

# The Success of the Gospel by the Divine Power Upon the Souls of Men

by Samuel Davies

---

*The gospel is a powerful tool used by God to bring about a peace between God and humanity, and to reduce rebels to their duty.*

**Scripture:** Judges 3:20, Matthew 11:28, Acts 9:6, Romans 6:16, Romans 6:22, 2 Corinthians 5:20, 2 Corinthians 10:4, Ephesians 6:12, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8

**Topics:** "Divine Power", "Gospel Conversion"

---

## Description

Samuel Davies preaches about the success of the gospel by the divine power upon the souls of men, emphasizing the ongoing war between Jesus Christ and the rebellious sons of men. He describes the apostolic powers as spiritual weapons used to propagate Christianity and reduce the world into obedience to the gospel. Davies explains the various ways sinners fortify themselves against the gospel's attempts to subdue them, highlighting the need for surrender and submission to Christ. He concludes by detailing the state and conduct of a true convert, urging the congregation to examine their hearts and choose to be reconciled to God.

---

## Transcript

The Success of the Gospel by the

Divine Power upon the Souls of Men

by Samuel Davies, Hanover, Virginia, October 17, 1756.

"The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ!" 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

This restless world is now in an unusual ferment; kingdom rising up against kingdom, and nation against nation; armories filling, weapons glistening, cannons roaring, and human blood streaming, both by sea and land. These things engross the thoughts and conversation of mankind, and alarm their fears and anxieties.

But there is another kind of war carrying on in the world; a war, the outcome of which is of infinitely greater importance; a war of nearly six thousand years standing; that is, ever since the first grand rebellion of mankind against God; a war in which we are all engaged as parties, and in the result of which our immortal interest is concerned; though, alas! it engages but little of the attention and solicitude of the generality among us; I mean, the war which Jesus Christ has been carrying on from age to age by the ministry of the gospel--to reduce the rebellious sons of men to their duty, and redeem them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, from their wretched captivity to sin and Satan!

This is the design in which the apostles were embarked, and which Paul describes in the military style in my text. As some members of the Corinthian church had taken up a very low opinion of Paul, his design in the context is to raise the dignity of his apostolic office. And for that purpose, he describes in military language the efficacy and success of those apostolic powers with which he was furnished for the propagation of Christianity, and the reduction of the world into obedience to the gospel.

These powers he here calls weapons of war. This tent-maker and a few fishermen were sent out upon a grand expedition, in opposition to the united powers of Jews and Gentiles, of earth and hell. All the world, with their false gods, were ready to join against them. They were ready to oppose them with all the force of philosophy, learning, authority, threatenings, and all the cruel forms of persecution. For the Christian cause in which these soldiers of Jesus Christ were engaged, was contrary to their lusts and prejudices, their honor and secular interests. This opposition of the world to the gospel, the apostle also describes in the military style. Their lusts, prejudices, and interests, their vain imaginations and false reasonings, are so many strongholds and high castles in which they, as it were, fortify and entrench themselves. These they hold and garrison under the prince of darkness: in these they stand out in their rebellion against heaven, and fight against God, against his gospel, and against their own consciences.

And with what weapons did the apostles attack these rebels in their strongholds? Not with carnal weapons, such as the heroes and conquerors of the world are accustomed to use--but with weapons of a spiritual nature, the preaching of the doctrine of the cross, the force of evidence and conviction, the purity of their doctrines and lives, the terrors of the Lord, and the all-conquering love of a dying Savior! With these weapons they encountered the allied powers of men and devils; with these they propagated the religion of their Master; and not with the sword, like Mohammed; or with the bloody artillery of persecution, like the church of Rome; or by the canon, like the tyrants of France.

What unpromising weapons were these! To what avail is the light of evidence--in a world that loves darkness rather than light, and where lust, prejudice, and self-interest generally prevail against truth and reason? Is the contemptible weapon of the cross--likely to conquer? Are the unpopular, mortifying doctrines of one who was crucified like a malefactor and a slave--likely to prevail against all the prejudices of education; and the attachment of mankind to the religion of antiquity, established by law; and the policy of priestcraft; and the love of gain; and the powers of the world; and the various oppositions of the depraved hearts of mankind?

Are such gentle and weak weapons as these--likely to have any success? Yes, these weapons, though not carnal, were mighty, resistless, all-conquering--but then you must observe, they were mighty through God. The excellency of the power was of God, and such unpromising weapons were used on purpose to show this. It was God who gave edge to the weapons, and force to the blow. Without the energy of his grace, they could have done nothing, even in the hands of apostles. But, by the might of his Spirit, they became almighty, and carried all before them! These contemptible weapons, with his concurrence, pulled

down strongholds; cast down towering imaginations, and human reasonings that seemed impregnable, and demolished every high thing, every battery, castle, or citadel, that was erected against the knowledge of God--that knowledge of him which the gospel brought to light; and reduced every thought into captivity, to the obedience of Christ!

Sinners were brought not only to compliment Jesus with a bended knee, and profess subjection to him with their lips--but to bow their stubborn hearts to him, and let him reign in their affections. That gospel to which they were so averse--gained a complete victory over their minds; their minds, which the Alexanders and Caesars of the world could not subdue; and reduced not only their external conduct--but their thoughts; not only some thoughts--but every thought, to the obedience of Christ! When God gives the commission, the mighty walls of Jericho fall flat, even at the feeble sound of rams' horns.

To bring into captivity, is generally understood in a bad sense, and signifies the carrying away of loyal subjects against their wills, into a foreign country, and there enslaving them to the enemy. But here it signifies the deliverance of sinners from the slavery of sin and Satan, and their restoration into a state of liberty, into favor with God, and this too by their own free consent. And it is called a captivating, to intimate, that, though when the sinner submits--he does it voluntarily--yet he had really made a strong resistance, and did not submit until sweetly constrained to it; and that he looked upon his state of slavery to sin--as a state of freedom, and was as unwilling to leave it as a free-born subject would be to be captivated and enslaved in an enemy's country.

I foresee I cannot take time to do justice to this copious subject. But I shall endeavor to compress my thoughts in as little space as possible, in a few propositions, to which each head in my text may be reduced. And the whole will be but a short history:

1. of the revolt of mankind against the great God, their rightful Sovereign; and of their miserable slavery to sin and Satan;
2. of an important expedition carried on by the ministry of the gospel, to recover them from their state of slavery, and reduce them to their obedience;
3. of their various methods of opposition to this design; or the various ways in which they fortify themselves against the attacks made upon them by divine grace for this end;
4. of the outcome of this siege, particularly the terms of surrender;
5. and their consequent deliverance from the dominion of sin and Satan, and their willing subjection to their rightful Lord and Proprietor.

I. All mankind, in their present state of apostasy, have revolted from God, and surrendered themselves as slaves to sin and Satan.

We might produce abundant evidence of this from the sacred writings; but as the evidence from plain undeniable fact may be more convicting, I shall insist chiefly upon it. Mankind are secretly rebellious to God and his government in their hearts; and hence they do not take pleasure in his service. They are not solicitous for the honor and dignity of his government. They will not bear the restraints of his authority, nor regard his law as the rule of their conduct--but will follow their own inclinations, let him prescribe what he will.

Nay, they have no disposition to return to their duty, or listen to proposals for reconciliation; and hence they disregard the gospel (which is a scheme to bring about a peace) as well as the law. In short, they will not do anything that God commands them--unless it suits their own corrupt inclinations; and they will not abstain from anything which he forbids, for his sake--if they have any temptation to it from their own lusts. These things, and a thousand more which might be mentioned, fix the charge of rebellion upon them. It is undeniable, they are mutinous to his government in their hearts, whatever forced or complimentary expressions of loyalty some of them may at times give him. Look into your own hearts, and take a view of the world around you--and you will find this is evidently the case.

But though they are thus disobedient to their rightful Sovereign--yet to sin and Satan, those usurping and tyrannical masters, they are the most willing and submissive slaves. For these, they will go through the most sordid drudgery, for no other wages than death and damnation. For these, they will give up their most important interests, and exchange their souls, and their share in heaven, without any compensation--but the sorry, transitory pleasures of sin! Let temptation but beckon--and they immediately see the signal, and obey. Let sin command them to hurt their souls and bodies, and perhaps their estates, with excessive drinking--and the poor slaves comply. Let sin order them to swear, to lie, to defraud--and they submit, though eternal damnation be the consequence! Let sin order them to pursue riches, honor, or sensual pleasures, at the loss of their ease, the danger of their lives, and the destruction of their souls--and they engage in the drudgery, and toil all their days in it! Let sin forbid them to serve God, to attend seriously to his Word, to pray to him, to reflect upon their miserable condition, to repent and believe the gospel; let sin but lay them under a prohibition to those things--and they will cautiously refrain from them! And all the arguments which God and man can use with them--will have little or no weight!

In short, let sin but order them to give up their interest in heaven, and run the risk of eternal ruin; let sin but command them to neglect and disregard the God who made them, and the Savior that died for them--and they will venture upon the self-denying and destructive enterprise! They will do more for sin than they will do for the great God, their rightful Sovereign and constant Benefactor! Sin has more influence with them--than all the persuasions of parents, ministers, and their best friends; nay, more influence than the love, the dying groans and agonies of a crucified Savior!

There is nothing so sacred, so dear or valuable in heaven--but they will give it up--if sin requires them! There is nothing so terrible in hell--but they will rush into it, if sin sets them upon the desperate attempt. They are the most tame, unresisting captives to sin. Sin is an arbitrary, absolute, despotic tyrant over them! And, which is most astonishing, they are not weary of its tyranny, nor do they strive and struggle for liberty. Liberty to them has lost its charms, and they hug their chains--and love their bondage.

Alas! are there not many free-born Britons in this assembly, who are slaves in this sense? Slaves in a worse sense than the poorest negro among us? Slaves to sin--and consequently to Satan; for sin is commander-in-chief under the prince of darkness, the evil god of this world! It is by sin, as his deputy, that Satan exercises his power--and therefore sinners are in reality slaves to him! This, one would think, would be a shocking reflection to them, that they are slaves of the most malignant being in the universe; a being not only malignant--but also very powerful; that they have broken off from the kind and equitable government of the Sovereign of the universe--and sold themselves slaves to such a lawless, tyrannical usurper! But, alas! they do not resent the usurpation, nor struggle to throw off the yoke, and regain their liberty. They resign themselves as voluntary slaves to Satan, and love their master and his drudgery.

This is a very melancholy indeed--but, alas! it is a true history of human nature in its present state. Thus are mankind in rebellion to the divine government, and held in a wretched captivity to sin and Satan! This is indeed a very dismal and threatening state, and we might tremble for the consequences, had we no gospel to inform us of a plan of reconciliation.

Here I may borrow the words Mr. Howe: "When we hear of a sort of creatures that were fallen away from God, and gone into rebellion against him; that were alienated and enemies to him in their minds, by wicked works; we would be in suspense, and say: 'Well, and what became of them? What was the outcome of their rebellion?' And we would expect to hear, 'Why, fire came down from heaven upon them, and consumed them in a moment; or the earth opened and swallowed them up!' Yes, and if the matter were so reported to us, if we did hear that fire and brimstone, flames and thunder-bolts came down instantly upon them, and destroyed them in a moment, who would not say, 'So I thought; who could expect better treatment?'"

But what grateful astonishment may it raise in heaven and earth to hear that their offended Sovereign has been so far from this, that he has sent his Son--his only Son, to die for them, in order to bring about a peace! and that,

II. He has set on foot an important expedition, and is carrying it on from age to age by the ministry of the gospel, to recover these rebels from their voluntary slavery to sin and Satan, and reduce them to their duty, and so bring them into a state of liberty and happiness!

This is the benevolent design on which the Son of God came down from his native heaven, and for which he endured the shame and the agonies of the cross. This is the design on which he set out his apostles into the world--armed, not with instruments of war and destruction--but with the most beneficent powers, powers of doing good, the powers of preaching the most important doctrines, of proving them by argument--to bring them to repentance. To carry on this design, the ministry of the gospel is perpetuated in the world from age to age; and for this purpose, my dear people, I would exercise my ministry among you. I would make an attack upon your hearts--to break them open for the admission of the King of heaven. I have continued the siege against the stubborn Trojans for nearly ten years! And now, in the name of God, I once more would renew the attack, and summon you to capitulate and surrender.

For this purpose the ministers of the gospel have their weapons; they begin the attack with the artillery of the divine LAW, which thunders the terrors of the Lord against you. They surround you with troops of arguments, which one would think would soon overpower a reasonable creature, and constrain him immediately to submit. They reason the matter with you, and lay before you the wickedness, the baseness, the unnatural ingratitude, and the dangerous consequences of your rebellion against God. They inform you what a good king and what an excellent government you have rejected; what holy, just, and good laws you have insolently broken; what rich mercies you have ungratefully abused; what long-continued patience you have provoked; and what friendly warnings you have despised.

They expose to your view the terrible consequences of your rebellion, if you persist in it; they honestly warn you that the wages of sin is death; death in all its terrible forms; death temporal, spiritual, and eternal! They solemnly admonish you--that if you continue your losing battle against God, that it will issue in your eternal, remediless destruction! They open to you the corruption of your natures; the aversion of your hearts to all that is spiritually good and excellent: your innate propensities to sin, and voluntary indulgence of your lusts and guilty pleasures. They put you upon a review of your lives, to recollect your

willful omissions of duty to God and man, and your commissions of known sin, in spite of the restraints of divine authority, the allurements of divine mercy, and the admonitions of your own consciences.

When they have thus discharged the dreadful artillery of the law, the thunders and lightnings of Sinai against you--the way is prepared for proposing the terms of surrender and articles of reconciliation. They make an attack upon the citadel of your heart, with the gentler weapons from the armory of the gospel of peace. They represent your injured Sovereign as reconcilable, reconcilable through Jesus Christ. They give you the strongest assurances from his own Word, that he is willing to make a lasting peace with you; that upon your laying down your weapons (that is, forsaking your sins and submitting upon his terms,) he will freely pardon all your past rebellion, and receive you again into his favor.

They also inform you of the strange method in which this peace may be brought about, consistently with the honor of his character as the Ruler of the world, and with the sacred rights of his government; and that is, through the mediation of his Son, the great Peace-maker, who, in your stead, has obeyed that law--which you have broken, and endured that penalty--which you have incurred. They likewise inform you in what manner you are to accede to this treaty, or consent to this plan of peace, namely, by believing in his Son--and thereby receiving every blessing as his free gift through Jesus Christ--by a deep, sincere repentance for your past rebellion, and by devoting yourselves to his service for the future.

These overtures of reconciliation, they enforce from various arguments, which, one would think, you would not be able to resist. They represent to you the riches of divine grace and mercy, and the all-conquering love of Jesus. That contemptible weapon, the cross, has broken many a hard heart; and subdued many an obstinate rebel!

They beseech you, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God; and if you should be obstinate enough to refuse such a request, they urge it with arguments drawn from its reasonableness in justice and gratitude, from its being of the greatest importance to your happiness, as being the only way in which apostate creatures can obtain the favor of their injured Sovereign! They also reason from the terrible consequences of a refusal; for unless you submit upon these terms, you may expect nothing but wrath and fiery indignation, which shall devour you as God's adversaries!

You cannot but know, my brethren, that the ministry of the gospel has, with such weapons as these, laid close siege to your hearts, year after year. And who would have thought that one heart among you would have been armored against this divine artillery, and stood it out so long? Some of you, I doubt not, have surrendered, and are now the willing subjects of your heavenly King. But, alas! do not some of you still obstinately refuse to submit, and persist in your rebellion? And are you not fortifying yourselves more and more against the attempts made to reduce you to obedience? This naturally leads me,

III. To give you a history of some of the various ways in which sinners oppose this benevolent design of the ministry of the gospel, to subdue them to the obedience of Christ.

Alas! these rebels also have their artillery, with which they labor to repel all the attacks made upon them by the gospel. They, as it were, throw up various lines of entrenchments around them, to defend them against conviction. Particularly,

Sinners hide themselves in the darkness of ignorance; ignorance of God, of Jesus Christ, of the law and gospel, and consequently of themselves! They endeavor to keep up their courage--by refusing to know their danger! They muffle themselves up in ignorance, so that they do not see their almighty enemy, nor

the instruments of death he has prepared for them. And hence they are so stupid as to conclude that God neither sees them, nor can he bring them to justice!

They also fortify themselves, as it were, in the enclosure of a hard heart; a heart of rock and adamant, which is armored against the artillery of the gospel. This, like an impregnable cave cut in a rock, holds out against all the terrors of the Lord set in array against it. The sinner, shut up in this stronghold, can laugh at the shaking of Jehovah's spear! Let the law thunder out tribulation and wrath, indignation and anguish against him; let the gospel attack him with the cross of Christ, with all the love of a dying Savior, and all the mercy of a reconcilable God--he is still secure, and bids defiance to all these attacks! The rock is impregnable, until the power of God gives force to these weapons, and then indeed it begins to tremble; then the sinner is struck into a consternation, and is dreadfully apprehensive that he cannot hold out the siege.

This natural fortification, (so I may call it, for his ignorance and hardness of heart are natural to him, though dreadfully improved by schemings,) this natural fortification, I say, begins to fail him; and hereupon he sets himself to work upon artificial fortifications, which may enable him to hold out the longer in his opposition against God.

He throws up an entrenchment of objections and excuses, or (a little to alter the metaphor) he discharges whole volleys of objections and excuses against those that besiege him. Perhaps he dares to plead that he is already a dutiful subject to the King of heaven, and therefore that the ministry of the gospel has missed its aim in directing its artillery against him as an enemy. And if to this plea, it is answered, that his temper and conduct towards his Sovereign plainly show that he is really rebellious to him in his heart, whatever outward professions of duty he may make; he replies--that if in some instances he allows himself in the breach of the divine laws--yet he has no bad design in so doing; that he has a good heart notwithstanding; and that he hopes the King of Heaven will not be so strict as to take notice of his minor infractions.

He pleads that he is as loyal as other people around him--and hopes that this will suffice. He reasons that, if he should be very punctual and zealous in his duty to God--that he would soon be out of fashion, and draw the contempt and ridicule of the world upon him. He objects, that he has not been so bold and daring a rebel as many others--and therefore he cannot think that so mild and gracious a King will severely punish him.

He pleads that he is now too busy about other things to listen to proposals of gospel reconciliation; and therefore begs that the matter may be put off, at least, until he has finished some important affairs he has now in hand. And he promises, that the next year, or in old age, or upon a death-bed--that he will submit, and make peace with God!

He pleads that he enjoys a great deal of pleasure under his present master, sin, which he must give up as unlawful, if he would change masters. He objects that the service of God is a drudgery to him, and that he has no relish for it, and that the laws of the King of Heaven are so strict, that he cannot live under them. These, and a thousand other pleas--the rebel urges to excuse his non-compliance with the proposals of gospel reconciliation; and in these he trusts as a sufficient defense!

Moreover, the lusts of the flesh, his pride, presumption, and love of ease, the cares of the world, the company of the wicked, who persuade him by all means not to surrender, and furnish him with weapons and all the assistance in their power to continue the war--these are all so many strongholds in which the

sinner fortifies himself against the Lord Jesus.

But if the weapons of the gospel prove mighty through God to diminish these strongholds, and the rebel finds they can defend him no longer, then he abandons these outworks, and entrenches himself secretly in his own righteousness! He, as it were, surrounds himself with a line of good works, repentance, and reformation. And now he thinks he is safe! Now he hopes he shall pass for a friend and subject of the King of heaven, and that the artillery of the law will continue to play upon him no longer.

This is the sinner's last refuge; and it is the greatest difficulty of all--to drive him out of this. He will not abandon this, until he is driven to great extremity indeed. And here many continue in it until they are dragged out of it--to the tribunal of their supreme Judge!

It must also be observed, that the sinner tries all the arts of self-deceit to secure his stronghold. When he finds he cannot defend himself as an open enemy by his declared hostilities, he pretends a submission; he pretends to capitulate and surrender. But then, he does not cordially consent to all the terms. He makes a reserve of some favorite lusts, and will not deliver them up to the sword of the conqueror! He has secret exceptions to the conditions of surrender--and will not comply with them all.

There are also some instances of duty, from which he will excuse himself. In short, his heart is not sincerely resigned to the Conqueror. His submission is forced and involuntary, and therefore is resented as the basest treachery by God who searches the heart, and must reign in the hearts of all his subjects.

Are not some of you, my brethren, now entrenched and fortified against the gospel in these strongholds? And such of you as are now the willing subjects of Jesus Christ--may you not recollect, that thus did you once strengthen yourselves in your opposition to him! But he has sweetly overcome your enmity, and constrained you to submit. And this leads me,

IV. To describe the outcome of this war, where it is effectually carried on; and particularly the terms of surrender.

The success of this war depends entirely upon the working of the almighty power of God. If the preacher's weapons of warfare prove mighty--it is only through God. Let the ministers of the gospel attack the sinner with all the weapons with which the arsenals of the law and gospel, of Scripture and reason, furnish them--they will never subdue one soul to the obedience of Christ! The sinner will still hold out, and bid defiance to all of them!

What is the reason that there are so many secure, presumptuous rebels among us, though the gospel-ministry has so often and so long discharged its artillery against them? The reason is, the weapons of our warfare are not made mighty through God. God does not give edge and force to these weapons by the all-conquering power of his Spirit. But when he begins to work--then the hardest sinner begins to tremble, the rocky heart breaks to pieces, and his strongholds are demolished! All his objections are silenced! He is then convinced that he is indeed a rebel against his rightful Sovereign; that his rebellion is most unnatural, ungrateful, unreasonable, and the height of wickedness; and that it is a most astonishing instance of condescending grace--that his provoked Sovereign should stoop to graciously propose articles of reconciliation to him. He sees that God might justly damn him--without one offer of mercy. He is struck with horror to think that ever he, a poor dependent worm, should engage in a war against the Lord Almighty, who has omnipotence at his command; and especially that he has dared to stand out so long against him. He is now sensible of the danger of delays, sensible that he has been ungrateful and

rebellious too long already, and that, if he delays his submission, that his almighty enemy may take his strongholds by force--and justly damn him.

He is now sensible that the slavery of sin is intolerable; that his lusts are tyrannical masters, and will give him no other wages but death and damnation! And therefore he pants and struggles for liberty.

The artillery of the divine law demolishes the promising entrenchment which he had formed for his own good works, and leaves him naked and defenseless to its vindictive fire!

Conscience also calls to the sinner to surrender, to surrender in time, while terms of peace may be obtained, and warns him of the dreadful consequences of continuing the war.

The trumpet of the gospel is still publishing peace, and summoning him to submit. The gospel assures him of pardon and acceptance, if he will but surrender. Now also (if I may so boldly accommodate the military style of this subject) now his provisions and ammunition begin to fail; he finds he can exist no longer; and, like the prodigal, is perishing with hunger! He finds he can defend himself no longer, but must submit--or die. If he continues in the battle--he is sure to die; but if he submits--he has some hopes of pardon; for oh! he has heard that the King of Israel is a merciful King. He must however make the trial.

All this time the Spirit of God is at work within, sweetly inclining the stubborn heart to yield, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. He gives the rebel favorable thoughts of the government of the Conqueror, and the infinite advantages of living under it. In short, he enforces upon the heart, all the applications made from without by the ministry of the gospel.

And now the sinner begins to think in earnest of surrendering; now he eagerly listens to terms of peace. And at length--he lays down his weapons, submits to the Conqueror, falls at his feet, casts himself upon his mercy, and welcomes him into the citadel of his heart! This is the most happy and important hour the sinner ever saw! The transactions of this hour extend their blessed consequences through all his future life--and to the remotest periods of eternity!

It may be necessary for me to inform you more particularly, of the manner of this surrender:

(1.) The sinner surrenders himself as an obnoxious rebel, lying entirely at the mercy of the Conqueror! He has no plea to excuse his rebellion, no merit to ingratiate himself, or procure a pardon. He pleads guilty--and surrenders himself to the will of the Conqueror, conscious that God may do with him--just as he pleases. His noble imaginations of himself are all demolished; his confidence in his own righteousness is entirely mortified; and he has nothing to plead but mercy, free, unmerited mercy! On this--he casts himself as his only ground of hope.

(2.) He surrenders himself entirely upon the terms prescribed by the Conqueror. He is conscious that he has no right to dictate, or to plead his own terms. His duty is to submit. The way of reconciliation revealed in the gospel, now appears to him infinitely reasonable, and to stand in need of no amendment.

Particularly, he is willing to lay down his weapons; that is, to forsake his sins, and to walk in ways of holiness for the future. He is willing to make the pleasure of his Sovereign, the rule of his conduct. Above all it must be noticed, that he is willing to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. The mediation of Jesus Christ, the glorious peculiarity of the Christian religion--is the only medium through which he would approach to God, and expect reconciliation with him. It is only in the righteousness of Christ, which he trusts to make atonement for his guilt, and procure the divine favor.

In short, he is willing that the Conqueror should make his own terms--and he submits, if he may but have his life for a prey. He puts a blank paper into God's hands, desirous he should fill it up with whatever articles he pleases; and he will cheerfully subscribe to them. His language is like that of Paul, when struck down prostrate at the feet of the persecuted Jesus, "Lord, what will you have me to do?" Acts 9:6. "Lord, you but command--and I will obey!" Now the rebel is all submission, all obedience.

(3.) He submits voluntarily and cheerfully. The power of divine grace has rooted out the enmity of his carnal mind, and implanted the principle of love to God in his heart. He breaks off from sin and Satan, as from the most cruel usurpers and destroyers! And he submits to Christ, not merely as to an irresistible Conqueror--but as to a gracious Deliverer. He enters upon a pious life, not as a state of slavery and unwilling captivity--but as a state of the most glorious liberty. He submits to the terms of gospel reconciliation, not as the arbitrary impositions of an imperious usurper--but as the gentle and reasonable prescriptions of a wise and good ruler. He esteems all his laws--to be holy, and just, and good; and with all his heart he acquiesces and rejoices in the blessed gospel of peace.

In short, the rebel's heart is now entirely changed and rendered subservient to the divine government; and consequently, he cordially and freely submits to it. Once indeed he hated it, and then he did at best but pretend submission to it. But now, his enmity being subdued, he freely surrenders himself with all his heart.

(4.) He makes a universal surrender of himself and all that he is and has--to Jesus Christ. He makes no reserve of one favorite lust--but gives them all up to be slain! He makes no secret exceptions to any of the articles of gospel reconciliation--but heartily consents to them all. He devotes his whole soul and all its faculties to God, in and through Jesus Christ:

his understanding to know him;

his heart to love him; and

his will to be governed by him.

This is implied in my text: Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Every thought, every passion, every motion of the soul must submit to Christ. Now every insurrection of sin in his heart alarms him, as an internal enemy. He also yields his body to God, and his members as instruments of righteousness unto holiness. He also devotes all his accomplishments, his learning, his influence, his popularity, his riches-- to his new master. In short, all his possessions of every kind--he is now willing to employ them all in the service of his new Master; or to resign them all, if they are inconsistent with his duty to God. Oh! how different a temper is this--from that which is natural to the sinner!

Thus the treaty of peace is happily concluded! He who was once a rebel against God, and an enemy to the Cross of Christ--has now become a friend and a loyal subject. The past rebellion is entirely forgotten and buried--and he is received into divine favor--as though he had never offended!

Once God was angry with him every day--but now he accepts him in the Beloved. Now the prince of hell has lost a captive; and Jesus has the satisfaction of seeing one more of his spiritual seed born unto his family! Now there is joy in heaven--upon this addition to the number of loyal subjects. Oh! the happy, the glorious peace! Oh! the blessed change in the circumstance of the poor condemned criminal!

What now remains?

V. We take a view of the true convert's state and conduct, in consequence of this gospel reconciliation. This you may be sure is vastly different from what it was before.

As to his STATE: He is now delivered from his sordid slavery to sin, as well as from guilt, and the sentence of condemnation. He is justified and accepted before God, through Jesus Christ, and entitled to a heavenly crown and kingdom.

Sin, indeed, is not entirely subdued; it forms frequent and violent insurrections, and struggles hard to recover its former power over him. The old man with his affections and lusts was immediately crucified upon the sinner's surrender to Christ; but crucifixion is a lingering death, and hence sin is never entirely dead--while he continues in this imperfect state. It is every day plotting against him, and laboring to ensnare him.

And hence his life is a constant warfare--an incessant conflict. He lives the life of a sentinel, perpetually upon the watch; or of a soldier, night and day in the battle. If he is off his guard but for an hour, he is liable to be surprised; and sometimes, alas! he is overcome! But he rises again, and renews the combat--and will rather die than willingly submit. He would resist even unto blood, striving against sin.

In short, whatever sins he may fall into--he is habitually on God's side: he espouses the cause of God in this rebellious world, whatever it costs him. He is an enemy to the kingdom of darkness, and all its interests; and it is the great business of his life--to oppose it in himself and others. The longer he lives under the government of King Jesus--the more he is attached to him, and in love with his administration. And it is his habitual endeavor to lead a life of universal obedience.

And now, my brethren, there is an inquiry I would set you upon, and that is, whether you have ever been captivated into a willing obedience to Jesus Christ? I am afraid this matter is not so plainly and unquestionably in your favor, as to render all inquiry into it needless. I am afraid it is dismally dark and doubtful, with regard to some of you--whether you are the servants of Christ--or the slaves of sin and Satan! Nay, I am afraid, there are plain evidences against some of you! However, you must put the matter to sincere trial; for I assure you it is a matter of too much importance to be slightly passed over.

Now it is evident, in the first place, that you are still the enemies of Jesus Christ--unless you have been deeply convinced of your enmity against him. It is impossible you should be reconciled to him--until you have seen your need of reconciliation. And it is impossible that you should see your need of reconciliation, until you are convinced that you are at war with him. Such of you, therefore, are undoubtedly his enemies--who imagine you have always been his friends!

In the next place, turn the substance of what has been said into so many queries to yourselves; and by these means, you may discover the truth of your case. Has ever the dreadful artillery of the law discharged its terrors upon you? Have you ever been driven out of all your carnal confidences, and particularly your own righteousness? Have you ever surrendered yourselves to the Conqueror? Has he overcome you by the sweet constraints of his love? And upon what terms did you surrender? Did you surrender as a vile rebel, lying at God's mercy? Did you submit to his terms, without pretending to dictate any of your own? Did you submit voluntarily and cheerfully? Did you surrender yourselves universally, without any reserve? Do you since endeavor to behave as dutiful subjects? And do you find his service to be perfect freedom?

And now, in consequence of this trial--Who is upon the Lord's side? Who? What is your real character? Are you to be ranked among the loyal subjects of Christ--OR among the stubborn enemies of his crown

and dignity?

Could I now collect the rebels together into one company, I would tell them some very alarming things from that God to whom they refuse to submit. Yes, sinner, as Ehud said to Eglon, king of Moab, "I have a message from God unto you!" Judges 3:20. In his name, and as his ambassador, I warn you of the dreadful consequences of your vile rebellion against him. You cannot win the battle against him. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength; who has hardened himself against him--and prospered? All the universe is subject to him, and he can order the smallest part of it to be the executioner of his vengeance upon you! If you refuse to submit--you shall as surely perish, as you have a being.

Of this you have reason to be apprehensive at all times--but especially at this time, when your almighty enemy is attacking your country with the terrors of war, and your neighborhood with an epidemic raging distemper. Sickneses are his soldiers, and fight in his cause against a rebellious world! He says to one, "Go!" and it goes; and to another, "Come!" and it comes. And are you not afraid some of these deadly shafts may strike you now, when they are flying so thickly all around you?

God has for many a year used gentler weapons with you--but now he seems about to take the citadel by storm! Now, therefore, now without delay--lay down your weapons and surrender yourselves to the Almighty Conqueror!

I have also joyful news to communicate, even to you rebels, if you are disposed to hear it! Your injured Sovereign is willing to be reconciled to you--even after all your hostilities, if you will now submit to the terms of reconciliation!

Christ is not here in person; but lo! though I also am but dust and ashes--I am here to manage the treaty in his name. Therefore, I beseech you in Christ's stead--be reconciled to God!

---

Source:

<https://sermonindex.net/speakers/samuel-davies/the-success-of-the-gospel-by-the-divine-power-upon-the-souls-of-men/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**