require a ministry unto this end. Secondly, There may be a preservation of the truth derived from the Scripture for a season in the minds of men and hearts of private believers. So was it in the days of Elijah, when, in a destitution of all outward ministry, seven thousand were preserved in faith and the fear of God, "not bowing the knee unto Baal," 1 Kings 19:18. This the Holy Ghost is in an especial manner promised and given unto them to effect, John 14:16-17, John 14:26, John 16:13; 1 John 2:10-21 : for herein is the promise accomplished, that "they shall be all taught of God," John 6:45; which though it be not wholly without means, yet it is such as doth not always and in all things indispensably depend thereon, Hebrews 8:11 And unto this work of the Spirit preserving the truth in the minds and hearts of true believers, the continuance of it in the world, as to its power and profession, under great and general apostasies, is to be ascribed. So I no way doubt but that during and under the papal defection, there were great numbers in whose hearts and minds the principal truths of the gospel were preserved inviolate, so as that by virtue of them they lived unto God and were accepted with him. But this way of the preservation of the truth is confined unto individual persons, and as such only are they concerned therein. [Thirdly], As unto public profession and the benefits thereof, all sacred truth is committed unto the ministry of the present age; and on the due discharge of their office and work it doth depend. The imagination of the church of Rome about keeping sacred truths in the hidden cells of tradition or invisible, fantastical treasures, which requires neither care, nor wisdom, nor honesty unto its custody, but a mere pretense of key to open it, was one engine whereby both truth and holiness were driven out of the world.

These things are inseparable. Gospel truth is the only root whereon gospel holiness will grow. If any worm corrode, or any other corrupting accident befall it, the fruit will quickly fade and decay. It is impossible to maintain the power of godliness where the doctrine from whence it springs is unknown, corrupted, or despised. And, on the other side, where men are weary of holiness, they will not long give entertainment to the truth; for as to their desires and affections, they will find it not only useless but troublesome. Hence the great opposition which is made at this day against many important truths of the gospel ariseth principally from the dislike men have of the holiness which they guide unto and require.

Secondly, It is required of the same persons that they diligently instruct the people in the knowledge of the whole counsel of God, in the mystery of the gospel, the doctrine of truth, that they may know and do the will of God; and this are they to do by all the means and ways that God hath appointed, pressing it instantly, together with instructions on their souls and consciences for its practice. The end why evangelical truth is committed unto their care is, not that they may keep it to themselves, so locking up the key of knowledge, but that they may communicate it unto others and instruct them therein. And he who doth not desire and endeavor to communicate unto his flock all things that are profitable for them can have no evidence in his own mind that God hath called him to the office of the ministry. The apostle, proposing his own example unto the elders of the church of Ephesus, affirms that he had "not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God," Acts 20:27, and that he had "kept back nothing that was profitable unto them," Acts 20:20. Men begin to talk or write about preaching on this or that subject: some, they say, preach all about Christ and grace, and justification by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and the like; but they preach about God's attributes, moral duties, obedience to superiors, and things of that nature.

But whether this fancy have more folly or malice in it is not easy to determine. It is like those who make this plea do speak truly as to their own concernment. They preach of the things they express, exclusively unto the others, which they meddle not with at all; for if they do teach them, then is the opposition they fancy between those ways of preaching altogether vain. But that others do preach the things ascribed unto them, with a neglect of those other doctrines, which such persons pretend to appropriate to themselves as their province, is a fond imagination. And, to increase the vanity of it, the distribution is made by some with a total silence on all hands, — both on their own, which they extol, and on that of others, which they condemn, — of that which certainly ought to be the principal subject of all preaching, namely, Jesus Christ and him crucified. But the truth is, he who knows not that it is his duty to declare unto the people, not this or that part of it, but the whole counsel of God, and who is not endowed with some measure of wisdom, so as to discern what is useful, profitable, and seasonable unto his hearers, according as their spiritual states and occasions do require, knows not what it is to be a minister of Christ or his gospel, a faithful steward of the mysteries of God, nor is meet to take that office upon him. And there are three things which ministers, teachers, leaders of the people, are to attend unto in the discharge of this principal part of their office, in the communication of the knowledge of the truth committed to them unto others: —

That they are to do it with all care, diligence, and sedulity. How vehement is our apostle in his charge to this purpose!

2 Timothy 4:1-2, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." How ought these words to sound continually in the ears of all ministers who design to be faithful in the discharge of their duty! How ought the power of them to abide on their hearts! Are they spoken alone unto Timothy? or will the souls of men be preserved, edified, saved, now with less pains and at an easier rate than formerly? It will appear at the last day that others also have an eternal concernment herein.

That they labor with the utmost of their strength, even to fatigue and weariness. All the names whereby their office and their work are expressed in the New Testament do include this kind of labor. As they are to "give themselves continually to the ministry of the word," Acts 6:4, — that is, wholly and entirely, in their utmost endeavors, continually unto this work, — so are they enjoined *kopia?* |n, "to labor to the utmost of the strength" they have therein, 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Corinthians 16:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:12. It is not bodily labor alone in the dispensation of the word (wherein there may be much variety, according unto the various natural dispositions or tempers of men, and of acquired gifts), but that earnestness and intension of spirit which will carry along with them the laborious pains of the whole person, that I intend. The cold, formal pronounciation or reading (as is the manner of some) of a well-composed oration doth not well express this laboring in the word and doctrine.

That their whole work and all their endeavors therein be accompanied with constant prayer, that the gospel in their ministry may run and be glorified, that the word may prosper in the hearts and lives of the people. So the apostles affirm that they would "give themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word," Acts 6:4. That ministrations of the word which is not accompanied

with continual prayer for its success is not like to have any great blessing go along with it. As our apostle calls God to witness of his frequent mention of them in his prayers unto whom the word was preached, Romans 1:9-10, so he desireth the prayers of others also, that his work and labor in the ministry might be prosperous and successful, Ephesians 6:18-19. For a minister to preach the word without constant prayer for its success is a likely means to cherish and strengthen secret atheism in his own heart, and very unlikely to work holiness in the lives of others.

Thirdly, It is in like manner required of them (so far as human frailty will permit) that they do, in their persons, ways, and walkings or conversations, especially in the discharge of all their ministerial duties, give a true representation both of the doctrine which they preach and of Him in whose name they dispense it. What meekness, humility, and zeal for the glory of God; what moderation, self-denial, and readiness for the cross; what mortification of corrupt affections and inordinate desires of earthly things; what contempt of the world; what benignity, condescension, and patience towards all men; what evidences of heavenly-mindedness, — are required hereunto, both the Scripture declares and the nature of the thing itself makes apparent What can any men rationally believe, but that they who preach Christ and the gospel unto them do declare that they have no other effect or tendency but what in themselves they express and represent unto them? There is a secret language in the ministry of men, that what they are and do is that which the doctrine they preach doth require, which their hearers do understand and are apt to believe. The very philosophers saw that so it would be with respect unto them who publicly taught philosophy; to which purpose the words of Themistius are remarkable: Orat. 1, VAneleuqe,rouj te dh. ou=n ou[twj eu`ri,skontej kai. filocrhma,touj te kai. a[rpagej( loido,rouj te kai. filapecqh,monaj kai. avlazo,naj( dolerou,j te kai. evpizou,louj( ouvkv oivh,sontai evk fu,sewj h' th/j prote,raj banausi,aj e;cein ta.j kh/raj( avllv aivtia,sontai evk filosofi,aj prosgi,nesqai. Whatever vices most men observe in such persons, they will not attribute them unto their depraved natures or inward corruptions, but unto the philosophy they profess Hence it is enjoined them that in "all things they show themselves patterns of good works," Titus 2:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:9. "Be thou," saith our apostle unto his Timothy, "an example unto believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity," 1 Timothy 4:12. This is the dignity, honor, and preferment, that the Lord Christ calls his ministers unto, namely, that they should in their own persons represent his graces and the holiness of his doctrine unto others. Those who are otherwise minded, whose designs and affections look another way, will find themselves to fall under the effects of a great mistake. I do not reflect any thing upon what outward, secular, circumstantial advantages men may have in this world, but I do say, whatever they have of that kind which doth not enable them the more effectually in their course and work to express the meekness, humility, self-denial, and zeal of Christ, with the holiness of the doctrine they teach, or should so do, it will not redound unto any great account in the kingdom of God.

Fourthly, It is also incumbent on them to attend with diligence unto that rule and holy discipline which the Lord Christ hath appointed for the edification of the church, and the preservation of it in purity, holiness, and obedience. This, indeed, most pretend a readiness to comply withal, as that which is condited unto their appetite by an appearance of authority and power, which seldom are unaccompanied with other desirable advantages, I shall only say, it will be well for them by whom they are administered according to the mind of Christ; but that more belongeth thereunto than is usually apprehended so to do, I suppose few sober and intelligent persons will deny. That these

things, yea, and many others of the like kind, with all those duties which are subservient or any way necessary unto them, are required of all ministers of the gospel, teachers, guides, rulers of the church, and that constantly to be attended unto with zeal for the glory of God and compassion for the souls of men, none, I suppose, who profess themselves Christians will in general deny. And if in these things the life and power of the ministry (whereon the purity and holiness of the church depend) do consist, where they are wanting, it is morally impossible but that the generality of the people will gradually degenerate into ignorance, profaneness, immorality, and unholiness of every kind.

There is nothing I could more desire than that the present defection from evangelical holiness, which is so visible in the world, might neither in whole nor in part be charged on a defect in these things among this sort of men, yea, that it might not be so unto qualifications, principles, and actings directly contrary unto what is thus required; for if it be not so, there will be yet hopes of a stay to be put unto its progress, yea, of a healing and recovery from it. But I shall a little inquire into that which offers itself unto the view of all, premising these two things: — 1. That I do not intend the ministry of any one place or nation, or age or time, more than another, but shall speak indefinitely unto what hath been and is in the Christian world. 2. That if indeed, upon trial, none be found blameworthy, none defective in these things, there is no harm done in that any are warned what to avoid. And, —

Have they all kept the truth, and doctrine, and mysteries of the gospel, committed to the ministers thereof? Are there not many of this sort who are themselves woefully ignorant of the counsel of God revealed therein? nay, are there not many who have neither will nor ability to search into the mysteries of the doctrine of Christ, and do therefore despise them? Can men keep in a way of duty what they never had, nor ever used those means for the attaining of it without which it will not be so done? And is it not manifest what must needs be, and what really are, the effects and fruits hereof? Do not hereon multitudes perish for want of knowledge and continue in the ways of sin because they have none to teach them better, at least none to teach them on such principles as are alone effectual unto their conversion and holiness? They must die, they shall die in their sins, but the blood of their souls will be required at other hands; for all the causes of gospel holiness, all proper motives unto it, all effectual ways and means of attaining it, are hid from them.

It is known how brutishly ignorant the generality of their priests are in the Papacy; neither, for the most part, do the rulers of that church require any more of them than that they have skill enough to read and manage their public offices of devotion. Neither is it much otherwise in the Greek church, in any of the branches of it, whereby whole nations, under a public profession of Christianity, are through stupid ignorance degenerated into a profane course of life, no less vile than that of the heathens. It is well if it be not so in some measure in other places also. But the truth is, the ignorance of many who take upon them the office of the ministry, and their unconscionable idleness when they have so done, is the great occasion of the continuance of profaneness and ungodliness among the people. And if the preaching of the gospel be the only sovereign, effectual means appointed by God for the change of men's natures and the reformation of their lives (a denial whereof includes a renunciation of Christianity), it is a vain expectation that either of them will be wrought in such a way as to restore the beauty and glory of religion in the world, unless provision be made for an able ministry to instruct the body of the people, through all their distributions, in knowledge and understanding.

It is the duty of this sort of persons, unto the same end, to preserve the truth pure and uncorrupted. Unless this be done carefully and effectually, holiness will not be maintained or preserved in the world. And it is evident how many of them have acquitted themselves herein, as hath been in part declared in the foregoing account of apostasy from the doctrine and truth of the gospel. By them principally it hath been debased, corrupted, perverted, and continueth yet so to be; neither is there at this day scarce any one doctrine that should really promote evangelical obedience which is free from being despised or depraved by some of them. But this is not that which we now speak unto; it hath been done already. Our present inquiry is after that love and care of, that zeal for the truth, which are eminently required of them. Do they pray, and labor, and plead with God and man for its preservation, as that wherein their principal interest doth lie? or do many esteem of it any farther but as their outward advantages are secured by it? A fault there is in this matter, and it is not without the especial guilt of some that the world is come to such an indifferency about the principal truths of the gospel that from thence men slip into atheism every day.

Neither are these defects supplied by diligence in their work; yea, the want thereof is of all other evils in this kind most evident. No words are sufficient to express the sloth and negligence, the coldness and carelessness, that are found amongst many in the discharge of their duty, as to the instruction of others, and the application of the word of God to the hearts and consciences of men. I shall not mention particular instances, that none may be offended. The matter itself is evident, and the effects of it manifest. It may seem to some desirable that such things should be concealed, but whilst by reason hereof the souls of multitudes are in danger of eternal ruin every day, those who are sensible of their misery may be allowed to complain. How few, therefore, do diligently and industriously lay out themselves and their strength in the ministry, with zeal for the glory of God and compassion unto the souls of men! How few do take heed to themselves and to the flocks, do watch and pray, and press their message on the consciences of their hearers! Alas! it is but little of saving truth that many know in the notions of it, less they care to communicate unto others, because they know it not in its power. Will the souls of men be brought into the obedience of faith, will the power and interest of sin and the world in them be cast down and destroyed, will gospel obedience be preserved in the lives of men, by such weak and languid endeavors as many satisfy themselves withal! If it be so, conversion unto God and the fruits of holiness must be looked on as most easy things, and the ministry itself to be of little use in the world. Certainly, there is another representation of these things in the Scripture; and notwithstanding the growth of some opinions that would render the whole work of Christianity so easy and facile as to be accommodated unto a negligent ministry, yet the event thereof is openly pernicious. Wherefore we need not fear to say, that coldness, lukewarmness, sloth, and negligence, especially when accompanied with ignorance and spiritual darkness about the principal mysteries of the gospel, with an unconcernment of mind and affections in the importance, end, and design of their work, among them who are looked on as the public teachers of the church, at any time or in any place, keeps open a wide door for the lusts of men to pour forth themselves into that deluge of apostasy from the power of godliness which the world is even overwhelmed withal.

So was it with the church under the old testament, as God by the prophets complains in a hundred places. Can any man be so stupid as to imagine that the ordinary discharge of the priestly office in the church of Rome, in saying their offices at canonical hours, hearing of confessions and giving absolutions, without the least dram of laboring in word and doctrine, is a means to keep up the

power of Christian religion, or is not an effectual means to drench mankind in sin and security? Neither doth the calling of things by other names change their natures. Wherever there is the same neglect of the true work of the ministry, in the matter of it or manner of its performance, the same event will ensue thereon. And it will be nowhere more fatal than where men love to have it so, and despise whatever is spoken to the contrary, so as that it shall be esteemed a crime for any one to be dissatisfied with the soul-ruining sloth and negligence of this sort of men.

Moreover, whereas great relief in all these cases might be taken from a holy, exemplary conversation and walking among them in whom it is required as an ordinance of God for the direction and encouragement of the people, it is manifest in the world, and sufficiently taken notice of, that many of them in their own persons are openly ambitious, insatiably covetous, proud, sensual, haters of them that are good, companions of the worst of men, evidencing the depraved habits of their minds in all signal instances of vice and folly. He that shall consider what was the state, what were the lives, of the apostles and first preachers of the gospel, with those who succeeded them for some ages following, not merely as to their outward condition of straits and poverty (which, as it will be pleaded, was occasioned by the state of things then in the world), but as to that humility, lowliness of mind, self-denial, contempt of the world, zeal for God, purity of life, which they prescribed unto others and gave an exemplification of in themselves; and then take a view of that universal contradiction unto them and their ways which the lives and course of very many in the world do at this day openly express; he must conclude that either all those things were needless in them, as to the public interests of Christianity, or that they are unspeakably endamaged by those of some at present.

Wherefore, it cannot with any modesty be denied but that by reason of these and the like miscarriages in the spiritual guides of the people, the generality of Christians have been either led or suffered insensibly to fall into the present apostasy. When God shall be pleased to give unto the people who are called by his name, in a more abundant manner, "pastors after his own heart, to feed them with knowledge and understanding;" when he shall revive and increase a holy, humble, zealous, self-denying, powerful ministry, by a more plentiful effusion of his Spirit from above; then, and not until then, may we hope to see the pristine glory and beauty of our religion restored unto its primitive state and condition.

Those who do yet judge that matters among the common professors of Christianity, as to the obedience of faith, are in as good a posture as they were at any time formerly, or as they need to be, who have no other desire or interest in them but only that they should not be better, may abide in their security without troubling themselves with these things. But for such as cannot but see that a revolt or defection from gospel obedience is not only begun in the world, but carried unto that height that it is ready to issue in idolatry or atheism, it is time for them to consider under whose hand this hath fallen out, and be stirred up to put a stop unto its progress before it be too late. Nor is it to be expected or fancied that there will be a recovery of the people from ungodliness and profaneness, or unto the holy obedience the gospel requireth, until there be such a change wrought in the ministry that the word may be so dispensed and such examples given as may be effectual unto that end. It is to cast the highest contempt on the office itself to imagine that this breach can be otherwise healed; for whereas this declension is fallen out under the conduct of the present ministry and that of the foregoing ages, it is not to be thought that it will be retrieved under the same conduct. And to suppose that it can be done any other way, that the world of professed

Christians shall be recovered unto holy obedience by any other means but the ministerial dispensation of the word, is to render it a thing altogether useless. Here, then, must begin the cure of that lethargy in sin that the world is fallen into, — namely, in the renovation of a powerful evangelical ministry, or the due discharge of that office by them that are called thereunto or possess the place of it, if ever it be effected unto any purpose in this world.

## 03A.10. CHAPTER 10.

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### CHAPTER 10.

#### OTHER CAUSES AND OCCASIONS OF THE DECAY OF HOLINESS.

MULTITUDES are led into and countenanced in the ways of sin and profaneness, freely indulging unto their lusts and corrupt affections, by a false appropriation of justifying names and titles unto them, in ways of sin and wickedness. This was one principal means of old whereby the Jews were hardened in their impieties and flagitious lives; for when the prophets told them of their sins, and warned them of God's approaching judgments, they opposed that outcry unto their whole ministry, "The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these;" — "Say what you please, we are the only posterity of Abraham, the only church of God in the world." This contest they managed with the prophet Jeremiah in an especial manner. Jeremiah 17:1-34, he saith unto them in the name of the Lord, "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place," Jeremiah 7:3. Their reply and defense is, "The temple of the LORD," etc., Jeremiah 7:4. Whereunto the prophet makes that severe return, Jeremiah 7:9-10, "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name?" — "Will ye give up yourselves unto all manner of wickedness, and countenance yourselves therein by being a people unto whom the temple and the worship of it are appropriated?" And this, in like manner, was the great prejudice which the Baptist had to contend withal when he came to call them to repentance. Abraham's children they were, and by virtue of that relation had right unto all the privileges of the covenant made with him, whatever they were in themselves, Matthew 3:9. And it is evident in these examples that the nearer churches or persons are unto an utter forfeiture of all their privileges, and to destruction itself, for their sins, the more ready they are to boast of and support themselves with their outward state, as having nothing else to trust unto. But if men were able to countenance themselves in their sins on this pretense against that extraordinary prophetic ministry which endeavored to discard them of it, and called them unto the necessity of personal holiness, how much more will they be able to shelter themselves under its shades when they shall be taught so to do!

When men who have given up themselves unto a vicious, sensual, worldly course of life, having either fallen into it by the power of their lusts and temptations, or were never brought into a better course by any means of correcting the vices of nature, shall find that notwithstanding what they are, what they know themselves to be, and what judgment others must needs pass of them, yet they are esteemed to belong to the church of Christ, and are made partakers of all the outward privileges of it, it cannot but greatly heighten their security in sin, and weaken the efficacy of all means of their reformation. And when others, not so engaged in the ways of sin and profaneness, shall see that they may have all the external pledges of divine love and favor communicated unto them, although they should run into the same compass of riot and excess with others, it cannot but insensibly weaken their diligence in duty, and render them more pliable subjects of temptations

unto sin; for they are but few who care to be better than they judge they must be of necessity. When the church of Sardis was really dead, the principal means of keeping it in that condition was the name it had to be alive.

Let us, therefore, consider how it hath been in the world in this matter. Whilst these things have been communicated promiscuously unto all sorts of men, yea, to the worst that live on the earth, is it not evident that the name of the church and the administration of its ordinances would be made use of to countenance men in a neglect of holiness, yea, a contempt and hatred of it? Whilst these sacred names, titles, and privileges, these pledges of the love of God, and of all the benefits of the mediation of Christ, are forced to lackey after men into the most provoking courses of flagitious sins, what can put a stay to the lusts of men? If the church be that society in the world which is alone the object of God's especial love and grace, if the principal end of the administration of its ordinances be to confirm unto men their interest in the benefits of the mediation of Christ, how can the lusts of men be more accommodated than by the application of these things unto them, whilst they are flagrant in their pursuit? It may, indeed, be supposed that the Lord Jesus Christ hath made evangelical obedience to be the immovable rule of an interest in his church; indeed, whether obedience unto the precepts of the gospel be not the only and indispensable condition of a participation of the privileges of the gospel, ought to be out of dispute with them that own the truth of its doctrine. And whereas all that is required of us that we may be eternally saved is contained in the precepts of the gospel, men can have no other outward security of their souls' welfare than what doth accompany the church and its rights. When, therefore, they do find on what easy terms they may hold an indefeasible interest in them, so as that, by a compliance with some outward forms or constitutions, they may secure their right from any impeachment or forfeiture by the most profligate course of life which, for the satisfaction of their lusts, they can betake themselves unto, what remains of outward means that can put a restraint upon them. This was the engine whereby Satan promoted that general apostasy from evangelical obedience which befell the church of Rome, in all its branches, members and adherents. For after that innumerable multitudes were brought unto the profession of Christianity, not through a conviction and experience of its truth, power, holiness, and necessity unto the present peace and eternal welfare of the souls of men, but in compliance with the rulers of the nations and their own secular interest, being once safely lodged (on most easy and gentle terms) in the church, they were quickly secured from all apprehensions of the necessity of that holiness which the gospel doth require: for being assured that although their lives were worse than those of the heathen; were they never so lewd, filthy, and wicked; did all manner of sins that may be named, or ought [not] to be named, abound among them; yet that they, and they alone, were the church of Christ, and could not be otherwise, — to what purpose should they trouble themselves with mortification, self-denial, purity of heart and hands, and such other ungrateful duties? What ground is there to expect the same course of obedience from them who engage into a profession of Christianity on these terms, with those who in the primitive times embraced the truth in the love of it, for its own sake, with a deliberate resolution to forego all things rather than forsake its profession or decline from its commands?

Especially were men confirmed in their security when they saw others condemned body and soul unto hell, and consumed with fire and sword in this world, for not being what they were, — that is, the church! They could not choose but applaud their own happiness, who on such easy terms were certainly freed from present and eternal flames. When hereunto, for the necessary

satisfaction of some convictions, the reliefs of confession, penances, commutation, and redemption of sins by outward works of supposed piety or charity, were found out, with the great reserve of purgatory in all dubious cases, the generality of men bade an open farewell unto the holiness of the gospel, as that wherein they were not concerned and wherewith they would not be troubled. In these things consisted the mystery of iniquity, the springs and occasions of that great apostasy which was in the world under the Papacy.

The doctrine of the gospel (as to its peculiar nature, the causes, motives, and ends of it) was generally lost, partly through the horrible ignorance of some, and partly through the pernicious errors of others, whose duty it was to have preserved it. And how impossible it is to maintain the life and power of obedience when this spring of it is dried up or corrupted, when this root is withered and decayed, is not hard to apprehend. Sometimes truth is lost first in a church, and then holiness, and sometimes the decay or hatred of holiness is the cause of the loss of truth; but where either is rejected, the other will not abide, as we have declared. And so it fell out in that fatal apostasy; these evils promoted and furthered each other.

The ground got by the loss of truth was secured by the application of the name, title, privileges, and promises of the church unto all sorts of men, though living impenitently in their sins; for there was and is virtually contained therein an assurance given unto them that they are in that condition wherein the Lord Christ requires they should be, which he accepts, approves, and hath annexed the promises of the gospel unto. When men are declared to be in this estate, what need they be at any pains or charge to have it changed or bettered? Certainly, in general, they are too much in love with their lusts, sins, and pleasures, to part with them, unless they see a greater necessity for it than such a condition would admit. And for their farther security herein, they were informed that the sacraments of the church did, by virtue of their administration alone, confer unto them all the grace which they do signify. Particularly, they were taught to believe that every one who had a mouth, whatever villainies his heart and life were filled withal, might eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus Christ (at least by concomitancy); which himself hath assured us that "whoso doeth hath eternal life," John 6:53-54. And other ways almost innumerable there were whereby, through their pretended interest in the church and its privileges, even flagitious sinners were secured of immortality and glory.

For the increase of their satisfaction, for the confirming of their security, they found that hell and destruction were denounced only against them who were not of the church. For besides one great maxim of truth which passed current amongst them, but [was] falsely applied unto their advantage, namely, that out of the church there was no salvation, which church they were; and one also of no less use to them, though of less truth in itself, that the church was like Noah's ark, all were saved that were in it, and all drowned that were out of it, with others of an alike encouraging nature; they saw the truth of them exemplified before their eyes: for if it so fell out that there were any who did not belong unto the church as they did, nor would comply with it, although they were evidently in their ways and lives more righteous than themselves, they saw them, by the authority of the church, cursed, condemned unto hell, cast into dungeons, and consumed with flames. And herewith they could not but be fully satisfied that there was no fear of danger and trouble, in this world or another, but only in not being of the church; which sin they were resolved not to be guilty of, seeing they could avoid it on so easy terms. And it will be found always true, that as persecutions, with the sufferings of the saints of God, do tend to the brightening of the grace of

some, and the confirmation of the faith of others who really believe, so they do greatly unto the obdurateness and impenitency of wicked men in their sins. Never was there a more pernicious engine against the glory of the gospel invented, than for professed Christians to persecute, hurt; and destroy others, in like manner professing Christian religion with themselves, who visibly excel them in a holy, fruitful conversation, because in some things they dissent from them; for what can more secure men in their impieties than to persuade them that they are justified in them by the rule of the gospel, above those who in all duties of morality do really excel them? Certainly, for swearers and drunkards, profane persons and unclean, to persecute such for religion as are visibly pious, sober, temperate, given unto prayer and good works, is no useful representation of Christianity. But, —

These privileges and these attestations were not absolutely and always such armor of proof unto sinners, but that some arrows of conviction would ever and anon pierce into their minds and consciences, giving them no small disquietment and trouble. One thing or other, either in some beam of truth from the gospel or from conscience itself, on the occasions of new surprisals into actual sin, or from fear, or an apprehension of some public judgments, would ever and anon befall them, and that unto an inward disturbance beyond what the advantages mentioned could reduce them from; and this was the most likely way of awaking them out of their security, and causing them to inquire what God yet required of them. In this case were the other helps and supplies mentioned found out and proposed unto them. "If it be so that you are not absolutely satisfied with your interest in the advantages of the church in general, if sin will yet give you any disquietment, then you must to confession, and penances, and works of redemption, with the like approved medicines and remedies for troubled minds. But if the conscience of any prove so stubborn or inflexible after all these mollifying and suppling medicines, that the wound will not be skinned over, all that is yet wanting shall be well issued and secured in purgatory, wherein it is most certain that never any soul did miscarry."

By these and the like means, the generality of mankind were brought into an utter unconcernment with gospel holiness. They neither understood it, nor found any need of it, nor did like what by any means they might hear of it, until at length a blind devotion, deformed with various superstitions, obtained the reputation of it, the world in the meantime being drenched in ignorance, profaneness, and all manner of wicked conversation. So, under the name of the church and its privileges, were Christ and the gospel almost utterly lost amongst men.

It will not be otherwise where the same principles are entertained, according unto the degrees of their prevalency. And were it not that the minds of men are powerfully influenced with reserves from these things, it were impossible that so many called Christians should in their lives and conversations exceed heathens and Mohammedans in wickedness. The commands of the gospel are most holy, its promises great, and its threatenings most severe; and yet, under a profession of owning them all, men lead lives worse than the heathens, who know nothing of that holy rule, or of those promises and threats of eternal things wherein the highest blessedness and utmost misery of our nature do consist, which these profess to be regulated by. To suppose really the least countenance to be given hereunto by any thing that belongs unto the gospel, is to exercise against it the highest despite imaginable. This event, therefore, must and doth principally follow on the undue application of the outward tokens of God's favor and pledges of eternal blessedness unto men in their sins, by those unto whom the administration of them is supposed to be committed by

Jesus Christ. And let none expect a return of a conversation becoming the gospel among Christians until things are so ordered in the church as that none may flatter themselves with a supposed interest in the promises and privileges of the gospel, who live not in a visible subjection unto and compliance with all the precepts of it. But whilst all things are huddled together promiscuously, and there is no more required to make a Christian than for him to be born in such a place or nation, and not to oppose the customs and usages in religion which are there established, we must be content to bear the evils of that defection which the world groans under.

Great examples of persons exalted in places of eminency giving up themselves unto boldness in a course of sinning, — which have fallen out in all the latter ages of the church, — have had a signal influence into the increase and furtherance of this apostasy; especially they have had so where the persons giving such examples have been such as pretended unto the conduct of religion. See Jeremiah 23:15. It cannot with any modesty be denied but that the flagitious, scandalous lives of many popes and other great prelates of the court of Rome have hurried many into the very depths of atheism, and countenanced multitudes in a careless, voluptuous, sensual course of life. And if at any time a man whose ways are made conspicuous by the eminency of his employment, — being, as it were, at the head of all the religion that is publicly professed, and having the chief conduct of it in his hand, as it is in the Papacy in many places, — be vain in his communication, profane in his principles, sensual in his course of life, negligent in the duties of his office, no way rebuking open sins, but taking pleasure in them that do them, it is incredible how soon a whole age or generation of professed Christians will be influenced, corrupted, and debauched thereby; for what is the family like to be, when the stewards are such as the evil servant described Matthew 24:48-51? As men are warned every day not to be wiser than their teachers, but duly to obey their guides; so they either cannot or will not, for the most part, see any reason why they should be better than they, or walk in any other paths than what they tread before them. When the sons of Eli, the sons and successors of the high priest, actually exercising the priests' office in their own persons, gave the people an open example of profaneness and lewdness of life, the body of the nation was quickly so far corrupted as that the judgments of God in the first captivity of the land ensued thereon. The world at present is so precipitate and headstrong in a course of sin, that the best examples are not able in any measure to stem the torrents of it. But if in any place, at any time, encouragements are given unto men by any eminent examples in sinning, helping to remove the remaining curbs of fear, shame, and reputation, impudence in sinning will rise unto an exorbitant and uncontrollable outrage. Hereby, then, hath the defection from holiness complained of been greatly promoted in all ages, for few or none of them have wanted plenty of these examples. Indeed, the first visible degeneracies of Christianity, as they accompanied, so they were occasioned by the open pride, ambition, strife, contentions, and conformity unto the world, that possessed the minds and stained the lives of far the greatest part of the prelates and principal leaders of the church, after it came under the protection of the Roman empire, and men thought to purchase an interest in the good things of religion, or at least a representation of them, by giving power, wealth, and honor, unto persons no way better than themselves, who had got the name and title of the "clergy," or "guides of the church;" for about these things they contended endlessly, to the shame of Christian religion, and the utter loss in the most of the true real power and virtue of it. And in following ages, as things grew worse and worse, the lewd and wicked lives of popes, prelates, and others, signalized unto the world by their power and dignity, did by their examples insensibly bring about a public conformity unto their vices, according as the concurrence of

opportunity and ability did enable men thereunto. Wherever, therefore, persons fall within the compass of the ministry of the church, or, as guides thereof, are on that account (on what principles soever) exalted into places of eminence or dignity, whereby they are made conspicuous and observable, if they do not proportionably excel others in visible exemplary holiness, at least if they be not unblamable in such a godly conversation as truly expresseth the grace of the gospel, in humility, meekness, contempt of the world, of sensual pleasures, and of the pride of life, zeal and diligence in the dispensation of the word, it cannot be but that apostasy from the gospel, as to its power and holiness, will be kept up and promoted.

IV. This apostasy hath been very much promoted by persecution. I mean not that persecution which hath befallen the sincere, constant professors of Christianity from the avowed enemies thereof, upon the account of their profession of it. This is so far from being any cause or occasion of a defection from the holiness of the gospel as that it hath been the peculiar glory of our religion, and a notable outward means of the increase of it. So hath it been with respect unto the whole doctrine of the gospel in general, and so it is with respect unto any especial branch or part of it. It was the primitive glory of Christian religion that it set out in the face of a universal opposition from the whole world, and not only made good its station, but increased under the fiercest persecutions, until it had finished that glorious conquest which it was designed unto. And not only did it preserve its being and enlarge its extent under them, but they were means also to preserve its purity, and to exert its power in the hearts and lives of its professors. The church never lost finally either truth or holiness by the violent persecutions of its avowed enemies. But I speak not of the outrages committed on the flock of Christ by wolves in their own skins, but by such as have got on sheep's clothing; for these things, in whomsoever they are, proceed from the uncured, wolfish nature in persons on whom the gospel hath not obtained its promised efficacy, Isaiah 11:6-9. It is professing Christians persecuting one another, about some differences among themselves concerning their apprehensions of spiritual things and practice of divine worship, that I intend. And this hath been so great, especially in the latter ages of the church, that it is questionable whether there hath not greater effusion of the blood of Christians, ruin of families, and devastation of nations, been made by them who have professed the same religion in general, than by all the Pagans in the world since the first promulgation of it. He that shall impartially read the Gospel will not be able to discern how it was possible that any such things should ever fall out among those who pretend to avow it as their rule and guide in any measure; for the whole design and all the rules of it are so expressly contradictory unto any such practice, as that no man who had not learned the contrary from the event could possibly conjecture that any persons could ever fall into it without an antecedent renunciation of the gospel itself. But thus in process of time it did fall out, unto the irreparable scandal and detriment of Christian religion. And that so it would do was foretold; for the principal design of the book of the Revelation is, to foretell and delineate such an apostate state of the church as wherein the external power prevailing in it should persecute, destroy, and kill those who would not comply in the apostasy; for which reason, together with idolatry, that state is called Babylon. And we all know how it came to pass under the power and prevalency of the Roman church. And we may observe, that upon the destruction of Babylon, it is said that "in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth," Revelation 18:24, — that is, for the gospel and the profession thereof. Whoever, therefore, offereth violence unto the life of any on the account of their profession of the gospel and religion of Christ, be it under what pretense it will, he doth therein and so far join himself unto that apostate state which shall be

destroyed. Our Lord Jesus Christ came to restore that love of God which was departed from our nature, and thereon that love unto and among mankind which the law of creation originally required, and that advanced unto a higher degree of worth and excellency by an addition of new motives, duties, and ends, unto it. He came to save the lives of men, and not to destroy them, — to deliver them out of a state of enmity and mutual hatred into that of peace and love; and can any sober man imagine that the hurting, imprisoning, fining, banishing, killing, and destroying of men, for no other reason or cause in the world but for believing in Christ, and worshipping of him according, as they are invincibly convinced they ought to do, is a good and due representation of this design of Christ? nay, is it not evident that this practice draws a veil over the glory of it, obscuring the principal attractive beauties of the gospel, and teaching the world a Christian religion, fierce, cruel, oppressive, vindictive, bloody, to the utter exclusion of that which is so indeed? There is therefore no more expedient course to draw off the minds of men from the due consideration of one principal end of the mediation of Christ (which is to turn them from the gospel, and to substitute another gospel in the room thereof, which yet is not another, because it is none, whatever it pretends), than for those who profess Christian religion to persecute others of the same profession for their profession, pleading this to be a duty of that religion. Wherefore, when the generality of mankind, by what they heard and saw, were persuaded that this was the true religion, — namely, variously to persecute, and at length to destroy others, who professing it did yet in some things dissent from them in power, — they had lost the true gospel and the benefits of it.

Besides, that religion is alien from the gospel, at least includes a notable defection from it, whose avowed profession doth not represent the spirit, graces, and virtues of Him who was its author; yea, conforuity unto him in all things is the sum and substance of that obedience which it doth require. But in this way of external force and persecution, there seems to be an appearance of the spirit of Mohammed and Antichrist rather than of our Lord Jesus Christ. And hereby are the minds of men infected with false notions and apprehensions of the nature of Christian religion; which whilst they conform themselves unto, they depart from the glory and power of it. It hath been sufficiently elsewhere evinced how contrary also this practice is to the most plain rules and principal ends of the gospel. And when at any time there is this kind of persecution prevailing among Christians, there is not so much as the form, face, or appearance, of Christianity left amongst men. All that love, charity, peace, meekness, quietness, condescension, mercy, compassion, benignity, towards mankind, which belong essentially unto Christian religion, are forced to give way to wrath, strife, revenge, evil surmises, false accusations, tumults, disorder, force, rapine, and every thing that is evil. Whereas, therefore, this course hath been steered in many places of the world, and yet continueth so to be, the generality of men must needs be much untaught the truth of religion thereby; for that kind of profession thereof which is consistent with such practices is not directed in the least by the gospel. And when the minds of men are hereby unframed, they are unsuited unto all other evangelical duties Whatever advantages may shall pretend to have by this means accrued unto the truth (as they suppose) in some few instances, yet as none can be so immodest as to deny but that it hath been a thousand times more subservient unto the interests of error, so no pretended advantage of truth can countervail that corruption of Christian morality which hath been introduced and countenanced by it.

V. Want of watchfulness against the insinuation of national vices and the prevailing sins of any present age, hath effectually promoted an apostasy from evangelical holiness among the generality of Christians. There are some vices, crimes, or sins, that particular nations (on what grounds I shall not now inquire) are peculiarly inclined unto, which therefore abound in them; for it is evident what great advantages those vices must have on the minds of men, and how easy it is to have their practice imposed on them. All men are continually encompassed with them in their occasions, and commonness takes off the sense of their guilt, That which would be looked on in one nation as the greatest debauchery of human nature, is, through custom, in another passed by without any animadversion. Hence the prevalency of the gospel in any nation may be measured by the success it hath against known national sins. If these are not in some good measure subdued by it, if the minds of men be not alienated from them and made watchful against them, if their guilt appear not naked, without the varnish or veil put upon it by commonness or custom, whatever profession is made of the gospel, it is vain and useless. Thus the apostle allows that there were national sins prevalent among the Cretians, Titus 1:12-13, "One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." Whatever their profession were, if they were not delivered by the gospel from the power and practice of these national sins which they were so prone unto, they would not long be sound in the faith nor fruitful in obedience. So among the Jews there was a peculiar kind of stubbornness and obstinacy, above any other nation under heaven, which God complaineth of in their successive generations from first to last, and which continueth to be their characteristical evil unto this day. Hence Josiah was eminently commended, "because his heart was tender," 2 Chronicles 34:27. He was not under the power of the common sin of that people, which indeed includes all other evils whatever. It was a rare thing to find one of a tender heart among them. And we may observe (it being easily demonstrable), that the great apostasy which is at this day among the nations which have received the Christian religion consists in a degeneracy into those customs, manners, humors, and courses of conversation, which were common among them and national before the entrance of Christianity. Set aside an outward profession and formality of worship, and the generality of men in most nations live as they did formerly, and are given up greatly unto those vices which were prevalent among them in their heathenism. A full evidence this is that the power of evangelical truth is lost among them, the efficacy thereof consisting in curing the vices of nature and those evils which men have been most habituated unto, as the prophet at large declares, Isaiah 11:6-9.

Thus the sin of this nation hath been always esteemed sensuality of life, in an excess of eating and drinking, with the consequents thereof. Hereunto of late have been added vanity in apparel, with foolish, light, lascivious modes and dressings therein, and an immodest boldness in conversation among men and women. These are corruptions, which, being borrowed from the neighbor nation, and grafted on crab-stocks of our own, have brought forth the fruit of vanity and pride in abundance. And it is the most manifest evidence of a degenerate people, when they are prone to naturalize the vices of other nations among them, but care not to imitate their virtues, if in any kind they do excel. But thus the lust of the eyes and the pride of life are joined unto the lust of the flesh, to give the world, as opposite unto God, a complete interest among us. It may be these things are restrained in some by contrary vices, as covetousness, and an earnest desire or ambition to enrich a family, and leave a name amongst men; — a vanity infused amongst mankind from the great design of the builders of Babel; which was, to "make unto themselves a name,"

Genesis 11:4. This is but another way of the exercise of the same sin.

Now, where sins are thus national and common, it is easier for men to preserve themselves from the most raging epidemical disease than from being, in one degree or other, tainted with the infection of them. It is almost inexpressible how efficaciously they will insinuate themselves into the minds and lives of men. They are so beset on every side with the occasions of them and temptations unto them, they offer themselves continually with so many specious pretenses, as that there is no security against them but by being encompassed with "the whole armor of God;" a matter that few understand or apply themselves unto. But it is not [possible] on any other grounds or by any other means for single persons to hold out and prevail against a national confederacy in sin; for they who will not say "A confederacy" to them, or in those things wherein a whole people shall say "A confederacy," must be content to be for "signs and wonders," to be despised, and even hooted at, Isaiah 8:11-12, Isaiah 8:18. However, it is apparent that by them the general apostasy we treat of is visibly and openly promoted. Some are engaged in them by a corrupt course of education, and some are betrayed into the entrances of them by sloth, negligence, and security; some lose a sense of their guilt by their commonness; some yield to the arguments that are pleaded, if not in their justification, yet in their excuse or for their extenuation. One way or other, multitudes of all sorts are by them turned away from gospel obedience. Hence it is come to pass that Christianity is, as unto customs, manners, vanities, vices, and way of conversation, sunk down into heathenism; or prevalent national sins have drowned the power and left little but the outward form of it in the world. And where it is so, the life, substance, and all the real benefits of the gospel, are renounced; for it doth not design only to turn men in their outward profession from "dumb idols to serve the living God," to change the form and outward state of religion, — as the Roman missionaries have made conversions of the Indians, giving them new images instead of their old idols, and new saints for their former Zemes, — but to turn men also from "all ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Where this is not effected, either the gospel never really prevailed among men, or they are fallen away from it. And where men do engage into a profession of religion, disallowing and condemning such national vanities, vices, and customs, if they are publicly countenanced they occasion particular apostasies every day. This is that which, on the one side and the other, hath almost lost the protestant religion in some neighbor nations; for, not being able to hold out against those national vanities and vices which are publicly countenanced, they find no relief unto their minds but in a renunciation of that religion by which they are condemned. And this I look upon as the principal means of that general defection from evangelical holiness which prevails in most nations The gospel comes upon a nation as on a wilderness or forest that is full of such wood, thorns and briers, as the soil of itself is peculiarly disposed to produce. These it cuts down to the ground, planting good and noble plants in their room, whereby the barren wilderness becomes for a season a fruitful field. But in process of time, if continual care and culture be not used about it, the earth pours out of its own accord the weeds and briers which are natural unto it. These springing up abundantly choke the other plants and useful herbs, whereby the fruitful field is turned again into a wilderness There needs no more unto this apostasy but that national vices, for a time suppressed by the power of the word, should overgrow the generality of any people, whereby the graces of the gospel will be certainly stifled and choked.

VI. Mistakes about the beauty and glory of Christian religion have been no small cause of apostasy from its power and holiness. That it should have a glory, somewhat that might render it honorable in the eyes and esteem of men, was always thought unquestionable; and it is certainly true, provided that we suppose those with whom we have to do have eyes to see that glory, and minds enlightened to make a true judgment of it. In compliance here-withal was religion outwardly figured and represented among the Jews. And as the apostle declares that the worship of God in the administration of the gospel is truly glorious, and eminently so above what was to be found in the administration of the law; so Christian religion is in itself truly honorable, and contains in it every thing that is so, in the judgment of God and the rectified reason of mankind. But about the true notion and apprehension of that glory and honor which is proper unto religion and suited unto its nature, men have fallen into many woful mistakes; for whereas it principally consists in the glorious internal operations of the Holy Spirit, renewing our nature, transforming us into the image and likeness of God, with the fruits of his grace in righteousness and, true holiness, in a meek, humble, gracious conversation, and the performance of all duties according to the rule, few are able to discern beauty or glory or honor in these things. But yet where there is not an eye to discern them, the gospel must of necessity be despised and abandoned, and somewhat else substituted in the room thereof. This therefore also proved a great furtherance of the general apostasy, and continues an efficacious means of keeping multitudes under the power of it unto this day; for,

Through the loss of spiritual light and neglect of the grace of God, things were come to that pass in the world, that those who had the conduct of religion saw no real glory themselves in the things wherein all the glory of the religion taught and appointed in the gospel doth consist. And they are but few that do so at this day. Therefore the profession that is made of them by any is generally looked on as hypocrisy, mixed with a certain kind of superstition, and is accordingly despised; yea, nothing is more contemptible in the world than the possession and profession of those ways which are truly, if not only, noble. Their view, therefore, being lost in the eyes of the leaders of the church, it could not be expected that they should be instrumental to open the eyes of others, or careful to instruct them how to look after what themselves did not discern.

They were fully satisfied that there was in these things no evidence of glory unto the eyes of the generality of mankind, whereunto they thought it wisdom to accommodate themselves and the notions of religion. Men naturally can see no more beauty in the spiritual power of Christianity than the Jews could see in the person of Christ when they rejected him, because unto them he made no appearance thereof, Isaiah 53:2. That religion should be set off and represented as truly glorious and honorable in the eyes of men, they thought it incumbent on them to take care; but leaving herein the judgment of God, of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, as declared in the Scripture, they accommodated themselves unto the carnal apprehensions of them with whom they had to do, which were also suited unto their own. Wherefore, that this glory of religion consisted in a ministry in the church humble, holy, laborious, eminent in the graces and gifts of the Spirit, looking for no honor or respect but for their work's sake; in a worship plain, unadorned, spiritual, whose life and excellency consist in the invisible, effectual administrations of the Spirit of God; in meekness, self-denial, mortification of sin, and the fruits of righteousness, proceeding from the grace of the Holy Ghost, — they neither did apprehend themselves nor could imagine that others would be of that mind: for the world generally supposeth the direct contrary unto all these to be

honorable and glorious. Things which have a pretense of height and gallantry of spirit, a religions worship set off with such ornaments and modes as to affect the outward senses, with somewhat that may give satisfaction unto lust and conscience at the same time, are the things which unto the most are alone desirable. Wherefore, all pretense unto the power of religion dwindling away into an empty, jejune form and appearance of it in monkery, the supposed glory of Christianity in the world issued in these three things: —

(1.) The secular pomp and grandeur of the rulers of the church. This was designed to beget a reverence unto their persons and offices, without which religion itself would be despised. And it is easily conceivable how by this means their minds were drawn off from a due consideration of all those things which are truly honorable in them, and the neglect whereof will be the loss of the power of religion in the most at any time; for when they had secured unto themselves that honor, respect, and reverence which they esteemed needful unto the glory of religion, and found very suitable unto their own desires and ends, to what purpose should they trouble or perplex themselves with those hard duties of exemplary mortification, self- denial, and painful labor in the work of the ministry, when the whole of what they aimed at or needed was prepared for them? And how corrupt a spring of apostasy brake forth hereon hath been before declared.

(2.) A pompous, ceremonious worship, which began to be introduced by a pretense of outward solemnity, and ended in plain superstition and idolatry. And hereby were the minds of men diverted and taken off from inquiring after that spiritual exercise of the graces and gifts of the Spirit, wherein alone the beauty of evangelical holiness doth consist.

(3.) In works of magnificence and bounty, wherewith the clergy were enriched, and the consciences of men pacified in a course of sin or an unholy lithe. When the world was once persuaded that in these things consisted the glory and beauty of religion, and found them all readily compliant with their lusts and darkness, that real holiness and obedience which is required in the gospel was every day more and more neglected and despised. Besides, it is not expressible what wicked, scandalous practices, in pride, ambition, divisions, and contentions among the leaders of the church, did spring from and ensue on these principles. Henceforward no small part of ecclesiastical story is taken up with fierce contentions and quarrels about the preeminence, dignities, privileges, and jurisdiction of the prelates. Those who were wise and sober among the heathen observed this evil among Christians, reporting it as that whereby their religion was debased and corrupted. Such is the account given by Ammianus Marcellinus of that bloody and scandalous conflict between Damasus and Ursicinus whether of them should be bishop of Rome, lib. 27 cap. 6.

VII. During these seasons, Satan (as he will never be) was not wanting unto his own occasions and advantages; and they are altogether ignorant of his devices who discern him not at work even at present unto the same end and purpose. Nor is it possible that in any age, time, or place, the glory of the gospel should be abated, and the principal endeavor therein not belong to him. He is the head and leader of every apostasy from God. Therein he began his work in this world, and in the promotion of it he will finish it. And as he engaged all his power and art against the Head of the church, so by his total defeat in that attempt, wherein he made the clearest discovery of his pride and malice against God that it is possible for him to do, he is not discouraged from pursuing the same design against the whole church itself. And the way now insisted on hath been the chiefest

path that he hath beaten in his course; for from the very entrance of Christianity, he Began to immix himself with all those lusts of men whereby a defection from its power and purity might be set on foot and effected. And he engaged against it in both his capacities, as a lion and as a serpent. As a lion he stirred up, acted, and animated all those bloody persecutions whereby the Jews and Pagan world attempted for three hundred years to exterminate the Christian profession. But herein his success was answerable to that of his attempt against the Head of the church, and ever will be so, by virtue of the victory the Lord Christ had over him in the same kind of conflict. The force of the devil and the world having been once fully broken and subdued by Christ, it shall never prevail in the issue against his followers. Satan, in a confederacy with the world, may as a lion, through rage and blood, make a great bluster, and scatter the churches of Christ for a season, but prevail unto the ruin of the church in this way he never did, nor shall. And if at any time, by national devastations, he do so far succeed as to expel the gospel from any place or country for a season, it shall be evident unto all that it shall turn greatly unto its advantage in general and in other places. Let not, then, any fear his bloody fury as to the interest of Christ and the gospel in the world. As sure as he was conquered and triumphed over in the cross of Christ, he shall finally be so in all such attempts. Happy and blessed are they, and shall they be, by whose blood and temporal ruin his power at any time is or shall be broken. So I say it fell out in his first attempt in this way against Christian religion; for through the efficacy of the grace of Christ, and by virtue of the victory obtained against him in his own person, he was overcome by the blood and constancy of innumerable holy souls, until he was cast out of the havens of the world, and an end was put unto his rage. But, in the meantime, whilst this sworn enemy of the church made all this bluster as a lion, and raised all these storms of persecution, which the minds of all the professors of Christianity were intent upon, and generally much fortified against, he was secretly at work as a serpent also. Herein he secretly and gradually infected the minds of many with ambition, worldliness, superstition, and a neglect of the power and simplicity of the gospel That this is his work as a serpent our apostle declares, 2 Corinthians 11:2-3. And herein sometimes "he transformed himself into an angel of light," as he speaks in that place, 2 Corinthians 11:14-15; for he not only poisoned and inflamed the lusts of men, but drew them aside from the gospel by suggestions and pretenses of more piety and devotion, or at least of other outward modes and means of their expression, than it did require. So did the "mystery of iniquity" work in the days of the apostles themselves, 2 Thessalonians 2:7. He was at work secretly, by ways and means not easy to be discovered, to draw off the minds of men from evangelical truth and holiness, by sowing the seeds of that ambition and superstition which afterward spread themselves over the face of the whole visible church. So was he the spirit which animated the apostasy which by various and insensible degrees prevailed in the following ages. Those who acted in it and promoted it never knew any thing of the design, but added one thing unto another, as occasion was offered, which gave it increase; but in him the projection was designed, and regularly carried on from the beginning. Hence had it the name of "The mystery of iniquity," as being insinuated and promoted by such unsearchable methods or depths of Satan, that those, for the most part, who were subservient to his design, knew not what they did, though sufficiently warned in the Scripture of what he would do and what should come to pass. Wherefore, being disappointed, as was said, in his endeavors by outward force and persecution (as he will ever be), leaving the name, power, and advantage of the church unto them that professed Christianity, he made use of all the darkness, ignorance, errors, ambition, and lusts of men, gradually to draw them from the truth and holiness

of the gospel. And he ceased not until he had brought Christian religion to be looked on as made up principally, if not only, of those things which by his craft and the lusts of men were introduced into it. So did he pursue his work, almost undiscovered, until the generality of those who professed Christian religion were given up to the power of sensual lusts on the one hand, or brought under the power of superstition on the other. All this he attempted, and in a great measure effected, of his own accord. But after that men had voluntarily given up themselves unto his delusions, rejecting the truth and holiness of the gospel, as unto their love to them and delight in them, God in his righteous judgment gave them up unto his power, to be infatuated by him, and hardened to their eternal ruin. So the apostle expresseth it, 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12, "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Thus was the apostasy completed under the Papacy; and by the same artifices is Satan still at work among us unto the same ends and purposes.

VIII. Moreover, among the occasions of the present decay of holiness and the power of Christianity in the world, we may reckon the scandal that hath been given by or is justly taken at those who have professed the most strict obedience unto the rules of the gospel. There is nothing difficult herein but only to choose out the most pregnant instances in the multitudes which offer themselves to evidence this occasion. Nor do I intend such offenses as some men will enviously seek after, and sometimes causelessly create, but such as are really given, and offer themselves unto the consideration of all sorts of men. Of these I shall mention two only, which are the most obvious and extensive; and, —

Offence hath been taken at the divisions that have been among them, and continue so to be, with the management of them in an evil, contentious frame of spirit. The Lord Christ hath declared and appointed that the mutual love of his disciples should be the great testimony of the truth of his doctrine and the sincerity of their obedience. He hath also commanded them to be one in heart, mind, and affection, praying for them also that so they might be. His commands and directions unto this purpose are known unto all who know the gospel, and so need not here to be repeated or insisted on. The blessed effects and fruits of them were eminent for a season among the professors of the gospel, and their mutual love was a convincing argument of the truth, efficacy, and holiness, of the doctrine which they did profess: for where there is oneness and love thereon, there is peace, order, usefulness to mankind, and every good work; whereas the want of them is attended with strife, envy, confusion, disorder, and every evil work whatever. Some divisions, indeed, happened among the primitive Christians, but were quickly healed by the spirit of apostolical authority, and that love which was yet prevalent among them. But afterward all things grew worse, and the first visible degeneracy of Christianity consisted in the strifes, divisions, and contentions of its professors, especially of their leaders. And these in no long process of time proceeded unto that excess, and were acted with such an evil spirit of pride, ambition, envy, and malice, that the very heathens made themselves sport with their contentions, and observed that there were no sort of men in the world so ready for them and implacable in them as the Christians of those days were. But when once one or other party of them got into power, and, snatching that sword of force and violence out of the hands of Pagans which had been imbrued in the blood of the holy martyrs, began, in the pursuit of their divisions, to persecute one another (which way carnal men having tasted the sweetness and advantage of, as that which, gratifying their envy,

malice, and ambition, doth also, as they suppose, secure all their earthly concerns, they would not forego, nor have so done until it is become the top-stone of many men's religion), it was merely from the unspeakable care and mercy of God that they made not the gospel an abhorrence unto all flesh; for who, not yet endued with that light and grace which might secure him from the power of such temptation, could look on the fierce, devouring, bloody contentions of its professors, and that solely on its own account, and not suppose that itself proceeded from a spirit of malice, strife, and disorder? But the truth and faithfulness of God preserved it against all the oppositions of its adversaries, and in the midst of the treacheries of its avowed friends. Thus was it in the primitive times; which as it was the first considerable stop unto the progress of the gospel, so it was one principal cause of corrupting the conversation of many, filling them with a frame of spirit in all things directly opposite unto that of the gospel. The differences, with their untoward management, which fell out among the first reformers, was the chief means that hindered their work from a universal success.

Is it much otherwise among the strictest sorts of professors at this day? Do not some seem to aim at nothing more than to multiply and increase divisions, and to delight in nothing more than to live and dispute in the flames of them? There is not the least different apprehension of men's minds about any thing in religion, but such persons suppose it a sufficient ground to quarrel and contend about it forever. By such ways and means scandals are given unto the world in its proneness unto apostasy, and seeking occasions for it or countenance unto it, which is its present posture; for these things are not done in a corner. Men who know nothing of the inward power and virtue of that religion which is in such professors, as it is hoped, seeing and observing those other distempers among them, are really alienated from all the good they do profess; and not only so, but do from thence justify and approve themselves in their immorality and profaneness, as those which allow them a better condition than such wranglers can afford them. By this means hath religion lost much of that awful authority in the world whereby it oftentimes put a restraint on the minds and consciences of men who were never acted by its power. What are the rules whereby we ought to walk under the continuance of these differences, and what are the best means to put an issue unto them, I have inquired in a treatise unto that purpose. But it must be acknowledged that for the most part attempts for the rebuking of these distempers, the reconciliation of dissenters, and the uniting of professors, have been managed from such principles and in such a frame of spirit as have heightened and increased rather than allayed or diminished them.

Great offense is given to the world by the uselessness of professors, and in that they are not, what they ought to be, the common good and blessing of mankind. There is a selfish spirit on many of them, whence, contenting themselves with abstinence from known sins, and the performance of the religious duties of divine worship, they are of little or no use unto others. Some will be kind, benign, helpful, good, in some measure unto other men, but yet will and do give undue bounds and limits unto their actings in this kind. Their own household, and the household of faith, according unto that measure which from opinion or prejudice they take of it, they will alone regard. As for love, condescension, benignity, kindness, readiness to help, assist, and relieve all mankind, yea, the worst of men, as they have opportunity, they understand them not, yea, have many pretenses that they are not required of them. But if we are Christians, it is required of us to "abound in love toward all men," 1 Thessalonians 3:12; and our doing good unto all, being useful unto all, exercising loving-kindness in the earth towards all, is the principal way whereby we may

express our sincere obedience unto the gospel. One professor that is kind, benign, condescending, charitable, useful, ready to become all things unto all men for their good, brings more glory to the gospel than a hundred who are looked on as those who live too much unto themselves. When the old saying was, "Bonus vir Caius Sejus, sed malus quia Christianus,"

"Such an one is a good man, evil only in this, that he is a Christian," religion did by such convictions insensibly get ground amongst men. If the world cannot see that it hath any advantage by professors, but hath trouble on the other hand by the hatred which it cannot but have of their profession, it is no wonder if it desire to have no more to do with them. Did men find that so soon as any gave themselves unto the strictest ways of profession, therewithal they became benign, kind, merciful, charitable, useful, and helpful unto all men, it could not but give an honorable reputation in their minds unto that religion which they do profess; but an observation of a contrary frame and temper in such persons, and of how little use they are in the world, must needs produce contrary effects. By reason of such miscarriages as these, and others of an alike nature, whereby some professors are so far from adorning the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as that they cast, what lies in them, a blemish and reproach upon it, others are every day hardened in their alienation from all its concerns.

These few instances have I given of the means and ways whereby a general apostasy from the holy precepts of the gospel, as the rule of our obedience, hath been begun and carried on. Many others of an alike nature might be added unto them; but it is to no purpose to insist long on the nature of a disease when we find it to despise all possible remedies. Sovereign grace yet remaineth, whereunto this state of things is referred. And this apostasy, in its measure and proportion, partakes of the guilt of that described in the text, which we made the foundation of this discourse: for therein also is Christ "crucified afresh, and put to an open shame;" for, —

All persons who profess the Christian religion, and yet are thus fallen off or alienated from its holiness, do really renounce and forego the commands of Christ, and those as enlivened by his promises, for the pleasure and wages of sin. And herein do they openly declare and avow, as the judgment and resolution of their minds, that there is not that excellency in his precepts, nor that goodness, beauty, desirableness, or satisfaction in obedience unto them, or not that assurance in his promises, or worth in the things promised, as that they ought to be preferred before the course of the world and the pleasures of sin. Hence some commands of the gospel (and those of no small importance unto the furtherance of holy obedience) are neglected and cast from among the generality of Christians. Such are the commands for mutual love, whereof there is scarce any shadow left in the world: for that pretense of it which some seem to rest in and plead for as satisfactory, in the peaceable, and, as they say, loving converse of persons in their civil and ecclesiastical distributions, is no other than what is found among Mohammedans and Pagans on the like occasion; which, as it is good and commendable so far as it proceeds from and is suited unto the light of nature, so it no way answers, either in the kind of it or in its acts and fruits, unto that evangelical love which the Lord Christ requires among his disciples. That watchfulness over one another with love, care, and tenderness, those mutual admonitions, exhortations, and consolations, which the gospel so frequently and diligently prescribes unto us, are not only neglected, but so far despised that the very naming of such duties is made a matter of scorn, as a pretense of hypocritical preciseness; and no better entertainment have many other of the commands of Christ among the generality of them that are called Christians. So do many, on all

accounts, openly profess in their walkings and conversation that they see no cogent reason why they should comply with him in his commands; and it is not easily to be conceived how they can cast a greater dishonor or contempt upon him.

By continuing in the outward profession of Christianity, they do most falsely represent Christ and the gospel unto the world, and thereby, what lies in them, "put him to an open shame;" for, pretending to yield obedience unto him, and to place their hope for life and blessedness in him by the gospel, they profess withal that he is a person that will approve of such ways as they walk in, and his gospel a doctrine that gives countenance unto all manner of licentiousness in sin. Who would judge otherwise who had no knowledge of him or it but by the representation that is made of them in the profligate conversation of such apostates? But this argument I have elsewhere insisted on.

## 03A.11. CHAPTER 11.

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### CHAPTER 11.

#### APOSTASY FROM EVANGELICAL WORSHIP.

THIRDLY, That which was proposed to be considered in the last place is that apostasy which is in the world from the purity of the worship of the gospel as appointed by Jesus Christ; and herein principally did consist that great defection foretold by our apostle, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12, which is also prophesied of in the Revelation, and did accordingly come to pass. But because I have insisted on this subject on many other occasions, and some things relating thereunto are under difference and debate among such as are capable of the warning given concerning the apostasy that is in the world, I shall wholly waive the consideration of particulars about which any such differences may be, and only mention such things as the generality of Christians, at least of Protestants, cannot but acknowledge.

I shall take it for granted at present, that our Lord Jesus Christ did institute and appoint a solemn worship of God, to be continued inviolably and unalterably unto the end of the world. And the principal end of his appointing, continuing, or preserving any church on the earth, is the celebration of this worship; for herein alone consisteth that public revenue of glory which God requires from believers in this world. All other duties of the gospel may be performed by men in their single capacities, if there were no such thing as a church on the earth. And those churches do exceedingly mistake their duty, and every end of their being, which make it not their principal business to take care of the due celebration of that worship which the Lord Christ hath appointed. He was faithful in the whole house of God, as was Moses,

Hebrews 3:5-6; and if the life, being, happiness, and welfare, of the church of Israel, consisted in and depended on their remembrance of the law of Moses, which "God commanded unto him in Horeb, with the statutes and judgments," Malachi 4:4, because he was faithful in the house of God as a servant, certainly the being and well-being of the Christian church consist in and depend upon that observing and doing of all whatsoever He hath commanded in the worship of God (as Matthew 28:20) who is faithful as a son in and over the whole house of God.

Besides, it is acknowledged by all, — and we shall, God willing, show the manner of it in our exposition of the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, — that the Lord Christ, in and by the gospel, hath altered and abolished all that solemn worship, all those ordinances and institutions, which God himself had set up under the old testament, to continue unto the time of reformation; and hereby he rendered it absolutely unlawful for any one to serve God according unto those institutions. Hereunto God signally set his public seal of approbation in the sight of the world; for no sooner had the Lord Christ, by the promulgation of the gospel, taken away all their authority and obligatory power, so as that his disciples ought not to make use of them any longer, but God immediately, by severe and unparalleled judgments, destroyed the seat and place of them, so that those who would yet never could regularly make use of them unto this day. And shall

we think that the Lord Jesus Christ thus took away and abolished the old solemn worship of the church, and substituted none in the room of it? or that he took away that which was erected by the wisdom of God, though but for a season, and left the church, as to its main duty and principal end in this world, unto the inventions and imaginations of men? One of these must be supposed, if it be denied that he hath established a solemn worship of God, to continue unalterably unto the end of the world; and both of them are highly blasphemous. Again, let any, in faith and obedience unto him, practice and attend unto all those parts of divine worship which he hath appointed, and I am persuaded no man will have the confidence to say that there is this or that wanting to render it a solemn and acceptable service, however they may contend for the conveniency of some circumstantial additional. Wherefore I take it for granted at present, that the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed such a solemn worship under the gospel, which all his disciples are obliged constantly and invariably to observe, as he declares, Matthew 28:20. And with respect hereunto men may fall away and apostatize from the gospel, no less sinfully and fatally than they may fall from the mystery of its doctrine or the holiness of its precepts. And there are two ways whereby this may be done: — 1. By neglecting and refusing to observe and do what he hath appointed; 2. By adding appointments of our own thereunto, inconsistent with and destructive of that which he hath ordained: —

I. In the first way we have some among ourselves who are fallen off from the worship of the gospel. It is true, they will do some things which have an appearance of being what Christ hath commanded; such are their first-day's meeting, and their prayers, with speaking in them; — but they neither observe the Lord's day, nor pray or speak in obedience unto any institution of his. Conveniency and the light within are all the reason and guide which they plead for them. And for the sacraments, or baptism and the supper of the Lord, which are so great a part of the mystical worship of the church, on I know not what fond pretenses, they utterly reject them. In like manner they deal with a stated ministry as of Christ's appointment, although they have found out means to set up one of their own. And because herein also Christ is "put to an open shame," we shall briefly inquire into the grounds and reasons of this defection from the obedience due to his commands: —

Now the principal reason, and which compriseth all others, why some men have forsaken the gospel, as unto the administration of its ordinances, is because they are no way suited unto, nor indeed consistent with, that faith and obedience which they have betaken themselves unto; for the ordinances of the gospel are representations of the things which we believe, and means of the conveyance of their efficacy unto us. Unto the confirmation of that faith and our edification therein are they suited, and to nothing else. Now, these persons having fallen, as we have showed, from the faith of the gospel in the mystery of it and the spiritual obedience which it doth require, of what use can the ordinances of worship be unto them? For instance, the ordinance of the Lord's supper is instituted in the remembrance of the death of Christ, of his suffering in our stead, of the sacrifice he made of himself therein, of the atonement or reconciliation with God that he wrought, and of the sealing of the new covenant with his blood. To what end should, any man solemnly worship God in and by this ordinance who upon the matter believeth none of these things, at least doth not believe them as proposed in the gospel, namely, as the principal causes and springs of life, righteousness, and salvation? Those who believe in God through these things, who find the effects of them upon their souls in righteousness and peace, cannot but delight to be found in the exercise of faith

through this ordinance, as they know it to be their duty so to do. But it is apparent that neither this nor the other ordinance of baptism doth contribute any thing to the furtherance, increase, or establishment, of that light within men which upon the matter they resolve their faith and obedience into; yea, they are, in their true and proper notion, as both directing unto the sanctifying and justifying blood of Christ, diametrically opposite thereunto and unto what is ascribed unto it. It is, therefore, so far from being strange that these men should forsake these ordinances of gospel worship, that the admission of them in their true and proper use and signification is destructive of the whole scheme of religion which they have formed unto themselves. Where the faith of the gospel is forsaken, the ordinances of worship must be so too, and so all instituted divine service be neglected, or other things found out that may suit unto the imaginations whereunto men are turned aside

Another reason hereof hath been want of spiritual light to see through the veils of outward institutions, and of the wisdom of faith, to obtain communion with God in Christ by them. Our worship under the gospel is either absolutely spiritual, or that which comes immediately unto what is so. But in these institutions there is somewhat that is outward and sensible, and it is to be feared that many do rest in these outward things, and proceed no farther in the worship of God by them than the actions and words that are used will carry them; but they are, as appointed by Christ, "animae vehicula," means of leading and conveying the soul unto an intimate communion with God. That they may be so unto us, three things are required: —

(1.) That we submit our souls and consciences unto the authority of Christ in these institutions. Unless this be the foundation which we build upon, the whole service will be lost unto us.

(2.) That we rest on the veracity of Christ for the working of the grace and accomplishment of the mercy represented in them and sacramentally exhibited by them; for they will not profit them by whom the promises of Christ, virtually contained in them and accompanying of them, are not mixed with faith, and we cannot believe the promise unless we submit to the authority of Christ in the appointment of that whereunto it is annexed.

(3.) That we understand in some measure the mystical relation that is between the outward symbols of the ordinance and the Lord Christ himself, with his grace represented thereby, wherein the nature, use, and end of the institutions are contained. And all these are necessary to keep up any delight in them, or a conscientious use of them. Where, therefore, all these are wanting, — as apparently they are in those concerning whom we treat, being none of them either understood, owned, or acknowledged by them, — whereas they have neither spiritual light into the internal nature of these things, nor spiritual gifts for their administration unto edification, following the conduct of their own principles, they could do no otherwise but reject them, and therein fell off from the worship of the gospel, and thereby do reflect dishonor upon the Son of God, the author and Lord of all these institutions.

There is another way whereby men may, and many men do fall away, and have for many ages fallen away, from the gospel with respect unto its worship, and that is, by rejecting its simplicity and pure institutions, substituting a superstitious, yea, idolatrous worship of their own in the room thereof, 2 Corinthians 11:3 : for whereas there are various degrees of declension from the purity of gospel worship, according as men forsake any part of it, or make any additions of their own unto it, yet at present I shall mention them only by whom it is wholly perverted, — that is, those of the

church of Rome; for as they have added unto it rites and institutions of their own in great number, partly superstitious and partly idolatrous, so there is no one ordinance or institution of Christ which they have not corrupted, the most of them so far as utterly to destroy their nature and use. Whereas, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ doth in the ordinances of gospel worship and the due celebration of them represent his own religion and authority unto the church, to remove them out of the way, and to introduce another fabric of them of another constitution, is to represent Antichrist unto the church, and not Christ, and thereby to "put Christ to an open shame." The ways and means whereby this apostasy was effected, by the craft of Satan and the carnal interest of men, in a long tract of time, I shall not here declare; it shall suffice at present to observe, that as men grew carnal, having lost the spirit, life, and power of the gospel, and so far as they did so, they found it necessary to introduce a carnal, visible, pompous worship, suited unto that inward principle and light whereby they were acted. And as the people in the wilderness, being carnal in their hearts, and accustomed unto carnal ways of worship, upon the absence of Moses in the mount, cried out unto Aaron, "Make us gods, which shall go before us" (that is, gods visibly present), "for as for this Moses, we wot not what is become of him," whereupon they made a calf; so these men, finding the whole fabric of Mosaical institutions, consisting in outward images and representations of things, taken away, and themselves left as it were without any present gods to guide them, — that is, such visible representations of the presence of God as their carnal hearts and minds might delight in, — they provided all those calves whereof their present worship doth consist. And because there were many in those days when this design was first set on foot who were truly spiritual and holy, worshipping God in spirit and in truth, this idolatrous worship could not be introduced and preserved but by insensible degrees and in a long tract of time, throughout the whole whereof the "mystery of iniquity" wrought effectually unto the same certain end. Those, in the meantime, who worshipped God in truth, were either imposed on by a show of humility and devotion in the degrees of apostasy which were added in their days, or else complained of what they could not remedy.

And if these brief considerations of the nature of the present apostasy that is in the world from the power of Christian religion, in all the principal concerns of it, with the causes and occasions thereof, do excite or provoke any one who hath more leisure and ability for this work unto a more diligent and useful inquiry into them, it will be an ample reward unto my endeavors.

## 03A.12. CHAPTER 12.

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### CHAPTER 12.

INFERENCES FROM THE FOREGOING DISCOURSES — THE PRESENT DANGER OF ALL SORTS OF PERSONS, IN THE PREVALENCY OF APOSTASY FROM THE TRUTH AND DECAYS IN THE PRACTICE OF EVANGELICAL HOLINESS. THE last part of this discourse is designed for cautions unto those who yet stand, or think they stand, with respect unto that general defection from the gospel whose causes and occasions we have thus far inquired into. And thereunto some directions may be added, to be used as preventives of its contagion. This method are we guided unto by the apostle, who, having declared the apostasy and ruin which ensued thereon of the generality of the church of the Jews, improves the consideration of it unto the caution of others, under a present profession of the truth. "Thou wilt say then," saith he to the Gentile believers, "The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off," Romans 11:19-22. And in another place, on an alike occasion, he speaks unto the same purpose: "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall," 1 Corinthians 10:12.

Most men are apt to suppose that the continuance of the true religion in any place depends solely on the prudence and industry of those unto whom the conduct of its outward concerns are committed. The interest of some and the duty of others, in the management of human laws and constitutions, are generally looked on as a sufficient and the only means of its preservation. And those of this persuasion think they have personally no concernment herein, but only to herd themselves in the multitude, and to take their fate, whatever it be. Such as these will despise our cautions, as those from which the reasons of their confidences and fears are most remote. But whereas the profession of religion in the community of Christians will not be preserved but by the power of it in individuals, the only root whereon it will long thrive or grow, we shall not at all concern ourselves in them by whom the directions of their duty are thought needless or useless; for after the utmost exercise of human policy, it is the wisdom that is from above which must be our stability. And if the power of truth and holiness be not preserved in the hearts and lives of particular persons, the profession of them in churches, or the pretense of them in nations (which are all that will remain), are neither acceptable unto God nor useful unto the souls of men.

Some think themselves, as for their own part, little concerned in these things. That there is such a defection from the gospel as hath been complained of they cannot deny, and they will also grant that it is desperately pernicious unto them that are overtaken thereby; therefore they suppose it not amiss that men should be warned of its danger and directed to avoid it. But this they think necessary for others, not for themselves; for as for their part, they have not the like occasions, nor are exposed unto the same temptations, with them who formerly apostatized from the gospel or

are in danger now so to do. Besides, they know well enough what are their own resolutions, and that though all men should forsake either the doctrine taught in or the obedience required by the gospel, yet should their constancy be immovable! But I do not think these apprehensions sufficient to render our warnings needless. Occasions and temptations are not in our power; our greatest present freedom from them will not secure us from the assaults of the next hour. Peter foresaw not his dangers and fears when he so confidently engaged unto constancy in the profession of his Master, which yet within a few hours came upon him. And such is the subtlety of our spiritual adversaries, that sometimes we are under the power of temptation when we think ourselves most remote from it. It is beyond the compass of human reason to take at once a prospect of all the causes and means thereof, with the ways of its efficacy and prevalency. And if at any time we judge ourselves free from an hour of temptation, which comes upon the world to try them that dwell therein, which most are exercised with and many are prevailed on by, so as to be secure and regardless of the means of our preservation, of all men we are in the most danger to be ruined by it. Neither will the best of our resolutions be of any avail without the utmost of our endeavors. The great apostle thought and resolved with respect unto the person of Christ that he would neither deny him nor forsake him, and it this confidence did not betray him into his fall, yet to be sure it did not preserve him from it; and it was upon his own experience that he gave afterward that holy advice, that we should "give a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear," 1 Peter 3:14-15, and "pass the time of our sojourning here in fear," 1 Peter 1:17. The highest present confidences have ever proved the most deceiving presages of future stability. Wherefore, the utmost I design in the ensuing cautions is but to excite men unto a due apprehension of their danger, that they be not surprised into that pernicious security which is the mire wherein this rush doth grow.

The consideration of the extent and almost universality of this apostasy may be of use unto this purpose. Ignorance, profaneness, worldly-mindedness, with sensuality of life, have obtained the most eminent catholicism in Christendom. The complaint of the prophet is not unsuited to the present state thereof: Isaiah 1:4-6, "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." Do we hear but of this or that individual person who hath apostatized from a profession of holiness, into a sensual, wicked, worldly course of life, or is turned from the faith into pernicious errors? there is no man that is wise and careful of his eternal concerns, but he will take it as a warning to examine, try, and be careful of himself; and this counsel is laid before us by the apostle, 2 Timothy 2:17-19. What, then, is required of us when we see nations, churches, multitudes of people, by one means or other, degenerated from that power of godliness which once they professed? If we hear that one or other in a city is visited with the plague, we are not altogether insensible of our own concern and danger, because we know how usual it is for the infection of that disease to spread and diffuse itself; but if the whole city be infected, and thousands fall under it every week, there is none so sottish as to need much warning of their danger. And shall we be less concerned for our immortal souls and their eternal condition than we are for these frail carcasses and their continuance for a few days in the world, which, if they escape one distemper, may yet in a few moments fall under the power of another? This spiritual "pestilence," that hath formerly "walked in darkness," is now a "destruction wasting at

noonday." Nations are depopulated by it and cities left desolate, as unto their interest in God and the gospel; and is it not high time to "look diligently" lest the infection reach unto us also, lest we also should "fail" and come short "of the grace of God," and be "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin?" As, then, our bodies are of the same natural frame and constitution, as they have in them the same burnouts, the same kind of animal spirits, as are in those who are infected with the plague, whereby we are obnoxious unto the same infection with them; so there are in our souls and minds the same principles of sin and love of the world as are infected, drawn away, enticed, excited, and enraged, by outward occasions and temptations, until they have issued in apostasy. Do we think that we shall be always easily preserved, and that whilst we are careless and secure, from that torrent which hath carried away such multitudes before it? Are we in ourselves better than they, or any of them? Have we a patent for our preservation, whilst we neglect any ways, means, or diligence that the rule requireth thereunto? Doth not God show unto us, not one, but many churches and nations, saying, "Go unto those Shilohs where I some time placed my name, and see what is become of them, and what I have done unto them? Will ye go after them? have yea mind to be made like unto them? Think not to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham to our father; we have those outward privileges and advantages which they had not:' for they also enjoyed the same until they had forfeited them by their apostasy." Certainly the general prevalency of this evil proclaims such a danger as no wise man, no man that takes care of his own salvation, ought or indeed can neglect. Wherefore, as it is always with Christians, if ever it be, a time to watch, to stand on our guard, to take unto ourselves the whole armor of God, to be jealous of ourselves, to be constant and diligent in the use of all means, both private and public, for our preservation, it is now a time so to be. And if professors will not be awakened; if they will not stir up themselves with the gifts and graces which they have received; if they will please themselves that all is well with them, and is likely so to be; if they will yet immix themselves with boldness and confidence in the ways of the world; — oh that my head were a fountain of tears! oh that my soul could mourn in secret for them! seeing assuredly they will not be able to stand in that day of temptation which is come upon the face of the earth, to try them that dwell therein. The outward court is long since given to be trodden down by the Gentiles, and how soon the enemies may roar in the very sanctuaries, and set up their banners for tokens, we know not; for, —

The present state of this defection hath a dangerous aspect. Physicians say, "Nemo moritur in declinatione morbi," — "No man dies in the declension of his disease;" and when a public pestilential distemper is in its wane or decay, the danger is esteemed in a great measure over. But whilst a disease is yet growing and daily spreading its contagion, whilst the bills of mortality are every week increased, they are only hardened and profligate persons whom the commonness of the judgment renders regardless and senseless of it. And it is no otherwise with the evil complained of at this day. There is almost nothing in the world that all sober men do generally agree in but this alone, that the whole world doth daily wax worse and worse. Who can give an instance of the decrease or abatement of any one sin in its love or practice? but that some are advanced to higher degrees of confidence in their perpetration than former days or ages afford us any precedent of, every one can declare. What instances have we of a spiritual recovery from any of our decays? What attempts unto that purpose are made by any, unless by such as are not of consideration, as have not advantages to enable them to effect any thing therein? The world is highly at variance about religion, managing its differences with great animosities and industry, how one way, party, and profession, may draw persons from other ways and professions. The sole

business of the church of Rome is, by all manner of artifices to win over men unto their communion; that is, a subjection of their souls, consciences, and entire interests here and for eternity, to the authority of the pope. Others bestir themselves as well as they are able to keep what they have, and to rescue men from their seductions; — and although they have the advantage of the truth on their side, and for the most part the advantage of abilities in the management of their cause, yet they visibly lose ground every day; and where one is recovered from the Roman interest, many are added unto it. And there can be no reason assigned hereof, but only that the apostasy is upon its increase, this being one way of it. Half that pains would have formerly turned a whole city from Popery which will not now succeed unto the preservation of one person. But, in the meantime, both in one profession and another, all sorts of men continue regardless of gospel holiness and obedience; and whilst they quarrel about the outward form, the inward power of godliness lies neglected. Do we see things anywhere in the world upon a recovery, or any thriving design for the retrieval of holiness? The name and thing are growing more and more into contempt. What instance can be given wherein this apostasy from the gospel doth or may exert itself, — be it in atheism, be it in Popery, in hatred of and scoffing at the mysteries of evangelical truth, in worldliness, profaneness, vanity, and sensuality of life, in the coldness of love and barrenness among professors, — that is not openly in its progress? And is this a time to be secure, careless, or negligent? Are we sure that this epidemical infection shall not enter our habitations? Do we not find how it hath, one way or other, attempted us already? Can we find no decay in zeal or love among ourselves, no adherence unto the world unsuited unto our present state and condition in it, no neglect of duties, no rareness in divine visitations, no want of life and delight in spiritual communion with Christ, no hurtful growth of carnal wisdom, with all its attendants? or have we not found ourselves, one way or other, sensibly attacked by these evils? It is to be feared that those who can make no observation of any thing of this nature among themselves are somewhat sick of the Laodicean distemper. And if we will not be awakened and stilted up to a more than ordinary diligence, care, and watchfulness, at such a season as this is, it is to be feared that ere long the generality of professors will come to be in the condition of the church of Sardis, — to have a name to live, but indeed and in the sight of Christ to be dead.

As this apostasy is yet in its progress, so what will be its event, what it will rise unto, is altogether uncertain. God can put a stop unto it when he pleaseth, as he hath in his holy purposes fixed bounds unto it which it shall not pass; but in the meantime, being greatly provoked by the ingratitude of a wicked world, no man knows how long he may suspend those more powerful influences and more extraordinary effects of his word and Spirit which are needful unto the healing of the nations, and without which they will not be cured. I hope for better things and pray for better things; but I have no certain ground of assurance that this apostasy shall not grow until, in one instance or other of it, it swallow up all visible profession. The whole world, so far as I know (I mean these parts of it), may become papal again, or be so corrupted in their principles and profane in their lives as that it is no great matter what their profession in religion be. Two things I do know or believe, — namely, (1.) That "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." His elect, that truly fear him and diligently serve him, shall be preserved from perishing eternally, and from every thing that necessarily leads thereunto. (2.) That God hath appointed a time and season wherein he will not only put a stop unto this defection from the gospel, but an end also. He will one day execute the vengeance that he hath written and recorded on the throne, power, and kingdom of the antichristian apostasy, and in one day shall the

plagues of Babylon come upon her; and he will again "turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call on the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent," Zephaniah 3:9. He will again revive the beauty of his worship, and the glory of holiness in the earth; but, in the meantime, what things may come unto I know not. Those who pretend to a clearer inspection into future things may not do amiss strictly to examine the grounds whereon they proceed; for many have been made ashamed of their predictions, that within such or such a time the yoke of Babylon should be broken. This is all I say (and I say it only for myself), I know no assurance that can be given on infallible grounds that the apostasy which we are treating of shall not one way or other, in one instance or other, become again to be catholic, and prevail against all open, visible profession of the purity and power of gospel worship and holiness. Now, if this be not so unto others, yet unto myself it ought to be a warning how I may be thought worthy to escape, and to stand before the Son of man. And I am sure there is so much danger of it at least as to deserve the consideration of all who take care of their eternal salvation; for if things should come to such a pass, they are not many, they are but very few, who will be entirely preserved. The most will, one way or other, suffer loss; and it is not an easy thing to be found among the number of the few in such a season. Can we think that men careless in holy duties, cold in zeal, lukewarm in love, barren in good works, cleaving to the world and conformable unto it, low in their light, dubious in their state, useless in the world, fearful of trials, will be of this number? They are woefully deceived who are pleased with such apprehensions Other principles, other ways, courses, and practices, will be required in them who shall be hidden and safeguarded in that day.

The various ways whereby this defection prevails in the world should also warn us to stand upon our guard. Were it of one sort only, did it work only one way, or make use of one engine alone for its progress, the evil and danger of it might be the more easily either withstood or avoided; but as we have before referred it unto three general heads, — with respect unto the doctrine, the holiness, and the worship of the gospel, — so under each of them there are various ways and means whereby it is promoted. The infection from this plague is taken innumerable ways, Hebrews 12:1. Some take it in their shops or especial vocations; some in their societies, civil and ecclesiastical; some from the vanities and pleasures, some from the profits and advantages, of the world. Unbelief, the deceitfulness of sin, corrupt lusts and affections, spiritual sloth, cares about and love of riches, lie all in a readiness to give entertainment to and to embrace any opportunity, advantage, or means, whatever it be, whereby this apostasy may be admitted and take place in them. See Hebrews 3:12-13, Hebrews 12:15-17. Satan, in the meantime, labors by his insinuations to corrupt our minds, to poison our lusts, and to supply them with all inveigling or provoking objects, 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Peter 5:8. In this state of things, look how many public temptations there are in the world, so many general ways and means are there whereby this apostasy doth prevail; and who can reckon up these temptations? Hence it is that men fall under this evil in such various ways, and unto such various degrees. Some do so by errors and "damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them;" some by superstition and idolatry; some by a contempt of gospel mysteries, and preferring another way of duty before evangelical obedience; some by ambition and pride of life; some by love of the world, and a neglect of duties spiritual and moral, under a deceiving profession; some by suffering carnal wisdom and some sensual lusts to devour their convictions and their efficacy; some by the uncertainty of their minds, brought to an indifferency in all things supernatural and divine; some by vain-glory and shame to be found among the scorned society of those who are truly religious; and multitudes are initiated

into an irrecoverable profaneness by the vain pomps and spectacles of the age. And other ways there are, more than can be recounted, whereby this evil is propagated, and men fall under the power of it. By this means the very common air we breathe in is infected, 1 Corinthians 15:33. Snakes are in all grass whereon we tread, and scorpions under every stone. Snares are laid for us on every hand, and those (some of them) so gilded and set off, that multitudes of loose professors have taken them up and wear them as their ornaments. Those who escape one evil do every day fall into others. And how shall they escape who are encompassed with so many dangers, if they live in the neglect of any one duty or means of their preservation that God hath appointed and made useful thereunto?

Consider that there is an apostasy which is irrecoverable, and it will end in eternal ruin. This is that which we are taught in this context, according unto the exposition before given of it. No man in this world can be, by the rule of the gospel, in an unsalvable condition, — that is, be concluded under an unavoidable destruction by any known rule of the revealed will of God, — unless it be an apostate. There are also several sorts and degrees of apostasy that may have several causes and effects, and so various events. Great surprisals, strong temptations, negligence in watching against the deceitfulness of sin, may produce temporary abnegations of Christ and the gospel, woful declensions from the due observation of his commands, with wandering into foolish opinions, and yet persons may be recovered from them all, and brought by repentance unto salvation. Signal instances of this grace and patience in God might be given. And this is sufficient to render the despair of them causeless who are ever awakened in this world [in] time enough to endeavor a deliverance from any sin, or course of sinning, provoking and destructive; for when any man is by any means called to have any thing to do with God about his eternal concerns, God doth not allow him to be the absolutely sovereign judge of himself, which would usurp his prerogative and put the sinner in the place of God. He that despairs says, "I am in the stead of God to myself in this matter. There is neither goodness, nor grace, nor mercy for him, but what I can comprehend." And this evil God hath obviated in signal instances of the recovery of great apostates. But yet withal there is, as we have showed, an apostasy that is irrecoverable; and hereof God permits many examples in this world, to put an awe not only on bold and presumptuous, but also on careless and negligent sinners: for whereas our apostle doth expressly twice mind the Hebrews of this severity of God against apostates, in this place and in Hebrews 10:26-27, in the one he doth it with respect unto unprofitableness under the means of grace, and in the other with respect unto a negligence in attending unto the administration of gospel ordinances. Now, whereas any men may be overtaken with the beginning of decays and declensions from the holiness and worship of the gospel, all which have a tendency in their own nature unto this irrecoverable apostasy, ought they not to be continually jealous over themselves, lest they should pass the bounds God hath fixed unto his patience and grace? Ought we not to be careful about every sin or omission of duty that hath a tendency unto this doleful issue? For this very end, that we may be warned to take heed of the beginning of apostasy, doth the apostle in this place declare the end of it. The reader may, if he please (to help him herein), consult our discourses on Hebrews 4:3. It is not an easy task to stop a course in backsliding when once it is entered into. And I shall close this warning with naming two directions unto this purpose: — (1.) Take heed of a course in any sin. Though every sin doth not immediately tend unto final apostasy, yet a course in any sin continued doth so. (2.) Take heed of touching on such especial sins as have a peculiar tendency thereunto; and of what nature they are hath been declared.

Our last consideration of this kind shall be taken from the nature and guilt of this sin, wherever it be found, with the severity of God against it; and we may look upon it as it is total, such as that supposed by the apostle, Hebrews 6:4-6. The exposition we have given of the words will warrant us to conclude that total apostasy from the gospel once professed is a greater sin, and of a more heinous nature, than that of the Jews in crucifying the Lord Christ in the days of his flesh. This was sufficiently proved in the exposition of the words. It remains only that we do briefly inquire what doth concur unto such a total apostasy, whereby the truth of the exposition and the necessity of the warnings given will be made yet more evident. And though I shall speak with especial respect unto total apostasy from all profession, yet are the things that shall be spoken to be found, in their degree and measure, in all those who are guilty of that partial defection which we have described. There are, therefore, always found in this great offense the things ensuing: —

(1.) The loss of all taste of any goodness or excellency in the gospel, in the truth or state of its profession and worship. There is no man who hath ever made a profession of the gospel in earnest, beyond pretense and custom, but he hath found some kind of taste, relish, or sweetness, in the things of it. They "taste of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." Either in the things themselves, or in the manner of their dispensation, or of the duties of worship enjoined therein, they have found somewhat that hath given their minds and consciences some satisfaction. A man cannot go into a pleasant garden in the spring but he will smell some savor from the flowers, though he gather not one of them. A man cannot take meat savory and well condited into his mouth but he will taste the relish of it, though he have no mind nor appetite to eat it; nor can any man walk in the sun but he will have some impressions from its heat. It is so, it can be no otherwise, with them who live under the preaching of the gospel and make profession of its doctrine. More or less it will insinuate itself into their minds with a taste of its excellency and goodness. This in the case considered is lost in the first place; and generally it comes to pass by a love of sin and the pleasures of the world. When this hath filled and possessed the soul, all its senses grow dead unto spiritual things, it hath no faculty or ability to taste any relish in them, yea, it loathes and abhors them as contrary to what it hath immersed itself in or given up itself unto. This usually is lost in the first place. Such persons find nothing any longer in Christ or the gospel for which they should either delight in them or desire them. And it seems to be thus with so many in the world who once gave hopes of better things, that the consideration of it is dreadful.

(2.) This is quickly followed with a loss of all prevailing evidence and conviction of the truth of the very doctrine of the gospel. This conviction all are supposed to have who profess it, and all really have it who profess it in any sincerity. Why else do they make profession of it, if they assent not unto its truth upon its conviction and evidence? for we speak not at all of them whose profession hath no other principle or foundation but custom or education. Others build their persuasion upon grounds and evidences prevalent to obtain their assent unto the truth against temptations and objections. This apostates lose in the next place. The truth remains what it was, and so do the arguments and evidences of it; but they have no longer any force upon or authority in their minds. It may be they do not presently renounce the gospel as a lie or "a cunningly-devised fable;" they may let the notions of it lie loose in their minds for a season neglected and unregarded, but give them no part of that entertainment which is due unto acknowledged truths of that nature, nor do they receive any impressions from its authority. And when men have lost these, they have lost their assent to the truth of the gospel upon its proper evidence, and are directly unbelievers; and

this on every occasion will issue in a formal renunciation of the truth of the whole. And when men arrive unto this posture in their minds, they will discover themselves, as by a conversation wholly regardless of the precepts of Christ, so also by light, irreverent expressions concerning the Scripture; which, where they have freedom, will be poured out from the abundance of their hearts. This step towards total apostasy will follow that foregoing. When once men have lost all taste and relish of the goodness and excellency of the word of God on their hearts and affections, they will not long retain any prevalent evidence of its truth in their minds. Hence, —

(3.) A contempt of the things promised in the gospel doth ensue. The promises of the gospel do indeed contain those things wherein the evident blessedness and happiness of our nature doth consist. Such are serenity of mind in this world, and eternal felicity in the enjoyment of God. These, for the substance of them, mankind cannot despise until they grow atheistically brutish; but they may, and many do so, in the manner and on the terms of their proposal and declaration by the promises of the gospel. That this enjoyment of God, wherein everlasting happiness consisteth, must be in and through Jesus Christ alone; that the way of attaining thereunto, and the only means of present peace and serenity of mind, is by faith and obedience in and unto him, — this they despise and contemn. This naturally follows on the former; for all expectation of good by and from the promises of the gospel depends on the evidence that we have of the truth thereof, and when that is lost, these will be despised. Now, herein consisteth one of the greatest aggravations of this sin; for whereas men cannot but desire the things (for the substance of them) which are promised in the gospel, as those wherein their blessedness doth consist, they will, out of hatred to Jesus Christ, reject and despise them, and eternally deprive their souls of them, rather than accept of them in and through him. They will rather never have any interest in God than have it by Christ. This rejection, therefore, of the promises of the gospel, as those which either as to the matter of them are not to be desired, or as to the truth of them not to be trusted, is the most provoking sin. No greater reproach can possibly be cast on Jesus Christ, as that which leaveth him the honor neither of his truth nor power, neither of which the Jews could in the least impeach when they took away his life. And, —

(4.) They choose some other way or means in the place and stead of Christ and the gospel, for the ends which they once sought after by them. So did those persons who fell off to Judaism. They looked for that in the law and ceremonies which they could not find in the gospel. And of these there are two sorts: — [1.] Such as retain their first end in general, but reject the gospel from being a sufficient means for attaining it; [2.] Some that renounce the whole end itself, and seek for satisfaction other ways. The former are such as preserve an aim in general to worship God, to do that in religion which may be accepted by him, and to believe that of him which is right; but they reject the gospel as an insufficient and deceitful guide in and about these things. And this is done either totally, by such as apostatize to Judaism or Mohammedanism; or partially, by such as turn off from the purity, truth, spirituality, and mystery of the gospel unto Popery, or the like. I say not this with an intention to charge the guilt of this whole sin on this latter sort; only I say, they share in a very considerable part of it, and without repentance will do so in the punishment due unto it. And this casts the scorn of folly on Christ and the gospel; both absolutely, as having neither truth nor efficacy sufficient for the end proposed by them; and comparatively, that a falsehood or lie, a diabolical invention or delusion, is to be preferred before them; — which is the highest provocation unto the eyes of God's glory. The latter sort quite cast off the general end of pleasing God and

living unto him. For a while they thought that this would have brought them in some considerable satisfaction, and used the gospel to that end and purpose; but now being fallen under the power of the former degrees of apostasy, in contempt of the gospel, as that which will not afford any tolerable answer unto their expectations, they take up in the lusts and pleasures of the world, preferring them before all the promises of Christ, and despising all the threatenings denounced against those that pursue them. And of this sort of apostates we have numberless examples in the world.

(5.) Hereunto is added a perfect hatred and contempt of such as abide constant in, their adherence unto and profession of the gospel. Constant observation hath approved the saying, "Apostata est osor sui ordinis;" great apostates have been always great persecutors, in word or deed, according to their power. As those who love Christ do love all that are his, because they are his, so they that hate him do hate all that are his, because they are his; and their hatred, because it is against the whole kind, acts itself every way possible. They despise them as weak and foolish for adhering and trusting to the things which they have relinquished, trusting to themselves, their reason, and gallantry of spirit. They are filled with revenge against them, as those who censure, judge, and condemn them as guilty of the highest villainy and most desperate wickedness. They know in their hearts that they have reserves against them, as persons whom their Lord will one day judge and destroy; which makes them design, if it were possible, their utter extirpation from the face of the earth. Those who crucified Christ in his own person did it but once, and could do so no more. These do so every day; for what is done unto any of his, for his sake, he esteemeth as done unto himself: "Why persecutest thou me?"

(6.) Those persons who proceed thus far do always fall into a peculiar contempt of the Spirit of God, and his whole work in the dispensation of the gospel. The promise of the dispensation of the Spirit is the especial privilege and glory of the gospel. He is sent and given in an especial manner by Jesus Christ as exalted. His whole work is to glorify and exalt Jesus Christ, and to make his mediation effectual unto the souls of men; and in the things which concern him and his work lies the life and soul of the gospel. Hence those who apostatize from it have a peculiar enmity against him and his work; and this usually is one of the first things wherein the fatal backslidings of men do manifest themselves. When once men "tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing," as they do in the former instances, they will assuredly "do despite unto the Spirit of grace," Hebrews 10:29. How this is done in particular shall be considered on that place, if God will, and we live thereunto. Under this head and degree the sin of apostasy becomes formally irremissible.

(7.) An open profession of a detestation of the gospel, so far as it is consistent with their worldly interests and advantages, completes the soul-ruining sin we treat of. It may be they may live in such times and places as that it would be to their secular disadvantage openly to avow their renunciation of Christ; but when that is the only curb from the declaration of themselves, the frame of their minds is esteemed for a full profession of their apostasy.

Now, whereas all these things, and it may be sundry others, do concur unto this sin of apostasy, I shall conclude two things concerning it: — 1. That it is a far greater sin than that of the generality of the Jews who crucified Jesus Christ in the days of his flesh, as was before asserted. 2. That it is inconsistent with the holiness, righteousness, honor, and faithfulness of God, to renew such

persons as are fully and openly guilty hereof unto repentance. Repentance may be given unto them in hell with as much advantage unto the glory of God; for when men, after trial and experiment, with some convictions of its truth and excellency, do obstinately reject the only remedy and relief that God hath provided for sinners, and therein do despite unto the whole blessed Trinity, and each person thereof in his peculiar interest in the dispensation and application of grace, God neither in his faithfulness will, nor in his holiness can, have any thing more to do with such presumptuous sinners in a way of mercy. He may and doth endure them for a while in this world, and that without any visible tokens of his indignation, satisfying his justice in the spiritual judgments that are upon them; but it is only as "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," and such "whose damnation slumbereth not." And these things may suffice to warn men of the danger of this evil; and they will be warnings unto all who shall consider them, who are not hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; and all the judgments of God, which are either impendent over or already inflicted on a wicked, apostatizing world, are calls from heaven unto a consideration of them.

Now, although the generality of men seem to be secure enough from any trouble or discomposure in their minds from the consideration of things of this nature, yet some there are who may by their own misapprehensions fall under such discouragements as may hinder them in that course of obedience which they would pursue. I shall therefore divert a little, to prevent or remove the objections which such persons make against themselves, and from whence their discouragement doth arise, adding some directions suited unto their state or condition; for, —

First, Some may suppose themselves so far interested in the backsliding and apostasy described, as that the threatening denounced in the text doth belong unto them also, and that they are now judicially shut up under impenitency; for they say that they had attained unto a greater measure or degree of holiness, unto more readiness, evenness, and constancy in the duties of obedience, than they do now retain. They have fearfully and woefully fallen off from a better frame, into deadness, barrenness, neglect of duties, and it may be in some instance into a sinful course, and that for many days. Hence now they fear, lest as they are sensible that they have forsaken God and gone off from him, so he should forsake them utterly, and they should be sealed up under impenitency.

Ans. As this case too often falls out, so it is often answered, and I shall not therefore much insist upon it, nor any otherwise but as our present design and discourse is concerned therein. And I say, —

It is to be granted that all such backslidings are not only evil and sinful, but dangerous also, as to the issue and event. Whoever, therefore, find themselves under the power of them, or any way overtaken by them, ought not only to consider the guilt of all the particular sins and omissions of duties which they contract, but principally the whole state of their souls, and the danger they are in of being "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin:" for no man in such a state can have the least spiritual assurance or security that he shall not fall totally and finally from God; and whatever persuasion he hath of that nature, it is but a deceiving presumption that will effectually promote his apostasy and ruin, for there is no word of truth, no promise of God, to assure any of his love and favor whilst they are in such a state. It is therefore unquestionably the duty of every one who is sensible of any evil of this nature, in the frame of his heart or course of his life, to give himself no rest therein, seeing the eternal welfare of his soul is highly in question. But, —

There is a decay, a falling away from the degrees of holiness and obedience that men may have attained, and that, it may be, for a long season, and possibly with respect unto some especial sin, which is recoverable, and which doth not cast persons under the power of it absolutely into the threatening here recorded. What circumstances are required hereunto and what aggravations of sin have been showed in the opening of the words. Now, there may be a falling away, and that great and dangerous, which yet riseth not up unto the provocation of the evil here in an especial manner intended. And I judge it may be given as a safe rule in general, that he who is spiritually sensible of the evil of his backsliding is unquestionably in a recoverable condition; and some may be so who are not yet sensible thereof, so long as they are capable of being made so by convictions. No man is past hopes of salvation until he is past all possibility of repentance; and no man is past all possibility of repentance until he be absolutely hardened against all gospel convictions. Wherefore there is a recoverable backsliding: for, (1.) Christ calleth men unto such a recovery, which, therefore, he approves of, and will assist them therein who conscientiously apply themselves unto their duty, Revelation 2:5, Revelation 3:1-3; which latter instance is great in this kind. (2.) God hath promised to recover and heal such backslidings in believers, Hosea 14:4. And unto whom this is not encouragement sufficient to endeavor a recovery of themselves, it is to be feared they will wax worse and worse through the power of sin, until it hath full dominion over them; yea, what pretenses soever they make to keep themselves off from such endeavors, it is either unbelief or the love of sin that is the sole proper cause thereof. Wherefore, —

(3.) If the backsliding whereof men complain from the ways of holiness and obedience have not proceeded out of dislike unto Christ and the gospel; if they have not, by the power and deceit wherewith they are accompanied, chosen any other way of duty or sin in his stead, — as there is all necessity imaginable that they should, so there is all encouragement necessary to put them upon the diligent use of all means of a blessed recovery. Suppose their decays have befallen them, or that they have fallen into them, through the power of temptations, the deceitfulness of sin joining with their own sloth and negligence, — which is the highest supposition that can be made in this kind, — yet if they shall say in their hearts that they "will return to their former husband, for then it was better with them than now," they had peace and much refreshment in their first ways of faith and obedience, which they will therefore return unto; as the Lord Christ calls upon them so to do, so he is ready in all the promises of the gospel to receive them upon their so doing. Only let such persons remember that the command is urgent on them, as on Lot when he was to flee out of Sodom, and the angel said unto him, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." There is no time of deliberation, much less of delay in this matter. It is for their souls, and the present moment wherein they are warned is the only season for their escape; and if any shall yet linger as Lot did, the Lord lay hold upon them, and bring them forth by the power of his grace, that they may be delivered! What are the ways whereby this may be done, what duties such persons are with diligence to attend unto, what means they are to use, are not things which at present fall under our consideration. All that I design is, to show that those who thus complain are not cast under any discouragement by this context and its exposition from an endeavor of a recovery, wherein they will find acceptance with God.

Secondly, It may be alleged that, as to the issue of things, it will be all one whether we fall from gospel holiness or can never attain unto it; — "And this," say some, "is our condition; for whatever

we have thought of ourselves, or whatever others have thought of us upon our profession, yet we now find by experience that we have not attained the holiness which the gospel requires." For their corruptions (they say, this or that, it may be, in particular) are too strong for their convictions; and after they thought themselves above them, they have again been prevailed on and overcome. They find the power of one or other lust grown so habitual unto them that they fall again and again under the power of it, until, it may be, they have lost much of the sense of its guilt and more of their power to resist it. And it must be acknowledged, also, that this condition is spiritually dangerous, and such as, if deliverance be not obtained from [it], will probably end in total apostasy. To state things aright in this case, we may observe: —

That there are three degrees in the power and prevalency of sin, and it must be inquired under which of them they are supposed to be concerning whom this complaint is made. The first is that mentioned Romans 7:23,

"I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." Where this is only, or the captivating power of sin, there are two things to be considered: — (1.) That the will, in its dispositions and inclinations, is constantly fixed against the power and interest of sin, so that in all its prevalency it suffers hardship, and is sensible of its captivity. (2.) That this captivity unto the law of sin doth not reach unto the outward perpetration of sin, but only the conflict that is in the mind and affections about it. And this is a condition which no man in this world is absolutely freed from, but is in some measure or other exercised with it, even as the apostle himself was, and thereon groaned for deliverance, Romans 7:24. Another degree of the prevalence of sin is expressed Romans 6:16, Romans 6:19, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" There is a state and prevalence of sin wherein men, being wholly under its dominion, do give up themselves unto its service willingly, notwithstanding any checks from light or conscience they meet withal. And such as these, the willing servants of sin, that yield up themselves in their affections and members of their bodies unto the obedience and service of it, we do not at present consider. Between these there is a degree of the prevalence of sin, beyond the first, yet falling short of the latter, expressed 2 Peter 2:19. Men are therein in some sense "servants of corruption," in that they are "overcome" by it and "brought into bondage." They are not such as willingly, without any contest or conflict, give up themselves unto the service of sin, but they are overcome by it, which manifests that they do in some measure strive against it. And, on the other hand, they go beyond them who complain they are led captives to the law of sin; for they are said to become "servants of corruption," which the others are not in any sense. These, therefore, seem to be such (and such I do intend) who, notwithstanding all their light and convictions, with all the endeavors that they use, are so far under the power of some prevalent habitual lust as to serve it in a frequent reiteration of actual sins.

If this be the case complained of, it is acknowledged to be a condition of no small hazard and danger. And he who is not deeply sensible hereof is "as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast;" as this state is at large described with respect unto them who are given to wine, Proverbs 23:29-35. Wherefore, unless some remedy be found out in this case, it must be acknowledged that it will deprive men of or keep them from any assured interest in gospel holiness.

I must not here divert to consider in general the nature and means of the mortification of sin; I have done it already in other discourses, with the best directions for that end which I am able to propose. Unto them I do refer the persons concerned for guidance and counsel, where better is not at hand. Unto what hath been so treated already I shall only add, that those who would secure an interest in gospel holiness, by a deliverance from the power of inveterate habitual corruptions, may take the ensuing directions: —

First, If they have in vain attempted their own deliverance, let them not delay to acquaint some able spiritual guide with their state and condition. This sometimes hath broken, defeated, and scattered at once the forces of sin in the soul, where in its own wisdom and strength it was no way able to conflict with it. And it is the ordinance of God to this purpose: James 5:16, "Confess your faults one to another," etc. It was no small effect of the craft of Satan so to abuse this ordinance of God by turning it into a necessary confession of all sin unto a priest, invested with power of absolution, which was attended with innumerable evils, and proved an effectual engine for the ruin of the souls of men, to keep them off from that benefit which the due use of it was designed to administer unto sinners. If, therefore, any have found that sin hath been and yet is too strong for them, and that that is come upon them which the wise man mentions, "Woe to him that is alone," let them address themselves for advice unto such as have "the tongue of the learned," to speak a word in season unto them that are weary and ready to faint, and they will find relief. God will discover that evil of this kind which men will hide to their own disadvantage, he will lay open those festered wounds which men would cover until rottenness enter into their bones.

Secondly, The effect aimed at will never be accomplished without violence offered unto ourselves as unto all occasions of sin, — namely, as to the particular corruption supposed prevalent. In this case, when known occasions of the excitation or acting of the evil complained of do occur, no deliberations, or inclinations, or civil compliances are once to be admitted. Violence and sudden execution of foretaken resolves, without any parley or debate, are to be pursued. This is the condition wherein our Savior's advice must take place, if we intend to escape, namely, of "plucking out a right eye, and cutting off a right hand," Matthew 5:29-30; which cannot be done without offering violence unto our affections and inclinations. This is the meaning of the counsel given, Proverbs 4:14-15, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." The multiplication of the expressions wherein the duty charged doth consist doth intimate that, in the obedience required in this particular, a resolution acted with a holy violence is required. And there are three things in this holy violence with respect unto the occasions of a prevalent corruption: —

The mind's rejection of their first solicitations. When such seasons do befall or are befalling any man as wherein his lust or sin hath wanted to act itself, they smile on one another and are ready to shake hands in folly, Psalms 50:18; Proverbs 23:31; and sundry things will present themselves unto the mind to render the occasion necessary, or at least not dangerous. But if all insinuations of that kind be not immediately rejected without parley or delay, the soul probably will be again entangled and overcome.

A stated satisfaction concerning the folly of reserves, although the occasion should be complied withal or embraced, so as that the mind will hear no more of them, under any pretense whatever. Such reserves will offer themselves, as that although a man proceed so far or so far in the

gratification of his present inclinations, yet he will put a stop unto or avoid what they may lead unto. When the mind is fully possessed [aware] of the deceitfulness of the heart in this matter, it will see its own folly in listening after such false promises or reserves, and reject the first thought of them with indignation.

Local mutation, or avoiding the place itself, or society and company, with a holy force put upon the affections, where such occasions are offered. This is that which is so expressed and pressed on us in the place before mentioned, Proverbs 4:14-15.

These things belong unto that holy violence which men are to use unto themselves, and must use, if ever they intend to be freed from the power of an habitually prevalent corruption; and those who judge their deliverance not to be worth this watchfulness and care will live and die under the power of sin.

Thirdly, Constancy in private prayer against the power of such a corruption. This is all the way a man hath to deal with God about such an evil; for such things are to be thought and spoken, such circumstances to be insisted on, and such pleas to be used, as are not meet to be communicated to or with others. And, for the most part, it will be found that constant, earnest, faithful, private prayer, and any strong corruption, will be like Moses and Amalek. When Moses' hands were down Amalek prevailed, but when they were lifted up Israel had the upper hand. And if a man engage into especial prayer in opposition unto any sin or corruption, whatever he thinks of his own resolutions, whatever confidence he hath in his purposes, as he begins to fail or faint in the constancy or fervency of that duty, so his sin gets strength in him, and will not fail to attempt him successfully on the next occasion; nor will the utmost effect of any man's wisdom, or care, or ability, work out his deliverance in this case, without a conscientious attendance unto and discharge of this duty.

Sundry other things of an alike nature unto these might be insisted on, but that I must not too far digress from my principal design. This I thought meet to interpose for the direction of such as may be kept off from a successful endeavor to "perfect holiness in the fear of God."

## 03A.13. CHAPTER 13.

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### CHAPTER 13.

#### DIRECTIONS TO AVOID THE POWER OF A PREVAILING APOSTASY.

UNTO the warnings given in the precedent chapter some directions may be added, perhaps not unuseful unto them who would be preserved from the occasions, causes, and danger, of the apostasy thus far inquired into; for although, as hath been declared, a watchful attendance unto all gospel duties, and a vigorous exercise of all gospel graces in general, are required unto our preservation, yet there are some things which have an especial respect unto the present state of the causes and circumstances of the evil insisted on, which ought in an especial manner to be remembered. And that things of this nature are by many despised is no argument why we should not be diligent in our attendance unto them; for if they are such things as the Scripture prescribeth in the like cases, the contempt of them proceeds only from that pride and security which are no small part of the apostasy complained of. Our first direction of this kind is, that we should all labor for a true, real sense of the concernment of the glory of God in this matter, and what is our duty with respect thereunto. Where this is not, men are under the power of that security which is the broad way and wide gate leading unto apostasy; yea, where this is not the first and principal thing wherewith we are affected in any evil that falls out in the world, our hearts are not upright in what we profess. When God threatened to disinherit the Israelites and destroy the whole congregation as one man, in the wilderness, because of their provoking rebellion, that wherewith Moses, in all the circumstances of his relation unto them and interest in them, was affected withal, was the concernment of the glory and name of God therein, Numbers 14:11-19. And it was so with Joshua in the sin and punishment of the same people. "What wilt thou do," saith he, "unto thy great name?" Joshua 7:8-9; words which have been made a public derision in the days wherein we live.

We cannot but have thoughts about these things, for they are the common subject of many men's discourse: but if our thoughts about them are confined unto a narrow compass, and, so that it be well with us and some few others in whom we are peculiarly concerned, the evil that is come on the world in other places is lightly set by; if we are sensible of no interest of the glory of God, of the honor of Christ and the gospel therein, or are regardless of them, — we are scarce likely to be delivered from that fatal issue whereunto all these things are in an open tendency. Is it nothing unto us that so many nations in the world, where the profession of the gospel and an avowed subjection of soul and conscience unto Jesus Christ did flourish for some ages, are now utterly overrun with Mohammedanism, paganism, and atheism? Do we suppose these things are fallen out by chance, or come to pass by a fatal revolution of affairs, such as all things in this world are obnoxious unto? Did ever any nation or people under heaven lose the gospel as unto its profession, who did not first reject it as unto its power, purity, and obedience? And is not the glory of God, is not the honor of Christ, peculiarly concerned herein? Is it nothing unto us that innumerable souls, who yet continue to make an outward profession of the name of Christ, have so degenerated from the mystery, holiness, and worship of the gospel, as to provoke the holy God

to give them up for so many generations unto the most woful bondage and slavery that ever any of the children of men were cast under from the foundation of the world, without the least hopes or appearance of relief? And is it not to be bewailed that, such is the power of that apostasy which brought all this evil upon them, as that they have not to this day accepted of the punishment of their sins, nor been bettered by all that they have undergone! And doth not that holy name whereby we are called suffer in these things? Is it not on their account evil spoken of? for do not the miseries, the long-continued, woful calamities and oppressions of innumerable multitudes of great nations, outwardly professing the Christian religion, become a snare to the world and a temptation against the truth of the gospel and the power of Jesus Christ The Jews themselves are not left unto more distresses, nor are more destitute of any pledges of divine protection, nor are more unreformed under their miseries, than many who are called Christians, upon the account of their apostasy from the gospel. It is true, great distresses and sore persecutions may befall the church in its best state and condition, but then God doth so dispose of all things as that their trials shall evidently tend both unto his own glory and their spiritual advantage who are exercised with them; and in the issue the gospel itself shall never be a loser by the suffering of its sincere professors. But in those horrible judgments which have befallen many parts of the apostatized Christian world, nothing offereth itself unto our minds but what is matter of lamentation and temptation. Is it nothing to us that the greatest number of those who are called Christians, and enjoy prosperity in the world, do live in open idolatry, to the unspeakable scandal of Christian religion and imminent danger unto themselves of eternal ruin? — nothing that so many do openly renounce the humble, meek spirit of Christ and the gospel, endeavoring to persecute, ruin, and destroy other Christians, perhaps better than themselves, because they cannot captivate their souls and consciences in obedience unto their impositions? — nothing to see and hear of all those dreadful effects of this apostasy in all manner of outrageous sins that the world is filled withal?

Certainly, if we are not greatly affected with these things, if our souls mourn not in secret about them, if we are not solicitous about the small remainders of the interest of truth and holiness in the world, we are in no small danger ourselves of being, one time or other, carried away with the deluge.

If we are sensible of the concernment of the glory of God in these things, it may not be amiss to consider what is our duty with respect thereunto.

And the first thing required of us is, that we mourn in secret for that sad issue which the profession of Christianity is come unto in the world. God puts an especial mark on them who mourn for the prevalency of sin and the apostasy of the church in any season, Ezekiel 9:4; neither will he have regard unto any others when he comes to execute judgments on ungodly apostates. Men may suffer with them with whom they will not sin; for where we are unconcerned for the sins of men we shall not be so in their sufferings. It is therefore those alone who, out of a sense of the dishonor of God, and compassion towards the souls of perishing sinners, do sigh and cry over these abominations, that shall be either preserved from those public calamities wherein they may issue, or be comfortably supported under them. And there is nothing of a more ominous presage that things are yet waxing worse, than that general regardlessness about them that is among the best of us. Whose "eyes run clown with waters because men keep not the law?" Who doth sufficiently bewail the decays of faith, truth, and holiness, that are in the earth? Most men, like Gallio, either "care for none of these things," or at best design to save their own houses in the general

conflagration. Many measure all things by their own advantage, and can see nothing amiss in the profession of religion but only in the complaints that any things are so. And although the degeneracy of Christianity, in the present professors of it, be grown a common theme in the mouths of most, yet very few are affected with it in a due manner in their hearts.

It is in this state of things required of us to pray continually, pleading those promises which are recorded in the word of God for the restoration of the pristine glory, power, and purity of Christian religion. This was the way and means whereby the church was recovered of old, and the same duty is still enjoined unto us,

Isaiah 62:6-7; and hereunto are all our present hopes reduced. There is nothing too hard for God. If he will work herein, none shall let him. Things are not gone beyond his cure. He can send peace, and truth, and righteousness from above, and cause them to prevail on the earth. Were all things left absolutely unto the wills of men, in that depraved state whereunto they are arrived in the world, nothing but an increase of overspreading abominations might be expected. Sovereign and effectual grace can yet give relief, and nothing else can so do. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills and the multitude of mountains; truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel; — but for all these will God be sought unto. And constancy in this duty for others, out of a deep sense of the concernment of the glory of God and zeal for the honor of the gospel, is the most effectual means of our own deliverance and preservation.

Constancy in our testimony against the prevalency of this apostasy is required of us. And hereof there are two parts: — (1.) An open, avowed profession of and contending for the faith and truth of the gospel. The public contempt and scorn that is by a prevalent vogue cast on some important evangelical truths is ready to discourage many from the owning and profession of them. Men, for the most part, have so many things to take into consideration before they will undertake the defense of the truth that they can find no season for it, whilst noisome errors are vented every day with confidence and diligence. It is therefore now, if ever, a time for all those in whose hearts are the ways of God to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints." And if either sloth, or self-love, or carnal fears, or earthly, ambitious designs, do betray any into a neglect of their duty in this matter, it will at one time or other give them disquietment and trouble. But, (2.) Exemplary holiness, righteousness, and fruitfulness in good works, belong unto this testimony against the prevalent apostasy which is required of us. As this is our constant duty at all times, so the progress of the fatal evil complained of renders the doubling of our diligence herein at present necessary, and puts a luster on it.

Secondly, Those who would be preserved in such a season must keep a due and careful watch over their own hearts with respect unto their duty and danger: for although temptations do abound, and those attended with all sorts of circumstances increasing their efficacy, and the outward means and causes of this evil are multiplied, yet the beginnings of all men's spiritual declensions are in their own hearts and spirits; for the different effects that these things have upon the minds and lives of men is principally from themselves. As they are careful, diligent, and watchful over themselves in a way of duty on the one hand, or slothful, careless, negligent on the other, so are they preserved or prevailed against. The advice, therefore, I intend is that given by the Holy Ghost in this case: Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life;" or, as it is emphatically expressed in the original, "Above all keeping, keep thy heart." The greatest

exercise of men in the world is about keeping what they have, what they esteem their own; wherewith the desire of adding unto it is of the same nature. What belongeth hereunto, what care, what watchfulness, what diligence, what exercise of their utmost wisdom and industry, all men know, unless it be such as by the power of their lusts are given up unto prodigality and profuseness. But the care and diligence in keeping of our hearts (the Holy Ghost being judge) ought to exceed whatever of that kind is employed about other things; and it is too evident that there is much want of this wisdom amongst us in the world. Of all things, the least diligence is used by many in keeping of their hearts. So they can safeguard their other concerns, the heart may be left to take its own course: yea, the heart is never so much neglected usually, nor more lost, than in the use it is put unto in keeping other things; for whilst it is employed to keep our lives, to keep the world and the things of it, it is lost itself in worldliness, covetousness, carnal wisdom, negligence of holy duties, and barrenness in the fruits of righteousness. That this is no good bargain, that nothing is got hereby, yea, that all will be lost by it at last, heart and world, and every thing wherein we are concerned, the Holy Ghost plainly intimates in this direction, wherein we are commanded above all things to keep our hearts. And we are not only laid under this command, but a cogent reason is added to enforce our obedience: "For out of it are the issues of life." Hereon do all events depend. The heart being kept, the whole course of our life here will be according unto the mind of God, and the end of it will be the enjoyment of him hereafter. This being neglected, life will be lost, both here as unto obedience, and hereafter as unto glory. This, therefore, is that which in the first place is to be applied unto the present case. Would any not be overtaken with the power and prevalency of any of the causes of apostasy mentioned before, let them look well unto their own hearts, seeing that from thence are the issues of life. By the "heart" the Scripture understandeth all the faculties of our souls, as they are an entire rational principle of all moral and spiritual operations; and so do we also. The preservation of them in their due order, acting in all things according unto their distinct powers, and the duty of the whole soul with respect unto God, is that which is intended by this keeping of the heart. And hereunto, with reference unto the present duty, sundry things do belong in an especial manner; as, —

That the heart be kept awake and attentive unto its own deceitfulness. The wise man tells us that "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool," Proverbs 28:26. The beginning of all security, — which is an assured entrance into all evil, — lies in men's leaving their hearts unto themselves and trusting in them. He is no wise man (the Holy Ghost being judge) who, after so many instructions and warnings given us in the Scripture of the deceitfulness of our hearts, or the deceitfulness of that sin which is bound up in them (which is all one), will carelessly trust it with his eternal concernments. The apostle Peter did so once, upon a strong confidence that his heart would not fail him; but we know what was the issue of it. It is apt to be so with most men in this matter. They think, and do really judge, that if all men should fall off and forsake the gospel, either wholly or as unto the degrees in obedience which they have attained, yet they would not so do; but all things are filled with visible examples of their disappointment. There are no apostates but once thought they would not be so; for we speak only of them who had light into and conviction of their duty, and who had therefore necessarily resolutions to continue therein. Wherefore, a constant, watchful jealousy over our own hearts, as to their deceitfulness, their readiness to be imposed on, and secret pretenses to countenance themselves in compliance with temptations, is the foundation of all other duties necessary unto our preservation.

Even this also is by some despised. They know of no deceitfulness in their own hearts, nor think there is any such thing in the hearts of others. They cannot but acknowledge that there is mutual deceit enough amongst mankind in the world; but that there should be deceit and treachery in men's hearts with respect unto themselves, their own actions, duties, and ways, with respect unto God and their own eternal condition, that they cannot apprehend: for what or whom should a man trust unto, if he may not safely repose his confidence in his own heart that it will be always true unto its spiritual and eternal interest? Happy men, were such apprehensions as these to be the rule of their present duty or future judgment! But is it not possible there may be in the hearts of men a blind self-love, so far predominant as practically to impose false apprehensions and notions of things upon the mind and affections with respect unto sin and duty? Is there no disorder in the faculties of our souls, nor confusion in their operations thereon? Are there no remainders of sin inseparable from them in this life, accompanied with all manner of spiritual deceitfulness? no corrupt reasonings for the procrastination of the most important duties? no inclinations unto undue precedences and presumptions? no vanity or uncertainty in the mind? Or can these things, with the like innumerable, be supposed without any deceit in them or accompanying of them? What one said of old to the Druids, —

"Solis nosse Deos et coeli Numina vobis Aut solis nescire datum," — may be applied unto the men of this persuasion: either they alone know the state of the heart of man with respect unto God, evangelical obedience, and their own eternal interest, or they alone are ignorant thereof. Until, therefore, we have more satisfaction in this novel pretended discovery, we dare not cease the pressing of men to be diligently attentive unto the deceits of their own hearts. If this be neglected, we shall labor in vain, whatever else we do. Blessed is he who thus feareth always! This will make men carefully and conscientiously avoid all occasions of all things, whether in their inward frames or outward practice, that may on any account have a tendency unto a declension from the gospel. A bold, hazardous, careless frame of spirit, venturing on all companies and temptations, complying with vanities and profane communications, offering itself with a fearless confidence unto ways of seduction, through "the cunning sleights of men that lie in wait to deceive," is that which hath ruined innumerable professors. Self-distrust, humility, fear of offending, with the like soul-preserving graces, will be kept up unto exercise only where men are awake unto the consideration of the deceitfulness of their own hearts.

We must keep our heart awake and attentive unto its help and relief; and this lies only in Christ Jesus, the captain of our salvation. After all Peter's confidence, it was the interposition of Christ alone that preserved him from utter ruin: "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." And if any can once prevail so far as to deter men from looking for all spiritual help and relief from Christ, for daily supplies of grace and strength from him alone; from a continual application unto him for directing, assisting, preserving, establishing grace (which they variously attempt), — there is no need to fear but they will easily follow them into whatever else either they, or Satan, or the world shall have a mind to draw them. But in all our discourses we proceed on other principles. We look on Jesus Christ as the spring and fountain of all grace, as him who alone is able to preserve us in faith and obedience, and doth communicate supplies of effectual grace unto believers for that purpose. Unto him, therefore, are we to make our applications continually, by faith and prayer, for our preservation, as we are directed, Hebrews 4:15-1. It is he alone who can "keep us from the hour of temptation, which is come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth,"

Revelation 3:10. Whosoever, therefore, would be kept from the power of the temptations unto apostasy which every way encompass us, and threaten to bear down all before them, let them keep their hearts continually attentive unto their only help and relief. Those who have not taken in a sense of their danger will see little reason to concern themselves in these directions. But as for such as are affected with the visible ruin of multitudes and their own apparent hazard, from prevailing causes and innumerable occasions thereof, — whose eyes are in any measure opened to see the general inclination that is in the world unto a relinquishment of all the principal concerns of the gospel, and by what various ways that inclination is furthered, followed, and pursued, — they will not think it unneedful to be minded of a help and refuge whereunto they may betake themselves and be preserved.

Let the heart be kept attentive unto its own frames, its progress or decay in holiness. How secret, and even oftentimes imperceptible, the beginnings of spiritual declension are in many, with the reasons and causes thereof, hath been declared in our exposition of Hebrews 4:12-13, whither the reader is referred. I shall here only offer, that he who, in such a season as that which is passing over us, cloth not often call himself unto an account how things stand with him as to the inner man, — what is the state of his spiritual life, whether his faith and love do thrive or decay, whether God or the world gets ground in his affections, — will be exposed unto more dangers than it may be he is readily able to deliver himself from. These things are all of them useful, yea, needful unto the course of our obedience at all times. That which is here intended is, their exercise and discharge with respect unto the evil and danger under consideration. When we have done the utmost of our duty, we shall have cause to rejoice in the grace of God if we are preserved and delivered. But if we be found slothful, negligent, and secure, what hopes can we have that we shall withstand the evil that doth on every side beset us? There is not any way of fraud or force wherein we either are not or may not be assaulted. The secret ways whereby this apostasy puts forth its efficacy are so various as not to be enumerated. The current, furthered by the winds of all sorts of temptations, lies strongly against us. New accessions are made unto it every day. New pretenses against the truths and holiness of the gospel are sought out and made use of. By some they are secretly undermined, by others openly despised; and the hand of Satan is in all these things. If we should now neglect a watchful care over our own hearts, and a diligent attendance unto all means of their preservation in soundness of doctrine and holiness of life, what assurance can we have that we shall finally escape?

Having premised these directions in general, those which ensue must have a particular respect unto some of the especial ways and means whereby this declension hath been carried on and promoted, peculiarly such as the present age and season are most obnoxious unto. And because this discourse is drawn forth to a length beyond my first design, I shall name a few things only, to intimate of what sort those directions are which might be more largely insisted on; and two only shall be named. Wherefore, —

Thirdly, Take heed of resting in or trusting unto the outward privileges of the church, and a participation of the dispensation of the ordinances of the gospel therein. It is known what various apprehensions as to the especial ways of outward solemn worship and the state of the church there are among all sorts of men. But whereas all men do approve of and adhere unto one church-state or other, one way of worship or other, I intend no one more than another in particular, but would speak unto all with respect unto that way which themselves do approve and practice.

And it was before declared how greatly the world was deluded by a pretense of them. And we may not think to excuse the necessity of watchfulness in this matter, because all the good things of the church and all the ordinances of the gospel were then abused, corrupted, and defiled, whereas we now all of us, in our own apprehensions, enjoy their administration in purity, according unto the institution of Christ; for they are all of them no less liable to be abused in this kind when duly administered than when most corrupted: yea, in some cases they are more apt so to be, seeing there is a greater appearance of reason why we should place our confidence in them.

It is indeed an especial mercy for any to be intrusted with the privileges of the church and institutions of the gospel; yea, it is the greatest outward dignity and pre-eminence that any can be advanced unto in this world, however by the most it be lightly set by Theodosius, one of the greatest emperors that ever were in the world, affirmed that he esteemed his being a member of the church a greater dignity than his imperial crown. And although the ruin of the Jews arose principally from their carnal confidence in their spiritual or church privileges, yet the apostle doth acknowledge that they had great pre-eminence and advantage, and might have had great profit thereby, Romans 3:1-2, Romans 9:4-5. And theirs must be granted more excellent in every kind who enjoy that administration of holy things in comparison wherewith that committed unto the Jews had neither beauty nor glory, 2 Corinthians 3:10. By whomsoever, therefore, these things are despised or neglected, under whatever pretenses they countenance themselves, they are utter strangers unto gospel holiness; for what holiness can there be where men live in an open disobedience unto the commands of Christ, and in a neglect of the use of those means which he hath appointed to beget and preserve it in our souls? Nothing, therefore, must be spoken to take off from the excellency, dignity, and necessity, of the privileges and ordinances of the church, when we would call off men from placing that confidence in them which may tend unto their disadvantage. And if persons can find no medium between rejecting all the ordinances of the gospel and trusting unto the outward performance or celebration of them, they have nothing but their own darkness, pride, and unbelief, to ascribe the ruin of their souls unto.

Again; there is not any thing in the whole course of our obedience wherein the continual exercise of faith and spiritual wisdom, with diligence and watchfulness, is more indispensably required than it is unto the due use and improvement of gospel privileges and ordinances; for there is no other part of our duty whereon our giving glory to God and the eternal concern of our own souls do more eminently depend. And he is a spiritually thriving Christian who knows how duly to improve gospel institutions of worship, and doth so accordingly; for they are the only ordinary outward means whereby the Lord Christ communicates of his grace unto us, and whereby we immediately return love, praise, thanks, and obedience unto him; in which spiritual intercourse the actings of our spiritual life principally do consist, and whereon, by consequence, its growth doth depend. It is therefore certain that our growth or decay in holiness, our steadfastness in or apostasy from profession, are greatly influenced by the use or abuse of these privileges.

That, therefore, which, in compliance with my present design, I intend, is only a warning that we do not rest in these things, the name, title, privilege, and outward observance of them, seeing so many have thereby been deluded into security and apostasy. Some there are (and of them not a few) all whose religion consists in going to church, and abiding there during the celebration of that sort of worship which they approve of. Herewith they satisfy their consciences as unto all that they have to do with God, especially if they are admitted unto a participation of the sacraments in the

appointed seasons. And many others, it is to be feared, content themselves with a bare hearing of the word, and do treat their consciences into a quietness and security thereby. It were otherwise impossible that, among so great multitudes as crowd after the preaching of the word, so few should be brought over unto sincere and universal obedience. But I intend those in particular who make a profession of giving themselves up unto gospel obedience, and are thereon made partakers of all gospel privileges according to the rule. Let them take heed that they do not too much rest in nor too much trust unto these outward things, for so they may do sundry ways unto their disadvantage.

Men may herein deceive themselves by spiritual gifts, which may be reckoned in the first place among the privileges of the church. Some rest in the gifts of others, and the satisfaction they receive thereby; for by the use and exercise of them men's affections may be greatly moved, as also temporary faith and evanid joy be greatly excited. These things, it is to be feared, some live upon, without farther care after a spring of living water in themselves. Others may rest in their own gifts, their light, knowledge, ability to pray or speak of the things of God. But it is the design of the apostle, in the context before insisted on, to declare that the most eminent spiritual gifts, with all their effects, either in the souls or lives of them who are made partakers of them, or in the church for edification, will not secure any persons from total apostasy. So also some shall be utterly rejected at the last day, who were able to plead their prophesying and casting out of devils in the name of Christ, and that in his name they had done "many wonderful works," Matthew 7:22-23. And therefore, when his disciples (who were true but as yet weak believers) were greatly affected, and it may be lifted up, with the success they had had in casting out of devils in his name, he recalls them from any confidence therein, as unto their eternal concernment, unto a trust in God's free electing grace, with the fruits thereof, Luke 10:20 and the reason hereof is, because these gifts have no inseparable relation unto any of the especial and peculiar causes of salvation. That which seemeth to be of any difficulty is, that they are an especial fruit of the mediation of Christ, purchased by his death, given into his power upon his resurrection, and first communicated on his ascension. But all that followeth from hence is, that they are good and holy in themselves, and designed unto good and holy ends or uses, — namely, the confirmation of the gospel and edification of the church. But it doth not thence follow that they are saving unto them that do receive them, unless they are accompanied with especial grace towards them and holy obedience in them; from both which they are separable. It is therefore greatly incumbent on all those who have received of these spiritual gifts to take care they be enlivened and acted by especial grace; for if they are not careful, they will give them a pretense and apprehension of what they have not, and set a greater luster upon what they have than it doth deserve; — for in their actings, because the objects of them are spiritual and heavenly things, the same with that of especial grace, men are apt to suppose that grace is exercised when it may be far from them; and as to the profession that men make, these gifts will set it off with such beauty as shall render it very acceptable unto others and very well-pleasing unto themselves. Both these tend evidently unto the ruin of the souls of men, if not wisely managed and improved. Wherefore, by the way, to help us unto a right judgment in this matter, we may observe one certain difference between the operations of spiritual gifts which are solitarily so on the one hand, and saving grace on the other. Gifts have their especial works, which they are confined unto, according as their especial nature is. In them they act vigorously; out of them they influence not the soul at all. But the work of saving grace is universal, equally respecting all times, occasions, seasons, and duties; and although it may be

acted more eminently at one time than another, in one instance of duty than another, yet it enliveneth and disposeth the heart alike unto all obedience. But of the difference that is between spiritual gifts and saving grace, as also concerning their whole nature and use, I shall, God assisting, treat at large in another discourse. At present I intend only this caution, that men countenance not themselves by them, nor resolve a peace (or rather security) into their exercise, under real spiritual decays of grace and obedience.

Too high an estimation of any peculiar way of worship is apt to entice the minds of some into a hurtful confidence in these things. Having an apprehension that they alone have attained unto the right way of gospel worship and the administration of its ordinances, and that, perhaps, on such accounts as wherein they are eminently deceived, they begin first greatly to value themselves, and then to despise all others, and, if they can, to persecute them. This insensibly works them into a trust in that which they esteem so excellent, and that unto an open neglect of things of a greater weight and moment. Thus is it not unusual to see persons who are under the power of some singular opinion and practice in religion to make one thing almost their whole business, the measure of other things and persons, the rule of communion and of all sincere love;

— to value and esteem themselves and others according unto their embracing or not embracing of that opinion. There is here something of that which God complains of in the prophet, Isaiah 65:5. And it were to be wished that such principles and practices were not visibly accompanied with a decay of love, humility, meekness, self-diffidence, condescension, and zeal in other things, seeing where it is so, let men's outward profession be what it will, the plague of apostasy is begun. Wherefore, although we ought greatly to prize and to endeavor after the true order of the church of Christ, the purity of worship, and regular administration of ordinances, yet let us take heed that we prize not ourselves too much on what we have attained; for if we do so, we shall be very apt to countenance ourselves in other neglects thereby, which will certainly bring us into a spiritual sickness and declension. And, one way or other, there is an undue confidence placed in these outward privileges, when either any or all of the things ensuing are found among us: —

(1.) A neglect of private duties. This ruinous event never falls out among professors, but it proceeds either from an over-fullness of the world and its occasions, or the prevalency of some predominant lust, or a sinful resting in or trusting unto the duties of public worship. When all these concur (unless God effectually awaken the soul), it is in a perishing condition. In particular, when men are satisfied, as unto religious worship, with that which is public or in communion with others, so as to countenance themselves in a neglect of the duties of their private retirements, they are in a high road unto apostasy.

(2.) The indulgence of any private lust, unto the satisfaction of the flesh. This great defect in the power of godliness is frequently countenanced by strictness in the form thereof. And a great effect it is of the deceitfulness of sin when it can delude the minds of men to justify themselves in any one sin, with the names, titles, reputation, and privileges of the church, or the ordinances whereof they are made partakers; and the secret efficacy of this deceit is not easy to be detected.

(3.) It is so, also, when a loose and careless frame in our walking is indulged unto on the same account. It is hard, indeed, to know directly whence this is come to pass, that so many professors of the gospel should give up themselves unto a negligent and careless walk, but that it is so come to pass is certain. There is no truth more acknowledged than that a strict and close walk with God,

an attendance thereunto on all occasions with diligence and circumspection, with a continual conscientious fear of sin, is indispensably required unto acceptable, evangelical obedience or holiness; yet so it is, that many professors walk with that looseness and carelessness, that venturous boldness, with respect unto the occasions of sinning, that liberty or rather licentiousness of conversation, as are utterly inconsistent therewithal. As there are many causes hereof, so I fear this may be one among them, that they too much satisfy themselves with their interest in the church and its privileges, and with their observance of public worship and the ordinances thereof, according to their respective stations and capacities.

Wherefore, the sum of this direction is, that if we would be preserved from the prevalency of the present apostasy, we must have a strict regard unto our principles and practice with respect unto the privileges of the church and ordinances of gospel worship. If we neglect or despise them, we cast off the yoke of Christ, and have no ground to look for his acceptance of us or concernment in us. It is but folly for them to pretend a hope in his mercy who defy his authority. And if, on the other hand, we so rest in them as to countenance ourselves in any of the evils mentioned, we shall succeed into their room who, under the name and pretense of the church and its privileges, fell into an open apostasy from Christ and the gospel; for the same causes will produce the same effect in us as they did in them. There is a middle way between these extremes, which whoso are guided into will find rest and peace unto their souls; and this is no other but an humble, careful, conscientious improvement of them all unto their proper ends. And it may not be amiss to name some of those things whereby we may know whether our hearts are upright and rightly disposed in the use of gospel ordinances. And we may judge of ourselves herein: —

If our hearts are bettered by them, or humbled for it if they are not. Their end, with respect unto us, is to excite and put forth all grace into exercise. When, therefore, we find faith and love, delight in God, longing after an increase of grace and holiness, with a detestation of sin, fruitfulness in good works and all duties of obedience, joy in spiritual things, self-abasement, and admiration of grace, stirred up in us by them, our hearts need not condemn us as to want of sincerity in these duties, though we are sensible of many weaknesses and imperfections. And whereas, through the power of corruptions and temptations, through the weakness of the flesh and prevalency of unbelief, we come sometimes short of a sensible experience of this effect on our souls by and under them, there may yet remain a relieving evidence of some sincerity in what we do; and this is, if, rejecting all other pretences and prejudices, we charge ourselves alone with our unprofitableness, and be humbled in a sense thereof. Want hereof hath been the reason why some have rejected the ordinances of the gospel as dead and useless, and others have grown formal, careless, and barren, under the enjoyment of them. When all veils and coverings shall be taken away and destroyed, these things will appear to be the fruits of pride and of the deceitfulness of sin.

It is so when, in the dispensation of the ordinances, spiritual things are realized and made nigh unto us. When in the preaching of the word we find Jesus Christ "evidently set forth, crucified before our eyes," Galatians 3:1; when the form of the things delivered is brought upon our minds, Romans 6:17; when we do, as it were, feel and handle the word of life, and the things hoped for have some kind of subsistence given them in our souls, as Hebrews 11:1, — then are we exercised in a due manner in this part of our obedience. To this purpose our apostle discourseth, Romans 10:6-9. The word as preached and other ordinances do not direct us unto things afar off, but bring the Lord Christ with all the benefits of his mediation into our hearts. But if we content

ourselves with empty light, with unassuming notions of spiritual things, if we rest satisfied with the outward performance of our own duty and that of other men, we have just cause to fear that our hearts are not right in the sight of God in this matter.

When we find that a conscientious attendance on all the ordinances of instituted worship doth quicken our diligence and watchfulness unto all other duties of obedience that are required of us, we are conversant in them in a due manner. When under a pretense of them, and a mistaken satisfaction in them, men countenance themselves in the neglect of other duties, how way is made for farther apostasy from holiness hath been declared. Wherefore there can be no greater evidence of our due attendance unto them than when we axe excited, quickened, enlarged, and confirmed by them unto and in all the ways of universal obedience. Those, therefore, who most conscientiously make use of church privileges and gospel ordinances are they whose hearts are most engaged unto all other duties by them.

Lastly, It is an evidence of the same importance when we have that experience of Christ and his grace in the administration of gospel ordinances according unto his will, as that we are strengthened thereby to suffer for him and them when we are called thereunto. The time will come when neither mere light and conviction of truth nor the gifts of the ministry will secure men unto their profession. But he who hath tasted how gracious Christ is in the ways of his appointment will not easily be removed from his resolution of following him whithersoever he goeth.

Fourthly, Take heed of the infection of national vices. What I intend hereby hath been before declared. And this caution is most necessary when they are most prevalent among any people; for commonness will take off a sense of their guilt, and countenance will insensibly take away shame. Besides, when some go out unto an open excess, others are apt to justify themselves in vain practices and sinful miscarriages, because they rise not up unto the same height of provocation with them. This makes lesser vanities, in habits, attires, pleasures, misspense of time in talking-houses, excess in eating and drinking, corrupt communication, and careless boldness in common converses, whereby persons tread in the steps, and sometimes on the very heels, of the predominant sins of the place and age, so to abound among us. Some openly show what they have a mind to be at, if they durst, and that it is more reputation and the power of convictions than the love of gospel holiness that restrain them from running forth into the same excess of riot with others. Israel of old "dwelt alone, and was not reckoned among the nations," Numbers 23:9; and "the remnant of Jacob is to be so in the midst," in the bowels "of many people," as to be a blessing unto them, Micah 5:7, not to be corrupted by them. If professors will so immerse themselves into the body of the people as insensibly to learn their manners, they will be carried down the stream with them into perdition; and the danger hereof is beyond what most men conceive. Grace was but sparingly administered unto the community of the people under the old testament, and therefore, after the giving of the law, God would not trust them to live among other people, nor other people to live among them, as knowing how unable they were to withstand the temptations of conformity unto them. Hereon he appointed that all the nations should be utterly extirpated where they were to inhabit, that they should not learn their customs, Leviticus 18:30. The neglect of this wisdom of God, the transgression of his will herein, by mixing themselves with other nations and learning their manners, was that which proved their ruin. Under the gospel there is a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit. God now intrusts all that are called unto the obedience of it to live in the midst of all nations under heaven; yet he so cloth it as to warn them of their danger thereby, and to require

them to stand upon their guard herein continually. This is that part of true religion which the apostle James calls the "keeping of ourselves unspotted from the world," James 1:27. Most men think it enough that no more can be required of them nor expected from them than that they wallow not in the mire and pollutions of it. If their practice be free from actual open sins, they care not what spots of a worldly conversation are upon them; but they know not what will be the end thereof.

It may be it will be said, that unless we do conform ourselves in some things unto the customs that are prevalent among us, as in habit, and fashion, and way of converse, we shall be despised in the world, and neither we nor ours be of any regard.

I answer, — 1. That I am not contending about small things, nor prescribing modes of attire or manner of deportment unto any. There is none who doth more despise the placing of religion in clothes, in gestures, in the refusal of civil and just respects, than I do; nor have I any severity in my thoughts against a distinction in these things among persons, according to their degrees and conditions in the world, though apparently there be an excess in all sorts herein. But that which I intend is, a compliance with the world in those things which border on and make some kind of representation of the predominant vices of the place and age wherein we live; and if you think you shall be despised if you come behind the rest of your rank and quality in the world in these things, still you will be so unless you come up unto them in all abominations, 1 Peter 4:3-4; — and whether it be fit to relinquish God, and Christ, and the gospel, all holiness and morality, to have the friendship of the world, judge ye. And, — 2. Be sure to outgo them in fixed honesty, kindness, benignity, usefulness, meekness, moderation of spirit, charity, bowels of compassion, readiness to help and relieve all men according unto your power, and you will quickly find, even in this world, how little you are concerned in that contempt of the vilest part of mankind whereof you seem to be afraid.

Fifthly, Carefully avoid all those miscarriages of professors which alienate the minds of men from the gospel, and countenance them in the contempt of the profession of it. Some of them we have mentioned before, and many of the like nature might be added unto them. As the scandalous, profligate lives of those in general who are called Christians give that offense unto Jews, Mohammedans, and Gentiles, all the world over, that hardens them unto a contempt and detestation of Christianity, and hath brought the whole matter of religion in the world unto force and the sword, so the miscarriages of the strictest sort of professors do greatly countenance others in their dislike of and enmity against the power of godliness which they profess; and so far as we continue in them, we have a share in the guilt of the present defection. Not to insist on particulars, the things of this nature that are charged on them may be reduced unto three heads: — 1. Want of love and unity among themselves; 2. Want of usefulness and kindness towards all; 3. Spiritual pride and censoriousness, or rash judging of other men.

These are the things which are commonly charged on some professors; and although, it may be, they are but few who are guilty of all or any of these things, at least not as they are charged and reproached by others, yet they may all learn what in an especial manner to avoid, that they give no advantage unto those who seek for it and would be glad of it. It is our duty, by a watchful, holy conversation in all things, to "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," and so universally to approve our sincerity unto God and men, that whereas we are, or may be at any time, "evil spoken

of, as evil-doers, they may be ashamed, beholding our good conversation in Christ, and glorify God in the day of visitation." This is the law that we have brought ourselves under, not to fret and fume, and in our minds seek for revenge, when we are traduced and evil spoken of, but by a "patient continuance in well-doing," to overcome all the evil that the malice of hell or the world can cast upon us; and if we like not this law and rule, we had best relinquish our profession, for it is indispensably required of all the disciples of Jesus Christ, And he whose heart is confirmed by grace to do well whilst he is evil spoken of will find such present satisfaction, in a sense of his acceptance with Christ, as to make him say, "This yoke is easy, and this burden is light," Especially ought we carefully to avoid the things mentioned and appearances of them, whereby public offense is taken, and advantage made by evil men to countenance themselves in their sins. You are but few unto whom these things are communicated, and so may judge that all your care in and about them will be of little significancy to put any stop unto the general declension from gospel holiness; but it is hoped that all others are warned in the same manner, yea, and more effectually than you are. However, every vessel must stand on its own bottom; "the just shall live by his" own "faith;" "every one of us shall give account of himself to God ;" and no more is required of you but your own personal duty.

It is true, you cannot put an end unto those differences and divisions, that want of love and agreement, that is among professors; but you may take care that the guilt of none of these things may be justly charged on you. Love unto the saints without dissimulation; readiness to bear in meekness with different apprehensions and palpable misapprehensions, not intrenching on the foundation; freedom from imposing your sentiments on those who cannot receive them, and from judging rashly on supposed failures; readiness for universal communion in all religious duties with all that "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," — as they are our duties, as they are some of the principal ways whereby we may truly represent the Lord Christ and the doctrine of the gospel unto others, so they will disarm Satan and the world of a great engine whereby they work no small mischief unto the whole interest of religion.

Again: were all professors meek, quiet, peaceable, in their societies and among their neighbors; sober, temperate, humble in their personal conversation in the world; useful, kind, benign, condescending towards all; cheerful in trials and afflictions, always "rejoicing in the Lord," — men not given up to a reprobate sense ([men] who are [so, are] not to be regarded) would at length be so far from taking offense at them as to judge that they should not know what to do without them, and be won to endeavor a conformity unto them. In like manner, were those rules more diligently attended unto which are prescribed unto all believers as unto their conversation in this world, it would be of no small advantage unto religion. See Php 4:8; 1 Peter 2:12; 2 Corinthians 13:7; Romans 13:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; Hebrews 13:18. Did honesty, sincerity, uprightness in all the occasions of life, in the whole converse of professors in the world, shine more brightly and give more evidences of themselves than at present among many they seem to do, it would undoubtedly turn unto the unspeakable advantage of religion.

And, lastly, for that judging or condemning of others wherewith they are so provoked, there is but one way whereby it may be done so as to give no just offense, and this is in our lives. The practice of holiness judgeth all unholy persons in their own breasts; and if they are provoked thereby, there is nothing in it but a new aggravation of their own sin and impiety.

## 04.00. Christologia

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## 04.00a. Christologia: or a Declaration of the

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1 ΧΡΙΣΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ: or, a Declaration of the Glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ — God and Man: with the Infinite Wisdom, Love, and Power of God in the Contrivance and Constitution thereof; as also, of the Grounds and Reasons of His Incarnation;

the Nature of His Ministry in Heaven;

the Present State of the Church above thereon;

and the Use of His Person in Religion: with an Account and Vindication of the Honour, Worship, Faith, Love, and Obedience due unto Him, in and from the Church.

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” — Php 3:8.

## 04.00b. Prefatory Note.

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Prefatory Note. The object of Dr Owen in this treatise is to illustrate the mystery of divine grace in the person of Christ. It bears the title, "Christologia;" but it differs considerably from modern works of the same title or character. It is not occupied with a formal induction from Scripture in proof of the supreme Godhead of the Saviour. Owen assumes the truth of this doctrine, and applies all his powers and resources to expound its relations in the Christian system, and its bearings on Christian duty and experience.

Chapter I. of the work is devoted to an exposition of Matthew 16:16, as a warrant and basis for his inquiry respecting the person of Christ. Chapter II. contains some historical references to the opposition encountered by this doctrine in past ages. From Chapter III. to VII. inclusive, the person of Christ is exhibited as the origin of all true religion, the foundation of the divine counsel, the representation of the divine nature and will, the embodiment and sum of divine truth, and the source of divine and gracious efficacy for the salvation of the church. The faith of the Old Testament Church respecting it is illustrated in Chapter VIII. Then follows the second leading division of the treatise, in which the divine honours and obedience due to Christ, and our obligation to seek conformity to him, are urged at some length, from Chapter IX. to XV. It is followed in Chapters XVI. and XVII. with an inquiry into the divine wisdom as manifested in the person of Christ. The hypostatical union is explained, Chapter XVIII. Two more Chapters, XIX. and XX., close the work, with a dissertation on the exaltation of Christ, and the mode in which he discharges his mediatorial functions in heaven. The treatise was first published in 1679. We are not informed under what particular circumstances Owen was led to prepare it. There is internal evidence in the work itself that he laboured under a strong impression of the peril in which evangelical religion would be involved, if views of the person of Christ, either positively unsound or simple vague and defective, obtained currency in the British churches. His acquaintance with the early history of the church taught him that against this doctrine the persevering assaults of Satan had been directed; and, with sagacious foresight, he anticipated the rise of heresy on this point in England. He speaks of "woeful contests" respecting it, — increasing rather than abating "unto this very day;" and intimates his conviction, in language which elucidates his main design in this work, that the only way by which they could be terminated was to enthrone Christ anew in the hearts and consciences of men.

Events ensued which justified these apprehensions of Owen. A prolonged controversy on the subject of the Trinity arose, which drew forth the works of Bull (1686), Sherlock (1690), and South (1695). In 1710, Whiston was expelled from Oxford for his Arianism. Dr S. Clarke, in 1712, published Arian views, for which he was summoned before the Convocation. Among the Presbyterian Dissenters, Pierce and Hallet (1717) became openly committed to Arianism. Dr Isaac Watts who succeeded (1702) to the charge of the same congregation in London which had been under the care of Owen, broached the Indwelling Scheme; according to which the Father is so united to the man Christ Jesus, whose human soul pre-existed his coming in the flesh, that, through this indwelling of the Godhead, he became properly God. The Christology of Owen has

always been highly valued, and will be of use to all ages of the church: — “A work,” says the late Dr M’Crie, “which, together with its continuation, the ‘Meditations on the Glory of Christ,’ of all the theological works published by individuals since the Reformation, next to ‘Calvin’s Institutions’, we would have deemed it our highest honour to have produced.” — Ed.

## 04.00c. The Preface

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### The Preface.

It is a great promise concerning the person of Christ, as he was to be given unto the church, (for he was a child born, a son given unto us, Isaiah 9:6) that God would “lay him in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation,” whereon “he that believeth shall not make haste:” Isaiah 28:16. Yet was it also foretold concerning him, that this precious foundation should be “for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;” so as that “many among them should stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken:” Isaiah 8:14-15. According unto this promise and prediction it hath fallen out in all ages of the church; as the apostle Peter declares concerning the first of them. “Wherefore also,” saith he, “it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto ye therefore which believe, he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed:” 1 Peter 2:6-8.

Unto them that believe unto the saving of the soul, he is, he always hath been, precious — the sun, the rock, the life, the bread of their souls — every thing that is good, useful, amiable, desirable, here or unto eternity. In, from, and by him, is all their spiritual and eternal life, light, power, growth, consolation, and joy here; with everlasting salvation hereafter. By him alone do they desire, expect, and obtain deliverance from that woeful apostasy from God, which is accompanied with — which containeth in it virtually and meritoriously — whatever is evil, noxious, and destructive unto our nature, and which, without relief, will issue in eternal misery. By him are they brought into the nearest cognation, alliance, and friendship with God, the firmest union unto him, and the most holy communion with him, that our finite natures are capable of, and so conducted unto the eternal enjoyment of him. For in him “shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory;” (Isaiah 45:25) for “Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation;” they “shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end:” Isaiah 45:17. On these and the like accounts, the principal design of their whole lives unto whom he is thus precious, is to acquaint themselves with him — the mystery of the wisdom, grace, and love of God, in his person and mediation, as revealed unto us in the Scripture, which is “life eternal;” (John 17:3) — to trust in him, and unto him, as to all the everlasting concerns of their souls — to love and honour him with all their hearts — to endeavour after conformity to him, in all those characters of divine goodness and holiness which are represented unto them in him. In these things consist the soul, life, power, beauty, and efficacy of the Christian religion; without which, whatever outward ornaments may be put upon its exercise, it is but a useless, lifeless carcass. The whole of this design is expressed in these heavenly words of the apostle: (Php 3:8-12) “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be

found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” This is a divine expression of that frame of heart — of that design — which is predominant and efficacious in them unto whom Christ is precious.

But, on the other hand, (according unto the fore-mentioned prediction,) as he hath been a sure foundation unto all that believe, so he hath in like manner been “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence unto them that stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.” There is nothing in him — nothing wherein he is concerned — nothing of him, his person, his natures, his office, his grace, his love, his power, his authority, his relation unto the church — but it hath been unto many a stone of stumbling and rock of offence. Concerning these things have been all the woeful contests which have fallen out and been managed among those that outwardly have made profession of the Christian religion. And the contentions about them do rather increase than abate, unto this very day; the dismal fruits whereof the world groaneth under, and is no longer able to bear. For, as the opposition unto the Lord Christ in these things, by men of perverse minds, hath ruined their own souls — as having dashed themselves in pieces against this everlasting rock — so in conjunction with other lusts and interests of the carnal minds of men, it hath filled the world itself with blood and confusion. The re-enthroning of the Person, Spirit, Grace, and Authority of Christ, in the hearts and consciences of men, is the only way whereby an end may be put unto these woeful conflicts. But this is not to be expected in any degree of perfection amongst them who stumble at this stone of offence, whereunto they were appointed; though in the issue he will herein also send forth judgment unto victory, and all the meek of the earth shall follow after it. In the meantime, as those unto whom he is thus a rock of offence — in his person, his spirit, his grace, his office, and authority — are diligent and restless (in their various ways and forms, in lesser or higher degrees, in secret artifices, or open contradictions unto any or all of them, under various pretences, and for divers ends, even secular advantages some of them, which the craft of Satan hath prepared for the ensnaring of them) in all ways of opposition unto his glory; so it is the highest duty of them unto whom he is precious, whose principal design is to be found built on him as the sure foundation, as to hold the truth concerning him, (his person, spirit, grace, office, and authority,) and to abound in all duties of faith, love, trust, honour, and delight in him — so also to declare his excellency, to plead the cause of his glory, to vindicate his honour, and to witness him the only rest and reward of the souls of men, as they are called and have opportunity.

This, and no other, is the design of the ensuing treatise; wherein, as all things fall unspeakably short of the glory, excellency, and sublimity of the subject treated of, (for no mind can conceive, no tongue can express, the real substantial glory of them,) so there is no doubt but that in all the parts of it there is a reflection of failings and imperfections, from the weakness of its author. But yet I must say with confidence, that in the whole, that eternal truth of God concerning the mystery of his wisdom, love, grace, and power, in the person and mediation of Christ, with our duties towards himself therein, even the Father, Son, and eternal Spirit, is pleaded and vindicated, which shall never be shaken by the utmost endeavours and oppositions of the gates of hell. And in the

acknowledgment of the truth concerning these things consists, in an especial manner, that faith which was the life and glory of the primitive church, which they earnestly contended for, wherein and whereby they were victorious against all the troops of stumbling adversaries by whom it was assaulted. In giving testimony hereunto, they loved not their lives unto the death, but poured out their blood like water, under all the pagan persecutions, which had no other design but to cast them down and separate them from this impregnable rock, this precious foundation. In the defence of these truths did they conflict, in prayers, studies, travels, and writings, against the swarms of seducers by whom they were opposed. And, for this cause, I thought to have confirmed the principal passages of the ensuing discourse with some testimonies from the most ancient writers of the first ages of the church; but I omitted that cause, as fearing that the interposition of such passages might obstruct instead of promoting the edification of the common sort of readers, which I principally intended. Yet, withal, I thought not good utterly to neglect that design, but to give at least a specimen of their sentiments about the principal truths pleaded for, in this preface to the whole. But herein, also, I met with a disappointment; for the bookseller having, unexpectedly unto me, finished the printing of the discourse itself, I must be contented to make use of what lieth already collected under my hand, not having leisure or time to make any farther inquiry.

I shall do something of this nature, the rather because I shall have occasion thereby to give a summary account of some of the principal parts of the discourse itself, and to clear some passages in it, which by some may be apprehended obscure.

Chap. I. The foundation of the whole is laid in the indication of those words of our blessed Saviour, wherein he declares himself to be the rock whereon the church is built: (Matthew 26:18) “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” The pretended ambiguity of these words hath been wrested by the secular interests of men, to give occasion unto that prodigious controversy among Christians, viz., whether Jesus Christ or the Pope of Rome be the rock whereon the church is built. Those holy men of old unto whom Christ was precious, being untainted with the desires of secular grandeur and power, knew nothing hereof. Testimonies may be — they have been — multiplied by others unto this purpose. I shall mention some few of them.

Ο■τ■ς ■στιν ■ πρ■σ τ■ν Πατ■ρα ■γουσα ■δ■ς, ■ π■τρα, ■ κλε■ς, ■ ποιμ■ν, &c., saith Ignatius: Epist. ad Philadelph. — “He” (that is, Christ) “is the way leading unto the Father, the rock, the key, the shepherd” — wherein he hath respect unto this testimony. And Origen expressly denies the words to be spoken of Peter, in Matthew 16:1-28 : (Tract. i.): “Quod si super unum illum Petrum tantum existimes totam ecclesiam ædificari, quid dicturus es de Johanne, et apostolorum unoquoque? Num audebimus dicere quod adversus Petrum unum non prevalituræ sunt portæ inferorum?” — “If you shall think that the whole church was built on Peter alone, what shall we say of John, and each of the apostles? What! shall we dare to say that the gates of hell shall not prevail against Peter only?” So he [held,] according unto the common opinion of the ancients, that there was nothing peculiar in the confession of Peter, and the answer made thereunto as unto himself, but that he spake and was spoken unto in the name of all the rest of the apostles. Euseb. æPræparat. Evang., lib. i. cap. 3: ■τε ■νομαστ■ προθεσπισθε■σα ■κκλεσ■α α■το■ ■στηκε κατ■ β■θους ■■■ιζωμ■νη, κα■ μ■χρις ο■ραν■ων ■ψ■δων ε■χα■ς ■σ■ων κα■ θεοφιλ■ν ■νδρ■ν μετεωριζομ■νη — δι■ μ■αν ■κε■νην, ■ν α■τ■ς ■πεφ■νατο λ■ξιν, ε■πων, ■π■ τ■ν π■τραν ο■κοδομ■σω μου τ■ν ■κκλεσ■αν, κα■ π■λαι ■δου ο■ κατισχ■συσιν α■τ■ς. He

proves the verity of divine predictions from the glorious accomplishment of that word, and the promise of our Saviour, that he would build his church on the rock, (that is, himself,) so as that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. For “Unum hoc est immobile fundamentum, una hæc est felix fidei Petra, Petri ore confessa, Tu es filius Dei vivi,” says Hilary de Trin., lib. ii. — “This is the only immovable foundation, this is the blessed rock of faith confessed by Peter, Thou art the Son of the living God.” And Epiphanius, Hær. xxxix.: π τ π τρ τ α τ τ ς σ φ α λ ο ς π σ τ ε ω ς ο κ ο δ ο μ σ ω μ ο τ ν κ κ λ η σ α ν. — “Upon this rock” of assured faith “I will build my church.” For many thought that faith itself was metonymically called the Rock, because of its object, or the person of Christ, which is so.

One or two more out of Augustine shall close these testimonies: “Super hanc Petram, quam confessus es, super meipsum filium Dei vivi, ædificabo ecclesiam meam. Super me ædificabo te, non me super te:” De Verbis Dom., Serm. xiii. — “Upon this rock which thou hast confessed — upon myself, the Son of the living God — I will build my church. I will build thee upon myself, and not myself on thee.” And he more fully declareth his mind: (Tract. cxxiv., in Johan. :) “Universam significabat ecclesiam, quæ in hoc seculo diversis tentationibus, velut imbribus, fluminibus, tempestatibusque quatitur, et non cadit; quoniam fundata est supra Petram; unde et Petrus nomen accepit. Non enim a Petro Petra, sed Petrus a Petra; sicut non Christus a Christiano, sed Christianus a Christo vocatur. Ideo quippe ait Dominus, ‘Super hanc Petram ædificabo ecclesiam meam,’ quia dixerat Petrus, ‘Tu es Christus filius Dei vivi.’ ‘Super hanc ergo’ (inquit) ‘Petram quam confessus es, ædificabo ecclesiam meam.’ Petra enim erat Christus, super quod fundamentum etiam ipse ædificatus est Petrus. Fundamentum quippe aliud nemo potest ponere, præter id quod positum est, quod est Jesus Christus.” — “He (Christ) meant the universal church, which in this world is shaken with divers temptations, as with showers, floods, and tempests, yet falleth not, because it is built on the rock (Petra) from whence Peter took his name. For the rock is not called Petra from Peter, but Peter is so called from Petra the rock; as Christ is not so called from Christian, but Christian from Christ. Therefore, said the Lord, ‘Upon this rock will I build my church;’ because Peter said, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Upon this rock, which thou hast confessed, will I build my church. For Christ himself was the rock on which foundation Peter himself was built. For other foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Chap. II. Against this rock, this foundation of the church — the person of Christ, and the faith of the church concerning it — great opposition hath been made by the gates of hell. Not to mention the rage of the pagan world, endeavouring by all effects of violence and cruelty to cast the church from this foundation; all the heresies wherewith from the beginning, and for some centuries of years ensuing, it was pestered, consisted in direct and immediate oppositions unto the eternal truth concerning the person of Christ. Some that are so esteemed, indeed, never pretended unto any sobriety, but were mere effects of delirant [raving] imaginations; yet did even they also, one way or other, derive from an hatred unto the person of Christ, and centred therein. Their beginning was early in the church, even before the writing of the gospel by John, or of his Revelation, and indeed before some of Paul’s epistles. And although their beginning was but small, and seemingly contemptible, yet, being full of the poison of the old serpent, they diffused themselves in various shapes and forms, until there was nothing left of Christ — nothing that related unto him, not his natures, divine or human, not their properties nor acting, not his person, nor the union of his

natures therein — that was not opposed and assaulted by them. Especially so soon as the gospel had subdued the Roman empire unto Christ, and was owned by the rulers of it, the whole world was for some ages filled with uproars, confusion, and scandalous disorders about the person of Christ, through the cursed oppositions made thereunto by the gates of hell. Neither had the church any rest from these conflicts for about five hundred years. But near that period of time, the power of truth and religion beginning universally to decay among the outward professors of them, Satan took advantage to make that havoc and destruction of the church — by superstition, false worship, and profaneness of life — which he failed of in his attempt against the person of Christ, or the doctrine of truth concerning it.

It would be a tedious work, and, it may be, not of much profit unto them who are utterly unacquainted with things so long past and gone, wherein they seem to have no concernment, to give a specimen of the several heresies whereby attempts were made against this rock and foundation of the church. Unto those who have inquired into the records of antiquity, it would be altogether useless. For almost every page of them, at first view, presents the reader with an account of some one or more of them. Yet do I esteem it useful, that the very ordinary sort of Christians should, at least in general, be acquainted with what hath passed in this great contest about the person of Christ, from the beginning. For there are two things relating thereunto wherein their faith is greatly concerned. First, There is evidence given therein unto the truth of those predictions of the Scripture, wherein this fatal apostasy from the truth, and opposition unto the Lord Christ, are foretold: and, secondly, An eminent instance of his power and faithfulness, in the appointment and conquest of the gates of hell in the management of this opposition. But they have been all reckoned up, and digested into methods of time and matter, by many learned men, (of old and of late,) so that I shall not in this occasional discourse represent them unto the reader again. Only I shall give a brief account of the ways and means whereby they who retained the profession of the truth contended for it, unto a conquest over the pernicious heresies wherewith it was opposed. The defence of the truth, from the beginning, was left in charge unto, and managed by, the guides and rulers of the church in their several capacities. And by the Scripture it was that they discharged their duty confirmed with apostolical tradition consonant thereunto. This was left in charge unto them by the great apostle, (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 6:13-14; 2 Timothy 2:1-2, 2 Timothy 2:15, 2 Timothy 2:23-24, 2 Timothy 4:1-5) and wherein any of them failed in this duty, they were reprov'd by Christ himself: Revelation 2:14-15, Revelation 2:20. Nor were private believers (in their places and capacities) either unable for this duty or exempt from it, but discharged themselves faithfully therein, according unto commandment given unto them: 1 John 2:20, 1 John 2:27, 1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 1:8-9. All true believers, in their several stations — by mutual watchfulness, preaching, or writing, according unto their calls and abilities — effectually used the outward means for the preservation and propagation of the faith of the church. And the same means are still sufficient unto the same ends, were they attended unto with conscience and diligence. The pretended defence of truth with arts and arms of another kind hath been the bane of religion, and lost the peace of Christians beyond recovery. And it may be observed, that whilst this way alone for the preservation of the truth was insisted on and pursued, although innumerable heresies arose one after another, and sometimes many together, yet they never made any great progress, nor arrived unto any such consistency as to make a stated opposition unto the truth; but the errors themselves and their authors, were as vagrant meteors, which appeared for a little while, and vanished away. Afterwards it was not so, when other ways and means for the

suppression of heresies were judged convenient and needful. For in process of time, when the power of the Roman empire gave countenance and protection unto the Christian religion, another way was fixed on for this end, viz., the use of such assemblies of bishops and others as they called General Councils, armed with a mixed power, partly civil and partly ecclesiastical — with respect unto the authority of the emperors and that jurisdiction in the church which began then to be first talked of. This way was begun in the Council of Nice, wherein, although there was a determination of the doctrine concerning the person of Christ — then in agitation, and opposed, as unto his divine nature therein — according unto the truth, yet sundry evils and inconveniences ensued thereon. For thenceforth the faith of Christians began greatly to be resolved into the authority of men, and as much, if not more weight to be laid on what was decreed by the fathers there assembled, than on what was clearly taught in the Scriptures. Besides, being necessitated, as they thought, to explain their conceptions of the divine nature of Christ in words either not used in the Scripture, or whose signification unto that purpose was not determined therein, occasion was given unto endless contentions about them. The Grecians themselves could not for a long season agree among themselves whether ομοουσία and πρσωπις were of the same signification or no, (both of them denoting essence and substance,) or whether they differed in their signification, or if they did, wherein that difference lay. Athanasius at first affirmed them to be the same: Orat. v. con. Arian., and Epist. ad African. Basil denied them so to be, or that they were used unto the same purpose in the Council of Nice: Epist. lxxviii. The like difference immediately fell out between the Grecians and Latins about “hypostasis” and “persona.” For the Latins rendered “hypostasis” by “substantia,” and πρσωπον by “persona.” Hereof Jerome complains, in his Epistle to Damasus, that they required of him in the East to confess “tres hypostases,” and he would only acknowledge “tres personas:” Epist. lxxi. And Augustine gives an account of the same difference: De Trinitate, lib v. cap. 8, 9. Athanasius endeavoured the composing of this difference, and in a good measure effected it, as Gregory Nazianzen affirms in his oration concerning his praise. It was done by him in a synod at Alexandria, in the first year of Julian’s reign. On this occasion many contests arose even among them who all pleaded their adherence unto the doctrine of the Council of Nice. And as the subtle Arians made incredible advantage hereof at first, pretending that they opposed not the deity of Christ, but only the expression of it by of ομοουσιος, so afterwards they countenanced themselves in coining words and terms, to express their minds with, which utterly rejected it. Hence were their ομοιοσιος, τεροσιος, ξ οκ ντων, and the like names of blasphemy, about which the contests were fierce and endless. And there were yet farther evils that ensued hereon. For the curious and serpentine wits of men, finding themselves by this means set at liberty to think and discourse of those mysteries of the blessed Trinity, and the person of Christ, without much regard unto plain divine testimonies, (in such ways wherein cunning and sophistry did much bear sway,) began to multiply such new, curious, and false notions about them, especially about the latter, as caused new disturbances, and those of large extent and long continuance. For their suppression, councils were called on the neck of one another, whereon commonly new occasions of differences did arise, and most of them managed with great scandal unto the Christian religion. For men began much to forego the primitive ways of opposing errors and extinguishing heresies; betaking themselves unto their interest, the number of their party, and their prevalence with the present emperors. And although it so fell out — as in that at Constantinople, the first at Ephesus, and that at Chalcedon — that the truth (for the substance of it) did prevail, (for in many others it happened quite otherwise,) yet did they always give

occasions unto new divisions, animosities, and even mutual hatreds, among the principal leaders of the Christian people. And great contests there were among some of those who pretended to believe the same truth, whether such or such a council should be received — that is, plainly, whether the church should resolve its faith into their authority. The strifes of this nature about the first Ephesian Council, and that at Chalcedon, not to mention those wherein the Arians prevailed, take up a good part of the ecclesiastical story of those days. And it cannot be denied, but that some of the principal persons and assemblies who adhered unto the truth did, in the heat of opposition unto the heresies of other men, fall into unjustifiable excess themselves.

We may take an instance hereof with respect unto the Nestorian heresy, condemned in the first Ephesian Council, and afterwards in that at Chalcedon. Cyril of Alexandria, a man learned and vehement, designed by all means to be unto it what his predecessor Athanasius had been to the Arian; but he fell into such excesses in his undertakings, as gave great occasion unto farther tumults. For it is evident that he distinguisheth not between  $\pi\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$  and  $\phi\sigma\iota\varsigma$ , and therefore affirms, that the divine Word and humanity had  $\mu\alpha\ \phi\sigma\iota\nu$ , one nature only. So he doth plainly in Epist. ad Successum: “They are ignorant,” saith he,  $\tau\ \kappa\alpha\tau\ \lambda\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha\nu\ \sigma\tau\ \mu\alpha\ \phi\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \tau\ \lambda\gamma\omicron\upsilon\ \sigma\epsilon\sigma\alpha\rho\kappa\omega\mu\upsilon\eta$ . Hence Eutyches the Archimandrite took occasion to run into a contrary extreme, being a no less fierce enemy to Nestorius than Cyril was. For to oppose him who divided the person of Christ into two, he confounded his natures into one — his delirant folly being confirmed by that goodly assembly, the second at Ephesus. Besides, it is confessed that Cyril — through the vehemency of his spirit, hatred unto Nestorius, and following the conduct of his own mind in nice and subtle expressions of the great mystery of the person of Christ — did utter many things exceeding the bounds of sobriety prescribed unto us by the apostle, (Romans 12:3) if not those of truth itself. Hence it is come to pass, that many learned men begin to think and write that Cyril was in the wrong, and Nestorius by his means condemned undeservedly. However, it is certain to me, that the doctrine condemned at Ephesus and Chalcedon as the doctrine of Nestorius, was destructive of the true person of Christ; and that Cyril, though he missed it in sundry expressions, yet aimed at the declaration and confirmation of the truth; as he was long since vindicated by Theorianus: Dialog. con. Armenios.

However, such was the watchful care of Christ over the church, as unto the preservation of this sacred, fundamental truth, concerning his divine person, and the union of his natures therein, retaining their distinct properties and operations, that — notwithstanding all the faction and disorder that were in those primitive councils, and the scandalous contests of many of the members of them; notwithstanding the determination contrary unto it in great and numerous councils — the faith of it was preserved entire in the hearts of all that truly believed, and triumphed over the gates of hell.

I have mentioned these few things, which belong unto the promise and prediction of our blessed Saviour in Matthew 16:18, (the place insisted on,) to show that the church, without any disadvantage to the truth, may be preserved without such general assemblies, which, in the following ages, proved the most pernicious engines for the corruption of the faith, worship, and manners of it. Yea, from the beginning, they were so far from being the only way of preserving truth, that it was almost constantly prejudiced by the addition of their authority unto the confirmation of it. Nor was there any one of them wherein “the mystery of iniquity” did not work, unto the laying of some rubbish in the foundation of that fatal apostasy which afterwards openly

ensued. The Lord Christ himself hath taken it upon him to build his church on this rock of his person, by true faith of it and in it. He sends his Holy Spirit to bear testimony unto him, in all the blessed effects of his power and grace. He continueth his Word, with the faithful ministry of it, to reveal, declare, make known, and vindicate his sacred truth, unto the conviction of gainsayers. He keeps up that faith in him, that love unto him, in the hearts of all his elect, as shall not be prevailed against. Wherefore, although the oppositions unto this sacred truth, this fundamental article of the church and the Christian religion — concerning his divine person, its constitution, and use, as the human nature conjoined substantially unto it, and subsisting in it — are in this last age increased; although they are managed under so great a variety of forms, as that they are not reducible unto any heads of order; although they are promoted with more subtlety and specious pretences than in former ages; yet, if we are not wanting unto our duty, with the aids of grace proposed unto us, we shall finally triumph in this cause, and transmit this sacred truth inviolate unto them that succeed us in the profession of it.

Chap. III. This person of Christ, which is the foundation whereon the church is built, whereunto all sorts of oppositions are endeavoured and designed, is the most ineffable effect of divine goodness and wisdom — whereof we treat in the next place. But herein, when I speak of the constitution of the person of Christ, I intend not his person absolutely, as he is the eternal Son of God. He was truly, really, completely, a divine person from eternity, which is included in the notion of his being the Son, and so distinct from the Father, which is his complete personality. His being so was not a voluntary contrivance or effect of divine wisdom and goodness, his eternal generation being a necessary internal act of the divine nature in the person of the Father. Of the eternal generation of the divine person of the Son, the sober writers of the ancient church did constantly affirm that it was firmly to be believed, but as unto the manner of it not to be inquired into. “*Scrutator majestatis absorbetur a gloria,*” was their rule; and the curious disputes of Alexander and Arius about it, gave occasion unto that many-headed monster of the Arian heresy which afterwards ensued. For when once men of subtile heads and unsanctified hearts gave themselves up to inquire into things infinitely above their understanding and capacity — being vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds — they fell into endless divisions among themselves, agreeing only in an opposition unto the truth. But those who contented themselves to be wise unto sobriety, repressed this impious boldness. To this purpose speaks Lactantius: (lib. iv., *De Verâ Sapient.*:) “*Quomodo igitur procreavit? Nec sciri a quoquam possunt, nec narrari, opera divina; sed tamen sacræ literæ docent illum Dei filium, Dei esse sermonem.*” — “How, therefore, did the Father beget the Son? These divine works can be known of none, declared by none; but the holy writings” (wherein it is determined) “teach that he is the Son of God, that he is the Word of God.” And Ambrose: (*De Fide, ad Gratianum*;) “*Quæro abs te, quando aut quomodo putes filium esse generatum? Mihi enim impossibile est scire generationis secretum. Mens deficit, vox silet, non mea tantum, sed et angelorum. Supra potestates, supra angelos, supra cherubim, supra seraphim, supra omnem sensum est. Tu quoque manum ori admove; scrutari non licet superna mysteria. Licet scire quod natus sit, non licet discutere quomodo natus sit; illud negare mihi non licet, hoc quærere metus est. Nam si Paulus ea quæ audivit, raptus in tertium cœlum, ineffabilia dicit, quomodo nos exprimere possumus paternæ generationis arcanum, quod nec sentire potuimus nec audire? Quid te ista questionum tormenta delectant?*” — “I inquire of you when and how the Son was begotten? Impossible it is to me to know the mystery of this generation. My mind faileth, my voice is silent — and not only mine, but of the angels; it is above principalities, above angels, above the cherubim,

above the seraphim, above all understanding. Lay thy hand on thy mouth; it is not lawful to search into these heavenly mysteries. It is lawful to know that he was born — it is not lawful to discuss how he was born; that it is not lawful for me to deny — this I am afraid to inquire into. For if Paul, when he was taken into the third heaven, affirms that the things which he heard could not be uttered; how can we express the mystery of the divine generation, which we can neither apprehend nor hear? Why do such tormenting questions delight thee?”

Ephraim Syrus wrote a book to this purpose, against those who would search out the nature of the Son of God. Among many other things to the same purpose are his words: (cap. ii.): “Infelix profecto, miser, atque impudentissimus est, qui scrutari cupot Opificem suum. Millia millium, et centies millies millena millia angelorum et archangelorum, cum horrore glorificant, et trementes adorant; et homines lutei, pleni peccatis, de divinitate intrepide disserunt? Non illorum exhorrescit corpus, non contremescit animus; sed securi et garruli, de Christo Dei filio, qui pro me indigno peccatore passus est, deque ipsius utraque generatione loquuntur; nec saltem quod in luce cæcutiunt, sentiunt.” — “He is unhappy, miserable, and most impudent, who desires to examine or search out his Maker. Thousands of thousands, and hundreds of thousands of millions of angels and archangels, do glorify him with dread, and adore him with trembling; and shall men of clay, full of sins, dispute of the Deity without fear? Horror doth not shake their bodies, their minds do not tremble, but being secure and prating, they speak of the Son of God, who suffered for me, unworthy sinner, and of both his nativities or generations; at least they are not sensible how blind they are in the light.” To the same purpose speaks Eusebius at large: *Demonstratio Evang.*, lib. v. cap. 2.

Leo well adds hereunto the consideration of his incarnation, in these excellent words: (*Serm. ix., De Nativit.*.) “Quia in Christo Jesu Filio Dei non solum ad divinam essentiam, sed etiam ad humanam spectat naturam, quo dictum est per prophetam — ‘generationem ejus quis enarrabit?’ — (utramque enim substantiam in unam convenisse personam, nisi fides credat, sermo non explicat; et ideo materia nunquam deficit laudis; qui nunquam sufficit copia laudatoris) — gaudeamus igitur quod ad eloquendum tantum, misericordiæ sacramentum impares sumus; et cum salutis nostræ altitudinem promere non valeamus, sentiamus nobis bonum esse quod vincimur. Nemo enim ad cognitionem veritatis magis propinquat, quam qui intelligit, in rebus divinis, etiamsi multum proficiat, semper sibi superesse quod quærat.” See also Fulg., lib. ii. ad Thrasimund. But I speak of the person of Christ as unto the assumption of the substantial adjunct of the human nature, not to be a part whereof his person is composed, but as unto its subsistence therein by virtue of a substantial union. Some of the ancients, I confess, speak freely of the composition of the person of Christ in and by the two natures, the divine and human. That the Son of God after his incarnation had one nature, composed of the Deity and humanity, was the heresy of Apollinarius, Eutyches, the Monothelites, or Monophysites, condemned by all. But that his most simple divine nature, and the human, composed properly of soul and body, did compose his one person, or that it was composed of them, they constantly affirmed. Τὸν Θεοῦ μεσσητην καὶ ἄνθρωπων, κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς συγκεσθαι φημεν ἅκ τε τὰς καθ’ ἑμᾶς ἄνθρωπότητος τελειώσεως κατὰ τὸν ἰδιον λόγον, καὶ ἅκ τοῦ πεφηνότητος, ἅκ Θεοῦ κατὰ φησιν υἱοῦ, saith Cyril of Alexandria. — “A sanctis patribus adunatione ex divinitate et humanitate Christus Dominus noster compositus prædicatur.” *Pet. Diacon., Lib. De Incarnat. et Grat. Christi, ad Fulgentium.* And the union which they intended by this composition they called ἕνωσιν φυσικῶν, because it was of

diverse natures, and  $\nu\omega\sigma\iota\nu$  κατὰ  $\sigma\upsilon\nu\theta\epsilon\sigma\iota\nu$ , a union by composition. But because there neither was nor can be any composition, properly so called, of the divine and human natures, and because the Son of God was a perfect person before his incarnation, wherein he remained what he was, and was made what he was not, the expression hath been forsaken and avoided; the union being better expressed by the assumption of a substantial adjunct, or the human nature into personal subsistence with the Son of God, as shall be afterwards explained. This they constantly admire as the most ineffable effect of divine wisdom and grace:  $\sigma\alpha\rho\kappa\omicron\varsigma$   $\sigma\alpha\rho\kappa\omicron\tau\alpha\iota$ ,  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$   $\pi\alpha\chi\upsilon\nu\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ ,  $\rho\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$   $\rho\tau\alpha\iota$ ,  $\nu\alpha\phi\omicron\varsigma$   $\psi\eta\lambda\alpha\phi\tau\alpha\iota$ ,  $\chi\rho\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$   $\rho\chi\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ ,  $\upsilon\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$   $\upsilon\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$   $\nu\theta\rho\omicron\upsilon$   $\gamma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ , saith Gregory Nazianzen, (Orat. xii.) in admiration of this mystery. Hereby God communicates all things unto us from his own glorious fulness, the near approaches whereof we are not able to bear. So is it illustrated by Eusebius: (Demonst. Evang., lib. iv. cap.5, &c. :)  $\omicron\tau\omega$   $\delta\epsilon$   $\phi\omega\tau\omicron\varsigma$   $\lambda\omicron\upsilon$   $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha$   $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$   $\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$   $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron\mu\omicron$   $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$   $\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha$   $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\upsilon\gamma\upsilon\zeta\epsilon\iota$   $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha$   $\rho\alpha$ ,  $\phi\omega\tau\omicron\varsigma$   $\delta\epsilon$   $\phi\theta\alpha\lambda\mu\omicron\varsigma$ ,  $\phi\epsilon\theta\epsilon\rho\mu\alpha$   $\nu\epsilon\iota$ ,  $\pi\iota\alpha\upsilon\nu\epsilon\iota$   $\delta\epsilon$   $\gamma\upsilon\nu$ ,  $\alpha\zeta\epsilon\iota$   $\delta\epsilon$   $\phi\upsilon\tau\alpha$ , κ. τ. λ. (cap. vi.)  $\epsilon\gamma\omega$   $\nu\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$   $\nu$   $\pi\omicron\theta\omicron\sigma\epsilon\iota$   $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\upsilon$ ,  $\kappa\alpha\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$   $\omicron\rho\rho\alpha\nu\theta\epsilon\nu$   $\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$   $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu$   $\pi\alpha\mu\phi\alpha\omicron\varsigma$   $\lambda\iota\omicron\varsigma$   $\sigma\upsilon\nu$   $\nu\theta\rho\omicron\pi\omicron\iota\varsigma$   $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$   $\pi\omicron\lambda\iota\tau\epsilon\upsilon\omicron\tau\omicron$ ,  $\omicron\delta\epsilon$   $\nu\alpha$   $\tau\omicron\nu$   $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$   $\gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$   $\nu$   $\delta\iota\phi\omicron\rho\omicron\nu$ ,  $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$   $\sigma\upsilon\lambda\lambda\omicron\beta\delta\eta\nu$   $\mu\psi\chi\omicron\nu$   $\mu\omicron$   $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$   $\psi\upsilon\chi\omicron\nu$   $\theta\rho\omicron\tau\omicron$   $\phi\omega\tau\omicron\varsigma$   $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron$   $\delta\iota\alpha\phi\theta\alpha\rho\eta\sigma\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\nu$ . The sense of which words, with some that follow in the same place, is unto this purpose: By the beams of the sunlight, and life, and heat, unto the procreation, sustentation, refreshment, and cherishing of all things, are communicated. But if the sun itself should come down unto the earth, nothing could bear its heat and lustre; our eyes would not be enlightened but darkened by its glory, and all things be swallowed up and consumed by its greatness; whereas, through the beams of it, every thing is enlightened and kindly refreshed. So is it with this eternal beam or brightness of the Father's glory. We cannot bear the immediate approach of the Divine Being; but through him, as incarnate, are all things communicated unto us, in a way suited unto our reception and comprehension. So it is admired by Leo: (Serm. iii., De Nativit. :) "Natura humana in Creatoris societatem assumpta est, non ut ille habitator, et illa esset habitaculum; sed ut naturæ alteri sic misceretur altera, ut quamvis alia sit quæ suscipitur, alia vero quæ suscipit, in tantam tamen unitatem conveniret utriusque diversitas, ut unus idemque sit filius, qui se, et secundum quod verus est homo, Patre dicit minorem, et secundum quod verus est Deus Patri se profitetur æqualem." — "Human nature is assumed into the society of the Creator, not that he should be the inhabitant, and that the habitation," (that is, by an inhabitation in the effects of his power and grace, for otherwise the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily,) "but that one nature should be so mingled" (that is, conjoined) "with the other, that although that be of one kind which assumeth, and that of another which is assumed, yet the diversity of them both should concur in such a unity or union, as that it is one and the same Son — who, as he was a true man, said that he was less than the Father, or the Father was greater than he — so as he was true God, professeth himself equal unto the Father." See also Augustinus De Fide, ad Pet. Diacon., cap. xvii.; Justitianus Imperator Epist. ad Hormisdam, Romæ Episcop. And the mystery is well expressed by Maxentius: (Biblioth. Patr. pars prima:) "Non confundimus naturarum diversitatem; veruntamen Christum non ut tu asseris Deum factum, sed Deum factum Christum confitemur. Quia non cum pauper esset, dives factus est, sed cum dives esset, pauper factus est, ut nos divites faceret; neque enim cum esset in formâ servi, formam Dei accepit; sed cum esset in formâ Dei, formam servi accepit; similiter etiam nec, cum esset caro, verbum est factum; sed cum esset verbum, caro factum est." — "We do not confound the diversity of the natures, howbeit we believe

not what you affirm, that Christ was made God; but we believe that God was made Christ. For he was not made rich when he was poor; but being rich, he was made poor, that he might make us rich. He did not take the form of God when he was in the form of a servant; but being in the form of God, he took on him the form of a servant. In like manner, he was not made the Word when he was flesh; but being the Word, he was made flesh.” And Jerome, speaking of the effects of this mystery: (Comment. in Ezekiel, cap. xlii.:) “Ne miretur lector si idem et Princeps est et Sacerdos, et Vitulus, et Aries, et Agnus; cum in Scripturis sanctis pro varietate causarum legamus eum Dominum, et Deum, et Hominem, et Prophetam, et Virgam, et Radicem, et Florem, et Principem, et Regem justum, et Justitiam, Apostolum, et Episcopum, Brachium, Servum, Angelum, Pastorem, Filium, et Unigenitum, et Promogenitum, Ostium, Viam, Sagittam, Sapientiam, et multa alia.” — “Let not the reader wonder if he find one and the same to be the Prince and Priest, the Bullock, Ram, and Lamb; for in the Scripture, on variety of causes, we find him called Lord, God, and Man, the Prophet, a Rod, and the Root, the Flower, Prince, Judge, and Righteous King; Righteousness, the Apostle and Bishop, the Arm and Servant of God, the Angel, the Shepherd, the Son, the Only-begotten, the First-begotten, the Door, the Way, the Arrow, Wisdom, and sundry other things.” And Ennodius hath, as it were, turned this passage of Jerome into verse:—

“Corda domat, qui cuncta videt, quem cuncta tremiscunt;

Fons, via, dextra, lapis, vitulus, leo, lucifer, agnus;

Janua, spes, virtus, verbum, sapientia, vates.

Ostia, virgultum, pastor, mons, rete, columba, Flama, gigas, aquila, sponsus, patientia, nervus, Filius, excelsus, Dominus, Deus; omnia Christus.”

(In natalem Papæ Epiphani.)

“Quod homo est esse Christus voluit; ut et homo possit esse quod Christus est,” saith Cyprian: De Idolorum Vanitate, cap. iii. And, “Quod est Christus erimus Christiani, si Christum fuerimus imitati.” Ibid. And he explains his mind in this expression by way of admiration: (Lib. de Eleemosyn.:) “Christus hominis filius fieri voluit, ut nos Dei filios faceret; humiliavit se, ut populum qui prius jacebat, erigeret; vulneratus est, ut vulnera nostra curaret.”

Chap. IV. That he was the foundation of all the holy counsels of God, with respect unto the vocation, sanctification, justification, and eternal salvation of the church, is, in the next place, at large declared. And he was so on a threefold account. 1. Of the ineffable mutual delight of the Father and the Son in those counsels from all eternity. 2. As the only way and means of the accomplishment of all those counsels, and the communication of their effects, unto the eternal glory of God. 3. As he was in his own person, as incarnate, the idea and exemplar in the mind of God of all that grace and glory in the church which was designed unto it in those eternal counsels. As the cause of all good unto us, he is on this account acknowledged by the ancients. Ο■τος γο■ν λ■γος, ■ Χριστ■ς κα■ το■ ε■ναι π■λαι ■μ■ς, ■ν γ■ρ ■ν Θε■, κα■ το■ ε■ ■ναι ■ιτιος. Ν■ν δ■ ■τεφ■νη ■νθρ■ποις, α■τ■ς ο■τος ■ λ■γος, ■ μ■νος ■μφω Θε■ς τε κα■ ■νθρωπος, ■π■ντων ■μ■ν α■τιος ■γαθων, saith Clemens, Adhort. ad Gentes. — “He, therefore, is the Word, the Christ, and the cause of old of our being; for he was in God, and the cause of our wellbeing. But now he hath appeared unto men, the same eternal Word, who alone is both God and man, and unto us the cause of all that is good.” As he was in God the cause of our being and

wellbeing from eternity, he was the foundation of the divine counsels in the way explained; and in his incarnation, the execution of them all was committed unto him, that through him all actual good, all the fruits of those counsels, might be communicated unto us.

Chap. V. He is also declared in the next place, as he is the image and great representative of God, even the Father, unto the church. On what various accounts he is so called, is fully declared in the discourse itself. In his divine person, as he was the only begotten of the Father from eternity, he is the essential image of the Father, by the generation of his person, and the communication of the divine nature unto him therein. As he is incarnate, he is both in his own entire person God and man, and in the administration of his office, the image or representative of the nature and will of God unto us, as is fully proved. So speaks Clem. Alexandrin., Adhort. ad Gentes: ■ μεν γρ το Θεο ■ εκιν ■ λγος ατο, κα υς το νο γνσιος, ■ θεος λγος, φωτς ρχτυπον φς, εκιν δ το λγου ■ νθπος. — “The image of God is his own Word, the natural Son of the” (eternal) “Mind, the divine Word, the original Light of Light; and the image of the Word is man.” And the same author again, in his æPædagogus: Πρσωπον το Θεο ■ λγος ■ φωτζεται ■ Θες κα γνωρζεται. — “The Word is the face, the countenance, the representation of God, in whom he is brought to light and made known.” As he is in his divine person his eternal, essential image; so, in his incarnation, as the teacher of men, he is the representative image of God unto the church, as is afterwards declared. So also Jerome expresseth his mind herein: (Comment. in Psa 66) “Illuminet vultum suum super nos; Dei facies quæ est? utique imago ejus. Dicit enim apostolus imaginem Patris esse filium; ergo imagine sua nos illuminet; hoc est, imaginem suam filium illuminet super nos; ut ipse nos illuminet; lux enim Patris lux filii est.” — “Let him cause his face to shine upon us; or lift up the light of his countenance upon us. What is the face of God? even his image. For the apostle says, that the Son is the image of the Father. Wherefore, let him shine on us with his image; that is, cause his Son, which is his image, to shine upon us, that he may illuminate us; for the light of the Father and of the Son are the same.” Christ being the image of God, the face of God, in him is God represented unto us, and through him are all saving benefits communicated unto them that believe.

Eusebius also speaks often unto this purpose, as: (Demonstratio Evangelica, lib. iv. cap. 2:) ■θεν εκτως ο χρησιμο θεολογοντεδ, Θεν γενεν ατην ποφανουσιν, ■ς ■ν τς ■νεκφρστου κα ■περινοτου θετητος μνον ■ν ατη φροντα τν εκνα, δι ■ν κα Θεν εναι τε ατην κα λγεςθαι τς πρς τ πρτον ■ξομοισεως χριν. — “Wherefore, the holy oracles, speaking theologically, or teaching divine things, do rightly call him God begotten,” (of the Father,) “as he who alone bears in himself the image of the ineffable and inconceivable Deity. Wherefore, he both is, and is called God, because of his being the character, similitude, or image of him who is the first.” The divine personality of Christ consists in this, that the whole divine nature being communicated unto him by eternal generation, he is the image of God, even the Father, who by him is represented unto us. See the same book, chap. vii., to the same purpose; also, De Ecclesiast. Theol. contra Marcell., lib. ii. cap. 17.

Clemens abounds much in the affirmation of this truth concerning the person of Christ, and we may yet add, from a multitude to the same purpose, one or more testimonies from him. Treating of Christ as the teacher of all men, his παιδαγωγς, he affirms that he is Θες ■ν ■νθρπου σχματι, “God in the figure or form of man;” ■χραντος, πατρικθελματι δικονος, λγος, Θες, ■ ■ν πατρ ■ κ δεξι ■ν το πατρς, σ ■ν κα τ σχματι Θεο, “impolluted, serving

the will of the Father, the Word, God, who is in the Father, on the right hand of the Father, and in or with the form of God.” Ομοιος μιν εικον κληδωτος, τοτε πντι σθνει πειρατον ξομοιον τν ψυχν. — “He is the image (of God) unto us, wherein there is no blemish; and with all our strength are we to endeavour to render ourselves like unto him.” This is the great end of his being the representative image of God unto us. And: (Stromat., lib. iv.): μν ον Θες ναπδεικτος ν, οκ στιν πιστημονικς. δ υς σοφα τε στ κα πιστημη, κα λθεια, κα, 20σα λλα τοτε συγγεν. — “As God” (absolutely) “falls not under demonstration,” (that is, cannot perfectly be declared,) “so he doth not” (immediately) “effect or teach us knowledge. But the Son is wisdom, and knowledge, and truth, unto us, and every thing which is cognate hereunto.” For in and by him doth God teach us, and represent himself unto us.

Chap. VII. Upon the glory of this divine person of Christ depends the efficacy of all his offices; an especial demonstration whereof is given in his prophetic office. So it is well expressed by Irenæus, “qui nil molitur ineptè:” ææLib. i. cap. 1. “Non enim aliter nos discere poteramus quæ sunt Dei, nisi magister noster verbum existens, homo factus fuisset. Neque enim alius poterat enarrare nobis quæ sunt Patris, nisi proprium ipsius verbum. Quis enim alius cognovit sensum Domini? aut quis alius ejus consiliarius factus est? Neque rursus nos aliter discere poteramus, nisi Magistrum nostrum videntes, et per auditum nostrum vocem ejus percipientes, uti imitatores quidem operum, factores autem sermonum ejus facti, communionem habeamus cum ipso.” — “We could not otherwise have learned the things of God, unless our Master, being and continuing the” (eternal) “Word, had been made man. For no other could declare unto us the things of God, but his own proper Word. For who else hath known the mind of the Lord? or who else hath been his counsellor? Neither, on the other side, could we otherwise have learned, unless we had seen our Master, and heard his voice,” (in his incarnation and ministry,) “whereby, following his works, and yielding obedience unto his doctrine, we may have communion with himself.”

I do perceive that if I should proceed with the same kind of attestations unto the doctrine of all the chapters in the ensuing discourse, this preface would be drawn forth unto a greater length than was ever designed unto it, or is convenient for it. I shall therefore choose out one or two instances more, to give a specimen of the concurrence of the ancient church in the doctrine declared in them, and so put a close unto it.

Chap. IX. In the ninth chapter and those following, we treat of the divine honour that is due unto the person of Christ, expressed in adoration, invocation, and obedience, proceeding from faith and love. And the foundation of the whole is laid in the discovery of the true nature and causes of that honour; and three things are designed unto confirmation herein. 1. That the divine nature, which is individually the same in each person of the holy Trinity, is the proper formal object of all divine worship, in adoration and invocation; wherefore, no one person is or can be worshipped, but in the same individual act of worship each person is equally worshipped and adored. 2. That it is lawful to direct divine honour, worship, and invocation unto any person, in the use of his peculiar name — the Father, Son, or Spirit — or unto them altogether; but to make any request unto one person, and immediately the same unto another, is not exemplified in the Scripture, nor among the ancient writers of the church. 3. That the person of Christ, as God-man, is the proper object of all divine honour and worship, on the account of his divine nature; and all that he did in his human nature are motives thereunto. The first of these is the constant doctrine of the whole ancient church, viz, that whether, (for instance,) in our solemn prayers and invocations, we call expressly on the name

of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Holy Spirit; whether we do it absolutely or relatively, that is, with respect unto the relation of one person to the other — as calling on God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, on Christ as the Son of his love, on the Holy Spirit as proceeding from them both — we do formally invoke and call on the divine nature, and consequently the whole Trinity, and each person therein. This truth they principally confirmed with the form of our initiation into Christ at baptism: “I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” For as there is contained therein the sum of all divine honour, so it is directed unto the same name, (not the names,) of the Father, Son, and Spirit, which is the same Deity or divine nature alone. So speak the Fathers of the second General Council in their letters unto the bishops of the west; as they are expressed in Theodoret, lib. v. cap. 9. This form of baptism teacheth us, say they, Πιστεῖν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς, καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, δηλαδὴ, θεότητες τε καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ ὁσίας μίς τοῦ πατρὸς, καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος πιστευομένης, ἑμῶν τῶν ἑξῆς, καὶ συναδούτου τῶν βασιλείας, ἐν τρισὶ τέλεισι ποστῆσει. — “to believe in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; seeing that the Deity, substance, and power of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is one and the same; their dignity equal; their kingdom co-eternal, in three perfect persons.” “In nomine dixit, non nominibus, ergo non aliud nomen Patris est,” &c., “quia unus Deus:” Ambrose, De Spirit. Sanct., lib. i. cap. 14. ὄνομα δὲ κοινὸν τῶν τριῶν ἐστίν, ἑθεότης. — “The one name common to the three is the Deity:” Gregor. Nazianzen, Orat. xl. Hence Augustine gives it as a rule, in speaking of the Holy Trinity: “Quando unus trium in aliquo opere nominatur, universa operari trinitas intelligitur:” Enchirid., cap. xxxviii. — “When one person of the three is named in any work, the whole Trinity is to be understood to effect it.” “There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,” according to the Scriptures. Wherefore, as there is one faith in Christ, and one baptism of truth, although we are baptized and believe in the Father, Son, and Spirit, κατὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ὁμοίᾳ, τῶν καὶ λόγων, μὲν προσκλήσεις ἐπὶ πατρὸς, καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντος υἱοῦ, καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος; — “so plainly, in my judgment, there is one and the same adoration, of the Father, the Son incarnate, and the Holy Spirit:” Cyril. Alex. De Recta Fide, cap. xxxii. And this they professed themselves to hold and believe, in that ancient doxology which was first invented to decry the Arian heresy: “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.” The same glory, in every individual act of its assignation or ascription, is directed unto each person jointly and distinctly, on the account of the same divine nature in each of them. I need not produce any testimonies in the farther confirmation hereof; for, in all their writings against the Arians, they expressly and constantly contend that the holy Trinity (that is, the divine nature in three persons) is the individual object of all divine adoration, invocation, and all religious worship; and that by whatever personal name — as the Father, Son, or Spirit — we call on God, it is God absolutely who is adored, and each person participant of the same nature. See August. Lib. con. Serm. Arian. cap. xxxv., and Epist. lxxvi. ad Maximum. For the second thing, or the invocation of God by any personal name, or by the conjunction of the distinct names of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together, nothing occurs more frequently among them. Yea, it is common to find in their writings, prayers begun unto one person, and ended in the name of another; yea, begun unto Christ, and closed in the name of His only-begotten Son; it being one and the same divine nature that is called on. Yea, the schoolmen do generally deny that the persons of the holy Trinity, under the consideration of the formal reason which is constitutive of their personality, are the formal object and term of divine worship; but in the worship of one, they are all worshipped as one God over all,

blessed for ever. See Aquin. xxii. q. 81, a. 3, ad prim., and q. 84, a. 1, ad tertium; Alexand. Alens. ææp. 3, q. 30, m. 1, a. 3. But yet, although we may call on God in and by the name of any divine person, or enumerate at once each person, (τρισ γα ριθουμνη, τρις ν ν ματι ριθουμνη, Epiphani. Ancorat., viii. 22.) it doth not follow that we may make a request in our prayers unto one person, and then immediately repeat it unto another; for it would thence follow, that the person unto whom we make that request in the second place, was not invocated, not called on, not equally adored with him who was so called on in the first place, although the divine nature is the object of all religious invocation, which is the same in each person. Wherefore, in our divine invocation, we may name and fix our thoughts distinctly on any person, according as our souls are affected with the distinct operations of each person in grace towards us. For what concerns, in the third place, the ascription of divine honour, in adoration and invocation, unto the person of Christ; it is that which they principally contended for, and argued from, in all their writings against the Arians.

Evidences of infinite wisdom in the constitution of the person of Christ, and rational discoveries of the condescencies therein, unto the exaltation of all the other glorious properties of the divine nature, are also treated of. Herein we consider the incarnation of the Son of God, with respect unto the recovery and salvation of the church alone. Some have contended that he should have been incarnate, had man never fallen or sinned. Of these are Rupertus, lib. iii., De Gloriâ et Honore Filii Hominis; Albertus Magnus, in iii. distinct. 10, a 4; Petrus Galatinus, lib. iii. cap.4; as are Scotus, Halensis, and others, whom Osiander followed. The same is affirmed by Socinus concerning the birth of that man, which alone he fancied him to be, as I have elsewhere declared. But I have disproved this figment at large. Many of the ancients have laboured in this argument, of the necessity of the incarnation of the eternal Word, and the condescencies unto divine wisdom therein. See Irenæus, æælib iii., cap. 20, 21; Eusebius, Demonst. Evangel., lib iv. cap. 1–4, &c.; Cyril Alexand., lib. v. cap. 7, lib i. De Fide ad Regin.; Chrysostom, Homil. x. in Johan., et in cap.8, ad Rom. Serm. 18; Augustine, De Trinit., lib. xiii. cap. 13–20; Leo, Epist. 13, 18, Sermo. de Nativit. 1, 4, 10; Basil, in Psa 48; Albinus, lib i. in Johan. cap. 11; Damascen., lib. iii., De Fide, cap. 15, 19; Anselm, quod Deus Homo, lib. duo. Guil. Parisiensis, lib. Cur Deus Homo. Some especial testimonies we may produce in confirmation of what we have discoursed, in the places directed unto. There is one of them, one of the most ancient, the most learned, and most holy of them, who hath so fully delivered his thoughts concerning this mystery, as that I shall principally make use of his testimony herein.

It belonged unto the wisdom and righteousness of God, that Satan should be conquered and subdued in and by the same nature which he had prevailed against, by his suggestion and temptation. To this purpose that holy writer speaks, (æælib. iii. cap. 20,) which, because his words are cited by Theodoret, (Dial. ii.,) I shall transcribe them from thence, as free from the injuries of his barbarous translator: νωσεν ον καθς προφάμεν τν νθρωπον τ Θε, ε γρ μ νθρωπος νκησεν τν ντπαλον τον νθρπου, οκ ν δικαως νικθη χθρς, πλιν τε, ε μ Θες δωρσατο τν σωτηραν, οκ ν βεβαως χοιμεν ατν, κα ι μ συνηθη νθρωπος τ Θε οκ ν δυνθη μετασχεν τς φθαρσας. δει γρ τν μεσττην τον Θεο τε κα νθρπων, δι τς δδας πρς καταρους οκειτητος ες φιλαν κα μμνοιαν τονς νφωτρους συναγαγεν. Words plainly divine; an illustrious testimony of the faith of the ancient church, and expressive of the principal mystery of the gospel!

“Wherefore, as we said before, he united man unto God. For if man had not overcome the adversary of men, the enemy had not been justly conquered; and, on the other hand, if God had not given and granted salvation, we could never have a firm, indefeasible possession of it; and if man had not been united unto God, he could not have been partaker of immortality. It behoved, therefore, the Mediator between God and man, by his own participation of the nature of each of them, to bring them both into friendship and agreement with each other.” And to the same purpose, speaking of the wisdom of God in our redemption by Christ, with respect unto the conquest of the devil: (æælib v. cap. 1:) “Potens in omnibus Dei Verbum, et non deficiens in sua justitiâ, juste etiam adversus ipsam conversus est apostasiam, ea quæ sunt sua redimens, ab eo, non cum vi, quemadmodum ille initio dominabatur nostri, ea quæ non erant sua insatiabiliter rapiens.... Suo igitur sanguine redimente nos Domino, et dante animam suam pro anima nostra, et carnem suam pro carnibus nostris,” &c. Again divinely: “The all-powerful Word of God, no way defective in righteousness, set himself against the apostasy justly also; redeeming from him (Satan, the head of the apostasy) the things which were his own — not with force, as he bare rule over us, insatiably making rapine of what was not his own — but he, the Lord, redeeming us with his own blood, giving his soul for our soul, and his flesh for ours, wrought out our deliverance.” These things are at large insisted on in the ending discourse.

## 04.00c. The Preface cont'd

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It belongs unto this great mystery, and is a fruit of divine wisdom, that our deliverance should be wrought in and by the same nature wherein and whereby we were ruined. The reasons hereof, and the glory of God therein, are at large discoursed in the ensuing treatise. To the same purpose speaks the same holy writer: (æælib v. cap. 14:) “Non in semetipso recapitulasset hæc Dominus, nisi ipse caro et sanguis secundum principalem plasmationem factus fuisset; salvans in semetipso in fine illud quod perierat in principio in Adam. Si autem ob aliam quandam dispositionem Dominus incarnatus est, et ex alterâ substantiâ carnem attulit, non ergo in semetipso recapitulatus est hominem, adhuc etiam nec caro quidem dici potest.... Habuit ergo et ipse carnem et sanguinem, non alteram quandam, sed ipsam principalem Patris plasmationem in se recapitulans, exquirens id quod perierat.” And to the same purpose: (æælib. v. cap. 1:) “Neque enim vere esset sanguinem et carnem habens, per quam nos redemit, nisi antiquam plasmationem Adæ in seipsum recapitulasset.” That which these passages give testimony unto, is what we have discoursed concerning the necessity of our redemption in and by the nature that sinned; and yet withal, that it should be free from all that contagion which invaded our nature by the fall. And these things are divinely expressed. “Our Lord,” saith he, “had not gathered up these things in himself, had not he been made flesh and blood, according unto its original creation.” (The reader may observe, that none of the ancient writers do so frequently express the fall of Adam by our apostasy from God, and our recovery by a recapitulation in Christ, as Irenæus — his recapitulation being nothing but the νακεφαλαωσις mentioned by the apostle, Ephesians 1:10 — and he here affirms, that, unto this end, the Lord was made flesh; “secundum principalem plasmationem,” as his words are rendered; that is plainly, the original creation of our nature in innocence, uprightness, purity, and righteousness.) “So he saved in himself in the end, what perished in Adam at the beginning.” (The same nature, in and by the same nature.) “For if the Lord had been incarnate for any other disposition,” (i.e., cause, reason, or end,) “and had brought flesh from any other substance,” (i.e., celestial or ethereal, as the Gnostics imagined,) “he had not recovered men, brought our nature unto a head in himself, nor could he have been said to be flesh. He therefore himself had flesh and blood not of any other kind; but he took to himself that which was originally created of the Father, seeking that which was lost.” The same is observed by Augustine: (Lib. de Fide, ad Petrum Diaconum:) “Sic igitur Christum Dei Filium, id est, unam ex Trinitate personam, Deum verum crede, ut divinitatem ejus de naturâ Patris natam esse non dubites; et sic eum verum hominem crede, et ejus carnem, non cœlestis, non aeris, non alterius cujusquam putes esse naturæ, sed ejus cujus est omnium caro; id est, quam ipse Deus, homini primo de terra plasmavit, et cæteris hominibus plasmavit.” — “So believe Christ the Son of God, that is, one person of the Trinity, to be the true God, that you doubt not but that his divinity was born” (by eternal generation) “of the nature of the Father; and so believe him to be a true man, that you suppose not his flesh to be aerial, or heavenly, or of any other nature, but of that which is the flesh of men; that is, which God himself formed in the first man of the earth, and which he forms in all other men.” That which he

speaks of one person of the Trinity, hath respect unto the heretical opinion of Hormisdas, the bishop of Rome, who contended that it was unlawful to say that one person of the Trinity was incarnate, and persecuted some Scythian monks, men not unlearned about it, who were strenuously defended by Maxentius, one of them.

It carrieth in it a great condecency unto divine wisdom, that man should be restored unto the image of God by him who was the essential image of the Father; (as is declared in our discourse;) and that he was made like unto us, that we might be made like unto him, and unto God through him. So speaks the same Irenæus: (æælib. v. Præfat:) “Verbum Dei Jesus Christus, qui propter immensam suam dilectionem, factus est quod sumus nos, ut nos perficeret quod est ipse.” — “Jesus Christ, the Word of God, who, from his own infinite love, was made what we are, that he might make us what he is;” that is, by the restoration of the image of God in us. And again: (æælib. iii. cap. 20:) “Filius Dei existens semper apud Patrem, et homo factus, longam hominum expositionem in seipso recapitulavit; in compendio nobis salutem præstans, ut quod perdideramus in Adam, id est, secundum imaginem et similitudinem esse Dei, hoc in Christo Jesus reciperemus. Quia enim non erat possibile, eum hominem, qui semel victus fuerat et elisus per inobedientiam, replasmare et obtinere brabium (βρ■βε■ον) victoriæ; iterum autem impossibile erat ut salutem perciperet, qui sub peccato ceciderat. Utraque operatus est filius Verbum Dei existens, a Patre descendens et incarnatus, et usque ad mortem descendens, et dispensationem consummans salutis nostræ.” — “Being the Son of God always with the Father, and being made man, he reconciled or gathered up in himself the long-continued exposing of men,” (unto sin and judgment,) “bringing in salvation in this compendious way, (in this summary of it,) that what we had lost in Adam — that is, our being in the image and likeness of God — we should recover in Christ. For it was not possible that man that had been once conquered and broken by disobedience, should by himself be reformed, and obtain the crown of victory; nor, again, was it possible that he should recover salvation who had fallen under sin. Both were wrought by the Son, the Word of God, who, descending from the Father, and being incarnate, submitted himself to death, perfecting the dispensation of our salvation.” And Clemens Alexandrinus to the same purpose: (Adhort. ad Gentes.) Να■ φ■μι ■ λ■γος ■ το■ Θεο■ ■νθρωπος γενομ■νος, ■να δ■ κα■ σ■ παρ■ ■νθρ■που μ■θ■ς, τ■ ποτε ■ρα ■νθρωπος γ■νεται Θε■ς. — “The Word of God was made man, that thou mightest learn of a man how man may become” (as) “God.” And Ambrose, in Psalms 118:1-29. Octonar. decim.: [of the authorized English version, Psalms 119:73] “Imago, [id est, Verbum Dei,] ad eum qui est ad imaginem, [hoc est, hominem,] venit, et quærit imago eum qui est ad similitudinem sui, ut iterum signet, ut iterum confirmet, quia amiseras quod accepisti.” — “The image of God, that is, the Word of God, came unto him who was after the image of God, that is man. And this image of God seeks him who was after the image of God, that he might seal him with it again, and confirm him, because thou hadst lost that which thou hadst received.” And Augustine in one instance gives a rational account why it was condecent unto divine wisdom that the Son, and not the Father or the Holy Spirit, should be incarnate — which we also inquire into: (Lib. de Definitionibus Orthodoxæ Fidei sive de Ecclesiastica Dogmatibus, cap. ii.): “Non Pater carnem assumpsit, neque Spiritus Sanctus, set Filius tantum; ut qui erat in divinitate Dei Patris Filius, ipse fieret in homine hominis matris Filius; ne Filii nomen ad alterum transiret, qui non esset æternâ nativitate filius.” — “The Father did not assume flesh, nor the Holy Spirit, but the Son only; that he who in the Deity was the Son of the Father, should be made the Son of man, in his mother of human race; that the name of the Son should not pass unto any other, who was not the Son by

an eternal nativity.”

I shall close with one meditation of the same author, concerning the wisdom and righteousness of God in this mystery: (Enchirid. ad Laurent., cap. xcix.): “Vide — universum genus humanum tam justo iudicio Divino in apostaticâ radice damnatum, ut etiam si nullus inde liberaretur, nemo recte possit Dei vituperare justitiam; et qui liberantur, sic oportuisse liberari, ut ex pluribus non liberatis, atque in damnatione justissimâ derelictis, ostenderetur, quod meruisset universa conspersio, et quò etiam istos debitum iudicium Dei duceret, nisi ejus indebita misericordia subveniret.” — “Behold, the whole race of mankind, by the just judgment of God, so condemned in the apostatical root, that if no one were thence delivered, yet no man could rightly complain of the justice of God; and that those who are freed, ought so to be freed, that, from the greater number who are not freed, but left under most righteous condemnation, it might be manifest what the whole mass had deserved, and whither the judgment of God due unto them would lead them, if his mercy, which was not due, did not relieve them.” The reader may see what is discoursed unto these purposes: and because the great end of the description given of the person of Christ, is that we may love him, and thereby be transformed into his image, I shall close this preface with the words of Jerome, concerning that divine love unto Christ which is at large declared. “Sive legas,” saith he, “sive scribas, sive vigiles, sive dormias, amor tibi semper buccina in auribus sonet, hic lituus excitet animam tuam, hoc amore furibundus; quære in lectulo tuo, quem desiderat anima tua:” Epist. lxxvi. ad Pammach., cap. 10. — “Whether thou readest or writest, whether thou watchest or sleepest, let the voice of love (to Christ) sound in thine ears; let this trumpet stir up thy soul: being overpowered (brought into an ecstasy) with this love, seek Him on thy bed whom thy soul desireth and longeth for.”

## **04.00d. A Declaration of the Glorious Mystery**

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A Declaration of the Glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ

## 04.01. Chapter 1

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### Chapter I.

Peter's Confession; Matthew 16:16 — Conceits of the Papists thereon — The Substance and Excellency of that Confession. Our blessed Saviour, inquiring of his disciples their apprehensions concerning his person, and their faith in him, Simon Peter — as he was usually the forwardest on all such occasions, through his peculiar endowments of faith and zeal — returns an answer in the name of them all, Matthew 16:16: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Baronius, and sundry others of the Roman Church, do all affirm that the Lord Christ did herein prescribe the form of a general council. "For here," say they, "the principal article of our Christian faith was declared and determined by Peter, whereunto all the rest of the apostles, as in duty they were obliged, did give their consent and suffrage." This was done, as they suppose, that a rule and law might be given unto future ages, how to enact and determine articles of faith. For it is to be done by the successors of Peter presiding in councils, as it was now done by Peter in this assembly of Christ and his apostles. But they seem to forget that Christ himself was now present, and therefore could have no vicar, seeing he presided in his own person. All the claim they lay unto the necessity of such a visible head of the church on the earth, as may determine articles of faith, is from the absence of Christ since his ascension into heaven. But that he should also have a substitute whilst he was present, is somewhat uncouth; and whilst they live, they shall never make the pope president where Christ is present. The truth is, he doth not propose unto his disciples the framing of an article of truth, [Faith?] but inquires after their own faith, which they expressed in this confession. Such things as these will prejudice, carnal interest, and the prepossession of the minds of men with corrupt imaginations, cause them to adventure on, to the scandal, yea, ruin of religion! This short but illustrious confession of Peter, compriseth eminently the whole truth concerning the person and office of Christ:— of his person, in that although he was the Son of man, (under which appellation he made his inquiry, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?") yet was he not only so, but the eternal Son of the living God:— of his office, that he was the Christ, he whom God had anointed to be the Saviour of the church, in the discharge of his kingly, priestly, and prophetic power. Instances of the like brief confessions we have elsewhere in the Scripture. Romans 10:9 : "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." 1 John 4:2-3 : "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." And it is manifest, that all divine truths have such a concatenation among themselves, and do all of them so centre in the person of Christ — as vested with his offices towards the church — that they are all virtually comprised in this confession, and they will be so as counted by all who destroy them not by contrary errors and imaginations inconsistent with them, though it be the duty of all men to obtain the express knowledge of them in particular, according unto the means thereof which they do enjoy. The danger of men's souls lieth not in a disability to attain a comprehension of longer or

more subtle confessions of faith, but in embracing things contrary unto, or inconsistent with, this foundation thereof. Whatever it be whereby men cease to hold the Head, how small soever it seem, that alone is pernicious: Colossians 2:18-19. This confession, therefore, — as containing the sum and substance of that faith which they were called to give testimony unto, and concerning which their trial was approaching — is approved by our Saviour. And not only so, but eminent privileges are granted unto him that made it, and in him unto the whole church, that should live in the same faith and confession: (2 Corinthians 2:17-18) “And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Two things doth our Saviour consider in the answer returned unto his inquiry. 1. The faith of Peter in this confession — the faith of him that made it; 2. The nature and truth of the confession: both which are required in all the disciples of Christ — “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation:” Romans 10:10.

1. The first thing which he speaks unto is the faith of Peter, who made this confession. Without this no outward confession is of any use or advantage. For even the devils knew him to be the Holy One of God; (Luke 4:34) yet would he not permit them to speak it: Mark 1:34. That which gives glory unto God in any confession, and which gives us an interest in the truth confessed, is the believing of the heart, which is unto righteousness. With respect hereunto the Lord Christ speaks: (Matthew 16:17) “And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”

He commends and sets forth the faith of Peter — (1.) From its effect; (2.) From its cause. Its effect was, that it made him blessed in whom it was. For it is not only a blessed thing to believe and know Jesus Christ, as it is called life eternal; (John 17:3) but it is that which gives an immediate interest in the blessed state of adoption, justification, and acceptance with God: John 1:12. (2.) The immediate cause of this faith is divine revelation. It is not the effect or product of our own abilities, the best of which are but flesh and blood. That faith which renders them blessed in whom it is, is wrought in them by the power of God revealing Christ unto their souls. Those who have more abilities of their own unto this end than Peter had, we are not concerned in.

2. He speaks unto the confession itself, acquainting his disciples with the nature and use of it, which, from the beginning, he principally designed: (Matthew 16:18) “And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” From the speaking of these words unto Peter, there is a controversy raised in the world, whether the Lord Christ himself, or the pope of Rome, be the rock whereon the church is built. And unto that state are things come in religion, among them that are called Christians, that the greatest number are for the pope and against Christ in this matter. And they have good reason for their choice. For if Christ be the rock whereon the church is built, whereas he is a living stone, those that are laid and built on him must be lively stones also, as this apostle assures us, 1 Epist. ii. 4, 5; they must be like unto Christ himself, partaking of his nature, quickened by his Spirit, so, as it were, to be bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh: Ephesians 5:30. Nor can any be built on him but by a living faith, effectual in universal obedience. These things the generality of men like not at all; and, therefore, the fabric of the living temple on this foundation is usually but small, seldom

conspicuous or outwardly glorious. But if the pope be this rock, all the Papists in the world, or all that have a mind so to be — be they ever so wicked and ungodly — may be built upon him, and be made partakers of all that deliverance from the powers of hell which that rock can afford them. And all this may be obtained at a very easy rate; for the acknowledgment of the pope's sovereign authority in the church is all that is required thereunto. How they bring in the claim of their pope by Peter, his being at Rome, being bishop of Rome, dying at Rome, fixing his chair at Rome, devoting and transmitting all his right, title, power, and authority, every thing but his faith, holiness, and labour in the ministry, unto the pope, I shall not here inquire; I have done it elsewhere. Here is fixed the root of the tree, which is grown great, like that in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, until it is become a receptacle for the beasts of the field and fowls of the air — sensual men and unclean spirits. I shall, therefore, briefly lay an axe unto the root of it, by evidencing that it is not the person of Peter who confessed Christ, but the person of Christ whom Peter confessed, that is the rock on which the church is built.

1. The variation of the expressions proves undeniably that our Saviour intended we should not understand the person of Peter to be the rock. He takes occasion from his name to declare what he designed, but no more: "And I say also unto thee, Thou art Peter." He had given him this name before, at his first calling; (John 1:42) now he gives the reason of his so doing; viz., because of the illustrious confession that he should make of the rock of the church; as the name of God under the Old Testament was called on persons, and things, and places, because of some especial relation unto him. Wherefore, the expression is varied on purpose to declare, that whatever be the signification of the name Peter, yet the person so called was not the rock intended. The words are, Σ■ ε■ Π■ τρος, κα■ π■ τα■ τ■ π■ τρ■. Had he intended the person of Peter, he would have expressed it plainly, Σ■ ε■ π■ τρος, κα■ π■ σο■, κ. τ. λ. — "Thou art a rock, and on thee will I build." At least the gender had not been altered, but he would have said, π■ το■ τ■ π■ τρ■, which would have given some colour to this imagination. The exception which they lay hereunto, from the use of Cephas in the Syriac, which was the name of Peter, and signified a rock or a stone, lies not only against the authentic authority of the Greek original, but of their own translation of it, which reads the words, "Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram."

2. If the church was built on the person of Peter, then when he died the church must utterly fail. For no building can possibly abide when its foundation is removed and taken away. Wherefore they tell us they do not intend by the person of Peter, that singular and individual person alone to be this rock; but that he and his successors the bishops of Rome are so. But this story of his successors at Rome is a shameful fable. If the pope of Rome be a true believer, he succeeds, in common with all other believers, unto the privileges which belong unto this confession; if he be not, he hath neither lot nor portion in this matter. But the pretence is utterly vain on another account also. The apostle, showing the insufficiency of the Aaronical priesthood — wherein there was a succession of God's own appointment — affirms, that it could not bring the church unto a perfect state, because the high priests died one after another, and so were many: Hebrews 7:8, Hebrews 7:23-24. And thereon he shows that the church cannot be consummated or perfected, unless it rest wholly in and on him who lives forever, and was made a priest "after the power of an endless life." And if the Holy Ghost judged the state of the Jewish Church to be weak and imperfect — because it rested on high priests that died one after another, although their succession was expressly ordained of God himself — shall we suppose that the Lord Christ, who came to

consummate the church, and to bring it unto the most perfect estate whereof in this world it is capable, should build it on a succession of dying men, concerning which succession there is not the least intimation that it is appointed of God? And as unto the matter of fact, we know both what interruptions it hath received, and what monsters it hath produced — both sufficiently manifesting that it is not of God.

3. There is but one rock, but one foundation. There is no mention in the Scripture of two rocks of the church. In what others invent to this purpose we are not concerned. And the rock and the foundation are the same; for the rock is that whereon the church is built, that is the foundation. But that the Lord Christ is this single rock and foundation of the church, we shall prove immediately. Wherefore, neither Peter himself, nor his pretended successors, can be this rock. As for any other rock, it belongs not unto our religion; they that have framed it may use it as they please. For they that make such things are like unto the things they make; so is every one that trusteth in them: Psalms 115:8. “But their rock is not as our rock, themselves being judges;” unless they will absolutely equal the pope unto Jesus Christ.

4. Immediately after this declaration of our Saviour’s purpose to build his church on the rock, he reveals unto his disciples the way and manner how he would lay its foundation, viz., in his death and sufferings: Matthew 16:21. And thereon this supposed rock, being a little left unto his own stability, showed himself to be but a “reed shaken with the wind.” For he is so far from putting himself under the weight of the building, that he attempts an obstruction of its foundation. He began to rebuke Christ himself for mentioning his sufferings, wherein alone the foundation of the Gospel Church was to be laid; (Matthew 16:22) and hereon he received the severest rebuke that ever the Lord Jesus gave unto any of his disciples: Matthew 16:23. And so it is known that afterward — through surprisal and temptation — he did what lay in him to recall that confession which here he made, and whereon the church was to be built. For, that no flesh might glory in itself, he that was singular in this confession of Christ, was so also in the denial of him. And if he in his own person manifested how unmeet he was to be the foundation of the church, they must be strangely infatuated who can suppose his pretended successors so to be. But some men will rather have the church to be utterly without any foundation, than that it should not be the pope. The vanity of this pretence being removed, the substance of the great mystery contained in the attestation given by our Saviour unto the confession of Peter, and the promise whereunto annexed, may be comprised in the ensuing assertions:—

1. The person of Christ, the Son of the living God, as vested with his offices, whereunto he was called and anointed, is the foundation of the church, the rock whereon it is built.

2. The power and policy of hell will be always engaged in opposition unto the relation of the church unto this foundation, or the building of it on this rock.

3. The church that is built on this rock shall never be disjoined from it, or prevailed against by the opposition of the gates of hell. The two former of these I shall speak briefly unto, my principal design being the demonstration of a truth that ariseth from the consideration of them all. The foundation of the church is twofold: (1.) Real; (2.) Doctrinal. And in both ways, Christ alone is the foundation. The real foundation of the church he is, by virtue of the mystical union of it unto him, with all the benefits whereof, from thence and thereby, it is made partaker. For thence alone hath it spiritual life, grace, mercy, perfection, and glory: Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 2:19. And he is

the doctrinal foundation of it, in that the faith or doctrine concerning him and his offices is that divine truth which in a peculiar manner animates and constitutes the church of the New Testament: Ephesians 2:19-22. Without the faith and confession hereof, no one person belongs unto that church. I know not what is now believed, but I judge it will not yet be denied, that the external formal cause of the Church of the New Testament, is the confession of the faith concerning the person, offices, and grace of Christ, with what is of us required thereon. In what sense we assert these things will be afterwards fully cleared. That the Lord Christ is thus the foundation of the church, is testified unto, Isaiah 28:16 : “Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.” It is among the bold inroads that in this late age have been made on the vitals of religion, that some, in compliance with the Jews, have attempted the application of this promise unto Hezekiah. The violence they have offered herein to the mind of the Holy Ghost, might be evidenced from every word of the context. But the interpretation and application of the last words of this promise by the apostles, leaves no pretence unto this insinuation. “He that believes on him shall not be ashamed” or “confounded,” Romans 9:33; Romans 10:11; 1 Peter 2:6; that is, he shall be eternally saved — which it is the highest blasphemy to apply unto any other but Jesus Christ alone. He, therefore, is alone that foundation which God hath laid in and of the church. See Psalms 118:22; Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:4; Ephesians 2:20-22; Zechariah 3:9. But this fundamental truth — of Christ being the only foundation of the church — is so expressly determined by the apostle Paul, as not to need any farther confirmation, 1 Corinthians 3:11 : “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

## 04.02. Chapter 2

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### Chapter II.

Opposition made unto the Church as built upon the Person of Christ.

There are in the words of our Saviour unto Peter concerning the foundation of the church, a promise of its preservation, and a prediction of the opposition that should be made thereunto. And, accordingly, all things are come to pass, and carrying on towards a complete accomplishment. For (that we may begin with the opposition foretold) the power and policy of hell ever were, and ever will be, engaged in opposition unto the church built on this foundation — that is, the faith of it concerning his person, office, and grace, whereby it is built on him. This, as unto what is past, concerneth matter of fact, whereof, therefore, I must give a brief account; and then we shall examine what evidences we have of the same endeavour at present. The gates of hell, as all agree, are the power and policy of it, or the actings of Satan, both as a lion and as a serpent, by rage and by subtlety. But whereas in these things he acts not visibly in his own person, but by his agents, he hath always had two sorts of them employed in his service. By the one he executes his rage, and by the other his craft; he animates the one as a lion, the other as a serpent. In the one he acts as the dragon, in the other as the beast that had two horns like the lamb, but spake like the dragon. The first is the unbelieving world; the other, apostates and seducers of all sorts. Wherefore, this work is this kind is of a double nature; — the one, an effect of his power and rage, acted by the world in persecution — the other, of his policy and craft, acted by heretics in seduction. In both he designs to separate the church from its foundation. The opposition of the first sort he began against the person of Christ immediately in his human nature. Fraud first he once attempted in his temptation, (Matt 4) but quickly found that that way he could make no approach unto him. The prince of this world came, but had nothing in him. Wherefore he betook himself unto open force, and, by all means possible, sought his destruction. So also the more at any time the church is by faith and watchfulness secured against seduction, the more doth he rage against it in open persecution. And (for the example and comfort of the church in its conformity unto Christ) no means were left unattempted that might instigate and prepare the world for his ruin. Reproaches, contempt, scorn, false and lying accusations — by his suggestions — were heaped on him on every hand. Hereby, in the whole course of his ministry, he “endured the contradiction of sinners against himself:” Hebrews 12:3. And there is herein blessed provision made of inestimable consolation, for all those who are “predestinated to be conformed unto his image,” when God shall help them by faith to make use of his example. He calls them to take up his cross and follow him; and he hath showed them what is in it, by his own bearing of it. Contempt, reproach, despiteful usage, calumnies, false accusations, wrestings of his words, blaspheming of his doctrine, reviling of his person, all that he said and did as to his principles about human government and moral conversation, encompassed him all his days. And he hath assured his followers, that such, and no other, (at least for the most part,) shall be their lot in this world. And some in all ages have an experience of it in an eminent manner. But have they any reason to complain? Why should the servant look for better measure than the Master met withal? To be made like unto him in the worst

of evils, for his sake, is the best and most honourable condition in this world. God help some to believe it! Hereby was way made for his death. But, in the whole, it was manifested how infinitely, in all his subtlety and malice, Satan falls short of the contrivances of divine wisdom and power. For all that he attained by effecting his death, in the hour of darkness, was but the breaking of his own head, the destruction of his works, with the ruin of his kingdom; and what yet remains to consummate his eternal misery, he shall himself work out in his opposition unto the church. His restless malice and darkness will not suffer him to give over the pursuit of his rage, until nothing remains to give him a full entrance into endless torments — which he hasteneth every day. For when he shall have filled up the measure of his sins, and of the sins of the world in being instrumental unto his rage, eternal judgment shall put all things unto their issue. Through that shall he, with the world, enter into everlasting flames — and the whole church, built on the rock, into rest and glory. No sooner did the Church of the New Testament begin to arise on this foundation, but the whole world of Jews and Gentiles set themselves with open force to destroy it. And all that they contended with the church about, was their faith and confession of it, that “Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.” This foundation they would cast it from, or exterminate it out of the earth. What were the endeavours of the gates of hell in this kind — with what height of rage, with what bloody and inhuman cruelties they were exercised and executed — we have some obscure remembrance, in the stories that remain from the martyrdom of Stephen unto the days of Constantine. But although there be enough remaining on record, to give us a view of the insatiable malice of the old murderer, and an astonishing representation of human nature degenerating into his image in the perpetration of all horrid, inhuman cruelties — yet is it all as nothing in comparison of that prospect which the last day will give of them, when the earth shall disclose all the blood that it hath received, and the righteous Judge shall lay open all the contrivances for its effusion, with the rage and malice wherewith they were attended. The same rage continueth yet unallayed in its principles. And although God in many places restrain and shut it up in his providence, by the circumstances of human affairs, yet — as it hath the least advantage, as it finds any door open unto it — it endeavours to act itself in lesser or higher degrees. But whatever dismal appearance of things there may be in the world, we need not fear the ruin of the church by the most bloody oppositions. Former experiences will give security against future events. It is built on the rock, and those gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The second way whereby Satan attempted the same end, and yet continueth so to do, was by pernicious errors and heresies. For all the heresies wherewith the church was assaulted and pestered for some centuries of years, were oppositions unto their faith in the person of Christ. I shall briefly reflect on the heads of this opposition, 38because they are now, after a revolution of so many ages, lifting up themselves again, though under new vizards and pretences. And they were of three sorts:—

1. That which introduced other doctrines and notions of divine things, absolutely exclusive of the person and mediation of Christ. Such was that of the Gnostic, begun as it is supposed by Simon the magician. A sort of people they were, with whom the first churches, after the decease of the apostles, were exceedingly pestered, and the faith of many was overthrown. For instead of Christ and God in him reconciling the world unto himself, and the obedience of faith thereon according unto the Gospel, they introduced endless fables, genealogies, and conjugations of deities, or divine powers; which practically issued in this, that Christ was such an emanation of light and knowledge in them as made them perfect — that is, it took away all differences of good and evil, and gave them liberty to do what they pleased, without sense of sin, or danger of punishment. This

was the first way that Satan attempted the faith of the church, viz., by substituting a perfecting light and knowledge in the room of the person of Christ. And, for aught I know, it may be one of the last ways whereby he will endeavour the accomplishment of the same design. Nor had I made mention of these pernicious imaginations which have lain rotting in oblivion for so many generations, but that some again endeavour to revive them, at least so far as they were advanced and directed against the faith and knowledge of the person of Christ.

2. Satan attempted the same work by them who denied his divine nature — that is, in effect, denied him to be the Son of the living God, on the faith whereof the church is built. And these were of two sorts:—

(1.) Such as plainly and openly denied him to have any pre-existence unto his conception and birth of the holy Virgin. Such were the Ebionites, Samosatarians, and Photinians. For they all affirmed him to be a mere man, and no more, though miraculously conceived and born of the Virgin, as some of them granted; (though denied, as it is said, by the Ebionites;) on which account he was called the Son of God. This attempt lay directly against the everlasting rock, and would have substituted sand in the room of it. For no better is the best of human nature to make a foundation for the church, if not united unto the divine. Many in those days followed those pernicious ways; yet the foundation of God stood sure, nor was the church moved from it. But yet, after a revolution of so many ages, is the same endeavour again engaged in. The old enemy, taking advantage of the prevalence of Atheism and profaneness among those that are called Christians, doth again employ the same engine to overthrow the faith of the church — and that with more subtlety than formerly — in the Socinians. For their faith, or rather unbelief, concerning the person of Christ, is the same with those before mentioned. And what a vain, wanton generation admire and applaud in their sophistical reasonings, is no more but what the primitive church triumphed over through faith, in the most subtle management of the Samosatarians, Photinians, and others. An evidence it is that Satan is not unknowing unto the workings of that vanity and darkness, of those corrupt affections in the minds of men, whereby they are disposed unto a contempt of the mystery of the Gospel. Who would have thought that the old exploded pernicious errors of the Samosatarians, Photinians, and Pelagians, against the power and grace of Christ, should enter on the world again with so much ostentation and triumph as they do at this day? But many men, so far as I can observe, are fallen into such a dislike of the Christ of God, that every thing concerning his person, Spirit, and grace, is an abomination unto them. It is not want of understanding to comprehend doctrines, but hatred unto the things themselves, whereby such persons are seduced. And there is nothing of this nature whereunto nature, as corrupted, doth not contribute its utmost assistance.

(2.) There were such as opposed his divine nature, under pretence of declaring it another way than the faith of the church did rest in. So was it with the Arians, in whom the gates of hell seemed once to be near a prevalency. For the whole professing world almost was once surprised into that heresy. In words they acknowledged his divine person; but added, as a limitation of that acknowledgment, that the divine nature which he had was originally created of God, and produced out of nothing; with a double blasphemy, denying him to be the true God, and making a god of a mere creature. But in all these attempts, the opposition of the gates of hell unto the church respected faith in the person of Christ as the Son of the living God.

(3.) By some his human nature was opposed — for no stone did Satan leave unturned in the pursuit of his great design. And that which in all these things he aimed at, was the substitution of a false Christ in the room of Him who, in one person, was both the Son of man and the Son of the living God. And herein he infected the minds of men with endless imaginations. Some denied him to have any real human nature, but [alleged him] to have been a phantasm, an appearance, a dispensation, a mere cloud acted by divine power; some, that he was made of heavenly flesh, brought from above, and which (as some also affirmed) was a parcel of the divine nature. Some affirmed that his body was not animated, as ours are, by a rational soul, but was immediately acted by the power of the Divine Being, which was unto it in the room of a living soul; some, that his body was of an ethereal nature, and was at length turned into the sun; with many such diabolical delusions. And there yet want not attempts, in these days, of various sorts, to destroy the verity of his human nature; and I know not what some late fantastical opinions about the nature of glorified bodies may tend unto. The design of Satan, in all these pernicious imaginations, is to break the cognation and alliance between Christ in his human nature and the church, whereon the salvation of it doth absolutely depend.

3. He raised a vehement opposition against the hypostatical union, or the union of these two natures in one person. This he did in the Nestorian heresy, which greatly, and for a long time, pestered the church. The authors and promoters of this opinion granted the Lord Christ to have a divine nature, to be the Son of the living God. They also acknowledged the truth of his human nature, that he was truly a man, even as we are. But the personal union between these two natures they denied. A union, they said, there was between them, but such as consisted only in love, power, and care. God did, as they imagined, eminently and powerfully manifest himself in the man Christ Jesus — had him in an especial regard and love, and did act in him more than in any other. But that the Son of God assumed our nature into personal subsistence with himself — whereby whole Christ was one person, and all his mediatory acts were the acts of that one person, of him who was both God and man — this they would not acknowledge. And this pernicious imagination, though it seem to make great concessions of truth, doth no less effectually evert the foundation of the church than the former. For, if the divine and human nature of Christ do not constitute one individual person, all that he did for us was only as a man — which would have been altogether insufficient for the salvation of the church, nor had God redeemed it with his own blood. This seems to be the opinion of some amongst us, at this day, about the person of Christ. They acknowledge the being of the eternal Word, the Son of God; and they allow in the like manner the verity of his human nature, or own that man Christ Jesus. Only they say, that the eternal Word was in him and with him, in the same kind as it is with other believers, but in a supreme degree of manifestation and power. But, though in these things there is a great endeavour to put a new colour and appearance on old imaginations, the design of Satan is one and the same in them all, viz., to oppose the building of the church upon its proper, sole foundation. And these things shall be afterwards expressly spoken unto.

I intend no more in these instances but briefly to demonstrate, that the principal opposition of the gates of hell unto the church lay always unto the building of it, by faith, on the person of Christ.

It were easy also to demonstrate that Mohammedanism, which hath been so sore a stroke unto the Christian profession, is nothing but a concurrence and combination of these two ways, of force and fraud, in opposition unto the person of Christ.

It is true that Satan, after all this, by another way, attempted the doctrine of the offices and grace of Christ, with the worship of God in him. And this he hath carried so far, as that it issued in a fatal antichristian apostasy; which is not of my present consideration. But we may proceed to what is of our own immediate concernment. And the one work with that before described is still carried on. The person of Christ, the faith of the church concerning it, the relation of the church unto it, the building of the church on it, the life and preservation of the church thereby, are the things that the gates of hell are engaged in opposition unto. For,

1. It is known with what subtlety and urgency his divine nature and person are opposed by the Socinians. What an accession is made daily unto their incredulity, what inclination of mind multitudes do manifest towards their pernicious ways, are also evident unto all who have any concernment in or for religion. But this argument I have laboured in on other occasions.

2. Many, who expressly deny not his divine person, yet seem to grow weary of any concernment therein. A natural religion, or none at all, pleaseth them better than faith in God by Jesus Christ. That any thing more is necessary in religion, but what natural light will discover and conduct us in, with the moral duties of righteousness and honesty which it directs unto, there are too many that will not acknowledge. What is beyond the line of nature and reason is rejected as unintelligible mysteries or follies. The person and grace of Christ are supposed to breed all the disturbance in religion. Without them, the common notions of the Divine Being and goodness will guide men sufficiently unto eternal blessedness. They did so before the coming of Christ in the flesh, and may do so now he is gone to heaven.

3. There are some who have so ordered the frame of objective religion, as that it is very uncertain whether they leave any place for the person of Christ in it or no. For, besides their denial of the hypostatical union of his natures, they ascribe all that unto a light within them which God will effect only by Christ as a mediator. What are the internal actings of their minds, as unto faith and trust towards him, I know not; but, from their outward profession, he seems to be almost excluded.

4. There are not a few who pretend high unto religion and devotion, who declare no erroneous conceptions about the doctrine of the person of Christ, who yet manifest themselves not to have that regard unto him which the Gospel prescribes and requires. Hence have we so many discourses published about religion, the practical holiness and duties of obedience, written with great elegance of style, and seriousness in argument, wherein we can meet with little or nothing wherein Jesus Christ, his office, or his grace, are concerned. Yea, it is odds but in them all we shall meet with some reflections on those who judge them to be the life and centre of our religion. The things of Christ, beyond the example of his conversation on the earth, are of no use with such persons, unto the promotion of piety and gospel obedience. Concerning many books of this nature, we may say what a learned person did of one of old: "There were in it many things laudable and delectable, sed nomen Jesu non erat ibi."

5. Suited unto these manifest inclinations of the minds of men unto a neglect of Christ, in the religion they frame unto themselves — dangerous and noxious insinuations concerning what our thoughts ought to be of him, are made and tendered. As, (1.) It is scandalously proposed and answered, "Of what use is the consideration of the person of Christ in our religion?" Such are the novel inquiries of men who suppose there is any thing in Christian religion wherein the person of Christ is of no consideration — as though it were not the life and soul that animates the whole of it,

that which gives it its especial form as Christian — as though by virtue of our religion we received any thing from God, any benefit in mercy, grace, privilege, or glory, and not through the person of Christ — as though any one duty or act of religion towards God could be acceptably performed by us, without a respect unto, or a consideration of, the person of Christ — or that there were any lines of truth in religion as it is Christian, that did not relate thereunto. Such bold inquiries, with futilous answers annexed unto them, sufficiently manifest what acquaintance their authors have either with Christ himself, which in others they despise, or with his Gospel, which they pretend to embrace. (2.) A mock scheme of religion is framed, to represent the folly of them who design to learn the mind and will of God in and by him. (3.) Reproachful reflections are made on such as plead the necessity of acquaintance with him, or the knowledge of him, as though thereby they rejected the use of the gospel. (4.) Professed love unto the person of Christ is traduced, as a mere fancy and vapour of distempered minds or weak imaginations. (5.) The union of the Lord Christ and his church is asserted to be political only, with respect unto laws and rules of government. And many other things of an alike nature are asserted, derogatory unto his glory, and repugnant unto the faith of the church; such as, from the foundation of Christian religion, were never vented by any persons before, who did not openly avow some impious heresy concerning his person. And I no way doubt but that men may, with less guilt and scandal, fall under sundry doctrinal misapprehensions concerning it — than, by crying hail thereunto, to despoil it of all its glory, as unto our concernment therein, in our practical obedience unto God. Such things have we deserved to see and hear.

6. The very name or expression of “preaching Christ” is become a term of reproach and contempt; nor can some, as they say, understand what is meant thereby, unless it be an engine to drive all rational preaching, and so all morality and honesty, out of the world.

7. That which all these things tend unto and centre in, is that horrible profaneness of life — that neglect of all gospel duties — that contempt of all spiritual graces and their effects, which the generality of them that are called Christians, in many places, are given up unto. I know not whether it were not more for the honour of Christ, that such persons would publicly renounce the profession of his name, rather than practically manifest their inward disregard unto him. That by these and the like means Satan doth yet attempt the ruin of the church, as unto its building on the everlasting rock, falls under the observation of all who are concerned in its welfare. And (whatever others may apprehend concerning this state of things in the world) how any that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity — especially such as are called to declare and represent him unto men in the office of the ministry — can acquit themselves to be faithful unto him, without giving their testimony against, and endeavouring to stop what lies in them, the progress of this prevailing declension from the only foundation of the church, I know not; nor will it be easy for themselves to declare. And in that variety of conceptions which are about him, and the opposition that is made unto him, there is nothing more necessary than that we should renew and attest our confession of him — as the Son of the living God — the only rock whereon the church of them that shall be saved is founded and built.

“*Pauca ideo de Christo,*” as Tertullian speaks; some few things concerning the person of Christ, with respect unto the confession of Peter, and the promise thereunto annexed — wherein he is declared the sole foundation of the church — will be comprised in the ensuing discourse. And He who hath ordained strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, as he hath given ability to

express these poor, mean contemplations of his glory, can raise by them a revenue of honour unto himself in the hearts of them that do believe. And some few things I must premise, in general, unto what I do design. As,

1. The instances which I shall give concerning the use and consideration <sup>44</sup>of the person of Christ in Christian religion, or of him as he is the foundation whereon the church is built, are but few — and those perhaps not the most signal or eminent which the greater spiritual wisdom and understanding of others might propose. And, indeed, who shall undertake to declare what are the chief instances of this incomprehensible effect of divine wisdom? “What is his name, and what is his son’s name, if thou canst tell?” Proverbs 30:4. See Isaiah 9:6. It is enough for us to stand in a holy admiration, at the shore of this unsearchable ocean, and to gather up some parcels of that divine treasure wherewith the Scripture of truth is enriched.

2. I make no pretence of searching into the bottom or depths of any part of this “great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.” They are altogether unsearchable, unto the line of the most enlightened minds, in this life. What we shall farther comprehend of them in the other world, God only knows. We cannot in these things, by our utmost diligent search, “find out the Almighty unto perfection.” The prophets could not do so of old, nor can the angels themselves at present, who “desire to look into these things:” 1 Peter 1:10-12. Only I shall endeavour to represent unto the faith of them that do believe, somewhat of what the Scripture doth plainly reveal — evidencing in what sense the person of Christ is the sole foundation of the church.

3. I shall not, herein, respect them immediately by whom the divine person of Christ is denied and opposed. I have formerly treated thereof, beyond their contradiction in way of reply. But it is their conviction which I shall respect herein, who, under an outward confession of the truth, do — either notionally or practically, either ignorantly or designedly, God knows, I know not — endeavour to weaken the faith of the church in its adherence unto this foundation. Howbeit, neither the one sort nor the other hath any place in my thoughts, in comparison of the instruction and edification of others, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

### 04.03. Chapter 3

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Chapter III. The Person of Christ the most ineffable Effect of Divine Wisdom and Goodness — Thence the next Cause of all True Religion — In what sense it is so. The person of Christ is the most glorious and ineffable effect of divine wisdom, grace, and power; and therefore is the next foundation of all acceptable religion and worship. The Divine Being itself is the first formal reason, foundation, and object of all religion. It all depends on taking God to be our God; which is the first of his commands. For religion, and the worship performed in it, is nothing but the due respect of rational creatures unto the divine nature, and its infinite excellencies. It is the glorifying of God as God; the way of expressing that respect being regulated by the revelation of his will. Yet the divine essence is not, in itself, the next and immediate cause of religious worship. But it is the manifestation of this Being and its excellencies, wherewith the mind of rational creatures is immediately affected, and whereby it is obliged to give that religious honour and worship which is due unto that Being, and necessary from our relation thereunto. Upon this manifestation, all creatures capable by an intelligent nature of a sense thereof, are indispensably obliged to give all divine honour and glory to God. The way alone whereby this manifestation may be made, is by outward acts and effects. For, in itself, the divine nature is hid from all living, and dwelleth in that light whereunto no creature can approach. This, therefore, God first made, by the creation of all things out of nothing. The creation of man himself — with the principles of a rational, intelligent nature, a conscience attesting his subordination unto God — and the creation of all other things, declaring the glory of his wisdom, goodness, and power, was the immediate ground of all natural religion, and yet continues so to be. And the glory of it answers the means and ways of the manifestation of the Divine Being, existence, excellencies, and properties. And where this manifestation is despised or neglected, there God himself is so; as the apostle discourseth at large, Romans 1:18-22. But of all the effects of the divine excellencies, the constitution of the person of Christ as the foundation of the new creation, as “the mystery of Godliness,” was the most ineffable and glorious. I speak not of his divine person absolutely; for his distinct personality and subsistence was by an internal and eternal act of the Divine Being in the person of the Father, or eternal generation — which is essential unto the divine essence — whereby nothing anew was outwardly wrought or did exist. He was not, he is not, in that sense, the effect of the divine wisdom and power of God, but the essential wisdom and power of God himself. But we speak of him only as incarnate, as he assumed our nature into personal subsistence with himself. His conception in the womb of the Virgin, as unto the integrity of human nature, was a miraculous operation of the divine power. But the prevention of that nature from any subsistence of its own — by its assumption into personal union with the Son of God, in the first instance of its conception — is that which is above all miracles, nor can be designed by that name. A mystery it is, so far above the order of all creating or providential operations, that it wholly transcends the sphere of them that are most miraculous. Herein did God glorify all the properties of the divine nature, acting in a way of infinite wisdom, grace, and condescension. The depths of the mystery hereof are open only unto him whose understanding it infinite, which no created understanding can comprehend. All other things were produced and effected by an outward emanation of power from God. He said,

“Let there be light, and there was light.” But this assumption of our nature into hypostatical union with the Son of God, this constitution of one and the same individual person in two natures so infinitely distinct as those of God and man — whereby the Eternal was made in time, the Infinite became finite, the Immortal mortal, yet continuing eternal, infinite, immortal — is that singular expression of divine wisdom, goodness, and power, wherein God will be admired and glorified unto all eternity. Herein was that change introduced into the whole first creation, whereby the blessed angels were exalted, Satan and his works ruined, mankind recovered from a dismal apostasy, all things made new, all things in heaven and earth reconciled and gathered into one Head, and a revenue of eternal glory raised unto God, incomparably above what the first constitution of all things in the order of nature could yield unto him. In the expression of this mystery, the Scripture doth sometimes draw the veil over it, as that which we cannot look into. So, in his conception of the Virgin, with respect unto this union which accompanied it, it was told her, that “the power of the Highest should overshadow her:” Luke 1:35. A work it was of the power of the Most High, but hid from the eyes of men in the nature of it; and, therefore, that holy thing which had no subsistence of its own, which should be born of her, should “be called the Son of God,” becoming one person with him. Sometimes it expresseth the greatness of the mystery, and leaves it as an object of our admiration, 1 Timothy 3:16 : “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.” A mystery it is, and that of those dimensions as no creature can comprehend. Sometimes it putteth things together, as that the distance of the two natures illustrate the glory of the one person, John 1:14 : “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” But what Word was this? That which was in the beginning, which was with God, which was God, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made that was made; who was light and life. This Word was made flesh, not by any change of his own nature or essence, not by a transubstantiation of the divine nature into the human, not by ceasing to be what he was, but by becoming what he was not, in taking our nature to his own, to be his own, whereby he dwelt among us. This glorious Word, which is God, and described by his eternity and omnipotence in works of creation and providence, “was made flesh,” — which expresseth the lowest state and condition of human nature. Without controversy, great is this mystery of godliness! And in that state wherein he visibly appeared as so made flesh, those who had eyes given them from above, saw “his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.” The eternal Word being made flesh, and manifested therein, they saw his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father. What heart can conceive, what tongue can express, the least part of the glory of this divine wisdom and grace? So also is it proposed unto us, Isaiah 9:6 : “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” He is called, in the first place, Wonderful. And that deservedly: Proverbs 30:4. That the mighty God should be a child born, and the everlasting Father a son given unto us, may well entitle him unto the name of Wonderful.

Some amongst us say, that if there were no other way for the redemption and salvation of the church, but this only of the incarnation and mediation of the Son of God, there was no wisdom in the contrivance of it. Vain man indeed would be wise, but is like the wild ass's colt. Was there no wisdom in the contrivance of that which, when it is effected, leaves nothing but admiration unto the utmost of all created wisdom? Who hath known the mind of the Lord in this thing, or who hath been his counsellor in this work, wherein the mighty God became a child born to us, a son given

unto us? Let all vain imaginations cease: there is nothing left unto the sons of men, but either to reject the divine person of Christ — as many do unto their own destruction — or humbly to adore the mystery of infinite wisdom and grace therein. And it will require a condescending charity, to judge that those do really believe the incarnation of the Son of God, who live not in the admiration of it, as the most adorable effect of divine wisdom. The glory of the same mystery is elsewhere testified unto, Hebrews 1:1-3 : “God hath spoken unto us by his Son, by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power, by himself purged our sin.” That he purged our sins by his death, and the oblation of himself therein unto God, is acknowledged. That this should be done by him by whom the worlds were made, who is the essential brightness of the divine glory, and the express image of the person of the Father therein who upholds, rules, sustains all things by the word of his power, whereby God purchased his church with his own blood, (Acts 20:28) is that wherein he will be admired unto eternity. See Php 2:6-9. In Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-13) there is a representation made of him as on a throne, filling the temple with the train of his glory. The Son of God it was who was so represented, and that as he was to fill the temple of his human nature with divine glory, when the fulness of the godhead dwelt in him bodily. And herein the seraphim, which administered unto him, had six wings, with two whereof they covered their faces, as not being able to behold or look into the glorious mystery of his incarnation: Isaiah 6:2-3; John 12:39-41; John 2:19; Colossians 2:9. But when the same ministering spirits, under the name of cherubim, attended the throne of God, in the administration of his providence as unto the disposal and government of the world, they had four wings only, and covered not their faces, but steadily beheld the glory of it: Ezekiel 1:6; Ezekiel 10:2-3. This is the glory of the Christian religion — the basis and foundation that bears the whole superstructure — the root whereon it grows. This is its life and soul, that wherein it differs from, and inconceivably excels, whatever was in true religion before, or whatever any false religion pretended unto. Religion, in its first constitution, in the estate of pure, uncorrupted nature, was orderly, beautiful and glorious. Man being made in the image of God, was fit and able to glorify him as God. But whereas, whatever perfection God had communicated unto our nature, he had not united it unto Himself in a personal union, the fabric of it quickly fell unto the ground. Want of this foundation made it obnoxious unto ruin. God manifested herein, that no gracious relation between him and our nature could be stable and permanent, unless our nature was assumed into personal union and subsistence with himself. This is the only rock and assured foundation of the relation of the church unto God, which, now, can never utterly fail. Our nature is eternally secured in that union, and we ourselves (as we shall see) thereby. “In him all things consist;” (Colossians 1:17-18) wherefore, whatever beauty and glory there was in the relation that was between God and man, and the relation of all things unto God by man — in the preservation whereof natural religion did consist — it had no beauty nor glory in comparison of this which doth excel, or the manifestation of God in the flesh — the appearance and subsistence of the divine and human natures in the same single individual person. And whereas God in that state had given man dominion “over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth,” (Genesis 1:26) it was all but an obscure representation of the exaltation of our nature in Christ — as the apostle declares, Hebrews 2:6-9.

There was true religion in the world after the fall, both before and after the giving of the Law; a religion built upon and resolved into divine revelation. And as for the outward glory of it — the administration that it was brought into under the tabernacle and temple — it was beyond what is

represented in the institutions of the gospel. Yet is Christian religion, our evangelical profession, and the state of the church thereon, far more glorious, beautiful, and perfect, than that state of religion was capable of, or could attain. And as this is evident from hence, because God in his wisdom, grace, and love to the church, hath removed that state, and introduced this in the room thereof; so the apostle proves it — in all considerable instances — in his Epistle to the Hebrews, written unto that purpose. There were two things, before, in religion; — the promise, which was the life of it; and the institutions of worship under the Law, which were the outward glory and beauty of it. And both these were nothing, or had nothing in them, but only what they before proposed and represented of Christ, God manifested in the flesh. The promise was concerning him, and the institutions of worship did only represent him. So the apostle declares it, Colossians 2:17. Wherefore, as all the religion that was in the world after the fact was built on the promise of this work of God, in due time to be accomplished; so it is the actual performance of it which is the foundation of the Christian religion, and which gives it the pre-eminence above all that went before it. So the apostle expresseth it: (Hebrews 1:1-3) “God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

All false religion pretended always unto things that were mysterious. And the more men could invent, or the devil suggest, that had an appearance of that nature, as sundry things were so introduced horrid and dreadful, the more reverence and esteem were reconciled unto it. But the whole compass of the craft of Satan and the imaginations of men could never extend itself unto the least resemblance of this mystery. And it is not amiss conjectured, that the apostle, in his description of it, 1 Timothy 3:16, did reflect upon and condemn the vanity of the Eleusinian mysteries, which were of the greatest vogue and reputation among the gentiles.

Take away the consideration hereof, and we despoil the Christian religion of all its glory, debasing it unto what Mohammedanism pretends unto, and unto what in Judaism was really enjoyed. The faith of this mystery enables the mind wherein it is — rendering it spiritual and heavenly, transforming it into the image of God. Herein consists the excellency of faith above all other powers and acts of the soul — that it receives, assents unto, and rests in, things in their own nature absolutely incomprehensible. It is ■λεγχος ο■ βλεπομ■νων, (Hebrews 11:1) — “The evidence of things not seen” — that which makes evident, as by demonstration, those things which are no way objected unto sense, and which reason cannot comprehend. The more sublime and glorious — the more inaccessible unto sense and reason — the things are which we believe; the more are we changed into the image of God, in the exercise of faith upon them. Hence we find this most glorious effect of faith, or the transformation of the mind into the likeness of God, no less real, evident, and eminent in many, whose rationally comprehensive abilities are weak and contemptible, in the eye of that wisdom which is of this world, than in those of the highest natural sagacity, enjoying the best improvements of reason. For “God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom:” James 2:5. However they may be poor, and, as another apostle speaketh, “foolish, weak, base, and despised;” (1 Corinthians 1:27-28) yet that faith which enables them to assent unto and embrace divine mysteries, renders them rich in the sight of God,

in that it makes them like unto him.

Some would have all things that we are to believe to be levelled absolutely unto our reason and comprehension — a principle which, at this day, shakes the very foundations of the Christian religion. It is not sufficient, they say, to determine that the faith or knowledge of any thing is necessary unto our obedience and salvation, that it seems to be fully and perspicuously revealed in the Scripture — unless the things so revealed be obvious and comprehensible unto our reason; an apprehension which, as it ariseth from the pride which naturally ensues on the ignorance of God and ourselves, so it is not only an invention suited to debase religion, but an engine to evert the faith of the church in all the principal mysteries of the Gospel — especially of the Trinity and the incarnation of the Son of God. But faith which is truly divine, is never more in its proper exercise — doth never more elevate the soul into conformity unto God — than when it acts in the contemplation and admiration of the most incomprehensible mysteries which are proposed unto it by divine revelation.

Hence things philosophical, and of a deep rational indagation, find great acceptance in the world — as, in their proper place, they do deserve. Men are furnished with proper measures of them, and they find them proportionate unto the principles of their own understandings. 51But as for spiritual and heavenly mysteries, the thoughts of men for the most part recoil, upon their first proposal, nor will be encouraged to engage in a diligent inquiry into them — yea, commonly reject them as foolish, or at least that wherein they are not concerned. The reason is that given in another case by the apostle: “All men have not faith;” (2 Thessalonians 3:2) which makes them absurd and unreasonable in the consideration of the proper objects of it. But where this faith is, the greatness of the mysteries which it embraceth heightens its efficacy, in all its blessed effects, upon the soul. Such is this constitution of the person of Christ, wherein the glory of all the holy properties and perfections of the divine nature is manifested, and doth shine forth. So speaks the apostle, 2 Corinthians 3:18 : “Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.” This glory which we behold, is the glory of the face of God in Jesus Christ, (2 Corinthians 4:6) or the glorious representation which is made of him in the person of Christ, whereof we shall treat afterwards. The glass wherein this glory is represented unto us — proposed unto our view and contemplation — is divine revelation in the gospel. Herein we behold it, by faith alone. And those whose view is steadfast, who most abound in that contemplation by the exercise of faith, are thereby “changed into the same image, from glory to glory” — or are more and more renewed and transformed into the likeness of God, so represented unto them. That which shall, at last, perfectly effect our utmost conformity to God, and, therein, our eternal blessedness — is vision, or sight. “We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is:” 1 John 3:2. Here faith begins what sight shall perfect hereafter. But yet “we walk by faith, and not by sight:” 2 Corinthians 5:7. And although the life of faith and vision differ in degrees — or, as some think, in kind — yet have they both the same object, and the same operations, and there is a great cognation between them. The object of vision is the whole mystery of the divine existence and will; and its operation is a perfect conformity unto God — a likeness unto him — wherein our blessedness shall consist. Faith hath the same object, and the same operations in its degree and measure. The great and incomprehensible mysteries of the Divine Being — of the will and wisdom of God — are its proper objects; and its operation, with respect unto us, is conformity and likeness unto him. And this it doth, in a peculiar manner, in the contemplation of the glory of God in the face

of Jesus Christ; and herein we have our nearest approaches unto the life of vision, and the effects of it. For therein, “beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory;” which, perfectly to consummate, is the effect of sight in glory. The exercise of faith herein doth more raise and perfect the mind — more dispose it unto holy, heavenly frames and affections — than any other duty whatever. To be nigh unto God, and to be like unto him, are the same. To be always with him, and perfectly like him, according to the capacity of our nature, is to be eternally blessed. To live by faith in the contemplation of the glory of God in Christ, is that initiation into both, whereof we are capable in this world. The endeavours of some to contemplate and report the glory of God in nature — in the works of creation and providence — in the things of the greater and the lesser world — do deserve their just commendation; and it is that which the Scripture in sundry places calls us unto. But for any there to abide, there to bound their designs — when they have a much more noble and glorious object for their meditations, viz., the glory of God in Christ — is both to despise the wisdom of God in that revelation of himself, and to come short of that transforming efficacy of faith in the contemplation hereof, whereby we are made like unto God. For hereunto alone doth it belong, and not unto any natural knowledge, nor to any knowledge of the most secret recesses of nature.

I shall only say, that those who are in conversant with these objects of faith — whose minds are not delighted in the admiration of, and acquiescence in, things incomprehensible, such as is this constitution of the person of Christ — who would reduce all things to the measure of their own understandings, or else wilfully live in the neglect of what they cannot comprehend — do not much prepare themselves for that vision of these things in glory, wherein our blessedness doth consist.

Moreover, this constitution of the person of Christ being the most admirable and ineffable effect of divine wisdom, grace, and power, it is that alone which can bear the weight of the whole superstructure of the mystery of godliness — that whereinto the whole sanctification and salvation of the church is resolved — wherein alone faith can find rest and peace. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ:” 1 Corinthians 3:11. Rest and peace with God is that which we seek after. “What shall we do to be saved?” In this inquiry, the acts of the mediatory office of Christ are, in the Gospel, first presented unto us — especially his oblation and intercession. Through them is he able to save unto the uttermost those that come to God by him. But there were oblations for sin, and intercessions for sinners, under the Old Testament; yet of them all doth the apostle affirm, that they could not make them perfect that came unto God by them, not take away conscience condemning for sin: Hebrews 10:1-4. Wherefore, it is not these things in themselves that can give us rest and peace, but their relation unto the person of Christ. The oblation and intercession of any other would not have saved us. Hence, for the security of our faith, we are minded that “God redeemed the church with his own blood:” Acts 20:28. He did so who was God, as he was manifested in the flesh. His blood alone could purge our consciences from dead works, who did offer himself unto God, through the eternal Spirit: Hebrews 9:14. And when the apostle — for our relief against the guilt of sin — calleth us unto the consideration of intercession and propitiation, he mindeth us peculiarly of his person by whom they are performed, 1 John 2:1-2 : “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins.” And we may briefly consider the order of these things.

1. We suppose, in this case, conscience to be awakened unto a sense of sin, and of apostasy from God thereby. These things are now generally looked on as of no great concernment unto us

— by some made a mock of — and, by the most, thought easy to be dealt withal — at time convenient. But when God fixeth an apprehension of his displeasure for them on the soul — if it be not before it be too late — it will cause men to look out for relief.

2. This relief is proposed in the gospel. And it is the death and mediation of Christ alone. By them peace with God must be obtained, or it will cease for ever. But,

3. When any person comes practically to know how great a thing it is for an apostate sinner to obtain the remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, endless objections through the power of unbelief will arise unto his disquietment. Wherefore,

4. That which is principally suited to give him rest, peace, and satisfaction — and without which nothing else can so do — is the due consideration of, and the acting of faith upon, this infinite effect of divine wisdom and goodness, in the constitution of the person of Christ. This at first view will reduce the mind unto that conclusion, “If thou canst believe, all things are possible.” For what end cannot be effected hereby? What end cannot be accomplished that was designed in it? Is any thing too hard for God? Did God ever do any thing like this, or make use of any such means for any other end whatever? Against this no objection can arise. On this consideration of him, faith apprehends Christ to be — as he is indeed — the power of God, and the wisdom of God, unto the salvation of them that do believe; and therein doth it find rest with peace.

## 04.04. Chapter 4

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Chapter IV. The Person of Christ the Foundation of all the Counsels of God.

Secondly, The person of Christ is the foundation of all the counsels of God, as unto his own eternal glory in the vocation, sanctification, and salvation of the church. That which I intend is what the apostle expresseth, Ephesians 1:9-10 : “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” The “mysteries of the will of God, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself” — are his counsels concerning his own eternal glory, in the sanctification and salvation of the church here below, to be united unto that above. The absolute original hereof was in his own good pleasure, or the sovereign acting of his wisdom and will. But it was all to be effected in Christ — which the apostle twice repeats: he would gather “all things into a head in Christ, even in him” — that is, in him alone.

Thus it is said of him, with respect unto his future incarnation and work of mediation, that the Lord possessed him in the beginning of his way, before his works of old; that he was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was: Proverbs 8:22-23. The eternal personal existence of the Son of God is supposed in these expressions, as I have elsewhere proved. Without it, none of these things could be affirmed of him. But there is a regard in them, both unto his future incarnation, and the accomplishment of the counsels of God thereby. With respect thereunto, God “possessed him in the beginning of his way, and set him up from everlasting.” God possessed him eternally as his essential wisdom — as he was always, and is always, in the bosom of the Father, in the mutual ineffable love of the Father and Son, in the eternal bond of the Spirit. But he signally possessed him “in the beginning of his way” — as his wisdom, acting in the production of all the ways and works that are outwardly of him. The “beginning of God’s ways,” before his works, are his counsels concerning them — even as our counsels are the beginning of our ways, with respect unto future works. And he “set him up from everlasting,” as the foundation of all the counsels of his will, in and by whom they were to be executed and accomplished. So it is expressed: (Proverbs 8:30-31) “I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.” And it is added, that thus it was before the foundation of the world was laid, or the chiefest part of the dust of the earth was made — that is, [before] man was created. Not only was the delight of the Father in him, but his delight was in the habitable part of the earth, and among the sons of men — before the creation of the world. Wherefore, the eternal prospect of the work he had to do for the children of men is intended herein. In and with him, God laid the foundation of all his counsels concerning his love towards the children of men. And two things may be observed herein.

1. That the person of the Son “was set up,” or exalted herein. “I was set up,” saith he, “from everlasting.” This cannot be spoken absolutely of the person of the Son himself — the Divine

nature being not capable of being so set up. But there was a peculiar glory and honour belonging unto the person of the Son, as designed by the Father unto the execution of all the counsels of his will. Hence was that prayer of his upon the accomplishment of them: (John 17:5) "And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." To suppose that the Lord Christ prayeth, in these words, for such a real communication of the properties of the divine nature unto the human as should render it immense, omniscient, and unconfined unto any space — is to think that he prayed for the destruction, and not the exaltation of it. For, on that supposition, it must necessarily lose all its own essential properties, and consequently its being. Nor doth he seem to pray only for the manifestation of his divine nature, which was eclipsed in his exinanition or appearance in the form of a servant. There was no need to express this by — the "glory which he had with the Father before the world was." For he had it not, in any especial manner, before the world was; but equally from eternity, and in every moment of time. Wherefore, he had a peculiar glory of his own, with the Father, before the world was. And this was no other but that especial exaltation which he had when he was "set up from everlasting," as the foundation of the counsels of God, for the salvation of the church. In those eternal transactions that were between the Father and the Son, with respect unto his incarnation and mediation — or his undertaking to execute and fulfill the eternal counsels of the wisdom and grace of the Father — there was an especial glory which the Son had with him — the "glory which he had with the Father before the world was." For the manifestation hereof he now prays and that the glory of his goodness, grace, and love — in his peculiar undertaking of the execution of the counsels of God — might be made to appear. And this is the principal design of the gospel. It is the declaration, as of the grace of God the Father, so of the love, grace, goodness, and compassion of the Son, in undertaking from everlasting the accomplishment of God's counsels, in the salvation of the church. And hereby doth he hold up the pillars of the earth, or support this inferior creation, which otherwise, with the inhabitants of it, would by sin have been dissolved. And those by whom the eternal, divine pre-existence, in the form of God — antecedent unto his incarnation — is denied, do what lies in them expressly to despoil him of all that glory which he had with the Father before the world was. So we have herein the whole of our design. "In the beginning of God's ways, before his works of old" that is, in his eternal counsels with respect unto the children of men, or the sanctification and salvation of the church — the Lord possessed, enjoyed the Son, as his eternal wisdom — in and with whom they were laid, in and by whom they were to be accomplished, wherein his delights were with the sons of men.

2. That there was an ineffable delight between the Father and the Son in this his setting up or exaltation. "I was," saith he, "daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." It is not absolutely the mutual, eternal delight of the Father and the Son — arising from the perfection of the same divine excellencies in each person — that is intended. But respect is plainly had unto the counsels of God concerning the salvation of mankind by him who is his power and wisdom unto that end. This counsel of peace was originally between Jehovah and the Branch, (Zechariah 6:13) or the Father and the Son — as he was to be incarnate. For therein was he "fore-ordained before the foundation of the world;" (1 Peter 1:20) viz., to be a Saviour and a deliverer, by whom all the counsels of God were to be accomplished; and this by his own will, and concurrence in counsel with the Father. And such a foundation was laid of the salvation of the church in these counsels of God — as transacted between the Father and the Son — that it is said, that "eternal life was promised before the world began:" Titus 1:2. For, although the first formal promise was given after the fall, yet was

there such a preparation of grace and eternal life in these counsels of God, with his unchangeable purpose to communicate them unto us, that all the faithfulness of God was engaged in them. "God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." There was eternal life with the Father — that is, in his counsel treasured up in Christ, and in him afterwards manifested unto us: 1 John 1:2. And, to show the stability of this purpose and counsel of God, with the infallible consequence of his actual promise, and efficacious accomplishment thereof, "grace" is said to be "given us in Christ Jesus before the world began:" 2 Timothy 1:9. In these counsels did God delight — or in the person of Christ, as his eternal wisdom in their contrivance, and as the means of their accomplishment in his future incarnation. Hence he so testifieth of him: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth;" (Isaiah 42:1) as he also proclaims the same delight in him, from heaven, in the days of his flesh: Matthew 3:17; Matthew 17:5. He was the delight of God, as he in whom all his counsel for his own glory, in the redemption and salvation of the church were laid and founded: "My servant, in whom I will be glorified;" (Isaiah 49:3) that is, "by raising the tribes of Jacob, restoring the preserved of Israel, in being a light unto the Gentiles, and the salvation of God unto the ends of the earth:" verse 6.

We conceive not aright of the counsels of God, when we think of nothing but the effect of them, and the glory that ariseth from their accomplishment. It is certainly true that they shall all issue in his glory, and the demonstration of it shall fill up eternity. The manifestative glory of God unto eternity, consists in the effects and accomplishment of his holy counsels. Heaven is the state of the actual accomplishment of all the counsels of God, in the sanctification and salvation of the church. But it is not with God as it is with men. Let men's counsels be ever so wise, it must needs abate of their satisfaction in them, because their conjectures (and more they have not) of their effects and events are altogether uncertain. But all the counsels of God having their entire accomplishment through revolutions perplexing and surpassing all created understandings, enclosed in them infallibly and immutably, the great satisfaction, complacency, and delight of the Divine Being is in these counsels themselves.

God doth delight in the actual accomplishment of his works. He made not this world, nor any thing in it, for its own sake. Much less did he make this earth to be a theatre for men to act their lusts upon — the use which it is now put to, and groans under. But he made "all things for himself," Proverbs 16:4; he "made them for his pleasure," Revelation 4:11; that is, not only by an act of sovereignty, but to his own delight and satisfaction. And a double testimony did he give hereunto, with respect unto the works of creation. (1.) In the approbation which he gave of the whole upon its survey: and "God saw all that he had made, and, behold, it was very good:" Genesis 1:31. There was that impression of his divine wisdom, power, and goodness upon the whole, as manifested his glory; wherein he was well pleased. For immediately thereon, all creatures capable of the conception and apprehension of his glory, "sang forth his praise:" Job 38:6-7. (2.) In that he rested from his works or in them, when they were finished: Genesis 2:2. It was not a rest of weariness from the labour of his work — but a rest of complacency and delight in what he had wrought — that God entered into. But the principal delight and complacency of God, is in his eternal counsels. For all his delight in his works is but in the effects of those divine properties whose primitive and principal exercise is in the counsels themselves, from whence they proceed. Especially is it so as unto these counsels of the Father and the Son, as to the redemption and salvation of the church, wherein they delight, and mutually rejoice in each other on their account. They are all eternal acts

of God's infinite wisdom, goodness, and love — a delight and complacency wherein is no small part of the divine blessedness. These things are absolutely inconceivable unto us, and ineffable by us; we cannot find the Almighty out unto perfection. However, certain it is, from the notions we have of the Divine Being and excellencies, and from the revelation he hath made of himself, that there is an infinite delight in God — in the eternal acting of his wisdom, goodness, and love — wherein, according to our weak and dark apprehensions of things, we may safely place no small portion of divine blessedness. Self-existence in its own immense being — thence self-sufficiency unto itself in all things — and thereon self-satisfaction — is the principal notion we have of divine blessedness.

1. God delighteth in these his eternal counsels in Christ, as they are acts of infinite wisdom, as they are the highest instance wherein it will exert itself. Hence, in the accomplishment of them, Christ is emphatically said to be the "Wisdom of God;" (1 Corinthians 1:24) he in whom the counsels of his wisdom were to be fulfilled. And in him is the manifold wisdom of God made known: Ephesians 3:10. Infinite wisdom being that property of the divine nature whereby all the actings of it are disposed and regulated, suitably unto his own glory, in all his divine excellencies — he cannot but delight in all the acts of it. Even amongst men — whose wisdom compared with that of God is folly itself — yet is there nothing wherein they have a real rational complacency, suitable unto the principles of their nature, but in such actings of that wisdom which they have (and such as it is) towards the proper ends of their being and duty. How much more doth God delight himself in the infinite perfection of his own wisdom, and its eternal acting for the representation of all the glorious excellencies of his nature! Such are his counsels concerning the salvation of the church by Jesus Christ; and because they were all laid in him and with him, therefore is he said to be his "delight continually before the world was." This is that which is proposed as the object of our admiration, Romans 11:33-36.

2. They are acts of infinite goodness, whereon the divine nature cannot but be infinitely delighted in them. As wisdom is the directive principle of all divine operations, so goodness is the communicative principle that is effectual in them. He is good, and he doth good — yea, he doth good because he is good, and for no other reason — not by the necessity of nature, but by the intervention of a free act of his will. His goodness is absolutely infinite, essentially perfect in itself; which it could not be if it belonged unto it, naturally and necessarily, to act and communicate itself unto any thing without God himself. The divine nature is eternally satisfied in and with its own goodness; but it is that principle which is the immediate fountain of all the communications of good unto others, by a free act of the will of God. So when Moses desired to see his glory, he tells him that "he will cause all his goodness to pass before him, and would be gracious unto whom he would be gracious:" Exodus 33:19. All divine operations — in the gracious communication of God himself — are from his goodness, by the intervention of a free act of his will. And the greatest exercise and emanation of divine goodness, was in these holy counsels of God for the salvation of the church by Jesus Christ. For whereas in all other effects of his goodness he gives of his own, herein he gave himself, in taking our nature upon him. And thence, as he expresseth the design of man in his fall, as upbraiding him with folly and ingratitude, "Behold, the man is become as one of us," Genesis 3:22, we may, with all humble thankfulness, express the means of our recovery, "Behold, God is become like one of us," as the apostle declares it at large, Php 2:6-8. It is the nature of sincere goodness — even in its lowest degree — above all other habits or principles of

nature, to give a delight and complacency unto the mind in the exercise of itself, and communication of its effects. A good man doth both delight in doing good, and hath an abundant reward for the doing it, in the doing of it. And what shall we conceive concerning eternal, absolute, infinite, perfect, immixed goodness, acting itself in the highest instance (in an effect cognate and like unto it) that it can extend unto! So was it in the counsels of God, concerning the incarnation of his Son and the salvation of the church thereby. No heart can conceive, no tongue can express, the least portion of that ineffable delight of the holy, blessed God, in these counsels, wherein he acted and expressed unto the utmost his own essential goodness. Shall a liberal man devise liberal things, because they are suited unto his inclination? Shall a good man find a secret refreshment and satisfaction in the exercise of that low, weak, imperfect, minced goodness, that his nature is inlaid withal? — And shall not He whose goodness is essential unto him — whose being it is, and in whom it is the immediate principle of communicating himself unto others — be infinitely delighted in the highest exercise of it which divine wisdom did direct? The effect of these eternal counsels of God in future glory is reserved for them that do believe; and therein will there be the nearest manifestation of the glory of God himself unto them, when he “shall be glorified in his saints,” and eternally “admired in all that believe.” But the blessed delight and satisfaction of God, was, and is, in those counsels themselves, as they were acts of his infinite wisdom and goodness. Herein was the Lord Christ his “delight continually before the foundation of the world,” — in that in him were all these counsels laid, and through him were they all to be accomplished. The constitution of his person was the only way whereby divine wisdom and goodness would act and communicate of themselves unto mankind — in which actings are the eternal delight and complacency of the Divine Being.

3. Love and grace have the same influence into the counsels of God, as wisdom and goodness have. And, in the Scripture notion of these things, they superadd unto goodness this consideration — that their object is sinners, and those that are unworthy. God doth universally communicate of his goodness unto all his creatures, though there be an especial exercise of it towards them that believe. But as unto his love and grace, as they are peculiar unto his elect — the church chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world — so they respect them primarily in a lost, undone condition by sin. “God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:” Romans 5:8. “God is love,” says the apostle. His nature is essentially so. And the best conception of the natural internal acting of the holy persons, is love; and all the acts of it are full of delight. This is, as it were, the womb of all the eternal counsels of God, which renders his complacency in them ineffable. Hence doth he so wonderfully express his delight and complacency in the acting of his love towards the church: “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing:” Zephaniah 3:17. The reason why, in the salvation of the church, he rejoiceth with joy and joyeth with singing — the highest expression of divine complacency — is because he resteth in his love, and so is pleased in the exercise of its effects. But we must return to manifest in particular how all these counsels of God were laid in the person of Christ — to which end the things ensuing may be distinctly considered.

1. God made all things, in the beginning, good, exceeding good. The whole of his work was disposed into a perfect harmony, beauty, and order, suited unto that manifestation of his own glory which he designed therein. And as all things had their own individual existence, and operations

suiting unto their being, and capable of an end, a rest, or a blessedness, congruous unto their natures and operations — so, in the various respects which they had each to other, in their mutual supplies, assistances, and co-operation, they all tended unto that ultimate end — his eternal glory. For as, in their beings and existence, they were effects of infinite power — so were their mutual respects and ends disposed in infinite wisdom. Thereon were the eternal power and wisdom of God glorified in them; the one in their production, the other in their disposal into their order and harmony. Man was a creature that God made, that by him he might receive the glory that he aimed at in and by the whole inanimate creation — both that below, which was for his use, and that above, which was for his contemplation. This was the end of our nature in its original constitution. Whereunto are we again restored in Christ: James 1:18; Psalms 104:24; Psalms 136:5; Romans 1:20.

2. God was pleased to permit the entrance of sin, both in heaven above and in earth beneath, whereby this whole order and harmony was disturbed. There are yet characters of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, remaining on the works of creation, and inseparable from their beings. But the primitive glory that was to redound unto God by them — especially as unto all things here below—was from the obedience of man, unto whom they were put in subjection. Their good estate depended on their subordination unto him in a way of natural use, as his did on God in the way of moral obedience: Genesis 1:26, Genesis 1:28; Psalms 8:6-8. Man, as was said, is a creature which God made, that by him he might receive the glory that he aimed at in and by the whole inanimate creation. This was the end of our nature in its original constitution. Whereunto are we again restored in Christ: James 1:18. But the entrance of sin cast all this order into confusion, and brought the curse on all things here below. Hereby were they deprived of that estate wherein they were declared exceeding good, and cast into that of vanity — under the burden whereof they groan, and will do so to the end: Genesis 3:17-18; Romans 8:20-21. And these things we must again consider afterwards.

3. Divine wisdom was no way surprised with this disaster. God had, from all eternity, laid in provisions of counsels for the recovery of all things into a better and more permanent estate than what was lost by sin. This is the **■ν■ψυξις**, the **■ποκατ■στασις π■ντων**, the revivification, the restitution of all things, Acts 3:19, Acts 3:21; the **■νακεφαλα■ωσις**, or the gathering all things in heaven and earth into a new head in Christ Jesus: Ephesians 1:10. For although, it may be, there is more of curiosity than of edification in a scrupulous inquiry into the method or order of God's eternal decrees or counsels, and the disposal of them into a subserviency one unto another; yet this is necessary from the infinite wisdom, prescience, and immutability of God — that he is surprised with nothing, that he is put unto no new counsels, by any events in the works of creation. All things were disposed by him into those ways and methods — and that from eternity — which conduce unto, and certainly issue in, that glory which is ultimately intended. For as we are careful to state the eternal decrees of God, and the actual operations of his providence, so as that the liberty of the will of man, as the next cause of all his moral actions, be not infringed thereby — so ought we to be careful not to ascribe such a sacrilegious liberty unto the wills of any creatures, as that God should be surprised, imposed on, or changed by any of their acting whatever. For “known unto him are all his works from the foundation of the world,” and with him there is neither “variableness nor shadow of turning.”

4. There were, therefore, eternal counsels of God, whereby he disposed all things into a new order, unto his own glory, in the sanctification and salvation of the church. And of them two things may be considered: (1.) Their original; (2.) The design of their accomplishment.

(1.) Their first spring or original was in the divine will and wisdom alone, without respect unto any external moving cause. No reason can be given, no cause be assigned, of these counsels, but the will of God alone. Hence are they called or described, by — the “good pleasure which he purposed in himself;” (Ephesians 1:9) “the purpose of him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will;” Ephesians 1:11. “Who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given unto him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things;” Romans 11:34-36. The incarnation of Christ, and his mediation thereon, were not the procuring cause of these eternal counsels of God, but the effects of them, as the Scripture constantly declares. But, (2.) The design of their accomplishment was laid in the person of the Son alone. As he was the essential wisdom of God, all things were at first created by him. But upon a prospect of the ruin of all by sin, God would in and by him — as he was fore-ordained to be incarnate — restore all things. The whole counsel of God unto this end centred in him alone. Hence their foundation is rightly said to be laid in him, and is declared so to be by the apostle: Ephesians 1:4. For the spring of the sanctification and salvation of the church lies in election, the decree whereof compriseth the counsels of God concerning them. Herein, God from the beginning “chooseth us unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit;” (2 Thessalonians 2:13) the one being the end he designeth, the other the means and way thereof. But this he did in Christ; “he chooseth us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love;” that is, “unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit.” In him we were not actually, nor by faith, before the foundation of the world; yet were we then chosen in him, as the only foundation of the execution of all the counsels of God concerning our sanctification and salvation.

Thus as all things were originally made and created by him, as he was the essential wisdom of God — so all things are renewed and recovered by him, as he is the provisional wisdom of God, in and by his incarnation. Therefore are these things put together and compared unto his glory. He “is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature: for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; ... all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist: and he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence:” Colossians 1:15-18.

Two things, as the foundation of what is ascribed unto the Lord Christ in the ensuing discourse, are asserted: Colossians 1:15. — (1.) That he is “the image of the invisible God.” (2.) That he is “the firstborn of every creature;” things seeming very distant in themselves, but gloriously united and centring in his person.

(1.) He is “the image of the invisible God;” or, as it is elsewhere expressed, he is “in the form of God” — his essential form, for other form there is none in the divine nature — the “brightness of the glory, and the express image of the Father’s person.” And he is called here the “invisible God,” not absolutely with respect unto his essence, though it be most true — the divine essence being absolutely invisible, and that equally, whether considered as in the Father or in the Son — but he

is called so with respect unto his counsels, his will, his love, and his grace. For so none hath seen him at any time; but the only-begotten, which is in the bosom of the Father, he declares him: John 1:18. As he is thus the essential, the eternal image of the invisible God, his wisdom and power — the efficiency of the first creation, and its consistence being created, is ascribed unto him: “By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible:” Colossians 1:17. And because of the great notions and apprehensions that were then in the world — especially among the Jews, unto whom the apostle had respect in this epistle — of the greatness and glory of the invisible part of the creation in heaven above, he mentions them in particular, under the most glorious titles that any could, or then did, ascribe unto them — “Whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him;” — the same expression that is used of God absolutely: Romans 11:36; Revelation 4:11. Add hereunto those other places to this purpose, John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:1-3; and those that are not under the efficacy of spiritual infatuations, cannot but admire at the power of unbelief, the blindness of the minds of men, and the craft of Satan, in them who deny the divine nature of Jesus Christ. For whereas the apostle plainly affirms, that the works of the creation do demonstrate the eternal power and Godhead of him by whom they were created; (Romans 1:19-20) and not only so, but it is uncontrollably evident in the light of nature: it being so directly, expressly, frequently affirmed, that all things whatever, absolutely, and in their distributions into heaven and earth, with the things contained respectively in them, were made and created by Christ — is the highest rebellion against the light and teachings of God, to disbelieve his divine existence and power.

(2.) Again it is added, that he is “the firstborn of every creature;” which principally respects the new creation, as it is declared: (verse 18:) “He is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.” For in him were all the counsels of God laid for the recovery of all things unto himself — as he was to be incarnate. And the accomplishment of these counsels of God by him the apostle declares at large in the ensuing verses. And these things are both conjoined and composed in this place. As God the Father did nothing in the first Creation but by him — as his eternal wisdom; (John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2; Proverbs 8:1-36) so he designed nothing in the new creation, or restoration of all things unto his glory, but in him — as he was to be incarnate. Wherefore in his person were laid all the foundation of the counsels of God for the sanctification and salvation of the church. Herein he is glorified, and that in a way unspeakably exceeding all that glory which would have accrued unto him from the first creation, had all things abode in their primitive constitution. His person, therefore, is the foundation of the church — the great mystery of godliness, or the religion we profess — the entire life and soul of all spiritual truth — in that all the counsels of the wisdom, grace, and goodness of God, for the redemption, vocation, sanctification, and salvation of the church, were all laid in him, and by him were all to be accomplished.

## 04.05. Chapter 5

Chapter V. The Person of Christ the great Representative of God and his Will.

What may be known of God, is, — his nature and existence, with the holy counsels of his will. A representation of them unto us is the foundation of all religion, and the means of our conformity unto him — wherein our present duty and future blessedness do consist. For to know God, so as thereby to be made like unto him, is the chief end of man. This is done perfectly only in the person of Christ, all other means of it being subordinate thereunto, and none of them of the same nature therewithal. The end of the Word itself, is to instruct us in the knowledge of God in Christ. That, therefore, which I shall now demonstrate, is, that in the person and mediation of Christ (which are inseparable, in all the respects of faith unto him) there is made unto us a blessed representation of the glorious properties of the divine nature, and of the holy counsels of the will of God. The first of these I shall speak unto in this chapter — the other, in that which ensues; wherein we shall manifest how all divine truths do centre in the person of Christ and the consideration of sundry things is necessary unto the explication hereof.

1. God, in his own essence, being, and existence, is absolutely incomprehensible. His nature being immense, and all his holy properties essentially infinite, no creature can directly or perfectly comprehend them, or any of them. He must be infinite that can perfectly comprehend that which is infinite; wherefore God is perfectly known unto himself only — but as for us, how little a portion is heard of him! Hence he is called “The invisible God,” and said to dwell in “light inaccessible.” The subsistence of his most single and simple nature in three distinct persons, though it raises and ennobles faith in its revelation, yet it amazeth reason which would trust to itself in the contemplation of it — whence men grow giddy who will own no other guide, and are carried out of the way of truth. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him:” John 1:18; 1 Timothy 6:16.

2. Therefore, we can have no direct intuitive notions or apprehensions of the divine essence, or its properties. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us. Whatever is pleaded for an intellectual vision of the essence of God in the light of glory, yet none pretend unto a possibility of an immediate, full comprehension of it. But, in our present state, God is unto us, as he was unto Moses under all the external manifestations of his glory, “in thick darkness:” Exodus 20:21. All the rational conceptions of the minds of men are swallowed up and lost, when they would exercise themselves directly on that which is absolutely immense, eternal, infinite. When we say it is so, we know not what we say, but only that it is not otherwise. What we deny of God, we know in some measure — but what we affirm we know not; only we declare what we believe and adore. “Neque sensus est ejus, neque phantasia, neque opinio, nec ratio, nec scientia,” says Dionys. De Divin. Nomine, 1. We have no means — no corporeal, no intellectual instrument or power — for the comprehension of him; nor hath any other creature: **■πε■ α■τ■ ■π■ρ ■στιν ■ Θε■ς, ο■ μ■νον προφ■ται, ■λλ■ ο■δ■ ■γγελοι ε■δον, ο■τε ■ρχ■νγγελοι■ αλλ■ ■■ν ■ρωτ■σ■ς α■το■ς, ■κο■σ■ περ■ μ■ν τ■ς ο■σ■ας ο■δ■ν ■ποκρινομ■νους■ δ■ξα δ■ ■ν ■ψ■στοις μ■νον ■δ■ντας τ■ Θε■ κ■ν παρ■**

τῶν Χερουβίμ καὶ τῶν Σεραφίμ πρὸς τὴν μαθεῖν, τὸ μυστικὸν τοῦ ἁγιασμοῦ μῦθος οὐκ ἔστιν, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι πλῆρης οὐρανὸς καὶ γὰρ τὸς δόξης αὐτοῦ. — “For that which is God” (the essence of God) “not only have not the prophets seen, but neither the angels nor the archangels. If thou wilt inquire of them, thou shalt hear nothing of the substance of God, but only hear them say, ‘glory to God in the highest.’” If thou askest the cherubim and seraphim, thou shalt only hear the praise of holiness, ‘The whole earth is full of his glory,’” says Chrysostom, on John 1:18. That God is in himself absolutely incomprehensible unto us, is a necessary effect of our infinite distance from him. But as he externally represents himself unto us, and by the notions which are in generated in us by the effects of his properties, are our conceptions of him: Psalms 19:1; Romans 1:20. This is declared in the answer given unto that request of Moses: “I beseech thee, show me thy glory:” Exodus 33:18. Moses had heard a voice speaking unto him, but he that spoke was “in thick darkness” — he saw him not. Glorious evidences he gave of his majestical presence, but no appearance was made of his essence or person. Hereon Moses desireth, for the full satisfaction of his soul, (as the nearer any one is unto God the more earnest will be his desire after the full fruition of him,) that he might have a sight of his glory — not of that created glory in the tokens of his presence and power which he had beheld, but of the glory of his essence and being. Through a transport of love to God, he would have been in heaven while he was on the earth; yea, desired more than heaven itself will afford, if he would have seen the essence of God with his corporeal eyes. In answer hereunto God tells him, that he cannot see his face and live; none can have either bodily sight or direct mental intuition of the Divine Being. But this I will do, saith God, “I will make my glory pass before thee, and thou shalt see my back parts:” Exodus 33:18-23, &c. This is all that God would grant, viz., such external representations of himself, in the proclamation of his name, and created appearances of his glory, as we have of a man whose back parts only we behold as he passeth by us. But as to the being of God, and his subsistence in the Trinity of persons, we have no direct intuition into them, much less comprehension of them.

3. It is evident, therefore, that our conceptions of God, and of the glorious properties of his nature, are both ingenerated in us and regulated, under the conduct of divine revelation, by reflections of his glory on other things, and representations of his divine excellencies in the effects of them. So the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen, being manifested and understood by the things that are made: Romans 1:20. Yet must it be granted that no mere creature, not the angels above, not the heaven of heavens, are meet or able to receive upon them such characters of the divine excellencies, as to be a complete, satisfactory representation of the being and properties of God unto us. They are all finite and limited and so cannot properly represent that which is infinite and immense. And this is the true reason why all worship or religious adoration of them is idolatry. Yet are there such effects of God’s glory in them, such impressions of divine excellencies upon them, as we cannot comprehend nor search out unto perfection. How little do we conceive of the nature, glory, and power of angels! So remote are we from an immediate comprehension of the uncreated glory of God, as that we cannot fully apprehend nor conceive aright the reflection of it on creatures in themselves finite and limited. Hence, they thought of old, when they had seen an angel, that so much of the divine perfections had been manifested unto them that thereon they must die: Judges 13:21-22. Howbeit, they [the angels] come infinitely short of making any complete representation of God; nor is it otherwise with any creature whatever.

4. Mankind seem to have always had a common apprehension that there was need of a nearer and more full representation of God unto them than was made in any of the works of creation or providence. The heavens indeed declared his glory, and the firmament always showed his handy-work — the invisible things of his eternal power and Godhead were continually made known by the things that are made; but men generally miscarried and missed it in the contemplation of them, as the apostle declares, Rom 1 For still they were influenced by a common presumption, that there must be a nearer and more evident manifestation of God — that made by the works of creation and providence being not sufficient to guide them unto him. But in the pursuit hereof they utterly ruined themselves; they would do what God had not done. By common consent they framed representations of God unto themselves; and were so besotted therein, that they utterly lost the benefit which they might have received by the manifestation of him in the works of the creation, and took up with most foolish imaginations. For whereas they might have learned from thence the being of God, his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness — viz., in the impressions and characters of them on the things that were made — in their own representations of him, they “changed the glory of the invisible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” Romans 1:23. Wherefore this common presumption — that there was no way to attain a due sense of the Divine Being but by some representation of it — though true in itself, yet, by the craft of Satan, and foolish superstitions of the minds of men, became the occasion of all idolatry and flagitious wickedness in the world. Hence were all those ■πιδ■νειαι, or supposed “illustrious appearances” of their gods, which Satan deluded the Gentiles by; and hence were all the ways which they devised to bring God into human nature, or the likeness of it. Wherefore, in all the revelations that ever God made of himself, his mind and will, he always laid this practice of making representations of him under the most severe interdict and prohibition. And this he did evidently for these two reasons:—

(1.) Because it was a bold and foolish entrenching upon his provisional wisdom in the case. He had taken care that there should be a glorious image and representation of himself, infinitely above what any created wisdom could find out. But as, when Moses went into the mount, the Israelites would not wait for his return, but made a calf in his stead; so mankind — refusing to wait for the actual exhibition of that glorious image of himself which God had provided — broke in upon his wisdom and sovereignty, to make some of their own. For this cause was God so provoked, that he gave them up to such stupid blindness, that in those things wherein they thought to show themselves wise, and to bring God nearer unto them, they became contemptibly foolish — abased their nature, and all the noble faculties of their minds unto hell, and departed unto the utmost distance from God, whom they sought to bring near unto them.

(2.) Because nothing that can fall into the invention or imagination of men could make any other but false representations of him, and so substitute an idol in his place. His own immediate works have great characters of his divine excellencies upon them, though unto us obscure and not clearly legible without the light of revelation. Somewhat he did, of old, represent of his glorious presence — though not of his being — in the visible institutions of his worship. But all men’s inventions to this end, which are neither divine works of nature, nor divine institutions of worship, are all but false representations of God, and therefore accursed by him.

Wherefore it is granted, that God hath placed many characters of his divine excellencies upon his works of creation and providence — many [characters] of his glorious presence upon the

tabernacle and temple of old — but none of these things ever did or could give such a representation of him as wherein the souls of men might fully acquiesce, or obtain such conceptions of him as might enable them to worship and honour him in a due manner. They cannot, I say — by all that may be seen in them, and learned from them — represent God as the complete object of all our affections, of all the actings of our souls in faith, trust, love, fear, obedience, in that way whereby he may be glorified, and we may be brought unto the everlasting fruition of him. This, therefore, is yet to be inquired after. Wherefore —

5. A mere external doctrinal revelation of the divine nature and properties, without any exemplification or real representation of them, was not sufficient unto the end of God in the manifestation of himself. This is done in the Scripture. But the whole Scripture is built on this foundation, or proceeds on this supposition — that there is a real representation of the divine nature unto us, which it declares and describes. And as there was such a notion on the minds of all men, that some representation of God, wherein he might be near unto them, was necessary — which arose from the consideration of the infinite distance between the divine nature and their own, which allowed of no measures between them — so, as unto the event, God himself hath declared that, in his own way, such a representation was needful — unto that end of the manifestation of himself which he designed. For —

6. All this is done in the person of Christ. He is the complete image and perfect representation of the Divine Being and excellencies. I do not speak of it absolutely, but as God proposeth himself as the object of our faith, trust, and obedience. Hence it is God, as the Father, who is so peculiarly represented in him and by him; as he says: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father:” John 14:9.

Unto such a representation two things are required:— (1.) That all the properties of the divine nature — the knowledge whereof is necessary unto our present obedience and future blessedness — be expressed in it, and manifested unto us. (2.) That there be, therein, the nearest approach of the divine nature made unto us, whereof it is capable, and which we can receive. And both these are found in the person of Christ, and therein alone. In the person of Christ we consider both the constitution of it in the union of his natures, and the respect of it unto his work of mediation, which was the end of that constitution. And —

(1.) Therein, as so considered, is there a blessed representation made unto us of all the holy properties of the nature of God — of his wisdom, his power, his goodness, grace, and love, his righteousness, truth, and holiness, his mercy and patience. As this is affirmed concerning them all in general, or the glory of God in them, which is seen and known only in the face of Christ, so it were easy to manifest the same concerning every one of them in particular, by express testimonies of Scripture. But I shall at present confine myself unto the proofs of the whole assertion which do ensue.

(2.) There is, therein, the most incomprehensible approach of the divine nature made unto ours, such as all the imaginations of men did ever infinitely fall short of — as hath been before declared. In the assumption of our nature into personal union with himself, and our cognition unto God thereby, with the union which believers obtain with him thereon — being one in the Father and the Son, as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, (John 17:20-21) — there is the nearest approach of the Divine Being unto us that the nature of things is capable of. Both these ends were

designed in those representations of God which were of human invention; but in both of them they utterly failed. For, instead of representing any of the glorious properties of the nature of God, they debased it, dishonoured it, and filled the minds of men with vile conceptions of it; and instead of bringing God nearer unto them, they put themselves at an infinite moral distance from him. But my design is the confirmation of our assertions from the Scripture.

“He is the image of the invisible God:” Colossians 1:15. This title or property of “invisible,” the apostle here gives unto God, to show what need there was of an image or representation of him unto us, as well as of one in whom he would declare the counsels of his will. For he intends not only the absolute invisibility of his essence, but his being unknown unto us in himself. Wherefore, (as was before observed,) mankind was generally prone to make visible representations of this invisible God, that, in them, they might contemplate on him and have him present with them, as they foolishly imagined. Unto the craft of Satan abusing this inclination of mankind, idolatry owes its original and progress in the world: howbeit, necessary it was that this invisible God should be so represented unto us by some image of him, as that we might know him, and that therein he might be worshipped according unto his own mind and will. But this must be of his own contrivance — an effect of his own infinite wisdom. Hence, as he absolutely rejecteth all images and representations of him of men’s devisings, (for the reasons before mentioned,) and declares that the honour that any should think would thereby redound unto him was not given unto him, but unto the devil; so that which he hath provided himself, unto his own holy ends and purposes, is every way approved of him. For he will have “all men honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;” and so as that “he who honoureth not the God, honoureth not the Father:” John 5:23. This image, therefore, is the person of Christ; “he is the image of the invisible God.” This, in the first place, respects the divine person absolutely, as he is the essential image of the Father: which must briefly be declared.

1. The Son is sometimes said to be  $\epsilon\nu\ \Pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\varsigma$ , “in the Father,” and the Father in the Son: “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?” John 14:10. This is from the unity or sameness of their nature — for he and the Father are one: John 10:30. Thence all things that the Father hath are his, (John 16:15) because their nature is one and the same. With respect unto the divine essence absolutely considered, wherein the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, the one cannot be said to be the image of the other. For he and the Father are one; and one and the same thing cannot be the image of itself, in that wherein it is one.

2. The Son is said not only to be  $\epsilon\nu\ \Pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\varsigma$ , “in the Father,” in the unity of the same essence; but also  $\pi\rho\sigma\ \tau\epsilon\nu\ \Pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\varsigma$  or  $\Theta\epsilon\upsilon$ , “with the Father,” or “with God,” in the distinction of his person: “The Word was with God, and the Word was God:” John 1:1. “The Word was God,” in the unity of the divine essence — and “the Word was with God,” in its distinct personal subsistence. “The Word” — that is, the person of the Son, as distinct from the Father — “was with God,” or the Father. And in this respect he is the essential image of the Father, as he is called in this place, and Hebrews 1:3; and that because he partakes of all the same divine properties with the Father. But although the Father, on the other side, be partaker of all the essential divine properties of the Son, yet is not he said to be the image of the Son. For this property of an image respects not the things themselves, but the manner of the participation of them. Now the Son receives all from the Father, and the Father nothing from the Son. Whatever belongs unto the person of the Son, as the person of the Son, he receives it all from the Father by eternal generation: “For as the Father hath life in

himself, so hath he given unto the Son to have life in himself:" John 5:26. He is therefore the essential image of the Father, because all the properties of the divine nature are communicated unto him together with personality — from the Father.

3. In his incarnation, the Son was made the representative image of God unto us — as he was, in his person, the essential image of the Father, by eternal generation. The invisible God — whose nature and divine excellencies our understandings can make no approach unto — doth in him represent, exhibit, or make present unto our faith and spiritual sense, both himself and all the glorious excellencies of his nature.

Wherefore our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, may be considered three ways.

1. Merely with respect unto his divine nature. This is one and the same with that of the Father. In this respect the one is not the image of the other, for both are the same.

2. With respect unto his divine person as the Son of the Father, the only-begotten, the eternal Son of God. Thus he receives, as his personality, so all divine excellencies, from the Father; so he is the essential image of the Father's person.

3. As he took our nature upon him, or in the assumption of our nature into personal union with himself, in order unto the work of his mediation. So is he the only representative image of God unto us — in whom alone we see, know, and learn all the divine excellencies — so as to live unto God, and be directed unto the enjoyment of him. All this himself instructs us in.

He reflects it on the Pharisees, as an effect of their blindness and ignorance, that they had neither heard the voice of God at any time, nor seen his shape: John 5:37. And in opposition hereunto he tells his disciples, that they had known the Father, and seen him: John 14:7. And the reason he gives thereof is, because they that knew him, knew the Father also. And when one of his disciples, not yet sufficiently instructed in this mystery, replied, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," (verse 8,) his answer is, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father:" verse 9.

Three things are required unto the justification of this assertion.

1. That the Father and he be of the same nature, have the same essence and being. For otherwise it would not follow that he who had seen him had seen the Father also. This ground of it he declares in the next verse: "The Father is in me, and I am in the Father" namely, because they were one in nature and essence. For the divine nature being simply the same in them all, the divine persons are in each other, by virtue of the oneness of that nature.

2. That he be distinct from him. For otherwise there cannot be a seeing of the Father by the seeing of him. He is seen in the Son as represented by him — as his image — the Word — the Son of the Father, as he was with God. The unity of nature and the distinction of persons is the ground of that assertion of our Saviour: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also."

3. But, moreover, the Lord Christ hath a respect herein unto himself, in his entire person as he was incarnate, and therein unto the discharge of his mediatory work. "Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me?" Whilst he was with them, dwelt among them, conversed with them, he was the great representative of the glory of God unto them. And, notwithstanding this

particular mistake, they did then see his glory, “the glory of the only-begotten of the Father:” John 1:14

4. And in him was manifested the glory of the Father. He “is the image of the invisible God.” In him God was, in him he dwelt, in him is he known, in him is he worshipped according unto his own will, in him is there a nearer approach made unto us by the divine nature than ever could enter into the heart of man to conceive. In the constitution of his person — of two natures, so infinitely distinct and separate in themselves — and in the work it was designed unto, the wisdom, power, goodness, love, grace, mercy, holiness, and faithfulness of God, are manifested unto us. This is the one blessed “image of the invisible God,” wherein we may learn, wherein we may contemplate and adore, all his divine perfections. The same truth is testified unto, Hebrews 1:3. God spoke unto us in the Son, who is “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.” His divine nature is here included, as that without which he could not have made a perfect representation of God unto us. For the apostle speaks of him, as of him “by whom the worlds were made,” and who “upholdeth all things by the word of his power.” Yet doth he not speak of him absolutely as he was God, but also as he who “in himself purged our sins, and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high;” that is, in his whole person. Herein he is **παγασμα τς δξης**, the effulgency, the resplendency of divine glory, that wherein the divine glory shines forth in an evident manifestation of itself unto us. And as a farther explication of the same mystery, it is added, that he is the character or “express image” of the person of the Father. Such an impression of all the glorious properties of God is on him, as that thereby they become legible unto all them that believe. So the same apostle affirms again that he is the “image of God,” 2 Corinthians 4:4; in what sense, and unto what end, he declares, verse 6: “We have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Still it is supposed that the glory of God, as essentially in him, is invisible unto us, and incomprehensible by us. Yet is there a knowledge of it necessary unto us, that we may live unto him, and come unto the enjoyment of him. This we obtain only in the face or person of Christ — **ν προσπ το Χριστο**; for in him that glory is represented unto us. This was the testimony which the apostles gave concerning him, when he dwelt among them in the days of his flesh. They saw “his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth:” John 1:14. The divine glory was manifest in him, and in him they saw the glory of the Father. So the same apostle witnesses again, who recorded this testimony: “For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us:” 1 John 1:2. In the Son incarnate, that eternal life which was originally in and with the Father was manifest unto us.

It may be said, that the Scripture itself is sufficient for this end of the declaration of God unto us, so that there is no need of any other representation of him; and [that] these things serve only to turn the minds of men from learning the mind and will of God therein, to seek for all in the person of Christ. But the true end of proposing these things is, to draw men unto the diligent study of the Scripture, wherein alone they are revealed and declared. And in its proper use, and unto its proper end, it is perfect and most sufficient. It is **λογς το Θεο** — “the word of God;” howbeit it is not **λογς οσδης**, the internal, essential Word of God — but **λογς προφορικς**, the external word spoken by him. It is not, therefore, nor can be, the image of God, either essential or representative; but is the revelation and declaration of it unto us, without which we can know nothing of it.

Christ is the image of the invisible God, the express image of the person of the Father; and the principal end of the whole Scripture, especially of the gospel, is to declare him so to be, and how he is so. What God promised by his prophets in the holy Scriptures concerning his Son, Jesus Christ, that is fully declared in the Gospel: Romans 1:1-4. The gospel is the declaration of Christ as “the power of God, and the wisdom of God,” 1 Corinthians 1:23-24; or an evident representation of God in his person and mediation unto us: Galatians 3:1. Wherefore three things are herein to be considered.

1. “Objectum reale et formale fidei” — “the real, formal object of our faith in this matter. This is the person of Christ, the Son of God incarnate, the representative image of the glory of God unto us; as in the testimonies insisted on.

2. “Medium revelans”, or “lumen deferens” — the means of its revelation, or the objective light whereby the perception and knowledge of it is conveyed unto our minds. This is the gospel; compared unto a glass because of the prospect which we have of the image of God therein: 2 Corinthians 3:18. But without it — by any other means, and not by it — we can behold nothing of this image of God.

3. “Lumen præparans, elevans, disponens subjectum” — “the internal light of the mind in the saving illumination of the Holy Spirit, enabling us — by that means, and in the use of it — spiritually to behold and discern the glory of God in the face of Christ: 2 Corinthians 4:6.

Through both these, in their several ways of operation, there proceedeth — from the real object of our faith, Christ, as the image of God — a transforming power, whereby the soul is changed into the same image, or is made conformable unto Christ; which is that whereunto we are predestinated. But we may yet a little farther contemplate on these things, in some instances wherein the glory of God and our own duty are concerned.

1. The glory of God’s wisdom is exalted, and the pride of the imaginations of men is proportionally debased. And in these two consists the real foundation of all religion in our souls. This God designed in the dispensation of himself and his will, 1 Corinthians 1:29, 1 Corinthians 1:31; this he calls us unto, Isaiah 2:22; Zechariah 2:13. As this frame of heart is prevalent in us, so do all other graces shine and flourish. And it is that which influences all our duties, so far as they are acceptable unto God. And there is no truth more instructive unto it than that before us. It is taken for granted — and the event hath demonstrated it to be so — that some express representation should be made of God unto us, wherein we might contemplate the glorious excellencies of his nature, and he might draw nigh unto us, and be present with us. This, therefore, men attempted to effect and accomplish; and this God alone hath performed, and could so do. And their several ways for this end are herein manifest. As the way whereby God hath done it is the principal exaltation of his infinite wisdom and goodness, (as shall be immediately more fully declared,) so the way whereby men attempted it was the highest instance of wickedness and folly. It is, as we have declared, in Christ alone that God hath done it. And that therein he hath exalted and manifested the riches, the treasures of his infinite wisdom and goodness, is that which the Gospel, the Spirit, and the church, do give testimony unto. A more glorious effect of divine wisdom and goodness, a more illustrious manifestation of them, there never was, nor ever shall be, than in the finding out and constitution of this way of the representation of God unto us. The ways of men, for the same end, were so far from giving a right representation of the perfections of the divine nature,

that they were all of them below, beneath, and unworthy of our own. For in nothing did the blindness, darkness, and folly of our nature, in its depraved condition, ever so exert and evidence themselves, as in contriving ways for the representation of God unto us — that is, in idolatry, the worst and vilest of evils: so Psalms 115:4-8; Isaiah 44:1-28; Revelation 9:19-20, &c. This pride and folly of men was that which lost all knowledge of God in the world, and all obedience unto him. The ten commandments are but a transcript of the light and law of nature. The first of these required that God — the only true God — the Creator and Governor of all — should be acknowledged, worshipped, believed in, and obeyed. And the second was, that we should not make unto ourselves any image or representation of him. Whatever he would do himself, yet he strictly forbade that we should make any such unto ourselves. And here began the apostasy of the world from God. They did not absolutely reject him, and so cast off the first fundamental precept of the law of nature — but they submitted not unto his wisdom and authority in the next, which was evidently educed from it. They would make images and representations of him unto themselves; and by this invention of their own, they first dishonoured him, and then forsook him, giving themselves up unto the rule and service of the devil. Wherefore, as the way that God in infinite wisdom found out for the representation of himself unto us, was the only means of recovery from the first apostasy — the way found out by men, unto the same end, was the great means of casting the generality of mankind unto the farthest degree of a new apostasy from God whereof our nature is capable. And of the same kind will all our contrivances be found to be — in what belongs unto his worship and glory — though, unto us, they may appear both pious and necessary. This, therefore, should lead us into a continual admiration of the wisdom and grace of God, with a due sense of our own vileness and baseness by nature. For we are in nothing better or wiser than they who fell into the utmost folly and wickedness, in their designs for the highest end, or the representation of God unto us. The more we dwell on such considerations, the more fear and reverence of God, with faith, trust, and delight in him, will be increased — as also humility in ourselves, with a sense of divine grace and love.

2. There is a peculiar ground of the spiritual efficacy of this representation of God. The revelations that he hath made of himself, and of the glorious properties of his nature, in the works of creation and providence, are, in themselves, clear, plain, and manifest: Psalms 19:1-2; Romans 1:19-20. Those which are made in Christ are sublime and mysterious. Howbeit, the knowledge we have of him as he is represented unto us in Christ is far more clear, certain, steady, effectual and operative, than any we can attain in and by all other ways of revelation. The reason hereof is, not only because there is a more full and extensive revelation made of God, his counsels and his will, in Christ and the Gospel, than in all the works of creation and providence; but because this revelation and representation of God is received by faith alone, the other by reason only: and it is faith that is the principle of spiritual light and life in us. What is received thereby is operative and effectual, unto all the ends of the life of God. For we live by faith here, as we shall by sight hereafter. Reason alone — especially as it is corrupted and depraved — can discern no glory in the representation of God by Christ; yea, all that is spoken thereof, or declared in the Gospel, is foolishness unto it. Hence many live in a profession of the faith of the letter of the Gospel, yet — having no light, guide, nor conduct, but that of reason — they do not, they cannot, really behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; nor hath the revelation of it any efficacy upon their souls. The manifestation of him in the light of nature, by the works of creation and providence, is suited unto their reason, and doth affect it: for that [manifestation] which is made in Christ, they

say of it, as the Israelites did of manna, that came down from heaven, "What is it?" we know not the meaning of it. For it is made unto faith alone, and all men have not faith. And where God shines into the heart, by that faith which is of divine operation — there, with "open face, we behold the glory of God, as in a glass;" or have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. There is not the meanest believer, but — in the real exercise of faith in Christ — hath more glorious apprehensions of God, his wisdom, goodness, and grace, of all his glorious excellencies, than the most learned and wise in the world can attain unto, in the exercise of reason on the proper objects of it. So are these things opposed by the apostle, 1 Corinthians 1:1-31. Wherefore, faith in Christ is the only means of the true knowledge of God; and the discoveries which are made of him and his excellencies thereby are those alone which are effectual to conform us unto his image and likeness. And this is the reason why some men are so little affected with the Gospel — notwithstanding the continual preaching of it unto them, and their outward profession of it. It doth not inwardly affect them, it produceth no blessed effects in them. Some sense they have of the power of God in the works of creation and providence, in his rule and government, and in the workings of natural conscience. Beyond these, they have no real sense of him. The reason is, because they have not faith — whereby alone the representation that is made of God in Christ, and declared in the gospel, is made effectual unto the souls of men. Wherefore —

3. It is the highest degeneracy from the mystery of the Christian religion, for men to satisfy themselves in natural discoveries of the Divine Being and excellencies, without an acquaintance with that perfect declaration and representation of them which is made in the person of Christ, as he is revealed and declared in the Gospel. It is confessed that there may be good use made of the evidence which reason gives or takes from its own innate principles — with the consideration of the external works of divine wisdom and power — concerning the being and rule of God. But to rest herein — to esteem it the best and most perfective knowledge of God that we can attain — not to rise up unto the more full, perfect, and evident manifestation of himself that he hath made in Christ — is a declaration of our unbelief, and a virtual renunciation of the Gospel. This is the spring of that declension unto a mere natural religion which discovers itself in many, and usually ends in the express denial of the divine person of Christ. For when the proper use of it is despised, on what grounds can the notion of it be long retained? But a supposition of his divine person is the foundation of this discourse. Were he not the essential image of the Father in his own divine person, he could not be the representative image of God unto us as he is incarnate. For if he were a man only — however miraculously produced and gloriously exalted, yet the angels above, the glorious heavens, the seat and throne of God, with other effects of creating power and wisdom, would no less represent his glory than it could be done in him. Yet are they nowhere, nowhere, jointly nor separately, styled "the image of the invisible God" — "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person;" nor doth God shine into our hearts to give us the knowledge of his glory in the face of them. And it argues the woeful enmity of the carnal mind against God and all the effects of his wisdom, that, whereas he hath granted us such a glorious image and representation of himself, we like it not, we delight not in the contemplation of it, but either despise it or neglect it, and please ourselves in that which is incomparably beneath it.

4. Because God is not thus known it is — that the knowledge of him is so barren and fruitless in the world, as it manifests itself to be. It were easy to produce, yea, endless to number the testimonies that might be produced out of heathen writers, given unto the being and existence of

God, his authority, monarchy, and rule; yet what were the effects of that knowledge which they had? Besides that wretched idolatry wherein they were all immersed, as the apostle declares, Rom 1, it rescued them from no kind of wickedness and villany; as he there also manifests. And the virtues which were found among them were evidently derived from other causes, and not from the knowledge they had of God. The Jews have the knowledge of God by the letter of the Old Testament; but they — not knowing him in Christ, and having lost all sense and apprehension of those representations which were made of his being in him, in the Law — they continue universally a people carnal, obstinate, and wicked. They have neither the virtues of the heathens among them, nor the power of the truth of religion. As it was with them of old, so it, yet continueth to be; “they profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate:” Titus 1:16. So is it among many that are called Christians at this day in the world: great pretence there is unto the knowledge of God — yet did flagitious sins and wickedness scarce ever more abound among the heathens themselves. It is the knowledge of “God in Christ” alone that is effectually powerful to work the souls of men into a conformity unto him. Those alone who behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

## 04.06. Chapter 6

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Chapter VI. The Person of Christ the great Repository of Sacred Truth — Its Relation thereunto.

Divine supernatural truth is called by the apostle, “The truth which is after godliness:” Titus 1:1. Whereas, therefore, the person of Christ is the great mystery of godliness, we must, in the next place, inquire — What is the relation of spiritual supernatural truth thereunto? And this I shall do, in pursuit of what was proposed in the foregoing chapter, viz., that he is the great representative unto the church, of God, his holy properties, and the counsels of his will?

All divine truth may be referred unto two heads. First, that which is essentially so; and then that which is so declaratively. The first is God himself, the other is the counsel of his will.

First, God himself is the first and only essential Truth, in whose being and nature the springs of all truth do lie. Whatever is truth — so far as it is so, derives from him, is an emanation from that eternal fountain of it. Being, truth, and goodness, is the principal notion of God; and in him they are all the same. How this is represented in Christ — as in himself he is the essential image of the Father, and as incarnate the representative image of him unto us — hath been declared.

Secondly, The counsels of God are the next spring and cause — as also the subject-matter or substance — of all truth that is so declaratively. Divine truth is “the declaration of the counsel of God:” Acts 20:27. Of them all the person of Christ is the sacred repository and treasury — in him are they to be learned. All their efficacy and use depend on their relation unto him. He is the centre and circumference of all the lines of truth — that is, which is divine, spiritual, and supernatural. And the beauty of it is presented unto us only in his face or person. We see it not, we know it not, but as God shines into our hearts to give us the knowledge of it therein: 2 Corinthians 4:6. So he testifieth of himself, “I am the truth:” John 14:6. He is so essentially — as he is one with the Father, the God of truth: Deuteronomy 32:4. He is so efficiently — as by him alone it is fully and effectually declared; for “no man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him:” John 1:18. He is so substantially — in opposition unto the types and shadows of the Old Testament; for in him dwelt “the fulness of the godhead bodily:” Colossians 2:9. “The body is of Christ:” Colossians 2:17. He is so subjectively — for all divine truth, relating to the saving knowledge of God, is treasured up in him. “In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:” Colossians 2:3. That is, the wisdom and knowledge of God — in his counsels concerning the vocation, sanctification, and salvation, of the church — concerning which the apostle falls into that holy admiration, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” Romans 11:33. And they are called “treasures” on a twofold account, both mentioned together by the Psalmist. “How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O Lord; how great is the sum of them!” They are treasures, because precious and invaluable — and are therefore usually preferred above all earthly treasures which men most highly esteem: Proverbs 3:14-15. And they are so, because of the greatness of the sum of them; and therefore also called “unsearchable riches:” Ephesians 3:8. These precious, unsearchable treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God — that is, all divine supernatural truths — are hid, or safely

deposited, in Christ — in and from whom alone they are to be learned and received. So we are said to learn the truth as it is in Jesus: Ephesians 4:21. And the knowledge of all evangelical sacred truth is, in the Scripture, most frequently expressed by the knowledge of Him: John 8:19; John 17:3; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:5-6; Ephesians 1:17; Php 3:8, Php 3:10; 1 John 1:1-2; 1 John 2:4, 1 John 2:13-14; 1 John 5:20; 2 Peter 2:20.

Setting aside what we have discoursed and proved before — concerning the laying of the foundation of all the counsels of God in the person of Christ, and the representation of them in the ineffable constitution thereof — I shall give some few instances of this relation of all supernatural truths unto him — manifesting that we cannot learn them, nor know them, but with a due respect thereunto.

1. There are two things wherein the glory of truth doth consist. (1.) Its light. (2) Its efficacy or power. And both these do all supernatural truths derive from this relation unto Christ.

(1.) No truth whatever brings any spiritual light unto the mind, but by virtue thereof. “In him is life, and the life is the light of men:” John 1:4. He is “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world:” John 1:9. Wherefore, as truth is the only means of illumination, so it cannot communicate any light unto the mind, but only as it is a beam from him, as it is an organ to convey it from that fountain. Separated from him and its relation unto him, it will not retain, it cannot communicate, any real spiritual light or understanding to the souls of men. How should it, if all light be originally in him — as the Scripture testifieth? Then alone is the mind irradiated with heavenly truth, when it is received as proceeding from, and leading unto, the Sun of Righteousness — the blessed spring of all spiritual light — which is Christ himself. Whatever notional knowledge men may have of divine truths, as they are doctrinally proposed in the Scripture, yet — if they know them not in their respect unto the person of Christ as the foundation of the counsels of God — if they discern not how they proceed from him, and centre in him — they will bring no spiritual, saving light unto their understanding. For all spiritual life and light is in him, and from him alone. An instance hereof we have in the Jews. They have the Scriptures of the Old Testament, wherein the substance of all divine truth is revealed and expressed; and they are diligent in the study of them; howbeit their minds are not at all illuminated nor irradiated by the truths contained in them, but they live and walk in horrible darkness. And the only reason hereof is, because they know not, because they reject, the relation of them unto Christ — without which they are deprived of all enlightening power.

(2.) Efficacy or power is the second property of divine truth. And the end of this efficacy is to make us like unto God: Ephesians 4:20-24. The mortification of sin, the renovation of our natures, the sanctification of our minds, hearts, and affections, the consolation of our souls, with their edification in all the parts of the life of God, and the like, are the things that God hath designed to effect by his truth; (John 17:17) whence it is able to “build us up, and give us an inheritance among all them that are sanctified:” Acts 20:32. But it is from their relation unto the person of Christ that they have any thing of this power and efficacy. For they have it no otherwise but as they are conveyances of his grace unto the souls of men. So 1 John 1:1-2.

Wherefore, as professors of the truth, if separated from Christ as unto real union, are withering branches — so truths professed, if doctrinally separated from him, or their respect unto him, have no living power or efficacy in the souls of men. When Christ is formed in the heart by them, when

he dwelleth plentifully in the soul through their operation, then, and not else, do they put forth their proper power and efficacy. Otherwise, they are as waters separated from the fountain — they quickly dry up or become a noisome puddle; or as a beam interrupted from its continuity unto the sun — it is immediately deprived of light.

2. All divine spiritual truths are declarative, either of the grace and love of God unto us, or [of] our duty, obedience, and gratitude unto him. But, as unto these things, Christ is all and in all; we can have no due apprehensions of the love and grace of God, no understanding of the divine truths of the Word — wherein they are revealed, and whereby they are exhibited unto them that believe — but in the exercise of faith on Christ himself. For in, by, and from him alone, it is that they are proposed unto us, that we are made partakers of them. It is from his fulness that all grace is received. No truth concerning them can, by any imagination, be separated from him. He is the life and soul of all such truths — without which, they, as they are written in the Word, are but a dead letter, and that of such a character as is illegible unto us, as unto any real discovery of the grace and love of God. And as unto those of the other sort, which are instructive unto us in our duty, obedience, and gratitude — we cannot come unto a practical compliance with any one of them, but by the aids of grace received from him. For without him we can do nothing; (John 15:5) and he alone understands divine truth who doeth it: John 7:17. There is not, therefore, any one text of Scripture which presseth our duty unto God, that we can so understand as to perform that duty in an acceptable manner, without an actual regard unto Christ, from whom alone we receive ability for the performance of it, and in or through whom alone it is accepted with God.

3. All the evidence of divine spiritual truth, and all the foundation of our real interest in the things whereof it is a declaration — as to benefit, advantage, and comfort — depend on their relation unto Christ. We may take an instance in one article of divine truth, which seems to be most disengaged from any such relation, namely, the resurrection of the dead. But there is no man who rightly believes or comprehends this truth, who doth it not upon the evidence given unto it, and example of it, in the person of Christ rising from the dead. Nor can any man have a comfortable expectation or faith of an especial interest in a blessed resurrection, (which is our whole concern in that truth, Php 3:11) but by virtue of a mystical union unto him, as the head of the church that shall be raised unto glory. Both these the apostle inserts upon at large, 1 Corinthians 15:1-58. So is it with all other truths whatever.

Wherefore, all divine supernatural truths revealed in the Scripture, being nothing but the declaration of these counsels of God, whose foundation was laid in the person of Christ; and whereas they are all of them expressive of the love, wisdom, goodness, and grace of God unto us, or instructive in our obedience and duty to him — all the actings of God towards us, and all ours towards him, being in and through him alone; and whereas all the life and power of these truths, all their beauty, symmetry, and harmony in their union and conjunction, which is expressive of divine wisdom, is all from him, who, as a living spirit diffused through the whole system, both acts and animates it — all the treasures of truth, wisdom, and knowledge, may be well said to be hid in him. And we may consider some things that ensue hereon.

1. Hence it is, that those who reject the divine person of Christ — who believe it not, who discern not the wisdom, grace, love, and power of God therein — do constantly reject or corrupt all other spiritual truths of divine revelation. Nor can it otherwise be. For they have a consistency only in

their relation unto the mystery of godliness — “God manifest in the flesh” — and from thence derive their sense and meaning. This being removed — the truth, in all other articles of religion, immediately falls to the ground. An instance hereof we have in the Socinians. For, although they retain the common notions of the unity and existence of the divine nature, which are indelibly fixed on the minds of men, yet is there no one truth that belongs peculiarly unto the Christian religion, but they either deny it or horribly deprave it. Many things concerning God and his essential properties — as his immutability, immensity, prescience — they have greatly perverted. So is that fulfilled in them which was spoken by Jude the apostle, verse 10. They “speak evil of those things which they know not: and what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.” So they do in the things mentioned, whereof there are natural notions in the minds of men; but of evangelical truths — which they know not — they speak evil, and deride them. The holy Trinity they blaspheme — the incarnation of the Son of God they scorn — the work of his mediation in his oblation and intercession, with the satisfaction and merit of his obedience and suffering, they reject. So do they [reject] whatever we are taught of the depravation of our natures by the fall, of the renovation of them by the Holy Ghost; and unto all other articles of our faith do they offer violence, to corrupt them. The beginning of their transgression or apostasy, is in a disbelief of the divine person of Christ. That being rejected, all other sacred truths are removed from their basis and centre, [from] that which gives them their unity and harmony. Hereon they fluctuate up and down in the minds of men, and, appearing unto them under various deceiving colours, are easily misapprehended or disbelieved. Yea, there can no direct, proper representation be made of them unto the understandings of men. Dissolve the knot, centre, and harmony in the most beautiful composition or structure — and every part will contribute as much unto the deformity and ruin of the whole, as it did before unto its beauty and consistency. So is it with every doctrine — so is it with the whole system of evangelical truths. Take the person of Christ out of them, dissolve their harmony in relation thereunto — whereby we no longer hold the Head in the faith and profession of them — and the minds of men cannot deliver them from an irreconcilable difference among themselves. Hereon some of them are immediately rejected, and some of them corrupted; for they lose their native light and beauty. They will neither agree nor consist any where but in Christ. Hence it is that no instance can be given of any, who, from the original of the Christian religion, rejected the divine person of Christ, and preserved any one evangelical truth besides, pure and uncorrupted. And I do freely confess, that all which we believe concerning the holy Trinity, the eternal counsels of God, the efficacy of the mediation of Christ, his satisfaction and merit, the way which we own of the sanctification, justification, and salvation of the church — are to be esteemed fables, as the Socinians contend, if what we believe concerning the person of Christ be so also.

2. Hence it is that the knowledge and profession of the truth, with many, is so fruitless, inefficacious, and useless. It is not known, it is not understood nor believed — in its relation unto Christ; on which account alone it conveys either light or power to the soul. Men profess they know the truth; but they know it not in its proper order, in its harmony and use. It leads them not to Christ, it brings not Christ unto them; and so is lifeless and useless. Hence, oftentimes, none are more estranged from the life of God than such as have much notional knowledge of the doctrines of the Scripture. For they are all of them useless, and subject to be abused, if they are not improved to form Christ in the soul, and transform the whole person into his likeness and image. This they will not effect where their relation unto him is not understood — where they are not

received and learned as a revelation of him, with the mystery of the will and wisdom of God in him. For whereas he is our life, and in our living unto God we do not so much live as he liveth in us, and the life which we lead in the flesh is by the faith of him — so that we have neither principle nor power of spiritual life, but in, by, and from him — whatever knowledge we have of the truth, if it do not effect a union between him and our souls, it will be lifeless in us, and unprofitable unto us. It is learning the truth as it is in Jesus, which alone reneweth the image of God in us: Ephesians 4:21-24. Where it is otherwise — where men have notions of evangelical truths, but know not Christ in them — whatever they profess, when they come really to examine themselves, they will find them of no use unto them, but that all things between God and their souls are stated on natural light and common presumptions.

## 04.07. Chapter 7

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### Chapter VII.

Power and Efficacy Communicated unto the Office of Christ, for the Salvation of the Church, from his Person.

It is by the exercise and discharge of the office of Christ — as the king, priest, and prophet of the church — that we are redeemed, sanctified, and saved. Thereby doth he immediately communicate all Gospel benefits unto us — give us an access unto God here by grace, and in glory hereafter; for he saves us, as he is the mediator between God and man. But hereon an inquiry may be made — whence it is that the acts and duties of this office of Christ, in their exercise and discharge, should have such a power and efficacy, with respect unto their supernatural and eternal ends; for the things which depend upon them, which are effected by them, are all the principal means of the glory of God, and the only concernments of the souls of men. And this, I say, is his holy, mysterious person; from thence alone all power and efficacy is derived, and transfused into his offices, and into all that is due in the discharge of them. A truth this is, of that importance, that the declaration and demonstration of it is the principal design of one entire book of the holy Scriptures, viz., of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle unto the Hebrews. That the glorious excellency of the person of Christ doth enable him, in the discharge of his offices, to accomplish those ends, — which none other, though vested with the same offices, could, in the exercise of them, attain unto — is the sum and substance of the doctrinal part of that discourse. Here, therefore, we must a little fix our meditations — and our interest calls us thereunto. For if it be so, it is evident that we can receive no good, no benefit, by virtue of any office of Christ, nor any fruits of their exercise, without an actual respect of faith unto his person, whence all their life and power is derived.

God gave of old both kings, priests, and prophets, unto the church. He both anointed them unto their offices, directed them in their discharge, was present with them in their work, and accepted of their duties; yet by none of them, nor by all of them together, was the church supernaturally enlightened, internally ruled, or eternally saved: nor could it so be. Some of them — as Moses in particular — had as much power, and as great a presence of God with him, as any mere man could be made partaker of; yet was he not, in his ministry, the saviour of the church — nor could he be so any otherwise than typically and temporally. The ministry of them all was subservient unto that end which, by its own power, it could not attain.

It is evident, therefore, that the redemption and salvation of the church do not depend merely on this — that God hath given one to be the king, priest, and prophet of the church, by the actings of which offices it is redeemed and saved; but on the person of him who was so given unto us: as is fully attested, Isaiah 9:6-7. This must be declared.

Two things were required, in general, unto the person of Christ, that his offices might be effectual unto the salvation of the church, and without which they could not so have been. And they are

such, as that their contrivance in the constitution of one and the same person, no created wisdom could reach unto. Wherefore the infinite wisdom of God is most gloriously manifested therein.

I. The first of these is, that he should have a nature provided for him, which originally was not his own. For in his divine nature, singly considered, he had no such relation unto them for whom he was to discharge his offices, as was necessary to communicate the benefit of them, nor could he discharge their principal duties. God could not die, nor rise again, nor be exalted to be a prince and a saviour, in his divine nature. Nor was there that especial alliance between it and ours, as should give us an especial interest in what was done thereby.

It was mankind in whose behalf he was to exercise these offices. He was not to bear them with respect immediately unto the angels; and, therefore, he took not their nature on him. Ο■ γ■ρ δ■που ■γγ■λων ■πιλαμβ■νεται — “He took not the nature of angels unto him;” (Hebrews 2:16) because he was not to be a mediator for them, a saviour unto them. Those of them who had sinned were left unto everlasting ruin; and those who retained their original righteousness needed no redemption. But God prepared a body for him — that is, a human nature: Hebrews 10:5. The promise hereof — viz., that he should be of the seed of the woman — was the foundation of the church; that is, he was made so unto the church in and by that promise: Genesis 3:15. In the accomplishment thereof he was “made of a woman,” that so he might be “made under the law;” (Galatians 4:4) and “took upon him the seed of Abraham”. For because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, “he also himself took part of the same:” Hebrews 2:14. For “in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God:” Hebrews 2:17. And this was absolutely necessary unto the discharge of his offices, on the twofold account before mentioned. For —

(1.) Those acts of his offices, whereon the sanctification and salvation of the church do principally depend, could not be performed but in and by that nature. Therein alone could he yield obedience unto the law, that it might be fulfilled in us — without which we could not stand in judgment before God. See Romans 8:3; Romans 10:3-4. Therein alone could he undergo the curse of the law, or be made a curse for us, that the blessing might come upon us: Galatians 3:13-14. It was necessary that, as a priest, he should have something of his own to offer unto God, to make atonement for sin: Hebrews 8:3. The like may be said of his whole ministry on the earth — of all the effects of his incarnation.

(2.) Herein that cognation and alliance between him and the church, which were necessary to entitle it unto a participation of the benefits of his mediation, do depend. For hereby he became our göel — the next of kin — unto whom belonged the right of redemptions and from whom alone we could claim relief and succour in our lost condition. This is divinely and at large declared by the apostle, Hebrews 2:10-18. Having at large explained this context in our exposition of that chapter, and therein declared both the necessity and benefit of the cognation between the church and its High Priest, I shall not here farther insist upon it. See to the same purpose, Ephesians 5:25-27. Wherefore, had he not been partaker of our nature, we could have received no benefit — not that without which we must eternally perish — by any office that he could have undertaken. This, therefore, was necessary unto the constitution of his person, with respect unto his offices. But —

II. There was yet more required thereunto, or to render his offices effectual unto their proper ends. Not one of them could have been so, had he been no more than a man — had he had no nature

but ours. This I shall particularly demonstrate, considering them in their usual distribution — unto the glory of his divine person, and our own edification in believing.

(1.) He could not have been the great and singular prophet of the church, had he been a man only, though ever so excellent and glorious; and that for these three reasons:—

[1.] He was to be the prophet of the whole catholic church; that is, of all the elect of God, of all that shall be saved in all ages and places, from the beginning of the world unto the end thereof. He had a personal ministry for the instruction of the church, whilst he was on the earth; but his prophetic office was not confined thereunto. For that was limited unto one nation, Matthew 15:24; Romans 15:8, and was for a short season only. But the church was never without a prophet — that is, one on whom it was incumbent to reveal unto it, and instruct it in, the will of God — nor can be so unto the consummation of all things. This is Christ alone. For —

1st, I take it for granted that, from the beginning, from the giving of the first promise, the Son of God did, in an especial manner, undertake the care of the church — as unto all the ends of the wisdom, will, and grace of God; and I take it for granted here, because I have proved it at large elsewhere. It evidently followeth on the eternal compact between the Father and him unto this end. In the work which belonged hereunto — that which concerned its instruction in the will of God, its saving illumination and spiritual wisdom, is of such importance, as that, without it, none can be partaker of any other blessings whatever. In this instruction and illumination consists the discharge of the prophetic office of Christ.

2dly, Upon the account of his susception of his office even before his incarnation, considered as God; he is said to act in it so as to be sent of God unto his work, Micah 5:2, “The Ruler of Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” His goings forth are not his eternal generation, which consists in one individual eternal act of the Father; but it is the egress, the exercise of his power and care for the church, that is so expressed. These were from the beginning the first foundation of the church, in answer unto his everlasting counsels, Zechariah 2:8-9, “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you;” and “I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me.” He who is sent calleth himself “The Lord of hosts,” and affirms that he will destroy the nations by the shaking of his hand; who can be no other but God himself. That is, it was the Son of God, who was to be incarnate, as is declared in the next words: “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee,” Zechariah 2:10-11. He promiseth that he will dwell in the midst of the people; which was accomplished when “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” John 1:14; which was the time of the calling of the Gentiles, when many nations were to be joined unto the Lord; and those that were so called were to be his people: “They shall be my people.” And yet in all this he was sent by the Lord of hosts: “Thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee.” Wherefore, with respect unto his susception of his offices towards the church, the Lord of hosts in the person of the Son is said to be sent by the Lord of hosts; that is, in the person of the Father. So was he the prophet of the church even before his incarnation, sent or designed by the Father to instruct it — to communicate spiritual and saving light unto it. So he testified concerning himself

unto the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I am," John 8:58. Which, as it invincibly proves his eternal pre-existence unto his incarnation, so it is not only intended. He was so before Abraham, as that the care of the church was then and always from the beginning on him. And he discharged this office four ways:—

(1st,) By personal appearances in the likeness of human nature, in the shape of a man, as an indication of his future incarnation; and under those appearances instructing the church. So he appeared unto Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses, to Joshua, as I have proved elsewhere. And those peculiar appearances of the person of the Son for the instruction of believers, are a full demonstration that the care and work of it were committed unto him in a peculiar manner. And I am not without thoughts, although I see some difficulty in it, that the whole Old Testament, wherein God perpetually treats with men by an assumption of human affections unto himself, so to draw us with the cords of a man, proceeded from the person of the Son, in a preparation for, and prospect of, his future incarnation.

(2dly,) By the ministry of angels upon his undertaking to be the mediator for the church with God, the angels were in a peculiar manner put into dependence on him, even as he became a new and immediate head unto the whole creation. This belonged unto that especial glory which he had with the Father "before the world was," whereof we have treated before. All things were to be anew gathered into a head in him, "both which are in heaven, and which are on earth," Ephesians 1:10. And he became "the firstborn of every creature," Colossians 1:15, the Lord and proprietor of them. Hence the whole ministry of angels was subordinate unto him; and whatever instruction was thereby given unto the church in the mind and will of God, it was immediately from him, as the great prophet of the church.

(3dly,) By sending his Holy Spirit to inspire, act, and guide the prophets, by whom God would reveal himself. God spoke unto them by the "mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began," Luke 1:70. But it was the Spirit of Christ that was in them that spoke by them, that revealed the things which concerned the redemption and salvation of the church, 1 Peter 1:11-12. And by this Spirit he himself preached unto those that were disobedient in the days of Noah, who are now in prison for their disobedience, 1 Peter 3:19-20. For he was so the prophet of the church always as to tender manifold instructions unto the perishing, unbelieving world. Hence is he said to lighten "every man that cometh into the world," John 1:9, by one way or other communicating to them some notices of God and his will; for his light shineth in, or irradiates darkness itself — that darkness which is come on the minds of men by sin — though the "darkness comprehend it not," John 1:5.

(4thly,) By the ministry of holy men, acted and moved by his Spirit. So he gave forth the word that was written for an everlasting rule of faith and obedience unto the church.

Thus were the office and work of instructing and illuminating of the church on his hand alone from the beginning, and thus were they by him discharged. This was not a work for him who was no more but a man. His human nature had no existence until the fulness of time, the latter days, and therefore could effect or operate nothing before. And whereas the apostle distinguisheth between the speaking of God in the Son and his speaking in the prophets, opposing the one to the other, (Hebrews 1:1-2) he doth it with respect unto his personal ministry unto the Church of the Jews, and not with respect unto his being the peculiar fountain of life and light unto the whole church in

all ages.

It is true, we have under the Gospel many unspeakable advantages from the prophetic office of Christ, above what they enjoyed under the Old Testament; but he was the prophet of the church equally in all ages. Only he hath given out the knowledge of the mind of God in different degrees and measures; that which was most perfect being for many reasons reserved unto the times of the Gospel; the sum whereof is, that God designed him unto a pre-eminence above all in his own personal ministry.

If any shall now inquire how the Lord Christ could be the prophet of the church before he took our nature on him and dwelt among us; I shall also ask how they suppose him to be the prophet of the church now he hath left the world and is gone to heaven, so as that we neither see him nor hear him anymore? If they shall say that he is so by his Spirit, his Word, and the ministry which he hath ordained; I say, so was he the prophet of the church before his incarnation also. To confine the offices of Christ, as unto their virtue, power and efficacy, unto the times of the Gospel only, is utterly to evacuate the first promise, with the covenant of grace founded thereon. And their minds are secretly influenced by a disbelief of his divine person, who suppose that the respect of the church unto Christ, in faith, love, trust, and instruction, commenceth from the date of his incarnation.

[2.] The full comprehension of the mind and will of God, of the whole divine counsel concerning his glory in the sanctification and salvation of the church, could not at once reside in the mind of any mere creature. Yet was this necessary unto him who was to be the prophet of the church; that is, the fountain of truth, life, and knowledge unto it. Hence is his name “Wonderful, Counsellor,” as he who was participant of all the eternal counsels of God; whereon in him as incarnate all the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge were hid, Colossians 2:3. In him this could be alone, in whom was life, and “the life was the light of men,” John 1:4. God did reveal his mind and will by angels and men. But as he did it at sundry times, so he did it by several parts, or various parcels — not only as the church was fit to receive it, but as they were able to communicate it. The whole of the divine counsels could not be comprehended, and so not declared, by any of them. Hence the angels themselves — notwithstanding their residence in the presence of God, beholding his face, and all the glorious messages wherein they were employed — learned more of his mind after the personal ministry of Christ, and the revelation of the mysteries of his counsel therein, than ever they knew before, Ephesians 3:8-9, Ephesians 3:11; 1 Peter 1:12. And on the account of their imperfection in the comprehension of his counsels, it is said that “he charged his angels with folly,” Job 4:18. And the best of the prophets not only received divine truth by parcel, but comprehended not the depths of the revelations made unto them, 1 Peter 1:11-12. To this purpose is that divine testimony, John 1:18, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” It is of all the prophets concerning whom it is affirmed, that no man hath seen God at any time. So is it evident in the antithesis between Moses the principal of them, and the Lord Christ, in the verse foregoing: “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Wherefore no man, no other man or prophet whatever hath seen God at any time; that is, had a perfect comprehension of his counsels, his mind and will, as they were to be declared unto the church. This is the privilege of the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; not only as being his eternal delight and love, but also as one acquainted with all his secret counsels — as his fellow and participant of all his bosom thoughts.

He says that “all that ever came before him were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them,” John 10:8. This some of old impiously applied unto the prophets of the Old Testament; whereas he intended it only of those false prophets who pretended of themselves that they, any of them, were the Messiah, the great Shepherd of the sheep, whom his elect sheep would not attend unto. But it is true that all who went before him, neither separately nor jointly, had the knowledge of God, so as to declare him fully unto the church.

It is the most fond and wicked imagination of the Socinians, invented to countenance their disbelief and hatred of his divine person, that during the time of his flesh he was taken up into heaven, and there taught the doctrine of the Gospel, as Mohammed feigned concerning himself and his Alkoran. The reason and foundation of his perfect knowledge of God was, his being the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, and not a fictitious rapture of his human nature. To this purpose have we his own testimony, John 3:13, “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” The matter whereof he treats is the revelation of heavenly things. For, finding Nicodemus slow in the understanding of the doctrine and necessity of regeneration, which yet was plain and evident in comparison of some other heavenly mysteries, he asks of him, “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not,” (things wrought in the earth and in your own breasts,) “how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?” if I declare unto you the deep counsels of the will of God above, John 3:12. But hereon a question might arise, how he should himself come to the knowledge of these heavenly things whereof they had never heard before, and which no other man could tell them of, especially considering what he had said before, John 3:11, “We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.” Hereof he gives an account in these words. Wherefore the ascending into heaven, which he denies unto all men whatever — “No man hath ascended up to heaven” — is an entrance into all the divine, heavenly counsels of God; no man either hath or ever had a full comprehension of these heavenly things but he himself alone. And unto him it is ascribed on a double account: first, That he came down from heaven; secondly, That when he did so, he yet still continued in heaven: which two properties give us such a description of the person of Christ as declare him a full possessor of all the counsels of God. He descended from heaven in his incarnation, whereby he became the Son of man; and he is and was then in heaven in the essence and glory of his divine nature. This is the full of what we assert. In the knowledge and revelation of heavenly mysteries, unto the calling, sanctification, and salvation of the church, doth the prophetic office of Christ consist. This he positively affirms could not otherwise be, but that he who came down from heaven was also at the same instant in heaven. This is that glorious person whereof we speak. He who, being always in heaven in the glory and essence of his divine nature, came down from heaven, not locally, by a mutation of his residence, but by dispensation in the assumption of our nature into personal union with himself — he alone is meet and able to be the prophet of the church in the revelation of the heavenly mysteries of the counsels of the will of God. In him alone were “hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” Colossians 2:3, because in him alone “dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” Colossians 2:9.

I do not hereby ascribe the infusion of omniscience, of infinite understanding, wisdom, and knowledge, into the human nature of Christ. It was and is a creature, finite and limited, nor is a capable subject of properties absolutely infinite and immense. Filled it was with light and wisdom to the utmost capacity of a creature; but it was so, not by being changed into a divine nature or

essence, but by the communication of the Spirit unto it without measure. The Spirit of the Lord did rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, and made him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, Isaiah 11:2-3.

[3.] The Spirit of God dwelling in him, in all the fullness of his graces and gifts, gave him an understanding peculiar unto himself; as above that of all creatures, so beneath the essential omniscience of the divine nature. Hence some things, as he was a man, he knew not, (Mark 13:32) but as they were given him by revelation, Revelation 1:1. But he is the prophet of the church in his whole entire person, and revealed the counsel of God, as he was in heaven in the bosom of the Father. Cursed be he that trusteth in man, that maketh flesh his arm, as to the revelations of the counsels of God. Here lies the safety, the security, the glory of the church. How deplorable is the darkness of mankind, in their ignorance of God and heavenly things! In what ways of vanity and misery have the generality of them wandered ever since our first apostasy from God! Nothing but hell is more full of horror and confusion than the minds and ways of men destitute of heavenly light. How miserably did those among them who boasted themselves to be wise, wax foolish in their imaginations! How woefully did all their inquiries after the nature and will of God, their own state, duty, and happiness, issue in curiosity, uncertainty, vanity, and falsehood! He who is infinitely good and compassionate, did from the beginning give some relief in this woeful state, by such parcels of divine revelations as he thought meet to communicate unto them by the prophets of old — such as they were able to receive. By them he set up a light shining in a dark place, as the light of stars in the night. But it was the rising of the Sun of Righteousness alone that dispelled the darkness that was on the earth, the thick darkness that was on the people, bringing life and immortality to light by the Gospel. The divine person of the Son of God, in whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, who is in the bosom of the Father, hath now made known all things unto the church, giving us the perfect idea and certainty of all sacred truth, and the full assurance of things invisible and eternal.

Three things are necessary, that we may have the benefit and comfort of divine light or truth — 1st, The fulness of its revelation; 2dly, The infallibility of it; and, 3dly, The authority from whence it doth proceed. If either of these be wanting, we cannot attain unto stability and assurance in the faith of it, or obedience unto it.

1st, Full it must be, to free us from all attempt of fear that any thing is detained or hidden from us that were needful for us to know. Without this the mind of man can never come to rest in the knowledge of truth. All that he knows may be useless unto him, for the want of that which he neither doth nor can know, because not revealed.

2dly, And it must be infallible also. For this divine truth whereof we treat, being concerning things unseen — heavenly, eternal mysteries, transcending the reach of human reason — nothing but the absolute infallibility of the revealer can bring the mind of man to assurance and acquiescency. And whereas the same truth enjoins unto us duties, many of them contrary unto our inclinations and cross unto our several interests — the great guides of corrupted nature — the revelation of it must proceed from sovereign authority, that the will may comply with the mind in the embracement of it. All these are absolutely secured in the divine person of the great prophet of the church. His infinite wisdom, his infinite goodness, his essential veracity, his sovereign authority over all, give

the highest assurance whereof a created understanding is capable, that nothing is detained from us — that there is no possibility of error or mistake in what is declared unto us, nor any pretence left of declining obedience unto the commands of the truth that we do receive. This gives the soul assured rest and peace in the belief of things which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can enter into the heart of man to conceive.” Upon the assurance of this truth alone can it with joy prefer things invisible and eternal above all present satisfactions and desires. In the persuasion hereof can it forego the best of present enjoyments, and undergo the worst of present evils; namely, in the experience of its present efficacy, and choice of that future recompense which it doth secure. And he believes not the Gospel unto his own advantage, or the glory of God, whose faith rests not in the divine person of Jesus Christ, the great prophet of the church. And he who there finds rest unto his soul, dares not admit of any copartners with him as to instruction in the mind of God.

3dly, It was requisite unto the office of this great prophet of the church, and the discharge thereof, that he should have power and authority to send the Holy Spirit to make his revelations of divine truth effectual unto the minds of men. For the church which he was to instruct, was not only in darkness, by reason of ignorance and want of objective light or divine revelations, but was incapacitated to receive spiritual things in a due manner when revealed. Wherefore, it was the work of this prophet, not only to make known and declare the doctrines of truth, which are our external directive light, but also to irradiate and illuminate our minds, so that we might savingly apprehend them. And it is no wonder if those who are otherwise minded, who suppose themselves able to receive spiritual things, the things of God, in a due manner, upon their external proposal unto them, are regardless of the divine person of Christ as the prophet of the church. But hereon they will never have experience of the life and power of the doctrine of the Gospel, if the apostle is to be believed, 1 Corinthians 2:9-12. Now, this internal illumination of the minds of men unto the acknowledgment of the truth can be wrought in them only by the Holy Spirit of God, Ephesians 1:17-19; 2 Corinthians 3:18. None, therefore, could be the prophet of the church, but he who had the power to send the Holy Spirit to enable it to receive his doctrine by the saving illumination of the minds of men. And this alone he could do, whose Spirit he is, proceeding from him; whom he therefore frequently promised so to send.

Without a respect unto these things, we cannot really be made partakers of the saving benefits and fruits of the prophetic office of Christ. And this we can have only in the exercise of faith on his divine person, which is the eternal spring from whence this office derives all life and efficacy. The command of God, in respect unto him as the prophet of the church, is, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him.” Unless we actually regard him by faith as the only begotten Son of God, we can perform no duty aright in the hearing of him, nor shall we learn the truth as we ought. Hence it is that those who deny his divine person, though they pretend to attend unto him as the teacher of the church, do yet learn no truth from him, but embrace pernicious errors in the stead thereof. So it is with the Socinians, and all that follow them. For whereas they scarcely own any other office of Christ but his prophetic — looking on him as a man sent to teach the mind of God, and to confirm his doctrine by his sufferings, whereon he was afterward highly exalted of God — they learn nothing from him in a due manner. But this respect unto the person of Christ is that which will ingenerate in us all those holy qualifications that are necessary to enable us to know the mind and will of God. For hence do reverence, humility, faith, delight, and

assurance, arise and flow; without whose continual exercise, in vain shall men hope to learn the will of God by the utmost of their endeavours. And the want of these things is the cause of much of that lifeless, unsanctified knowledge of the doctrine of the Gospel which is amongst many. They learn not the truth from Christ, so as to expect all teachings from his divine power. Hence they never come to know it, either in its native beauty drawing the soul into the love and delight of what they know, or in its transforming efficacy changing the mind into its own image and likeness.

(2.) The same also is the state of things with respect unto his kingly office and power. But this I have at large treated on elsewhere, and that much unto the same purpose; namely, in the exposition of Hebrews 1:3. Wherefore I shall not here enlarge upon it.

Some seem to imagine, that the kingly power of Christ towards the church consists only in external rule by the Gospel and the laws thereof, requiring obedience unto the officers and rulers that he hath appointed therein. It is true, that this also belongs unto his kingly power and rule; but to suppose that it consisteth solely therein, is an ebullition from the poisonous fountain of the denial of his divine person. For if he be not God over all, whatever in words may be pretended or ascribed unto him, he is capable of no other rule or power. But indeed no one act of his kingly office can be aright conceived or acknowledged, without a respect had unto his divine person. I shall instance only unto this purpose in two things in general.

[1.] The extent of his power and rule gives evidence hereunto. It is over the whole creation of God. "All power is given him in heaven and earth," Matthew 28:18. "All things are put under his feet, he only excepted who put all things under him," 1 Corinthians 15:27; and he is made "head over all things unto the church," Ephesians 1:22. Not only those who are above the rule of external law, as the holy angels; and those who have cast off all such rule, as the devils themselves; but all things that in their own nature are not capable of obedience to an external law or rule, as the whole inanimate creation, heaven, and earth, and the sea, with all things in them and under them, (Php 2:10) with the dead bodies of men, which he shall raise at the last day. For this power over the whole creation is not only a moral right to rule and govern it; but it is also accompanied with virtue, force, or almighty power, to act, order, and dispose of it at his pleasure. So is it described by the apostle from the Psalmist, Hebrews 1:10-12, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." That power is required unto his kingly office whereby he created all things in the beginning, and shall change them all, as a man folds up a vesture, in the end. Omnipotence, accompanied with eternity and immutability, are required hereunto.

It is a vain imagination, to suppose that this power can reside in a mere creature, however glorified and exalted. All essential divine properties are concurrent with it, and inseparable from it. And where are the properties of God, there is the nature of God; for his being and his properties are one and the same.

If the Lord Christ, as king of the church, be only a mere man, and be as such only to be considered, however he may be exalted and glorified — however he may be endowed with honour, dignity, and authority — yet he cannot put forth or act any real physical power immediately and directly, but where he is present. But this is in heaven only; for the heaven must receive him

“until the times of the restitution of all things,” Acts 3:21. And hereon his rule and power would be the greatest disadvantage unto the church that could befall it. For suppose it immediately under the rule of God, even the Father; his omnipotence and omnipresence, his omniscience and infinite wisdom — whereby he could be always present with every one of them, know all their wants, and give immediate relief according to the counsel of his will — were a stable foundation for faith to rest upon, and an everlasting spring of consolation. But now, whereas all power, all judgment, all rule, is committed unto the Son, and the Father doth nothing towards the church but in and by him, if he have not the same divine power and properties with him, the foundation of the church’s faith is cast down, and the spring of its consolation utterly stopped up.

I cannot believe in him as my heavenly king, who is not able by himself, and by the virtue of his presence with me, to make what changes and alterations he pleaseth in the minds of men, and in the whole creation of God, to relieve, preserve, and deliver me, and to raise my body at the last day. To suppose that the Lord Christ, as the king and head of the church, hath not an infinite, divine power, whereby he is able always to relieve, succour, save, and deliver it — if it were to be done by the alteration of the whole or any part of God’s creation, so as that the fire should not burn, nor the water overwhelm them, nor men be able to retain their thoughts or ability one moment to afflict them; and that their distresses are not always effects of his wisdom, and never from the defect of his power — is utterly to overthrow all faith, hope, and the whole of religion itself.

Ascribe therefore unto the Lord Christ, in the exercise of his kingly office, only a moral power, operative by rules and laws, with the help of external instruments — deprive him of omnipresence and omniscience, with infinite, divine power and virtue, to be acted at his pleasure in and over the whole creation — and you rase the foundation of all Christian faith and hope to the ground.

There are no true believers who will part with their faith herein for the whole world; namely, that the Lord Jesus Christ is able, by his divine power and presence, immediately to aid, assist, relieve, and deliver them in every moment of their surprisals, fears, and dangers, in every trial or duty they may be called unto, in every difficulty they have to conflict withal. And to expect these things any otherwise but by virtue of his divine nature, is woefully to deceive our own souls. For this is the work of God.

[2.] The rule of Christ, as king of the church, is internal and spiritual, over the minds, souls, and consciences of all that do believe. There is no one gracious acting of soul in any one believer, at any time in the whole world, either in opposition unto sin or the performance of duty, but it is influenced and under the guidance of the kingly power of Christ. I suppose we have herein not only the common faith, but also the common spiritual sense and experience, of them all. They know that in their spiritual life it is he that liveth in them as the efficient cause of all its acts and that without him they can do nothing. Unto him they have respect in every the most secret and retired acting of grace, not only performed as under his eye, but by his assistance; on every occasion do they immediately, in the internal acting of their minds, look unto him, as one more present with their souls than they are with themselves; and have no thoughts of the least distance of his knowledge or power. And two things are required hereto.

1st, That he be καρδιογνωστης — that he have an actual inspection into all the frames, dispositions, thoughts, and internal actings, of all believers in the whole world, at all times, and every moment. Without this, he cannot bear that rule in their souls and consciences which we

have described, nor can they act faith in him, as their occasions do require. No man can live by faith on Christ, no man can depend on his sovereign power, who is not persuaded that all the frames of his heart, all the secret groans and sighs of his spirit, all the inward labourings of his soul against sin, and after conformity to himself, are continually under his eye and cognizance. Wherefore it is said, that all things are naked and opened unto his eyes, Hebrews 4:13. And he says of himself, that he “searcheth” (that is, knoweth) “the hearts and reins of men,” Revelation 2:23. And if these things are not the peculiar properties of the divine nature, I know nothing that may be so esteemed.

2dly, There is required hereunto an influence of power into all the acting of the souls of believers; — all intimate, efficacious operation with them in every duty, and under every temptation. These all of them do look for, expect, and receive from him, as the king and head of the church. This also is an effect of divine and infinite power. And to deny these things unto the Lord Christ, is to rase the foundation of Christian religion. Neither faith in, nor love unto him, nor dependence on him, nor obedience unto his authority, can be preserved one moment, without a persuasion of his immediate intuition and inspection into the hearts, minds, and thoughts of all men, with a real influence into all the acting of the life of God in all them that believe. And the want of the faith hereof is that which hath disjoined the minds of many from adherence unto him, and hath produced a lifeless carcass of the Christian religion, instead of the saving power thereof.

(3.) The same may be said concerning his sacerdotal office, and all the acts of it. It was in and by the human nature that he offered himself a sacrifice for us. He had somewhat of his own to offer, Hebrews 8:3; and to this end a body was prepared for him, Hebrews 10:5. But it was not the work of a man, by one offering, and that of himself, to expiate the sins of the whole church, and forever to perfect them that are sanctified, which he did, Hebrews 10:14. God was to purchase his church “with his own blood,” Acts 20:28. But this also I have spoken to at large elsewhere. This is the sum of what we plead for: We can have no due consideration of the offices of Christ, can receive no benefit by them, nor perform any act of duty with respect unto them, or any of them, unless faith in his divine person be actually exercised as the foundation of the whole. For that is it whence all their glory, power, and efficacy are derived. Whatever, therefore, we do with respect unto his rule, whatever we receive by the communication of his Spirit and grace, whatever we learn from his Word by the teachings of his Spirit, whatever benefit we believe, expect, and receive, by his sacrifice and intercession on our behalf; our faith in them all, and concerning them all, is terminated on his divine person. The church is saved by his offices, because they are his. This is the substance of the testimony given concerning him, by God, even the Father, 1 John 5:10-11. “This is the record” that God hath testified concerning his Son, “that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” Eternal life is given unto us, as it was wrought out and procured by the mediation of Christ on our behalf. But yet in him it was originally, and from him do we receive it in the discharge of his office; for this life is in the Son of God.

Hence it is that all those by whom the divine person of Christ is denied, are forced to give such a description of his offices, as that it is utterly impossible that the church should be saved by the discharge of them.

## 04.08. Chapter 8

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Chapter VIII. The Faith of the Church under the Old Testament in and concerning the Person of Christ. A brief view of the faith of the church under the Old Testament concerning the divine person of Christ, shall close these discourses, and make way for those that ensue, wherein our own duty with respect whereunto shall be declared. That the faith of all believers, from the foundation of the world, had a respect unto him, I shall afterwards demonstrate; and to deny it, is to renounce both the Old Testament and the New. But that this faith of theirs did principally respect his person, is what shall here be declared. Therein they knew was laid the foundation of the counsels of God for their deliverance, sanctification, and salvation. Otherwise it was but little they clearly understood of his office, or the way whereby he would redeem the church. The apostle Peter, in the confession he made of him, (Matthew 16:16) exceeded the faith of the Old Testament in this, that he applied the promise concerning the Messiah unto that individual person: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" — he that was to be the Redeemer and Saviour of the church. Howbeit Peter then knew little of the way and manner whereby he was principally so to be. And therefore, when he began to declare them unto his disciples — namely, that they should be by his death and sufferings — he in particular was not able to comply with it, but, saith he, "Master, that be far from thee," Matthew 16:22. As "flesh and blood" — that is, his own reason and understanding — did not reveal or declare Him unto Peter to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, but the Father which is in heaven; so he stood in need of fresh assistance from the same almighty hand to believe that He should redeem and save his church by his death. And therefore he did refuse the external revelation and proposition of it, though made by Christ himself, until he received internal aid from above. And to suppose that we have faith now in Christ or his death on any other terms, is an evidence that we have no faith at all.

Wherefore, the faith of the saints under the Old Testament did principally respect the person of Christ — both what it was, and what it was to be in the fulness of time, when he was to become the seed of the woman. What his especial work was to be, and the mystery of the redemption of the church thereby, they referred unto his own wisdom and grace; — only, they believed that by him they should be saved from the hand of all their enemies, or all the evil that befell them on the account of the first sin and apostasy from God.

God gave them, indeed, representations and prefigurations of his office and work also. He did so by the high priest of the law, the tabernacle, with all the services and services thereunto belonging. All that Moses did, as a faithful servant in the house of God, was but a "testimony of those things which were to be spoken after," Hebrews 3:5. Howbeit the apostle tells us that all those things had but a "shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things themselves," Hebrews 10:1. And although they are now to us full of light and instruction, evidently expressing the principal works of Christ's mediation, yet were they not so unto them. For the veil is now taken off from them in their accomplishment, and a declaration is made of the counsels of God in them by the Gospel. The meanest believer may now find out more of the work of Christ in the types of the Old Testament, than any prophets or wise men could have done of old. Therefore they always

earnestly longed for their accomplishment — that the day might break, and the shadows fly away by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings. But as unto his person, they had glorious revelations concerning it; and their faith in him was the life of all their obedience. The first promise, which established a new intercourse between God and man, was concerning his incarnation — that he should be the seed of the woman, Genesis 3:15; that is, that the Son of God should be “made of a woman, made under the law,” Galatians 4:4. From the giving of that promise the faith of the whole church was fixed on him whom God would send in our nature, to redeem and save them. Other way of acceptance with him there was none provided, none declared, but only by faith in this promise. The design of God in this promise — which was to reveal and propose the only way which in his wisdom and grace he had prepared for the deliverance of mankind from the state of sin and apostasy whereinto they were cast, with the nature of the faith and obedience of the church — will not admit of any other way of salvation, but only faith in him who was thus promised to be a saviour. To suppose that men might fall off from faith in God by the revelation of himself in this promise, and yet be saved by attending to instructions given by the works of creation and providence, is an imagination that will no longer possess the minds of men than whilst they are ignorant of, or do forget, what it is to believe and to be saved. The great promise made unto Abraham was, that He should take his seed upon him, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, Genesis 12:3; Genesis 15:18; Genesis 22:18; which promise is explained by the apostle, and applied unto Christ, Galatians 3:8. Hereon “Abraham believed on the Lord, and it was counted unto him for righteousness,” Genesis 15:6; for he saw the day of Christ, and rejoiced, John 8:56. The faith that Jacob instructed his sons in was — that the Shiloh should come, and unto him should be the gathering of the nations, Genesis 49:10. Job’s faith was — that his Redeemer was the Living One, and that he should stand on the earth in the latter day, Job 19:25. The revelations made unto David principally concerned His person, and the glory thereof. See Psalms 2:1-12, Psalms 45:1-17, Psalms 68:1-35, Psalms 72:1-20, Psalms 110:1-7, Psalms 118:1-29, especially Psalms 45:1-17 and Psalms 72:1-20 compared, which give an account of their apprehensions concerning him. The faith of Daniel was, that God would show mercy, for the Lord’s sake, Daniel 9:17; and of all the prophets that the “Redeemer should come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob,” Isaiah 49:20. Of the same nature were all his personal appearances under the Old Testament, especially that most illustrious representation made of him unto the prophet Isaiah, chap. 6, and the glorious revelation of his name, Isaiah 9:6.

It is true that both these and other prophets had revelations concerning his sufferings also. For “the Spirit of Christ that was in them testified beforehand of his sufferings, and the glory that should follow,” 1 Peter 1:11; — an illustrious testimony whereunto we have given us Psalms 22:1-31, and Isaiah 53:1-12. Nevertheless their conceptions concerning them were dark and obscure. It was his person that their faith principally regarded. Thence were they filled with desires and expectations of his coming, or his exhibition and appearance in the flesh. With the renewed promises hereof did God continually refresh the church in its straits and difficulties. And hereby did God call off the body of the people from trust in themselves, or boasting in their present privileges, which they were exceedingly prone unto. In process of time this faith, which wrought effectually in the Church of Israel, degenerated into a lifeless opinion, that proved the ruin of it. Whilst they really lived in the faith of him as the Saviour and Redeemer of the church from all its spiritual adversaries, as he who was to make “an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness,” unto whom all their present ordinances were subservient and directive; all grace, love, zeal, and patient

waiting for the accomplishment of the promise, flourished among them. But in process of time, growing carnal, trusting in their own righteousness, and the privileges which they had by the law, their faith concerning the person of Christ degenerated into a corrupt, obstinate opinion, that he should be only a temporal king and deliverer; but as unto righteousness and salvation they were to trust unto themselves and the law. And this prejudicate opinion, being indeed a renunciation of all the grace of the promises of God, proved their utter ruin. For when he came in the flesh, after so many ages, filled up with continued expectations, they rejected and despised him as one that had neither form nor comeliness for which he should be desired. So doth it fall out in other churches. That which was faith truly spiritual and evangelical in their first planting, becomes a lifeless opinion in succeeding ages. The same truths are still professed, but that profession springs not from the same causes, nor doth it produce the same effects in the hearts and lives of men. Hence, in process of time, some churches continue to have an appearance of the same body which they were at first, but — being examined — are like a lifeless, breathless carcass, wherein the animating Spirit of grace doth not dwell. And then is any church, as it was with that of the Jews, nigh to destruction, when it corrupts formerly professed truths, to accommodate them unto the present lusts and inclinations of men.

## 04.09. Chapter 9

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### Chapter IX.

#### Honour due to the Person of Christ — The Nature and Causes of it.

Many other considerations of the same nature with those foregoing, relating unto the glory and honour of the person of Christ, may be taken from all the fundamental principles of religion. And our duty it is in them all, to “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession” — “the Author and Finisher of our faith”. I shall not insist on more, but proceed unto those principles of truth which are immediately directive of our duty towards him; without diligent attendance whereunto, we do but in vain bear the name of Christians. And the substance of what is designed may be included in the following assertion:—

“The glory, life, and power of Christian religion, as Christian religion, and as seated in the souls of men, with all the acts and duties which properly belong thereunto, and are, therefore, peculiarly Christian, and all the benefits and privileges we receive by it, or by virtue of it, with the whole of the honour and glory that arise unto God thereby, have all of them their formal nature and reason from their respect and relation unto the person of Christ; nor is he a Christian who is otherwise minded.” In the confirmation hereof it will appear what judgment ought to be passed on that inquiry — which, after the uninterrupted profession of the catholic church for so many ages of a faith unto the contrary, is begun to be made by some amongst us — namely, Of what use is the person of Christ in religion? For it proceeds on this supposition, and is determined accordingly — that there is something in religion wherein the person of Christ is of no use at all; — a vain imagination, and such as is destructive unto the whole real intercourse between God and man, by the one and only Mediator! The respect which we have in all acts of religion unto the person of Christ may be reduced unto these four heads: I. Honour. II. Obedience. III. Conformity. IV. The use we make of him, for the attaining and receiving of all Gospel privileges — all grace and glory. And hereunto the whole of our religion, as it is Christian or evangelical, may be reduced.

I. The person of Christ is the object of divine honour and worship. The formal object and reason hereof is the divine nature, and its essential infinite excellencies. For they are nothing but that respect unto the Divine Being which is due unto it from all rational creatures, regulated by revelation, and enforced by divine operations. Wherefore the person of Christ is primarily the object of divine honour and worship, upon the account of his divine nature and excellencies. And those who, denying that nature in him, do yet pretend to worship him with divine and religious adoration, do but worship a golden calf of their own setting up; for a Christ who is not over all, God blessed forever, is not better. And it implies a contradiction, that any creature should, on any accounts be the immediate, proper object of divine worship; unless the divine essential excellencies be communicated unto it, or transfused into it, whereby it would cease to be a creature. For that worship is nothing but the ascription of divine excellencies unto what is so worshipped. But we now consider the Lord Christ in his whole entire person, the Son of God incarnate, “God manifest in the flesh.” His infinite condescension, in the assumption of our nature,

did no way divest him of his divine essential excellencies. For a time, they were shadowed and veiled thereby from the eyes of men; when “he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant.” But he eternally and unchangeably continued “in the form of God,” and “thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” Php 2:6-7. He can no more really and essentially, by any act of condescension or humiliation, cease to be God, than God can cease to be. Wherefore, his being clothed with our nature derogates nothing from the true reason of divine worship due unto him, but adds an effectual motive unto it. He is, therefore, the immediate object of all duties of religion, internal and external; and in the dispensation of God towards us, none of them can be performed in a due manner without a respect unto him.

This, then, in the first place, is to be confirmed; namely, that all divine honour is due unto the Son of God incarnate — that is, the person of Christ.

John 5:23 : It is the will of the Father, “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.” Some considerations on this divine testimony will confirm our position. It is of the Son incarnate that the words are spoken — as all judgment was committed unto him by the Father, as he was “sent” by him, John 5:22 — that is, of the whole person of Christ in the exercise of his mediatory office. And with respect hereunto it is that the mind of God is peculiarly revealed. The way whereby God manifesteth his will, that all men should thus honour the Son, as they honour the Father, is by committing all power, authority, and judgment unto him, John 5:20-22, “For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” Not that these things are the formal reason and cause of the divine honour which is to be given him; but they are reasons of it, and motives unto it, in that they are evidences of his being the Son of God. But it may be said, What need is there that the Father should so interpose an act of his will and sovereign pleasure as to this honouring of the Son, seeing the sole cause and reason of this divine honour is the divine nature, which the Son is no less partaker of than the Father? I answer —

(1.) He doth not in this command intend the honour and worship of Christ absolutely as God, but distinctly as the Son; which peculiar worship was not known under the Old Testament, but was now declared necessary in the committing all power, authority, and judgment unto him. This is the honour whereof we speak.

(2.) He doth it, lest any should conceive that “as he was now sent of the Father,” and that in the “form of a servant,” this honour should not be due unto him. And the world was then far from thinking that it was so; and many, I fear, are yet of the same mind. He is, therefore, to be honoured by us, according to the will of God, καθ'■, “in like manner,” as we honour the Father.

[1.] With the same honour; that is, divine, sacred, religious, and supreme. To honour the Father with other honour, is to dishonour him. When men design to give glory and honour to God which is not truly divine, it is idolatry; for this honour, in truth, is nothing but the ascription of all infinite, divine excellencies unto him. Whereon, when men ascribe unto him that which is not so, they fall into idolatry, by the worship of their own imaginations. So was it with the Israelites, when they thought to have given glory to God by making a golden calf, whereon they proclaimed a feast unto

Jehovah, Exodus 32:5. And so was it with the heathen in all their images of God, and the glory which they designed to give him thereby, as the apostle declares, Romans 1:23-25. This is one kind of idolatry — as the other is — the ascribing unto creatures anything that is proper and peculiar unto God, any divine excellency. And we do not honour God the Father with one kind of honour, and the Son with another. That were not to honour the Son καθ' ἑαυτὸν, “as” we honour the Father, but in a way infinitely different from it.

[2.] In the same manner, with the same faith, love, reverence, and obedience, always, in all things, in all acts and duties of religion whatever. This distinct honour is to be given unto the person of the Son by virtue of this command of the Father, though originally on the account of his oneness in nature with the Father. And our duty herein is pressed with the highest enforcement; he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father. He who denieth the Son (herein) “hath not the Father; [but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also,]” 1 John 2:23. “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life,” 1 John 5:11-12. If we are wanting herein, whatever we pretend, we do not worship nor honour God at all. And there is reason to give this caution — reason to fear that this great fundamental principle of our religion is, if not disbelieved, yet not much attended unto in the world. Many, who profess a respect unto the Divine Being and the worship thereof, seem to have little regard unto the person of the Son in all their religion; for although they may admit of a customary interposition of his name in their religious worship, yet the same distinct veneration of him as of the Father, they seem not to understand, or to be exercised in. Howbeit, all the acceptance of our persons and duties with God depends on this one conditions — “That we honour the Son, even as we honour the Father.” To honour the Son as we ought to honour the Father, is that which makes us Christians, and which nothing else will so do. This honour of the person of Christ may be considered — in the duties of it, wherein it doth consist; and in the principle, life, or spring, of those duties. The duties whereby we ascribe and express divine honour unto Christ may be reduced unto two heads, 1st, Adoration; 2dly, Invocation.

1st, Adoration is the prostration of soul before him as God, in the acknowledgment of his divine excellencies and the ascription of them unto him. It is expressed in the Old Testament by **שָׁחוּ**; that is, humbly to bow down ourselves or our souls unto God. The LXX. render it constantly by προσκυνῶ; which is the word used in the New Testament unto the same purpose. The Latins expressed it usually by adoro. And these words, though of other derivations, are of the same signification with that in the Hebrew; and they do all of them include some external sign of inward reverence, or a readiness thereunto. Hence is that expression, “He bowed down his head and worshipped,” [Genesis 24:26] see [also] Psalms 95:6. And these external signs are of two sorts (1st,) Such as are natural and occasional; (2dly,) Such as are solemn, stated, or instituted. Of the first sort are the lifting up of our eyes and hands towards heaven upon our thoughts of him, and sometimes the casting down of our whole persons before him; which deep thoughts with reverence will produce. Outward instituted signs of this internal adoration are all the ordinances of evangelical worship. In and by them do we solemnly profess and express our inward veneration of him. Other ways may be invented to the same purpose, but the Scripture knows them not, yea, condemns them. Such are the veneration and adoration of the pretended images of him, and of the Host, as they call it, among the Papists. This adoration is due continually to the person of Christ, and that — as in the exercise of the office of mediation. It is due unto him from

the whole rational creation of God. So is it given in charge unto the angels above. For when he brought the First-begotten into the world, he said, Προσκυνηστωσαν ατο παντες γγελου Θεο; that is, "Worship him, all ye gods," Psalms 97:7. "Let all the angels of God worship him," adore him, bow down before him, Hebrews 1:6. See our exposition of that place; — the design of the whole chapter being to express the divine honour that is due unto the person of Christ, with the grounds thereof. This is the command given also unto the church, "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him," Psalms 95:11. A glorious representation hereof — whether in the church above, or in that militant here on the earth — is given us, Revelation 5:6-14, "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever." The especial object of divine adoration, the motives unto it, and the nature of it, or what it consisteth in, are here declared. The object of it is Christ, not separately, but distinctly from the Father, and jointly with him. And he is proposed, 1st, As having fulfilled the work of his mediation in his incarnation and oblation — as a Lamb slain. 2dly, In his glorious exaltation — "in the midst of the throne of God." The principal thing that the heathen of old observed concerning the Christian religion, was, that in it "praises were sung to Christ as unto God." The motives unto this adoration are the unspeakable benefits which we receive by his mediation, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God," &c.

Hereon the same glory, the same honour, is ascribed unto him as unto God the Father: "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." The nature of this adoration is described to consist in three things. 1st, Solemn prostration: "And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever." So also is it described, Revelation 4:10-11. 2dly, In the ascription of all divine honour and glory, as is at large expressed, Revelation 5:11-13. 3dly, In the way of expressing the design of their souls in this adoration, which is by the praises: "They sung a new song" — that is, of praise; for so are all those psalms which have that title of a new song. And in these things — namely, solemn prostration of soul in the acknowledgment of divine excellencies, ascriptions of glory and honour with praise — doth religious adoration consist. And they belong not unto the great holy society of them who worship above and here below — whose

hearts are not always ready unto this solemn adoration of the Lamb, and who are not on all occasions exercised therein. And this adoration of Christ doth differ from the adoration of God, absolutely considered, and of God as the Father, not in its nature, but merely on the account of its especial motives. The principal motive unto the adoration of God, absolutely considered, is the work of creation — the manifestation of his glory therein — with all the effects of his power and goodness thereon ensuing. So it is declared, Revelation 4:11, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” And the principal motive unto the adoration and worship of God as the Father, is that eternal love, grace, and goodness, which he is the fountain of in a peculiar manner, Ephesians 1:4-5. But the great motive unto the adoration of Christ is the work of redemption, Revelation 5:12, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” The reason whereof is given, Revelation 5:9-10, “For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood; and made us unto our God kings and priests.” The adoration is the same, Revelation 5:13, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.” But the immediate motives of it are different, as its objects are distinct.

Herein no small part of the life of the Christian religion doth consist. The humbling of our souls before the Lord Christ, from an apprehension of his divine excellencies — the ascription of glory, honour, praise, with thanksgiving unto him, on the great motive of the work of redemption with the blessed effects thereof — are things wherein the life of faith is continually exercised; nor can we have any evidence of an interest in that blessedness which consists in the eternal assignation of all glory and praise unto him in heaven, if we are not exercised unto this worship of him here on earth.

2dly, Invocation is the second general branch of divine honour — of that honour which is due and paid unto the Son, as unto the Father. This is the first exercise of divine faith — the breath of the spiritual life. And it consisteth in two things, or hath two parts. (1st,) An ascription of all divine properties and excellencies unto him whom we invoke. This is essential unto prayer, which without it is but vain babbling. Whoever comes unto God hereby, “must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (2dly,) There is in it also a representation of our wills, affections, and desires of our souls, unto him on whom we call, with an expectation of being heard and relieved, by virtue of his infinitely divine excellencies. This is the proper acting of faith with respect unto ourselves; and hereby it is our duty to give honour unto the person of Christ. When he himself died in the flesh, he committed his departing soul by solemn invocation into the hands of his Father, Psalms 31:5; Luke 23:46, “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.” And to evidence that it is the will of God that we should honour the Son, as we honour the Father, even as the Son himself in his human nature, who is our example, honoured the Father — he who first died in the faith of the Gospel, bequeathed his departing soul into the hands of Jesus Christ by solemn invocation, Acts 7:59, “They stoned Stephen, ■πικαλο■μενον, solemnly invoking, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And having by faith and prayer left his own soul safe in the hands of the Lord Jesus, he adds one petition more unto him, wherewith he died: “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,” Acts 7:60. Herein did he give divine honour unto Christ in the especial invocation of his name, in the highest instances that can be conceived. In his first request, wherein he committed his departing soul into his hands, he ascribed unto him divine omniscience,

omnipresence, love, and power; and in the latter, for his enemies, divine authority and mercy, to be exercised in the pardon of sin. In his example is the rule established for the especial invocation of Christ for the effects of divine power and mercy.

Hence the apostle describeth the church, or believers, and distinguisheth it, or them, from all others, by the charge of this duty, 1 Corinthians 1:2, "With all that call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours." To call on the name of the Lord Jesus expresseth solemn invocation in the way of religious worship. The Jews did call on the name of God. All others in their way called on the names of their gods. This is that whereby the church is distinguished from them all — it calls on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He requires that, as we believe on God, that is, the Father, so we should believe on him also; and therein honour the Son, as we honour the Father, John 14:1. The nature of this faith, and the manner how it is exercised on Christ, we shall declare afterwards. But the apostle, treating of the nature and efficacy of this invocation, affirms, that we cannot call on him in whom we have not believed, Romans 10:14. Whence it follows, on the contrary, that he on whom we are bound to believe, on him it is our duty to call. So the whole Scripture is closed with a prayer of the church unto the Lord Christ, expressing their faith in him: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," Revelation 22:20.

There is not any one reason of prayer — not any one motive unto it — not any consideration of its use or efficacy — but renders this peculiar invocation of Christ a necessary duty. Two things in general are required to render the duty of invocation lawful and useful. First, That it have a proper object. Secondly, That it have prevalent motives and encouragements unto it. These in concurrence are the formal reason and ground of all religious worship in general, and of prayer in particular. So are they laid down as the foundation of all religion, Exodus 20:2-3, "I am the Lord thy God" — that is, the proper object of all religious worship — "which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;" which being summarily and typically representative of all divine benefits, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, is the great motive thereunto. The want of both these in all mere creatures, saints and angels, makes the invocation of them, not only useless, but idolatrous. But they both eminently concur in the person of Christ, and his acting towards us. All the perfections of the divine nature are in him; whence he is the proper object of religious invocation. On this account when he acted in and towards the church as the great angel of the covenant, God instructed the people unto all religious observance of him, and obedience unto him, Exodus 23:21, "Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him." Because the name of God was in him — that is, the divine nature, with sovereign authority to punish or pardon sin — therefore was all religious obedience due unto him. And no motives are wanting hereunto. All that the Lord Christ hath done for us, and all the principles of love, grace, compassion, and power, from whence what he hath so done did proceed, are all of this nature; and they are accompanied with the encouragement of his relation unto us, and charge concerning us. Take away this duty, and the peculiar advantage of the Christian religion is destroyed.

We have lived to see the utmost extremes that the Christian religion can divert into. Some, with all earnestness, do press the formal invocation of saints and angels as our duty; and some will not grant that it is lawful for us so to call on Christ himself. The Socinians grant generally that it is lawful for us to call on Christ; but they deny that it is our duty at any time so to do. But as they own

that it is not our duty, so on their principles it cannot be lawful. Denying his divine person, they leave him not the proper object of prayer. For prayer without an ascription of divine excellencies — as omniscience, omnipresence, and almighty power — unto him whom we invoke, is but vain babbling, that hath nothing of the nature of true prayer in it; and to make such ascriptions unto him who by nature is not God, is idolatrous. The solemn ordinary worship of the church, and so of private believers in their families and closets, is under an especial directory and guidance. For the person of the Father — as the eternal fountain of power, grace, and mercy — is the formal object of our prayers, unto whom our supplications are directed. The divine nature, also lately considered, is the object of natural worship and invocation; but it is the same divine nature, in the person of the Father, that is the proper object of evangelical worship and invocation. So our Saviour hath taught us to call on God under the name and notion of a father, Matthew 6:9; that is, his God and our God, his Father and our Father, John 20:17. And this invocation is to be by and in the name of the Son, Jesus Christ, through the aid of the Holy Ghost. He is herein considered as the mediator between God and man — as the Holy Ghost is he by whom supplies of grace, enabling us unto the acceptable performance of our duties are actually communicated unto us. This is the way whereby God will be glorified. This is the mystery of our religion, that we worship God according to the economy of his wisdom and grace, wherein he doth dispense of himself unto us, in the persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Otherwise he will not be honoured or worshipped by us. And those who in their worship or invocation do attempt an approach unto the divine nature as absolutely considered, without respect unto the dispensation of God in the distinct persons of the holy Trinity, do reject the mystery of the Gospel, and all the benefit of it. So is it with many. And not a few, who pretend a great devotion unto God, do supply other things into the room of Christ, as saints and angels — rejecting also the aids of the Spirit to comply with imaginations of their own, whose as distance herein they more approve of. But this is the nature and method of ordinary solemn evangelical invocation. So it is declared, Ephesians 2:18, “Through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” It is the Father unto whom we have our access, whom we peculiarly invoke; as it is expressed, Ephesians 3:14-16, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you,” &c. But it is through him — that is, by Christ in the exercise of his mediatory office — that we have this access unto the Father; we ask in his name, and for his sake, John 14:13-14; John 16:23-24. They did so of old, though not in that express exercise of faith which we now attain unto. Daniel 9:17, “Hear, O Lord, and have mercy, for the Lord’s sake.” All this are we enabled unto by one Spirit — through the aids and assistance of the Spirit of grace and supplication, Romans 8:26-27. So that prayer is our crying — “Abba, Father,” by the Spirit of the Son, Galatians 4:6. This is farther declared, Hebrews 4:15-16; Hebrews 10:19-22. Herein is the Lord Christ considered, not absolutely with respect unto his divine person, but with respect unto his office, that through “him our faith and hope might be in God,” 1 Peter 1:21.

Wherefore, it being our duty, as hath been proved, to invoke the name of Christ in a particular manner, and this being the ordinary solemn way of the worship of the church — we may consider on what occasions, and in what seasons, this peculiar invocation of Christ, who in his divine person is both our God and our advocate, is necessary for us, and most acceptable unto him.

(1st.) Times of great distresses in conscience through temptations and desertions, are seasons requiring an application unto Christ by especial invocation. Persons in such conditions, when their

souls, as the Psalmist speaks, are overwhelmed in them, are continually solicitous about compassion and deliverance. Some relief, some refreshment, they often find in pity and compassion from them who either have been in the same condition themselves, or by Scripture light do know the terror of the Lord in these things. When their complaints are despised, and their troubles ascribed unto other causes than what they are really sensible of, and feel within themselves — as is commonly done by physicians of no value — it is an aggravation of their distress and sorrow. And they greatly value every sincere endeavour for relief, either by counsel or prayer. In this state and condition the Lord Christ in the Gospel is proposed as full of tender compassion — as he alone who is able to relieve them. In that himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and knows how to have compassion on them that are out of the way, Hebrews 2:18; Hebrews 4:15; Hebrews 5:2. So is he also, as he alone who is able to succour, to relieve, and to deliver them. “He is able to succour them that are tempted,” Hebrews 2:18. Hereon are they drawn, constrained, encouraged to make applications unto him by prayer, that he would deal with them according to his compassion and power. This is a season rendering the discharge of this duty necessary. And hereby have innumerable souls found consolation, refreshment, and deliverance. A time of trouble is a time of the especial exercise of faith in Christ. So himself gives direction, John 14:1, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.” Distinct acting of faith on Christ are the great means of supportment and relief in trouble. And it is by especial invocation, whereby they put forth and exert themselves. An instance hereof, as unto temptation, and the distress wherewith it is attended, we have in the apostle Paul. He had “a thorn in the flesh,” “a messenger of Satan to buffet” him. Both expressions declare the deep sense he had of his temptation, and the perplexity wherewith it was accompanied. “For this cause he besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from him,” 2 Corinthians 12:7-8. He applied himself solemnly unto prayer for its removal, and that frequently. And it was the Lord — that is, the Lord Jesus Christ — unto whom he made his application. For so the name Lord is to be interpreted — if there be nothing contrary in the context — as the name of God is of the Father, by virtue of that rule, 1 Corinthians 8:6, “To us there is one God, the Father; and one Lord Jesus Christ.” And it is evident also in the context. The answer he received unto his prayer was, “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my power [strength] is made perfect in weakness”. And whose power that was, who gave him that answer, he declares in the next words, “Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me,” that is, the power of him on whom he called, who gave him that answer, “My power is made perfect in weakness.”

(2dly,) Times of gracious discoveries either of the glory of Christ in himself, or of his love unto us, are seasons that call for this duty. The glory of Christ in his person and offices is always the same, and the revelation that is made of it in the Scripture varies not; but — as unto our perception and apprehension of it, whereby our hearts and minds are affected with it in an especial manner — there are apparent seasons of it which no believers are unacquainted withal. Sometimes such a sense of it is attained under the dispensation of the Word; wherein as Christ on the one hand is set forth evidently crucified before our eyes, so on the other he is gloriously exalted. Sometimes it is so in prayer, in meditation, in contemplation on him. As an ability was given unto the bodily sight of Stephen, to see, upon the opening of the heavens, “the glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand,” Acts 7:55-56 — so he opens the veil sometimes, and gives a clear, affecting discovery of his glory unto the minds and souls of believers; and in such seasons are they drawn forth and excited unto invocation and praise. So Thomas — being surprised with an apprehension and

evidence of his divine glory and power after his resurrection, wherein he was declared to be the Son of God with power, Romans 1:4 — cried unto him, “My Lord and my God,” John 20:28. There was in his words both a profession of his own faith and a solemn invocation of Christ. When, therefore, we have real discoveries of the glory of Christ, we cannot but speak to him, or of him. “These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him,” John 12:41. And Stephen, upon a view of it in the midst of his enraged enemies, testified immediately, “I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.” And thereby was he prepared for that solemn invocation of his name which he used presently after, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” Acts 7:56, Acts 7:59. And so, also, upon his appearance as the Lamb, to open the book of prophecies; wherein there was an eminent manifestation of his glory — seeing none else could be found in heaven, or earth, or under the earth, that was able to open the book, or so much as to look thereon,” Revelation 5:3. “The four and twenty elders fell down before him,” and presenting all the prayers of the saints, “sang a new song” of praise unto him, Revelation 5:8-10. This is our duty, this will be our wisdom, upon affecting discoveries of the glory of Christ; namely, to apply ourselves unto him by invocation or praise; and thereby will the refreshment and advantage of them abide upon our minds. So is it also as unto his love. The love of Christ is always the same and equal unto the church. Howbeit there are peculiar seasons of the manifestation and application of a sense of it unto the souls of believers. So it is when it is witnessed unto them, or shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. Then is it accompanied with a constraining power, to oblige us to live unto him who died for use and rose again, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. And of our spiritual life unto Christ, invocation of him is no small portion and this sense of his love we might enjoy more frequently than for the most part we do, were we not so much wanting unto ourselves and our own concerns. For although it be an act of sovereign grace in God to grant it unto us, and affect us with it, as it seems good unto him, yet is our duty required to dispose our hearts unto its reception. Were we diligent in casting out all that “filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness” which corrupts our affections, and disposes the mind to abound in vain imaginations; were our hearts more taken off from the love of the world, which is exclusive of a sense of divine love; did we more meditate on Christ and his glory; — we should more frequently enjoy these constraining visits of his love than now we do. So himself expresseth it, Revelation 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” He makes intimation of his love and kindness unto us. But oftentimes we neither hear his voice when he speaks, nor do open our hearts unto him. So do we lose that gracious, refreshing sense of his love, which he expresseth in that promise, “I will sup with him, and he shall sup with me.” No tongue can express that heavenly communion and blessed intercourse which is intimated in this promise. The expression is metaphorical, but the grace expressed is real, and more valued than the whole world by all that have experience of it. This sense of the love of Christ and the effect of it in communion with him, by prayer and praises, is divinely set forth in the Book of Canticles. The church therein is represented as the spouse of Christ; and, as a faithful spouse, she is always either solicitous about his love, or rejoicing in it. And when she hath attained a sense of it, she aboundeth in invocation admiration and praise. So doth the church of the New Testament, upon an apprehension of his love, and the unspeakable fruits of it: “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen,” Revelation 1:5-6. This, therefore, is another season that calls for this duty.

(3dly;) Times of persecution for his Name's sake, and for the profession of the gospel, are another season rendering this peculiar invocation of Christ both comely and necessary. Two things will befall the minds of believers in such a season; — [1st,] that their thoughts will be neatly exercised about him, and conversant with him. They cannot but continually think and meditate on him for whom they suffer. None ever suffered persecution on just grounds, with sincere ends, and in a due manner, but it was so with them. The invincible reasons they have to suffer for him — taken from his person love, grace, and authority — from what he is in himself, what he hath done for them, and what account of all things is to be given unto him — do continually present themselves unto their minds. Wildernesses, prisons, and dungeons, have been filled with thoughts of Christ and his love. And many in former and latter ages have given an account of their communion and holy intercourse with the Lord Christ under their restraints and sufferings. And those who at any time have made an entrance into such a condition, will all of them give in the testimony of their own experience in this matter. [2dly,] Such persons have deep and fixed apprehensions of the especial concernment which the Lord Christ hath in them as unto their present condition — as also of his power to support them, or to work out their deliverance. They know and consider — that “in all their afflictions he is afflicted” — suffers in all their sufferings — is persecuted in all their persecutions; that in them all he is full of love, pity, and unspeakable compassion towards them; that his grace is sufficient for them — that his power shall be perfected in their weakness, to carry them through all their sufferings, unto his and their own glory. In these circumstances, it is impossible for them who are under the conduct of his Spirit, not to make especial applications continually unto him for those aids of grace — for those pledges of love and mercy — for those supplies of consolation and spiritual refreshments, which their condition calls for. Wherefore, in this state, the invocation of Christ is the refuge and sheet-anchor of the souls of them who truly believe in him. So it was unto all the holy martyrs of old, and in latter ages. This doctrine and duty is not for them who are at ease. The afflicted, the tempted, the persecuted, the spiritually disconsolate, will prize it, and be found in the practice of it. And all those holy souls who, in most ages, on the account of the profession of the gospel, have been reduced unto outwardly unbelievable distresses, have, as was said, left their testimony unto this duty, and the benefits of it. The refreshment which they found therein was a sufficient balance against the weight of all outward calamities, enabling them to rejoice under them with “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” This is the church's reserve against all the trials it may be exercised withal, and all the dangers whereunto it is exposed. Whilst believers have liberty of access unto him in their supplications, who hath all power in his hand, who is full of ineffable love and compassion towards them, especially as suffering for his sake — they are more than conquerors in all their tribulations.

(4thly,) When we have a due apprehension of the eminent acting of any grace in Christ Jesus, and withal a deep and abiding sense of our own want of the same grace, it is a season of especial application unto him by prayer for the increase of it. All graces as unto their habit were equal in Christ — they were all in him in the highest degree of perfection; and every one of them did he exercise in its due manner and measure on all just occasions. But outward causes and circumstances gave opportunity unto the exercise of some of them in a way more eminent and conspicuous than others were exercised in. For instance; — such were his unspeakable condescension, self-denial, and patience in sufferings; which the apostle unto this purpose insists upon, Php 2:5-8. Now the great design of all believers is to be like Jesus Christ, in all grace, and all the exercise of it. He is in all things their pattern and example. Wherefore, when they have a

view of the glory of any grace as it was exercised in Christ, and withal a sense of their own defect and want therein — conformity unto him being their design — they cannot but apply themselves unto him in solemn invocation, for a farther communication of that grace unto them, from his stores and fulness. And these things mutually promote one another in us, if duly attended unto. A due sense of our own defect in any grace will farther us in the prospect of the glory of that grace in Christ. And a view, a due contemplation, of the glorious exercise of any grace in him, will give us light to discover our own great defect therein, and want thereof. Under a sense of both, an immediate application unto Christ by prayer would be all unspeakable furtherance of our growth in grace and conformity unto him. Nor can there be any more effectual way or means to draw supplies of grace from him, to draw water from the wells of salvation. When, in a holy admiration of, and fervent love unto, any grace as eminently exercised in and by him, with a sense of our own want of the same grace, we ask it of him in faith — he will not deny it unto us. So the disciples, upon the prescription of a difficult duty, unto whose due performance a good measure of faith was required — out of a sense of the all-fulness of him, and their own defect in that grace which was necessary unto the peculiar duty there prescribed — immediately pray unto him, saying, “Lord, increase our faith,” Luke 17:5. The same is the case with respect unto any temptation that may befall us, wherewith he was exercised, and over which he prevailed.

(5thly,) The time of death, whether natural, or violent for his sake, is a season of the same nature. So Stephen recommended his departing soul into his hands with solemn prayer. “Lord Jesus,” said he, “receive my spirit.” To the same purpose have been the prayers of many of his faithful martyrs in the flames, and under the sword. In the same manner doth the faith of innumerable holy souls work in the midst of their deathbed groans. And the more we have been in the exercise of faith on him in our lives, the more ready will it be in the approaches of death, to make its resort unto him in a peculiar manner. And it may be other instances of an alike nature may be given unto the same purpose. An answer unto an inquiry which may possibly arise from what we have insisted on, shall close this discourse. For whereas the Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator, doth intercede with the Father for us, it may be inquired, Whether we may pray unto him, that he would so intercede on our behalf; whether this be comprised in the duty of invocation or prayer unto him?

Ans. 1. There is no precedent nor example of any such thing, of any such prayer, in the Scripture; and it is not safe for us to venture on duties not exemplified therein. Nor can any instance of a necessary duty be given, of whose performance we have not an example in the Scripture. 2. In the invocation of Christ, we “honour the Son, even as we honour the Father.” Wherefore his divine person is therein the formal object of our faith. We consider him not therein as acting in his mediatory office towards God for us, but as he who hath the absolute power and disposal of all the good things we pray for. And in our invocation of him, our faith is fixed on, and terminated on his person. But — as he is in the discharge of his mediatory office — through him “our faith and hope are in God,” 1 Peter 1:21. He who is the Mediator, or Jesus Christ the Mediator — as God and man in one person — is the object of all divine honour and worship. His person, and both his natures in that person, is so the object of religious worship. This is that which we are in the proof and demonstration of. Howbeit it is his divine nature, and not his discharge of the office of mediation, that is the formal reason and object of divine worship. For it consists in an ascription of infinitely divine excellencies and properties unto him whom we so worship. And to do this on any account but of the divine nature, is in itself a contradiction, and in them that do it idolatry. Had the

Son of God never been incarnate, he had been the object of all divine worship. And could there have been a mediator between God and us who was not God also, he could never have been the object of any divine worship or invocation. Wherefore Christ the Mediator, God and man in one person, is in all things to be honoured, even as we honour the Father; but it is as he is God, equal with the Father, and not as Mediator — in which respect he is inferior unto him. With respect unto his divine person, we ask immediately of himself in our supplications, — as he is Mediator — we ask of the Father in his name. The different actings of faith on him, under the same distinction shall be declared in the next chapter.

## 04.10. Chapter 10

Chapter X. The Principle of the Assignation of Divine Honour unto the Person of Christ, in both the Branches of it; which is Faith in Him. The principle and spring of this assignation of divine honour unto Christ, in both the branches of it, is faith in him. And this hath been the foundation of all acceptable religion in the world since the entrance of sin. There are some who deny that faith in Christ was required from the beginning, or was necessary unto the worship of God, or the justification and salvation of them that did obey him. For, whereas it must be granted that “without faith it is impossible to please God,” which the apostle proves by instances from the foundation of the world, Hebrews 11:1-40 — they suppose it is faith in God under the general notion of it, without any respect unto Christ, that is intended. It is not my design to contend with any, nor expressly to confute such ungrateful opinions — such pernicious errors. Such this is, which — being pursued in its proper tendency — strikes at the very foundation of Christian religion; for it at once deprives us of all contribution of light and truth from the Old Testament. Somewhat I have spoken before of the faith of the saints of old concerning him. I shall now, therefore, only confirm the truth, by some principles which are fundamental in the faith of the Gospel.

1. The first promise, Genesis 3:15 — truly called Πρωτευαγγελιον — was revealed, proposed, and given, as containing and expressing the only means of delivery from that apostasy from God, with all the effects of it, under which our first parents and all their posterity were cast by sin. The destruction of Satan and his work in his introduction of the state of sin, by a Saviour and Deliverer, was prepared and provided for in it. This is the very foundation of the faith of the church; and if it be denied, nothing of the economy or dispensation of God towards it from the beginning can be understood. The whole doctrine and story of the Old Testament must be rejected as useless, and no foundation be left in the truth of God for the introduction of the New.

2. It was the person of Christ, his incarnation and mediation, that were promised under the name of the “seed of the woman,” and the work he should do in breaking the head of the serpent, with the way whereby he should do it in suffering, by his power. The accomplishment hereof was in God’s sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the fulness of time, made under the law, or by his manifestation in the flesh, to destroy the works of the devil. So is this promise interpreted, Galatians 3:13; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 2:14-16; 1 John 3:8. This cannot be denied but upon one of these two grounds:—

(1.) That nothing is intended in that divine revelation but only a natural enmity that is between mankind and serpents. But this is so foolish an imagination, that the Jews themselves, who constantly refer this place to the Messiah, are not guilty of. All the whole truth concerning God’s displeasure on the sin of our first parents, with what concerneth the nature and consequence of that sin, is everted hereby. And whereas the foundation of all God’s future dealing with them and their posterity is plainly expressed herein, it is turned into that which is ludicrous, and of very little concernment in human life. For such is the enmity between mankind and serpents — which not one in a million knows any thing of or is troubled with. This is but to lay the axe of atheism unto all

religion built on divine revelation. Besides, on this supposition, there is in the words not the least intimation of any relief that God tendered unto our parents for their delivery from the state and condition whereinto they had cast themselves by their sin and apostasy. Wherefore they must be esteemed to be left absolutely under the curse, as the angels were that fell — which is to root all religion out of the world. For amongst them who are absolutely under the curse, without any remedy, there can be no more than is in hell. Or —

(2.) It must be, because some other way of deliverance and salvation, and not that by Christ, is here proposed and promised. But, whereas they were to be wrought by the “seed of the woman” — if this were not that Christ in whom we do believe, there was another promised, and he is to be rejected. And this is fairly at once to blot out the whole Scripture as a fable; for there is not a line of doctrinal truth in it but what depends on the traduction of Christ from this first promise.

3. This promise was confirmed, and the way of the deliverance of the church by virtue of it declared, in the institution of expiatory sacrifices. God in them and by them declared from the beginning, that “without shedding of blood there was no remission;” that atonement for sin was to be made by substitution and satisfaction. With respect unto them, the Lord Christ was called “The Lamb of God,” even as he took away the sins of the world by the sacrifice of himself, John 1:29. For we “were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,” 1 Peter 1:19. Wherein the Holy Spirit refers unto the institution and nature of sacrifices from the beginning. And he is thence represented in heaven as a “Lamb that had been slain,” Revelation 5:6 — the glory of heaven arising from the fruits and effects of his sacrifice. And because of the representation thereof in all the former sacrifices, is he said to be a “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” Revelation 13:8. And it is strange to me that any who deny not the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, should doubt whether the original of these sacrifices were of divine institution or the invention of men. And it is so, amongst others, for the reasons ensuing:—

(1.) On the supposition that they were of men’s finding out and voluntary observation, without any previous divine revelation, it must be granted that the foundation of all acceptable religion in the world was laid in, and resolved into, the wisdom and wills of men, and not into the wisdom, authority, and will of God. For that the great solemnity of religion, which was as the centre and testimony of all its other duties, did consist in these sacrifices even before the giving of the law, will not be denied. And in the giving of the law, God did not, on this supposition, confirm and establish his own institutions with additions unto them of the same kind, but set his seal and approbation unto the inventions of men. But this is contrary unto natural light, and the whole current of Scripture revelations.

(2.) All expiatory sacrifices were, from the beginning, types and representations of the sacrifice of Christ; whereon all their use, efficacy, and benefit among men — all their acceptance with God — did depend. Remove this consideration from them, and they were as irrational a service, as unbecoming the divine nature, as any thing that reasonable creatures could fix upon. They are to this day as reasonable a service as ever they were, but that only their respect unto the sacrifice of Christ is taken from them. And what person of any ordinary understanding could now suppose them a meet service whereby to glorify the divine nature? Besides, all expiatory sacrifices were of the same nature, and of the same use, both before and after the giving of the law. But that all those afterwards were typical of the sacrifice of Christ, the apostle demonstrates at large in his

Epistle unto the Hebrews. The inquiry, therefore, is, whether this blessed prefiguration of the Lord Christ and his sacrifice, as he was the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world, was an effect of the wisdom, goodness, and will of God, or of the wills and inventions of men. And let it be considered, also, that these men, who are supposed to be the authors of this wonderful representation of the Lord Christ and his sacrifice, did indeed know little of them — or, as the assertors of this opinion imagine, nothing at all. To suppose that those who knew no more of Christ than they could learn from the first promise — which, as some think, was nothing at all — should of their own heads find out and appoint this divine service, which consisted only in the prefiguration of him and his sacrifice; and that God should not only approve of it, but allow it as the principal means for the establishment and exercise of the faith of all believers for four thousand years; is to indulge unto thoughts deviating from all rules of sobriety. He that sees not a divine wisdom in this institution, hath scarce seriously exercised his thoughts about it. But I have elsewhere considered the causes and original of these sacrifices, and shall not therefore farther insist upon them.

4. Our first parents and all their holy posterity did believe this promise, or did embrace it as the only way and means of their deliverance from the curse and state of sin; and were thereon justified before God. I confess we have not infallible assurance of any who did so in particular, but those who are mentioned by name in Scripture, as Abel, Enoch, Noah, and some others; but to question it concerning others also, as of our first parents themselves, is foolish and impious. This is done by the Socinians to promote another design, namely, that none were justified before God on the belief of the first promise, but on their walking according to the light of nature, and their obedience unto some especial revelations about temporal things — the vanity whereof hath been before discovered. Wherefore, our first parents and their posterity did so believe the first promise, or they must be supposed either to have been kept under the curse, or else to have had, and to make use of, some other way of deliverance from it. To imagine the first is impious — for the apostle affirms that they had this testimony, that they pleased God, Hebrews 11:5; which under the curse none can do — for that is God's displeasure. And in the same place he confirms their faith, and justification thereon, with a "cloud of witnesses," Hebrews 12:1. To affirm the latter is groundless; and it includes a supposal of the relinquishment of the wisdom, grace, and authority of God in that divine revelation, for men to betake themselves to none knows what. For that there was in this promise the way expressed which God in his wisdom and grace had provided for their deliverance, we have proved before. To forsake this way, and to betake themselves unto any other, whereof he had made no mention or revelation unto them, was to reject his authority and grace. As for those who are otherwise minded, it is incumbent on them directly to prove these three things:—

(1.) That there is another way — that there are other means for the justification and salvation of sinners — than that revealed, declared, and proposed in that first promise. And when this is done, they must show to what end — on that supposition — the promise itself was given, seeing the end of it is evacuated.

(2.) That upon a supposition that God had revealed in the promise the way and means of our deliverance from the curses and state of sin, it was lawful unto men to forsake it, and to betake themselves unto another way, without any supernatural revelation for their guidance. For if it was not, their relinquishment of the promise was no less apostasy from God in the revelation of himself in a way of grace, than the first sin was as to the revelation of himself in the works of nature: only,

the one revelation was by inbred principles, the other by external declaration; nor could it otherwise be. Or, —

(3.) That there was some other way of the participation of the benefit of this promise, besides faith in it, or in him who was promised therein; seeing the apostle hath declared that no promise will profit them by whom it is not mixed with faith, Hebrews 4:2. Unless these things are plainly proved — which they will never be — whatever men declaim about universal objective grace in the documents of nature, it is but a vain imagination.

5. The declaration of this promise, before the giving of the law, with the nature and ends of it, as also the use of sacrifices, whereby it was confirmed, was committed unto the ordinary ministry of our first parents and their godly posterity, and the extraordinary ministry of the prophets which God raised up among them. For God spake of our redemption by Christ by the mouth of his holy prophets from the beginning of the world, Luke 1:70. No greater duty could be incumbent on them, by the light of nature and the express revelation of the will of God, than that they should, in their several capacities, communicate the knowledge of this promise unto all in whom they were concerned. To suppose that our first parents, who received this promise, and those unto whom they first declared it, looking on it as the only foundation of their acceptance with God and deliverance from the curse, were negligent in the declaration and preaching of it, is to render them brutish, and guilty of a second apostasy from God. And unto this principle — which is founded in the light of nature — there is countenance given by revelation also. For Enoch did prophesy of the things which were to accompany the accomplishment of this promise, Jude 1:14; and Noah was a preacher of the righteousness to be brought in by it, 2 Peter 2:5 — as he was an heir of the righteousness which is by faith, in himself, Hebrews 11:7.

6. All the promises that God gave afterwards unto the church under the Old Testament, before and after giving the law — all the covenants that he entered into with particular persons, or the whole congregation of believers — were all of them declarations and confirmations of the first promise, or the way of salvation by the mediation of his Son, becoming the seed of the woman, to break the head of the serpent, and to work out the deliverance of mankind. As most of these promises were expressly concerning him, so all of them in the counsel of God were confirmed in him, 2 Corinthians 1:20. And as there are depths in the Scripture of the Old Testament concerning him which we cannot fathom, and things innumerable spoken of him or in his person which we conceive not, so the principal design of the whole is the declaration of him and his grace. And it is unprofitable unto them who are otherwise minded. Sundry promises concerning temporal things were, on various occasions, superadded unto this great spiritual promise of life and grace. And the enemies of the person and mediation of Christ do contend that men are justified by their faith and obedience with respect unto those particular revelations, which were only concerning temporal things. But to suppose that all those revelations and promises were not built upon and resolved into, did not include in them, the grace and mercy of this first promise — is to make them curses instead of blessings, and deprivations of that grace which was infinitely better than what, on this supposition, was contained in them. The truth is, they were all additions unto it, and confirmations of it; nor had any thing of spiritual good in them, but upon a supposition of it. In some of them there was an ampliation of grace in the more full declaration of the nature of this promise, as well as an application unto their persons unto whom they were made. Such was the promise made unto Abraham, which had a direct respect unto Christ, as the apostle proveth, Galatians 3:1-29 and

Galatians 4:1-31.

7. Those who voluntarily, through the contempt of God and divine grace, fell off from the knowledge and faith of this promise, whether at once and by choice, or gradually through the love of sin, were in no better condition than those have been, or would be, who have so fallen off or should so apostatize from Christian religion after its revelation and profession. And although this proved, in process of time, both before and after the flood, to be the condition of the generality of mankind, yet is it in vain to seek after the means of salvation among them who had voluntarily rejected the only way which God had revealed and provided for that end. God thereon “suffered all nations to walk in their own ways,” Acts 14:16 — “winking at the times of their ignorance” — not calling them to repentance, Acts 17:30; yea, he “gave them up unto their own hearts lust, and they walked in their own counsels,” Psalms 81:12. And nothing can be more derogatory unto the wisdom and holiness of God, than to imagine that he would grant other ways of salvation unto them who had rejected that only one which he had provided; which was by faith in Christ, as revealed in that first promise.

8. From these considerations, which are all of them unquestionable principles of truth, two things are evident.

(1.) That there was no way of the justification and salvation of sinners revealed and proposed from the foundation of the world, but only by Jesus Christ, as declared in the first promise.

(2.) That there was no way for the participation of the benefits of that promise, or of his work of mediation, but by faith in him as so promised. There was, therefore, faith in him required from the foundation of the world; that is, from the entrance of sin. And how this faith respected his person hath been before declared. Now, faith in him as promised for the works and ends of his mediation, and faith in him as actually exhibited and as having accomplished his work, are essentially the same, and differ only with respect unto the economy of times, which God disposed at his pleasure. Hence the efficacy of his mediation was the same unto them who then so believed, as it is now unto us after his actual exhibition in the flesh. But yet it is acknowledged, that — as unto the clearness and fulness of the revelation of the mystery of the wisdom and grace of God in him — as unto the constitution of his person in his incarnation, and therein the determination of the individual person promised from the beginning, through the actual accomplishment of the work which he was promised for — faith in him, as the foundation of that divine honour which it is our duty to give unto him, is far more evidently and manifestly revealed and required in the Gospel, or under the New Testament, than it was under the Old. See Ephesians 3:8-11. The respect of faith now unto Christ is that which renders it truly evangelical. To believe in him, to believe on his name, is that signal especial duty which is now required of us.

Wherefore the ground of the actual assignation of divine honour unto the person of Christ, in both branches of it, adoration and invocation, is faith in him. So he said unto the blind man whose eyes he opened, “Believest thou on the Son of God?” John 9:35. And he said, “Lord, I believe; and he worshipped him,” verse 38. All divine worship or adoration is a consequent effect and fruit of faith. So also is invocation; for “How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?” Romans 10:14. Him in whom we believe, we ought to adore and invoke. For these are the principal ways whereby divine faith doth act itself. And so to adore or invoke any in whom we ought not to believe, is idolatry. This faith, therefore, on the person of Christ is our duty; yea, such a duty it is,

as that our eternal condition doth more peculiarly depend on the performance or nonperformance of it than on any other duty whatever. For constantly under those terms is it prescribed unto us. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John 3:36. Wherefore the nature and exercise of this faith must be inquired into.

There is a faith which is exercised towards those by whom the mind and will of God is revealed. So it is said of the Israelites, "They believed the Lord and Moses," Exodus 14:31; that is, that he was sent of God, was no deceiver — that it was the word and will of God which he revealed unto them. So 2 Chronicles 20:20, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." It was not the persons of the prophets, but their message, that was the object of the faith required. It was to believe what they said, as from God — not to believe in them as if they were God. So it is explained by the apostle, Acts 26:27, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." He believed that they were sent of God, and that the word they spake was from him; otherwise there was no believing of them who were dead so many ages before. And this is all the faith in Christ himself which some will allow. To believe in Christ, they say, is only to believe the doctrine of the Gospel revealed by him. Hence they deny that any could believe in him before his coming into the world, and the declaration of the mind of God in the Gospel made by him. An assent unto the truth of the Gospel, as revealed by Christ, is with them the whole of that faith in Christ Jesus which is required of us. Of all that poison which at this day is diffused in the minds of men, corrupting them from the mystery of the Gospel, there is no part that is more pernicious than this one perverse imagination, that to believe in Christ is nothing at all but to believe the doctrine of the Gospel; which yet, we grant, is included therein. For as it allows the consideration of no office in him but that of a prophet, and that not as vested and exercised in his divine person, so it utterly overthrows the whole foundation of the relation of the church unto him, and salvation by him. That which suits my present design, is to evince that it is the person of Christ which is the first and principal object of that faith wherewith we are required to believe in him; and that so to do, is not only to assent unto the truth of the doctrine revealed by him, but also to place our trust and confidence in him for mercy, relief, and protection — for righteousness, life, and salvation — for a blessed resurrection and eternal reward. This I shall first manifest from some few of those multiplied testimonies wherein this truth is declared, and whereby it is confirmed as also with some arguments taken from them; and then proceed to declare the ground, nature, and exercise of this faith itself. As unto the testimonies confirming this truth, it must be observed of them all in general, that wherever faith is required towards our Lord Jesus Christ, it is still called believing "in him," or "on his name," according as faith in God absolutely is every where expressed. If no more be intended but only the belief of the doctrine revealed by him, then whose doctrine soever we are obliged to believe, we may be rightly said to believe in them, or to believe on their name. For instance, we are obliged to believe the doctrine of Paul the apostle, the revelations made by him, and that on the hazard of our eternal welfare by the unbelieving of them; yet that we should be said to believe in Paul, is that which he did utterly detest, 1 Corinthians 1:13, 1 Corinthians 1:15. For the places themselves the reader may consult, among others John 1:12; John 3:16, John 3:18, John 3:36; John 6:29, John 6:35, John 6:41; John 7:38-39; Acts 14:23; Acts 16:31; Acts 19:4; Acts 24:24; Acts 26:18; Romans 3:26; Romans 9:33; Romans 10:11; 1 Peter 2:6; 1 John 5:10, 1 John 5:13. There is not one of these but sufficiently confirms the truth. Some few others not named may be briefly insisted on.

John 14:1, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." The distinction made between God and him limits the name of God unto the person of the Father. Faith is required in them both, and that distinctly: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." And it is the same faith, of the same kind, to be exercised in the same way and manner, that is required; as is plain in the words. They will not admit of a double faith, of one faith in God, and of another in Christ, or of a distinct way of their exercise.

Wherefore, as faith divine is fixed on, and terminated in, the person of the Father; so is it likewise distinctly in and on the person of the Son: and it was to evidence his divine nature unto them — which is the ground and reason of their faith — that he gave his command unto his disciples. This he farther testifies, John 14:9-11. And as unto the exercise of this faith, it respected the relief of their souls, under troubles, fears, and disconsolations: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." To believe in him unto the relief of our souls against troubles, is not to assent merely unto the doctrine of the Gospel, but also to place our trust and confidence in him, for such supplies of grace, for such an exercise of the acts of divine power, as whereby we may be supported and delivered. And we have herein the whole of what we plead. Divine faith acted distinctly in, and terminated on, the person of Christ — and that with respect unto supplies of grace and mercy from him in a way of divine power. So he speaks unto Martha, John 11:25-27, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?" Whereunto she answers "Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." His person was the object of her faith; and her belief in him comprised a trust for all spiritual and eternal mercies.

I shall add one more, wherein not only the thing itself, but the especial ground and reason of it, is declared, Galatians 2:20 — "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." That faith he asserts which is the cause of our spiritual life — that life unto God which we lead in the flesh, or whilst we are in the body, not yet admitted unto sight and enjoyment. Of this faith the Son of God is both the author and the object; the latter whereof is here principally intended. And this is evident from the reason and motive of it, which are expressed. This faith I live by, am in the continual exercise of, because he "loved me, and gave himself for me." For this is that which doth powerfully influence our hearts to fix our faith in him and on him. And that person who so loved us is the same in whom we do believe. If his person was the seat of his own love, it is the object of our faith And this faith is not only our duty, but our life. He that hath it not, is dead in the sight of God. But I hope it is not yet necessary to multiply testimonies to prove it our duty to believe in Jesus Christ — that is, to believe in the person of the Son of God, for other faith in Christ there is none; yet I shall add one or two considerations in the confirmation of it.

1st, There is no more necessary hereunto — namely, to prove the person of Christ the Son of God to be the proper and distinct object of faith divine — than what we have already demonstrated concerning the solemn invocation of him. For, saith the apostle, "How they call on him in whom they have not believed?" Romans 10:14. It holds on either side. We cannot, we ought not, to call on him in whom we do not, we ought not to believe. And in whom we do believe, on him we ought to call. Wherefore, if it be our duty to call on the name of Christ, it is our duty to believe in the person of Christ. And if to believe in Christ be no more but to believe the doctrine of the Gospel which he hath revealed, then every one whose doctrine we are obliged to believe, on them we

ought to call also. And on this ground, we may call on the names of the prophets and apostles, as well as on the name of Jesus Christ, and be saved thereby. But whereas invocation or prayer proceedeth from faith, and that prayer is for mercy, grace, life, and eternal salvation; faith must be fixed on the person so called on, as able to give them all unto us, or that prayer is in vain.

2dly, Again, that we are baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, and that distinctly with the Father, is a sufficient evidence of the necessity of faith in his person; for we are therein given up unto universal spiritual subjection of soul unto him, and dependence on him. Not to believe in him, on his name — that is, his person — when we are so given up unto him, or baptized into him, is virtually to renounce him. But to put a present close unto this contest: Faith in Christ is that grace whereby the church is united unto him — incorporated into one mystical body with him. It is thereby that he dwells in them, and they in him. By this alone are all supplies of grace derived from him unto the whole body. Deny his person to be the proper and immediate object of this faith, and all these things are utterly overthrown — that is, the whole spiritual life and eternal salvation of the church. This faith in the person of Christ, which is the foundation of all that divine honour in sacred adoration and invocation which is assigned unto him, may be considered two ways. First, as it respects his person absolutely; Secondly, As he is considered in the discharge of the office of mediation.

First, In the first sense, faith is placed absolutely and ultimately on the person of Christ, even as on the person of the Father. He counts it no robbery herein to be equal with the Father. And the reason hereof is, because the divine nature itself is the proper and immediate object of this faith, and all the acts of it. This being one and the same in the person of the Father and of the Son, as also of the Holy Spirit, two things do follow thereon. 1. That each person is equally the object of our faith, because equally participant of that nature which is the formal reason and object of it. 2. It follows also, that in acting faith on, and ascribing therewithal divine honour unto, any one person, the others are not excluded; yea, they are included therein. For by reason of the mutual inbeing of the Divine persons in the unity of the same nature, the object of all spiritual worship is undivided. Hence are those expressions of the Scriptures, “He that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father; he that honoureth the Son, honoureth the Father, for he and the Father are one.” And to clear our present design, three things may be observed from hence; namely, that the divine nature, with all its essential properties, is the formal reason and only ground of divine faith. As—

1st, That the Lord Christ is not the absolute and ultimate object of our faith, any otherwise but under this consideration, of his being partaker of the nature of God — of his being in the form of God, and equal unto him. Without this, to place our faith in him would be robbery and sacrilege; as is all the pretended faith of them who believe not his divine person.

2dly, There is no derogation from the honour and glory of the Father — not the least diversion of any one signal act of duty from him, nor from the Holy Spirit — by the especial acting of faith on the person of Christ; for all divine honour is given solely unto the divine nature: and this being absolutely the same in each person, in the honouring of one, they are all equally honoured. He that honoureth the Son, he therein honoureth the Father also.

3dly, Hence it appears what is that especial acting of faith on the person of Christ which we intend, and which in the Scripture is given in charge unto us, as indispensably necessary unto our salvation. And there are three things to be considered in it.

(1st.) That his divine nature is the proper formal object of this faith, on the consideration whereof alone it is fixed on him. If you ask a reason why I believe on the Son of God — if you intend what cause I have for it, what motives unto it — I shall answer, It is because of what he hath done for me, whereof afterwards. So doth the apostle, Galatians 2:20. But if you intend, what is the formal reason, ground, and warranty whereon I thus believe in him, or place my trust and confidence in him, I say it is only this, that he is “over all, God blessed for ever;” and were he not so, I could not believe in him. For to believe in any, is to expect from him that to be done for me which none but God can do.

(2dly,) That the entire person of Christ, as God and man, is the immediate object of our faith herein. The divine nature is the reason of it; but his divine person is the object of it. In placing our faith on him, we consider him as God and man in one and the same person. We believe in him because he is God; but we believe in him as he is God and man in one person. And this consideration of the person of Christ — namely, as he is God and man — in our acting of faith on him, is that which renders it peculiar, and limits or determines it unto his person, because he only is so; — the Father is not, nor the Holy Spirit. That faith which hath the person of God and man for its object, is peculiarly and distinctly placed on Christ.

(3dly,) The motives unto this distinct acting of faith on his person are always to be considered as those also which render this faith peculiar. For the things which Christ hath done for us, which are the motives of our faith in him, were peculiar unto him alone; as in the place before quoted, Galatians 2:20. Such are all the works of his mediation, with all the fruits of them, whereof we are made partakers. So God, in the first command, wherein he requires all faith, love, and obedience from the church, enforced it with the consideration of a signal benefit which it had received, and therein a type of all spiritual and eternal mercies, Exodus 20:2-3. Hence two things are evident, which clearly state this matter.

[1st.] That faith which we place upon and the honour which we give thereby unto the person of Christ, is equally placed on and honour equally given thereby unto the other persons of the Father and the Holy Spirit, with respect unto that nature which is the formal reason and cause of it. But it is peculiarly fixed on Christ, with respect unto his person as God and man, and the motives unto it, in the acts and benefits of his mediation.

[2dly.] All of Christ is considered and glorified in this acting of faith on him; — his divine nature, as the formal cause of it; his divine entire person, God and man, as its proper object; and the benefits of his mediation, as the especial motives thereunto. This faith in the person of Christ is the spring and fountain of our spiritual life. We live by the faith of the Son of God. In and by the actings hereof is it preserved, increased, and strengthened. “For he is our life,” Colossians 3:4; and all supplies of it are derived from him, by the acting of faith in him. We receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, “by the faith that is in him,” Acts 26:18. Hereby do we abide in him; without which we can do nothing, John 15:5. Hereby is our peace with God maintained — “For he is our peace,” Ephesians 2:14; and in him we have peace, according to his promise, John 16:33. All strength for the mortification of sin, for the conquest of temptations — all our increase and growth in grace — depend on the constant actings of this faith in him. The way and method of this faith is that which we have described. A due apprehension of the love of Christ, with the effects of it in his whole mediatory work on our behalf — especially in his giving himself for

us, and our redemption by his blood — is the great motive thereunto. They whose hearts are not deeply affected herewith, can never believe in him in a due manner. “I live,” saith the apostle, “by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Unless a sense hereof be firmly implanted in our souls, unless we are deeply affected with it, our faith in him would be weak and wavering, or rather none at all. The due remembrance of what the blessed Lord Jesus hath done for us, of the ineffable love which was the spring, cause, and fountain of what he so did — thoughts of the mercy, grace, peace, and glory which he hath procured thereby — are the great and unconquerable motives to fix our faith, hope, trust, and confidence in him. His divine nature is the ground and warranty for our so doing. This is that from whence he is the due and proper object of all divine faith and worship. From the power and virtue thereof do we expect and receive all those things which in our believing on him we seek after; for none but God can bestow them on us, or work them in us. There is in all the acting of our faith on him, the voice of the confession of Thomas, “My Lord and my God.” His divine person, wherein he is God and man, wherein he hath that nature which is the formal object of divine worship, and wherein he wrought all those things which are the motives thereunto, is the object of this faith; which gives its difference and distinction from faith in God in general, and faith in the person of the Father, as the fountain of grace, love, and power.

Secondly, Faith is acted on Christ under the formal notion of mediator between God and man. So it is expressed, 1 Peter 1:21, “Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.” And this acting of faith towards Christ is not contrary unto that before described, nor inconsistent with it, though it be distinct from it. To deny the person of Christ to fall under this double consideration — of a divine person absolutely, wherein he is “over all, God blessed for ever,” and, as manifested in the flesh, exercising the office of mediator between God and man — is to renounce the Gospel. And according unto the variety of these respects, so are the acting of faith various; some on him absolutely, on the motives of his mediation; some on him as mediator only. And how necessary this variety is unto the life, supportment, and comfort of believers, they all know in some measure who are so. See our exposition on Hebrews 1:1-3. Sometimes faith considers him as on the throne; sometimes as standing at the right hand of God; sometimes as the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Sometimes his glorious power, sometimes his infinite condescension, is their relief.

Wherefore, in the sense now intended, he is considered as the ordinance, as the servant of God, “who raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory.” So our faith respects not only his person, but all the acts of his office. It is faith in his blood, Romans 3:25. It is the will of God, that we should place our faith and trust in him and them, as the only means of our acceptance with him — of all grace and glory from him. This is the proper notion of a mediator. So is he not the ultimate object of our faith, wherein it rests, but God through him. “Through him have we access by one Spirit unto the Father,” Ephesians 2:18. So he is the way whereby we go to God, John 14:6; see Hebrews 10:19-22. And this so is faith in him; because he is the immediate, though not the ultimate, object of it, Acts 26:18. This is that which renders our faith in God evangelical. The especial nature of it ariseth from our respect unto God in Christ, and through him. And herein faith principally regards Christ in the discharge of his sacerdotal office. For although it is also the principle of all obedience unto him in his other offices, yet as unto fixing our faith in God through him, it is his sacerdotal

office and the effects of it that we rest upon and trust unto. It is through him as the high priest over the house of God, as he who hath made for us a new and living way into the holy place, that we draw nigh to God, Hebrews 4:14-16, Hebrews 10:19-22; 1 John 1:3. No comfortable, refreshing thoughts of God, no warrantable or acceptable boldness in an approach and access unto him, can any one entertain or receive, but in this exercise of faith on Christ as the mediator between God and man. And if, in the practice of religion, this regard of faith unto him — this acting of faith on God through him — be not the principle whereby the whole is animated and guided, Christianity is renounced, and the vain cloud of natural religion embraced in the room of it. Not a verbal mention of Him, but the real intention of heart to come unto God by him, is required of us; and thereinto all expectation of acceptance with God, as unto our persons or duties, is resolved.

We have had great endeavours of late, by the Socinians, to set forth and adorn a natural religion; as if it were sufficient unto all ends of our living unto God. But as most of its pretended ornaments are stolen from the Gospel, or are framed in an emanation of light from it, such as nature of itself could not rise unto; so the whole proceeds from a dislike of the mediation of Christ, and even weariness of the profession of faith in him. So is it with the minds of men who were never affected with supernatural revelations, with the mystery of the Gospel, beyond the owning of some notions of truth — who never had experience of its power in the life of God. But here lies the trial of faith truly evangelical. Its steady beholding of the Sun of Righteousness proves it genuine and from above. And let them take heed who find their heart remiss or cold in this exercise of it. When men begin to satisfy themselves with general hopes of mercy in God, without a continual respect unto the interposition and mediation of Christ, whereinto their hope and trust is resolved, there is a decay in their faith, and proportionally in all other evangelical graces also. Herein lies the mystery of Christian religion, which the world seems to be almost weary of.

## 04.11. Chapter 11

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### Chapter XI.

#### Obedience unto Christ — The Nature and Causes of it.

II. All holy obedience, both internal and external is that which we proposed as the second part of our religious regard unto the person of Christ. His great injunction unto his disciples is, "That they keep his commandments" — without which, none are so.

Some say the Lord Christ is to be considered as a lawgiver, and the Gospel as a new law given by him, whereby our obedience unto him is to be regulated. Some absolutely deny it, and will not grant the Gospel in any sense to be a new law. And many dispute about these things, whilst obedience itself is on all hands generally neglected. But this is that wherein our principal concernment doth lie. I shall not, therefore, at present, immix myself in any needless disputations. Those things wherein the nature and necessity of our obedience unto him is concerned, shall be briefly declared. The law under the Old Testament, taken generally, had two parts, — first, the moral preceptive part of it; and, secondly, the institutions of worship appointed for that season. These are jointly and distinctly called the law. In respect unto the first of these, the Lord Christ gave no new law, nor was the old abrogated by him — which it must be if another were given in the room of it, unto the same ends. For the introduction of a new law in the place of and unto the end of a former, is an actual abrogation of it. Neither did he add any new precepts unto it, nor give any counsels for the performance of duties in matter or manner beyond what it prescribed. Any such supposition is contrary to the wisdom and holiness of God in giving the law, and inconsistent with the nature of the law itself. For God never required less of us in the law than all that was due unto him; and his prescription of it included all circumstances and causes that might render any duty at any time necessary in the nature or degree of it. Whatever at any time may become the duty of any person towards God, in the substance or degrees of it, it is made so by the law. All is included in that summary of it, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." Nothing can be the duty of men but what and when it is required by the love of God or our neighbour. Wherefore, no additions were made unto the preceptive part of the law by our Saviour, nor counsels given by him for the performance of more than it did require. In this regard the Gospel is no new law; — only the duties of the moral and eternal law are plainly declared in the doctrine of it, enforced in its motives, and directed as to their manner and end. Nor in this sense did the Lord Christ ever declare himself to be a new lawgiver; yea, he declares the contrary — that he came to confirm the old, Matthew 5:17.

Secondly, The law may be considered as containing the institutions of worship which were given in Horeb by Moses, with other statutes and judgments. It was in this sense abolished by Christ. For the things themselves were appointed but unto the time of reformation. And thereon, as the supreme Lord and lawgiver of the Gospel Church, he gave a new law of worship, consisting in several institutions and ordinances of worship thereunto belonging. See Hebrews 3:3-6, and our explanation of that place.

Obedience unto the Lord Christ may be considered with respect unto both these; — the moral law which he confirmed, and the law of evangelical worship which he gave and appointed. And some few things may be added to clear the nature of it.

1. Obedience unto Christ doth not consist merely in doing the things which he requireth. So far the church under the Old Testament was obliged to yield obedience unto Moses; and we are yet so unto the prophets and apostles. This is done, or may be so, with respect unto any subordinate directive cause of our obedience, when it is not formally so denominated from his authority. All obedience unto Christ proceeds from an express subjection of our souls and consciences unto him.

2. No religious obedience could be due unto the Lord Christ directly, by the rule and command of the moral law, were he not God by nature also. The reason and foundation of all the obedience required therein is, "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before me." This contains the formal reason of our religious obedience. The Socinians pretend highly unto obedience to the precepts of Christ; but all obedience unto Christ himself they utterly overthrow. The obedience they pretend unto him, is but obeying God the Father according to his commands; but they take away the foundation of all obedience unto his person, by denying his divine nature. And all religious obedience unto any who is not God by nature, is idolatry. Wherefore, all obedience unto God, due by the moral law, hath respect unto the person of Christ, as one God with the Father and Holy Spirit, blessed for ever.

3. There is a peculiar respect unto him in all moral obedience as Mediator.

(1.) In that by the supreme authority over the church wherewith he was vested, he hath confirmed all the commands of the moral law, giving them new enforcements; whence he calls them his commands. "This," saith he, "is my commandment, That ye love one another;" which yet was the old commandment of the moral law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Hence the apostle calls it an old and new commandment, 1 John 2:7-8. This law was given unto the church under the Old Testament in the hand of a mediator; that is, of Moses, Galatians 3:19. It had an original power of obliging all mankind unto obedience, from its first institution or prescription in our creation; which it never lost nor abated in. Howbeit the church was obliged to have a respect unto it, as it was given unto them, "ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." See Malachi 4:4. Hereon many things hard and difficult did ensue, which we are now freed from. We are not obliged unto the observance of the moral law itself, as given in the hand of that mediator, which gave it the formal reason of a covenant unto that people, and had other statutes and judgments inseparable from it. But the same law continueth still in its original authority and power, which it had from the beginning, to oblige all indispensably unto obedience.

Howbeit, as the Church of Israel, as such, was not obliged unto obedience unto the moral law absolutely considered, but as it was given unto them peculiarly in the hand of a mediator — that is, of Moses; no more is the Evangelical Church, as such, obliged by the original authority of that law, but as it is confirmed unto us in the hand of our Mediator. This renders all our moral obedience evangelical. For there is no duty of it, but we are obliged to perform it in faith through Christ, on the motives of the love of God in him, of the benefits of his mediation, and the grace we receive by him: whatever is otherwise done by us is not acceptable unto God.

They do, therefore, for the most part, but deceive themselves and others, who talk so loudly about moral duties. I know of none that are acceptable unto God, which are not only materially, but formally so, and no more.

If the obligation they own unto them be only the original power of the moral law, or the law of our creation, and they are performed in the strength of that law unto the end of it, they are no way accepted of God. But if they intend the duties which the moral law requireth, proceeding from, and performed by, faith in Christ, upon the grounds of the love of God in him, and grace received from him — then are they duties purely evangelical. And although the law hath never lost, nor ever can lose, its original power of obliging us unto universal obedience, as we are reasonable creatures; yet is our obedience unto it as Christians, as believers, immediately influenced by its confirmation unto the Evangelical Church in the hand of our Mediator. For —

(2.) God hath given unto the Lord Christ all power in his name, to require this obedience from all that receive the Gospel. Others are left under the original authority of the Law, either as implanted in our natures at their first creation, as are the Gentiles; or as delivered by Moses, and written in tables of stone, as it was with the Jews, Romans 2:12-15. But as unto them that are called unto the faith of the Gospel, the authority of Christ doth immediately affect their minds and consciences. “He feeds” or rules his people “in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God,” Micah 5:4. All the authority and majesty of God is in him and with him; — so of old, as the great Angel of God’s presence, he was in the church in the wilderness with a delegated power, Exodus 23:20-22 : “Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared: beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak,” &c. The name of God the Father is so in him — that is, he is so partaker of the same nature with him — that his voice is the voice of the Father: “If thou obey his voice, and do all that I speak.” Nevertheless, he acts herein as the Angel of God, with power and authority delegated from him. So is he still immediately present with the church, requiring obedience in the name and majesty of God.

(3.) All judgment upon and concerning this obedience is committed unto him by the Father: “For the Father judgeth no man,” (that is, immediately as the Father,) “but hath committed all judgment unto the Son,” John 5:22; He “hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man,” John 5:27. And his judgment is the judgment of God; for the Father, who judgeth none immediately in his own person, judgeth all in him, 1 Peter 1:17 : “If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work.” He doth so in and by the Son, unto whom all judgment is committed. And unto him are we to have regard in all our obedience, unto whom we must give our account concerning it, and by whom we are and must be finally judged upon it. To this purpose speaks the apostle, Romans 14:10-12, “We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” He proveth that we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, or be judged by him, by a testimony of Scripture that we shall be also judged by God himself, and give an account of ourselves unto him. And as this doth undeniably prove and confirm the divine nature of Christ, without the faith whereof there is neither cogency in the apostle’s testimony nor force in his arguing; so he declares that God judgeth us only in and by him. In this regard of our moral

obedience unto Christ lies the way whereby God will be gloried.

Secondly, All things are yet more plain with respect unto institutions of divine worship. The appointment of all divine ordinances under the New Testament was his especial province and work, as the Son and Lord over his own house; and obedience unto him in the observance of them is that which he gives in especial charge unto all his disciples, Matthew 28:18-20. And it is nothing but a loss of that subjection of soul and conscience unto him which is indispensably required of all believers, that hath set the minds of so many at liberty to do and observe in divine worship what they please, without any regard unto his institutions. It is otherwise with respect unto moral duties; for the things of the moral law have an obligation on our consciences antecedent unto the enforcement of them by the authority of Christ, and there hold us fast. But as unto things of the latter sort, our consciences can no way be affected with a sense of them, or a necessity of obedience in them, but by the sole and immediate authority of Christ himself. If a sense hereof be lost in our minds, we shall not abide in the observance of his commands.

## 04.12. Chapter 12

Chapter XII. The especial Principle of Obedience unto the Person of Christ; which is Love — Its Truth and Reality Vindicated. That which doth enliven and animate the obedience whereof we have discoursed, is love. This himself makes the foundation of all that is acceptable unto him. “If,” saith he, “ye love me, keep my commandments,” John 14:15. As he distinguisheth between love and obedience, so he asserts the former as the foundation of the latter. He accepts of no obedience unto his commands that doth not proceed from love unto his person. That is no love which is not fruitful in obedience; and that is no obedience which proceeds not from love. So he expresseth on both sides: “If a man love me, he will keep my words;” and, “He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings,” John 14:23-24. In the Old Testament the love of God was the life and substance of all obedience. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, thy mind and strength,” was the sum of the law. This includes in it all obedience, and, where it is genuine, will produce all the fruits of it; and where it was not, no multiplication of duties was accepted with him. But this in general we do not now treat of. That the person of Christ is the especial object of this divine love, which is the fire that kindles the sacrifice of our obedience unto him — this is that alone which at present I design to demonstrate. The apostle hath recorded a very severe denunciation of divine wrath against all that love him not: “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha,” 1 Corinthians 16:22. And what was added unto the curse of the Law we may add unto this of the Gospel: “And all the people shall say, Amen,” Deuteronomy 27:26. And, on the other hand, he prays for grace on all that “love him in sincerity,” Ephesians 6:24. Wherefore, none who desire to retain the name of Christian, can deny, in words at least, but that we ought, with all our hearts, to love the Lord Jesus Christ.

I do not so distinguish love from obedience as though it were not itself a part, yea, the chiefest part, of our obedience. So is faith also; yet is it constantly distinguished from obedience, properly so called. This alone is that which I shall demonstrate — namely, that there is, and ought to be, in all believers, a divine, gracious love unto the person of Christ, immediately fixed on him, whereby they are excited unto, and acted in, all their obedience unto his authority. Had it been only pleaded, that many who pretend love unto Christ do yet evidence that they love him not, it is that which the Scripture testifieth, and continual experience doth proclaim. If an application of this charge had been made unto them whose sincerity in their profession of love unto him can be no way evidenced, it ought to be borne with patience, amongst other reproaches of the same kind that are cast upon them. And some things are to be premised unto the confirmation of our assertion.

1. It is granted that there may be a false pretence of love unto Christ; and as this pretence is ruinous unto the souls of them in whom it is, so it oftentimes renders them prejudicial and troublesome unto others. There ever were, and probably ever will be, hypocrites in the church and a false pretence of love is of the essential form of hypocrisy. The first great act of hypocrisy, with respect unto Christ, was treachery, veiled with a double pretence of love. He cried, “Hail, Master! and kissed him,” who betrayed him. His words and actions proclaimed love, but deceit and



imaginations. From the Scripture are we to derive all the principles and motives of our love. If either the acts or effects of it will not endure a trial thereby, they are false and counterfeit; and many such have been pretended unto, as we shall see immediately.

(4.) That is so, unquestionably, which fixeth itself on undue objects, which, whatever is pretended, are neither Christ nor means of conveying our love unto him. Such is all that love which the Romanists express in their devotion unto images, as they fancy, of Christ; crucifixes, pretended relics of his cross, and the nails that pierced him, with the like superstitious representations of him, and what they suppose he is concerned in. For although they express their devotion with great appearance of ardent affections, under all outward signs of them — in adorations, kissings, prostrations, with sighs and tears; yet all this while it is not Christ which they thus cleave unto, but a cloud of their own imaginations, wherewith their carnal minds are pleased and affected. That is no god which a man hews out of a tree, though he form it for that end, though he falls down unto it and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, “Deliver me, for thou art my god,” Isaiah 44:17. The authors of this superstition, whereby the love of innumerable poor souls is depraved and abused, do first frame in their minds what they suppose may solicit or draw out the natural and carnal affections of men unto it, and then outwardly represent it as an object for them. Wherefore some of their representations of him are glorious, and some of them dolorous, according as they aim to excite affections in carnal minds. But, as I said, these things are not Christ, nor is he any way concerned in them.

(5.) I acknowledge there have been great pretences of such a love unto Christ as cannot be justified. Such is that which some of the devotionists of the Roman Church have endeavoured rather to express out of their fancy than declare out of their experience. Raptures, ecstasies, self-annihilations, immediate adhesions and enjoyments, without any act of the understanding, and with a multitude of other swelling words of vanity, they labour to set off what they fancy to be divine love. But there wants not evidences of truth sufficient to defeat these pretences, be they ever so specious or glorious. For —

[1.] As it is by them described, it exceedeth all Scripture precedents. For men to assume unto themselves an apprehension that they love Christ in another manner and kind, in a higher degree at least, and thence to enjoy more intimacy with him, more love from him, than did any of the apostles — John, or Paul, or Peter, or any other of those holy ones whose love unto him is recorded in the Scripture — is intolerable vanity and presumption. But no such things as these devotees pretend unto are mentioned, or in the least intimated concerning them, and their love to their Lord and Master. No man will pretend unto more love than they had, but such as have none at all.

[2.] It is no way directed, warranted, approved, by any command, promise, or rule of the Scripture. As it is without precedent, so it is without precept. And hereby, whether we will or no, all our graces and duties must be tried, as unto any acceptance with God. Whatever pretends to exceed the direction of the Word may safely be rejected — cannot safely be admitted. Whatever enthusiasms or pretended inspirations may be pleaded for the singular practice of what is prescribed in the Scripture, yet none can be allowed for an approved principle of what is not so prescribed. Whatever exceeds the bounds thereof is resolved into the testimony of every distempered imagination. Nor will it avail that these things amongst them are submitted unto the judgment of

the church. For the church hath no rule to judge by but the Scripture; and it can pass but one judgment of what is not warranted thereby — namely, that it is to be rejected.

[3.] As it is described by those who applaud it, it is not suited unto the sober, sedate actings of the rational faculties of our souls. For whereas all that God requireth of us, is that we love him with all our souls and all our minds, these men cry up a divine love by an immediate adhesion of the will and the affections unto God, without any actings of the mind and understanding at all. Love, indeed, is the regular acting of our whole souls, by all their faculties and rational powers, in an adherence unto God. But these men have fancied a divine love for them whom they would admire and extol, which disturbs all their regular acting, and renders them of little or no use in that which, without their due exercise, is nothing but fancy. And hence it is that, under pretence of this love, sundry persons among them — yea, all that have pretended unto it — have fallen into such ridiculous excesses and open delusions as sufficiently discover the vanity of the love itself pretended by them.

Wherefore we plead for no other love unto the person of Christ but what the Scripture warrants as unto its nature; what the gospel requireth of us as our duty; what the natural faculties of our minds are suited unto and given us for; what they are enabled unto by grace; and without which in some degree of sincerity, no man can yield acceptable obedience unto him.

These things being premised, that which we assert is, that there is, and ought to be, in all believers, a religious, gracious love unto the person of Christ, distinct from, and the reason of, their obedience unto his commands; — that is, it is distinct from all other commands; but is also itself commanded and required of us in a way of duty. That there is in the church such a love unto the person of Christ, the Scripture testifies, both in the precepts it gives for it and the examples of it. And all those who truly believe cannot apprehend that they understand any thing of faith, or love of Christ, or themselves, by whom it is called in question. If, therefore, I should enlarge on this subject, a great part of the doctrine of the Scripture from first to last must be represented and a transcript of the hearts of believers, wherein this love is seated and prevalent, be made, according to our ability. And there is no subject that I could more willingly enlarge upon. But I must at present contract myself, in compliance with my design. Two things only I shall demonstrate: 1. That the person of Christ is the object of divine love; 2. What is the nature of that love in us; what are the grounds of it, and the motives unto it, in them that do believe. In reference unto the first of these, the ensuing position shall be the subject of the remainder of this chapter. The person of Christ is the principal object of the love of God, and of the whole creation participant of his image. The reason why I thus extend the assertion will appear in the declaration of it.

(1.) No small part of the eternal blessedness of the holy God consisteth in the mutual love of the Father and the Son, by the Spirit. As he is the only-begotten of the Father, he is the first, necessary, adequate, complete object of the whole love of the Father. Hence he says of himself, that from eternity he was “by him, as one brought up with him: and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him,” Proverbs 8:30 — which place was opened before. In him was the ineffable, eternal, unchangeable delight and complacency of the Father, as the full object of his love. The same is expressed in that description of him, John 1:18, “The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father.” His being the only-begotten Son declares his eternal relation unto the person of the Father, of whom he was begotten in the entire communication of the whole divine

nature. Hereon he is in the bosom of the Father — in the eternal embraces of his love, as his only-begotten Son. The Father loves, and cannot but love, his own nature and essential image in him.

Herein originally is God love: “For God is love,” 1 John 4:8. This is the fountain and prototype of all love, as being eternal and necessary. All other acts of love are in God but emanations from hence, and effects of it. As he doeth good because he is good, so he loveth because he is love. He is love eternally and necessarily in this love of the Son; and all other workings of love are but acts of his will, whereby somewhat of it is outwardly expressed. And all love in the creation was introduced from this fountain, to give a shadow and resemblance of it.

Love is that which contemplative men have always almost adored. Many things have they spoken to evince it to be the light, life, lustre and glory of the whole creation. But the original and pattern of it was always hid from the wisest philosophers of old. Something they reached after about God’s love unto himself, with rest and complacency in his own infinite excellencies; but of this ineffable mutual love of the Father and the Son, both in and by that Spirit which proceeds from them both, they had neither apprehension nor conjecture. Yet, as herein doth the principal part (if we may so speak) of the blessedness of the holy God consist, so is it the only fountain and prototype of all that is truly called love; — a blessing and glory which the creation had never been made partaker of, but only to express, according to the capacity of their several natures, this infinite and eternal love of God! For God’s love of himself — which is natural and necessary unto the Divine Being — consists in the mutual complacency of the Father and the Son by the Spirit. And it was to express himself, that God made any thing without himself. He made the heavens and the earth to express his being, goodness, and power. He created man “in his own image,” to express his holiness and righteousness; and he implanted love in our natures to express this eternal mutual love of the holy persons of the Trinity. But we must leave it under the veil of infinite incomprehensibleness; though admiration and adoration of it be not without the highest spiritual satisfaction.

Again, he is the peculiar object of the love of the Father, of the love of God, as he is incarnate — as he hath taken on him, and hath now discharged, the work of mediation, or continues in the discharge of it; that is, the person of Christ, as God-man, is the peculiar object of the divine love of the Father. The person of Christ in his divine nature is the adequate object of that love of the Father which is “ad intra” — a natural necessary act of the divine essence in its distinct personal existence; and the person of Christ as incarnate, as clothed with human nature, is the first and full object of the love of the Father in those acts of it which are “ad extra”, or are towards anything without himself. So he declares himself in the prospect of his future incarnation and work, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth,” Isaiah 42:1. The delight of the soul of God, his rest and complacency — which are the great effects of love — are in the Lord Christ, as his elect and servant in the work of mediation. And the testimony hereof he renewed twice from heaven afterwards, Matthew 3:17, “Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;” as it is again repeated, Matthew 17:5. All things are disposed to give a due sense unto us of this love of God unto him. The testimony concerning it is twice repeated in the same words from heaven. And the words of it are emphatical unto the utmost of our comprehension: “My Son, my servant, mine elect, my beloved Son, in whom I rest, in whom I delight, and am well pleased.” It is the will of God to leave upon our hearts a sense of this love unto Christ; for his voice came from heaven, not for his sake, who was always filled with a sense of

this divine love, but for ours, that we might believe it. This he pleaded as the foundation of all the trust reposed in him, and all the power committed unto him. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand," John 3:35. "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth," John 5:20. And the sense or due apprehension of it is the foundation of Christian religion. Hence he prays that we may know that God hath loved him, John 17:23, John 17:26. In this sense, the person of Christ is the  $\pi\rho\tau\omicron\nu\ \delta\epsilon\kappa\tau\iota\kappa\upsilon\nu$  — the first recipient subject of all that divine love which extends itself unto the church. It is all, the whole of it, in the first place fixed upon him, and by and through him is communicated unto the church. Whatever it receives in grace and glory, it is but the streams of this fountain — love unto himself. So he prays for all his disciples, "that the love," saith he, "wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them," John 17:26. They can be partakers of no other love, neither in itself nor in its fruits, but that alone wherewith the Father first loved him. He loveth him for us all, and us no otherwise but as in him. He makes us "accepted in the Beloved," Ephesians 1:6. He is the Beloved of the Father  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\ \xi\omicron\chi\upsilon\nu$ ; as in all things he was to have the pre-eminence, Colossians 1:18. The love of the body is derived unto it from the love unto the Head; and in the love of him doth God love the whole church, and no otherwise. He loves none but as united unto him, and participant of his nature.

Wherefore the love of the Father unto the Son, as the only begotten, and the essential image of his person, wherein the ineffable delight of the divine nature doth consist, was the fountain and cause of all love in the creation, by an act of the will of God for its representation. And the love of God the Father unto the person of Christ as incarnate, being the first adequate object of divine love wherein there is anything "ad extra," is the fountain and especial cause of all gracious love towards us and in us. And our love unto Christ being the only outward expression and representation of this love of the Father unto him, therein consists the principal part of our renovation into his image. Nothing renders us so like unto God as our love unto Jesus Christ, for he is the principal object of his love, — in him doth his soul rest — in him is he always well pleased. Wherever this is wanting, whatever there may be besides, there is nothing of the image of God. He that loves not Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha; for he is unlike unto God, — his carnal mind is enmity against God.

(2.) Among those who are in the image of God, the angels above are of the first consideration. We are, indeed, as yet much in the dark unto the things that are "within the veil." They are above us as unto our present capacity, and hid from us as unto our present state; but there is enough in the Scripture to manifest the adhesion of angels unto the person of Christ by divine love. For love proceeding from sight is the life of the church above; as love proceeding from faith is the life of the church below. And this life the angels themselves do live. For —

[1.] They were all, unto their inexpressible present advantage and security for the future, brought into that recovery and recapitulation of all things which God hath made in him. He hath "gathered together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him," Ephesians 1:10. The things in heaven, and things on earth — angels above, and men below — were originally united in the love of God. God's love unto them, whence springs their mutual love between themselves, was a bond of union between them, rendering them one complete family of God in heaven and earth, as it is called, Ephesians 3:15. On the entrance of sin, whereby mankind forfeited their interest in the love of God, and lost all love unto him, or anything for him, this union was utterly dissolved, and mutual enmity came into the place of its principle in love. God is

pleased to gather up these divided parts of his family into one — in one head, which is Christ Jesus. And as there is hereby a union established again between angels and the church in love, so their adherence unto the head, the centre, life, and spring of this union, is by love, and no otherwise. It is not faith, but love, that is the bond of this union between Christ and them; and herein no small part of their blessedness and glory in heaven doth consist.

[2.] That worship, adoration, service, and obedience, which they yield unto him, are all in like manner animated with love and delight. In love they cleave unto him, in love they worship and serve him. They had a command to worship him on his nativity, Hebrews 1:6; and they did it with joy, exultation, and praises — all effects of love and delight — Luke 2:13-14. And as they continue about the throne of God, they say, with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing,” Revelation 5:12. Their continual ascription of glory and praise unto him is an effect of reverential love and delight; and from thence also is their concernment in his gospel and grace, Ephesians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:12. Nor without this love in the highest degree can it be conceived how they should be blessed and happy in their continual employment. For they are “all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for the heirs of salvation,” Hebrews 1:14. Were they not acted herein by their fervent love unto Christ, they could have no delight in their own ministry.

We have not, we cannot have, in this world, a full comprehension of the nature of angelical love. Our notions are but dark and uncertain, in things whereof we can have no experience. Wherefore, we cannot have here a clear intuition into the nature of the love of spirits, whilst our own is mixed with what derives from the acting of the animal spirits of our bodies also. But the blessedness of angels doth not consist in the endowments of their nature — that they are great in power, light, knowledge, and wisdom; for, notwithstanding these things, many of them became devils. But the excellency and blessedness of the angelical state consist in these two things:— 1st, That they are disposed, and able constantly, inseparably, universally, uninterruptedly, to cleave unto God in love. And as they do so unto God, so they do unto the person of Christ; and through him, as their head, unto God, even the Father. 2dly, Add hereunto that gracious reflex sense which they have of the glory, dignity, eternal sweetness, and satisfaction, which arise from hence, and we have the sum of angelical blessedness.

(3.) The church of mankind is the other part of the rational creation whereon the image of God is renewed. Love unto the person of Christ, proceeding from faith, is their life, their joy, and glory.

It was so unto the church under the Old Testament. The whole Book of Canticles is designed to no other purpose, but variously to shadow forth, to insinuate and represent, the mutual love of Christ and the church. Blessed is he who understands the sayings of that book, and hath the experience of them in his heart. The 45th Psalm, among others, is designed unto the same purpose. All the glorious descriptions which are given of his person in the residue of the prophets, were only means to excite love unto him, and desires after him. Hence is he called **██████████** **██████████████████**, Haggai 2:7, “The Desire of all nations” — he alone who is desirable unto, and the only beloved of the church gathered out of all nations. The clear revelation of the person of Christ, so as to render him the direct object of our love, with the causes and reasons of it, is one of the most eminent privileges of the New Testament. And it is variously attested in precepts, promises, instances, and solemn approbations.

Wherever he supposeth or requireth this love in any of his disciples, it is not only as their duty, as that which they were obliged unto by the precepts of the Gospel, but as that without which no other duty whatever is accepted by him. "If," saith he "ye love me, keep my commandments," John 14:15. He so requires love unto himself, as not to expect or approve of any obedience unto his commands without it. It is a great and blessed duty to feed the sheep and lambs of Christ; yet will not he accept of it unless it proceeds out of love unto his person. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Feed my lambs," John 21:15-17. Three times did he repeat the same words to him who had failed in his love towards him, by denying him thrice. Without this love unto him, he requires of none to feed his sheep, nor will accept of what they pretend to do therein. It were a blessed thing, if a due apprehension hereof did always abide with them that are called unto that work.

Hereunto doth he annex those blessed promises which comprise the whole of our peace, safety, and consolation in this world. "He," saith he, "that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him," Luke 14:21; and Luke 14:23, "My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." What heart can conceive, what tongue can express, the glory of these promises, or the least part of the grace that is contained in them? Who can conceive aright of the divine condescension, love, and grace that are expressed in them? How little a portion is it that we know of God in these things! But if we value them not, if we labour not for an experience of them according unto our measure, we have neither lot nor portion in the gospel. The presence and abode of God with us as a Father, manifesting himself to be such unto us, in the infallible pledges and assurances of our adoption — the presence of Christ with us, revealing himself unto us, with all those ineffable mercies wherewith these things are accompanied — are all contained in them. And these promises are peculiarly given unto them that love the person of Christ, and in the exercise of love towards him.

Hereunto are designed the Gospel Gerizim and Ebal — the denunciation of blessings and curses. As blessings are declared to be their portion "who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity," Ephesians 6:24 — so those who love him not, have the substance of all curses denounced against them, even "Anathema Maranatha," 1 Corinthians 16:22. So far shall such persons be, whatever they may profess of outward obedience unto the Gospel, from any blessed interest in the promises of it, as that they are justly liable unto final excision from the church in this world, and eternal malediction in that which is to come.

It is evident, therefore, that the love of the church of believers unto the person of Christ is not a distempered fancy, not a deluding imagination, as some have blasphemed; but that which the nature of their relation unto him makes necessary — that wherein they express their renovation into the image of God — that which the Scripture indispensably requires of them, and whereon all their spiritual comfort do depend. These things being spoken in general, the particular nature, effects, operations, and motives of this divine love, must now be farther inquired into.

## 04.13. Chapter 13

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Chapter XIII. The Nature, Operations, and Causes of Divine Love, as it respects the Person of Christ. That we may the better understand that love unto the person of Christ which we plead for, some things must be premised concerning the nature of divine love in general; and thereon its application unto the particular acting and exercise of it which we inquire into will be plain and easy.

God hath endowed our nature with a faculty and ability of fixing our love upon himself. Many can understand nothing of love but the adherence of their minds and souls unto things visible and sensible, capable of a present natural enjoyment. For things unseen, especially such as are eternal and infinite, they suppose they have a veneration, a religious respect, a devout adoration; but how they should love them, they cannot understand. And the apostle doth grant that there is a greater difficulty in loving things that cannot be seen, than in loving those which are always visibly present unto us, 1 John 4:20 . Howbeit, this divine love hath a more fixed station and prevalence in the minds of men than any other kind of love whatever. For —

1. The principal end why God endued our natures with that great and ruling affection, that hath the most eminent and peculiar power and interest in our souls, was, in the first place, that it might be fixed on himself — that it might be the instrument of our adherence unto him. He did not create this affection in us, that we might be able by it to cast ourselves into the embraces of things natural and sensual. No affection hath such power in the soul to cause it to cleave unto its object, and to work it into a conformity unto it. Most other affections are transient in their operations, and work by a transport of nature — as anger, joy, fear, and the like; but love is capable of a constant exercise, is a spring unto all other affections, and unites the soul with an efficacy not easy to be expressed unto its object. And shall we think that God, who made all things for himself, did create this ruling affection in and with our natures, merely that we might be able to turn from him, and cleave unto other things with a power and faculty above any we have of adherence unto him? Wherefore, at our first creation, and in our primitive condition, love was the very soul and quickening principle of the life of God; and on our adherence unto him thereby the continuance of our relation unto him did depend. The law, rule, and measure of it was, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul.” For this end did God create this affection in us. Not only our persons in their nature and being, but in all their powers and faculties, were fitted and prepared unto this end, of living unto God, and coming unto the enjoyment of him. And all their exercise on created objects was to be directed unto this end. Wherefore, the placing of our love on anything before God, or above him is a formal expression of our apostasy from him.

2. Divine excellencies are a proper, adequate object of our love. The will, indeed, can adhere unto nothing in love, but what the understanding apprehends as unto its truth and being; but it is not necessary that the understanding do fully comprehend the whole nature of that which the will doth so adhere unto. Where a discovery is made unto and by the mind of real goodness and amiableness, the will there can close with its affections. And these are apprehended as absolutely the most perfect in the divine nature and holy properties of it. Whereas, therefore, not only that

which is the proper object of love is in the divine excellencies, but it is there only perfectly and absolutely, without the mixture of anything that should give it an alloy, as there is in all creatures, they are the most suitable and adequate object of our love.

There is no greater discovery of the depravation of our natures by sin and degeneracy of our wills from their original rectitude, than that — whereas we are so prone to the love of other things, and therein do seek for satisfaction unto our souls where it is not to be obtained — it is so hard and difficult to raise our hearts unto the love of God. Were it not for that depravation, he would always appear as the only suitable and satisfactory object unto our affections.

3. The especial object of divine, gracious love, is the divine goodness. “How great is his goodness, how great is his beauty!” Zechariah 9:17. Nothing is amiable or a proper object of love, but what is good, and as it is so. Hence divine goodness, which is infinite, hath an absolutely perfect amiableness accompanying it. Because his goodness is inexpressible, his beauty is so. “How great is his goodness, how great is his beauty!” Hence are we called to give thanks unto the Lord, and to rejoice in him — which are the effects of love — because he is good, Psalms 106:1; Psalms 136:1.

Neither is divine goodness the especial object of our love as absolutely considered; but we have a respect unto it as comprehensive of all that mercy, grace, and bounty, which are suited to give us the best relief in our present condition and an eternal future reward. Infinite goodness, exerting itself in all that mercy, grace, faithfulness, and bounty, which are needful unto our relief and blessedness in our present condition, is the proper object of our love. Whereas, therefore, this is done only in Christ, there can be no true love of the divine goodness, but in and through him alone. The goodness of God, as a creator, preserver, and rewarder, was a sufficient, yea, the adequate object of all love antecedently unto the entrance of sin and misery. In them, in God under those considerations, might the soul of man find full satisfaction as unto its present and future blessedness. But since the passing of sin, misery, and death upon us, our love can find no amiableness in any goodness — no rest, complacency, and satisfaction in any — but what is effectual in that grace and mercy by Christ, which we stand in need of for our present recovery and future reward. Nor doth God require of us that we should love him otherwise but as he “is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” So the apostle fully declares it: “In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him,” 1 John 4:9-10, 1 John 4:16. God is love, of a nature infinitely good and gracious, so as to be the only object of all divine love. But this love can no way be known, or be so manifested unto us, as that we may and ought to love him, but by his love in Christ, his sending of him and loving us in him. Before this, without this, we do not, we cannot love God. For “herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” This is the cause, the spring and fountain, of all our love to him. They are but empty notions and imaginations, which some speculative persons please themselves withal, about love unto the divine goodness absolutely considered. For however infinitely amiable it may be in itself, it is not so really unto them, it is not suited unto their state and condition, without the consideration of the communications of it unto us in Christ.

4. These things being premised, we may consider the especial nature of this divine love, although I acknowledge that the least part of what believers have an experience of in their own souls can be expressed at least by me. Some few things I shall mention, which may give us a shadow of it, but not the express image of the thing itself.

(1.) Desire of union and enjoyment is the first vital act of this love. The soul, upon the discovery of the excellencies of God, earnestly desires to be united unto them — to be brought near unto that enjoyment of them whereof it is capable, and wherein alone it can find rest and satisfaction. This is essential unto all love; it unites the mind unto its object, and rests not but in enjoyment. God's love unto us ariseth out of the overflowing of his own immense goodness, whereof he will communicate the fruits and effects unto us. God is love; and herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his only-begotten Son. Yet also doth this love of God tend to the bringing of us unto him, not that he may enjoy us, but that he may be enjoyed by us. This answers the desire of enjoyment in us, Job 14:15 : "Thou shalt call me;" (that is, out of the dust at the last day;) "thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." God's love will not rest, until it hath brought us unto himself. But our love unto God ariseth from a sense of our own wants — our insufficiency to come unto rest in ourselves, or to attain unto blessedness by our own endeavours. In this state, seeing all in God, and expecting all from the suitableness of his excellencies unto our rest and satisfaction, our souls cleave unto him, with a desire of the nearest union whereof our natures are capable. We are made for him, and cannot rest until we come unto him. Our goodness extends not unto God; we cannot profit him by any thing that we are, or can do. Wherefore, his love unto us hath not respect originally unto any good in ourselves, but is a gracious, free act of his own. He doeth good for no other reason but because he is good. Nor can his infinite perfections take any cause for their original actings without himself. He wants nothing that he would supply by the enjoyment of us. But we have indigency in ourselves to cause our love to seek an object without ourselves. And so his goodness — with the mercy, grace, and bounty included therein — is the cause, reason, and object of our love. We love them for themselves; and because we are wanting and indigent, we love them with a desire of union and enjoyment — wherein we find that our satisfaction and blessedness doth consist. Love in general unites the mind unto the object — the person loving unto the thing or person beloved. So is it expressed in an instance of human, temporary, changeable love, — namely, that of Jonathan to David. His soul "was knit with the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul," 1 Samuel 18:1. Love had so effectually united them, as that the soul of David was as his own. Hence are those expressions of this divine love, by "cleaving unto God, following hard after him, thirsting, panting after him," with the like intimations of the most earnest endeavours of our nature after union and enjoyment. When the soul hath a view by faith (which nothing else can give it) of the goodness of God as manifested in Christ — that is of the essential excellencies of his nature as exerting themselves in him — it reacheth after him with its most earnest embraces, and is restless until it comes unto perfect fruition. It sees in God the fountain of life, and would drink of the "river of his pleasures," Psalms 36:8-9 — that in his "presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore," Psalms 16:11. It longs and pants to drink of that fountain — to bathe itself in that river of pleasures; and wherein it comes short of present enjoyment, it lives in hopes that when we "awake, it shall be satisfied with his likeness," Psalms 17:15. There is nothing grievous unto a soul filled with this love, but what keeps it from the full enjoyment of these excellencies of God. What doth so naturally and necessarily, it groans under. Such is our present state in the body, wherein, in some sense, we are

“absent from the Lord,” 2 Corinthians 5:4, 2 Corinthians 5:8-9. And what doth so morally, in the deviations of its will and affections, as sin — it hates and abhors and loathes itself for. Under the conduct of this love, the whole tendency of the soul is unto the enjoyment of God; — it would be lost in itself, and found in him, — nothing in itself, and all in him. Absolute complacency herein — that God is what he is, that he should be what he is, and nothing else, and that as such we may be united unto him, and enjoy Him according to the capacity of our natures is the life of divine love.

(2.) It is a love of assimilation. It contains in it a desire and intense endeavour to be like unto God, according unto our capacity and measure. The soul sees all goodness, and consequently all that is amiable and lovely, in God — the want of all which it finds in itself. The fruition of his goodness is that which it longs for as its utmost end, and conformity unto it as the means thereof. There is no man who loves not God sincerely, but indeed he would have him to be somewhat that he is not, that he might be the more like unto him. This such persons are pleased withal whilst they can fancy it in any thing, Psalms 50:21. They that love him, would have him be all that he is — as he is, and nothing else; and would be themselves like unto him. And as love hath this tendency, and is that which gives disquietment unto the soul when and wherein we are unlike unto God, so it stirs up constant endeavours after assimilation unto him, and hath a principal efficacy unto that end. Love is the principle that actually assimilates and conforms us unto God, as faith is the principle which originally disposeth thereunto. In our renovation into the image of God, the transforming power is radically seated in faith, but acts itself by love. Love proceeding from faith gradually changeth the soul into the likeness of God; and the more it is in exercise, the more is that change effected. To labour after conformity unto God by outward actions only, is to make an image of the living God, hewed out of the stock of a dead tree. It is from this vital principle of love that we are not forced into it as by engines, but naturally grow up into the likeness and image of God. For when it is duly affected with the excellencies of God in Christ, it fills the mind with thoughts and contemplations on them, and excites all the affections unto a delight in them. And where the soul acts itself constantly in the mind’s contemplation, and the delight of the affections, it will produce assimilation unto the object of them. To love God is the only way and means to be like unto him.

(3.) It is a love of complacency, and therein of benevolence. Upon that view which we have by spiritual light and faith of the divine goodness, exerting itself in the way before described, our souls do approve of all that is in God, applaud it, adore it, and acquiesce in it. Hence two great duties do arise, and hereon do they depend. First, Joyful ascriptions of glory and honour unto God. All praise and thanksgiving, all blessing, all assignation of glory unto him, because of his excellencies and perfections, do arise from our satisfactory complacence in them. The righteous “rejoice in the Lord, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness,” Psalms 92:12. They are so pleased and satisfied at the remembrance of God’s holiness, that it fills their hearts with joy and causeth them to break forth in praises. Praise is nothing but an outward expression of the inward complacency of our hearts in the divine perfections and their operations. And, secondly, Love herein acts itself by benevolence, as the constant inclination of the mind unto all things wherein the glory of God is concerned. It wills all the things wherein the name of God may be sanctified, his praises made glorious, and his will done on earth as it is in heaven. As God says of his own love unto us, that “he will rest in his love, he will joy over us [thee] with singing,” Zephaniah 3:17 — as having the greatest complacency in it, rejoicing over us with his “whole heart and his whole soul,” Jeremiah 32:41; — so, according unto our measure, do we by love rest in the glorious excellencies of God,

rejoicing in them with our whole hearts and our whole souls.

(4.) This divine love is a love of friendship. The communion which we have with God therein is so intimate, and accompanied with such spiritual boldness, as gives it that denomination. So Abraham was called "The friend of God," Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23. And because of that mutual trust which is between friends, "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant," Psalms 35:14. For, as our Saviour teacheth us, "servants" — that is, those who are so, and no more — "know not what their lord doeth;" he rules them, commands them, or requires obedience from them; but as unto his secret — his design and purpose, his counsel and love — they know nothing of it. But saith he unto his disciples, "I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you," John 15:15. He proves them to be rightly called his friends, because of the communication of the secret of his mind unto them. This is the great difference between them who are only servants in the house of God, and those who are so servants as to be friends also. The same commands are given unto all equally, and the same duties are required of all equally, inasmuch as they are equally servants; but those who are no more but so, know nothing of the secret counsel, love, and grace of God, in a due manner. For the natural man receiveth not the things that are of God. Hence all their obedience is servile. They know neither the principal motives unto it nor the ends of it. But they who are so servants as to be friends also, they know what their Lord doeth; the secret of the Lord is with them, and he shows them his covenant. They are admitted into an intimate acquaintance with the mind of Christ, ("we have the mind of Christ," 1 Corinthians 2:16) and are thereon encouraged to perform the obedience of servants, with the love and delight of friends. The same love of friendship is expressed by that intimate converse with, and especial residence that is between God and believers. God dwelleth in them, and they dwell in God; for God is love, 1 John 4:16. "If a man," saith the Lord Christ, "love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John 14:23; and, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me," Revelation 3:20. These are not empty sound of words; — there is substance under them, there is truth in them. Those whose hearts are duly exercised in and unto the love of God have experience of the refreshing approaches both of the Father and of the Son unto their souls, in the communications of a sense of their love, and pledges of their abode with them.

These things have I briefly premised, concerning the nature of divine love, that we may the better apprehend what we understand by it, in the application of it unto the person of Christ. For —

1. The formal object of this love is the essential properties of the divine nature — its infinite goodness in particular. Wherever these are, there is the object and reason of this love. But they are all of them in the person of the Son, no less than in the person of the Father. As, therefore, we love the Father on this account, so are we to love the Son also. But —

2. The Person of Christ is to be considered as he was incarnate, or clothed with our nature. And this takes nothing off from the formal reason of this love, but only makes an addition unto the motives of it. This, indeed, for a season veiled the loveliness of his divine excellencies, and so turned aside the eyes of many from him. For when he took on him "the form of a servant, and made himself of no reputation," he had, unto them who looked on him with carnal eyes, "neither form nor comeliness," that he should be desired or be loved. Howbeit, the entire person of Christ,

God and man, is the object of this divine love, in all the acts of the whole exercise of it. That single effect of infinite wisdom and grace, in the union of the divine and human natures in the one person of the Son of God, renders him the object of this love in a peculiar manner. The way whereby we may attain this peculiar love, and the motives unto it, shall close these considerations. A due consideration of, and meditation on, the proposal of the person of Christ unto us in the Scripture, are the proper foundation of this love. This is the formal reason of our faith in him, and love unto him. He is so proposed unto us in the Scripture, that we may believe in him and love him, and for that very end. And in particular with respect unto our love, to ingenerate it in us, and to excite it unto its due exercise, are those excellencies of his person — as the principal effect of divine wisdom and goodness, which we have before insisted on — frequently proposed unto us. To this end is he represented as “altogether lovely,” and the especial glories of his person are delineated, yea, drawn to the life, in the holy records of the Old and New Testaments. It is no work of fancy or imagination — it is not the feigning images in our minds of such things as are meet to satisfy our carnal affections, to excite and act them; but it is a due adherence unto that object which is represented unto faith in the proposal of the gospel. Therein, as in a glass, do we behold the glory of Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, and have our souls filled with transforming affections unto him. The whole Book of Canticles is nothing but a mystical declaration of the mutual love between Christ and the church. And it is expressed by all such ways and means as may represent it intense, fervent, and exceeding all other love whatever; which none, I suppose, will deny, at least on the part of Christ. And a great part of it consists in such descriptions of the person of Christ and his love as may render him amiable and desirable unto our souls, even “altogether lovely.” To what end doth the Holy Spirit so graphically describe and represent unto us the beauty and desirableness of his person, if it be not to ingenerate love in us unto him? All want of love unto him on this proposal is the effect of prevalent unbelief. It is pretended that the descriptions given of Christ in this book are allegorical, from whence nothing can be gathered or concluded. But God forbid we should so reflect on the wisdom and love of the Holy Spirit unto the church — that he hath proposed unto the faith of the church an empty sound and noise of words, without mind or sense. The expressions he uses are figurative, and the whole nature of the discourse, as unto its outward structure, is allegorical. But the things intended are real and substantial; and the metaphors used in the expression of them are suited, in a due attendance unto the analogy of faith, to convey a spiritual understanding and sense of the things themselves proposed in them. The church of God will not part with the unspeakable advantage and consolation — those supports of faith and incentives of love — which it receives by that divine proposal of the person of Christ and his love which is made therein, because some men have no experience of them nor understanding in them. The faith and love of believers is not to be regulated by the ignorance and boldness of them who have neither the one nor the other. The title of the 45th Psalm is, ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■, “A song of loves;” — that is, of the mutual love of Christ and the church. And unto this end — that our souls may be stirred up unto the most ardent affection towards him — is a description given us of his person, as “altogether lovely.” To what other end is he so evidently delineated in the whole harmony of his divine beauties by the pencil of the Holy Spirit? Not to insist on particular testimonies, it is evident unto all whose eyes are opened to discern these things, that there is no property of the divine nature which is peculiarly amiable — such as are goodness, grace, love, and bounty, with infinite power and holiness — but it is represented and proposed unto us in the person of the Son of God, to this end, that we should

love him above all, and cleave unto him. There is nothing in the human nature, in that fulness of grace and truth which dwelt therein, in that inhabitation of the Spirit which was in him without measure, in any thing of those “all things” wherein he hath the pre-eminence — nothing in his love, condescension, grace, and mercy — nothing in the work that he fulfilled, what he did and suffered therein — nothing in the benefits we receive thereby — nothing in the power and glory that he is exalted unto at the right hand of God — but it is set forth in the Scripture and proposed unto us, that, believing in him, we may love him with all our hearts and souls. And, besides all this, that singular, that infinite effect of divine wisdom, whereunto there is nothing like in all the works of God, and wherewith none of them may be compared — namely, the constitution of his person by the union of his natures therein, whereby he becomes unto us the image of the invisible God, and wherein all the blessed excellencies of his distinct natures are made most illustriously conspicuous in becoming one entire principle of all his mediatory operations on our behalf — is proposed unto us as the complete object of our faith and love. This is that person whose loveliness and beauty all the angels of God, all the holy ones above, do eternally admire and adore. In him are the infinite treasures of divine wisdom and goodness continually represented unto them. This is he who is the joy, the delight, the love, the glory of the church below. “Thou whom our souls do love,” is the title whereby they know him and converse with him, Song of Solomon 1:7; Son 3:1, Son 3:4. This is he who is the Desire of all nations — the Beloved of God and men. The mutual intercourse on this ground of love between Christ and the church, is the life and soul of the whole creation; for on the account hereof all things consist in him.

There is more glory under the eye of God, in the sighs, groans, and mournings of poor souls filled with the love of Christ, after the enjoyment of him according to his promises — in their fervent prayers for his manifestation of himself unto them — in the refreshments and unspeakable joys which they have in his gracious visits and embraces of his love — than in the thrones and diadems of all the monarchs on the earth. Nor will they themselves part with the ineffable satisfactions which they have in these things, for all that this world can do for them or unto them. “Malle ruere cum Christo, quam regnare cum Cæsare.” These things have not only rendered prisons and dungeons more desirable unto them than the most goodly palaces, on future accounts, but have made them really places of such refreshment and joys as men shall seek in vain to extract out of all the comforts that this world can afford.

O curvæ in terras animæ et cœlestium inanes!

Many there are who, not comprehending, not being affected with, that divine, spiritual description of the person of Christ which is given us by the Holy Ghost in the Scripture, do feign unto themselves false representations of him by images and pictures, so as to excite carnal and corrupt affections in their minds. By the help of their outward senses, they reflect on their imaginations the shape of a human body, cast into postures and circumstances dolorous or triumphant; and so, by the working of their fancy, raise a commotion of mind in themselves, which they suppose to be love unto Christ. But all these idols are teachers of lies. The true beauty and amiableness of the person of Christ, which is the formal object and cause of divine love, is so far from being represented herein, as that the mind is thereby wholly diverted from the contemplation of it. For no more can be so pictured unto us but what may belong unto a mere man, and what is arbitrarily referred unto Christ, not by faith, but by corrupt imagination. The beauty of the person of Christ, as represented in the Scripture, consists in things invisible unto the eyes of flesh. They are such as

no hand of man can represent or shadow. It is the eye of faith alone that can see this King in his beauty. What else can contemplate on the untreated glories of his divine nature? Can the hand of man represent the union of his natures in the same person, wherein he is peculiarly amiable? What eye can discern the mutual communications of the properties of his different natures in the same person, which depends thereon, whence it is that God laid down his life for us, and purchased his church with his own blood? In these things, O vain man! doth the loveliness of the person of Christ unto the souls of believers consist, and not in those strokes of art which fancy hath guided a skilful hand and pencil unto. And what eye of flesh can discern the inhabitation of the Spirit in all fulness in the human nature? Can his condescension, his love, his grace, his power, his compassion, his offices, his fitness and ability to save sinners, be deciphered on a tablet, or engraven on wood or stone? However such pictures may be adorned, however beautified and enriched, they are not that Christ which the soul of the spouse doth love; — they are not any means of representing his love unto us, or of conveying our love unto him; — they only divert the minds of superstitious persons from the Son of God, unto the embraces of a cloud, composed of fancy and imagination.

Others there are who abhor these idols, and when they have so done, commit sacrilege. As they reject images, so they seem to do all love unto the person of Christ, distinct from other acts of obedience, as a fond imagination. But the most superstitious love unto Christ — that is, love acted in ways tainted with superstition — is better than none at all. But with what eyes do such persons read the Scriptures? With what hearts do they consider them? What do they conceive is the intention of the Holy Ghost in all those descriptions which he gives us of the person of Christ as amiable and desirable above all things, making wherewithal a proposal of him unto our affections — inciting us to receive him by faith, and to cleave unto him in love? yea, to what end is our nature endued with this affection — unto what end is the power of it renewed in us by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit — if it may not be fixed on this most proper and excellent object of it? This is the foundation of our love unto Christ — namely, the revelation and proposal of him unto us in the Scripture as altogether lovely. The discovery that is made therein of the glorious excellencies and endowments of his person — of his love, his goodness, and grace — of his worth and work — is that which engageth the affections of believers unto him. It may be said, that if there be such a proposal of him made unto all promiscuously, then all would equally discern his amiableness and be affected with it, who assent equally unto the truth of that revelation. But it hath always fallen out otherwise. In the days of his flesh, some that looked on him could see neither “form nor comeliness” in him wherefore he should be desired; others saw his glory — “glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” To some he is precious; unto others he is disallowed and rejected — a stone which the builders refused, when others brought it forth, crying, “Grace, grace unto it!” as the head of the corner. Some can see nothing but weakness in him; unto others the wisdom and power of God do evidently shine forth in him. Wherefore it must be said, that notwithstanding that open, plain representation that is made of him in the Scripture, unless the Holy Spirit gives us eyes to discern it, and circumcise our hearts by the cutting off corrupt prejudices and all effects of unbelief, implanting in them, by the efficacy of his grace, this blessed affection of love unto him, all these things will make no impression on our minds. As it was with the people on the giving of the law, notwithstanding all the great and mighty works which God had wrought among them, yet having not given them “a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear” — which he affirms that he had not done, Deuteronomy 29:4, — they were not moved unto

faith or obedience by them; so is it in the preaching of the gospel. Notwithstanding all the blessed revelation that is made of the excellencies of the person of Christ therein, yet those into whose hearts God doth not shine to give the knowledge of his glory in his face, can discern nothing of it, nor are their hearts affected with it.

We do not, therefore, in these things, follow “cunningly-devised fables.” We do not indulge unto our own fancies and imaginations; — they are not unaccountable raptures or ecstasies which are pretended unto, nor such an artificial concatenation of thoughts as some ignorant of these things do boast that they can give an account of. Our love to Christ ariseth alone from the revelation that is made of him in the Scripture — is ingenerated, regulated, measured, and is to be judged thereby.

## 04.14. Chapter 14

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### Chapter XIV.

Motives unto the Love of Christ. The motives unto this love of Christ is the last thing, on this head of our religious respect unto him, that I shall speak unto. When God required of the church the first and highest act of religion, the sole foundation of all others — namely, to take him as their God, to own, believe, and trust in him alone as such, (which is wholly due unto him for what he is, without any other consideration whatever,) — yet he thought meet to add a motive unto the performance of that duty from what he had done for them, Exodus 20:2-3. The sense of the first command is, that we should take him alone for our God; for he is so, and there is no other. But in the prescription of this duty unto the church, he minds them of the benefits which they had received from him in bringing them out of the house of bondage.

God, in his wisdom and grace, ordereth all the causes and reasons of our duty, so as that all the rational powers and faculties of our souls may be exercised therein. Wherefore he doth not only propose himself unto us, nor is Christ merely proposed unto us as the proper object of our affections, but he calls us also unto the consideration of all those things that may satisfy our souls that it is the most just, necessary, reasonable and advantageous course for us so to fix our affections an him. And these considerations are taken from all that he did for us, with the reasons and grounds why he did it. We love him principally and ultimately for what he is; but nextly and immediately for what he did. What he did for us is first proposed unto us, and it is that which our souls are first affected withal. For they are originally acted in all things by a sense of the want which they have, and a desire of the blessedness which they have not. This directs them unto what he hath done for sinners; but that leads immediately unto the consideration of what he is in himself. And when our love is fixed on him or his person, then all those things wherewith, from a sense of our own wants and desires, we were first affected, become motives unto the confirming and increasing of that love. This is the constant method of the Scripture; it first proposes unto us what the Lord Christ hath done for us, especially in the discharge of his sacerdotal office, in his oblation and intercession, with the benefits which we receive thereby. Hereby it leads us unto his person, and presseth the consideration of all other things to engage our love unto him. See Php 2:5-11, with Php 3:8-11.

Motives unto the love of Christ are so great, so many, so diffused through the whole dispensation of God in him unto us, as that they can by no hand be fully expressed, let it be allowed ever so much to enlarge in the declaration of them; much less can they be represented in that short discourse whereof but a very small part is allotted unto their consideration — such as ours is at present. The studying, the collection of them or so many of them as we are able, the meditation on them and improvement of them, are among the principal duties of our whole lives. What I shall offer is the reduction of them unto these two heads: 1. The acts of Christ, which is the substance of them; and, 2. The spring and fountain of those acts, which is the life of them.

1. In general they are all the acts of his mediatory office, with all the fruits of them, whereof we are made partners. There is not any thing that he did or doth, in the discharge of his mediatory office, from the first susception of it in his incarnation in the womb of the blessed Virgin unto his present intercession in heaven, but is an effectual motive unto the love of him; and as such is proposed unto us in the Scripture. Whatever he did or doth with or towards us in the name of God, as the king and prophet of the church — whatever he did or doth with God for us, as our high priest — it all speaks this language in the hearts of them that believe: O love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. The consideration of what Christ thus did and doth for us is inseparable from that of the benefits which we receive thereby. A due mixture of both these — of what he did for us, and what we obtain thereby — compriseth the substance of these motives: “Who loved me, and gave himself for me” — “Who loved us, and washed us in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God” — “For thou wast slain, and hast bought us unto God with thy blood.” And both these are of a transcendent nature, requiring our love to be so also. Who is able to comprehend the glory of the mediatory acting of the Son of God, in the assumption of our nature — in what he did and suffered therein? And for us, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive, what we receive thereby. The least benefit, and that obtained by the least expense of trouble or charge, deserveth love, and leaveth the brand of a crime where it is not so entertained. What, then, do the greatest deserve, and thou procured by the greatest expense — even the price of the blood of the Son of God?

If we have any faith concerning these things, it will produce love, as that love will obedience. Whatever we profess concerning them, it springs from tradition and opinion, and not from faith, if it engage not our souls into the love of him. The frame of heart which ensues on the real faith of these things is expressed, Psalms 103:1-5, “Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” Let men pretend what they will, there needs no greater, no other evidence, to prove that any one doth not really believe the things that are reported in the Gospel, concerning the mediatory acting of Christ, or that he hath no experience in his own soul and conscience of the fruits and effects of them, than this — that his heart is not engaged by them unto the most ardent love towards his person.

He is no Christian who lives not much in the meditation of the mediation of Christ, and the especial acts of it. Some may more abound in that work than others, as it is fixed, formed and regular; some may be more able than others to dispose their thought concerning them into method and order; some may be more diligent than others in the observation of times for the solemn performance of this duty; some may be able to rise to higher and clearer apprehensions of them than others. But as for those, the bent of whose minds doth not lie towards thoughts of them — whose hearts are not on all occasions retreating unto the remembrance of them — who embrace not all opportunities to call them over as they are able — on what grounds can they be esteemed Christians? how do they live by the faith of the Son of God? Are the great things of the Gospel, of the mediation of Christ, proposed unto us, as those which we may think of when we have nothing else to do, that we may meditate upon or neglect at our pleasure — as those wherein our concernment is so small as that they must give place unto all other occasions or diversions

whatever? Nay; if our minds are not filled with these things — if Christ doth not dwell plentifully in our hearts by faith — if our souls are not possessed with them, and in their whole inward frame and constitution so cut into this mould as to be led by a natural complacency unto a converse with them — we are strangers unto the life of faith. And if we are thus conversant about these things, they will engage our hearts into the love of the person of Christ. To suppose the contrary, is indeed to deny the truth and reality of them all, and to turn the Gospel into a fable.

Take one instance from among the rest — namely, his death. Hath he the heart of a Christian, who doth not often meditate on the death of his Saviour, who doth not derive his life from it? Who can look into the Gospel and not fix on those lines which either immediately and directly, or through some other paths of divine grace and wisdom, do lead him thereunto? And can any have believing thoughts concerning the death of Christ, and not have his heart affected with ardent love unto his person? Christ in the Gospel “is evidently set forth, crucified” before us. Can any by the eye of faith look on this bleeding, dying Redeemer, and suppose love unto his person to be nothing but the work of fancy or imagination? They know the contrary, who “always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus,” as the apostle speaks, 2 Corinthians 4:10. As his whole “name,” in all that he did, is “as ointment poured forth,” for which “the virgins love him,” Song of Solomon 1:3, — so this precious perfume of his death is that wherewith their hearts are ravished in a peculiar manner.

Again: as there can be no faith in Christ where there is no love unto him on the account of his mediatory acts; so, where it is not, the want of it casteth persons under the highest guilt of ingratitude that our nature is liable unto. The highest aggravation of the sin of angels was their ingratitude unto their Maker. For whereas, by his mere will and pleasure, they were stated in the highest excellency, pre-eminence, and dignity, that he thought good to communicate unto any creatures — or, it may be, that any mere created nature is capable of in itself — they were unthankful for what they had so received from undeserved goodness and bounty; and so cast themselves into everlasting ruin. But yet the sin of men, in their ingratitude towards Christ on the account of what he hath done for them, is attended with an aggravation above that of the angels. For although the angels were originally instated in that condition of dignity which in this world we cannot attain unto, yet were they not redeemed and recovered from misery as we are. In all the crowd of evil and wicked men that the world is pestered withal, there are none, by common consent, so stigmatised for unworthy villainy, as those who are signally ungrateful for singular benefits. If persons are unthankful unto them, if they have not the highest love for them, who redeem them from ignominy and death, and instate them in a plentiful inheritance, (if any such instances may be given,) and that with the greatest expense of labour and charge, — mankind, without any regret, doth tacitly condemn them unto greater miseries than those which they were delivered from. What, then, will be the condition of them whose hearts are not so affected with the mediation of Christ and the fruits of it, as to engage the best, the choicest of their affections unto him! The gospel itself will be “a savour of death” unto such ungrateful wretches.

2. That which the Scripture principally insisteth on as the motive of our love unto Christ, is his love unto us — which was the principle of all his mediatory actings in our behalf.

Love is that jewel of human nature which commands a valuation wherever it is found. Let other circumstances be what they will, whatever distances between persons may be made by them, yet

real love, where it is evidenced so to be, is not despised by any but such as degenerate into profligate brutality. If it be so stated as that it can produce no outward effects advantageous unto them that are beloved, yet it commands a respect, as it were, whether we will or no, and some return in its own kind. Especially it doth so if it be altogether undeserved, and so evidenceth itself to proceed from a goodness of nature, and an inclination unto the good of them on whom it is fixed. For, whereas the essential nature of love consisteth in willing good unto them that are beloved — where the act of the will is real, sincere, and constantly exercised, without any defect of it on our part, no restraints can possibly be put upon our minds from going out in some acts of love again upon its account, unless all their faculties are utterly depraved by habits of brutish and filthy lusts. But when this love, which is thus undeserved, doth also abound in effects troublesome and chargeable in them in whom it is, and highly beneficial unto them on whom it is placed — if there be any such affection left in the nature of any man, it will prevail unto a reciprocal love. And all these things are found in the love of Christ, unto that degree and height as nothing parallel unto it can be found in the whole creation. I shall briefly speak of it under two general heads.

(1.) The sole spring of all the mediatory acting of Christ, both in the susception of our nature and in all that he did and suffered therein, was his own mere love and grace, working by pity and compassion. It is true, he undertook this work principally with respect unto the glory of God, and out of love unto him. But with respect unto us, his only motive unto it was his abundant, overflowing love. And this is especially remembered unto us in that instance wherein it carried him through the greatest difficulties — namely, in his death and the oblation of himself on our behalf, Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:2, Ephesians 5:25-26; 1 John 3:16; Revelation 1:5-6. This alone inclined the Son of God to undertake the glorious work of our redemption, and carried him through the death and dread which he underwent in the accomplishment of it. Should I engage into the consideration of this love of Christ, which was the great means of conveying all the effects of divine wisdom and grace unto the church, — that glass which God chose to represent himself and all his goodness in unto believers, — that spirit of life in the wheel of all the motions of the person of Christ in the redemption of the church unto the eternal glory of God, his own and that of his redeemed also, — that mirror wherein the holy angels and blessed saints shall for ever contemplate the divine excellencies in their suitable operations; — I must now begin a discourse much larger than that which I have passed through. But it is not suited unto my present design so to do. For, considering the growing apprehensions of many about the person of Christ, which are utterly destructive of the whole nature of that love which we ascribe unto him, do I know how soon a more distinct explication and defence of it may be called for. And this cause will not be forsaken.

They know nothing of the life and power of the gospel, nothing of the reality of the grace of God, nor do they believe aright one article of the Christian faith, whose hearts are not sensible of the love of Christ herein; nor is he sensible of the love of Christ, whose affections are not thereon drawn out unto him. I say, they make a pageant of religion, — a fable for the theatre of the world, — a business of fancy and opinion, — whose hearts are not really affected with the love of Christ, in the susception and discharge of the work of mediation, so as to have real and spiritually sensible affections for him. Men may babble things which they have learned by rote; they have no real acquaintance with Christianity, who imagine that the placing of the most intense affections of our souls on the person of Christ — the loving him with all our hearts because of his love — our being overcome thereby until we are sick of love — the constant motions of our souls towards him

with delight and adherence — are but fancies and imaginations. I renounce that religion, be it whose it will, that teacheth, insinuateth, or giveth countenance unto, such abominations. That doctrine is as discrepant from the Gospel as the Alkoran — as contrary to the experience of believers as what is acted in and by the devils which instructs men unto a contempt of the most fervent love unto Christ, or casts reflections upon it. I had rather choose my eternal lot and portion with the meanest believer, who, being effectually sensible of the love of Christ, spends his days in mourning that he can love him no more than he finds himself on his utmost endeavours for the discharge of his duty to do, than with the best of them, whose vain speculations and a false pretence of reason puff them up unto a contempt of these things.

(2.) This love of Christ unto the church is singular in all those qualifications which render love obliging unto reciprocal affections. It is so in its reality. There can be no love amongst men, but will derive something from that disorder which is in their affections in their highest actings. But the love of Christ is pure and absolutely free from any alloy. There cannot be the least suspicion of anything of self in it. And it is absolutely undeserved. Nothing can be found amongst men that can represent or exemplify its freedom from any desert on our part. The most candid and ingenuous love amongst us is, when we love another for his worth, excellency, and usefulness, though we have no singular benefit of them ourselves; but not the least of any of these things were found in them on whom he set his love, until they were wrought in them, as effects of that love which he set upon them.

Men sometimes may rise up unto such a high degree and instance in love, as that they will even die for one another; but then it must be on a superlative esteem which they have of their worth and merit. It may be, saith the apostle, treating of the love of Christ, and of God in him, that “for a good man some would even dare to die,” Romans 5:7. It must be for a good man — one who is justly esteemed “commune bonum,” a public good to mankind — one whose benignity is ready to exercise loving-kindness on all occasions, which is the estate of a good man; — peradventure some would even dare to die for such a man. This is the height of what love among men can rise unto; and if it hath been instanced in any, it hath been accompanied with an open mixture of vain-glory and desire of renown. But the Lord Christ placed his love on us, that love from whence he died for us, when we were sinners and ungodly; that is, every thing which might render us unamiable and undeserving. Though we were as deformed as sin could render us, and more deeply indebted than the whole creation could pay or answer, yet did he fix his love upon us, to free us from that condition, and to render us meet for the most intimate society with himself. Never was there love which had such effects — which cost him so dear in whom it was, and proved so advantageous unto them on whom it was placed. In the pursuit of it he underwent everything that is evil in his own person, and we receive everything that is good in the favour of God and eternal blessedness. On the account of these things, the apostle ascribes a constraining power unto the love of Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:14. And if it constrains us unto any return unto him, it doth so unto that of love in the first place. For no suitable return can be made for love but love, at least not without it. As love cannot be purchased — “For if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be condemned,” Song of Solomon 8:7, — so if a man would give all the world for a requital of love, without love it would be despised. To fancy that all the love of Christ unto us consists in the precepts and promises of the Gospel, and all our love unto him in the observance of his commands, without a real love in him unto our persons, like that of a “husband

unto a wife," Ephesians 5:25-26, or a holy affection in our hearts and minds unto his person, is to overthrow the whole power of religion — to despoil it of its life and soul, leaving nothing but the carcass of it. This love unto Christ, and unto God in him, because of his love unto us, is the principal instance of divine love, the touchstone of its reality and sincerity. Whatever men may boast of their affectionate endearments unto the divine goodness, if it be not founded in a sense of this love of Christ, and the love of God in him, they are but empty notions they nourish withal, and their deceived hearts feed upon ashes. It is in Christ alone that God is declared to be love; without an apprehension whereof none can love him as they ought. In him alone that infinite goodness, which is the peculiar object of divine love, is truly represented unto us, without any such deceiving phantasm as the workings of fancy or depravation of reason may impose upon us. And on him doth the saving communication of all the effects of it depend. And an infinite condescension is it in the holy God, so to express his "glory in the face of Jesus Christ," or to propose himself as the object of our love in and through him. For considering our weakness as to an immediate comprehension of the infinite excellencies of the divine nature, or to bear the rays of his resplendent glory, seeing none can see his face and live, it is the most adorable effect of divine wisdom and grace, that we are admitted unto the contemplation of them in the person of Jesus Christ.

There is yet farther evidence to be given of this love unto the person of Christ, from all those blessed effects of it which are declared in the Scripture, and whereof believers have the experience in themselves. But something I have spoken concerning them formerly, in my discourse about communion with God; and the nature of the present design will not admit of enlargement upon them.

## 04.15. Chapter 15

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### Chapter XV.

#### Conformity unto Christ, and Following his Example.

III. The third thing proposed to declare the use of the person of Christ in religion, is that conformity which is required of us unto him. This is the great design and projection of all believers. Every one of them hath the idea or image of Christ in his mind, in the eye of faith, as it is represented unto him in the glass of the Gospel: Τὴν δόξαν Κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι κ. τ. λ., 2 Corinthians 3:18. We behold his glory “in a glass,” which implants the image of it on our minds. And hereby the mind is transformed into the same image, made like unto Christ so represented unto us — which is the conformity we speak of. Hence every true believer hath his heart under the conduct of an habitual inclination and desire to be like unto Christ. And it were easy to demonstrate, that where this is not, there is neither faith nor love. Faith will cast the soul into the form or frame of the thing believed, Romans 6:17. And all sincere love worketh an assimilation. Wherefore the best evidence of a real principle of the life of God in any soul — of the sincerity of faith, love, and obedience — is an internal cordial endeavour, operative on all occasions, after conformity unto Jesus Christ.

There are two parts of the duty proposed. The first respects the internal grace and holiness of the human nature of Christ; the other, his example in duties of obedience. And both of them — both materially as to the things wherein they consist, and formally as they were his or in him — belong unto the constitution of a true disciple. In the first place, Internal conformity unto his habitual grace and holiness is the fundamental design of a Christian life. That which is the best without it is a pretended imitation of his example in outward duties of obedience. I call it pretended, because where the first design is wanting, it is no more but so; nor is it acceptable to Christ nor approved by him. And therefore an attempt unto that end hath often issued in formality, hypocrisy, and superstition. I shall therefore lay down the grounds of this design, the nature of it, and the means of its pursuit.

1. God, in the human nature of Christ, did perfectly renew that blessed image of his on our nature which we lost in Adam, with an addition of many glorious endowments which Adam was not made partaker of. God did not renew it in his nature as though that portion of it whereof he was partaker had ever been destitute or deprived of it, as it is with the same nature in all other persons. For he derived not his nature from Adam in the same way that we do; nor was he ever in Adam as the public representative of our nature, as we were. But our nature in him had the image of God implanted in it, which was lost and separated from the same nature in all other instances of its subsistence. “It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,” — that he should be “full of grace and truth,” and “in all things have the pre-eminence.” But of these gracious endowments of the human nature of Christ I have discoursed elsewhere.

2. One end of God in filling the human nature of Christ with all grace, in implanting his glorious image upon it, was, that he might in him propose an example of what he would by the same grace

renew us unto, and what we ought in a way of duty to labour after. The fulness of grace was necessary unto the human nature of Christ, from its hypostatical union with the Son of God. For whereas therein the “fulness of the godhead dwelt in him bodily,” it became τῆς ἁγιότητος, a “holy thing,” Luke 1:35. It was also necessary unto him, as unto his own obedience in the flesh, wherein he fulfilled all righteousness, “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth,” 1 Peter 2:22. And it was so unto the discharge of the office he undertook; for “such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners,” Hebrews 7:26. Howbeit, the infinite wisdom of God had this farther design in it also, — namely, that he might be the pattern and example of the renovation of the image of God in us, and of the glory that doth ensue thereon. He is in the eye of God as the idea of what he intends in us, in the communication of grace and glory; and he ought to be so in ours, as unto all that we aim at in a way of duty.

He hath “predestinated us to be conformed unto the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren,” Romans 8:29. In the collation of all grace on Christ, God designed to make him “the first born of many brethren;” that is, not only to give him the power and authority of the firstborn, with the trust of the whole inheritance to be communicated unto them, but also as the example of what he would bring them unto. “For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,” Hebrews 2:11. It is Christ who sanctifieth believers; yet is it from God, who first sanctified him, that he and they might be of one, and so become brethren, as bearing the image of the same Father. God designed and gave unto Christ grace and glory; and he did it that he might be the prototype of what he designed unto us, and would bestow upon us. Hence the apostle shows that the effect of this predestination to conformity unto the image of the Son is the communication of all effectual, saving grace, with the glory that ensues thereon, Romans 8:30, “Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” The great design of God in his grace is, that as we have borne the “image of the first Adam” in the depravation of our natures, so we should bear the “image of the second” in their renovation. “As we have borne the image of the earthy,” so “we shall bear the image of the heavenly,” 1 Corinthians 15:49. And as he is the pattern of all our graces, so he is of glory also. All our glory will consist in our being “made like unto him;” which, what it is, doth not as yet appear, 1 John 3:2. For “he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,” Php 3:21. Wherefore the fulness of grace was bestowed on the human nature of Christ, and the image of God gloriously implanted thereon, that it might be the prototype and example of what the church was through him to be made partaker of. That which God intends for us in the internal communication of his grace, and in the use of all the ordinances of the church, is, that we may come unto the “measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,” Ephesians 4:13. There is a fulness of all grace in Christ. Hereunto are we to be brought, according to the measure that is designed unto every one of us. “For unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ,” Ephesians 4:7. He hath, in his sovereign grace, assigned different measures unto those on whom he doth bestow it. And therefore it is called “the stature”, because as we grow gradually unto it, as men do unto their just stature; so there is a variety in what we attain unto, as there is in the statures of men, who are yet all perfect in their proportion.

3. This image of God in Christ is represented unto us in the Gospel. Being lost from our nature, it was utterly impossible we should have any just comprehension of it. There could be no steady

notion of the image of God, until it was renewed and exemplified in the human nature of Christ. And thereon, without the knowledge of him, the wisest of men have taken those things to render men most like unto God which were adverse unto him. Such were the most of those things which the heathens adored as heroic virtues. But being perfectly exemplified in Christ, it is now plainly represented unto us in the Gospel. Therein with open face we behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, 2 Corinthians 3:18. The veil being taken away from divine revelations by the doctrine of the Gospel and from our hearts “by the Lord the Spirit,” we behold the image of God in Christ with open face, which is the principal means of our being transformed into it. The Gospel is the declaration of Christ unto us, and the glory of God in him; as unto many other ends, so in especial, that we might in him behold and contemplate that image of God we are gradually to be renewed into. Hence, we are so therein to learn the truth as it is in Jesus, as to be “renewed in the spirit of our mind,” and to “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,” Ephesians 4:20, Ephesians 4:23-24 — that is, “renewed after the image of him who created him,” Colossians 3:10.

4. It is, therefore, evident that the life of God in us consists in conformity unto Christ; nor is the Holy Spirit, as the principal and efficient cause of it, given unto us for any other end but to unite us unto him, and make us like him. Wherefore, the original Gospel duty, which animates and rectifies all others, is a design for conformity unto Christ in all the gracious principles and qualifications of his holy soul, wherein the image of God in him doth consist. As he is the prototype and exemplar in the eye of God for the communication of all grace unto us, so he ought to be the great example in the eye of our faith in all our obedience unto God, in our compliance with all that he requireth of us.

God himself, or the divine nature in its holy perfections, is the ultimate object and idea of our transformation in the renewing of our minds. And, therefore, under the Old Testament, before the incarnation of the Son, he proposed his own holiness immediately as the pattern of the church: “Be ye holy, for the Lord your God is holy,” Leviticus 11:44; Leviticus 19:2; Leviticus 20:26. But the law made nothing perfect. For to complete this great injunction, there was yet wanting an express example of the holiness required; which is not given us but in him who is “the first-born, the image of the invisible God.”

There was a notion, even among the philosophers, that the principal endeavour of a wise man was to be like unto God. But in the improvement of it, the best of them fell into foolish and proud imaginations. Howbeit, the notion itself was the principal beam of our primigenial light, the best relic of our natural perfections; and those who are not some way under the power of a design to be like unto God are every way like unto the devil. But those persons who had nothing but the absolute essential properties of the divine nature to contemplate on in the light of reason, failed all of them, both in the notion itself of conformity unto God, and especially in the practical improvement of it. Whatever men may fancy to the contrary, it is the design of the apostle, in sundry places of his writings, to prove that they did so, especially Romans 1:1-32; 1 Corinthians 1:1-31. Wherefore, it was an infinite condescension of divine wisdom and grace, gloriously to implant that image of him which we are to endeavour conformity unto in the human nature of Christ, and then so fully to represent and propose it unto us in the revelation of the Gospel. The infinite perfections of God, considered absolutely in themselves, are accompanied with such an incomprehensible glory as it is hard to conceive how they are the object of our imitation. But the representation that is made of them in Christ, as the image of the invisible God, is so suited to the

renewed faculties of our souls, so congenial unto the new creature or the gracious principle of spiritual life in us, that the mind can dwell on the contemplation of them, and be thereby transformed into the same image.

Herein lies much of the life and power of Christian religion, as it resides in the souls of men. This is the prevailing design of the minds of them that truly believe the Gospel; they would in all things be like unto Jesus Christ. And I shall briefly show — (1.) What is required hereunto; and, (2.) What is to be done in a way of duty for the attaining that end.

(1.) A spiritual light, to discern the beauty, glory, and amiableness of grace in Christ, is required hereunto. We can have no real design of conformity unto him, unless we have their eyes who “beheld his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,” John 1:14. Nor is it enough that we seem to discern the glory of his person, unless we see a beauty and excellency in every grace that is in him. “Learn of me,” saith he; “for I am meek and lowly in heart,” Matthew 11:29. If we are not able to discern an excellency in meekness and lowliness of heart, (as they are things generally despised,) how shall we sincerely endeavour after conformity unto Christ in them? The like may be said of all his other gracious qualifications. His zeal, his patience, his self-denial, his readiness for the cross, his love unto his enemies, his benignity to all mankind, his faith and fervency in prayer, his love to God, his compassion towards the souls of men, his unweariedness in doing good, his purity, his universal holiness; — unless we have a spiritual light to discern the glory and amiableness of them all, as they were in him, we speak in vain of any design for conformity unto him. And this we have not, unless God shine into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. It is, I say, a foolish thing to talk of the imitation of Christ, whilst really, through the darkness of our minds, we discern not that there is an excellency in the things wherein we ought to be like unto him.

(2.) Love unto them so discovered in a beam of heavenly light, is required unto the same end. No soul can have a design of conformity unto Christ but his who so likes and loves the graces that were in him, as to esteem a participation of them in their power to be the greatest advantage, to be the most invaluable privilege, that can in this world be attained. It is the savour of his good ointments for which the virgins love him, cleave unto him, and endeavour to be like him. In that whereof we now discourse — namely, of conformity unto him — he is the representative of the image of God unto us. And, if we do not love and prize above all things those gracious qualifications and dispositions of mind wherein it doth consist, whatever we may pretend of the imitation of Christ in any outward acts or duties of obedience, we have no design of conformity unto him. He who sees and admires the glory of Christ as filled with these graces — as he “was fairer than the children of men,” because “grace was poured into his lips” — unto whom nothing is so desirable as to have the same mind, the same heart, the same spirit that was in Christ Jesus — is prepared to press after conformity unto him. And unto such a soul the representation of all these excellencies in the person of Christ is the great incentive, motive, and guide, in and unto all internal obedience unto God.

Lastly, That wherein we are to labour for this conformity may be reduced unto two heads.

[1.] An opposition unto all sin, in the root, principle, and most secret springs of it, or original cleavings unto our nature. He “did no sin, neither was there any guile found in his mouth.” He “was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” He was the “Lamb of God, without spot or

blemish;" like unto us, yet without sin. Not the least tincture of sin did ever make an approach unto his holy nature. He was absolutely free from every drop of that fomes which hath invaded us in our depraved condition. Wherefore, to be freed from all sin, is the first general part of an endeavour for conformity unto Christ. And although we cannot perfectly attain hereunto in this life, as we have "not already attained, nor are already perfect," yet he who groaneth not in himself after it — who doth not loathe every thing that is of the remainder of sin in him and himself for it — who doth not labour after its absolute and universal extirpation — hath no sincere design of conformity unto Christ, nor can so have. He who endeavours to be like him, must "purify himself, even as he is pure." Thoughts of the purity of Christ, in his absolute freedom from the least tincture of sin, will not suffer a believer to be negligent, at any time, for the endeavouring the utter ruin of that which makes him unlike unto him. And it is a blessed advantage unto faith, in the work of mortification of sin, that we have such a pattern continually before us.

[2.] The due improvement of, and continual growth, in every grace, is the other general part of this duty. In the exercise of his own all-fulness of grace, both in moral duties of obedience and the especial duties of his office, did the glory of Christ on the earth consist. Wherefore, to abound in the exercise of every grace — to grow in the root and thrive in the fruit of them — is to be conformed unto the image of the Son of God.

Secondly, The following the example of Christ in all duties towards God and men, in his whole conversation on the earth, is the second part of the instance now given concerning the use of the person of Christ in religion. The field is large which here lies before us, and filled with numberless blessed instances. I cannot here enter into it; and the mistakes that have been in a pretence unto it, require that it should be handled distinctly and at large by itself; which, if God will, may be done in due time. One or two general instances wherein he was most eminently our example, shall close this discourse.

1. His meekness, lowliness of mind, condescension unto all sorts of persons — his love and kindness unto mankind — his readiness to do good unto all, with patience and forbearance — are continually set before us in his example. I place them all under one head, as proceeding all from the same spring of divine goodness, and having effects of the same nature. With respect unto them, it is required that "the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus," Php 2:5; and that we "walk in love, as he also loved us," Ephesians 5:2. In these things was he the great representative of the divine goodness unto us. In the acting of these graces on all occasions did he declare and manifest the nature of God, from whom he came. And this was one end of his exhibition in the flesh. Sin had filled the world with a representation of the devil and his nature, in mutual hatred, strife, variance, envy, wrath, pride, fierceness, and rage, against one another; all which are of the old murderer. The instances of a cured, of a contrary frame, were obscure and weak in the best of the saints of old. But in our Lord Jesus the light of the glory of God herein first shone upon the world. In the exercise of these graces, which he most abounded in, because the sins, weaknesses and infirmities of men gave continual occasion thereunto, did he represent the divine nature as love — as infinitely good, benign, merciful, and patient — delighting in the exercise of these its holy properties. In them was the Lord Christ our example in an especial manner. And they do in vain pretend to be his disciples, to be followers of him, who endeavour not to order the whole course of their lives in conformity unto him in these things.

One Christian who is meek, humble, kind, patient, and useful unto all; that condescends to the ignorance, weaknesses and infirmities of others; that passeth by provocations, injuries, contempt, with patience and with silence, unless where the glory and truth of God call for a just vindication; that pitieth all sorts of men in their failings and miscarriages, who is free from jealousies and evil surmises; that loveth what is good in all men, and all men even wherein they are not good, nor do good, — doth more express the virtues and excellencies of Christ than thousands can do with the most magnificent works of piety or charity, where this frame is wanting in them. For men to pretend to follow the example of Christ, and in the meantime to be proud, wrathful envious, bitterly zealous, calling for fire from heaven to destroy men, or fetching it themselves from hell, is to cry, “Hail unto him,” and to crucify him afresh unto their power.

2. Self-denial, readiness for the cross, with patience in sufferings, are the second sort of things which he calls all his disciples to follow his example in. It is the fundamental law of his Gospel, that if any one will be his disciple, “he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow him.” These things in him, as they are all of them summarily represented, Php 2:5-8, by reason of the glory of his person and the nature of his sufferings, are quite of another kind than that we are called unto. But his grace in them all is our only pattern in what is required of us. “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not,” 1 Peter 2:21-23. Hence are we called to look unto “Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame.” For we are to “consider him, who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself,” that we faint not, Hebrews 12:3. Blessed be God for this example — for the glory of the condescension, patience, faith, and endurance, of Jesus Christ, in the extremity of all sorts of sufferings. This hath been the pole-star of the church in all its storms; the guide, the comfort, supportment and encouragement of all those holy souls, who, in their several generations, have in various degrees undergone persecution for righteousness’ sake; and yet continueth so to be unto them who are in the same condition. And I must say, as I have done on some other occasions in the handling of this subject, that a discourse on this one instance of the use of Christ in religion — from the consideration of the person who suffered, and set us this example; of the principle from whence, and the end for which, he did it; of the variety of evils of all sorts he had to conflict withal; of his invincible patience under them all, and immovableness of love and compassion unto mankind, even his persecutors; the dolorous afflictive circumstances of his sufferings from God and men; the blessed efficacious workings of his faith and trust in God unto the uttermost; with the glorious issue of the whole, and the influence of all these considerations unto the consolation and supportment of the church — would take up more room and time than what is allotted unto the whole of that whereof it is here the least part. I shall leave the whole under the shade of that blessed promise, “If so be that we suffer with him, we may be also glorified together; for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us,” Romans 8:17-18.

IV. The last thing proposed concerning the person of Christ, was the use of it unto believers, in the whole of their relation unto God and duty towards him. And the things belonging thereunto may be reduced unto these general heads:—

1. Their sanctification, which consisteth in these four things: (1.) The mortification of sin, (2.) The gradual renovation of our natures, (3.) Assistances in actual obedience, (4.) The same in

temptations and trials.

2. Their justification, with its concomitants and consequent; as — (1.) Adoption, (2.) Peace, (3.) Consolation and joy in life and death, (4.) Spiritual gifts, unto the edification of themselves and others, (5.) A blessed resurrection, (6.) Eternal glory.

There are other things which also belong hereunto: — as their guidance in the course of their conversation in this world, direction unto usefulness in all states and conditions, patient waiting for the accomplishment of God's promises to the church, the communication of federal blessings unto their families, and the exercise of loving-kindness towards mankind in general, with sundry other concernments of the life of faith of the like importance; but they may be all reduced unto the general heads proposed.

What should have been spoken with reference unto these things belongs unto these three heads:—

1st, A declaration that all these things are wrought in and communicated unto believers, according to their various natures, by an emanation of grace and power from the person of Jesus Christ, as the head of the church — as he who is exalted and made a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

2dly, A declaration of the way and manner how believers do live upon Christ in the exercise of faith, whereby, according to the promise and appointment of God, they derive from him the whole grace and mercy whereof in this world they are made partakers, and are established in the expectation of what they shall receive hereafter by his power. And that two things do hence ensue: (1st,) The necessity of universal evangelical obedience, seeing it is only in and by the duties of it that faith is, or can be, kept in a due exercise unto the ends mentioned. (2dly,) That believers do hereby increase continually with the increase of God, and grow up into him who is the head, until they become the fulness of him who fills all in all.

3dly, A conviction that a real interest in, and participation of, these things cannot be obtained any other way but by the actual exercise of faith on the person of Jesus Christ.

These things were necessary to be handled at large with reference unto the end proposed. But, for sundry reasons, the whole of this labour is here declined. For some of the particulars mentioned I have already insisted on in other discourses heretofore published, and that with respect unto the end here designed. And this argument cannot be handled as it doth deserve, unto full satisfaction, without an entire discourse concerning the life of faith; which my present design will not admit of.

## 04.16. Chapter 16

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Chapter XVI. An humble Inquiry into, and Prospect of, the infinite Wisdom of God, in the Constitution of the Person of Christ, and the Way of Salvation thereby. From the consideration of the things before insisted on, we may endeavour, according unto our measure, to take a view of, and humbly adore, the infinite wisdom of God, in the holy contrivance of this great “mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.” As it is a spiritual, evangelical mystery, it is an effect of divine wisdom, in the redemption and salvation of the church, unto the eternal glory of God; and as it is a “great mystery,” so it is the mystery of the “manifold wisdom of God,” Ephesians 3:9-10 — that is, of infinite wisdom working in great variety of acting and operations, suited unto, and expressive of, its own infinite fulness: for herein were “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” laid up, and laid out, Colossians 2:3. An argument this is, in some parts whereof divers of the ancient writers of the church have laboured, some occasionally, and some with express design. I shall insist only on those things which Scripture light leads us directly unto. The depths of divine wisdom in this glorious work are hid from the eyes of all living. “God [alone] understandeth the way thereof; and he knoweth the place thereof;” as he speaks, Job 28:21, Job 28:23. Yet is it so glorious in its effects, that “destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears,” Job 28:22. The fame and report of this divine wisdom reach even unto hell. Those who eternally perish shall hear a fame of this wisdom, in the glorious effects of it towards the blessed souls above, though some of them would not believe it here in the light of the Gospel, and none of them can understand it there, in their everlasting darkness. Hence the report which they have of the wisdom is an aggravation of their misery.

These depths we may admire and adore, but we cannot comprehend: “For who hath known the mind of the Lord herein, or with whom took he counsel?” Concerning the original causes of his counsels in this great mystery we can only say, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out!” This alone is left unto us in the way of duty, that in the effects of them we should contemplate on their excellency, so as to give glory to God, and live in a holy admiration of his wisdom and grace. For to give glory unto him, and admire him, is our present duty, until he shall come eternally “to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe,” 2 Thessalonians 1:10.

We can do no more but stand at the shore of this ocean, and adore its unsearchable depths. What is delivered from them by divine revelation we may receive as pearls of price, to enrich and adorn our souls. For “the secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us,” that we may do “the words of this law,” Deuteronomy 29:29. We shall not, therefore, in our inquiry into this great mystery, intrude ourselves into the things which we have not seen, but only endeavour a right understanding of what is revealed concerning it. For the end of all divine revelations is our knowledge of the things revealed, with our obedience thereon; and unto this end things revealed do belong unto us.

Some things in general are to be premised unto our present inquiry.

1. We can have no view or due prospect of the wisdom of God in any of his works, much less in this of “sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,” or the constitution of his person, and the work of redemption to be accomplished thereby, unless we consider also the interest of the other holy properties of the divine nature in them. Such are his holiness, his righteousness, his sovereign authority, his goodness, love, and grace.

There are three excellencies of the divine nature principally to be considered in all the external works of God. (1.) His Goodness, which is the communicative property thereof. This is the eternal fountain and spring of all divine communications. Whatever is good in and unto any creature, is an emanation from divine goodness. “He is good, and he doeth good.” That which acts originally in the divine nature, unto the communication of itself in any blessed or gracious effects unto the creatures, is goodness. (2.) Wisdom, which is the directive power or excellency of the divine nature. Hereby God guides, disposes, orders, and directs all things unto his own glory, in and by their own immediate proper ends, Proverbs 16:4; Revelation 6:11. (3.) Power, which is the effective excellency of the divine nature, effecting and accomplishing what wisdom doth design and order.

Whereas wisdom, therefore, is that holy excellency or power of the Divine Being, wherein God designs, and whereby he effects, the glory of all the other properties of his nature, we cannot trace the paths of it in any work of God, unless we know the interest and concernment of those other properties in that work. For that which wisdom principally designs, is the glorification of them. And unto this end the effective property of the divine nature, which is almighty power, always accompanies, or is subservient unto, the directive or infinite wisdom, which is requisite unto perfection in operation. What infinite goodness will communicate ad extra — what it will open the eternal fountain of the Divine Being and all sufficiency to give forth — that infinite wisdom designs, contrives, and directs to the glory of God; and what wisdom so designs, infinite power effects. See Isaiah 40:13-15, Isaiah 40:17, Isaiah 40:28.

2. We can have no apprehensions of the interest of the other properties of the divine nature in this great mystery of godliness, whose glory was designed in infinite wisdom, without the consideration of that state and condition of our own wherein they are so concerned. That which was designed unto the eternal glory of God in this great work of the incarnation of his Son, was the redemption of mankind, or the recovery and salvation of the church. What hath been disputed by some concerning it, without respect unto the sin of man and the salvation of the church, is curiosity, and indeed presumptuous folly. The whole Scripture constantly assigneth this sole end of that effect of divine goodness and wisdom; yea, asserts it as the only foundation of the Gospel, John 3:16. Wherefore, unto a due contemplation of divine wisdom in it, it is necessary we should consider what is the nature of sin, especially of that first sin, wherein our original apostasy from God did consist — what was the condition of mankind thereon — what is the concernment of the holy God therein, on the account of the blessed properties of his nature — what way was suited unto our recovery, that God might be glorified in them all. Without a previous consideration of these things, we can have no due conceptions of the wisdom of God in this glorious work which we inquire after. Wherefore I shall so far speak of them, that, if it be the will of God, the minds of those who read and consider them may be opened and prepared to give admittance unto some rays of that divine wisdom in this glorious work, the lustre of whose full light we are not able in this world to behold. When there was a visible pledge of the presence of God in the “bush that burned” and was not

consumed, Moses said he “would turn aside to see that great sight,” Exodus 3:3. And this great representation of the glory of God being made and proposed unto us, it is certainly our duty to divert from all other occasions unto the contemplation of it. But as Moses was then commanded to put off his shoes, the place whereon he stood being holy ground, so it will be the wisdom of him that writes, and of them that read, to divest themselves of all carnal affections and imaginations, that they may draw nigh unto this great object of faith with due reverence and fear. The first thing we are to consider, in order unto the end proposed, is — the nature of our sin and apostasy from God. For from thence we must learn the concernment of the divine excellencies of God in this work. And there are three things that were eminent therein:—

(1.) A reflection on the honour of the holiness and wisdom of God, in the rejection of his image. He had newly made man in his own image. And this work he so expresseth as to intimate a peculiar effect of divine wisdom in it, whereby it was distinguished from all other external works of creation whatever, Genesis 1:26-27, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.” Nowhere is there such an emphasis of expression concerning any work of God. And sundry things are represented as peculiar therein.

[1st,] That the word of consultation and that of execution are distinct. In all other works of creation, the word of determination and execution was the same. When he created light — which seems to be the beauty and glory of the whole creation — he only said, “Let there be light; and there was light,” Genesis 1:3. So was it with all other things. But when he comes unto the creation of man, another process is proposed unto our faith. These several words are distinct, not in time, but in nature. “God said, Let us make man in our image and likeness;” and thereon it is added distinctly, as the execution of that antecedent counsel, “So God made man in his own image.” This puts a signal eminency on this work of God.

[2dly,] A distinct, peculiar concernment of all the persons of the holy Trinity, in their consultation and operation, is in like manner proposed unto us: “And God said, Let us make man.” The truth hereof I have sufficiently evinced elsewhere, and discovered the vanity of all other glosses and expositions. The properties of the divine nature principally and originally considerable, in all external operations, (as we have newly observed,) are goodness, wisdom, and power. In this great work, divine goodness exerted itself eminently and effectually in the person of the Father — the eternal fountain and spring, as of the divine nature, so of all divine operations. Divine wisdom acted itself peculiarly in the person of the Son; this being the principal notion thereof — the eternal Wisdom of the Father. Divine power wrought effectually in the person of the Holy Spirit; who is the immediate actor of all divine operations.

[3dly,] The proposition of the effecting this work, being by way of consultation, represents it a signal effect of infinite wisdom. These expressions are used to lead us unto the contemplation of that wisdom.

Thus, “God made man in his own image;” that is, in such a rectitude of nature as represented his righteousness and holiness — in such a state and condition as had a reflection on it of his power and rule. The former was the substance of it — the latter a necessary consequent thereof. This representation, I say, of God, in power and rule, was not that image of God wherein man was created, but a consequent of it. So the words and their order declare: “Let us make man in our

image, and after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,” &c. Because he was made in the image of God, this dominion and rule were granted unto him. So fond is their imagination, who would have the image of God to consist solely in these things. Wherefore, the loss of the image of God was not originally the loss of power and dominion, or a right thereunto; but man was deprived of that right, on the loss of that image which it was granted unto. Wherein it did consist, see Ecclesiastes 7:29; Ephesians 4:24.

Three things God designed in this communication of his image unto our nature, which were his principal ends in the creation of all things here below; and therefore was divine wisdom more eminently exerted therein than in all the other works of this inferior creation. The first was, that he might therein make a representation of his holiness and righteousness among his creatures. This was not done in any other of them. Characters they had on them of his goodness, wisdom, and power. In these things the “heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work.” His eternal power and Godhead are manifest in the things that are made; but none of them, not the whole fabric of heaven and earth, with all their glorious ornaments and endowments, were either fit or able to receive any impressions of his holiness and righteousness — of any of the moral perfections or universal rectitude of his nature. Yet, in the demonstration and representation of these things doth the glory of God principally consist. Without them, he could not be known and glorified as God. Wherefore he would have an image and representation of them in the creation here below. And this he will always have, so long as he will be worshipped by any of his creatures. And therefore, when it was lost in Adam, it was renewed in Christ, as hath been declared. The second was, that it might be a means of rendering actual glory unto him from all other parts of the creation. Without this, which is as the animating life and form of the whole, the other creatures are but as a dead thing. They could not any way declare the glory of God, but passively and objectively. They were as an harmonious, well-tuned instrument, which gives no sound unless there be a skilful hand to move and act it. What is light, if there be no eye to see it? or what is music, if there be no ear to hear it? How glorious and beautiful soever any of the works of creation appear to be, from impressions of divine power, wisdom, and goodness on them; yet, without this image of God in man, there was nothing here below to understand God in them — to glorify God by them. This alone is that whereby, in a way of admiration, obedience, and praise, we were enabled to render unto God all the glory which he designed from those works of his power. The third was, that it might be a means to bring man unto that eternal enjoyment of Himself, which he was fitted for and designed unto. For this was to be done in a way of obedience; — “Do this and live,” was that rule of it which the nature of God and man, with their mutual relation unto one another, did require. But we were made meet for this obedience, and enabled unto it, only by virtue of this image of God implanted in our natures. It was morally a power to live unto God in obedience, that we might come to the enjoyment of him in glory.

Evident it is that these were the principal ends of God in the creation of all things. Wherefore this constitution of our nature, and the furnishment of it with the image of God, was the most eminent effect of infinite wisdom in all the outward works of the divine nature.

(2.) In the entrance of sin, and by apostasy from God, man voluntarily rejected and defaced this blessed representation of the righteousness and holiness of God — this great effect of his goodness and wisdom, in its tendency unto his eternal glory, and our enjoyment of him. No greater dishonour could be done unto him — no endeavour could have been more pernicious in casting

contempt on his counsel. For as his holiness, which was represented in that image, was despoiled, so we did what lay in us to defeat the contrivance of his wisdom. This will be evident by reflecting on the ends of it now mentioned. For —

[1.] Hereon there remained nothing, in all the creation here below, whereby any representation might be made of God's holiness and righteousness, or any of the moral perfections of his nature. How could it be done, this image being lost out of the world? The brute, inanimate part of the creation, however stupendously great in its matter and glorious in its outward form, was no way capable of it. The nature of man under the loss of this image — fallen, depraved, polluted, and corrupted — gives rather a representation and image of Satan than of God. Hence — instead of goodness, love, righteousness, holiness, peace, all virtues usefully communicative and effective of the good of the whole race of mankind, which would have been effects of this image of God, and representatives of his nature — the whole world, from and by the nature of man, is filled with envy, malice, revenge, cruelty, oppression, and all engines of promoting self, whereunto man is wholly turned, as fallen off from God. He that would learn the divine nature, from the representation that is made of it in the present acting of the nature of man, will be gradually led unto the devil instead of God. Wherefore no greater indignity could be offered unto divine wisdom and holiness, than there was in this rejection of the image of God wherein we were created.

[2.] There was no way left whereby glory might redound unto God from the remainder of the creation here below. For the nature of man alone was designed to be the way and means of it, by virtue of the image of God implanted on it. Wherefore man by sin did not only draw off himself from that relation unto God wherein he was made, but drew off the whole creation here below with himself into a uselessness unto his glory. And upon the entrance of sin, before the cure of our apostasy was actually accomplished, the generality of mankind divided the creatures into two sorts — those above, or the heavenly bodies, and those here below. Those of the first sort they worshipped as their gods; and those of the other sort they abused unto their lusts. Wherefore God was every way dishonored in and by them all, nor was there any glory given him on their account. What some attempted to do of that nature, in a wisdom of their own, ended in folly and a renewed dishonour of God; as the apostle declares, Romans 1:18-19, Romans 1:21-22.

[3.] Man hereby lost all power and ability of attaining that end for which he was made — namely, the eternal enjoyment of God. Upon the matter, and as much as in us lay, the whole end of God in the creation of all things here below was utterly defeated. But that which was the malignity and poison of this sin, was the contempt that was cast on the holiness of God, whose representation, and all its express characters, were utterly despised and rejected therein. Herein, then, lay the concernment of the holiness or righteousness of God in this sin of our nature, which we are inquiring after. Unless some reparation be made for the indignity cast upon it in the rejection of the image and representation of it — unless there be some way whereby it may be more eminently exalted in the nature of man than it was debased and despised in the same nature; it was just, equal, righteous with God — that which becomes the rectitude and purity of his nature — that mankind should perish eternally in that condition whereinto it was cast by sin.

It was not, therefore, consistent with the glory of God, that mankind should be restored, that this nature of ours should be brought unto the enjoyment of him, unless his holiness be more exalted, be more conspicuously represented in the same nature, than ever it was depressed or despised

thereby. The demonstration of its glory in any other nature, as in that of angels, would not serve unto this end; as we shall see afterward.

We must now a little return unto what we before laid down. Wisdom being the directive power of all divine operations, and the end of all those operations being the glory of God himself, or the demonstration of the excellencies of the holy properties of his nature, it was incumbent thereon to provide for the honour and glory of divine holiness in an exaltation answerable unto the attempt for its debasement. Without the consideration hereof, we can have no due prospect of the acting of infinite wisdom in this great work of our redemption and recovery by the incarnation of the Son of God.

(3.) Sin brought disorder and disturbance into the whole rule and government of God. It was necessary, from the infinite wisdom of God, that all things should be made in perfect order and harmony — all in a direct subordination unto his glory. There could have been no original defect in the natural or moral order of things, but it must have proceeded from a defect in wisdom; for the disposal of all things into their proper order belonged unto the contrivance thereof. And the harmony of all things among themselves, with all their mutual relations and aspects in a regular tendency unto their proper and utmost end — whereby though every individual subsistence or being hath a peculiar end of its own, yet all their actings and all their ends tend directly unto one utmost common end of them all — is the principal effect of wisdom. And thus was it at the beginning, when God himself beheld the universe, and, “lo, it was exceeding good.”

All things being thus created and stated, it belonged unto the nature of God to be the rector and disposer of them all.

It was not a mere free act of his will, whereby God chose to rule and govern the creation according unto the law of the nature of all things, and their relation unto him; but it was necessary, from his divine being and excellences, that so he should do. Wherefore, it concerned both the wisdom and righteousness of God to take care that either all things should be preserved in the state wherein they were created, and no disorder be suffered to enter into the kingdom and rule of God, or that, in a way suited unto them, his glory should be retrieved and re-established; for God is not the God of confusion — neither the author nor approver of it — neither in his works nor in his rule. But sin actually brought disorder into the kingdom and rule of God. And this it did not in any one particular instance, but that which was universal as unto all things here below. For the original harmony and order of all things consisted in their subordination unto the glory of God. But this they all lost, as was before declared. Hence he who looked on them in their constitution, and, to manifest his complacency in them, affirmed them to be “exceeding good,” immediately on the entrance of sin, pronounced a curse on the whole earth, and all things contained therein. To suffer this disorder to continue unrectified, was not consistent with the wisdom and righteousness of God. It would make the kingdom of God to be like that of Satan — full of darkness and confusion. Nothing is more necessary unto the good of the universe, and without which it were better it were annihilated, than the preservation of the honour of God in his government. And this could no otherwise be done, but by the infliction of a punishment proportionable in justice unto the demerit of sin. Some think this might be done by a free dismissal of sin, or a passing it over without any punishment at all. But what evidence should we then have that good and evil were not alike, and almost equal unto God in his rule — that he doth not like sin as well as uprightness? Nor would this supposition leave any

grounds of exercising justice among men. For if God, in misrule of all things, dismissed the greatest sin without any penalty inflicted, what reason have we to judge that evils among ourselves should at all be punished? That, therefore, be far from God, that the righteous should be as the wicked: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Wherefore, the order of God's rule being broken, as it consisted in the regular obedience of the creature, and disorder with confusion being brought thereby into the kingdom and government of God; his righteousness, as it is the rectorial virtue and power of the divine nature, required that his glory should be restored, by reducing the sinning creature again into order by punishment. Justice, therefore, must be answered and complied withal herein, according unto its eternal and unanswerable law, in a way suited unto the glory of God, or the sinning creature must perish eternally.

Herein the righteousness of God, as the rectorial virtue of the divine nature, was concerned in the sin and apostasy of men. The vindication and glory of it — to provide that in nothing it were eclipsed or diminished — was incumbent on infinite wisdom, according unto the rule before laid down. That must direct and dispose of all things anew unto the glory of the righteousness of God, or there is no recovery of mankind. And in our inquiry after the impressions of divine wisdom on the great and glorious means of our restoration under consideration, this provision made thereby for the righteousness of God, in his rule and government of all, is greatly to be attended to.

(4.) Man by sin put himself into the power of the devil, God's greatest adversary. The devil had newly, by rebellion and apostasy from his first condition, cast himself under the eternal displeasure and wrath of God. God had righteously purposed in himself not to spare him, nor contrive any way for his deliverance unto eternity. He, on the other side, was become obdurate in his malice and hatred of God, designing his dishonour and the impeachment of his glory with the utmost of his remaining abilities. In this state of things, man voluntarily leaves the rule and conduct of God, with all his dependence upon him, and puts himself into the power of the devil; for he believed Satan above God — that is, placed his faith and confidence in him, as unto the way of attaining blessedness and true happiness. And in whom we place our trust and confidence, them do we obey, whatever we profess. Herein did God's adversary seem for a season to triumph against him, as if he had defeated the great design of his goodness, wisdom, and power. So he would have continued to do, if no way had been provided for his disappointment.

This, therefore, also belonged unto the care of divine wisdom, — namely, that the glory of God in none of the holy properties of his nature did suffer any diminution hereby.

All this, and inconceivably more than we are able to express, being contained in the sin of our apostasy from God, it must needs follow that the condition of all mankind became thereby inexpressibly evil. As we had done all the moral evil which our nature was capable to act, so it was meet we should receive all the penal evil which our nature was capable to undergo; and it all issued in death temporal and eternal, inflicted from the wrath of God. This is the first thing to be considered in our tracing the footsteps of divine wisdom in our deliverance by the incarnation of the Son of God. Without due conceptions of the nature of this sin and apostasy — of the provocation given unto God thereby, of the injury attempted to be done unto the glory of all his properties, of his concernment in their reparation, with the unspeakable misery that mankind was fallen into — we cannot have the least view of the glorious acting of divine wisdom in our

deliverance by Christ; and, therefore, the most of those who are insensible of these things, do wholly reject the principal instances of infinite wisdom in our redemption; as we shall yet see farther afterward. And the great reason why the glory of God in Christ doth so little irradiate the minds of many, that it is so much neglected and despised, is because they are not acquainted nor affected with the nature of our first sin and apostasy, neither in itself nor its woeful effects and consequents.

But, on the supposition of these things, a double inquiry ariseth with reference unto the wisdom of God, and the other holy properties of his nature immediately concerned in our sin and apostasy.

1. Whereas man by sin had defaced the image of God, and lost it, whereby there was no representation of his holiness and righteousness left in the whole creation here below — no way of rendering any glory to him, in, for, or by, any other of his works — no means to bring man unto the enjoyment of God, for which he was made; — and whereas he had brought confusion and disorder into the rule and kingdom of God, which, according unto the law of creation and its sanction, could not be rectified but by the eternal ruin of the sinner; and had, moreover, given up himself unto the rule and conduct of Satan:— whether, I say, hereon it was meet, with respect unto the holy properties of the divine nature, that all mankind should be left eternally in this condition, without remedy or relief? or whether there were not a condecency and suitableness unto them, that at least our nature in some portion of it should be restored?

2. Upon a supposition that the granting of a recovery was suited unto the holy perfections of the divine nature, acting themselves by infinite wisdom, what rays of that wisdom may we discern in the finding out and constitution of the way and means of that recovery? The first of these I shall speak briefly unto in this place, because I have treated more largely concerning it in another. For there are many things which argue a condecency unto the divine perfections herein — namely, that mankind should not be left utterly remediless in that guilt of misery whereinto it was plunged. I shall at present only insist on one of them.

God had originally created two sorts of intellectual creatures, capable of the eternal enjoyment of himself — namely, angels and men. That he would so make either sort or both, was a mere effect of his sovereign wisdom and pleasure; but on a supposition that he would so make them, they must be made for his glory. These two sorts thus created he placed in several habitations, prepared for them, suitable unto their natures and the present duties required of them; the angels in heaven above, and men on earth below. Sin first invaded the nature of angels, and cast innumerable multitudes of them out of their primitive condition. Hereby they lost their capacity of, and right unto, that enjoyment of God which their nature was prepared and made meet for; neither would God ever restore them thereunto. And in the instance of dealing with them, when he “spared them not, but shut them up in chains of everlasting darkness unto the judgement of the great day,” he manifested how righteous it was to leave sinning, apostate creatures in everlasting misery. If anything of relief be provided for any of them, it is a mere effect of sovereign grace and wisdom, whereunto God was no way obliged. Howbeit, the whole angelical nature, that was created in a capacity for the eternal enjoyment of God, perished not; nor doth it seem consistent with the wisdom and goodness of God, that the whole entire species or kind of creatures made capable of glory in the eternal enjoyment of him, should at once immediately be excluded from it. That such a thing should fall out as it were accidentally, without divine provision and disposal, would argue a

defect in wisdom, and a possibility of a surprisal into the loss of the whole glory he designed in the creation of all things; and to have it a mere effect of divine ordination and disposal, is as little consistent with his goodness. Wherefore, the same nature which sinned and perished in the angels that fell, abideth in the enjoyment of God in those myriads of blessed spirits which “left not their first habitation.” The nature of man was in like manner made capable of the eternal enjoyment of God. This was the end for which it was created, unto the glory of him by whom it was made; for it became the divine wisdom and goodness, to give unto everything an operation and end suited unto its capacity. And these, in this race of intellectual creatures, were to live unto God, and to come unto the eternal enjoyment of him. This operation and end their nature being capable of, they being suited unto it, unto them it was designed. But sin entered them also; we also “sinned, and came short of the glory of God.” The inquiry hereon is, whether it became the divine goodness and wisdom that this whole nature, in all that were partakers of it, should fail and come short of that end for which alone it was made of God? For whereas the angels stood, in their primitive condition, every one in his own individual person, the sin of some did not prejudice others, who did not sin actually themselves. But the whole race of mankind stood all in one common head and state; from whom they were to be educed and derived by natural generation. The sin and apostasy of that one person was the sin and apostasy of us all. In him all sinned and died. Wherefore, unless there be a recovery made of them, or of some from among them, that whole species of intellectual nature — the whole kind of it, in all its individuals — which was made capable of doing the will of God, so as to come unto the eternal fruition of him, must be eternally lost and excluded from it. This, we may say, became not the wisdom and goodness of God, no more than it would have done to have suffered the whole angelical nature, in all its individuals, to have perished for ever. No created understanding could have been able to discern the glory of God in such a dispensation, whereby it would have had no glory. That the whole nature, in all the individuals of it, which was framed by the power of God out of nothing, and made what it was for this very end, that it might glorify him, and come unto the enjoyment of him, should eternally perish, if any way of relief for any portion of it were possible unto infinite wisdom, doth not give an amiable representation of the divine excellencies unto us.

It was therefore left on the provision of infinite wisdom, that this great effect, of recovering a portion of fallen mankind out of this miserable estate, wherein there was a suitableness, a condecency unto the divine excellencies, should be produced; only, it was to be done on and by a free act of the will of God; for otherwise there was no obligation on him from any of his properties so to do. But it may be yet said, on the other side, that the nature of man was so defiled, so depraved, so corrupted, so alienated and separated from God, so obnoxious unto the curse by its sin and apostasy, that it was not reparable to the glory of God; and therefore it would not argue any defect in divine power, nor any unsuitableness unto divine wisdom and goodness, if it were not actually repaired and restored. I answer two things.

(1.) The horrible nature of the first sin, and the heinousness of our apostasy from God therein, were such and so great, as that God thereon might righteously, and suitably unto all the holy properties of his nature, leave mankind to perish eternally in that condition whereinto they had cast themselves; and if he had utterly forsaken the whole race of mankind in that condition, and left them all as remediless as the fallen angels, there could have been no reflection on his goodness, and an evident suitableness unto his justice and holiness. Wherefore, wherever there is any

mention in the Scripture of the redemption or restoration of mankind, it is constantly proposed as an effect of mere sovereign grace and mercy. See Ephesians 1:3-11. And those who pretend a great difficulty at present, in the reconciliation of the eternal perishing of the greatest part of mankind with those notions we have of the divine goodness, seem not to have sufficiently considered what was contained in our original apostasy from God, nor the righteousness of God in dealing with the angels that sinned. For when man had voluntarily broken all the relation of love and moral good between God and him, had defaced his image — the only representation of his holiness and righteousness in this lower world — and deprived him of all his glory from the works of his hands, and had put himself into the society and under the conduct of the devil; what dishonour could it have been unto God, what diminution would there have been of his glory, if he had left him unto his own choice — to eat for ever of the fruit of his own ways, and to be filled with his own devices unto eternity? It is only infinite wisdom that could find out a way for the salvation of any one of the whole race of mankind, so as that it might be reconciled unto the glory of his holiness, righteousness, and rule. Wherefore, as we ought always to admire sovereign grace in the few that shall be saved, so we have no ground to reflect on divine goodness in the multitudes that perish, especially considering that they all voluntarily continue in their sin and apostasy.

(2.) I grant the nature of man was not reparable nor recoverable by any such actings of the properties of God as he had exerted in the creation and rule of all things. Were there not other properties of the divine nature than what were discovered and revealed in the creation of all — were not some of them so declared capable of an exercise in another way or in higher degrees than what had as yet been instanced in — it must be acknowledged that the reparation of mankind could not be conceived compliant with the divine excellencies, nor to be effected by them. I shall give one instance in each sort; namely, first in properties of another kind than any which had been manifested in the works of creation, and then the acting of some of them so manifested, in another way, or farther degree than what they were before exerted in or by.

[1.] Of the first sort are love, grace, and mercy, which I refer unto one head — their nature being the same, as they have respect unto sinners. For although there were none of them manifested in the works of creation, yet are they no less essential properties of the divine nature than either power, goodness, or wisdom. With these it was that the reparation of our nature was compliant — unto them it had a condecency; and the glory of them infinite wisdom designed therein. That wisdom, on which it is incumbent to provide for the manifestation of all the other properties of God's nature, contrived this work unto the glory of his love, mercy, and grace; as in the gospel it is everywhere declared.

[2.] Of the second sort is divine goodness. This, as the communicative property of the divine nature, had exerted itself in the creation of all things. Howbeit, it had not done so perfectly — it had not done so to the uttermost. But the nature of goodness being communicative, it belongs unto its perfection to act itself unto the uttermost. This it had not yet done in the creation. Therein "God made man," and acted his goodness in the communication of our being unto us, with all its endowments. But there yet remained another effect of it; which was, that God should be made man, as the way unto, and the means of, our recovery.

These things being premised, we proceed to inquire more particularly by what way and means the recovery of mankind might be wrought, so as that God might be glorified thereby.

If fallen man be restored and reinstated in his primitive condition, or brought into a better, it must either be by himself, or by some other undertaking for him; for it must be done by some means or other. So great an alteration in the whole state of things was made by the entrance of sin, that it was not consistent with the glory of any of the divine excellencies that a restoration of all things should be made by a mere act of power, without the use of any means for the removal of the cause of that alteration. That man himself could not be this means — that is, that he could not restore himself — is openly evident. Two ways there were whereby he might attempt it, and neither jointly nor severally could he do anything in them.

1. He might do it by returning unto obedience unto God on his own accord. He fell off from God on his own accord by disobedience, through the suggestion of Satan; wherefore, a voluntary return unto his former obedience would seem to reduce all things unto their first estate. But this way was both impossible, and, upon a supposition of it, would have been insufficient unto the end designed. For —

(1.) This he could not do. He had, by his sin and fall, lost that power whereby he was able to yield any acceptable obedience unto God; and a return unto obedience is an act of greater power than a persistency in the way and course of it, and more is required thereunto. But all man's original power of obedience consisted in the image of God. This he had defaced in himself, and deprived himself of. Having, therefore, lost that power which should have enabled him to live unto God in his primitive condition, he could not retain a greater power in the same kind to return thereunto. This, indeed, was that which Satan deceived and deluded him withal; namely, that by his disobedience he should acquire new light and power, which he had not yet received — he should be "like unto God." But he was so far from any advantage by his apostasy, that one part of his misery consisted in the loss of all power or ability to live to God. This is the folly of that Pelagian heresy, which is now a third time attempting to impose itself on the Christian world. It supposeth that men have a power of their own to return unto God, after they had lost the power they had of abiding with him. It is not, indeed, as yet, pretended by many that the first sin was a mere transient act, that no way vitiated our nature, or impaired the power, faculty, or principle of obedience in us. A wound, they say, a disease, a weakness, it brought upon us, and rendered us legally obnoxious unto death temporal, which we were naturally liable unto before. Wherefore, it is not said that men can return unto that perfect obedience which the law required; but that they can comply with and perform that which the gospel requireth in the room thereof. For they seem to suppose that the gospel is not much more but an accommodation of the rule of obedience unto our present reason and abilities, with some motives unto it, and an example for it in the personal obedience and suffering of Christ. For whereas man forsook the law of obedience first prescribed unto him, and fell into various incapacities of observing it, God did not, as they suppose, provide, in and by the Gospel, a righteousness whereby the law might be fulfilled, and effectual grace to raise up the nature of man unto the performance of acceptable obedience; but only brings down the law and the rule of it into a compliance unto our weakened, diseased, depraved nature; — than which, if anything can be spoken more dishonourably of the Gospel, I know it not. However, this pretended power of returning unto some kind of obedience, but not that which was required of us in our primitive condition, is no way sufficient unto our restoration; as is evident unto all.

(2.) As man could not effect his own recovery, so he would not attempt it. For he was fallen into that condition wherein, in the principles of all his moral operations, he was at enmity against God;

and whatever did befall him, he would choose to continue in his state of apostasy; for he was wholly “alienated from the life of God.” He likes it not, as that which is incompliant with his dispositions, inclinations, and desires — as inconsistent with everything wherein he placeth his interest. And hence, as he cannot do what he should through impotency, he will not do even what he can through obstinacy. It may be, we know not distinctly what to ascribe unto man’s impotency, and what unto his obstinacy; but between both, he neither can nor will return unto God. And his power unto good, though not sufficient to bring him again unto God, yet is it not so small but that he always chooseth not to make use of it unto that end. In brief, there was left in man a fear of divine power — a fear of God because of his greatness — which makes him do many things which otherwise he would not do; but there is not left in him any love unto divine goodness, without which he cannot choose to return unto God.

(3.) But let us leave these things which men will dispute about, though in express contradiction unto the Scripture and the experience of them that are wrought upon to believe; and let us make an impossible supposition — that man could and would return unto his primitive obedience; yet no reparation of the glory of God, suffering in the loss of the former state of all things, would thereon ensue. What satisfaction would be hereby made for the injury offered unto the holiness, righteousness, and wisdom of God, whose violation in their blessed effects was the principal evil of sin? Notwithstanding such a supposition, all the disorder that was brought into the rule and government of God by sin, with the reflection of dishonour upon him, in the rejection of his image, would still continue. And such a restitution of things wherein no provision is made for the reparation of the glory of God, is not to be admitted. The notion of it may possibly please men in their apostate condition, wherein they are wholly turned off from God, and into self — not caring what becomes of his glory, so it may go well with themselves; but it is highly contradictory unto all equity, justice, and the whole reason of things, wherein the glory of God is the principal and centre of all.

Practically, things are otherwise among many. The most profligate sinners in the world, that have a conviction of an eternal condition, would be saved. Tell them it is inconsistent with the glory of the holiness, righteousness, and truth of God, to save unbelieving, impenitent sinners — they are not concerned in it. Let them be saved that is, — eternally delivered from the evil they fear — and let God look unto his own glory; they take no care about it. A soul that is spiritually ingenuous, would not be saved in any way but that whereby God may be glorified. Indeed, to be saved, and not unto the glory of God, implies a contradiction; for our salvation is eternal blessedness, in a participation of the glory of God.

Secondly, It followeth, therefore, that man must make satisfaction unto the justice of God, and thereby a reparation of his glory, that he may be saved. This, added unto a complete return unto obedience, would effect a restitution of all things; it would do so as unto what was past, though it would make no new addition of glory unto God. But this became not the nature and efficacy of divine wisdom. It became it not merely to retrieve what was past, without a new manifestation and exaltation of the divine excellencies. And therefore, in our restitution by Christ, there is such a manifestation and exaltation of the divine properties as incomparably exceeds whatever could have ensued on, or been effected by, the law of creation, had man continued in his original obedience. But at present it is granted that this addition of satisfaction unto a return unto obedience, would restore all things unto their just condition. But as that return was impossible unto

man, so was this satisfaction for the injury done by sin much more. For suppose a mere creature, such as man is, such as all men are, in what condition you please, and under all advantageous circumstances, yet, whatever he can do towards God is antecedently and absolutely due from him in that instant wherein he doth it, and that in the manner wherein it is done. They must all say, when they have done all that they can do, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done what was our duty." Wherefore, it is impossible that, by anything a man can do well, he should make satisfaction for anything he hath done ill. For what he so doth is due in and for itself; and to suppose that satisfaction will be made for a former fault by that whose omission would have been another, had the former never been committed, is madness. An old debt cannot be discharged with ready money for new commodities; nor can past injuries be compensated by present duties, which we are anew obliged unto. Wherefore — mankind being indispensably and eternally obliged unto the present performance of all duties of obedience unto God, according to the utmost of their capacity and ability, so as that the non-performance of them in their season, both as unto their matter and manner, would be their sin — it is utterly impossible that by anything, or all that they can do, they should make the least satisfaction unto God for anything they have done against him; much less for the horrible apostasy whereof we treat. And to attempt the same end by any way which God hath not appointed, which he hath not made their duty, is a new provocation of the highest nature. See Micah 6:6-8.

It is therefore evident, on all these considerations, that all mankind, as unto any endeavours of their own, anything that can be fancied as possible for them to design or do, must be left irreparable, in a condition of eternal misery. And unless we have a full conviction hereof, we can neither admire nor entertain the mystery of the wisdom of God in our reparation. And therefore it hath been the design of Satan, in all ages, to contrive presumptuous notions of men's spiritual abilities — to divert their minds from the contemplation of the glory of divine wisdom and grace, as alone exalted in our recovery.

We are proceeding on this supposition, that there was a condescency unto the holy perfections of the divine nature, that mankind should be restored, or some portion of it recovered unto the enjoyment of himself; so angelical nature was preserved unto the same end in those that did not sin. And we have showed the general grounds whereon it is impossible that fallen man should restore or recover himself. Wherefore we must, in the next place, inquire what is necessary unto such a restoration, on the account of that concernment of the divine excellencies in the sin and apostasy of man which we have stated before; for hereby we may obtain light, and an insight into the glory of that wisdom whereby it was contrived and effected. And the things following, among others, may be observed under that end:—

1. It was required that there should be an obedience yielded unto God, bringing more glory unto him than dishonour did arise and accrue from the disobedience of man. This was due unto the glory of divine holiness in giving of the law. Until this was done, the excellency of the law, as becoming the holiness of God, and as an effect thereof, could not be made manifest. For if it were never kept in any instance, never fulfilled by any one person in the world, how should the glory of it be declared? — how should the holiness of God be represented by it? — how should it be evident that the transgression of it was not rather from some defect in the law itself, than from any evil in them that should have yielded obedience unto it? The obedience yielded by the angels that stood and sinned not, made it manifest that the transgression of it by them that fell and sinned was from

their own wills, and not from any unsuitableness unto their nature and state in the law itself. But if the law given unto man should never be complied withal in perfect obedience by any one whatever, it might be thought that the law itself was unsuited unto our nature, and impossible to be complied withal. Nor did it become infinite wisdom to give a law whose equity, righteousness, and holiness, should never be exemplified in obedience — should never be made to appear but in the punishment inflicted on its transgressors. Wherefore the original law of personal righteousness was not given solely nor primarily that men might suffer justly for its transgression, but that God might be glorified in its accomplishment. If this be not done, it is impossible that men should be restored unto the glory of God. If the law be not fulfilled by obedience, man must suffer evermore for his disobedience, or God must lose the manifestation of his holiness therein. Besides, God had represented his holiness in that image of it which was implanted on our nature, and which was the principle enabling us unto obedience. This also was rejected by sin, and therein the holiness of God despised. If this be not restored in our nature, and that with advantages above what it had in its first communication, we cannot be recovered unto the glory of God.

2. It was necessary that the disorder brought into the rule and government of God by sin and rebellion should be rectified. This could no otherwise be done but by the infliction of that punishment which, in the unalterable rule and standard of divine justice, was due thereunto. The dismissal of sin on any other terms would leave the rule of God under unspeakable dishonour and confusion; for where is the righteousness of government, if the highest sin and provocation that our nature was capable of, and which brought confusion on the whole creation below, should for ever go unpunished? The first express intimation that God gave of his righteousness in the government of mankind, was his threatening a punishment equal unto the demerit of disobedience, if man should fall into it: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die." If he revoke and disannul this sentence, how shall the glory of his righteousness in the rule of all be made known? But how this punishment should be undergone, which consisted in man's eternal ruin, and yet man be eternally saved, was a work for divine wisdom to contrive. This, therefore, was necessary unto the honour of God's righteousness, as he is the supreme Governor and Judge of all the earth

It was necessary that Satan should be justly despoiled of his advantage and power over mankind, unto the glory of God; for he was not to be left to triumph in his success. And inasmuch as man was, on his part, rightfully given up unto him, his deliverance was not to be wrought by an act of absolute dominion and power, but in a way of justice and lawful judgement; which things shall be afterward spoken unto.

Without these things the recovery of mankind into the favour and unto the enjoyment of God was utterly impossible, on the account of the concernment of the glory of his divine perfections in our sin and apostasy.

How all this might be effected — how the glory of the holiness and righteousness of God in his law and rule, and in the primitive constitution of our nature, might be repaired — how his goodness, love, grace, and mercy, might be manifested and exalted in this work of the reparation of mankind — was left unto the care and contrivance of infinite wisdom. From the eternal springs thereof must this work arise, or cease for ever. To trace some of the footsteps of divine wisdom herein, in and from the revelation of it by its effects, is that which lieth before us. And sundry things appear to

have been necessary hereunto. As —

1. That all things required unto our restoration, the whole work wherein they consist, must be wrought in our own nature — in the nature that had sinned, and which was to be restored and brought unto glory. On supposition, I say, of the salvation of our nature, no satisfaction can be made unto the glory of God for the sin of that nature, but in the nature itself that sinned and is to be saved. For whereas God gave the law unto man as an effect of his wisdom and holiness, which he transgressed in his disobedience, wherein could the glory of them or either of them be exalted, if the same law were complied withal and fulfilled in and by a nature of another kind — suppose that of angels? For, notwithstanding any such obedience, yet the law might be unsuited unto the nature of man, whereunto it was originally prescribed. Wherefore, there would be a veil drawn over the glory of God in giving the law unto man, if it were not fulfilled by obedience in the same nature; nor can there be any such relation between the obedience and sufferings of one nature in the stead and for the disobedience of another, as that glory might ensue unto the wisdom, holiness, and justice of God, in the deliverance of that other nature thereon. The Scripture abounds in the declaration of the necessity hereof, with its condecency unto divine wisdom. Speaking of the way of our relief and recovery, “Verily,” says the apostle, “he took not on him the nature of angels,” Hebrews 2:16. Had it been the recovery of angels which he designed, he would have taken their nature on him. But this would have been no relief at all unto us, no more than the assuming of our nature is of advantage unto the fallen angels. The obedience and sufferings of Christ therein extended not at all unto them — nor was it just or equal that they should be relieved thereby. What, then, was required unto our deliverance? Why, saith he, “Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same,” verse 14. It was human nature (here expressed by flesh and blood) that was to be delivered; and therefore it was human nature wherein this deliverance was to be wrought. This the same apostle disputes at large, Romans 5:12-19. The sum is, that “as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one” (of one man, Jesus Christ, Romans 5:15) “are many made righteous.” The same nature that sinned must work out the reparation and recovery from sin. So he affirms again, 1 Corinthians 15:21, “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” No otherwise could our ruin be retrieved, nor our deliverance from sin with all the consequents of it be effected, — which came by man, which were committed and deserved in and by our nature, — but by man, by one of the same nature with us. This, therefore, in the first place, became the wisdom of God, that the world of deliverance should be wrought in our own nature, — in the nature that had sinned.

2. That part of human nature wherein or whereby this work was to be effected, as unto the essence or substance of it, was to be derived from the common root or stock of the same nature, in our first parents. It would not suffice hereunto that God should create a man, out of the dust of the earth or out of nothing, of the same nature in general with ourselves; for there would be no cognation or alliance between him and us, so that we should be any way concerned in what he did or suffered: for this advance depends solely hereon, that God “hath made of one blood all nations of men,” Acts 17:26. Hence it is that the genealogy of Christ is given us in the Gospel — not only from Abraham, to declare the faithfulness of God in the promise that he should be of his seed, but from Adam also, to manifest his relation unto the common stock of our nature, and unto all mankind therein. The first discovery of the wisdom of God herein was in that primitive revelation,

that the Deliverer should be of “the seed of the woman,” Genesis 3:15. No other but he who was so could “break the serpent’s head,” or “destroy the work of the devil,” so as that we might be delivered and restored. He was not only to be partaker of our nature, but he was so to be, by being “the seed of the woman,” Galatians 4:4. He was not to be created out of nothing, nor to be made of the dust of the earth, but so “made of a woman,” as that thereby he might receive our nature from the common root and spring of it. Thus “he who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one,” Hebrews 2:11, — ξ υ; that is, φυρματος — of the same mass, of one nature and blood; whence he is not ashamed to call them brethren. This also was to be brought forth from the treasures of infinite wisdom.

3. This nature of ours, wherein the work of our recovery and salvation is to be wrought and performed, was not to be so derived from the original stock of our kind or race as to bring along with it the same taint of sin, and the same liableness unto guilt, upon its own account, as accompany every other individual person in the world; for, as the apostle speaks, “such a high priest became us” (and as a high priest was he to accomplish this work) “as was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” For, if this nature in him were so defiled as it is in us — if it were under a deprivation of the image of God, as it is in our persons before our renovation — it could do nothing that should be acceptable unto him. And if it were subject unto guilt on its own account, it could make no satisfaction for the sin of others. Here, therefore, again occurs dignus vindice nodus — a difficulty which nothing but divine wisdom could expedite. To take a little farther view hereof, we must consider on what grounds these things (spiritual defilement and guilt) do adhere unto our nature, as they are in all our individual persons. And the first of these is — that our entire nature, as unto our participation of it, was in Adam, as our head and representative. Hence his sin became the sin of us all — is justly imputed unto us and charged on us. In him we all sinned; all did so who were in him as their common representative when he sinned. Hereby we became the natural “children of wrath,” or liable unto the wrath of God for the common sin of our nature, in the natural and legal head or spring of it. And the other is — that we derive our nature from Adam by the way of natural generation. By that means alone is the nature of our first parents, as defiled, communicated unto us; for by this means do we become to appertain unto the stock as it was degenerate and corrupt. Wherefore that part of our nature wherein and whereby this great work was to be wrought, must, as unto its essence and substance, be derived from our first parents, — yet so as never to have been in Adam as a common representative, nor be derived from him by natural generation. The bringing forth of our nature in such an instance — wherein it should relate no less really and truly unto the first Adam than we do ourselves, whereby there is the strictest alliance of nature between him so partaker of it and us, yet so as not in the least to participate of the guilt of the first sin, nor of the defilement of our nature thereby — must be an effect of infinite wisdom beyond the conceptions of any created understanding. And this, as we know, was done in the person of Christ; for his human nature was never in Adam as his representative, nor was he comprised in the covenant wherein he stood. For he derived it legally only from and after the first promise, when Adam ceased to be a common person. Nor did it proceed from him by natural generation — the only means of the derivation of its depravation and pollution; for it was a “holy thing,” created in the womb of the Virgin by the power of the Most High. “O the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God!”

It was necessary, therefore, on all these considerations — it was so unto the glory of the holy properties of the divine nature, and the reparation of the honour of his holiness and righteousness — that he by whom the work of our recovery was to be wrought should be a man, partaker of the nature that sinned, yet free from all sin, and all the consequent of it. And this did divine wisdom contrive and accomplish in the human nature of Jesus Christ. But yet, in the second place, on all the considerations before mentioned, it is no less evident that this work could not be wrought or effected by him who was no more than a mere man, who had no nature but ours — who was a human person, and no more. There was no one act which he was to perform, in order unto our deliverance, but did require a divine power to render it efficacious. But herein lies that great mystery of godliness whereunto a continual opposition hath been made by the gates of hell; as we manifested in the entrance of this discourse. But whereas it belongs unto the foundation of our faith, we must inquire into it, and confirm the truth of it with such demonstrations as divine revelation doth accommodate us withal. And three things are to be spoken unto. cont'd

## 04.16. Chapter 16 cont'd

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First, We are to give in rational evidences that the recovery of mankind was not to be effected by any one who was a mere man, and no more, though it were absolutely necessary that a man he should be; he must be God also. Secondly, We must inquire into the suitableness or condecency unto divine wisdom in the redemption and salvation of the church by Jesus Christ, who was God and man in one person; and thereon give a description of the person of Christ and its constitution, which suiteth all the ends of infinite wisdom in this glorious work. The first of these falls under sundry plain demonstrations.

1. That human nature might be restored, or any portion of mankind be eternally saved unto the glory of God, it was necessary, as we proved before, that an obedience should be yielded unto God and his law, which should give and bring more glory and honour unto his holiness than there was dishonour reflected on it by the disobedience of us all. Those who are otherwise minded care not what becomes of the glory of God, so that wicked, sinful man may be saved one way or other. But these thoughts spring out of our apostasy, and belong not unto that estate wherein we loved God above all, and preferred his glory above all, — as it was with us at the first, in the original constitution of our nature. But such an obedience could never be yielded unto God by any mere creature whatever; — not by any one who was only a man, however dignified and exalted in state and condition above all others. For to suppose that God should be pleased and glorified with the obedience of any one man, more than he was displeased and dishonored by the disobedience of Adam and all his posterity, is to fancy things that have no ground in reason or justice, or are any way suitable unto divine wisdom and holiness. He who undertaketh this work must have somewhat that is divine and infinite, to put an infinite value on his obedience — that is, he must be God.

2. The obedience of such a one, of a mere man, could have no influence at all on the recovery of mankind, nor the salvation of the church. For, whatever it were, it would be all due from him for himself, and so could only profit or benefit himself; for what is due from any on his own account, cannot redound or be reckoned unto the advantage of another. But there is no mere creature, nor can there be any such, but he is obliged for himself unto all the obedience unto God that he is capable of the performance of in this world; as we have before declared. Yea, universal obedience, in all possible instances, is so absolutely necessary unto him, as a creature made in dependence on God, and for the enjoyment of him, that the voluntary omission of it, in any one instance, would be a criminal disobedience, ruinous unto his own soul. Wherefore, no such obedience could be accepted as any kind of compensation for the disobedience of others, or in their stead. He, then, that performs this obedience must be one who was not originally obliged thereunto, on his own account, or for himself. And this must be a divine person, and none other; for every mere creature is so obliged. And there is nothing more fundamental in Gospel principles, than that the Lord Christ, in his divine person, was above the law, and for himself owed no obedience thereunto; but by his own condescension, as he was “made of a woman” for us, so he was “made under the law” for us. And therefore, those by whom the divine person of Christ is

denied, do all of them contend that he yielded obedience unto God for himself, and not for us. But herein they bid defiance unto the principal effect of divine wisdom, wherein God will be eternally glorified.

3. The people to be freed, redeemed, and brought unto glory, were great and innumerable; “a great multitude, which no man can number,” Revelation 7:9. The sins which they were to be delivered, ransomed, and justified from — for which a propitiation was to be made — were next unto absolutely infinite. They wholly surpass the comprehension of any created understanding, or the compass of imagination. And in every one of them there was something reductively infinite, as committed against an infinite Majesty. The miseries which hereon all these persons were obnoxious unto were infinite, because eternal; or all that evil which our nature is capable to suffer was by them all eternally to be undergone. By all these persons, in all these sins, there was an inroad made on the rule and government of God, an affront given unto his justice, in the violation of his law; nor can any of them be delivered from the consequent hereof in eternal misery, without a compensation and satisfaction made unto the justice of God. To assert the contrary, is to suppose, that upon the matter it is all one to him whether he be obeyed or disobeyed, whether he be honoured or dishonoured, in and by his creatures; and this is all one as to deny his very being, seeing it opposeth the glory of his essential properties. Now, to suppose that a mere man, by his temporary suffering of external pains, should make satisfaction unto the justice of God for all the sins of all these persons, so as it should be right and just with him not only to save and deliver them from all the evils they were liable unto, but also to bring them unto life and glory, is to constitute a mediation between God and man that should consist in appearance and ostentation, and not be an effect of divine wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, nor have its foundation in the nature and equity of things themselves. For the things supposed will not be reduced unto any rules of justice or proportion, that one of them should be conceived in any sense to answer unto the other, that is, there is nothing which answers any rule, notions, or conceptions of justice — nothing that might be exemplary unto men in the punishment of crimes — that the sins of an infinite number of men, deserving every one of them eternal death, should be expiated by the temporary sufferings of one mere man, so as to demonstrate the righteousness of God in the punishment of sin. But God doth not do these things for show or appearance, but according unto the real exigence of the holy properties of his nature. And on that supposition, there must be a proportion between the things themselves — namely, the sufferings of one and the deliverance of all. Nor could the faith of man ever find a stable foundation to fix upon on the supposition before mentioned. No faith is able to conflict with this objection, that the sufferings of one mere man should be accepted with God as a just compensation for the sins of the whole church. Men who, in things of this nature, satisfy themselves with notions and fancies, may digest such suppositions; but those who make use of faith for their own delivery from under a conviction of sin, the nature and demerit of it, with a sense of the wrath of God, and the curse of the law against it, can find no relief in such notions or apprehensions. But it became the wisdom of God, in the dispensation of himself herein unto the church, so to order things as that faith might have an immovable rock to build upon. This alone it hath in the person of Christ, God and man, his obedience and sufferings. Wherefore, those by whom the divine nature of the Lord Christ is denied, do all of them absolutely deny also that he made any satisfaction unto divine justice for sin. They will rather swallow all the absurdities which the absolute dismissal of sin without satisfaction or punishment doth bring along with it, than grant that a mere man could make any such satisfaction by his temporary

sufferings for the sins of the world. And, on the other hand, whoever doth truly and sincerely believe the divine person of Christ — namely, that he was God and man in one person, and as such a person acted in the whole work of mediation — he cannot shut his eyes against the glorious light of this truth, that what he did and suffered in that work must have an intrinsic worth and excellency in it, out-balancing all the evil in the sins of mankind — that more honour and glory accrued unto the holiness and law of God by his obedience than dishonour was cast on them by the disobedience of Adam and all his posterity.

4. The way whereby the church was to be recovered and saved, was by such works and acting as one should take on himself to perform in the way of an office committed unto him for that end. For whereas man could not recover, ransom, nor save himself as we have proved, the whole must be wrought for him by another. The undertaking hereof by another must depend on the infinite wisdom, counsel, and pleasure of God, with the will and consent of him who was to undertake it. So also did the constitution of the way and means in particular whereby this deliverance was to be wrought. Hereon it became his office to do the things which were required unto that end. But we have before proved, apart by itself, that no office unto this purpose could be discharged towards God, or the whole church, by any one who was a man only. I shall not, therefore, here farther insist upon it, although there be good argument in it unto our present purpose.

5. If man be recovered, he must be restored into the same state, condition, and dignity, wherein he was placed before the fall. To restore him with any diminution of honour and blessedness was not suited unto divine wisdom and bounty; yea, seeing it was the infinite grace, goodness, and mercy of God to restore him, it seems agreeable unto the glory of divine excellencies in their operations, that he should be brought into a better and more honourable condition than that which he had lost. But before the fall, man was not subject nor obedient unto any but unto God alone. Somewhat less he was in dignity than the angels; howbeit he owed them no obedience — they were his fellow-servants. And as for all other things here below, they were made “subject unto him, and put under his feet,” he himself being in subjection unto God alone. But if he were deemed and restored by one who was a mere creature, he could not be restored unto this state and dignity; for, on all grounds of right and equity, he must owe all service and obedience unto him by whom he was redeemed, restored, and recovered, as the author of the state wherein he is. For when we are “bought with a price,” we are not our own, as the apostle affirms, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. We are therefore his who hath bought us; and him are we bound to serve in our souls and bodies, which are his. Accordingly, in the purchase of us, the Lord Christ became our absolute Lord, unto whom we owe all religious subjection of soul and conscience, Romans 14:7-9. It would follow, therefore, that if we were redeemed and recovered by the interposition of a mere creature — if such a one were our Redeemer, Saviour, and Deliverer — into the service of a mere creature (that is, religious service and obedience) we should be recovered. And so they believe who affirm the Lord Christ to be a man, and no more. But, on this supposition, we are so far from an advancement in state and dignity by our restoration, that we do not recover what we were first instated in. For it belonged thereunto that we should owe religious service and obedience unto him alone who was God by nature over all, blessed for ever. And they bring all confusion into Christian religion, who make a mere creature the object of our faith, love, adoration, invocation, and all sacred worship. But in our present restoration we are made subject anew, as unto religious service, only unto God alone. Therefore the holy angels, the head of the creation, do openly disclaim any such service and

revelation from us, because they are only the fellow-servants of them that have the testimony of Jesus, Revelation 19:10. Nor hath God put the “world to come,” the gospel state of the church, into subjection unto angels, or any other creature, but only unto the Son, who is Lord over his own house, even he that made all things, who is God, Hebrews 3:4-6. Wherefore, we are restored into our primitive condition, to be in spiritual subjection unto God alone. He, therefore, by whom we are restored, unto whom we owe all obedience and religious service, is, and ought to be, God also. And as they utterly overthrow the gospel who affirm that all the obedience of it is due unto him who is a man, and no more — as do all by whom the divine nature of Christ is denied; so they debase themselves beneath the dignity of the state of redemption, and cast dishonour on the mediation of Christ, who subject themselves in any religious service to saints or angels, or any other creatures whatever. On these suppositions, which are full of light and evidence, infinite Wisdom did interpose itself, to glorify all the other concerned excellencies of the glory of God, in such a way as might solve all difficulties, and satisfy all the ends of God’s glory, in the recovery and redemption of mankind. The case before it was as followeth:—

Man, by sin, had cast the most inconceivable dishonour on the righteousness, holiness, goodness, and rule of God; and himself into the guilt of eternal ruin. In this state it became the wisdom and goodness of God, neither to suffer the whole race of mankind to come short eternally of that enjoyment of himself for which it was created, nor yet to deliver any one of them without a retrieval of the eternal honour of his righteousness, holiness, and rule, from the diminution and waste that was made of it by sin. As this could no way be done but by a full satisfaction unto justice and an obedience unto the law, bringing and yielding more honour unto the holiness and righteousness of God than they could any way lose by the sin and disobedience of man; — so this satisfaction must be made, and this obedience be yielded, in and by the same nature that sinned or disobeyed, whereby alone the residue of mankind may be interested in the benefits and effects of that obedience and satisfaction. Yet was it necessary hereunto, that the nature wherein all this was to be performed, though derived from the same common stock with that whereof in all our persons we are partakers, should be absolutely free from the contagion and guilt which, with it and by it, are communicated unto our persons from that common stock. Unless it were so, there could be no undertaking in it for others — it would not be able to answer for itself. But yet, on all these suppositions, no undertaking, no performance of duty, in human nature, could possibly yield that obedience unto God, or make that satisfaction for sin, whereon the deliverance of others might ensue, unto the glory of the holiness, righteousness, and rule of God. In this state of things did infinite Wisdom interpose itself, in that glorious, ineffable contrivance of the person of Christ — or of the divine nature in the eternal Son of God and of ours in the same individual person. Otherwise this work could not be accomplished; — at least all other ways are hidden from the eyes of all living, no created understanding being able to apprehend any other way whereby it might so have been, unto the eternal glory of God. This, therefore, is such an effect of divine wisdom as will be the object of holy adoration and admiration unto eternity; — as unto this life, how little a portion is it we know of its excellency!

## 04.17. Chapter 17

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### Chapter XVII.

Other Evidences of Divine Wisdom in the Contrivance of the Work of Redemption in and by the Person of Christ, in Effects Evidencing a Condecency thereunto. That which remains of our present inquiry, is concerning those evidences of divine condecency, or suitableness unto infinite wisdom and goodness, which we may gather from the nature of this work, and its effects as expressed in divine revelation. Some few instances hereof I shall choose out from amongst many that might be insisted on.

1. Man was made to serve God in all things. In his person — in his soul and body — in all his faculties, powers, and senses — all that was given unto him or intrusted with him — he was not his own, but every way a servant, in all that he was in all that he had, in all that he did or was to do. This he was made for — this state and condition was necessary unto him as a creature. It could be no otherwise with any that was so; it was so with the angels, who were greater in dignity and power than man. The very name of creature includes the condition of universal subjection and service unto the Creator. This condition, in and by his sin, Adam designed to desert and to free himself from. He would exalt himself out of the state of service and obedience absolute and universal, into a condition of self-sufficiency — of domination and rule. He would be as God, like unto God; that is, subject no more to him, be in no more dependence on him — but advance his own will above the will of God. And there is somewhat of this in every sin; — the sinner would advance his own will in opposition unto and above the will of God. But what was the event hereof? Man, by endeavouring to free himself from absolute subjection and universal service, to invade absolute dominion, fell into absolute and eternal ruin. For our recovery out of this state and condition, considering how we cast ourselves into it, the way insisted on was found out by divine wisdom — namely, the incarnation of the Son of God; for he was Lord of all, had absolute dominion over all, owed no service, no obedience for himself — being in the form of God, and equal unto him. From this state of absolute dominion he descended into a condition of absolute service. As Adam sinned and fell by leaving that state of absolute service which was due unto him, proper unto his nature, inseparable from it, — to attempt a state of absolute dominion which was not his own, not due unto him, not consistent with his nature; so the Son of God, being made the second Adam, relieved us by descending from a state of absolute dominion, which was his own — due to his nature — to take on him a state of absolute service, which was not his own, nor due unto him. And this being inconsistent with his own divine nature, he performed it by taking our nature on him — making it his own. He descended as much beneath himself in his self-humiliation, as Adam designed to ascend above himself in his pride and self-exaltation. The consideration of the divine grace and wisdom herein the apostle proposeth unto us, Php 2:6-8, “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Adam being in the form — that is, the state and condition — of a servant, did by robbery

attempt to take upon him the “form of God,” or to make himself equal unto him. The Lord Christ being in the “form of God” — that is, his essential form, of the same nature with him — accounted it no robbery to be in the state and condition of God, to be “equal to him;” but being made in the “fashion of a man,” taking on him our nature, he also submitted unto the form or the state and condition of a servant therein. He had dominion over all, owed service and obedience unto none, being in the “form of God,” and equal unto him — the condition which Adam aspired unto; but he condescended unto a state of absolute subjection and service for our recovery. This did no more belong unto him on his own account, than it belonged unto Adam to be like unto God, or equal to him. Wherefore it is said that he humbled himself unto it, as Adam would have exalted himself unto a state of dignity which was not his due. This submission of the Son of God unto an estate of absolute and universal service is declared by the apostle, Hebrews 10:5. For those words of the Psalmist, “Mine ears hast thou digged,” or bored, Psalms 40:6, he renders, “A body hast thou prepared me.” There is an allusion in the words of the prophecy unto him under the law who gave up himself in absolute and perpetual service; in sign whereof his ears were bored with an awl. So the body of Christ was prepared for him, that therein he might be in a state of absolute service unto God. So he became to have nothing of his own — the original state that Adam would have forsaken; no, not [even] his life — he was obedient unto the death. This way did divine wisdom find out and contrive, whereby more glory did arise unto the holiness and righteousness of God from his condescension unto universal service and obedience who was over all, God blessed for ever, than dishonour was cast upon them by the self-exaltation of him who, being in all things a servant, designed to be like unto God.

2. Adam was poor in himself, as a creature must be. What riches he had in his hand or power, they were none of his own, they were only trusted with him for especial service. In this state of poverty he commits the robbery of attempting to be like unto God. Being poor, he would make himself rich by the rapine of an equality with God. This brought on him and us all, as it was meet it should, the loss of all that we were trusted with. Hereby we lost the image of God — lost our right unto the creatures here below — lost ourselves and our souls. This was the issue of his attempt to be rich when he was poor. In this state infinite wisdom hath provided for our relief, unto the glory of God. For the Lord Jesus Christ being rich in himself, for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich, 2 Corinthians 8:9. He was rich in that riches which Adam designed by robbery; for “he was in the form of God, and accounted it no robbery to be equal with God.” But he made himself poor for our sakes, with poverty which Adam would have relinquished; yea, to that degree that “he had not where to lay his head” — he had nothing. Hereby he made a compensation for what he never made spoil of, or paid what he never took. In this condescension of his, out of grace and love to mankind, was God more glorified than he was dishonored in the sinful exaltation of Adam out of pride and self-love.

3. The sin of man consisted formally in disobedience; and it was the disobedience of him who was every way and in all things obliged unto obedience. For man — by all that he was, by all that he had received, by all that he expected or was farther capable of, by the constitution of his own nature, by the nature and authority of God, with his relation thereunto — was indispensably obliged unto universal obedience. His sin, therefore, was the disobedience of him who was absolutely obliged unto obedience by the very constitution of his being and necessary relation unto God. This was that which rendered it so exceeding sinful, and the consequents of it eternally

miserable; and from this obligation his sin, in any one instance, was a total renunciation of all obedience unto God. The recompense, with respect unto the glory of God, for disobedience must be by obedience, as hath been before declared. And if there be not a full obedience yielded unto the law of God in that nature that sinned, man cannot be saved without an eternal violation of the glory of God therein. But the disobedience of him who was every way obliged unto obedience could not be compensated but by his obedience who was no way obliged thereunto; and this could be only the obedience of him that is God, (for all creatures are obliged to obedience for themselves,) and it could be performed only by him who was man. Wherefore, for the accomplishment of this obedience, he who, in his own person as God, was above the law, was in his human nature, in his own person as man, made under the law. Had he not been made under the law, what he did could not have been obedience; and had he not been in himself above the law, his obedience could not have been beneficial unto us. The sin of Adam (and the same is in the nature of every sin) consisted in this — that he who was naturally every way under the law, and subject unto it, would be every way above the law, and no way obliged by it. Wherefore it was taken away, unto the glory of God, by his obedience, who being in himself above the law, no way subject unto it, yet submitted, humbled himself, to be “made under the law,” to be every way obliged by it. See Galatians 3:13, Galatians 4:4. This is the subject of the discourse of the apostle, Romans 5:12-21.

Unto the glory of God in all these ends, the person of Christ, as an effect of infinite wisdom, was meet and able to be a mediator and undertaker between God and man. In the union of both our natures in the same person he was so meet by his relation unto both; — unto God by filiation, or sonship; unto us by brotherhood, or nearness of kindred, Hebrews 2:14. And he was able from the dignity of his person; for the temporary sufferings of him who was eternal were a full compensation for the eternal sufferings of them who were temporary.

4. God made man the lord of all things here below. He was, as it were, the heir of God, as unto the inheritance of this world in present, and as unto a blessed state in eternal glory. But he lost all right and title hereunto by sin. He made forfeiture of the whole by the law of tenure whereby he held it, and God took the forfeiture. Wherefore he designs a new heir of all, and vests the whole inheritance of heaven and earth in him, even in his Son. He appointed him “the heir of all things,” Hebrews 1:2. This translation of God’s inheritance the apostle declares, Hebrews 2:6-9; for the words which he cites from Psalms 8:4-6, — “What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet,” — do declare the original condition of mankind in general. But man forfeited the dominion and inheritance that he was intrusted withal; and God settleth it anew, solely in the man Christ Jesus. So the apostle adds, “We see not yet all things put under him;” but we see it all accomplished in Jesus, Hebrews 2:8. But as all other inheritances do descend with theirs, so did this unto him with its burden. There was a great debt upon it — the debt of sin. This he was to undergo, to make payment of, or satisfaction for, or he could not rightly enter upon the inheritance. This could no otherwise be done but by his suffering in our nature, as hath been declared. He who was the heir of all, was in himself to purge our sins. Herein did the infinite wisdom of God manifest itself, in that he conveyed the inheritance of all things unto him who was meet and able so to enter upon it, so to enjoy and possess it, as that no detriment or

damage might arise unto the riches, the revenue, the glory of God, from the waste made by the former possessor.

5. Mankind was to be recovered unto faith and trust in God, as also unto the love of him above all. All these things had utterly forsaken our nature; and the reduction of them into it is a work of the greatest difficulty. We had so provoked God, he had given such evidences of his wrath and displeasure against us, and our minds thereon were so alienated from him, as we stood in need of the strongest motives and highest encouragements once to attempt to return unto him, so as to place all our faith and trust in him, and all our love upon him.

Sinners generally live in a neglect and contempt of God, in an enmity against him; but whenever they are convinced of a necessity to endeavour a return unto him, the first thing they have to conflict withal is fear. Beginning to understand who and what he is, as also how things stand between him and them, they are afraid to have anything to do with him, and judge it impossible that they should find acceptance with him. This was the sense that Adam himself had upon his sin, when he was afraid, and hid himself. And the sense of other sinners is frequently expressed unto the same purpose in Scripture. See Isaiah 33:14; Micah 6:6-7.

All these discouragements are absolutely provided against in that way of our recovery which infinite wisdom hath found out. It were a thing delightful to dwell on the securities given us therein, as unto our acceptance, in all those principles, acts, and duties wherein the renovation of the image of God doth consist. I must contract my meditations, and shall therefore instance in some few things only unto that purpose.

(1.) Faith is not capable of greater encouragement or confirmation than lieth in this one consideration — that what we are to believe unto this end is delivered unto us by God himself in our nature. What could confirm our faith and hope in God, what could encourage us to expect acceptance with God, like this ineffable testimony of his goodwill unto us? The nature of things is not capable of greater assurance, seeing the divine nature is capable of no greater condescension. This the Scripture proposeth as that which gives a just expectation that, against all fears and oppositions, we should close with divine calls and invitations to return unto God: “Last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son,” Matthew 21:37, — they will believe the message which I send by him. He hath “spoken unto us by his Son” — “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,” Hebrews 1:1-3. The consideration hereof is sufficient to dispel all that darkness and confusion which fear, dread, and guilt do bring on the minds of men, when they are invited to return unto God. That that God against whom we have sinned should speak unto us, and treat with us, in our own nature, about a return unto himself, is the utmost that divine excellencies could condescend unto. And as this was needful for us, (though proud men and senseless of sin understand it not,) so, if it be refused, it will be attended with the sorest destruction, Hebrews 12:25.

(2.) This treaty principally consists in a divine declaration, that all the causes of fear and dread upon the account of sin are removed and taken away. This is the substance of the Gospel, as it is declared by the apostle, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. Wherefore, if hereon we refuse to return unto God — to make him the object of our faith, trust, love, and delight — it is not by reason of any old or former sin, not of that of our original apostasy from God, nor of the effects of it against the law, [but] by the means of a new sin, outdoing them all in guilt and contempt of God. Such is final

unbelief against the proposal of the Gospel. It hath more malignity in it than all other sins whatever. But by this way of our recovery, all cause of fear and dread is taken away — all pretences of a distrust of the love and good-will of God are defeated; so that if men will not hereon be recovered unto him, it is from their hatred of him and enmity unto him — the fruits whereof they must feed on to eternity.

(3.) Whereas, if we will return unto God by faith, we are also to return unto him in love, what greater motive can there be unto it than that infinite love of the Father and the Son unto us, which is gloriously displayed in this way of our recovery? See 1 John 4:9-10 “Si amare pigebat, saltem redamare ne pigeat.”

(4.) The whole race of mankind falling into sin against God, and apostasy from him, there was no example left unto them to manifest how excellent, how glorious and comely a thing it is, to live unto God, — to believe and trust in him — to cleave unto him unchangeably by love; for they were utter strangers unto what is done by angels above, nor could be affected with their example. But without a pattern of these things, manifesting their excellency and reward, they could not earnestly endeavour to attain unto them. This is given us most conspicuously in the human nature of Christ. See Hebrews 12:2-3. Hereby, therefore, everything needful for our encouragement to return unto God is, in infinite wisdom, provided for and proposed unto us.

6. Divine Wisdom, in the way of our recovery by Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, designed to glorify a state of obedience unto God, and to cast the reproach of the most inexpressible folly on the relinquishment of that state by sin. For, as God would recover and restore us; so he would do it in a way of obedience on our part — of that obedience which we had forsaken. The design of man, which was imposed on him by the craft of Satan, was to become wise like unto God, knowing good and evil. The folly of this endeavour was quickly discovered in its effects. Sense of nakedness, with shame, misery, and death, immediately ensued thereon. But divine Wisdom thought meet to aggravate the reproach of this folly. He would let us see wherein the true knowledge of good and evil did consist, and how foolishly we had aspired unto it by a relinquishment of that state of obedience wherein we were created.

Job 28:12-28, there is an inquiry after wisdom, and the place of its habitation. All creatures give an account that it is not in them, that it is hid from them — only they have heard the fame thereof. All the context is to evince that it is essentially and originally only in God himself. But if we cannot comprehend it in itself, yet may we not know what is wisdom unto us, and what is required thereunto? Yes, saith he; for “unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding,” Job 28:28. Man, on the other hand, by the suggestion of Satan, thought, and now of himself continues to think, otherwise; namely, that the way to be wise is to relinquish these things. The world will not be persuaded that “the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding;” yea, there is nothing that the most of men do more despise and scorn, than thoughts that true wisdom doth consist in faith, love, fear, and obedience unto God. See Psalms 14:6. Whatever else may be pleaded to be in it, yet sure enough they are that those who count it wisdom are but fools. To cast an everlasting reproach of folly on this contrivance of the devil and man, and uncontrollably to evince wherein alone true wisdom doth consist, God would glorify a state of obedience. He would render it incomparably more amiable, desirable, and excellent, than ever it could have appeared to have been in the obedience of all the

angels in heaven and men on earth, had they continued therein. This he did in this way of our recovery, — in that his own eternal Son entered into a state of obedience, and took upon him the “form” or condition “of a servant” unto God.

What more evident conviction could there be of the folly of mankind in hearkening unto the suggestion of Satan to seek after wisdom in another condition? How could that great maxim, which is laid down in opposition unto all vain thoughts of man, be more eminently exemplified — that “the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding?” What greater evidence could be given, that the nature of man is not capable of a better condition than that of service and universal obedience unto God? How could any state be represented more amiable, desirable, and blessed? In the obedience of Christ, of the Son of God in our nature, apostate sinners are upbraided with their folly in relinquishing that state which, by his susception of it, is rendered so glorious. What have we attained by leaving that condition which the eternal Son of God delighted in? “I delight,” saith he, “to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is in the midst of my bowels,” Psalms 40:8 — margin. It is the highest demonstration that our nature is not capable of more order, more beauty, more glory, than consists in obedience unto God. And that state which we fell into upon our forsaking of it, we now know to be all darkness, confusion, and misery.

Wherefore, seeing God, in infinite grace and mercy, would recover us unto himself; and, in his righteousness and holiness, would do this in a way of obedience, — of that obedience which we had forsaken; it hath an eminent impression of divine wisdom upon it, that in this mystery of God manifest in the flesh, the only means of our recovery, he would cast the reproach of the most inexpressible folly on our apostasy from a state of it, and render it amiable and desirable unto all who are to return unto him. To bear the shame of this folly, to be deeply sensible of it, and to live in a constant prospect and view of the glory of obedience in the person of Christ, with a sedulous endeavour for conformity thereunto, is the highest attainment of our wisdom in this world; — and whosoever is otherwise minded, is so at his own utmost peril.

7. God, in infinite wisdom, hath by this means secured the whole inheritance of this life and that which is to come from a second forfeiture. Whatever God will bestow on the children of men, he grants it unto them in the way of an inheritance. So the land of Canaan, chosen out for a representative of spiritual and eternal things, was granted unto Abraham and his seed for an inheritance. And his interest in the promise is expressed by being “heir of the world.” All the things of this life, that are really good and useful unto us, do belong unto this inheritance. So they did when it was vested in Adam. All things of grace and glory do so also. And the whole of the privilege of believers is, that they are heirs of salvation. Hence godliness hath the “promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,” 1 Timothy 4:8. And the promise is only of the inheritance. This inheritance, as was before intimated, was lost in Adam, and forfeited into the hand of the great Lord, the great possessor of heaven and earth. In his sovereign grace and goodness he was pleased again to restore it — as unto all the benefits of it — unto the former tenants; and that with an addition of grace, and a more exceeding weight of glory. But withal, infinite wisdom provides that a second forfeiture shall not be made of it. Wherefore the grant of it is not made immediately unto any of those for whose use and benefit it is prepared and granted. They had been once tried, and failed in their trust, unto their own eternal beggary and ruin, had not infinite grace interposed for their relief. And it did not become the wisdom and glory of God to make a second grant of it, which might be frustrate in like manner. Wherefore he would not commit

it again unto any mere creature whatever; nor would it safely have been so done with security unto his glory. For —

(1.) It was too great a trust — even the whole inheritance of heaven and earth, all the riches of grace and glory — to be committed unto any one of them. God would not give this glory unto any one creature. If it be said it was first committed unto Adam, and therefore to have it again is not an honour above the capacity of a creature; I say that the nature of the inheritance is greatly changed. The whole of what was intrusted with Adam comes exceedingly short of what God hath now prepared as the inheritance of the church. There is grace in it, and glory added unto it, which Adam neither had nor could have right unto. It is now of that nature, as could neither be intrusted with, nor communicated by, any mere creature. Besides, he that hath it is the object of the faith and trust of the church; nor can any be interested in any part of this inheritance without the exercise of those and all other graces on him whose the inheritance is. And so to be the object of our faith, is the prerogative of the divine nature alone.

(2.) No mere creature could secure this inheritance that it should be lost no more; and yet if it were so, it would be highly derogatory unto the glory of God. For two things were required hereunto, — First, That he in whom this trust is vested should be in himself incapable of any such failure, as through which, by the immutable, eternal law of obedience unto God, a forfeiture of it should be made; — Secondly, That he undertake for them all who shall be heirs of salvation, who shall enjoy this inheritance, that none of them should lose or forfeit their own personal interest in it, or the terms whereon it is conveyed and communicated unto them. But no mere creature was sufficient unto these ends; for no one of them, in and by him in the constitution of his nature, is absolutely free from falling from God, himself. They may receive — the angels in heaven and the glorified saints have received — such a confirmation, in and by grace, as that they shall never actually apostatize or fall from God; but this they have not from themselves, nor the principles of their own nature, — which is necessary unto him that shall receive this trust. For so when it was first vested in Adam, he was left to preserve it by the innate concreated abilities of his own nature. And as unto the latter, all the angels in heaven cannot undertake to secure the obedience of any one man, so as that the conveyance of the inheritance may be sure unto him. Wherefore, with respect hereunto, those angels themselves though the most holy and glorious of all the creatures of God, have no greater trust or interest than to be “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,” Hebrews 1:14. So unmeet are they to have the whole inheritance vested in any of them. But all this infinite wisdom hath provided for in the great “mystery of godliness God manifest in the flesh.” God herein makes his only Son the heir of all things, and vests the whole inheritance absolutely in him. For the promise, which is the court-roll of heaven — the only external mean and record of its conveyance — was originally made unto Christ only. God said not, “And to seeds as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ,” Galatians 3:16. And we become again heirs of God only as we are joint heirs with Christ, Romans 8:17; that is by being taken into a participation of that inheritance which is vested in him alone. For many may be partakers of the benefit of that whose right and title is in one alone, when it is conveyed unto him for their use. And hereby the ends before mentioned are fully provided for. For —

[1.] He who is thus made the “heir of all” is meet to be intrusted with the glory of it. For where this grant is solemnly expressed, it is declared that he is the “brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person,” Hebrews 1:2-3; and that by him the worlds were made. He alone

was meet to be this heir who is partaker of the divine nature, and by whom all things were created; for such things belong unto it as cannot appertain unto any other. The reader may consult, if he please, our exposition of that place of the apostle.

[2.] Any failure in his own person was absolutely impossible. The subsistence of the human nature in the person of the Son of God, rendered the least sin utterly impossible unto him; for all the moral operations of that nature are the acts of the person of the Son of God. And hereby not only is the inheritance secured but also an assurance that it is so is given unto all them that do believe. This is the life and soul of all Gospel comforts, that the whole inheritance of grace and glory is vested in Christ, where it can never suffer loss or damage. When we are sensible of the want of grace, should we go unto God, and say, "Father, give us the portion of goods that falls unto us," as the prodigal did, we should quickly consume it, and bring ourselves unto the utmost misery, as he did also. But in Christ the whole inheritance is secured for evermore.

[3.] He is able to preserve all those who shall be heirs of this inheritance, that they forfeit not their own personal interest therein, according unto the terms of the covenant whereby it is made over to them. He can and will, by the power of his grace, preserve them all unto the full enjoyment of the purchased inheritance. We hold our title by the rod — at the will of the Lord; and many failures we are liable unto, whereon we are "in misericordia Domini," and are subject unto ameracements. But yet the whole inheritance being granted unto Christ is eternally secured for us, and we are by his grace preserved from such offences against the supreme Lord, or committing any such wastes, as should cast us out of our possession. See Psalms 89:27-32. Thus in all things infinite wisdom hath provided that no second forfeiture should be made of the inheritance of grace and glory, which as it would have been eternally ruinous unto mankind, so it was inconsistent with the glory and honour of God.

8. The wisdom of God was gloriously exalted in the righteous destruction of Satan and his interest, by the incarnation and mediation of the Son of God. He had prevailed against the first way of the manifestation of divine glory; and therein both pleased and prided himself. Nothing could ever give such satisfaction unto the malicious murderer, as the breach he had occasioned between God and man, with his hopes and apprehensions that it would be eternal. He had no other thoughts but that the whole race of mankind, which God had designed unto the enjoyment of himself, should be everlastingly ruined. So he had satisfied his envy against man in his eternal destruction with himself, and his malice against God in depriving him of his glory. Hereon, upon the distance that he had made between God and man, he interposed himself, and boasted himself for a long season as "The god of this world," who had all power over it and in it. It belonged unto the honour of the wisdom of God that he should be defeated in this triumph. Neither was it meet that this should be done by a mere act of sovereign omnipotent power; for he would yet glory in his craft and the success of it, — that there was no way to disappoint him, but by crushing him with power, without respect unto righteousness or demonstration of wisdom. Wherefore, it must be done in such a way as wherein he might see, unto his eternal shame and confusion, all his arts and subtleties defeated by infinite wisdom, and his enterprise overthrown in a way of right and equity. The remark that the Holy Ghost puts on the serpent, which was his instrument in drawing man unto apostasy from God — namely, that he was "more subtle than any beast of the field" — is only to intimate wherein Satan designed his attempt, and from whence he hoped for his success. It was not an act of power or rage; but of craft, counsel, subtlety, and deceit. Herein he gloried and prided

himself; wherefore the way to disappoint him with shame, must be a contrivance of infinite wisdom, turning all his artifices into mere folly. This work of God, with respect unto him, is expressed in the Scripture two ways:— First, it is called the spoiling of him, as unto his power and the prey that he had taken. The “strong man armed” was to be bound, and his goods spoiled. The Lord Christ, by his death, “destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” He “led captivity captive,” spoiling principalities and powers, triumphing over them in his cross. So Abraham, when he smote the kings, not only delivered Lot, who was their captive, but also took all their spoils. Again, it is expressed by the destruction of his works: “For this cause was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” The spoils which he had in his own power were taken from him, and the works which he had erected in the minds of men were demolished. The web which he had woven to clothe himself withal, as the god of this world, was unravelled to the last thread. And although all this seems to represent a work of power, yet was it indeed an effect of wisdom and righteousness principally. For the power which Satan had over mankind was in itself unjust. For, (1.) He obtained it by fraud and deceit: “The serpent beguiled” Eve. (2.) He possessed it with injustice, with respect unto God, being an invader of his right and possession. (3.) He used and exercised it with malice, tyranny, and rage; — so as that it was every way unjust, both in its foundation and execution. With respect hereunto he was justly destroyed by omnipotent power, which puts forth itself in his eternal punishment. But, on the other side, mankind did suffer justly under his power — being given up unto it in the righteous judgement of God. For one may suffer justly what another doth unjustly inflict; as when one causelessly strikes an innocent man, if he strikes him again, he who did the first injury suffereth justly, but the other doth unjustly in revenging himself. Wherefore, as man was given up unto him in a way of punishment, he was a lawful captive, and was not to be delivered but in a way of justice. And this was done in a way that Satan never thought of. For, by the obedience and sufferings of the Son of God incarnate, there was full satisfaction made unto the justice of God for the sins of man, a reparation of his glory, and an exaltation of the honour of his holiness, with all the other properties of his nature, as also of his law, outbalancing all the diminution of it by the first apostasy of mankind; as hath been declared. Immediately hereon all the charms of Satan were dissolved, all his chains loosed, his darkness that he had brought on the creation dispelled, his whole plot and design defeated; — whereon he saw himself, and was exposed unto all the holy angels of heaven, in all the counsels, craft, and power he had boasted of, to be nothing but a congeries — a mass of darkness, malice, folly, impotency, and rage.

Hereon did Satan make an entrance into one of the principal parts of his eternal torments, in that furious self-maceration which he is given up unto on the consideration of his defeat and disappointment. Absolute power he always feared, and what it would produce; for he believes that, and trembles. But against any other war he thought he had secured himself. It lies plain to every understanding, what shame, confusion, and self-revenge, the proud apostate was cast into, upon his holy, righteous disappointment of his design; whereas he had always promised himself to carry his cause, or at least to put God to act in the destruction of his dominion, by mere omnipotent power, without regard unto any other properties of his nature. To find that which he contrived for the destruction of the glory of God — the disappointment of his ends in the creation of all things — and the eternal ruin of mankind, to issue in a more glorious exaltation of the holy properties of the divine nature, and an unspeakable augmentation of blessedness unto mankind itself, is the highest aggravation of his eternal torments. This was a work every way becoming the infinite

wisdom of God.

9. Whereas there are three distinct persons in the holy Trinity, it became the wisdom of God that the Son, the second person, should undertake this work, and be incarnate. I shall but sparingly touch on this glorious mystery; for as unto the reason of it, it is absolutely resolved into the infinite wisdom and sovereign counsel of the divine will. And all such things are the objects of a holy admiration — not curiously to be inquired into. To intrude ourselves into the things which we have not seen — that is, which are not revealed — in those concernments of them which are not revealed, is not unto the advantage of faith in our edification. But as unto what is declared of them — either immediately and directly, or by their relation unto other known truths — we may meditate on them unto the improvement of faith and love towards God. And some things are thus evident unto us in this mystery.

(1.) We had by sin lost the image of God, and thereby all gracious acceptance with him, — all interest in his love and favour. In our recovery, as we have declared, this image is again to be restored unto us, or we are to be renewed into the likeness of God. And there was a condescency unto divine wisdom, that this work should, in a peculiar manner, be effected by him who is the essential image of God — that is, the Father. This, as we have formerly showed, was the person of the Son. Receiving his personal subsistence, and therewithal the divine nature, with all its essential properties, from the Father by eternal generation, he was thereon the express image of his person, and the brightness of his glory. Whatever is in the person of the Father is in the person of the Son, and being all received from the Father, he is his essential image. And one end of his incarnation was, that he might be the representative image of God unto us. Whereas, therefore, in the work of our recovery, the image of God should be restored in us, there was a condescency that it should be done by him who was the essential image of God; for it consists in the communication of the effects and likeness of the same image unto us which was essentially in himself.

(2.) We were by nature the sons of God. We stood in relation of sons unto him by virtue of our creation — the communication of his image and likeness — with the preparation of an inheritance for us. On the same accounts the angels are frequently called the sons of God. This title, this relation unto God, we utterly lost by sin, becoming aliens from him, and enemies unto him. Without a recovery into this estate we cannot be restored, nor brought unto the enjoyment of God. And this cannot be done but by adoption. Now, it seems convenient unto divine wisdom that he should recover our sonship by adoption, who was himself the essential and eternal Son of God.

(3.) The sum of what we can comprehend in this great mystery ariseth from the consideration of the order of the holy persons of the blessed Trinity in their operations; for their order herein doth follow that of their subsistence. Unto this great work there are peculiarly required, authority, love, and power — all directed by infinite wisdom. These originally reside in the person of the Father, and the acting of them in this matter is constantly ascribed unto him. He sent the Son, as he gives the Spirit, by an act of sovereign authority. And he sent the Son from his eternal love; — he loved the world, and sent his Son to die. This is constantly assigned to be the effect of the love and grace of the Father. And he wrought in Christ, and he works in us, with respect unto the end of this mystery, with the “exceeding greatness of his power,” Ephesians 1:19. The Son, who is the second person in the order of subsistence, in the order of operation puts the whole authority, love, and power of the Father in execution. This order of subsistence and operation thereon is expressly

declared by the apostle, 1 Corinthians 8:6, "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." The Father is the original fountain and spring, ἡξ ο, from whom — [from] whose original authority, love, goodness, and power — are all these things. That expression, "from him," peculiarly denotes the eternal original of all things. But how are this authority, goodness, love, and power in the Father, whence all these things spring and arise, made effectual — how are their effects wrought out and accomplished? "There is one Lord," even Jesus Christ, a distinct person from the Father, δι ο, "by whom are all things." He works in the order of his subsistence, to execute, work, and accomplish all that originally proceedeth from the Father. By the Holy Spirit, who is the third person in order of subsistence, there is made a perfecting application of the whole unto all its proper ends.

Wherefore, this work of our redemption and recovery being the especial effect of the authority, love, and power of the Father — it was to be executed in and by the person of the Son; as the application of it unto us is made by the Holy Ghost. Hence it became not the person of the Father to assume our nature; — it belonged not thereunto in the order of subsistence and operation in the blessed Trinity. The authority, love, and power whence the whole work proceeded, were his in a peculiar manner. But the execution of what infinite wisdom designed in them and by them belonged unto another. Nor did this belong unto the person of the Holy Spirit, who, in order of divine operation following that of his subsistence, was to perfect the whole work, in making application of it unto the church when it was wrought. Wherefore it was every way suited unto divine wisdom — unto the order of the Holy Persons in their subsistence and operation — that this work should be undertaken and accomplished in the person of the Son. What is farther must be referred unto another world.

These are some few of those things wherein the infinite wisdom of God in this holy contrivance giveth forth some rays of itself into enlightened minds and truly humbled souls. But how little a portion of it is heard by us! How weak, how low are our conceptions about it! We cannot herein find out the Almighty unto perfection. No small part of the glory of heaven will consist in that comprehension which we shall have of the mystery of the wisdom, love, and grace of God herein.

Howbeit, we are with all diligence to inquire into it whilst we are here in the way. It is the very centre of all glorious evangelical truths. Not one of them can be understood, believed, or improved as they ought, without a due comprehension of their relation hereunto; as we have showed before. This is that which the prophets of old inquired into and after with all diligence, even the mystery of God manifest in the flesh, with the glory that ensued thereon, 1 Peter 1:11. Yet had they not that light to discern it by which we have. The "least in the kingdom of God," as to the knowledge of this mystery, may be above the greatest of them. And ought we not to fear lest our sloth under the beams of the sun should be condemned by their diligence in the twilight? This the angels bow down to look into, although their concerns therein are not equal to ours. But angels are angels, and prophets were prophets; we are a generation of poor, sinful men, who are little concerned in the glory of God or our own duty. Is it not much to be lamented that many Christians content themselves with a very superficial knowledge of these things? How are the studies, the abilities, the time, and diligence of many excellent persons engaged in, and laid out about, the works of nature, and the effects of divine wisdom and power in them, by whom any endeavour to inquire into this glorious mystery is neglected, if not despised! Alas! The light of divine wisdom in the

greatest works of nature holds not the proportion of the meanest star unto the sun in its full strength, unto that glory of it which shines in this mystery of God manifest in the flesh, and the work accomplished thereby! A little time shall put an end unto the whole subject of their inquiries, with all the concernment of God and man in them for evermore. This alone is that which fills up eternity, and which, although it be now with some a nothing, yet will shortly be all. Is it not much more to be lamented, that many who are called Christians do even despise these mysteries? Some oppose them directly with pernicious heresies about the person of Christ, denying his divine nature, or the personal union of his two natures whereby the whole mystery of infinite wisdom is evacuated and rejected; and some there are who, though they do not deny the truth of this mystery, yet they both despise and reproach such as with any diligence endeavour to inquire into it. I shall add the words used on a like occasion, unto them who sincerely believe the mysteries of the Gospel: “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” And the due contemplation of this mystery will certainly be attended with many spiritual advantages.

[1.] It will bring in steadfastness in believing, as unto the especial concerns of our own souls; so as to give unto God the glory that is his due thereon. This is the work, these are the ends, of faith, Romans 5:1-5. We see how many Christians who are sincere believers, yet fluctuate in their minds with great uncertainties as unto their own state and condition. The principal reason of it is, because they are “unskilful in the word of righteousness,” and so are babes, in a weak condition, as the apostle speaks, Hebrews 5:13. This is the way of spiritual peace. When the soul of a believer is able to take a view of the glory of the wisdom of God, exalting all the other holy properties of his nature, in this great mystery unto our salvation, it will obviate all fears, remove all objections, and be a means of bringing in assured peace into the mind; which without a due comprehension of it will never be attained.

[2.] The acting of faith hereon is that which is accompanied with its great power to change and transform the soul into the image and likeness of Christ. So is it expressed by the apostle, 2 Corinthians 3:18, “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” — we all beholding — κατοπτριζόμενοι, not taking a transient glance of these things, but diligently inspecting them, as those do who, through a glass, design a steady view of things at a distance. Κατοπτρίζω does not admit of the signification here ascribed to it by Dr Owen. It denotes looking into a mirror, not through a telescope: “Beholding the glory of the Lord as reflected and radiant in the Gospel.” — See Dr Robinson’s Lexicon. Another view is taken of the passage, by which a tacit antithesis is instituted between κατοπτρον and εκκιν: “Dominus nos κατοπτρίζει, splendorem faciei suæ in corda nostra, tanquam in specula immittens: nos illum splendorem suscipimus et referimus. Elegans antitheton ad εντετυπωμένη, insculpta. Nam quæ insculpuntur fiunt paullatim: quæ in speculo repræsentantur, fiunt celerrime.” Bengelii Gnomon in locum. Owen himself gives a correct explanation of the passage in his work on the Mortification of Sin, chap. xii. — Ed. That which we are thus to behold by the continued actings of faith in holy contemplation, is the “glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” as it is expressed, 2 Corinthians 4:6; which is nothing but that mystery of godliness in whose explanation we have been engaged. And what is the effect of the steady contemplation of this mystery by faith? Μεταμορφούμεθα — “we are changed” — made

quite other creatures than we were — cast into the form, figure, and image of Jesus Christ — the great design of all believers in this world. Would we, then, be like unto Christ? Would we bear the image of the heavenly, as we have borne the image of the earthy? Is nothing so detestable unto us as the deformed image of the old man, in the lusts of the mind and of the flesh? Is nothing so amiable and desirable as the image of Christ, and the representation of God in him? This is the way, this is the means of attaining the end which we aim at.

[3.] Abounding in this duty is the most effectual means of freeing us, in particular, from the shame and bane of profession in earthly-mindedness. There is nothing so unbecoming a Christian as to have his mind always exercised about, always filled with thoughts of, earthly things and according as men's thoughts are exercised about them, their affections are increased and inflamed towards them. These things mutually promote one another, and there is a kind of circulation in them. Multiplied thoughts inflame affections, and inflamed affections increase the number of thoughts concerning them. Nothing is more repugnant unto the whole life of faith, nothing more obstructive unto the exercise of all grace, than a prevalence of this frame of mind. And at this season, in an especial manner, it is visibly preying on the vitals of religion. To abound in the contemplation of this mystery, and in the exercise of faith about it, as it is diametrically opposed unto this frame, so it will gradually cast it out of the soul. And without this we shall labour in the fire for deliverance from this pernicious evil.

[4.] And hereby are we prepared for the enjoyment of glory above. No small part of that glory consists in the eternal contemplation and adoration of the wisdom, goodness, love, and power of God in this mystery, and the effects of it; as shall afterward be declared. And how can we better or otherwise be prepared for it, but by the implanting a sense of it on our minds by sedulous contemplation whilst we are in this world? God will not take us into heaven, into the vision and possession of heavenly glory, with our heads and hearts reeking with the thoughts and affections of earthly things. He hath appointed means to make us “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,” before he will bring us into the enjoyment of it. And this is the principal way whereby he doth it; for hereby it is that we are “changed” into the image of Christ, “from glory to glory,” and make the nearest approaches unto the eternal fulness of it.

## 04.18. Chapter 18

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Chapter XVIII. The Nature of the Person of Christ, and the Hypostatical Union of his Natures Declared. The nature or constitution of the person of Christ hath been commonly spoken unto and treated of in the writings both of the ancient and modern divines. It is not my purpose, in this discourse, to handle anything that hath been so fully already declared by others. Howbeit, to speak something of it in this place is necessary unto the present work; and I shall do it in answer unto a double end or design:—

First, To help those that believe, in the regulation of their thoughts about this divine person, so far as the Scripture goeth before us. It is of great importance unto our souls that we have right conceptions concerning him; not only in general, and in opposition unto the pernicious heresies of them by whom his divine person or either of his natures is denied, but also in those especial instances wherein it is the most ineffable effect of divine wisdom and grace. For although the knowledge of him mentioned in the Gospel be not confined merely unto his person in the constitution thereof, but extends itself unto the whole work of his mediation, with the design of God's love and grace therein, with our own duty thereon; yet is this knowledge of his person the foundation of all the rest, wherein if we mistake or fail, our whole building in the other parts of the knowledge of him will fall unto the ground. And although the saving knowledge of him is not to be obtained without especial divine revelation, Matthew 16:17 — or saving illumination, 1 John 5:20 — nor can we know him perfectly until we come where he is to behold his glory, John 17:24; yet are instructions from the Scripture of use to lead us into those farther degrees of the knowledge of him which are attainable in this life.

Secondly, To manifest in particular how ineffably distinct the relation between the Son of God and the man Christ Jesus is, from all that relation and union which may be between God and believers, or between God and any other creature. The want of a true understanding hereof is the fundamental error of many in our days. We shall manifest thereupon how "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," so that in all things "he might have the pre-eminence," Colossians 1:18-19. And I shall herein wholly avoid the curious inquiries, bold conjectures, and unwarrantable determinations of the schoolmen and some others. For many of them, designing to explicate this mystery, by exceeding the bounds of Scripture light and sacred sobriety, have obscured it. Endeavouring to render all things plain unto reason, they have expressed many things unsound as unto faith, and fallen into manifold contradictions among themselves. Hence Aquinas affirms, that three of the ways of declaring the hypostatical union which are proposed by the Master of the Sentences,<sup>33</sup> Peter Lombard. Born near Novara, in Lombardy — died in 1164, bishop of Paris — called "Magister Sententiarum," from one of his works, which is a compilation of sentences from the Fathers, arranged so as to form a system of Divinity, and held in high repute during mediæval times. It appeared in 1172. — Ed. are so far from probable opinions, as that they are downright heresies. I shall therefore confine myself, in the explication of this mystery, unto the propositions of divine revelation, with the just and necessary expositions of them.



do ensue thereon.

3. This assumption and the hypostatical union are distinct and different in the formal reason of them. (1.) Assumption is the immediate act of the divine nature in the person of the Son on the human; union is mediate, by virtue of that assumption. (2.) Assumption is unto personality; it is that act whereby the Son of God and our nature became one person. Union is an act or relation of the natures subsisting in that one person. (3.) Assumption respects the acting of the divine and the passion of the human nature; the one assumeth, the other is assumed. Union respects the mutual relation of the natures unto each other. Hence the divine nature may be said to be united unto the human, as well as the human unto the divine; but the divine nature cannot be said to be assumed as the human is. Wherefore assumption denotes the acting of the one nature and the passion of the other; union, the mutual relation that is between them both.

These things may be safely affirmed, and ought to be firmly believed, as the sense of the Holy Ghost in those expressions: “He took on him the seed of Abraham” — “He took on him the form of a servant;” and the like. And who can conceive the condescension of divine goodness, or the acting of divine wisdom and power therein?

II. That which followeth hereon, is the union of the two natures in the same person, or the hypostatical union. This is included and asserted in a multitude of divine testimonies. Isaiah 7:14, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel,” as Matthew 1:23. He who was conceived and born of the virgin was Emmanuel, or God with us; that is, God manifest in the flesh, by the union of his two natures in the same person. Isaiah 9:6, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” That the same person should be “the mighty God” and a “child born,” is neither conceivable nor possible, nor can be true, but by the union of the divine and human natures in the same person. So he said of himself, “Before Abraham was, I am,” John 8:58. That he, the same person who then spake unto the Jews, and as a man was little more than thirty years of age, should also be before Abraham, undeniably confirms the union of another nature, in the same person with that wherein he spoke those words, and without which they could not be true. He had not only another nature which did exist before Abraham, but the same individual person who then spoke in the human nature did then exist. See to the same purpose, John 1:14; Acts 20:28; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9; 1 John 3:16. This union the ancient church affirmed to be made **■τρ■πτως**, “without any change” in the person of the Son of God, which the divine nature is not subject unto; — **■διαιρ■τως**, with a distinction of natures, but “without any division” of them by separate subsistences; — **■συγγ■τως**, “without mixture” or confusion; — **■χωρ■σως**, “without separation” or distance; and **ο■σιωδ■ς**, “substantially,” because it was of two substances or essences in the same person, in opposition unto all accidental union, as the “fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily.” The first four of these terms were adopted by the Fourth Œcumenical Council, held at Chalcedon, a.d. 451. — Ed.

These expressions were found out and used by the ancient church to prevent the fraud of those who corrupted the doctrine of the person of Christ, and (as all of that sort ever did, and yet continue so to do) obscured their pernicious sentiments under ambiguous expressions. And they also made use of sundry terms which they judged significant of this great mystery, or the incarnation of the Son of God. Such are **■νσ■ρκωσις**, “incarnation;” **■νσωμ■τωσις**, “embodying,”

■νανθρ■πησις, “inhumanation;” ■ δεσποτικ■ ■πιδημ■α, κα■ παρουσ■α, ■ ο■κονομ■α, to the same purpose; ■ δι■ σαρκ■ς ■μιλ■α, “his conversation in or by the flesh;” ■ δι■ ■νθρωπ■τητος φαν■ρωσις, “his manifestation by humanity;” ■ ■λευσις, “the advent;” ■ κ■νωσις, “the exinanition”, or humiliation; ■ το■ Χριστο■ ■πιφ■νεια, “the appearance” or manifestation “of Christ;” ■ συγκατ■βασις, “the condescension.” Most of these expressions are taken from the Scripture, and are used therein with respect unto this mystery, or some concernments of it. Wherefore, as our faith is not confined unto any one of these words or terms, so as that we should be obliged to believe not only the things intended, but also the manner of its expression in them; so, in as far as they explain the thing intended according unto the mind of the Holy Ghost in the Scripture, and obviate the senses of men of corrupt minds, they are to be embraced and defended as useful helps in teaching the truth. That whereby it is most usually declared in the writings of the ancients, is χ■ρις ■ν■σεως, “gratia unionis”, the “grace of union;” — which form of words some manifesting themselves strangers unto, do declare how little conversant they are in their writings. Now, it is not any habitual inherent grace residing subjectively in the person or human nature of Christ that is intended, but things of another nature.

1. The cause of this union is expressed in it. This is the free grace and favour of God towards the man Christ Jesus — predestinating, designing, and taking him into actual union with the person of the Son, without respect unto, or foresight of, any precedent dignity or merit in him, 1 Peter 1:20.

Hence is that of Austin, “Eâ gratiâ fit ab initio fidei suæ homo quicumque Christianus, quâ gratiâ homo ille ab initio factus est Christus,” æDe Prædest. Sanct., cap. xv. For whereas all the inherent grace of the human nature of Christ, and all the holy obedience which proceeded from it, was consequent in order of nature unto this union, and an effect of it, they could in no sense be the meritorious or procuring causes of it; — it was of grace.

2. It is used also by many and designed to express the peculiar dignity of the human nature of Christ. This is that wherein no creature is participant, nor ever shall be unto eternity. This is the fundamental privilege of the human nature of Christ, which all others, even unto his eternal glory, proceed from, and are resolved into.

3. The glorious meetness and ability of the person of Christ, for and unto all the acts and duties of his mediatory office. For they are all resolved into the union of his natures in the same person, without which not one of them could be performed unto the benefit of the church. And this is that “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” which renders him so glorious and amiable unto believers. Unto them “that believe he is precious.” The common prevalent expression of it at present in the church is the hypostatical union; that is, the union of the divine and human nature in the person of the Son of God, the human nature having no personality nor subsistence of its own. With respect unto this union the name of Christ is called “Wonderful,” as that which hath the pre-eminence in all the effects of divine wisdom. And it is a singular effect thereof. There is no other union in things divine or human, in things spiritual or natural, whether substantial or accidental, that is of the same kind with it; — it differs specifically from them all.

(1.) The most glorious union is that of the Divine Persons in the same being or nature; the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, the Holy Spirit in them both, and both in him. But this is a union of distinct persons in the unity of the same single nature. And this, I confess, is more glorious than that whereof we treat; for it is in God absolutely, it is eternal, of his nature and being. But this union

we speak of is not God; — it is a creature, — an effect of divine wisdom and power. And it is different from it herein, inasmuch as that is of many distinct persons in the same nature; — this is of distinct natures in the same person. That union is natural, substantial, essential, in the same nature; — this, as it is not accidental, as we shall show, so it is not properly substantial, because it is not of the same nature, but of diverse in the same person, remaining distinct in their essence and substance, and is therefore peculiarly hypostatical or personal. Hence Austin feared not to say, that “Homo potius est in filio Dei, quam filius in Patre;” De Trin., lib. i. cap 10. But that is true only in this one respect, that the Son is not so in the Father as to become one person with him. In all other respects it must be granted that the in-being of the Son in the Father — the union between them, which is natural, essential, and eternal — doth exceed this in glory, which was a temporary, external act of divine wisdom and grace.

(2.) The most eminent substantial union in things natural, is that of the soul and body constituting an individual person. There is, I confess, some kind of similitude between this union and that of the different natures in the person of Christ; but it is not of the same kind or nature. And the dissimilarities that are between them are more, and of greater importance, than those things are wherein there seems to be an agreement between them. For, — 1st, The soul and body are so united as to constitute one entire nature. The soul is not human nature, nor is the body, but it is the consequent of their union. Soul and body are essential parts of human nature; but complete human nature they are not but by virtue of their union. But the union of the natures in the person of Christ doth not constitute a new nature, that either was not or was not complete before. Each nature remains the same perfect, complete nature after this union. 2dly, The union of the soul and body doth constitute that nature which is made essentially complete thereby, — a new individual person, with a subsistence of its own, which neither of them was nor had before that union. But although the person of Christ, as God and man, be constituted by this union, yet his person absolutely, and his individual subsistence, was perfect absolutely antecedent unto that union. He did not become a new person, another person than he was before, by virtue of that union; only that person assumed human nature to itself to be its own, into personal subsistence. 3dly, Soul and body are united by an external efficient cause, or the power of God, and not by the act of one of them upon another. But this union is effected by that act of the divine nature towards the human which we have before described. 4thly, Neither soul nor body have any personal subsistence before their union; but the sole foundation of this union was in this, that the Son of God was a self-subsisting person from eternity.

(3.) There are other unions in things natural, which are by mixture of composition. Hereon something is produced composed of various parts, which is not what any of them are. And there is a conversion of things, when one thing is substantially changed into another, — as the water in the miracle that Christ wrought was turned into wine; but this union hath no resemblance unto any of them. There is not a κρῆσις, “a mixture,” a contemperation of the divine and human natures into one third nature, or the conversion of one into another. Such notions of these things some fancied of old. Eutyches<sup>55</sup> Eutyches was a presbyter and abbot at Constantinople, and distinguished himself by his opposition to the Nestorians, a.d. 448, asserting that in Christ there is but one nature, and was condemned by the General Council at Chalcedon, a.d. 451. In the preface to this work, he is called “The Archimandrite.” Mandrite is a Syriac work for “monk.” Archimandrite corresponds with the term “abbot” in Europe. — Ed. supposed such a composition and mixture of

the two natures in the person of Christ, as that the human nature at least should lose all its essential properties, and have neither understanding nor will of its own. And some of the Arians fancied a substantial change of that created divine nature which they acknowledged, into the human. But these imaginations, instead of professing Christ to be God and man, would leave him indeed neither God nor man; and have been sufficiently confuted. Wherefore the union we treat of hath no similitude unto any such natural union as is the effect of composition or mutation.

(4.) There is an artificial union wherewith some have illustrated this mystery; as that of fire and iron in the same sword. The sword is one; the nature of fire and that of iron different; — and the acts of them distinct; the iron cuts, the fire burns; — and the effects distinct; cutting and burning; yet is the agent or instrument but one sword. Something of this nature may be allowed to be spoken in way of allusion; but it is a weak and imperfect representation of this mystery, on many accounts. For the heat in iron is rather an accident than a substance, is separable from it, and in sundry other things diverts the mind from due apprehensions of this mystery.

(5.) There is a spiritual union, — namely, of Christ and believers; or of God in Christ and believers, which is excellent and mysterious, — such as all other unions in nature are made use of in the Scripture to illustrate and represent. This some among us do judge to be of the same kind with that of the Son of God and the man Christ Jesus. Only they say they differ in degrees. The eternal Word was so united unto the man Christ Jesus, as that thereby he was exalted inconceivably above all other men, though ever so holy, and had greater communications from God than any of them. Wherefore he was on many accounts the Son of God in a peculiar manner; and, by a communication of names, is called God also. This being the opinion of Nestorius,<sup>66</sup> Born at Germanicia, in the north of Syria — ordained a presbyter at Antioch — appointed patriarch of Constantinople a.d. 428 — objected to the epithet Θεοτοκος, as applied to the Virgin Mary, because “that God should be born of a human being is impossible” — charged in consequence with maintaining that Christ was a mere man — held in reality the distinct separation of the divine and human natures of Christ, insisting on a connection between them by συνφεια (junction), or ενωκησις (indwelling), in opposition to ενωσις (union) — deposed by the Third General Council of Ephesus, a.d. 431, and died probably before a.d. 450. — Ed. revived again in the days wherein we live, I shall declare wherein he placed the conjunction or union of the two natures of Christ, — whereby he constituted two distinct persons of the Son of God and the Son of man, as these now do, — and briefly detect the vanity of it. For the whole of it consisted in the concession of sundry things that were true in particular, making use of the pretence of them unto the denial of that wherein alone the true union of the person of Christ did consist.

Nestorius allowed the presence of the Son of God with the man Christ Jesus to consist in five things.

[1.] He said he was so present with him κατ' παρστασιν, or by inhabitation, as a man dwells in a house or a ship to rule it. He dwelt in him as his temple. So he dwells in all that believe, but in him in a more especial manner. And this is true with respect unto that fulness of the Spirit whereby God was with him and in him; as he is with and in all believers, according unto the measures wherein they are made partakers of him. But this answers not that divine testimony, that in him dwelt “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” Colossians 2:9. The fulness of the Godhead is the entire divine nature. This nature is considered in the person of the Son, or eternal Word; for it was

the Word that was made flesh. And this could no otherwise dwell in him bodily, really, substantially, but in the assumption of that nature to be his own. And no sense can be given unto this assertion to preserve it from blasphemy, — that the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in any of the saints bodily.

[2.] He allowed an especial presence,  $\kappa\alpha\tau\ \sigma\chi\sigma\iota\nu$ , as some call it; that is, by such a union of affections as is between intimate friends. The soul of God rested always in that man [Christ]; — in him was he well pleased: and he was wholly given up in his affections unto God. This also is true; but there is that which is no less true, that renders it useless unto the pretensions of Nestorius. For he allowed the divine person of the Son of God. But whatever is spoken of this nature concerning the love of God unto the man Christ Jesus, and of his love to God, it is the person of the Father that is intended therein; nor can any one instance be given where it is capable of another interpretation. For it is still spoken of with reference unto the work that he was sent of the Father to accomplish, and his own delight therein.

[3.] He allowed it to be  $\kappa\tau\ \xi\alpha\nu$ , by way of dignity and honour. For this conjunction is such, as that whatever honour is given unto the Son of God is also to be given unto that Son of man. But herein, to recompense his sacrilege in taking away the hypostatical union from the church, he would introduce idolatry into it. For the honour that is due unto the Son of God is divine, religious, or the owning of all essential divine properties in him, with a due subjection of soul unto him thereon. But to give this honour unto the man Christ Jesus, without a supposition of the subsistence of his human nature in the person of the Son of God, and solely on that account, is highly idolatrous.

[4.] He asserted it to be  $\kappa\alpha\tau\ \tau\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\beta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\alpha\nu$ , or on the account of the consent and agreement that was between the will of God and the will of the man Christ Jesus. But no other union will thence ensue, but what is between God and the angels in heaven; in whom there is a perfect compliance with the will of God in all things. Wherefore, if this be the foundation of this union, he might be said to take on him the nature of angels as well as the seed of Abraham; which is expressly denied by the apostle, Hebrews 2:16-17.

[5.]  $\text{Καθ}\ \mu\omicron\nu\nu\alpha\nu$ , by an equivocal denomination, the name of the one person, namely, of the Son of God, being accommodated unto the other, namely, the Son of man. So they were called gods unto whom the word of God came. But this no way answers any one divine testimony wherein the name of God is assigned unto the Lord Christ, — as those wherein God is said “to lay down his life for us,” and to “purchase his church with his own blood,” to come and be “manifest in the flesh,” — wherein no homonymy or equivocation can take place. By all these ways he constituted a separable accidental union, wherein nothing in kind, but in degree only, was peculiar unto the man Christ Jesus. But all these things, so far as they are true, belong unto the third thing to be considered in his person, — namely, the communion or mutual communication of the distinct natures therein. But his personal union consists not in any of them, nor in all of them together; nor do they answer any of the multiplied testimonies given by the Holy Ghost unto this glorious mystery. Some few of them may be mentioned.

“The Word was made flesh,” John 1:14. There can be but two senses of these words (1st,) That the Word ceased to be what it was, and was substantially turned into flesh (2dly,) That continuing to be what it was, it was made to be also what before it was not. The first sense is destructive of

the Divine Being and all its essential properties. The other can be verified only herein, that the Word took that flesh — that is, our human nature — to be his own, his own nature wherein he was made flesh; which is that we plead for. For this assertion, that the person of the Son took our nature to be his own, is the same with that of the assumption of the human nature into personal subsistence with himself. And the ways of the presence of the Son of God with the man Christ Jesus, before mentioned, do express nothing in answer unto this divine testimony, that “The Word was made flesh.”

“Being in the form of God, he took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient,” Php 2:6-8. That by his being “in the form of God,” his participation in and of the same divine nature with the Father is intended, these men grant; and that herein he was a person distinct from him Nestorius of old acknowledged, though it be by ours denied. But they can fancy no distinction that shall bear the denomination and relation of Father and Son; but all is inevitably included in it which we plead for under that name. This person “took on him the form of a servant,” — that is, the nature of man in the condition of a servant. For it is the same with his being made of a woman, made under the law; or taking on him the seed of Abraham. And this person became obedient. It was in the human nature, in the form of a servant, wherein he was obedient. Wherefore that human nature was the nature of that person, — a nature which he took on him and made his own, wherein he would be obedient. And that the human nature is the nature of the person of him who was in the form of God, is that hypostatical union which we believe and plead for.

“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and his name shall be called The mighty God,” Isaiah 9:6. The child and the mighty God are the same person, or he that is “born a child” cannot be rightly called “The mighty God.” And the truth of many other expressions in the Scripture hath its sole foundation in this hypostatical union. So the Son of God took on him “the seed of Abraham,” was “made of a woman,” did “partake of flesh and blood,” was “manifest in the flesh.” That he who was born of the blessed Virgin was “before Abraham,” — that he was made of the “seed of David according to the flesh,” — whereby God “purchased the church with his own blood,” — are all spoken of one and the same person, and are not true but on the account of the union of the two natures therein. And all those who plead for the accidental metaphorical union, consisting in the instances before mentioned, do know well enough that the true Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ is opposed by them.

III. Concurrent with, and in part consequent unto, this union, is the communion of the distinct natures of Christ hypostatically united. And herein we may consider, — 1. What is peculiar unto the Divine nature; 2. What is common unto both.

1. There is a threefold communication of the divine nature unto the human in this hypostatical union. (1.) Immediate in the person of the Son. This is subsistence. In itself it is **■νυπ■στατος**, — that which hath not a subsistence of its own, which should give it individuation and distinction from the same nature in any other person. But it hath its subsistence in the person of the Son, which thereby is its own. The divine nature, as in that person, is its suppositum. (2.) By the Holy Spirit he filled that nature with an all-fulness of habitual grace; which I have at large explained elsewhere. (3.) In all the acts of his office, by the divine nature, he communicated worth and dignity unto what was acted in and by the human nature. For that which some have for a long season troubled the church withal, about such a real communication of the properties of the divine nature unto the

human, which should neither be a transfusion of them into it, so as to render it the subject of them, nor yet consist in a reciprocal denomination from their mutual in-being in the same subject, — it is that which neither themselves do, nor can any other well understand.

2. Wherefore, concerning the communion of the natures in this personal union, three things are to be observed, which the Scripture, reason, and the ancient church, do all concur in.

(1.) Each nature doth preserve its own natural, essential properties, entirely unto and in itself; without mixture, without composition or confusion, without such a real communication of the one unto the other, as that the one should become the subject of the properties of the other. The Deity, in the abstract, is not made the humanity, nor on the contrary. The divine nature is not made temporary, finite, united, subject to passion or alteration by this union; nor is the human nature rendered immense, infinite, omnipotent. Unless this be granted, there will not be two natures in Christ, a divine and a human; nor indeed either of them, but somewhat else, composed of both.

(2.) Each nature operates in him according unto its essential properties. The divine nature knows all things, upholds all things, rules all things, acts by its presence everywhere; the human nature was born, yielded obedience, died, and rose again. But it is the same person, the same Christ, that acts all these things, — the one nature being his no less than the other. Wherefore, —

(3.) The perfect, complete work of Christ, in every act of his mediatory office, — in all that he did as the King, Priest, and Prophet of the church, — in all that he did and suffered, — in all that he continueth to do for us, in or by virtue of whether nature soever it be done or wrought, — is not to be considered as the act of this or that nature in him alone, but it is the act and work of the whole person, — of him that is both God and man in one person. And this gives occasion, —

IV. Unto that variety of enunciations which is used in the Scripture concerning him; which I shall name only, and conclude.

1. Some things are spoken of the person of Christ, wherein the enunciation is verified with respect unto one nature only; as — “The Word was with God, and the Word was God,” John 1:1; — “Before Abraham was, I am,” John 8:58, — “Upholding all things by the word of his power,” Hebrews 1:3. These things are all spoken of the person of Christ, but belong unto it on account of his divine nature. So is it said of him, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,” Isaiah 9:6; — “A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” Isaiah 53:3. They are spoken of the person of Christ, but are verified in human nature only, and the person on the account thereof.

2. Sometimes that is spoken of the person which belongs not distinctly and originally unto either nature, but doth belong unto him on the account of their union in him, — which are the most direct enunciations concerning the person of Christ. So is he said to be the Head, the King, Priest, and Prophet of the church; all which offices he bears, and performs the acts of them, not on the singular account of this or that nature, but of the hypostatical union of them both.

3. Sometimes his person being denominated from one nature, the properties and acts of the other are assigned unto it. So they “crucified the Lord of glory.” He is the Lord of glory on the account of his divine nature only; thence is his person denominated when he is said to be crucified, which was in the human nature only. So God purchased his church “with his own blood,” Acts 20:28. The denomination of the person is from the divine nature only — he is God; but the act ascribed unto it,

or what he did by his own blood, was of the human nature only. But the purchase that was made thereby was the work of the person as both God and man. So, on the other side, “The Son of man who is in heaven,” John 3:13. The denomination of the person is from the human nature only, — “The Son of man.” That ascribed unto it was with respect unto the divine nature only, — “who is in heaven.”

4. Sometimes the person being denominated from one nature, that is ascribed unto it which is common unto both; or else being denominated from both, that which is proper unto one only is ascribed unto him. See Romans 9:5; Matthew 22:42.

These kinds of enunciations the ancients expressed by **■ναλλαγ■**, “alteration;” **■λλο■ωσις**, “permutation,” **κοιν■της**, “communion;” **τρ■πος ■ντιδ■σεως**, “the manner of mutual position;” **κοινων■α ■διωμ■των**, “the communication of properties,” and other the like expressions.

These things I have only mentioned, because they are commonly handled by others in their didactical and polemical discourses concerning the person of Christ, and could not well be here utterly omitted.

## 04.19. Chapter 19

Chapter XIX. The Exaltation of Christ, with his Present State and Condition in Glory during the Continuance of his Mediatory Office. The apostle, describing the great mystery of godliness — “God manifest in the flesh” — by several degrees of ascent, he carrieth it within the veil, and leaves it there in glory —  $\nu\epsilon\lambda\phi\theta\eta\ \nu\ \delta\epsilon\acute{\xi}$ , 1 Timothy 3:16; God was manifest in the flesh, and “received up into glory.” This assumption of our Lord Jesus Christ into glory, or his glorious reception in heaven, with his state and condition therein, is a principal article of the faith of the church, — the great foundation of its hope and consolation in this world. This, also, we must therefore consider in our meditations on the person of Christ, and the use of it in our religion. That which I especially intend herein is his present state in heaven, in the discharge of his mediatory office, before the consummation of all things. Hereon doth the glory of God, and the especial concernment of the church, at present depend. For, at the end of this dispensation, he shall give up the kingdom unto God, even the Father, or cease from the administration of his mediatory office and power, as the apostle declares, 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All this are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. 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.”

All things fell by sin into an enmity unto the glory of God and the salvation of the church. The removal of this enmity, and the destruction of all enemies, is the work that God committed unto his Son in his incarnation and mediation, Ephesians 1:10. This he was variously to accomplish in the administration of all his offices. The enmity between God and us immediately, he removed by the blood of his cross, whereby he made peace, Ephesians 2:14-16; which peace he continues and preserves by his intercession, Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1. The enemies themselves of the church’s eternal welfare — namely, sin, death, the world, Satan, and hell — he subdues by his power. In the gradual accomplishment of this work — according as the church of the elect is brought forth in successive generations (in every one whereof the same work is to be performed) — he is to continue unto the end and consummation of all things. Until then the whole church will not be saved, and therefore his work not be finished. He will not cease his work whilst there is one of his elect to be saved, or one enemy to be subdued. He shall not faint nor give over until he hath sent forth judgement unto victory. For the discharge of this work he hath a sovereign power over all things in heaven and earth committed unto him. Herein he doth and must reign. And so absolutely is it vested in him, that upon the ceasing of the exercise of it, he himself is said to be made subject unto God. It is true that the Lord Christ, in his human nature, is always less than, or inferior unto, God, even the Father. In that sense he is in subjection unto him now in heaven. But yet he hath an actual exercise of divine power, wherein he is absolute and supreme. When this ceaseth, he shall be subject unto the Father in that nature, and only so. Wherefore, when this work is perfectly

fulfilled and ended, then shall all the mediatory acting of Christ cease for evermore. For God will then have completely finished the whole design of his wisdom and grace in the constitution of his person and offices, and have raised up and finished the whole fabric of eternal glory. Then will God “be all in all”. In his own immense nature and blessedness he shall not only be “all” essentially and causally, but “in all” also; he shall immediately be all in and unto us. This state of things — when God shall immediately “be all in all” — we can have no just comprehension of in this life. Some refreshing notions of it may be framed in our minds, from these apprehensions of the divine perfections which reason can attain unto; and their suitableness to yield eternal rest, satisfaction, and blessedness, in that enjoyment of them whereof our nature is capable. Howbeit, of these things in particular the Scripture is silent; however, it testifies our eternal reward and blessedness to consist alone in the enjoyment of God. But there is somewhat else proposed as the immediate object of the faith of the saints at present, as unto what they shall enjoy upon their departure out of this world. And Scripture revelations extend unto the state of things unto the end of the world, and no longer.

Wherefore heaven is now principally represented unto us as the place of the residence and glory of Jesus Christ in the administration of his office; and our blessedness to consist in a participation thereof, and communion with him therein. So he prays for all them who are given him of his Father, that they may be where he is, to behold his glory, John 17:24. It is not the essential glory of his divine person that he intends, which is absolutely the same with that of the Father; but it is a glory that is peculiarly his own, — a glory which the Father hath given him, because he loved him: “My glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me.” Nor is it merely the glorified state of his human nature that he intendeth; as was before declared in the consideration of the 5th verse of this chapter, where he prayeth for this glory. However, this is not excluded; for unto all those that love him, it will be no small portion of their blessed refreshment, to behold that individual nature wherein he suffered for them, undergoing all sorts of reproaches, contempts, and miseries, now unchangeably stated in incomprehensible glory. But the glory which God gives unto Christ, in the phase of the Scripture, principally is the glory of his exaltation in his mediatory office. It is the “all power” that is given him in heaven and earth; the “name” that he hath “above every name,” as he sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high. In the beholding and contemplation hereof with holy joy and delight, consists no small part of that blessedness and glory which the saints above at present enjoy, and which all others of them shall so do who depart this life before the consummation of all things. And in the due consideration hereof consists a great part of the exercise of that faith which is “the evidence of things not seen,” and which, by making them present unto us, supplies the room of sight. This is the ground whereon our hope doth anchor, — namely, the things “within the veil,” Hebrews 6:19, which directs us unto the temple administration of the mediatory office of Christ. And it is for the strengthening of our faith and hope in God, through him, that we do and that we ought to inquire into these things. The consideration of the present state of Christ in heaven may be reduced unto three heads:—

- I. The glorification of his human nature; what it hath in common with, and wherein it differs in kind from, the glory of all saints whatever.
- II. His mediatory exaltation; or the especial glory of his person as mediator.

III. The exercise and discharge of his office in the state of things: which is what at present I shall principally inquire into. I shall not speak at all of the nature of glorified bodies, nor of anything that is common unto the human nature of Christ and the same nature in glorified saints; but only what is peculiar unto himself. And hereunto I shall premise one general observation.

All perfections whereof human nature is capable, abiding what it was in both the essential path of it, soul and body, do belong unto the Lord Christ in his glorified state. To ascribe unto it what is inconsistent with its essence, is not an assignation of glory unto its state and condition, but a destruction of its being. To affix unto the human nature divine properties, as ubiquity or immensity, is to deprive it of its own. The essence of his body is no more changed than that of his soul. It is a fundamental article of faith, that he is in the same body in heaven wherein he conversed here on earth; as well as the faculties of his rational soul are continued the same in him. This is that “holy thing” which was framed immediately by the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin. This is that “Holy One” which, when it was in the grave, saw no corruption. This is that “body” which was offered for us, wherein he bare our sins on the tree. To fancy any such change in or of this body, by its glorification, as that it should not continue essentially and substantially the same that it was is to overthrow the faith of the church in a principal article of it. We believe that the very same body wherein he suffered for us, without any alteration as unto its substance, essence, or integral parts, and not another body, of an ethereal, heavenly structure, wherein is nothing of flesh, blood, or bones, by which he so frequently testified the faithfulness of God in his incarnation, is still that temple wherein God dwells, and wherein he administers in the holy place not made with hands. The body which was pierced is that which all eyes shall see, and no other.

I. On this foundation I willingly allow all perfections in the glorified human nature of Christ, which are consistent with its real form and essence. I shall, therefore, only in some instances inquire into the present glory of the human nature of Christ, wherein it differ either in kind or degree from the glory of all other saints whatever. For even among them I freely allow different degrees in glory; which the eternal order of things — that is, the will of God, in the disposal of all things unto his own glory — doth require.

1. There is that wherein the present glory of the human nature of Christ differeth, in kind and nature, from that which any other of the saints are partakers of, or shall be so after the resurrection. And this is, —

(1.) The eternal subsistence of that nature of his in the person of the Son of God. As this belongs unto its dignity and honour, so it doth also unto its inherent glory. This is, and shall be, eternally peculiar unto him, in distinction from, and exaltation above, the whole creation of God, angels and men. Those by whom this is denied, instead of the glorious name whereby God doth call him, — “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God,” &c., — do call him “Ichabod,” “Where is the glory?” or, there is none that is peculiar unto him. But the mystery hereof, according unto our measure, and in answer unto our design, we have already declared. And this glory he had, indeed, in this world, from the first instant of his incarnation, or conception in the womb. But, as unto the demonstration of it, “he emptied himself,” and made himself of no reputation, under the form of a servant. But now the glory of it is illustriously displayed in the sight of all his holy ones. Some inquire, whether the saints in heaven do perfectly comprehend the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God? I do not well understand what is meant by “perfectly comprehend;” but this is certain, that what we

have now by faith, we shall have there by sight. For as we live now by faith, so shall we there by sight. No finite creature can have an absolute comprehension of that which is infinite. We shall never search out the almighty to perfection, in any of his works of infinite wisdom. Wherefore this only I shall say, there is such a satisfactory evidence in heaven, not only of the truth, but also of the nature of this mystery, as that the glory of Christ therein is manifest, as an eternal object of divine adoration and honour. The enjoyment of heaven is usually called the beatifical vision; that is, such an intellectual present view, apprehension, and sight of God and his glory, especially as manifested in Christ, as will make us blessed unto eternity. Wherefore, in the contemplation of this mystery doth a great part of our blessedness consist; and farther our thoughts cannot attain. This is that wherein the glory of the human nature of Christ doth essentially excel, and differ from that of any other blessed creature whatever. And hereon other things do depend. For, —

(2.) Hence the union of the human nature of Christ unto God, and the communications of God unto it, are of another kind than those of the blessed saints. In these things — namely, our union with God and his communications unto us — do our blessedness and glory consist. In this world, believers are united unto God by faith. It is by faith that they cleave unto him with purpose of heart. In heaven, it shall be by love. Ardent love, with delight, complacency, and joy, from a clear apprehension of God's infinite goodness and beauty, now made present unto us, now enjoyed by us, shall be the principle of our eternal adherence unto him, and union with him. His communications unto us here are by an external efficiency of power. He communicates of himself unto us, in the effects of his goodness, grace, and mercy, by the operations of his Spirit in us. Of the same kind will all the communications of the divine nature be unto us, unto all eternity. It will be by what he worketh in us by his Spirit and power. There is no other way of the emanation of virtue from God unto any creature. But these things in Christ are of another nature. This union of his human nature unto God is immediate, in the person of the Son; ours is mediate, by the Son, as clothed with our nature. The way of the communications of the divine nature unto the human in his person is what we cannot comprehend; we have no notion of it, — nothing whereby it may be illustrated. There is nothing equal to it, nothing like it, in all the works of God. As it is a creature, it must subsist in eternal dependence on God; neither hath it anything but what it receives from him. For this belongs essentially unto the divine nature, to be the only independent, eternal spring and fountain of all being and goodness. Nor can Omnipotency itself exalt a creature into any such condition as that it should not always and in all things depend absolutely on the Divine Being. But as unto the way of the communications between the divine and human nature, in the personal union, we know it not. But whether they be of life, power, light, or glory, they are of another kind than that whereby we do or shall receive all things. For all things are given unto us, are wrought in us, as was said, by an external efficiency of power. The glorious immediate emanations of virtue, from the divine unto the human nature of Christ, we understand not. Indeed, the acting of natures of different kinds, where both are finite, in the same person, one towards the other, is of a difficult apprehension. Who knows how directive power and efficacy proceeds from the soul, and is communicated unto the body, unto every the least minute action, in every member of it, — so as that there is no distance between the direction and the action, or the accomplishment of it? or how, on the other hand, the soul is affected with sorrow or trouble in the moment wherein the body feeleth pain, so as that no distinction can be made between the body's sufferings and the soul's sorrow? How much more is this mutual communication in the same person of diverse natures above our comprehension, where one of them is absolutely infinite! Somewhat will be spoken to it

afterward. And herein doth this eternal glory differ from that of all other glorified creatures whatever. And, —

(3.) Hence the human nature of Christ, in his divine person and together with it, is the object of all divine adoration and worship, Revelation 5:13. All creatures whatever do forever ascribe “blessing, honour, glory, and power, unto the Lamb,” in the same manner as unto him who sits on the throne. This we have declared before. But no other creature either is, or ever can be, exalted into such a condition of glory as to be the object of any divine worship, from the meanest creature which is capable of the performance of it. Those who ascribe divine or religious honour unto the saints or angels, as is done in the Church of Rome, do both rob Christ of the principal flower of his imperial crown, and sacrilegiously attempt to adorn others with it; — which they abhor.

(4.) The glory that God designed to accomplish in and by him, is now made evident unto all the holy ones that are about the throne. The great design of the wisdom and grace of God, from eternity, was to declare and manifest all the holy, glorious properties of his nature, in and by Jesus Christ. And this is that wherein he will acquiesce, with which he is well pleased. When this is fully accomplished, he will use no other way or means for the manifestation of his glory. Herein is the end and blessedness of all.

Wherefore the principal work of faith, whilst we are in this world, is to behold this glory of God, as so represented unto us in Christ. In the exercise of faith therein is our conformity unto Him carried on unto perfection, 2 Corinthians 3:18. And unto this end, or that we may do so, he powerfully communicates unto our minds a saving, internal light; without which we can neither behold his glory nor give glory unto him. He “who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,” shines into our hearts, to give us “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” 2 Corinthians 4:6. The end, I say, why God communicates a spiritual, supernatural light unto the minds of believers, is that they may be able to discern the manifestation and revelation of his glory in Christ; which is hid from the world, Ephesians 1:17-19; Colossians 2:2. Howbeit, whilst we are here, we see it but “darkly as in a glass,” it is not evident unto us in its own lustre and beauty. Yea, the remainder of our darkness herein is the cause of all our weakness, fears, and disconsolations. Want of a steady view of this glory of God, is that which exposeth us unto impressions from all our temptations. And the light of our minds therein is that whereby we are changed and transformed into the likeness of Christ. But in heaven this is conspicuously and gloriously manifest unto all the blessed ones that are before the throne of God. They do not behold it by faith in various degrees of light, as we do here below. They have not apprehensions of some impressions of divine glory on the person of Christ and the human nature therein, with the work which he did perform; which is the utmost of our attainment. But they behold openly and plainly the whole glory of God, all the characters of it, illustriously manifesting themselves in him, in what he is, in what he hath done, in what he doth. Divine wisdom, grace, goodness, love, power, do all shine forth in him unto the contemplation of all his saints, in whom he is admired. And in the vision hereof consists no small part of our eternal blessedness. For what can be more satisfactory, more full of glory unto the souls of believers, than clearly to comprehend the mystery of the wisdom, grace, and love of God in Christ? This is that which the prophets, at a great distance, inquired diligently into, — that which the angels bow down to look towards, — that whose declaration is the life and glory of the Gospel. To behold in one view the reality, the substance of all that was typified and represented by the beautiful fabric of the Tabernacle, and Temple which succeeded in the room thereof, — of all the

utensils of them, and services performed in them, — all that the promises of the Old Testament did contain, or the declarations of the New; — as it is the most satisfactory, blessed, and glorious state, that by the present light of faith we can desire or long for, so it evidenceth a glory in Christ of another kind and nature than what any creature can be participant in. I shall therefore state it unto our consideration, with some few observations concerning it.

[1.] Every believer sees here in this life an excellency, a glory in the mystery of God in Christ. They do so in various degrees, unless it be in times of temptation, when any of them walk in darkness, and have no light. The view and prospect hereunto is far more clear, and accompanied with more evidence, in some than in others, according unto the various degrees of their faith and light. The spiritual sight of some is very weak, and their views of the glory of God in Christ are much obscured with inevidence, darkness, and instability. This in many is occasioned by the weakness of their natural ability, in more by spiritual sloth and negligence, — in that they have not habitually “exercised their senses to discern good and evil,” as the apostle speaks, Hebrews 5:14. Some want instruction, and some have their minds corrupted by false opinions. Howbeit, all true believers have the “eyes of their understanding opened” to discern, in some measure, the glory of God, as represented to them in the Gospel. Unto others it is foolishness; or they think there is that darkness in it whereunto they cannot approach. But all the darkness is in themselves. This is the distinguishing property and character of saving faith — it beholds the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; — it makes us to discern the manifestation of the glory of God in Christ, as declared in the Gospel.

[2.] Our apprehension of this glory is the spring of all our obedience, consolation, and hope in this world. Faith discovering this manifestation of the glory of God in Christ, engageth the soul unto universal obedience, as finding therein abundant reason for it and encouragement unto it. Then is obedience truly evangelical, when it arises from this acting of faith, and is thereon accompanied with liberty and gratitude. And herein is laid all the foundation of our consolations for the present and hope for the future. For the whole security of our present and future condition depends on the acting of God towards us, according as he hath manifested himself in Christ.

[3.] From the exercise of faith herein doth divine love, love unto God, proceed; therein alone it is enlivened and inflamed. On these apprehensions doth a believing soul cry out, “How great is his goodness! how great is his beauty!” God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, is the only object of divine love. Under that representation of him alone can the soul cleave unto him with ardent love, constant delight, and intense affections. All other notions of love unto God in sinners, as we are all, are empty fancies. Wherefore, —

[4.] All believers are, or should be, conversant in their minds about these things, with longings, expectations, and desires after nearer approaches unto them, and enjoyments of them. And if we are not so, we are earthly, carnal, and unspiritual; yea, the want of this frame — the neglect of this duty — is the sole cause why many professors are so carnal in their minds, and so worldly in their conversions. But this is the state of them who live in the due exercise of faith, — this they pant and breathe after, — namely, that they may be delivered from all darkness, unstable thoughts, and imperfect apprehensions of the glory of God in Christ. After these things do those who have received the “first fruits of the Spirit,” groan within themselves. This glory they would behold “with open face;” not, as at present, “in a glass,” but in its own beauty. What do we want? what would

we be at? what do our souls desire? It is not that we might have a more full, clear, stable comprehension of the wisdom, love, grace, goodness, holiness, righteousness, and power of God, as declared and exalted in Christ unto our redemption and eternal salvation? To see the glory of God in Christ, to understand his love unto him and valuation of him, to comprehend his nearness unto God, — all evidenced in his mediation, — is that which he hath promised unto us, and which we are pressing after. See John 17:23-24.

[5.] Heaven will satisfy all those desires and expectations. To have them fully satisfied, is heaven and eternal blessedness. This fills the souls of them who are already departed in the faith, with admiration, joy, and praises. See Revelation 5:9-10. Herein is the glory of Christ absolutely of another kind and nature than that of any other creature whatever. And from hence it is that our glory shall principally consist in beholding his glory, because the whole glory of God is manifested in him.

And, by the way, we may see hence the vanity as well as the idolatry of them who would represent Christ in glory as the object of our adoration in pictures and images. They fashion wood or stone into the likeness of a man. They adorn it with colours and flourishes of art, to set it forth unto the senses and fancies of superstitious persons as having a resemblance of glory. And when they have done, “they lavish gold out of the bag,” as the prophet speaks, in various sorts of supposed ornaments, — such as are so only to the vainest sort of mankind, — and so propose it as an image or resemblance of Christ in glory. But what is there in it that hath the least respect thereunto, — the least likeness of it? nay, is it not the most effectual means that can be devised to divert the minds of men from true and real apprehensions of it? Doth it teach anything of the subsistence of the human nature of Christ in the person of the Son of God? nay, doth it not obliterate all thoughts of it! What is represented thereby of the union of it unto God, and the immediate communications of God unto it? Doth it declare the manifestation of all the glorious properties of the divine nature in him? One thing, indeed, they ascribe unto it that is proper unto Christ, — namely, that it is to be adored and worshipped; whereby they add idolatry unto their folly. Persons who know not what it is to live by faith — whose minds are never raised by spiritual, heavenly contemplations, who have no design in religion but to gratify their inward superstition by their outward senses — may be pleased for a time, and ruined for ever, by these delusions. Those who have real faith in Christ, and love unto him, have a more glorious object for their exercise. And we may hereby examine both our own notions of the state of glory and our preparations for it, and whether we are in any measure “made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” More grounds of this trial will be afterward suggested; these laid down may not be passed by. Various are the thoughts of men about the future state, — the things which are not seen, which are eternal. Some rise no higher but unto hopes of escaping hell, or everlasting miseries, when they die. Yet the heathen had their Elysian fields, and Mohammed his sensual paradise. Others have apprehensions of I know not what glistening glory, that will please and satisfy them, they know not how, when they can be here no longer. But this state is quite of another nature, and the blessedness of it is spiritual and intellectual. Take an instance in one of the things before laid down. The glory of heaven consists in the full manifestation of divine wisdom, goodness, grace, holiness, — of all the properties of the nature of God in Christ. In the clear perception and constant contemplation hereof consists no small part of eternal blessedness. What, then, are our present thoughts of these things? What joy, what satisfaction have we in the sight of them, which we have

by faith through divine revelation? What is our desire to come unto the perfect comprehension of them? How do we like this heaven? What do we find in ourselves that will be eternally satisfied hereby? According as our desires are after them, such and no other are our desires of the true heaven, — of the residence of blessedness and glory. Neither will God bring us unto heaven whether we will or no. If, through the ignorance and darkness of our minds, — if, through the earthliness and sensuality of our affections, — if, through a fulness of the world, and the occasions of it, — if, by the love of life and our present enjoyments, we are strangers unto these things, we are not conversant about them, we long not after them, — we are not in the way towards their enjoyment. The present satisfaction we receive in them by faith, is the best evidence we have of an indefeasible interest in them. How foolish is it to lose the first fruits of these things in our own souls, — those entrances into blessedness which the contemplation of them through faith would open unto us, — and hazard our everlasting enjoyment of them by an eager pursuit of an interest in perishing things here below! This, this is that which ruins the souls of most, and keeps the faith of many at so low an ebb, that it is hard to discover any genuine working of it.

2. The glory of the human nature of Christ differs from that of the saints after the resurrection, in things which concern the degrees of it. For, —

(1.) The glory of his body is the example and pattern of what they shall be conformed unto: “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself,” Php 3:21. Our bodies were made vile by the entrance of sin; thence they became brothers to the worms, and sisters unto corruption. To death and the grave, with rottenness and corruption therein, they are designed. At the resurrection they shall be new-framed, fashioned, and moulded. Not only all the detriment and disadvantage they received by the entrance of sin shall be removed, but many additions of glorious qualifications, which they had not in their primitive, natural constitution, shall be added unto them. And this shall be done by the almighty power of Christ, — that working or exercise of it whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. But of the state whereinto we shall be changed by the power of Christ, his own body is the pattern and example. A similitude of it is all that we shall attain unto. And that which is the idea and exemplar in any state, is the rule and standard unto all others. Such is the glory of Christ; — ours consists in conformity thereunto; which gives him the pre-eminence.

(2.) As the state of his body is more glorious than ours shall be, so will that of his soul in itself be made appear to be more excellent than what we are capable of. For that fulness of the Spirit without measure and of all grace, which his nature was capacitated for by virtue of the hypostatical union, doth now shine forth in all excellency and glory. The grace that was in Christ in this world is the same with that which is in him now in heaven. The nature of it was not changed when he ceased to be viator, but is only brought into a more glorious exercise now he is comprehensor. And all his graces are now made manifest, the veil being taken from them, and light communicated to discern them. As, in this world, he had unto the most neither form nor comeliness for which he should be desired, — partly from the veil which was cast on his inward beauty from his outward condition, but principally from the darkness which was on their minds, whereby they were disabled to discern the glory of spiritual things; (notwithstanding which, some then, in the light of faith, “beheld his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;”) — so now the veil is removed, and the darkness wholly taken away from the minds of the saints, he is

in the glory of his grace altogether lovely and desirable. And although the grace which is in believers be of the same nature with that which is in Christ Jesus, and shall be changed into glory after the likeness of his; yet is it, and always shall be, incomprehensibly short of what dwells in him. And herein also doth his glory gradually [greatly?] excel that of all other creatures whatever. But we must here draw a veil over what yet remains. For it doth not yet appear what we ourselves shall be; much less is it evident what are, and what will be, the glories of the Head above all the members, — even then when we shall “be made like unto him.” But it must be remembered, that whereas, at the entrance of this discourse, we so proposed the consideration of the present state of the Lord Christ in heaven, as that which should have an “end at the consummation of all things;” what hath been spoken concerning the glory of his human nature in itself, is not of that kind but what abideth unto eternity. All the things mentioned abide in him and unto him for evermore.

II. The second thing to be considered in the present state and condition of Christ is his mediatory exaltation. And two things with respect thereunto may be inquired into: 1. The way of his entrance into that state above; 2. The state itself, with the glory of it.

1. The way of his entrance into the exercise of his mediatory office in heaven is expressed, 1 Timothy 3:16, He was “received up into glory,” or rather gloriously; and he entered “into his glory,” Luke 24:26. This assumption and entrance into glory was upon his ascension, described Acts 1:9-11. “He was taken up into heaven,”  $\nu\epsilon\lambda\phi\theta\eta\ \nu\ \delta\epsilon\iota\chi\sigma\alpha\iota$ , by an act of divine power; and he went into heaven,  $\epsilon\sigma\epsilon\lambda\theta\epsilon\ \nu\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\ \tau\ \nu\ \delta\epsilon\iota\chi\sigma\alpha\iota$ , in his own choice and will, as that which he was exalted unto. And this ascension of Christ in his human nature into heaven is a fundamental article of the faith of the church. And it falls under a double consideration: (1.) As it was triumphant, as he was a King; (2.) As it was gracious, as he was a Priest. His ascension, as unto change of place, from earth to heaven, and as unto the outward manner of it, was one and the same, and at once accomplished; but as unto the end of it, which is the exercise of all his offices, it had various respects, various prefigurations, and is distinctly proposed unto us with reference unto them.

(1.) In his ascension, as it was triumphant, three things may be considered: 1st, The manner of it, with its representation of old; 2dly, The place whereinto he ascended; 3dly, The end of it, or what was the work which he had to do thereon.

[1.] As unto the manner of it, it was openly triumphant and glorious. So is it described, Ephesians 4:8, “When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” And respect is had unto the prefiguration of it at the giving of the law, Psalms 68:17-18, where the glory of it is more fully expressed, “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive,” &c. The most glorious appearance of God upon the earth, under the Old Testament, was that on Mount Sinai, in the giving of the law. And as his presence was there attended with all his glorious angels, so, when, upon the finishing of that work, he returned or ascended into heaven, it was in the way of a triumph with all that royal attendance. And this prefigured the ascent of Christ into heaven, upon his fulfilling of the law, all that was required in it, or signified by it. He ascended triumphantly after he had given the law, as a figure of his triumphant ascent after he had fulfilled it. Having then “spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them,” Colossians 2:15. So he led captivity captive; or all the adverse powers of the salvation of the church, in triumph at his chariot wheels. I deny not but

that his leading “captivity captive” principally respects his spiritual conquest over Satan, and the destruction of his power; yet, whereas he is also said to “spoil principalities and powers, making a show of them openly,” and triumphing over them, I no way doubt but Satan, the head of the apostasy, and the chief princes of darkness, were led openly, in sight of all the holy angels, as conquered captives, — the “seed of the woman” having now bruised the “head of the serpent.” This is that which is so emphatically expressed, Psalms 47:1-9 throughout. The ground and cause of all the triumphant rejoicing of the church, therein declared, is, that God was “gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet,” Psalms 47:5; which is nothing but the glorious ascent of Christ into heaven, said to be accompanied with shouts and the sound of a trumpet, the expressions of triumphant rejoicing, because of the glorious acclamations that were made thereon, by all the attendants of the throne of God.

[2.] The place whither he thus ascended is on high. “He ascended up on high,” Ephesians 4:8, — that is, heaven. He went “into heaven,” Acts 1:11, — and the “heaven must receive him,” Acts 3:21; not these aspectable heavens which we behold, — for in his ascension “he passed through them,” The expression quoted by Dr Owen is founded upon the phrase in the original language, διεληλυθη τα το ορανος “having passed through,” not “into the heavens,” as it stands in our version. — Ed. Hebrews 4:14, and is made “higher than they,” Hebrews 7:26, — but into the place of the residence of God in glory and majesty, Hebrews 1:3, Hebrews 8:1, Hebrews 12:2. There, on “the throne of God,” Revelation 3:21, — “on the right hand of the Majesty on high,” — he sits down in the full possession and exercise of all power and authority. This is the palace of this King of saints and nations. There is his royal eternal throne, Hebrews 1:8. And “many crowns” are on his head, Revelation 19:12, — or all dignity and honour. And he who, in a pretended imitation of him, wears a triple crown, hath upon his own head thereby, “the name of blasphemy,” Revelation 13:1. There are before him his “sceptre of righteousness,” his “rod of iron,” — all the regalia of his glorious kingdom. For by these emblems of power doth the Scripture represent unto us his sovereign, divine authority in the execution of his kingly office. Thus he ascended triumphantly, having conquered his enemies; thus he reigneth gloriously over all.

[3.] The end for which he thus triumphantly ascended into heaven, is twofold: — 1st, The overturning and destruction of all his enemies in all their remaining powers. He rules them “with a rod of iron,” and in his due time will “dash them in pieces as a potter’s vessel,” Psalms 2:9; for he must “reign until all his enemies are made his footstool,” 1 Corinthians 15:25-26; Psalms 110:1. Although at present, for the most part, they despise his authority, yet they are all absolutely in his power, and shall fall under his eternal displeasure. 2dly, The preservation, continuation, and rule of his church, both as unto the internal state of the souls of them that believe, and the external order of the church in its worship and obedience, and its preservation under and from all oppositions and persecutions in this world. There is in each of these such a continual exercise of divine wisdom, power, and care, — the effects of them are so great and marvellous, and the fruits of them so abundant unto the glory of God, — that the world would “not contain the books that might be written” of them; but to handle them distinctly is not our present design.

(2.) His ascension may be considered as gracious, as the ascent of a High Priest. And herein the things before mentioned are of a distinct consideration.

[1.] As to the manner of it, and the design of it, he gives an account of them himself, John 20:17. His design herein was not the taking on him the exercise of his power, kingdom, and glorious rule; but the acting with God on the behalf of his disciples. "I go," saith he, "to my Father, and to your Father; to my God, and to your God," — not his God and Father with respect unto eternal generation, but as he was their God and Father also. And he was so, as he was their God and Father in the same covenant with himself; wherein he was to procure of God all good things for them. Through the blood of this everlasting covenant — namely, his own blood, whereby this covenant was established, and all the good things of it secured unto the church — he was "brought again from the dead" that he might live ever to communicate them unto the church, Hebrews 13:20-21. With this design in his ascension, and the effects of it, did he often comfort and refresh the hearts of his disciples, when they were ready to faint on the apprehensions of his leaving of them here below, John 14:1-2, John 16:5-7. And this was typified by the ascent of the high priest unto the temple of old. The temple was situated on a hill, high and steep, so as that there was no approach unto it but by stairs. Hence in their wars it was looked on as a most impregnable fortress. And the solemn ascent of the high priest into it on the day of expiation, had a resemblance of this ascent of Christ into heaven. For after he had offered the sacrifices in the outward court, and made atonement for sin, he entered into the most holy place, — a type of heaven itself, as the apostle declares, Hebrews 9:24, — of heaven, as it was the place whereinto our High Priest was to enter. And it was a joyful ascent, though not triumphant. All the Psalms, from the 120th to the 134th inclusively, whose titles are ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■, "Songs of Degrees," or rather ascents or risings — being generally songs of praise and exhortations to have respect unto the sanctuary — were sung to God at the resting-places of that ascent. Especially was this represented on the day of jubilee. The proclamation of the jubilee was on the same day that the high priest entered into the holy place; and at the same time, — namely, on the "tenth day of the seventh month," Leviticus 16:29, Leviticus 25:9. Then did the trumpet sound throughout the land, the whole church; and liberty was proclaimed unto all servants, captives, and such as had sold their possessions that they might return unto them again. This being a great type of the spiritual deliverance of the church, the noise of the trumpet was called "The joyful sound," Psalms 89:15, "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." Those who are made partakers of spiritual deliverance, shall walk before God in a sense of his love and grace. This is the ascent of our High Priest into his sanctuary, when he proclaimed "the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called Trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified," Isaiah 61:2-3. For in this ascension of Christ, proclamation was made in the Gospel, of mercy, pardon, peace, joy, and everlasting refreshments, unto all that were distressed by sin, with a communication of righteousness unto them, to the eternal glory of God. Such was the entrance of our High Priest into heaven, with acclamations of joy and praise unto God.

[2.] The place whereinto he thus entered was the sanctuary above, the "tabernacle not made with hands," Hebrews 9:11. It was into heaven itself, not absolutely, but as it is the temple of God, as the throne of grace and mercy-seat are in it; which must farther be spoken unto immediately.

[3.] The end why the Lord Christ thus ascended, and thus entered into the holy place, was “to appear in the presence of God for us,” and to “make intercession for all that come unto God by him,” Hebrews 7:26-27, Hebrews 9:24-25.

He ascended triumphantly into heaven, as Solomon ascended into his glorious throne of judgement described 1 Kings 10:18-20. As David was the type of his conquest over all the enemies of his church, so was Solomon of his glorious reign. The types were multiplied because of their imperfection. Then came unto him the queen of Sheba, the type of the Gentile converts and the church; when ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■, the “voluntaries of the people,” (those made willing in the day of his power, Psalms 110:3) “gathered themselves to the people of the God of Abraham,” and were taken in his covenant, Psalms 47:9 — margin. But he ascended graciously, as the high priest went into the holy place; not to rule all things gloriously with mighty power, not to use his sword and his sceptre — but to appear as an high priest, in a garment down to the foot, and a golden girdle about his paps, Revelation 1:13, — as in a tabernacle, or temple, before a throne of grace. His sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high adds to the glory of his priestly office, but belongs not unto the execution of it. So it was prophesied of him, that he should be “a priest upon his throne,” Zechariah 6:13.

It may be added hereunto, that when he thus left this world and ascended into glory, the great promise he made unto his disciples — as they were to be preachers of the Gospel, and in them unto all that should succeed them in that office — was, that he would “send the Holy Spirit unto them,” to teach and guide them, to lead them into all truth, — to declare unto them the mysteries of the will, grace, and love of God, for the use of the whole church. This he promised to do, and did, in the discharge of his prophetic office. And although his giving “gifts unto men” was an act of his kingly power, yet it was for the end of his prophetic office. From what hath been spoken, it is evident that the Lord Christ “ascended into heaven,” or was received up into glory, with this design, — namely, to exercise his office of mediation in the behalf of the church, until the end should be. As this was his grace, that when he was rich, for our sakes he became poor; so when he was made rich again for his own sake, he lays forth all the riches of his glory and power on our behalf.

2. The glory of the state and condition whereinto Christ thus entered is the next thing to be considered; for he is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. And as his ascension, with the ends of it, were twofold, or of a double consideration, so was his glory that ensued thereon. For his present mediatory state consists either in the glory of his power and authority, or, in the glory of his love and grace, — his glory as a King, or his glory as a Priest. For the first of these, or his royal glory, in sovereign power and authority over the whole creation of God, — all in heaven and earth, persons and things, angels and men, good and bad, alive and dead, — all things spiritual and eternal, grace, gifts, and glory; — his right and power, or ability to dispose of all things according unto his will and pleasure, I have so fully and distinctly declared it, in my exposition on Hebrews 1:3, as that I shall not here again insist upon it. His present glory, in the way of love and grace, — his glory as a Priest, — will be manifested in what doth ensue.

## 04.20. Chapter 20

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Chapter XX. The Exercise of the Mediatory Office of Christ in Heaven.

III. The third and last thing which we proposed unto consideration, in our inquiry into the present state and condition of the person of Christ in heaven, is the exercise and discharge of his mediatory office in behalf of the church; — especially as he continueth to be a “minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”

All Christians acknowledge that his present state is a state of the highest glory, — of exaltation above the whole creation of God, above every name that is or can be named; and hereon they esteem their own honour and safety to depend. Neither do they doubt of his power, but take it for granted that he can do whatever he pleaseth; which is the ground of their placing all their confidence in him. But we must show, moreover, that his present state is a state of office-power, work, and duty. He leads not in heaven a life of mere glory, majesty, and blessedness, but a life of office, love, and care also. He lives as the Mediator of the church; as the King, Priest, and Prophet thereof. Hereon do our present safety and our future eternal salvation depend. Without the continual acting of the office-power and care of Christ, the church could not be preserved one moment. And the darkness of our faith herein is the cause of oft our disconsolations, and most of our weaknesses in obedience. Most men have only general and confused notions and apprehensions of the present state of Christ, with respect unto the church. And by some, all considerations of this nature are despised and derided. But revealed things belong unto us; especially such as are of so great importance unto the glory of God and the saving of our own souls, — such as this is, concerning the present state of the person of Christ in heaven, with respect unto his office-power and care.

Thus he is at once represented in all his offices, Revelation 5:6, “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” The whole representation of the glory of God, with all his holy attendants, is here called his “throne;” whence Christ is said to be in the “midst” of it. And this he is in his kingly glory; with respect also whereunto he is said to have “seven horns,” or perfect power for the accomplishment of his will. And with respect unto his sacerdotal office, he is represented as a “Lamb that had been slain;” it being the virtue of his oblation that is continually effectual for the salvation of the church. For, as the “Lamb of God,” — in the offering of himself, — he “taketh away the sin of the world.” And as a prophet he is said to have “seven eyes,” which are “the seven Spirits of God;” or a perfect fulness of all spiritual light and wisdom in himself, with a power for the communication of gifts and grace for the illumination of the church. The nature of these offices of Christ, what belongs unto them and their charge, as was before intimated, I have declared elsewhere. I do now no farther consider them but as they relate unto the present state and condition of the person of Christ in heaven. And because it would be too long a work to treat of them all distinctly, I shall confine myself unto the consideration of his priestly office, with what

depends thereon. And with respect thereunto the things ensuing may be observed.

1. The Lord Christ entered into heaven, the place of the residence of the glory of God, as into a temple, a tabernacle, a place of sacred worship. He did so as the high priest of the church, Hebrews 9:24. He "is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." He is entered into heaven, as it was figured by the tabernacle of old; which was the place of all sacred and solemn worship. And therefore is he said to enter into it "through the veil," Hebrews 6:19-20, Hebrews 10:19-20; which was the way of entrance into the most holy place, both in the tabernacle and temple. Heaven is not only a palace, a throne, as it is God's throne, Matthew 5:34; but it is a temple, wherein God dwells, not only in majesty and power, but in grace and mercy. It is the seat of ordinances and solemn worship. So is it represented, Revelation 7:15, Revelation 7:17. It is said of the whole number of the saints above that have passed through the tribulations of this world, that they are "before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them;" and "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of water." See also Revelation 8:1-4. The worship of the church below may also be herein comprised; but it is by virtue of communion with that above. This is that heaven which the souls of believers do long for an entrance into. Other apprehensions of it are but uncertain speculations.

2. In this temple, this sanctuary, the Lord Christ continueth gloriously to minister before the throne of grace, in the discharge of his office. See Hebrews 4:14-16, Hebrews 9:24. As the high priest went into the holy place to minister for the church unto God, before the ark and mercy-seat, which were types of the throne of grace; so doth our High Priest act for us in the real presence of God. He did not enter the holy place only to reside there in a way of glory, but to do temple-work, and to give unto God all that glory, honour, and worship, which he will receive from the church. And we may consider, both — (1.) What this work is, and (2.) How it is performed.

(1.) In general; herein Christ exerteth and exerciseth all his love, compassion, pity, and care towards the church, and every member of it. This are we frequently called unto the consideration of, as the foundation of all our consolation, as the fountain of all our obedience. See Hebrews 2:17-18, Hebrews 4:15-16, Hebrews 5:2. Thoughts hereof are the relief of believers in all their distresses and temptations; and the effects of it are all their supplies of grace, enabling them to persevere in their obedience. He doth appear for them as the great representative of the church, to transact all their affairs with God. And that for three ends.

First, To make effectual the atonement that he hath made for sin. By the continual representation of it, and of himself as a "Lamb that had been slain," he procures the application of the virtues and benefits of it, in reconciliation and peace with God, unto their souls and consciences. Hence are all believers sprinkled and washed with his blood in all generations, — in the application of the virtues of it unto them, as shed for them.

Secondly, To undertake their protection, and to plead their cause against all the accusations of Satan. He yet accuseth and chargeth them before God; but Christ is their advocate at the throne of grace, effectually frustrating all his attempts, Revelation 12:10; Zechariah 3:2.

Thirdly, To intercede for them, as unto the communication of all grace and glory, all supplies of the Spirit, the accomplishment of all the promises of the covenant towards them, 1 John 2:1-2. This is the work of Christ in heaven. In these things, as the high priest of the church, doth he continue to administer his mediatory office on their behalf. And herein is he attended with the songs and joyful acclamations of all the holy ones that are in the presence of God, giving glory to God by him.

(2.) As unto the manner of this glorious administration, sundry things are to be considered.

[1.] That this transaction of things in heaven, being in the temple of God, and before the throne of grace, is a solemn instituted worship at present, which shall cease at the end of the world. Religious worship it is, or that wherein and whereby all the saints above do give glory to God. And it is instituted worship, not that which is merely natural, in that it is God's especial appointment, in and by Christ the mediator. It is a church-state which is constituted hereby, wherein these glorious ordinances are celebrated; and such a state as shall not be eternal, but hath its time allotted unto it. And believers at present have, by faith, an admission into communion with this church above, in all its divine worship. For we "are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel," Hebrews 12:22-24. A church-state doth the apostle most expressly represent unto us. It is Zion, Jerusalem, the great assembly, — the names of the church state under the Old Testament. And it is a state above, the heavenly Jerusalem, where are all the holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect in themselves, though not in their state as to the restitution of their bodies at the resurrection. And a holy worship is there in this great assembly; for not only is Jesus in it as the mediator of the covenant, but there is the "blood of sprinkling" also, in the effectual application of it unto the church. Hereunto have we an entrance. In this holy assembly and worship have we communion by faith whilst we are here below, Hebrews 10:19-22. O that my soul might abide and abound in this exercise of faith! — that I might yet enjoy a clearer prospect of this glory, and inspection into the beauty and order of this blessed assembly! How inconceivable is the representation that God here makes of the glory of his wisdom, love, grace, goodness, and mercy, in Christ! How excellent is the manifestation of the glory and honour of Christ in his person and offices! — the glory given him by the Father! How little a portion do we know, or can have experience in, of the refreshing, satiating communications of divine love and goodness, unto all the members of this assembly; or of that unchangeable delight in beholding the glory of Christ, and of God in him, — of that ardency of affections wherewith they cleave unto him, and continual exultation of spirit, whereby they triumph in the praises of God, that are in all the members of it! To enter into this assembly by faith, — to join with it in the assignation of praises unto "him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore," — to labour after a frame of heart in holy affections and spiritual delight in some correspondence with that which is in the saints above, — is the duty, and ought to be the design, of the church of believers here below. So much as we are furthered and assisted herein by our present ordinances, so much benefit and advantage have we by them, and no more. A constant view of this glory will cast contempt on all the desirable things of this world, and deliver our minds from any dreadful apprehensions of what is most terrible therein.

[2.] This heavenly worship in the sanctuary above, administered by the High Priest over the house of God, is conspicuously glorious. The glory of God is the great end of it, as shall be immediately declared; that is, the manifestation of it. The manifestation of the glory of God consists really in the effects of his infinite wisdom, goodness, grace, and power; — declaratively, in the express acknowledgement of it with praise. Herein, therefore, doth the solemn worship of God in the sanctuary above consist, — setting aside only the immediate acting of Christ in his intercession. It is a glorious, express acknowledgement of the wisdom, love, goodness, grace, and power of God, in the redemption, sanctification, and salvation of the church by Jesus Christ, with a continual ascription of all divine honour unto him in the way of praise. For the manner of its performance, our present light into it is but dark and obscure. Some things have an evidence in them. As, —

1st, That there is nothing carnal in it, or such things as are suited unto the fancies and imaginations of men. In the thoughts of heaven, most persons are apt to frame images in their minds of such carnal things as they suppose they could be delighted withal. But they are far remote from the worship of this holy assembly. The worship of the Gospel, which is spiritually glorious, makes a nearer approach unto it than that of the Temple, which was outwardly and carnally so.

2dly, It is not merely mental, or transacted only in the silent thoughts of each individual person; for, as we have showed, it is the worship of a church assembly wherein they have all communion, and join in the performance of it. We know not well the way and manner of communication between angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. It is expressed in the Scripture by voices, postures, and gestures; which, although they are not of the same nature as absolutely ours are, yet are they really significant of the things they would express, and a means of mutual communication. Yea, I know not how far God may give them the use of voice and words whereby to express his praise, as Moses talked with Christ at his transfiguration, Matthew 17:3. But the manner of it is such as whereby the whole assembly above do jointly set forth and celebrate the praises of God and the glory hereof consisteth in three things.

[1.] The blessed and beautiful order of all things in that sanctuary. Job describes the grave beneath to be a “place without any order, and where the light is as darkness,” Matthew 10:22. All above is order and light, — every person and thing in its proper place and exercise. 1st, Heaven itself is a temple, a sanctuary, made so by the especial presence of God, and the ministration of Christ in the tabernacle of his human nature. 2dly, God is on the throne of grace, gloriously exalted on the account of his grace, and for the dispensation of it. To the saints above he is on the throne of grace, in that they are in the full enjoyment of the effects of his grace, and do give glory unto him on the account thereof. He is so, also with respect unto the church here below, in the continual communications of grace and mercy through Christ. 3dly, The Lord Christ, in his human nature, is before the throne, acting his mediatory office and power in behalf of the church. 4thly, All the holy angels, in the various orders and degrees of their ministration, are about the throne continually. So — 5thly, Are the spirits of just men made perfect, in the various measures of light and glory. And these things were obscurely represented in the order of the church at its first erection in the wilderness; for the ordinances of God among them were patterns or figures of heavenly things, Hebrews 9:23. (1st,) In the midst was the tabernacle or sanctuary, — which represented the sanctuary or temple above. (2dly,) In the most holy place were the ark and mercy-seat, — representatives of the throne of grace. (3dly,) The ministry of the high priest, — a type of the

ministry of Christ. (4thly,) The Levites, who attended on the priest, did represent the ministry of angels attending on Christ in the charge of his office. And, (5thly,) Round about them were the tribes in their order.

[2.] In the full, clear apprehensions which all the blessed ones have of the glory of God in Christ, of the work and effects of his wisdom and grace towards mankind. These are the foundation of all divine worship. And because our conceptions and apprehensions about them are dark, low, obscure, and inevident, our worship is weak and imperfect also. But all is open unto the saints above. We are in the dust, the blood, the noise of the battle; they are victoriously at peace, and have a perfect view of what they have passed through, and what they have attained unto. They are come to the springs of life and light, and are filled with admiration of the grace of God in themselves and one another. What they see in God and in Jesus Christ, what they have experience of in themselves; what they know and learn from others, are all of them inconceivable and inexpressible. It is well for us, if we have so much experience of these things as to see a real glory in the fulness and perfection of them. The apprehensions by sight, without mixture of unsteadiness or darkness, without the alloy of fears or temptations, with an ineffable sense of the things themselves on their hearts or minds, are the springs or motives of the holy worship which is in heaven.

[3.] In the glorious manner of the performance of it. Now, whereas it ariseth from sight and present enjoyment, it must consist in a continual ascription of glory and praise unto God; and so it is described in the Scripture. See Revelation 4:9-11, with Isaiah 6:3. And how little a portion of the glory of these things is it that we can apprehend!

3. In this solemn assembly before the throne of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ — the great High Priest — doth represent and render acceptable unto God the worship of the church here below. So it is expressed, Revelation 8:3-4, “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.” It is a representation of the high priest burning incense on the golden altar on the day of atonement, when he entered into the most holy place; for that altar was placed just at the entrance of it, directly before the ark and mercy seat, representing the throne of God. This angel, therefore, is our High Priest; none else could approach that altar, or offer incense on it, the smoke whereof was to enter into the holy place. And the “prayers of all saints” is a synecdochical expression of the whole worship of the church. And this is presented before the throne of God by this High Priest. And it is not said that their prayers came unto the throne of God, but the smoke of the incense out of the hand of the angel did so; for it is the incense of the intercession of Christ alone that gives them their acceptance with God. Without this, none of our prayers, praises, or thanksgivings, would ever have access into the presence of God, or unto the throne of grace. Blessed be God for this relief, under the consideration of the weakness and imperfection of them! Wherefore, in him and by him alone do we represent all our desires, and prayers, and whole worship to God. And herein, in all our worship, do we ourselves “enter into the most holy place,” Hebrews 10:19. We do it not merely by faith, but by this especial exercise of it, in putting our prayers into the hand of this High Priest.

There are three things in all our worship that would hinder its access unto God, and acceptance with him, as also keep off comfort and peace from our consciences. The first is, The sin or iniquity that cleaves unto it; secondly, The weakness or imperfection that at best is in it; and, thirdly, The unworthiness of the persons by whom it is performed. With reference unto these things the Law could never consummate or perfect the consciences of them that came unto God by the sacrifices of it. But there are three things in the sacerdotal ministration of Christ that remove and take them all away, whereon we have access with boldness unto God. And they are — (1.) The influence of his oblation; (2.) The efficacy of his intercession; and, (3.) The dignity of his person. Through the first of these he bears and takes away all the iniquity of our holy things, as Aaron did typically of old, by virtue of the plate of gold with the name of God (a figure of Christ) on his forehead, Exodus 28:36-38. He hath made atonement for them in the blood of his oblation, and they appear not in the presence of God. Through the second, or the efficacy of his intercession, he gives acceptance unto our prayers and holy worship, with power and prevalence before God. For this is that incense whose smoke or sweet perfume comes up with the prayers of all saints unto the throne of God. Through the third, or the dignity of his person, wherein he appears as the representative of his whole mystical body, he takes away from our consciences that sense of our own vileness and unworthiness which would not suffer us to approach with boldness unto the throne of grace. In these things consists the life of the worship of the church, — of all believers; without which, as it would not be acceptable unto God, so we could have neither peace nor consolation in it ourselves.

4. Herein hath the church that is triumphant communion with that which is yet militant. The assembly above have not lost their concernment in the church here below. As we rejoice in their glory, safety, and happiness, that having passed through the storms and tempests, the temptations, sufferings, and dangers, of this life and world, they are harboured in eternal glory, unto the praise of God in Christ; so are they full of affections towards their brethren exercised with the same temptations, difficulties, and dangers, which they have passed through, with earnest desires for their deliverance and safety. Wherefore, when they behold the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great high priest over the house of God, presenting their prayers, with all their holy worship unto him, rendering them acceptable by the incense of his own intercession, it fills them with satisfaction, and continually excites them unto the assignation of praise, and glory, and honour unto him. This is the state of the saints above, with respect unto the church here below. This is all which may be herein ascribed unto them; and this may safely be so. What some have fancied about their own personal intercession, and that for particular persons, is derogatory unto the honour of Jesus Christ, and inconsistent with their present condition; but in these things consists their communion with the church here below. A love they have unto it, from their union with it in the same mystical body, Ephesians 1:10. A sense they have of its condition, from the experience they had of it in the days of their flesh. A great concernment they have for the glory of God in them, and a fervent desire of their eternal salvation. They know that without them they shall not be absolutely consummate, or made perfect in their whole persons, Revelation 6:11. In this state of things they continually behold the Lord Jesus Christ presenting their prayers before the throne of grace, — making intercession for them, — appearing to plead their cause against all their adversaries, — transacting all their affairs in the presence of God, — taking care of their salvation, that not one of them shall perish. This continually fills them with a holy satisfaction and complacency, and is a great part of the subject-matter of their incessant praises and ascriptions of glory unto him. Herein lies the concernment of the church above in that here below; this is the communion that is

between them, whereof the person of Christ, in the discharge of his office, is the bond and centre.

5. There is herein a full manifestation made of the wisdom of God, in all the holy institutions of the tabernacle and temple of old. Herein the veil is fully taken off from them, and that obscure representation of heavenly things is brought forth unto light and glory. It is true, this is done unto a great degree in the dispensation of the Gospel. By the coming of Christ in the flesh, and the discharge of his mediatory office in this world, the substance of what they did prefigure is accomplished; and in the revelations of the Gospel the nature and end of them is declared. Howbeit, they extended their signification also unto things within the veil, or the discharge of the priestly office of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, Hebrews 9:24. Wherefore, as we have not yet a perfection of light to understand the depth of the mysteries contained in them; so themselves also were not absolutely fulfilled until the Lord Christ discharged his office in the holy place. This is the glory of the pattern which God showed unto Moses in the mount, made conspicuous and evident unto all. Therein especially do the saints of the Old Testament, who were exercised all their days in those typical institutions whose end and design they could not comprehend, see the manifold wisdom and goodness of God in them all, rejoicing in them for evermore.

6. All that the Lord Christ receives of the Father on the account of this holy interposition and mediation for the church, he is endowed with sovereign authority and almighty power in himself to execute and accomplish. Therefore is he said, as a priest, is be “made higher than the heavens;” and as a “priest to sit down at the right hand of the majesty on high,” Hebrews 8:1. This glorious power doth not immediately belong unto Him on the account of his sacerdotal office, but it is that qualification of his person which is necessary unto the effectual discharge of it. Hence it is said of him, that he should “bear the glory,” and “sit and rule upon his throne,” and should be “a priest upon his throne,” Zechariah 6:13. A throne is insigne regium, and properly belongs unto Christ with respect unto his kingly office, Hebrews 1:8-9. Howbeit the power accompanying and belonging unto his throne being necessary unto the effectual discharge of his priestly office, as he sits and rules on his throne, so it is said that he is a “priest on his throne” also. This is one instance of the present state of Christ in heaven, and of the work which he doth there perform, and the only instance I shall insist upon. He was made a priest “after the power of an endless life,” — the life which he now leads in heaven; — and “lives for ever to make intercession for us.” He was dead, but is alive, and lives for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and death, — all power over the enemies of his church. God on a throne of grace; — Christ, the high priest, so on his right hand in glory and power as yet to be “before the throne” in the virtue of his sacerdotal office, with the whole concernment of the church on his hand, transacting all things with God for them; — all the holy angels and the “spirits of just men made perfect” encompassing the throne with continual praises unto God, even the Father, and him, on the account of the work of infinite wisdom, goodness, and grace, in his incarnation, mediation, and salvation of the church thereby; — himself continuing to manage the cause of the whole church before God, presenting all their prayers and services unto him perfumed with his own intercession, — is that resemblance of heaven and its present glory which the Scripture offers unto us. But, alas! how weak, how dark, how low, are our conceptions and apprehensions of these heavenly things! We see yet as through a glass darkly, and know but in part. The time is approaching when we shall see these things “with open face,” and know even as we are known. The best improvement we can make of this prospect, whilst faith supplies the place of future sight, is to be stirred up thereby unto holy longings after a participation in this glory,

and constant diligence in that holy obedience whereby we may arrive thereunto.

What remaineth yet to be spoken on this subject hath respect unto these two ensuing propositions:—

1. All the effects of the offices of Christ, internal, spiritual, and eternal, in grace and glory, — all external fruits of their dispensation in providence towards the church or its enemies, — are wrought by divine power; or are the effects of an emanation of power from God. They are all wrought “by the exceeding greatness of his power,” even as he wrought in Christ himself when he raised him from the dead, Ephesians 1:19. For all the outward works of God, such as all these are, which are wrought in and for the church, are necessarily immediate effects of divine power, — nor can be of another nature.

2. Upon supposition of the obedience of Christ in this life, and the atonement made by his blood for sin, with his exaltation thereon, there is nothing in any essential property of the nature of God, — nothing in the eternal, unchangeable law of obedience, — to hinder but that God might work all these things in us unto his own honour and glory, in the eternal salvation of the church and the destruction of all its enemies, without a continuance of the administration of the offices of Christ in heaven, and all that sacred solemnity of worship wherewith it is accompanied.

These things being certain and evident, we may inquire thereon, whence it is that God hath ordered the continuation of all these things in heaven above, seeing these ends might have been accomplished without them, by immediate acts of divine power. The great “works of the Lord are sought out of them that have pleasure in them,” Psalms 111:2. This, therefore, being a great work of God, which he hath wrought and revealed unto us, especially in the effect and fruit of it, and that for the manifestation of his wisdom and grace, it is our duty to inquire into it with all humble diligence; “for those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children,” that we may do the will of God for our good. Wherefore, —

(1.) God would have it so, for the manifestation of his own glory. This is the first great end of all the works of God. That it is so is a fundamental principle of our religion. And how his works do glorify him is our duty to inquire. The essential glory of God is always the same, — eternal and immutable. It is the being of God, with that respect which all creatures have unto it. For glory adds a supposition of relation unto being. But the manifestations of his glory are various, according to the pleasure of his will. Wherefore, that which he chooseth to manifest his glory in and by at one time, he may cease from using it unto that end at another; for its being a means of the manifestation of his glory may depend on such circumstances, such a state of things, which being removed, it ceaseth to be. So of old he manifested and represented his glory in the tabernacle and temple, and the holy pledges of his presence in them, and was glorified in all the worship of the Law. But now he ceaseth so to do, nor is any more honoured by the services and ceremonies of religion therein prescribed. If the whole structure of the temple and all its beautiful services were now in being on the earth, no glory would redound unto God thereby, — he would receive none from it. To expect the glory of God in them would be a high dishonour unto him. And God may at any time begin to manifest his glory by such ways and means as he did not formerly make use of unto that purpose. So is it with all Gospel ordinances: which state will be continued unto the consummation of all things here below, and no longer; for then shall they all cease, — God will be no more glorified in them or by them. So hath God chosen to glorify himself in heaven by this

administration of all things in and by Jesus Christ; whereunto also there is an end determined. And in the continuance of this holy worship in the sanctuary above, God doth manifest his glory on many accounts, and resteth thereto. First, he doth it in and unto the saints who departed this life under the Old Testament. They came short in glory of what they now enter into who die in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. For — not to dispute about nor determine positively, what was their state and condition before the ascension of Christ into heaven, or what was the nature of the blessed receptacle of their souls — it is manifest that they did not, they could not, behold the glory of God, and the accomplishment of the mystery of his wisdom and will, in Jesus Christ; nor was it perfectly made known unto them. Whatever were their rest, refreshment, and blessedness, — whatever were their enjoyments of the presence of God; yet was there no throne of grace erected in heaven, — no High Priest appearing before it, — no Lamb as it had been slain, — no joint ascription of glory unto him that sits on the throne, and the Lamb, for ever; God “having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” See Ephesians 3:9-10. This was that, and this was that alone, so far as in the Scripture it is revealed, wherein they came short of that glory which is now enjoyed in heaven. And herein consists the advantage of the saints above them, who now die in faith. Their state in heaven was suited unto their faith and worship on the earth. They had no clear, distinct knowledge of the incarnation and mediatory office of Christ by their revelations and services; only they believed that the promise of deliverance, of grace and mercy, should be in and by him accomplished. Their reception into heaven — that which they were made meet and prepared for by their faith and worship — was suited thereunto. They had a blessed rest and happiness, above what we can comprehend; for who knows what it is to be in the glorious presence of God, though at the greatest distance? They were not immediately surprised with an appearance of that glory which they had no distinct apprehensions of in this world. Neither they nor the angels knew clearly either the sufferings of Christ or the glory that should ensue. But they saw and knew that there was yet something farther to be done in heaven and earth, as yet hid in God and the counsels of his will, for the exaltation of his glory in the complete salvation of the church. This they continued waiting for in the holy place of their refreshment above. Faith gave them, and it gives us, an entrance into the presence of God, and makes us meet for it. But what they immediately enjoyed did not in its whole kind exceed what their faith directed unto. No more doth ours. Wherefore they were not prepared for a view of the present glory of heaven; nor did enjoy it. But the saints under the New Testament, who are clearly instructed by the Gospel in the mysteries of the incarnation and mediation of Christ, are, by their faith and worship, made meet for an immediate entrance into this glory. This they long for, this they expect and are secured of, from the prayer of our Saviour, — that they be, when they leave this world, where he is, to behold his glory. But now, upon the entrance of Christ into the heavenly sanctuary, all those holy ones were admitted into the same glory with what the saints under the New Testament do enjoy. Hereon with open face they behold the use and end of those typical services and ordinances wherein these things were shadowed out unto them. No heart can conceive that ineffable addition of glory which they received hereby. The mystery of the wisdom and grace of God in their redemption and salvation by Christ was now fully represented unto them; what they had prayed for, longed for, and desired to see in the days of their flesh on the earth, and waited for so long in heaven, was now gloriously made manifest unto them. Hereon did glorious light and blessed satisfaction come into and upon all those blessed souls, who died in the faith, but had not received the promise, — only beheld it afar off. And hereby did God greatly manifest his own glory in them and unto them; which

is the first end of the continuation of this state of things in heaven. This makes me judge that the season of Christ's entrance into heaven, as the holy sanctuary of God, was the greatest instance of created glory that ever was or ever shall be, unto the consummation of all things. And this as for other reasons, so because all the holy souls who had departed in the faith from the foundation of the world, were then received into the glorious light of the counsels of God, and knowledge of the effects of his grace by Jesus Christ.

Want of a due apprehension of the truth herein hath caused many, especially those of the Church of Rome, to follow after vain imaginations about the state of the souls of the faithful, departed under the Old Testament. Generally, they shut them up in a subterranean limbus, whence they were delivered by the descent of Christ. But it is contrary unto all notions and revelations of the respect of God unto his people — contrary to the life and nature of faith — that those who have passed through their course of obedience in this world, and finished the work given unto them, should not enter, upon their departure, into blessed rest in the presence of God. Take away the persuasion hereof, and the whole nature of faith is destroyed. But into the fulness of present glory they could not be admitted; as hath been declared.

Moreover, God hereby manifests his glory unto the holy angels themselves. Those things wherein it doth consist were hid in himself even from them, from the foundation of the world, — hidden in the holy counsels of his will, Ephesians 3:9. Wherefore unto these "principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God was made known by the church," verse 10. The church being redeemed by the blood of Christ, and himself thereon exalted in this glory, they came to know the "manifold wisdom of God" by the effects of it; which before they earnestly desired to look into, 1 Peter 1:12. Hereby is all the glory of the counsels of God in Christ made conspicuous unto them; and they receive themselves no small advancement in glory thereby. For in the present comprehension of the mind of God, and doing of his will, doth their blessedness consist.

Heaven itself was not what it is, before the entrance of Christ into the sanctuary for the administration of his office. Neither the saints departed nor the angels themselves were participant of that glory which now they are. Neither yet doth this argue any defect in heaven, or the state thereof in its primitive constitution; for the perfection of any state hath respect unto that order of things which it is originally suited unto. Take all things in the order of the first creation, and with respect thereunto heaven was perfect in glory from the beginning. Howbeit there was still a relation and regard in it unto the church of mankind on the earth, which was to be translated thither. But by the entrance of sin all this order was disturbed, and all this relation was broken. And there followed thereon an imperfection in the state of heaven itself; for it had no longer a relation unto, or communion with, them on earth, nor was a receptacle meet for men who were sinners to be received into. Wherefore, by the "blood of the cross," God "reconciled all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven," Colossians 1:20, — or gathered all things into one in him, "both which are in heaven, and which are on earth," Ephesians 1:10. Even the things in heaven so far stood in need of a reconciliation, as that they might be gathered together in one with the things on earth; the glory whereof is manifested in this heavenly ministrations. And the apostle affirms that the "heavenly things themselves" were purified by the sacrifice of Christ, Hebrews 9:23. Not that they were actually defiled in themselves, but without this purification they were not meet for the fellowship of this mystery in the joint worship of the whole society in heaven and earth, by Jesus Christ. Hence, therefore, there is a continual manifestation of the glory of God

unto the angels themselves. They behold his manifold wisdom and grace in the blessed effects of it, which were treasured up in the holy counsels of his will from eternity. Hereby is their own light and blessedness advanced, and they are filled with admiration of God, ascribing praise, honour, and glory unto him for evermore; for the beholding of the mystery of the wisdom of God in Christ, which is here so despised in the dispensation of the Gospel, is the principal part of the blessedness of the angels in heaven, which fills them with eternal delight, and is the ground of their ascribing praise and glory unto him for evermore. This is that manifestative glory wherewith God satisfieth himself, until the end determined shall be. On the account hereof he doth and will bear with things in this world, unto the appointed season. For whilst the creation is in its present posture, a revenue of glory must be taken out of it for God; and longer than that is done it cannot be continued. But the world is so full of darkness and confusion, of sin and wickedness, of enmity against God, — is so given up to villany, unto all the ways whereby God may be dishonoured, — that there is little or no appearance of any revenue of glory unto him from it. Were it not on the secret account of divine wisdom, it would quickly receive the end of Sodom and Gomorrah. The small remnant of the inheritance of Christ is shut up in such obscurity, that, as unto visible appearance and manifestation, it is no way to be laid in the balance against the dishonour that is done unto him by the whole world. But whilst things are in this posture here below, God hath a solemn honour, glory, and worship above, in the presence of all his holy ones; wherein he resteth and takes pleasure. In his satisfaction herein he will continue things in this world unto all the ends of his wisdom, goodness, righteousness, and patience, let it rage in villany and wickedness as it pleaseth. And so, when any of the saints who are wearied, and even worn out, with the state of things in this world, and, it may be, understand not the grounds of the patience of God, do enter into this state, they shall, unto their full satisfaction, behold that glory which abundantly compensates the present dishonour done to God here below.

(2.) This state of things is continued for the glory of Christ himself. The office of Mediator was committed by God the Father unto his only-begotten Son, — no other being able to bear or discharge it. See Isaiah 9:6; Revelation 5:1-5. But in the discharge of this office it was necessary he should condescend unto a mean and low condition, and to undergo things difficult, hard, and terrible, Php 2:6-8. Such were the things which our Lord Jesus Christ underwent in this world; — his undergoing of them being necessary unto the discharge of his office; yea, it consisted therein. Herein was he exposed unto reproach, contempt, and shame, with all the evils that Satan or the world could bring upon him. And besides, he was, for us and in our stead, to undergo the “curse of the law,” with the greatest of terror and sorrows in his soul, until he gave up the ghost. These things were necessary unto the discharge of his office, nor could the salvation of the church be wrought out without them. But do we think that God would commit so glorious an office unto his only Son to be discharged in this manner only? Let it be granted that after he had so accomplished the will of God in this world, he had himself entered into glory; yet if he should so cease the administration of his office, that must be looked on as the most afflictive and dolorous that ever was undergone. But it was the design of God to glorify the office itself; as an effect of his wisdom, and himself therein; yea, so as that the very office itself should be an everlasting honour to his Son as incarnate. Unto this end the administration of it is continued in glory in his hand, and he is exalted in the discharge of it. For this is that glory which he prays that all his disciples may be brought unto him to behold. The time between his ascension and the end of all things is allotted unto the glory of Christ in the administration of his office in the heavenly sanctuary. And from

hence doth the apostle prove him, “as a high priest,” to be far more glorious than those who were called unto that office under the law, Hebrews 8:1-3. Herein it is manifest unto angels and men, how glorious a thing it is to be the only king, priest, and prophet of the church. Wherefore, as it behoved Christ, in the discharge of his office, to suffer; so, after his sufferings in the discharge of the same office, he was to enter into his glory, Revelation 1:18.

(3.) God hath respect herein unto those who depart in the faith, in their respective generations, especially those who died betimes, as the apostles and primitive Christians. And sundry things may be herein considered.

[1.] There are two things which believers put a great price and value on in this world, and which sweeten every condition unto them. Without them the world would be a noisome dungeon unto them, nor could they be satisfied with a continuance therein. The one is the service of Christ. Without an opportunity of being exercised herein, they could not abide here with any satisfaction. They who know it not so to be, are under the power of worldly-mindedness. The meanest service of Christ hath refreshment in it. And as to those who have opportunities and abilities for great instances of service, they do not know on just grounds, nor are able to determine themselves, whether it be best for them to continue in their service here below, or to enter into the immediate service of Christ above; — so glorious, so excellent is it to be usefully serviceable unto the Lord Jesus. So was it with the apostle, Php 1:21-26; — so may it be with others, if they serve him in the same spirit, with the same sincerity, though their ability in service be not like unto his. For neither had he anything but what he received. Again, they have the enjoyment of Christ in the ordinances of Gospel worship. By these means do they live, — in these things is the life of their souls. In this state of things God will not call them hence unto their loss; he will not put an end unto these privileges, without an abundant recompense and advantage. Whatever we enjoy here, yet still to depart hence and to be with Christ shall be far better, Php 1:23. For, —

1st, although service here below shall cease, and be given over unto other hands who are to have their share herein; yet, on the continuance of this state of things in heaven, there is also a continuation of service unto Christ, in a way inexpressibly more glorious than what we are in this life capable of. Upon their admittance into this state of things above, they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them, Revelation 7:15. The whole state of the glorious worship of God before described is here respected; and herein is a continual service performed unto him that sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb. Wherefore it is so far from being loss, in being called off from service here below, as that, in point of service itself, it is an inconceivable advancement.

2dly, The enjoyment of Christ in and by the ordinances of his worship, is the immediate fountain and spring of all our refreshments and consolations in this world, Psalms 87:7; but what is it unto the blessed immediate enjoyment of him in heaven! Hence the blessedness of the state above is described, by being with Christ, being with Christ for ever, — in the presence and immediate enjoyment of him. The light of the stars is useful and relieving in a dark night as we are on our way; but what are they when the sun ariseth! Will any man think it a loss that, upon the rising of the sun, they shall not enjoy their light any more, though in the night they knew not what to have done without it? It may be we cannot conceive how it will be best for us to forego the use of sacraments, ministry, and the Scripture itself. But all the virtue of the streams is in the fountain; and the

immediate enjoyment of Christ unspeakably exceeds whatever by any means we can be made partakers of here below. In this blessed state have the holy apostles, all the primitive martyrs and believers, from the time of their dissolution, enjoyed full satisfaction and solace, in the glorious assembly above, Revelation 7:15-17, &c.

[2.] Hereby there is a continuation of communion between the church triumphant above and that yet militant here below. That there is such a communion between glorified saints and believers in this world, is an article of faith. Both societies are but one church, one mystical body, have one Head, and a mutual concernment in each other. Yea, the spring and means of this communion is no small part of the glory of the Gospel. For, — before the saints under the Old Testament had the mystery of the glory of God in Christ, with our redemption thereby, revealed unto them, in the way before declared, — the communion was very obscure; but we are now taken into the light and glory of it, as the apostle declares, Hebrews 12:22-24.

I know some have perverted the notions of the communion unto idolatrous superstition; and so have all other truths of the Gospel been abused and wrested, unto the destruction of the souls of men; — all the Scriptures have been so dealt withal, 2 Peter 3:16. But they deceived themselves in this matter, — the truth deceiveth none. Upon a supposition of communion, they gathered that there must of necessity be an immediate communication between them above and us below. And if so, they knew no way for it, no means of it, but by our praying unto them, and their praying for us. But they were under the power of their own deceivings. Communion doth not require immediate mutual communication, unless it be among persons in the same state, and that in such acts as wherein they are mutually assisting and helpful unto one another. But our different states will admit of no such intercourse; nor do we stand in need of any relief from them, or can be helped by any acts of their love, as we may aid and help one another here below. Wherefore the centre of this communion is in Christ alone and our exercise of it is upon him only, with respect unto them.

Yet hereon some deny that there is any such communion between the members of the church or the mystical body of Christ in these diverse states. And they suppose it is so declared in that of the prophet, Isaiah 63:16, “Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not.” But there is nothing of any such importance in these words. The church, under a deep sense of its present state, in its unworthy walking and multiplied provocations, profess themselves to be such, as that their forefathers in covenant could not own them as their children and posterity in the faith. Hereupon they appeal unto the infinite mercy and faithfulness of God, which extend themselves even unto that condition of unworthiness which was enough to render them utterly disowned by the best of men, however otherwise concerned in them. But to suppose the church above, which hath passed through its course of faith and obedience in afflictions, tribulations, and persecutions, to be ignorant of the state of the church here below in general, and unconcerned in it, — to be without desires of its success, deliverance, and prosperity, unto the glory of Christ, — is to lay them asleep in a senseless state, without the exercise of any grace, or any interest in the glory of God. And if they cry for vengeance on the obdurate persecuting world, Revelation 6:10, shall we suppose they have no consideration nor knowledge of the state of the church suffering the same things which they did themselves? And, to put it out of question, they are minded of it in the next verse by Christ himself, Revelation 6:11. But that which at present I alone intend, is the joint communion of the whole church in the worship of God in Christ. Were all that die in the Lord immediately received into that state wherein God “shall

be all in all," — without any use of the mediation of Christ, or the worship of praise and honour given unto God by him, — without being exercised in the ascription of honour, glory, power, and dominion unto him, on the account of the past and present discharge of his office, — there could be no communion between them and us. But whilst they are in the sanctuary, in the temple of God, in the holy worship of Christ and of God in him, and we are not only employed in the same work, in sacred ordinances suited unto our state and condition, but, in the performance of our duties, do by faith "enter in within the veil," and approach unto the same throne of grace in the most holy place, there is a spiritual communion between them and us. So the apostle expresseth it, Hebrews 12:22-24.

[3.] It is the way that God hath appointed to prepare the holy souls above for the enjoyment of that eternal state which shall ensue at the end of all things. As we are here, in and by the Word and other ordinances, prepared and made meet for the present state of things in glory; so are they, by the temple-worship of heaven, fitted for that state of things when Christ shall give up the kingdom unto the Father, that God may be all in all.

(4.) Respect is had herein unto the faith of the church yet militant on the earth, and that, among others, in two things.

1st, For the encouragement of their faith. God could, as we have observed, upon the supposition of the atonement and reconciliation made by the blood of Christ, have saved the church by mere sovereign act of power. But whereas it was unto his glory that we should be saved in the way of faith and obedience, this way was necessary unto our encouragement therein. For it is in the nature of faith, it is a grace suited unto that end, to seek for and receive aid, help, and relief, from God continually, to enable us unto obedience. For this end the Lord Christ continueth in the discharge of his office, whereby he is able to save us unto the uttermost, that we may receive such supplies by and from him. The continual use that faith makes of Christ unto this purpose, as he gloriously exerciseth his mediatory office and power in heaven, cannot fully be declared. Neither can any believer, who is acted by present Gospel light and grace, conceive how the life of faith can be led or preserved without it. No duties are we called unto, — no temptation are we exercised withal, — no sufferings do we undergo, — no difficulties, dangers, fears, have we to conflict withal, — nothing is there in life or death, wherein the glory of God or our own spiritual welfare is concerned, — but faith finds and takes relief and encouragement in the present mediatory life and power of Christ in heaven, with the exercise of his love, care, and compassion therein. So he proposeth himself unto our faith, Revelation 1:17-18.

2dly, That our faith may be guided and directed in all our accesses unto God in his holy worship. Were nothing proposed unto us but the immensity of the divine essence, we should not know how to make our approaches unto it. And thence it is that those who are unacquainted with the glory of this dispensation, who know not how to make use of Christ in his present state for an access unto God, are always inventing ways of their own (as by saints, angels, images) for that end; for an immediate access unto the divine essence they cannot fancy. Wherefore, to end this discourse in one word, — all the present faith and worship of God in the church here on earth, all access unto him for grace, and all acceptable ascriptions of glory unto his divine majesty, do all of them, in their being and exercise, wholly depend on, and are resolved into, the continuation of the mediatory actings of Christ in heaven and glory.

I shall close this discourse with a little review of somewhat that passed before. From the consideration of that place of the apostle wherein he affirms, that at the end Christ shall give up the kingdom unto the Father, I declared that all the state of things which we have described shall then cease, and all things issue in the immediate enjoyments of God himself. I would extend this no farther than as unto what concerneth the exercise of Christ's mediatory office with respect unto the church here below, and the enemies of it. But there are some things which belong unto the essence of this state which shall continue unto all eternity; as, —

1st, I do believe that the person of Christ, in and by his human nature, shall be for ever the immediate head of the whole glorified creation. God having gathered all things unto a head in him, the knot or centre of that collection shall never be dissolved. We shall never lose our relation unto him, nor he his unto us.

2dly, I do therefore also believe, that he shall be the means and way of communication between God and his glorified saints for ever. What are, what will be, the glorious communications of God unto his saints for ever, in life, light, power, joy, rest, and ineffable satisfaction, (as all must be from him unto eternity,) I shall not now inquire. But this I say, they shall be all made in and through the person of the Son, and the human nature therein. That tabernacle shall never be folded up, never be laid aside as useless. And if it be said, that I cannot declare the way and manner of the eternal communications of God himself unto his saints in glory by Christ; I shall only say, that I cannot declare the way and manner of his communications of himself in grace by Christ unto the souls of men in this world, and yet I do believe it. How much more must we satisfy ourselves with the evidence of faith alone in those things which, as yet, are more incomprehensible. And our adherence unto God, by love and delight, shall always be through Christ. For God will be conceived of unto eternity according to the manifestation that he hath made of himself in him, and no otherwise. This shall not be by acting faith with respect unto the actual exercise of the mediation of Christ, as now we cleave unto God; but it shall be by the all-satisfying acting of love unto God, as he hath manifested himself, and will manifest himself in Christ.

3dly, The person of Christ, and therein his human nature, shall be the eternal object of divine glory, praise, and worship. The life of glory is not a mere state of contemplation. Vision is the principle of it, as faith is of the life of grace. Love is the great vital acting of that principle, in adherence unto God with eternal delight. But this is active in it also. It shall be exercised in the continual ascription and assignation of glory, praise, and honour unto God, and the glorious exercise of all sorts of grace therein; — hereof the Lamb, the person of Christ, is the eternal object with that of the Father and the Spirit; the human nature in the Son, admitted into the communion of the same eternal glory.

## 04A.00. Duties of Christian Fellowship

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Duties of Christian Fellowship by John Owen The text of this module was taken from a PDF created by Monergism ©For more free books like this, and other theological literature, please visit [www.monergism.com](http://www.monergism.com) For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.—1 Peter 2:15.

## 04A.00.2. PREFATORY NOTE

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PREFATORY NOTE THIS little book was published in 1647, soon after Owen had formed a church on the principles of Independency at Coggeshall, in Essex. It is designed to exhibit scriptural rules on the subject of ecclesiastical fellowship and discipline; the first part containing seven rules, on the duties of members of a church to their pastor; and the second fifteen, on their duties to one another. It was prepared by our author after he had adopted Congregational views, but is of such a nature as to be applicable and useful under any form of ecclesiastical polity. Each rule is established by a body of evidence from Scripture, and is followed by a general explanation.

Several editions of this treatise have appeared; and we cannot wonder at its favourable reception with the religious public, for it is as remarkable as any work of our author, for deep piety, sound judgment, lucid arrangement, and a comprehensive knowledge of Scripture, and forms a manual on church-fellowship which is to this day unsurpassed. One feature of it can hardly escape the reader's attention,—Owen is here, for once, a master in the art of condensation.—ED.

### 04A.00.3. TO THE READER

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#### TO THE READER

THERE are, Christian reader, certain principles in church affairs generally consented unto by all men aiming at reformation and the furtherance of the power of godliness therein, however diversified among themselves by singular persuasions, or distinguished by imposed and assumed names and titles. Some of these, though not here mentioned, are the bottom and foundation of this following collection of rules for our walking in the fellowship of the gospel; amongst which these four are the principal:—

First, That particular congregations or assemblies of believers, gathered into one body for a participation of the ordinances of Jesus Christ, under officers of their own, are of divine institution.

Secondly, That every faithful believer is bound, by virtue of positive precepts, to join himself to some such single congregation, having the notes and marks whereby a true church may be known and discerned.

Thirdly, That every man's own voluntary consent and submission to the ordinances of Christ, in that church whereunto he is joined, is required for his union therewith and fellowship therein.

Fourthly, That it is convenient that all believers of one place should join themselves in one congregation, unless, through their being too numerous, they are by common consent distinguished into more; which order cannot be disturbed without danger, strife, emulation, and breach of love.

These principles, evident in the word, clear in themselves, and owned in the main by all pretending to regular church reformation, not liable to any colourable exception from the Scripture or pure antiquity, were supposed and taken for granted at the collection of these ensuing rules. The apostolical direction and precept in such cases is, that "whereunto we have attained, we should walk according to the same rule;" unto whose performance the promise annexed is, that "if any one be otherwise minded, God will also reveal that unto him." The remaining differences about church order and discipline are for continuance so ancient, and by the disputes of men made so involved and intricate, the parties at variance so prejudiced and engaged, that although all things of concernment appear to me, as to others both consenting with me and dissenting from me, clear in the Scriptures, yet I have little hopes of the accomplishment of the promise in revelation, of the truth as yet contested about, in men differently minded, until the obedience of walking suitably and answerably to the same rules agreed on be more sincerely accomplished. This persuasion is the more firmly fixed on me every day, because I see men, for the most part, to spend their strength and time more in the opposing of those things wherein others differ from them than in the practice of those which by themselves and others are owned as of the most necessary concernment. To recall the minds of men, —at least of those who, having not much light to judge of things under debate (especially considering their way of handling in this disputing age), may have yet much heat and love towards the ways of gospel obedience,—from the entanglements of controversies

about church affairs, and to engage them into a serious, humble performance of those duties which are, by the express command of Jesus Christ, incumbent on them in what way of order they walk, are these leaves designed. I shall only add, that though the ensuing rules or directions may be observed, and the duties prescribed performed with much beauty and many advantages by those who are engaged in some reformed church society; yet they are, if not all of them, yet for the most part, such as are to be the constant practice of all Christians in their dairy conversation, though they are not persuaded of the necessity of any such reformation as is pleaded for. And herein I am fully resolved that the practice of any one duty here mentioned, by any one soul before neglected, shall be an abundant recompense for the publishing my name with these papers, savouring so little of those ornaments of art or learning which in things that come to public view men desire to hold out.

## **04A.01. ESHCOL: A CLUSTER OF THE FRUIT OF CANAAN**

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ESHCOL: A CLUSTER OF THE FRUIT OF CANAAN ———

Rules of walking in fellowship, with reference to the pastor or minister that watcheth for our souls.

## 04A.02. RULE I. THE word and all ordinances dispensed in the administration to him ...

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RULE I. THE word and all ordinances dispensed in the administration to him committed, by virtue of ministerial authority, are to be diligently attended and submitted unto, with ready obedience in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 4:1, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." 2 Corinthians 5:18; 2 Corinthians 5:20, "God hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us."

2 Corinthians 4:7, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." See

2 Corinthians 6:1.

Galatians 4:14, "Ye received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus."

2 Thessalonians 3:14, "If any man obey not our word, note that man, and have no company with him."

Hebrews 13:7; Hebrews 13:17, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

EXPLICATION I. There is a twofold power for the dispensing of the word:—1. Δύναμις, or ability; 2. ἐξουσία, or authority. The first, with the attending qualifications, mentioned and recounted 1 Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:6-9, and many other places, is required to be previously in those, as bestowed on them, who are to be called to office of ministration: and may be, in several degrees and measures, in such as are never set apart thereunto, who thereby are warranted to declare the gospel, when called by the providence of God thereunto, Romans 10:14-15; for the work of preaching unto the conversion of souls being a moral duty, comprised under that general precept of doing good unto all, the appointment of some to the performance of that work, by the way of office, doth not enclose it. The second, or authority, proper to them who orderly are set apart thereunto, ariseth from,—

Christ's institution of the office, Ephesians 4:11.

God's providential designation of the persons, Matthew 9:38.

The church's call, election, appointment, acceptation, submission, Galatians 4:14; Acts 14:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Acts 6:3; 2 Corinthians 8:5 : which do not give them dominion over the faith of believers, 2 Corinthians 1:24, nor make them lords over God's heritage, 1 Peter 5:3; but intrust them with a stewardly power in the house of God, 1 Corinthians 4:1-2,—that is, the peculiar

flock over which, in particular, they are made overseers, Acts 20:28. Of whom the word is to be received,—

(1.) As the truth of God; as also from all others speaking according to gospel order in his name.

(2.) As the truth held out with ministerial authority to them in particular, according to the institution of Christ.

Want of a due consideration of these things lies at the bottom of all that negligence, carelessness, sloth, and wantonness in hearing, which have possessed many professors in these days. There is nothing but a respect to the truth and authority of God in the administration of the word that will establish the minds of men in a sober and profitable attending unto it. Neither are men weary of hearing until they are weary of practising.

Motives to the observance of this rule are:—

The name wherein they speak and administer, 2 Corinthians 5:20.

The work which they do, 1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 6:1; 1 Timothy 4:16.

The return that they make, Hebrews 13:17.

The regard that the Lord hath of them in his employment, Matthew 10:40-41; Luke 10:16.

The account that hearers must make of the word dispensed by them, 2 Chronicles 36:15-16; Proverbs 1:22-29; Proverbs 13:13; Luke 10:16; Mark 4:24; Hebrews 2:1-3; Hebrews 4:2.

### **04A.03. RULE II. His conversation is to be observed and diligently followed, so far ...**

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RULE II. His conversation is to be observed and diligently followed, so far as he walks in the steps of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 4:16, "I beseech you, be ye followers of me." Chap. 11:1, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

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."

2 Thessalonians 3:7, "Yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you."

Php 3:17, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."

1 Timothy 4:12, "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

1 Peter 5:3, "Be ensamples to the flock."

EXPLICATION II. That an exemplary conversation was ever required in the dispensers of holy things, both under the Old Testament and New, is apparent. The glorious vestments of the old ministering priests, the soundness and integrity of their person, without maim, imperfection, or blemish, Urim and Thummim, with many other ornaments, though primitively typical of Jesus Christ, yet did not obscurely set out the purity and holiness required in the administrators themselves, Zechariah 3:4. In the New, the shining of their light in all good works, Matthew 5:16, is eminently exacted; and this not only that no offence be taken at the ways of God, and his worship by them administered (as hath fallen out in the Old Testament, 1 Samuel 2:17; and in the New, Php 3:18-19), but also that those who are without may be convinced, 1 Timothy 3:7, and the churches directed in the practice of all the will and mind of God by them revealed, as in the places cited. A pastor's life should be vocal; sermons must be practised as well as preached. Though Noah's workmen built the ark, yet themselves were drowned. God will not accept of the tongue where the devil hath the soul. Jesus did "do and teach," Acts 1:1. If a man teach uprightly and walk crookedly, more will fall down in the night of his life than he built in the day of his doctrine.

Now, as to the completing of the exemplary life of a minister, it is required that the principle of it be that of the life of Christ in him, Galatians 2:20, that when he hath taught others he be not himself "a cast-away," 1 Corinthians 9:27; with which he hath a spiritual understanding, and light given him into the counsel of God, which he is to communicate, 1 John 5:20; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 4:6-7;—and that the course of it be singular, Matthew 5:46, Luke 6:32; where unto so many eminent qualifications of the person and duties of conversation are

required, 1 Timothy 2:2-7, etc., Titus 1:6-9;—and his aim to be exemplar to the glory of God, 1 Timothy 4:12. So is their general course and the end of their faith to be eyed, Hebrews 13:7. And their infirmities, whilst really such, and appearing through the manifold temptations whereunto they are in these days exposed, or imposed on them through the zeal of their adversaries that contend against them, [are] to be covered with love, Galatians 4:13-14. And this men will do when they conscientiously consider that even the lives of their teachers are an ordinance of God, for their relief under temptations, and provocation unto holiness, zeal, meekness, and self-denial.

## **04A.04. RULE III. Prayer and supplications are continually to be made on his behalf for...**

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RULE III. Prayer and supplications are continually to be made on his behalf for assistance and success in the work committed to him.

Ephesians 6:18-20, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador." 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2, "Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men;" 1 Thessalonians 5:25. Colossians 4:3, "Pray also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ;" Hebrews 13:18.

Acts 12:5, "Prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him;" Hebrews 13:7.

EXPLICATION III. The greatness of the work (for which who is sufficient? 2 Corinthians 2:16);—the strength of the opposition which lies against it, 1 Corinthians 16:9; Revelation 12:12; 2 Timothy 4:3-5;—the concernment of men's souls therein, Acts 20:26-28; Hebrews 13:7; 1 Timothy 4:16;—the conviction which is to be brought upon the world thereby, Ezekiel 2:5; 1 Corinthians 1:23-24; 2 Corinthians 3:15-16;—its aim and tendency to the glory of God in Christ,—call aloud for the most effectual daily concurrence of the saints in their supplications for their supportment. That these are to be for assistance, encouragement, abilities, success, deliverance, and protection, is proved in the rule. As their temptations are multiplied, so ought prayers in their behalf. They have many curses of men against them, Jeremiah 15:10;—it is hoped that God hears some prayers for them. When many are not ashamed to revile them in public, some ought to be ashamed not to remember them in private.

Motives:—

The word will doubtless be effectual, when ability for its administration is a return of prayers, Acts 10:1-6.

The minister's failing is the people's punishment, Amos 8:11-12; Isaiah 30:20.

His prayers are continually for the church, Isaiah 62:6-7; Romans 1:9, etc.

That for which he stands in so much need of prayers is the saints' good, and not peculiarly his own. Help him who carries the burden, Ephesians 6:18-20; Php 2:17; Colossians 1:24.

## **04A.05. RULE IV. Reverential estimation of him, with submission unto him for his work's sake.**

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RULE IV. Reverential estimation of him, with submission unto him for his work's sake.

1 Corinthians 4:1, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."

1 Timothy 5:17, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."

1 Peter 5:5, "Submit yourselves unto the elders."

Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves."

EXPLICATION IV. The respect and estimation here required is civil, the motive sacred; whence the honour of the minister is the grace of the church, and the regard to him a gospel duty acceptable to God in Christ, 1 Timothy 5:17. Honour and reverence is due only to eminency in some kind or other. This is given to pastors by their employment; proved by their titles. They are called "angels," Revelation 1:20; Hebrews 12:22;—"bishops," or overseers, Ezekiel 3:17; Acts 20:28; Titus 1:7;—"ambassadors," 2 Corinthians 5:20;—"stewards," 1 Corinthians 4:1;—"men of God," 1 Samuel 2:27; 1 Timothy 6:11;—"rulers," Hebrews 13:7; Hebrews 13:17;—"lights," Matthew 5:14;—"salt," Matthew 5:13;—"fathers," 1 Corinthians 4:15. And by many more such-like terms are they described. If under these notions they honour God as they ought, God will also honour them as he hath promised; and his people are in conscience to esteem them highly for their work's sake. But if any of them be fallen angels, thrown-down stars, negligent bishops, treacherous ambassadors, lordly revelling stewards, tyrannical or foolish rulers, blind guides, unsavoury salt, insatiate dogs, the Lord and his people shall abhor them and cut them off in a month, Zechariah 11:8.

## **04A.06. RULE V. Maintenance for them and their families, by the administration of earthly ...**

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RULE V. Maintenance for them and their families, by the administration of earthly things suitable to the state and condition of the churches, is required from their flocks.

1 Timothy 5:17-18, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward."

Galatians 6:6-7, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

1 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Corinthians 9:9-11; 1 Corinthians 9:13-14, "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? It is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." Matthew 10:9-10, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat."

Add to these and the like places the analogy of the primitive allowance in the church of the Jews.

EXPLICATION V. It is a promise to the church under the gospel, that "kings should be her nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers," Isaiah 49:23. To such it belongs principally to provide food and protection for those committed to them. The fruit of this promise the churches in many ages have enjoyed; laws by supreme and kingly power have been enacted, giving portions and granting privileges to churches and their pastors. It is so in many places in the days wherein we live. On this ground, where equitable and righteous laws have allowed a supportment in earthly things to the pastors of churches, arising from such as may receive spiritual benefit by their labour in the gospel, it is thankfully to be accepted and embraced, as an issue of God's providence for the good of his. Besides, our Saviour warranteth his disciples to take and eat of their things, by their consent, to whomsoever the word is preached, Luke 10:8. But it is not always thus; these things may sometimes fail: wherefore, the continual care, and frequently the burden, or rather labour of love, in providing for the pastors, lies, as in the rule, upon the churches themselves; which they are to do in such a manner as is suitable to the condition wherein they are, and the increase given them of God. This the whole in general, and each member in particular, is obliged unto; for which

they have as motives,—

God's appointment, as in the texts cited.

The necessity of it. How shall he go on warfare if he be troubled about the necessities of this life? They are to give themselves wholly to the work of the ministry, 1 Timothy 4:15.

Other works had need to be done for them.

The equity of the duty. Our Saviour and the apostles plead it out from grounds of equity and justice, and all kinds of laws and rules of righteousness, among all sorts of men, Matthew 10:9-10, 1 Corinthians 9:10; allowing proportionable rectitude in the way of recompense to it with the wages of the labourer, which to detain is a crying sin, James 5:4-5,—the wretched endeavours of men of corrupt minds to rob and spoil them of all that, by the providence of God, on any other account, they are righteously possessed of.

## **04A.07. RULE VI. Adhering to him and abiding by him in all trials and persecutions for the word.**

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RULE VI. Adhering to him and abiding by him in all trials and persecutions for the word.

2 Timothy 4:16, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge."

2 Timothy 1:16-18, "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well."

EXPLICATION VI. A common cause should be carried on by common assistance. That which concerneth all should be supported by all. When persecution ariseth for the word's sake, generally it begins with the leaders, 1 Peter 4:17-18. The common way to scatter the sheep is by smiting the shepherds, Zechariah 13:7-8. It is for the church's sake he is reviled and persecuted, 2 Timothy 2:10, Colossians 1:24; and, therefore, it is the church's duty to share with him and help to bear his burden. All the fault in scattering congregations hath not been in ministers; the people stood not by them in their trial. The Lord lay it not to their charge! The captain is betrayed, and forced to mean conditions with his enemy, who going on, with the assurance of being followed by his soldiers, looking back in the entrance of danger, he finds them all run away. In England, usually, no sooner had persecution laid hold of a minister, but the people willingly received another, perhaps a wolf, instead of a shepherd. Should a wife forsake her husband because he is come into trouble for her sake? When a known duty in such a relation is incumbent upon a man, is the crime of a backslider in spiritual things less? Whilst a pastor lives, if he suffer for the truth, the church cannot desert him, nor cease the performance of all required duties, without horrid contempt of the ordinances of Jesus Christ. This is a burden that is commonly laid on the shoulders of ministers, that for no cause whatsoever they must remove from their charge, when those that lay it on will oftentimes freely leave them and their ministry without any cause at all.

## **04A.08. RULE VII. Gathering together in the assembly upon his appointment, with theirs...**

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RULE VII. Gathering together in the assembly upon his appointment, with theirs joined with him.

Acts 14:27, "When they were come, and had gathered the church together."

These are some of the heads wherein the church's duty consisteth towards him or them that are set over it in the Lord, by all means giving them encouragement to the work; saying also unto them, "Take heed to the ministry ye have received in the Lord, that ye fulfil it," Colossians 4:17. For what concerneth other officers may easily be deduced hence by analogy and proportion.

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Rules to be observed by those who walk in fellowship, and considered, to stir up their remembrance in things of mutual duty one towards another, which consisteth in,—

RULE I. Affectionate, sincere love in all things, without dissimulation towards one another, like that which Christ bare to his church.

John 15:12, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

John 13:34-35, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Romans 13:8, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

Ephesians 5:2, "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us."

1 Thessalonians 3:12, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another."

1 Thessalonians 4:9, "Yourselves are taught of God to love one another."

1 Peter 1:22, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

1 John 4:21, "This commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."

Romans 12:10, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love."

EXPLICATION I. Love is the fountain of all duties towards God and man, Matthew 22:37, the substance of all rules that concerneth the saints, the bond of communion, "the fulfilling of the law," Romans 13:8-10, the advancement of the honour of the Lord Jesus, and the glory of the gospel. The primitive Christians had a proverbial speech, received, as they said, from Christ, "Never

rejoice but when thou seest thy brother in love;" and it was common among the heathens concerning them, "See how they love one another!" from their readiness for the accomplishment of that royal precept of laying down their lives for their brethren. It is the fountain, rule, scope, aim, and fruit of gospel communion. And of no one thing of present performance is the doctrine of the Lord Jesus more eximious and eminent above all other directions than in this of mutual, intense, affectionate love amongst his followers; for which he gives them innumerable precepts, exhortations, and motives, but, above all, his own heavenly example. To treat of love, in its causes, nature, subject, fruits, effects, tendency, eminency, and exaltation, or but to repeat the places of Scripture wherein these things are mentioned, would not suit with our present intention; only, it may be plainly affirmed, that if there were no cause besides of reformation and walking in fellowship but this one,—that thereby the power and practice of this grace, shamefully, to the dishonour of Christ and his gospel, lost amongst those who call themselves Christians, might be recovered,—it were abundantly enough to give encouragement for the undertaking of it, notwithstanding any oppositions. Now, this love is a spiritual grace, wrought by the Holy Ghost, Galatians 5:22, in the hearts of believers, 1 Peter 1:22, whereby their souls are carried out, 1 Thessalonians 2:8, to seek the good of the children of God as such, Philem. 5, Ephesians 1:15, Hebrews 13:1, uniting the heart unto the object so beloved, attended with joy, delight, and complacency in their good. The motives unto love, and the grounds of its enforcement from,—

The command of God, and nature of the whole law, whereof love is the accomplishment, Leviticus 19:34; Matthew 19:19; Romans 13:9-10 :

The eternal, peculiar, distinguishing, faithful love of God towards believers, and the end aimed at therein by him, Ezekiel 16:8; Deuteronomy 7:8; Deuteronomy 33:3; Zephaniah 3:17; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 1:4 :

The intense, inexpressible love of Jesus Christ, in his whole humiliation and laying down his life for us, expressly proposed as an example unto us, Song of Solomon 3:10; John 15:13; Ephesians 5:2 :

The eminent renewed of the old command of love, with such new enforcements that it is called "A new commandment," and is peculiarly the law of Christ, John 13:34; John 15:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 2 John 1:5 :

The state and condition of the persons between whom this duty is naturally to be exercised, as,—(1.) Children of one Father, Malachi 2:10; (2.) Members of one body, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; (3.) Partakers of the same hope, Ephesians 4:4; (4.) Objects of the same hate of the world, 1 John 3:13 :

The eminency of this grace,—(1.) In itself, and divine nature, Col.

2:2; 1 John 4:7; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; (2.) In its usefulness, Proverbs 10:12; Proverbs 15:17; Galatians 5:13; Hebrews 13:1; (3.) In its acceptance with the saints, Ephesians 1:15-16; Psalms 5:11; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 :

The impossibility of performing any other duty without it, Galatians 5:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 John 4:20 :

The great sin of want of love, with all its aggravations, Matthew 24:12; 1 John 3:14-15, and the like;—are so many, and of such various consideration, as not now to be insisted on.

Love, which is the bond of communion, maketh out itself and is peculiarly exercised in these things following:—

RULE II. Continual prayer for the prosperous state of the church, in God's protection towards it.

Psalms 122:6, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee."

Php 1:4-5, "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now."

Romans 1:9, "Without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."

Acts 12:5, "Peter was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."

Isaiah 62:6-7, "Ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

Ephesians 6:18, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Colossians 4:12, "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

EXPLICATION II. Prayer, as it is the great engine whereby to prevail with the Almighty, Isaiah 45:11, so it is the sure refuge of the saints at all times, both in their own behalf, Psalms 61:2, and also of others, Acts 12:5. It is a benefit which the poorest believer may bestow, and the greatest potentate hath no power to refuse. This is the beaten way of the soul's communion with God, for which the saints have many gracious promises of assistance, Zechariah 12:10, Romans 8:26; innumerable precepts for performance, Matthew 7:7, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 1 Timothy 2:8; with encouragements thereunto, James 1:5, Luke 11:9; with precious promises of acceptance, Matthew 21:22, John 16:24, Psalms 50:15;—by all which, and divers other ways, the Lord hath abundantly testified his delight in this sacrifice of his people. Now, as the saints are bound to pray for all men, of what sort soever, 1 Timothy 2:1-2, unless they are such as sin unto death, 1 John 5:16, yea, for their persecutors, Matthew 5:44, and them that hold them in bondage, Jeremiah 29:7, so most especially for all saints, Php 1:4, and peculiarly for those with whom they are in fellowship, Colossians 4:12. The Lord having promised that "upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies" there shall be "a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night," Isaiah 4:5, it is every one's duty to pray for its accomplishment. He is not worthy of the privileges of the church who continues not in prayer for a defence upon that glory. Prayer, then, for the good, prosperity, flourishing, peace, increase, edification, and protection of the church is a duty every day required of all the members thereof.

Estimation of the ordinances; 2. Concernment for God's glory; 3. The honour of Jesus Christ; 4. Our own benefit and spiritual interest; with, 5. The expressness of the command, are sufficient motives hereunto.

RULE III. Earnest striving and contending, in all lawful ways, by doing and suffering, for the purity of the ordinances, honour, liberty, and privileges of the congregation, being jointly assistant against opposers and common adversaries.

Jude 1:3, "And exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

Hebrews 12:3-4, "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

1 John 3:16, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Galatians 5:1; Galatians 5:13, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty."

1 Corinthians 7:23, "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."

Song of Solomon 6:4, "Thou art beautiful, O my love;.... terrible as an army with banners."

1 Peter 3:15, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

EXPLICATION III. The former rule concerned our dealing with God in the behalf of the church; this, our dealing with men. To the right performance hereof many things are required; as,—

Diligent labouring in the word, with fervent prayer, to acquaint ourselves with the mind and will of God concerning the way of worship which we profess, and the rules of walking which we desire to practise, that so we may be able to give an account to humble inquirers, and stop the mouths of stubborn opposers. According to our knowledge, such will be our valuation of the ordinances we enjoy. A man will not contend unless he know his title.

An estimation of all the aspersions cast on and injuries done to the church to be Christ's, and also our own,—Christ wounded through the sides of his servants, and his ways. And if we are of his, though the blow light not immediately on us, we are not without pain; all such reproaches and rebukes fall on us.

Just vindication of the church against calumnies and false imputations. Who can endure to hear his parents in the flesh falsely traduced? and shall we be senseless of her reproaches who bean us unto Christ?

Joint refusal of subjection, with all gospel opposition, to any persons or things which, contrary to or beside the word, under what name soever, do labour for power over the church, to the abridging of it of any of those liberties and privileges which it claimeth as part of the purchase of Christ. To them that would intral us we are not to give place, no not for an hour.

RULE IV. Sedulous care and endeavouring for the preservation of unity, both in particular and in general.

Php 2:1-3, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

Ephesians 4:3-4, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit," etc.

1 Corinthians 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

2 Corinthians 13:11, "Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

Romans 14:19, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

Romans 15:5, "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another," etc.

1 Corinthians 6:5-7, "Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? but brother goeth to law with brother. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you."

Acts 4:32, "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul."

EXPLICATION IV. Union is the main aim and most proper fruit of love; neither is there any thing or duty of the saints in the gospel pressed with more earnestness and vehemency of exhortation than this. Now, unity is threefold: First, Purely spiritual, by the participation of the same Spirit of grace; communication in the same Christ,—one head to all. This we have with all the saints in the world, in what condition soever they be; yea, with those that are departed, sitting down in the kingdom of heaven with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Secondly, Ecclesiastical, or church communion in the participation of ordinances, according to the order of the gospel. This is a fruit and branch of the former; opposed to schism, divisions, rents, evil-surmisings, self-practices, causeless differences in judgment in spiritual things concerning the kingdom of Christ, with whatsoever else goeth off from closeness of affection, oneness of mind, consent in judgment to the form of wholesome words, conformity of practice to the rule. And this is that which in the churches, and among them, is so earnestly pressed, commanded, desired, as the glory of Christ, the honour of the gospel, the joy and crown of the saints. Thirdly, Civil unity, or an agreement in things of this life, not contending with [for?] them nor about them, every one seeking the welfare of each other. Striving is unseemly for brethren. Why should they contend about the world who shall jointly judge the world?

Motives to the preservation of both these are,—

The remarkable earnestness of Christ and his apostles in their prayers for, and precepts of this duty.

The certain dishonour of the Lord Jesus, scandal to the gospel, ruin to the churches, shame and sorrow to the saints, that the neglect of it is accompanied withal, Galatians 5:15.

The gracious issues and sweet heavenly consolation which attendeth a right observance of them.

4 The many fearful aggravations wherewith the sin of rending the body of Christ is attended.

The sad contempt and profanation of ordinances which want of this hath brought upon many churches.

For a right performance of this duty, we must,—

Labour, by prayer and faith, to have our hearts and spirits throughly seasoned with that affectionate love which our first rule requireth.

Carefully observe, in ourselves or others, the first beginnings of strife; which are as the letting out of water, and, if not prevented, will make a breach like the sea.

Sedulously apply ourselves to the removal of the first appearance of divisions; and in case of not prevailing, to consult the church.

Daily to strike at the root of all dissension, by labouring for universal conformity to Jesus Christ.

RULE V. Separation and sequestration from the world and men of the world, with all ways of false worship, until we be apparently a people dwelling alone, not reckoned among the nations.

Numbers 23:9, "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations."

John 15:19, "Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

2 Corinthians 6:14-18, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Ephesians 5:8; Ephesians 5:11, "Walk as children of light. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness."

2 Timothy 3:5, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away."

Hosea 4:15, "Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-aven."

Revelation 18:4, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Proverbs 14:7, "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge."

EXPLICATION V. Separation generally hears ill in the world, and yet there is a separation suitable to the mind of God. He that will not separate from the world and false worship is a separate from Christ

Now, the separation here commanded from any persons is not in respect of natural affections, nor spiritual care for the good of their souls, Romans 9:3; nor yet in respect of duties of relation, 1 Corinthians 7:13; nor yet in offices of love and civil converse, 1 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:12; much less in not seeking their good and prosperity, 1 Timothy 2:1-2, or not communicating good things unto them, Galatians 6:10, or not living profitably and peaceably with them, Romans 12:18 : but in,—1. Manner of walking and conversation, Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:17-19; Ephesians 2:1-22. Delightful converse and familiarity where enmity and opposition appear, Ephesians 5:3-4; Ephesians 5:6-8; Ephesians 5:10-11; Ephesians 3:1-21. In ways of worship and ordinances of fellowship, Revelation 18:4, not running out into the same compass of excess and riot with them in any thing: for these three, and the like commands and discoveries of the will of God, are most express, as in the places annexed to the rule; necessity abundantly urgent, spiritual profit, and edification, no less requiring it. Causeless separation from established churches, walking according to the order of the gospel (though perhaps failing in the practice of some things of small concernment), is no small sin; but separation from the sinful practices, and disorderly walkings, and false unwarranted ways of worship in any, is to fulfil the precept of not partaking in other men's sins. To delight in the company, fellowship, society, and converse of unsavoury, disorderly persons, proclaims a spirit not endeared to Christ.

Let motives hereunto be,—

God's command.

Our own preservation from sin and protection from punishment, that with others we be not infected and plagued.

Christ's delight in the purify of his ordinances.

His distinguishing love to his saints; provided that, in the practice of this rule, abundance of meekness, patience, gentleness, wisdom, and tenderness be exercised. Let no offence be given justly to any.

RULE VI. Frequent spiritual communication for edification, according to gifts received.

Malachi 3:16, "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another; and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name."

Job 2:11, "Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him."

Ephesians 4:29, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

Colossians 4:6, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Ephesians 5:4, "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks."

1 Thessalonians 5:11, "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."

Hebrews 3:13, "Exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Jude 1:20, "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost."

Hebrews 10:24-25, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Acts 18:26, "Whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."

1 Corinthians 12:7, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."

EXPLICATION VI. That men not solemnly called and set apart to the office of public teaching may yet be endued with useful gifts for edification was before declared. The not using of such gifts, in an orderly way, according to the rule and custom of the churches, is to napkin up the talent given to trade and profit withal. That every man ought to labour that he may walk and dwell in knowledge in his family, none doubts. That we should also labour to do so in the church or family of God is no less apparent. This the Scriptures annexed to the rule declare; which in an especial manner hold out prayer, exhortation, instruction from the word, and consolation. Now, the performance of this duty of mutual edification is incumbent on the saints,—

Ordinarily, Ephesians 4:29; Ephesians 5:3-4; Hebrews 3:13. Believers, in their ordinary daily converse, ought to be continually making mention of the Lord, with savoury discourses tending to edification, and not waste their opportunities with foolish, light, frothy speeches that are not convenient.

Occasionally, Luke 24:14; Malachi 3:16. If any thing of weight and concernment to the church be brought forth by Providence, a spiritual improvement of it, by a due consideration amongst believers, is required.

By assembling of more together, by appointment, for prayer and instruction from the word, Acts 10:24; Acts 12:12; Job 2:11; Ephesians 5:19; James 5:16; Jude 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; this being a special ordinance and appointment of God, for the increasing of knowledge, love, charity, experience, and the improving of gifts received, every one contributing to the building of the tabernacle. Let then, all vain communication be far away. The time is short, and the days are evil. Let it suffice us that we have neglected so many precious opportunities of growing in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and doing good to one another; let the remainder of our few and evil days be spent in living to him who died for us. Be not conformed to this world, nor the men

thereof.

RULE VII. Mutually to bear with each other's infirmities, weakness, tenderness, failings, in meekness, patience, pity, and with assistance.

Ephesians 4:32, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Matthew 18:21-22, "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

Mark 11:25-26, "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

Romans 14:13, "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." See Romans 14:3-4.

Romans 15:1-2, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."

1 Corinthians 13:4-7, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity is not rash, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Colossians 3:12-14, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfection."

EXPLICATION VII. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing," Proverbs 25:2. Free pardon is the substance of the gospel, the work of God in perfection, .Isaiah 55:1-13; proposed to us for imitation, Matthew 18:23-35. Whilst we are clothed with flesh we do all things imperfectly. Freedom from failings is a fruit of glory. We see here darkly, as in a glass,—know but in part. In many things we offend all; who knoweth how often? Mutual failings to be borne with, offences to be pardoned, weakness to be supported, may mind us in these pence of the talents forgiven us. Let him that is without fault throw stones at others. Some men rejoice in others' failings; they are malicious, and fail more in that sinful joy than their brethren in that which they rejoice at. Some are angry at weaknesses and infirmities; they are proud and conceited, not considering that they themselves also are in the flesh. Some delight to dwell always upon a frailty; they deserve to find no charity in the like kind. For injuries, who almost can bear until seven times? Peter thought it much. Some more study revenge than pardon. Some pretend to forgive, but yet every slight offence makes a continued alienation of the affections and separation of converse. Some will carry a smooth face over a rough heart Christ is in none of these ways. They have no savour of the

gospel. Meekness, patience, forbearance, and forgiveness, hiding, covering, removing of offences, are the footsteps of Christ. Seest thou thy brother fail? pity him. Doth he continue in it? earnestly pray for him, admonish him. Cannot another sin but you must sin too? If you be angry, vexed, rejoiced, alienated from, you are partner with him in evil, instead of helping him. Suppose thy God should be angry every time thou givest cause, and strike every time thou provokest him. When thy brother offendeth thee, do but stay thy heart until thou takest a faithful view of the patience and forbearance of God towards thee, and then consider his command to thee to go and do likewise. Let, then, all tenderness of affection and bowels of compassion towards one another be put on amongst us, as becometh saints. Let pity, not envy; mercy, not malice; patience, not passion; Christ, not flesh; grace, not nature; pardon, not spite or revenge,—be our guides and companions in our conversations.

Motives hereunto are,—

God's infinite mercy, patience, forbearance, long-suffering, and free grace towards us, sparing, pardoning, pitying, bearing with us, in innumerable daily, hourly failings and provocations; especially all this being proposed for our imitation in our measure, Matthew 18:23-35.

The goodness, unwearied and unchangeable love of the Lord Jesus Christ putting in every day for us, not ceasing to plead in our behalf, notwithstanding our continual backsliding, 1 John 2:1-2.

The experience which our own hearts have of the need wherein we stand of others' patience, forbearance, and pardon, Ecclesiastes 7:20-22.

The strictness of the command, with the threatening attending its non-performance.

The great glory of the gospel, which is in the walking of the brethren with a right foot as to this rule.

## **04A.09. RULE VIII. Tender and affectionate participation with one another in their ...**

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RULE VIII. Tender and affectionate participation with one another in their several states and conditions,—bearing each other's burdens.

Galatians 6:2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Hebrews 13:3, "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body."

1 Corinthians 12:25-26, "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

2 Corinthians 11:29, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?"

James 1:27, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," etc.

Matthew 25:35-36; Matthew 25:40, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

2 Timothy 1:16-17, "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me."

Acts 20:35, "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak," etc.

EXPLICATION VIII. The former rule concerned the carriage and frame of spirit towards our brethren in their failings; this is in their miseries and afflictions. In this, also, conformity to Christ is required, who in all the afflictions of his people is afflicted, Isaiah 63:9, and persecuted in their distresses, Acts 9:4. Could we bring up our spiritual union to hold any proportion with the mutual union of many members in one body, to which it is frequently compared, this duty would be excellently performed. No man ever yet hated his own flesh. If one member be in pain, the rest have little comfort or ease. It is a rotten member which is not affected with the anguish of its companions. They are marked particularly for destruction who, in the midst of plentiful enjoyments, forget the miseries of their brethren, Amos 6:6. If we will not feel the weight of our brethren's afflictions, burdens, and sorrow, it is a righteous thing that our own should be doubled. The desolations of the church make Nehemiah grow pale in the court of a great king, Nehemiah 2:1-3. They who are not concerned in the troubles, sorrows, visitations, wants, poverties, persecutions of the saints, not so far as to pity their wounding, to feel their strokes, to refresh their spirits, help bear

their burdens upon their own shoulders, can never assure themselves that they are united to the Head of those saints. Now, to a right performance of this duty, and in the discharge of it, are required,—

A due valuation, strong desire, and high esteem of the church's prosperity, in every member of it, Psalms 122:6.

Bowels of compassion as a fruit of love; to be sensible of, and intimately moved for, the several burdens of the saints, Colossians 3:12.

Courage and boldness to own them without shame in all conditions, 2 Timothy 1:16-17.

Personal visitations in sicknesses, troubles, and restraints, to advise, comfort, and refresh them, Matthew 25:36.

Suitable supportment, by administration of spiritual or temporal assistances, to the condition wherein they are. The motives are the same as to the former rule.

## **04A.10. RULE IX. Free contribution and communication of temporal things to them that are...**

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RULE IX. Free contribution and communication of temporal things to them that are poor indeed, suitable to their necessities, wants, and afflictions.

1 John 3:17-18, "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

1 Corinthians 16:1-2, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."

2 Corinthians 9:5-7, "Let your gift be ready as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness. He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." So the whole eighth and ninth chapters of this epistle.

Romans 12:13, "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality."

Galatians 6:10, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

1 Timothy 6:17-19, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come."

Hebrews 13:16, "To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

Leviticus 25:35, "If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him."

Matthew 25:34-36; Matthew 25:40, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

EXPLICATION IX. The having of poor always amongst us and of us, according to our Saviour's prediction, Matthew 26:11, and the promise of God, Deuteronomy 15:11, serves for the trial of themselves and others: of their own content with Christ alone, with submission to the all-disposing sovereignty of God; of others, how freely they can part, for Christ's sake, with those things

wherewith their hand is filled. When God gave manna for food unto his people, every one had an equal share: Exodus 16:18, "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack;" 2 Corinthians 8:15. This distribution in equality was again, for the necessity of the church, reduced into practice in the days of the apostles, Acts 4:35. Of the total sum of the possessions of believers, distribution was made to every man according to his need. That every man, by the ordinance and appointment of God, hath a peculiar right to the use and disposal of the earthly things wherewith he his in particular intrusted, is unquestionable. The very precepts for free distribution and communication are enough to prove it. But that these things are altogether given to men for themselves and their own use is denied; friends are to be made of mammon. Christ needs in some what he bestows on others. If he hath given thee thine own and thy brother's portion also to keep, wilt thou be false to thy trust, and defraud thy brother? Christ being rich, became poor for our sakes; if he make us rich, it is that we may feed the poor for his sake. Neither doth this duty lie only (though chiefly) on those who are greatly increased; those who have nothing but their labour should spare out of that for those who cannot work, Ephesians 4:28. The two mites are required as well as accepted. Now, the relief of the poor brethren in the church hath a twofold rule:—

First, Their necessity; Secondly, Others' abilities.

Unto these two must assistance be proportioned, provided that those which are poor walk suitably to their condition, 2 Thessalonians 3:10,

And as we ought to relieve men in their poverty, so we ought by all lawful means to prevent their being poor. To keep a man from falling is an equal mercy to the helping of him up when he is down.

Motives to this duty are:—

The love of God unto us, 1 John 3:16.

The glory of the gospel, exceedingly exalted thereby, Titus 3:8; Titus 3:14; Matthew 5:7.

The union whereinto we are brought in Christ, with the common inheritance promised to us all.

The testimony of the Lord Jesus, witnessing what is done in this kind to be done unto himself, Matthew 25:35-36; Matthew 25:40.

The promise annexed to it, Ecclesiastes 11:1; Proverbs 19:17; Deuteronomy 15:10; Matthew 10:42.

The way whereby it is to be done is by appointing some, Acts 6:1-6, to take what is voluntarily contributed by the brethren, according as God hath blessed them, on the first day of the week, 1 Corinthians 16:2, and to distribute to the necessity of the saints, according to the advice of the church; besides private distributions, wherein we ought to abound, Matthew 6:3; Hebrews 13:16.

## **04A.11. RULE X. To mark diligently and avoid carefully all causes and causers of divisions;...**

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RULE X. To mark diligently and avoid carefully all causes and causers of divisions; especially to shun seducers, false teachers, and broachers of heresies and errors, contrary to the form of wholesome words.

Romans 16:17-18, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For 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."

Matthew 24:4-5; Matthew 24:23-25, "Jesus said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before."

1 Timothy 6:3-5, "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself"

2 Timothy 2:16-17, "Shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker."

Titus 3:9-11, "Avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."

1 John 2:18-19, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

1 John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world,"

2 John 1:10-11, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

Acts 20:29-31, "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch."

Revelation 2:14-16, "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."

EXPLICATION X. The former part of this rule was something spoken to, Rule iv. If the preservation of unity ought to be our aim, then certainly the causes and causers of division ought to be avoided. "From such turn away." There is a generation of men whose tongues seem to be acted by the devil; James calls it, "Set on fire of hell," James 3:6. As though they were the mere offspring of serpents, they delight in nothing but in the fire of contention; disputing, quarrelling, backbiting, endless strivings, are that they live upon. "Note such men, and avoid them." Generally they are men of private interests, fleshly ends, high conceits, and proud spirits. "From such turn away." For the latter part of the rule in particular, concerning seducers, that a judgment of discerning by the Spirit rests in the church and the several members thereof is apparent, 1 John 2:27; 1 Corinthians 2:15; Isaiah 8:20. To the exercise of this duty they are commanded, 1 John 4:1; 1 Corinthians 14:29 : so it is commended, Acts 17:11; and hereunto are they encouraged, Php 1:9-10; Hebrews 5:14. "If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch." That gold may be suspected which would not be tried. Christians must choose the good, and refuse the evil. If their teachers could excuse them if they lead them aside, they might well require blind submission from them. Now, that the brethren may exercise this duty aright, and perform obedience to this rule, it is required,—

That they get their senses exercised in the word, "to discern good and evil," Hebrews 5:14; especially, that they get from the Scripture a "form of sound words," 2 Timothy 1:13, of the main truths of the gospel and fundamental articles of religion; so that, upon the first apprehension of the contrary, they may turn away from him that brings it, and not bid him "God-speed," 2 John 1:10.

That they attend and hearken to nothing but what comes to them in the way of God. Some men, yea, very many in our days, have such itching ears after novelty, that they run greedily after every one that lies in wait to deceive with cunning enticing words, to make out some new pretended revelations; and this from a pretended liberty, yea, duty of trying all things, little considering that God will have his own work done only in his own way. How they come it matters not, so they may be heard. Most of the seducers and false prophets of our days are men apparently out of God's way, leaving their own callings to wander without a call, ordinary or extraordinary,— without providence or promise. For a man to put himself voluntarily, uncalled, upon the hearing of them, is to tempt God; with whom it is just and righteous to deliver them up to the efficacy of error, that they may believe the lies they hear. Attend only, then, to, and try only that which comes in the way of, God. To others bid not God-speed

To be always ready furnished with and to bear in mind the characters which the Holy Ghost hath given us in the word of seducers, which are indeed the very same, whereby poor unstable souls are seduced by them; as,—First, That they should come in "sheep's clothing," Matthew

7:15,—goodly pretences of innocency and holiness. Secondly, With "good words and fair speeches," Romans 16:17-18, smooth as butter and oil. Thirdly, Answering men's lusts in their doctrine, 2 Timothy 4:3,—bringing doctrines suitable to some beloved lusts of men, especially a broad and easy way of salvation. Fourthly, Pretences of glorious discoveries and revelations, Matthew 24:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:2.

Utterly reject and separate from such as have had means of conviction and admonition, Titus 3:10.

Not to receive any without testimony from some of the brethren of known integrity in the churches. Such is the misery of our days, that men will run to hear those that they know not from whence they come, nor what they are. The laudable practice of the first churches, to give testimonials to them that were to pass from one place to another, 1 Corinthians 16:3, and not to receive any without them, Acts 9:26, is quite laid aside.

To walk orderly, not attending to the doctrine of any not known to and approved by the churches.

To remove far away all delight in novelties, disputes, janglings, contentions about words not tending to godliness; which usually are beginnings of fearful apostasies, Titus 3:9; 2 Timothy 4:3; 1 Timothy 2:3-5.

## **04A.12. RULE XI. Cheerfully to undergo the lot and portion of the whole church, in ...**

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RULE XI. Cheerfully to undergo the lot and portion of the whole church, in prosperity and affliction, and not to draw back upon any occasion whatever.

Matthew 13:20-21, "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended."

Hebrews 10:23-25; Hebrews 10:32-39, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

2 Timothy 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:16, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.... At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge."

EXPLICATION XI. Backsliding from the practice of any way of Christ or use of any ordinances, taken up upon conviction of his institution, is in no small degree an apostasy from Christ himself.

Apostasy, in what degree soever, is attended with all that aggravation which a renunciation of a tasted sweetness and goodness from God for transitory things can lay upon it. Seldom it is that backsliders are without pretences. Commonly of what they forsake, in respect of what they pretend to retain, they say, as Lot of Zoar, "Is it not a little one?" But yet we see, without exception, that such things universally tend to more ungodliness. Every unrecovered step backward from any way of Christ maketh a discovery of falseness in the heart, whatever former pretences have been.

They who, from motives of any sort, for things that are seen, which are but temporal, will seek for, or embrace, being presented, colours or pretences for declining from any gospel duty, will not want them for the residue, if they should be tempted thereunto. The beginnings of great evils are to be

resisted. That the neglect of the duty whereof we treat,—which is always accompanied with contempt of the communion of saints,—hath been a main cause of the great dishonour and confusion whereinto most churches in the world are fallen, was in part touched before; it being a righteous thing with God to suffer the sons of men to wax vain in their imaginations, in whom neither the love of Christ nor terror of the Lord can prevail against the fear of men.

Let this, then, with the danger and abomination of backsliding, make such an impression on the hearts of the saints, that with full "purpose of heart they might cleave unto the Lord," and "follow hard after him," in all his ordinances; so that if persecution arise, they may cheerfully "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth;" and, by their close adhering one to another, receive such mutual assistance and supportment, as that their joint prayers may prevail with the goodness of God, and their joint sufferings overcome the wickedness of men.

Now, to a close adhering to the church wherein we walk in fellowship, in all conditions whatsoever, without dismissal attained upon just and equitable grounds, for the embracing of communion in some other churches. Motives are,—

The eminency and excellency of the ordinances enjoyed.

The danger of backsliding, and evidence of unsoundness in every degree thereof.

The scandal, confusion, and disorder of the churches, by neglect thereof.

## **04A.13. RULE XII. In church affairs to make no difference of persons, but to condescend ...**

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RULE XII. In church affairs to make no difference of persons, but to condescend to the meanest persons and services for the use of the brethren.

James 2:1-6, "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor," etc.

Matthew 20:26-27, "It shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

Romans 12:16, "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."

John 13:12-16, "So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him."

EXPLICATION XII. Where the Lord hath not distinguished, neither ought we. In Jesus Christ there is neither rich nor poor, high nor low, but a new creature. Generally, "God hath chosen the poor of this world to confound the mighty."

Experience shows us that not many great, not many wise, not many mighty after the flesh, are partakers of the heavenly calling;—not that the gospel of Christ doth any way oppose or take away those many differences and distinctions among the sons of men, caused by power, authority, relation, enjoyment of earthly blessings, gifts, age, or any other eminency whatsoever, according to the institution and appointment of God, with all that respect, reverence, duty, obedience, and subjection due unto persons in those distinctions, much less pull up the ancient bounds of propriety and interest in earthly things; but only declares, that in things purely spiritual, these outward things, which for the most part happen alike unto all, are of no value or esteem. Men in the church are considered as saints, and not as great or rich. All are equal, all are naked, before God.

Free grace is the only distinguisher,—all being brethren in the same family, servants of the same Master, employed about the same work, acted by the same precious faith, enjoying the same purchased privileges, expecting the same recompense of reward and eternal abode. Whence should any difference arise? Let, then, the greatest account it their greatest honour to perform the meanest necessary service to the meanest of the saints. A community in all spiritual advantages should give equality in spiritual affairs. Not he that is richest, not he that is poorest, but he that is humblest, is accepted before the Lord.

Motives hereunto are,—1. Christ's example; 2. Scripture precepts; 3. God's not accepting persons; 4. Joint participation of the same common faith, hope, etc.; 5. The unprofitableness of all causes of outward differences in the things of God.

## **04A.14. RULE XIII. If any be in distress, persecution, or affliction, the whole church ...**

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RULE XIII. If any be in distress, persecution, or affliction, the whole church is to be humbled, and to be earnest in prayer in their behalf.

Acts 12:5; Acts 12:7; Acts 12:12, "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying."

Romans 12:15, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

1 Corinthians 12:26-27, "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

2 Thessalonians 3:1-2, "Brethren, pray for us, that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men."

EXPLICATION XIII. This duty being in general made out from, and included in, other former rules, we shall need to speak the less unto it, especially seeing that, upon consideration and supposition of our fellow-membership, it is no more than very nature requireth and calleth for. God delighteth as in the thankful praises, so in the fervent prayers of his churches; therefore, he variously calleth them, by several dispensations, to the performance of these duties. Now, this oftentimes, to spare the whole church, he doth by the afflictions of some one or other of the members thereof; knowing that that near relation which, by his institution and Spirit, is between them will make their distress common and their prayers closely combined. Spiritual union is more noble and excellent than natural; and yet in this it were monstrous that either any member in particular, or the whole in general, should not both suffer with and care for the distress of every part and member. That member is rotten and to be cut off, for fear of infecting the body, which feels not the pains of its associates. If, then, any members of the church do lie under the immediate afflicting hand of God or the persecuting rage of man, it is the duty of every fellow-member, and of the church in general, to be sensible of it, and account themselves so sharers therein as to be instant with God by earnest supplication, and helpful to them by suitable assistance, that their spiritual concernment in that affliction may be apparent; and that because,— First, The will of God is thereby fulfilled. Secondly, The glory of the gospel is thereby exalted. Thirdly, Preservation and deliverance to the whole church procured. Fourthly, Conformity with Christ's sufferings in his saints attained. Fifthly, An inestimable benefit of church-fellowship enjoyed, etc.

## **04A.15. RULE XIV. Vigilant watchfulness over each other's conversation, attended with ...**

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RULE XIV. Vigilant watchfulness over each other's conversation, attended with mutual admonition in case of disorderly walking, with rendering an account to the church if the party offending be not prevailed with.

Matthew 18:15-17, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church."

1 Thessalonians 5:14, "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly."

Hebrews 3:12-13, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Hebrews 10:24-25, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Hebrews 12:13; Hebrews 12:15-16, "Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."

Leviticus 19:17, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him."

2 Thessalonians 3:15, "Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

Romans 15:14, "I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."

James 5:19-20, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

Proverbs 29:1, "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

EXPLICATION XIV. There is a threefold duty included in this rule, the main whereof, and here chiefly intended, is that of admonition; whereunto the first is previous and conducing; the latter in some cases consequent, and attending Christians' conversation. Whether you consider the glory of God and the gospel therein concerned, or the bonds of relation, with those mutual endearments wherein they stand engaged, and obligations that are upon them for the general good and spiritual

edification one of another, this duty is of eminent necessity and usefulness. Not that we should curiously pry into one another's failings, much less maliciously search into doubtful unknown things, for the trouble or disparagement of our brethren, both which are contrary to that love which "thinketh no evil," but "hideth a multitude of sins;" but only, out of a sense of the glory of God, the honour of the gospel, and care of each other's souls, we are to observe their walking, that what is exemplary therein may be followed, what faileth may be directed, what is amiss may be reprov'd, that in all things God may be glorified and Christ exalted.

Now, admonition is twofold:—1. Authoritative, by the way of power;

Fraternal, by the way of love. The first, again, is twofold:—(1.) Doctrinal, by the way of teaching; (2.) Disciplinary, which belongeth to the whole church. Of these we do not treat. The latter, also, is twofold:—hortatory, to encourage unto good; and monitory, to reprove that which is amiss. It is this last which is peculiarly aimed at and intended in the rule. This, then, we assert as the duty of every church member towards them with whom he walks in fellowship, to admonish any from the word whom he perceives not walking in any thing with a right foot, as becometh the gospel; thereby to recover his soul to the right way. That much caution and wisdom, tenderness and moderation, is required in the persons performing this duty, for want whereof it often degenerates from a peaceable remedy of evil into fuel for strife and debate, is granted. Let them, then, who are called to perform this duty diligently consider these things: 1. That in the whole action he transgress not that rule of charity which we have, 1 Corinthians 13:7, Galatians 6:2. Let him have peace at home, by an assurance of constant labouring to cast out all beams and motes from his own eye, Matthew 7:5. 3. Let him so perform it that it may evidently appear that he hath no other aim but the glory of God and the good of his brother reprov'd, all envy and rejoicing in evil being far away. 4. Let him be sure to draw his admonitions from the word, that the authority of God may appear therein, and without the word let him not presume to speak. 5. Let all circumstances attending time, place, persons, and the like, be duly weigh'd, that all provocation in the least manner may be fully avoided. 6. Let it be considered as an ordinance whereunto Christ hath an especial regard. 7. Let him carefully distinguish between personal injuries unto himself,—whose mention must have far more of forgiveness than reproof,—and other offences tending to public scandal. Lastly, Let self-examination concerning the same or the like miscarriage always accompany the brotherly admonition.

These and the like things being duly weigh'd, let every brother, with Christian courage, admonish from the word every one whom he judgeth to walk disorderly in any particular whatsoever, not to suffer sin upon him, being ready to receive content and satisfaction upon just defence, or promised amendment; and without this, in case of just offence, a man cannot be freed from the guilt of other men's sins. Let also the person admonish'd, with all Christian patience, accept of the admonition, without any more regret of spirit than he would have against him who should break the weapon wherewith he was in danger to be slain; considering,—

The authority of Him who hath appointed it;

The privilege and mercy he enjoyeth by such a spiritual prevention of such a danger or out of such an evil, which perhaps himself did not discern;

The dreadful judgments which are everywhere threatened to despisers of reproofs, Proverbs 29:1; and so thankfully accept just admonition from the meanest in the congregation.

For the last, or repairing unto the church in case of not prevailing by private admonition, our Saviour hath so plainly laid down both the manner and end of proceeding in Matthew 18:15-17, that it needeth no explanation. Only I shall observe, that by "church" there, Matthew 18:17, cannot be understood the elders of the church alone, but rather the whole congregation; for if the offended brother should take with him two or three of the elders unto the offender, as he may, then were they the church, and the church should be told of the offence before the reproof hath been managed by two or three; which is contrary to the rule.

## **04A.16. RULE XV. Exemplary walking in all holiness and godliness of conversation, to the ...**

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RULE XV. Exemplary walking in all holiness and godliness of conversation, to the glory of the gospel, edification of the church, and conviction of them which are without.

Psalms 24:3-4, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

Matthew 5:16; Matthew 5:20, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 21:19, "When he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever," etc.

2 Corinthians 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

2 Timothy 2:19, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Titus 2:11-12; Titus 2:14, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.... Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Ephesians 4:21-23, "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind." 1 Peter 3:1-2, "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 fears." Hebrews 12:14, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Ephesians 5:15-16, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." 2 Samuel 12:14, "Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."

EXPLICATION XV. Holiness becometh the house of the Lord for ever; without it none shall see God. Christ died to wash his church, to present it before his Father without spot or blemish; to purchase unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. It is the kingdom of God within us, and by which it appeareth unto all that we are the children of the kingdom. Let this, then, be the great discriminating character of the church from the world, that they are a holy, humble, self-denying people. Our Master is holy; his doctrine and worship are holy: let us strive that our

hearts may also be holy. This is our wisdom towards them that are without, whereby they may be guided or convinced; this is the means whereby we build up one another most effectually. Examples are a sharper way of instruction than precepts. Loose walking, causing the name of God to be blasphemed, the little ones of Christ to be offended, and his enemies to rejoice, is attended with most dreadful woes. O that all who are called to a holy profession, and do enjoy holy ordinances, did shine also in holiness of conversation, that those who accuse them as evil-doers might have their mouths stopped and their hearts filled with shame, to the glory of the gospel! To this general head belongeth wise walking, in all patience, meekness, and long-suffering towards those that are without, until they evidently appear to be fighters against God, when they are to be prayed for. Hither, also, might be referred the patience of the saints in all tribulations, sufferings, and persecutions for the name of Christ.

Motives for the exercise of universal holiness, in acts internal and external, private and public, personal and of all relations, are,—

The utter insufficiency of the most precious ordinances for any communion with God without it.

The miserable issue of deceived souls, with their barren, empty, fruitless faith.

The glory of the gospel, when the power thereof hath an evident impression on the hearts, thoughts, words, actions, and lives of professors.

Scandal of the gospel, the advantage of its adversaries, the shame of the church, and fierce wrath of God, following the unsuitable walking of professors.

The sweet reward which the practice of holiness bringeth along with it even in this life, with that eternal weight of glory where unto it leadeth hereafter;—unto which the holy Son of God bring us all, through the sprinkling of his most holy blood!

And these are some of those rules whose practice is required from the persons, and adorneth the profession, of those who have obtained this grace, to walk together in fellowship, according to the rule of the gospel; towards others also ought they, with several limitations, and in the full latitude towards the brethren of the congregations in communion with them, to be observed.

## 05.00. Gospel grounds and evidences if the faith of God's elect

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Gospel grounds and evidences of the faith of God's elect

by

John Owen

(1616-1683) showing

I. The nature of true saving faith, in securing of the spiritual comfort of believers in this life, is of the highest importance.

II. The way wherein true faith does evidence itself in the souls and consciences of believers, unto their supportment and comfort, under all their conflicts with sin, in all their trials and temptations.

III. Faith will evidence itself by a diligent, constant endeavour to keep itself and all grace in due exercise, in all ordinances of divine worship, private and public.

IV. A peculiar way whereby true faith will evidence itself, by bringing the soul into a state of repentance.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” — 2 Corinthians 13:5

## 05.00a. Prefatory note

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**Prefatory note** This treatise, entitled “Gospel Grounds and Evidences of the Faith of God’s Elect,” was given to the world in 1695. The remainder of the title is scarcely applicable as a correct designation of the leading divisions of the work, and may, perhaps, have been added by those who had the charge of publishing it. In the preface by Isaac Chauncey, the reader is assured that the treatise is the production of Dr Owen. It bears internal evidence of the fact, and that he wrote it, with a view to publication. When he waives the formal discussion of some topics connected with his subject, on the ground that he had attempted the discussion of them “in other writings,” it seems a just inference that it had been his intention to publish the treatise, though no explanation has transpired why it was withheld from the press for a period of twelve years after his death. The circumstance is of some moment, as showing that the work, though posthumous, may be held to contain the deliberate and matured judgement of the author on the question of which it treats. His object is not to illustrate the common evidences of genuine religion, or the grounds on which we may conclude a man to be sincere in his religious profession. It is an inquiry rather into the evidences on which the elect of God, in any process of self-scrutiny, may ascertain the reality of their own faith. Ascribing to faith all the importance which is due to it as the instrumental cause of justification, the author suspends the entire question of the genuineness of conversion upon the existence of a fourfold development or operation of that gracious principle in the hearts of all who may be anxious to discover whether they have been really quickened and born of God.

After stating the nature of saving faith, and after a brief exhibition of the gospel as the divine method for the salvation of sinners through the merits of Christ, he proceeds to “the trial of faith,” as the main object of the treatise. In the first place, he shows that faith, if genuine, includes or denotes implicit approbation of “God’s way of saving sinners,” in opposition to all schemes of merely human invention for our spiritual deliverance. This approbation of the divine plan for our redemption, in which he holds that the very essence and life of faith consist, is founded on the conviction, — first, That the salvation revealed in the gospel is in harmony with the perfections and majesty of the divine character; secondly, That it is suited to the views, desires, and aspirations of a soul enlightened by grace; and, thirdly, That it as effectually honours the moral law as if it had been completely fulfilled in the personal obedience of the saints.

Secondly, Faith is shown to imply an approbation of the will of God in requiring of us holiness and obedience, to the full measure of the perfection and spirituality demanded of us in the moral law. He appeals, in illustration of the obedience required, to the light of nature, and to the knowledge of good and evil which men enjoy through the law; but proves that without the light of saving faith there can be no adequate conception of the holiness required by the divine will, urging an acute distinction, which might rank as a separate contribution to the doctrine of conscience, and according to which its authority in determining the moral character of an action by no means implies the love of what is good, and the hatred of what is evil. The function of conscience he views is exclusively judicial, and shows that the motive which prompts to action must spring from other considerations. Two grounds are assigned on which faith approves of the holiness required

of us:— the consistency of such a demand with the perfection of the divine nature; and its fitness, when full compliance is yielded with it, to advance us to the utmost perfection of which our own nature is capable.

Thirdly, Evidence of genuine faith is also afforded when the mind endeavours to keep itself in the due exercise of the grace of faith, in the public and private ordinances of divine worship. If faith is not cultivated in the worship of God, all devotion is corrupted into the empty forms of superstition, as in the ritual of Popery; or becomes the mere wildfire of fanaticism, or degenerates into the rationalism which ignores all worship instituted by the authority of revelation. Judicious directions follow as to the best method of preserving faith in vivid exercise while we are engaged in the various acts of devotion.

Fourthly, The last evidence specified of true faith is the evangelical repentance which it produces. Weanedness from the world, the lively remembrance of sin, a becoming intensity of godly sorrow on account of it, and other spiritual duties, are described as essential elements in the penitential feelings and exercises of those who really believe unto salvation. The treatise indicates an acquaintance with the true philosophy of human nature, thorough knowledge of the world, and of man individually, as he takes the hue of his character from surrounding objects and social influences, and that depth of Christian experience in which our author has perhaps been rarely excelled. He shines in the anatomy of human motives; and while he goes deeply into the subjective workings of faith, he is always keenly alive to the objective realities of evangelical truth. The Christian reader will find this treatise an admirable manual for self-examination. — Ed.

## 05.00b. To the reader

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To the reader As faith is the first vital act that every true Christian puts forth, and the life which he lives is by the faith of the Son of God, so it is his next and great concern to know that he does believe, and that believing he has eternal life; that his faith is the faith of God's elect, and of the operation of God: without some distinct believing knowledge of which he cannot so comfortably assure his heart before God concerning his calling and election, so far as to carry him forth in all the ways of holiness, in doing and suffering the will of God with necessary resolution and cheerfulness; the doing of which in a right manner, according to the tenor of the gospel, is no small part of spiritual skill; whereunto two things are highly requisite: first, That he be well acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, and know how to distinguish the gospel from the law; and, secondly, That he be very conversant with his own heart, that so by comparing his faith, and the fruits thereof, with the said doctrine of Christ, he may come to see that, as he has received Christ, so he walks in him: all his reasonings concerning himself being taken up from the word of God, so that what judgment he passes upon himself may be a judgment of faith, and answer of a good conscience towards God; for all the trials of faith must at last be resolved into a judgment of faith, before which is made, the soul still labours under staggerings and uncertainties. The design of this ensuing treatise is to resolve this great question, whether the faith we profess unto be true or no? — the resolution of which, upon an impartial inquiry, must needs be very grateful and advantageous to every one that has but tasted that the Lord is gracious. That the late reverend, learned, and pious Dr Owen was the author there needs be no doubt; not only because good assurance is given by such as were intrusted with his writings, but also in that the style and spirit running through the other of his practical writings is here very manifest; and, accordingly, with them is recommended to the serious perusal of every diligent inquirer into the truth of his spiritual estate and condition.

Isaac Chauncey [1]

[1] Isaac Chauncey, M.A. and M.D., was pastor of Bury Street congregation, London, from 1687 to 1702. It was the congregation of which Dr Owen had the charge in 1683, when he died. Dr Chauncey was the son of Mr Chauncey, President of Harvard College, New England, and had been ejected from the living of Woodborough, Wiltshire, at the time of the Restoration. On demitting the charge of his congregation in 1687, he was succeeded by the celebrated Dr I. Watts. He was subsequently appointed tutor to a new academical institution at Homerton, London, — the same institution which has acquired wide-spread celebrity under the able and honoured presidency of the Rev. John Pye Smith, D.D. — Ed.

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