

The Christian in Complete Armour - Part 10

by William Gurnall

The gospel is the joyfulest tidings for poor sinners, bringing good news, great good, and concerns those who hear it intimately.

Scripture: Psalm 50:21, Isaiah 53:5, Romans 5:1, Colossians 1:20

Topics: "Reconciliation With God", "Gospel Of Salvation"

Description

William Gurnall preaches about the deep reconciliation and peace with God that is offered through the gospel of Christ. He explains that the gospel reveals God's perfect hatred for sin and his infinite love and mercy towards sinners by reconciling them to himself through Christ. Gurnall emphasizes that the gospel presents the articles of peace that God graciously offers to sinners and that the gospel, as the power of God unto salvation, is the instrument used to effect this peace. He highlights the unparalleled wisdom and workmanship of God in choosing this method of reconciliation, demonstrating his holiness, mercy, and justice in the most profound way.

Transcript

Direction Seventh.

The Several Pieces of the Whole Armour of God.

Third Piece--The Christian's Spiritual Shoe.

'And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace' (Eph. 6:15).

This verse presents us with the third piece of armour in the Christian's panoply--A Spiritual Shoe, fitted to his foot, and to be worn by him, so long as he keeps the field against sin and Satan. 'And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.' We shall cast the words into distinct questions or inquiries, from the resolution of which will result the several points to be insisted on. First. What is meant by the 'gospel.' Second. What is meant by 'peace,' and why it is attributed to 'the gospel.' Third. What the 'feet' here mentioned import, and what grace is intended by 'the preparation of the gospel of peace,' which here is compared to the shoe, and fitted for these feet.

DIRECTION VII.--FIRST GENERAL PART.

[What is meant by the Gospel.]

What is meant by the gospel. Gospel, according to the notation of the original word, ἄγαλλίασι, signifies any good news, or joyful message. So, Jer. 20:15, 'Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad'--Septuagint, ὁ ἄγαλλίζων, ἡ δὲ βουλή. But usually in Scripture, it is restrained, by way of excellency, to signify the doctrine of Christ, and salvation by him to poor sinners. 'I bring you good tidings,' said the angel to the shepherds, 'of great joy,' Luke 2:10. And, ver. 11, he addeth, 'unto you is born....a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' Thus it is taken in this place, and generally in the New Testament, and affords this note.

Doctrine. The revelation of Christ, and the grace of God through him, is without compare the best news, and the joyfullest tidings, that poor sinners can hear. It is such a message that no good news can come before it, nor no ill news follow. No good news can come before it, no, not from God himself to the creature. He cannot issue out any blessing to poor sinners till he hath shown mercy to their souls in Christ. 'God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us,' Ps. 67:1.

First. God forgives and then he gives. Till he be merciful to pardon our sins through Christ, he cannot bless or look kindly on us sinners. All our enjoyments are but blessings in bullion, till gospel grace --pardoning mercy--stamp, and make them current. God cannot so much as bear any good-will to us, till Christ makes peace for us; 'on earth peace, good-will toward men,' Luke 2:14. And what joy can a sinner take, though it were to hear of a kingdom befallen to him, if he may not have it with God's good-will?

Second. Again, no ill news can come after the glad tidings of the gospel, where believingly embraced. God's mercy in Christ alters the very property of all evils to the believer. All plagues and judgments that can befall the creature in the world, when baptized in the stream of gospel-grace, receive a new name, come on a new errand, and have a new taste on the believer's palate, as the same water by running through some mine, gets a tang and a healing virtue, which before it had not. 'The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity,' Isa. 33:24. Observe, he doth not say 'They shall not be sick.' Gospel grace doth not exempt from afflictions, but 'they shall not say, I am sick.' they shall be so ravished with the joy of God's pardoning mercy, that they shall not complain of being sick. This or any other cross is too thin a veil to darken the joy of the other good news. This is so joyful a message which the gospel brings, that God would not have Adam long without it, but opened a crevice to let some beams of this light, that is so pleasant to behold, into his soul, amazed with the terror of God's presence. As he was turned out of paradise without it, so he had been turned into hell immediately; for such the world would have been to his guilty conscience. This is the news God used to tell his people of, on a design to comfort them and cheer them, when things went worst with them, and their affairs were at the lowest ebb, Isa. 7:15; Micah 5:5. This is the great secret which God whispers, by his Spirit, in the ear of those only [whom] he embraces with his special distinguishing love, Luke 10:21; I Cor. 2:12, so that it is made the sad sign of a soul marked out for hell, to have the gospel 'hid' from it, II Cor. 4:3. To wind up this in a few words, there meet all the properties of a joyful message in the glad tidings of the gospel.

[The five properties of a joyful message

found in the gospel.]

Five ingredients are desirable in a message, yea, must all conspire to fill up the joyfulness thereof into a redundancy.

First Property. A message to be joyful must be good. None rejoice to hear evil news. Joy is the dilation of the heart, whereby it goes forth to meet and welcome in what it desires; and this must needs be some

good. Ill news is sure to find the heart shut against it, and to come before it is welcome.

Second Property. It must be some great good, or else it affects little. Affections are stirred according to the degrees of good or evil in the object presented. A thing we hear may be so inconsiderable, that it is no great odds how it goes, but if it be good, and that great also, of weighty importance, this causeth rejoicing proportionable. The greater the bell, the more strength is required to raise it. It must be a great good that raiseth great joy.

Third Property. This great good must intimately concern them that hear it. My meaning is, they must have propriety in it. For though we can rejoice to hear of some great good befallen another, yet it affects most when it is emptied into our own bosom. A sick man doth not feel the joy of another's recovery with the same advantage as he would do his own.

Fourth Property. It would much add to the joyfulness of the news if this were inauditum or insperatum--unheard of and unlooked for--when the tidings steal upon us by way of surprise. The farther our own ignorance or despair has set us off all thoughts of so great enjoyment, the more joy it brings with it when we hear the news of it. The joy of a poor swineherd's son, who never dreamed of a crown, would be greater at the news of such a thing conferred on him, than he whose birth invited him to look for it, yea, promised it him as his inheritance. Such a one's heart would but stand level to the place, and therefore could not be so ravished with it, as another, who lay so far below such a preferment.

Fifth Property. To fill up the joy of all these, it is most necessary that the news be true and certain, else all the joy soon leaks out. What great joy would it afford to hear of a kingdom befallen to a man, and the next day or month to hear all crossed again and prove false? Now, in the glad tidings of the gospel, all these do most happily meet together, to wind up the joy of the believing soul to the highest pin that the strings of his affections can possibly bear.

1. The news which the gospel hath in its mouth to tell us poor sinners is good. It speaks promises, and they are significations of some good intended by God for poor sinners. The law, that brings ill news to town. Threatenings are the *lingua vernacula legis* --the native language of the law. It can speak no other language to sinners but denunciations of evil to come upon them; but the gospel smiles on poor sinners, and plains the wrinkles that sit on the law's brow, by proclaiming promises.

2. The news the gospel brings is as great as good. It was that the angel said, 'I bring you good tidings of great joy,' Luke 2:10. Great joy it must needs be, because it is all joy. The Lord Christ brings such news in his gospel as that he left nothing for any after him to add to it. If there be any good wanting in the tidings of the gospel, we find it elsewhere than in God, for in the covenant of the gospel he gives himself through Christ to the believing soul. Surely the apostle's argument will hold: 'All things are yours and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's,' I Cor. 3:22, 23. The gospel lays our pipes close to the fountain of goodness itself; and he, sure, must have all, that is united to him that hath that is all. Can any good news come to the glorified saints which heaven doth not afford them? In the gospel we have news of that glory. 'Jesus Christ, hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,' II Tim. 1:10. The sun in the firmament discovers only the lower world; *absignat cælum dum revelat terram*--O it hides heaven from us, while it shows the earth to us! But the gospel enlightens both at once--'Godliness hath the promise of the life that is now, and of that which is to come,' I Tim. 4:8.

3. The gospel doth not tell us news we are little concerned in--not what God has done for angels, but for us. 'Unto you,' saith the angel, 'is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord.' If charity made angels rejoice for our

happiness, surely then, the benefit which is paid into our nature by it, gives a further pleasure to our joy at the hearing of it. It were strange that the messenger who only brings the news of some great empire to be devolved on a person should sing, and the prince to whom it falls should not be glad. And, as the gospel's glad tidings belong to man's nature, not to angels; so in particular, to thee, poor soul, whoever thou art, that embracest Christ in the arms of thy faith. A prince is a common good to all his kingdom --every subject, though never so mean, hath a part in him--and so is Christ to all believers. The promises are so laid that, like a well-drawn picture, they look on all that look on them by an eye of faith. The gospel's joy is thy joy, that hast but faith to receive it.

4. The glad tidings of the gospel were unheard of and unlooked for by the sons of men. Such news it brings as never could have entered into the heart of man to conceive, till God unlocked the cabinet of his own good pleasure, and revealed the counsel of his will, wherein this mysterious price of love to fallen man lay hid far enough from the prying eye of the most quick-sighted angel in heaven, much more from man himself, who could read in his own guilty conscience within, and spell from the covenant without, now broken by him, nothing but his certain doom and damnation. So that the first gospel-sermon preached by God himself to Adam, anticipated all thoughts of such a thing intended to him. O who but one that hath really felt the terrors of an approaching hell in his despairing soul, can conceive how joyous the tidings of gospel mercy is to a poor soul, dwelling amidst the black thoughts of despair, and bordering on the very marches of the region of utter darkness! Story tells us of a nobleman of our nation, in King Henry VIII.'s reign, to whom a pardon was sent a few hours before he should have been beheaded, which, being not at all expected by him, did so transport him that he died for joy. And if the vessel of our nature be so weakly hooped that the wine of such an inferior joy breaks it, how then could it possibly be able to bear the full joy of the gospel tidings, which doth as far exceed this as the mercy of God doth the mercy of a mortal man, and as the deliverance from an eternal death in hell doth a deliverance from a temporary death, which is gone before the pain can well be felt?

5. The glad tidings of the gospel are certainly true. It is no flying report, cried up today, and liked to be crossed tomorrow--not news that is in every one's mouth, but none can tell whence it came, and who is the author of it; we have it from a good hand --God himself, to whom it is impossible to lie. He from heaven voucheth it--'This is my beloved Son: hear him,' Luke 9:35. What were all those miracles which Christ wrought but ratifications of the truth of the gospel? Those wretches that denied the truth of Christ's doctrine, were forced many times to acknowledge the divinity of his miracles, which is a pretty piece of nonsense, and declares the absurdity of their unbelief to all the world. The miracles were to the gospel as seals are to a writing. They could not deny God to be in the miracles, and yet they could not see him in the doctrine! As if God would set his seal to an untruth! Here, Christians, is that which fills up the joy of this good news the gospel brings--that we may lay our lives upon the truth of it. It will never deceive any that lay the weight of their confidence on it. 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,' I Tim. 1:15. This bridge which the gospel lays over the gulf of God's wrath, for poor sinners to pass from their sins into the favour of God here, and [into the] kingdom of God hereafter, is supported with no other arches than the wisdom, power, mercy, and faithfulness of God; so that the believing soul needs not fear, till it sees these bow or break. It is called the 'everlasting gospel,' Rev. 14:6. When heaven and earth go to wreck, not the least iota or tittle of any promise of the gospel shall be buried in their ruins. 'The word of the Lord endureth for ever; and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you,' I Peter 1:25.

USE OR APPLICATION.

[Claim of those who never heard the gospel

on our compassion.]

Use First. Pity those that never heard word of this good news. Such there are in the world--whole nations, with whom the day is not yet broke, but a dismal night of ignorance and barbarism continues to be stretched over them--whose forlorn souls are under a continual massacre from the bloody butcher of hell! An easy conquest, God knows, that soul-fiend makes of them. He lays his cruel knife to their throats, and meets with no resistance, because he finds them fast asleep in ignorance--utterly destitute of that light which alone can discover a way to escape the hands of this destroyer. What heart, that ever tasted the sweetness of gospel grace, trembles not at their deplored state?--yea, doth not stand astonished at the difference of God's dispensations to them and us? 'Lord, why wilt thou manifest thyself to us, and not to the world?' God pardon the unmercifulness of our hearts, that we can weep no more over them. Truly we do not live so far from the Moors and Indians but we may--by not pitying of them, and earnest desiring their conversion--besmear ourselves with the guilt of their souls' blood, which is shed continually by the destroyer of mankind. O how seldom is their miserable the companion of our sorrowful thoughts, and their conversion the subject of our prayers and desires! There have been, alas! in the world, more counsels how to ease them of their gold, than enrich them with the treasure of the gospel --how to get their land, than how to save their souls. But the time is coming, when winning souls will be found more honourable than conquering nations. Well, Christian, though thou canst not impart to them what God hath laid on thy trencher, yet, as thou sittest at the feast of the gospel, think of those poor souls, and that compassionately, who starve to death for want of that bread with which thou art fed unto eternal life. There is an opinion which some have lately taken up, that the heathens may spell Christ out of the sun, moon and stars. These may seem kinder than others have been to them; but I wish it doth not make them more cruel to them in the end --I mean by not praying so heartily for gospel light to arise among them, as those must needs do who believe them under a sad necessity of perishing without it. When a garrison is judged pretty well stored with provisions for its defence, it is an occasion that relief and succour comes the slower to it. And I wish Satan hath not such a design against those forlorn souls in this principle. If such a lesson were to be got by the stars, we should ere this have heard of some that had learned it. Indeed, I find a star led the wise men to Christ; but they had a heavenly preacher to open the text to them, or else they would never have understood it.

[Lamentation for the unkind welcome

the gospel finds in the world.]

Use Second. A sad lamentation may be here taken up, that so good news should have such an ill welcome as the gospel commonly finds in the world. When the tidings were first told at Jerusalem of a Saviour being born, on would have thought--especially if we consider that the Scripture reckoning was now out for the birth of the Messias, and they big with the expectation of his coming--that all hearts should have leaped within them for joy at the news, to see their hopes so happily delivered and accomplished. But, behold, the clean contrary. Christ's coming proves matter of trouble and distaste to them. They take the alarm at his birth, as if an enemy, a destroyer --not a Saviour--were landed in their coast; and as such, Herod goes out against him, and makes him flee the country. But possibly, though at present they stumble at the meanness of his birth and parentage, yet, when the rays of his divinity shall shame through his miracles, then they will religiously worship him when now they contemn; when he comes forth into his public ministry, opens his commission and shows his authority--yea, with his own lips tells the joyful

message he brings from the Father unto the sons of men, then surely they will dearly love his person, and thankfully embrace, yea greedily drink in, the glad tidings of salvation which he preacheth to them. No; they persist in their cursed unbelief and obstinate rejecting of him. Though the Scripture, which they seemed to adore, bear so full a testimony for Christ that it accuseth them to their own consciences, yet they will have none of him. Christ tells them so much--'Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye might have life,' John 5:39, 40. Life they desired, yet will lose it rather than come to him for it.

And is the world now amended? Doth Christ in his gospel meet with any kinder usage at the hands of most? The note that Christ sings is still the same, 'Come unto me, that ye may have life.' The worst hurt Christ does poor souls that come unto him, is to put them into a state of life and salvation; and yet where is the person that likes the offer? O, it is other news that men generally listen after. This makes the exchange, the market-place, so full, and the church so thin and empty. Most expect to hear their best news from the world. They look upon the news of the gospel as foreign, and that which doth not so much concern them, at least at present. It is time enough, they think, to mind this, when they are going into another world. Alas! the gospel is not accommodated to their carnal desires. It tells them off no fields and vineyards that it hath to give. It invites them not with the gaities of worldly honours and pleasures. Had Christ in his gospel but gratified the cravings of men's lusts with a few promises for these things--though he had promised less for another world--the news would have gone down better with these sots, who had rather hear one prophecy of wine and strong drink, than [to hear] preach of heaven itself. Truly, there are but a very few--and those sufficiently jeered for their pains --that like the message of the gospel so well as to receive it cordially into their hearts. If any one does but give entertainment to Christ, and it be known, what an alarm does it give to all his carnal neighbours! If they do not presently beset his house, as the Sodomite's did Lot's, yet do they set some brand of scorn upon him--yea, make account they have now reason enough to despise and hate him, how well soever they loved him before.

O what will God do with this degenerate age we live in! O England! England! I fear some sad judgment or other bodes for thee! If such glad tidings as the gospel brings be rejected, sad news cannot be far off--I cannot think of less than of a departing gospel. God never made such settlement of his gospel among any people but he could remove it from them. He comes but upon liking, and will he stay where he is not welcome? Who will that hath elsewhere to go? It is high time for the merchant to pack up and be gone when few or none will buy, nay, when instead of buying, they will not suffer him to be quiet in his shop, but throw stones at him, and dirt on his richest commodities. Do we not see the names of Christ's faithful messengers bleeding at this day under the reproaches that fly so thick about their ears? Are not the most precious truths of the gospel almost covered with the mire and dirt of errors and blasphemies, which men of corrupt minds--set on work by the devil himself--have raked out of every filthy puddle and sink of old heretics and thrown on the face of Christ and his gospel! And where is the hand so kind as to wipe off that which they have thrown on? the heart so valiant for the truth as to stop these foul mouths from spitting their venom against Christ and his gospel? If anything be done of this kind, alas! it is so faintly, that they gather heart by it. Justice is so favourably sprinkled, like a few drops upon fire, that it rather increaseth the flame of their rage against the truth than quencheth it. A prince calls not home his ambassador for every affront that is offered him in the streets--only when he is affronted and can have no redress for the wrong.

Objection. But some may say, Though it cannot be denied that the gospel hath found very unkind entertainment by many among us, and especially of late years--since a spirit of error hath so sadly prevailed in the land--yet, make us not worse than we are.' There is, blessed be God, 'a remnant of

gracious souls yet to be found to whom Christ is precious --who gladly embrace the message of the gospel, and weep in secret for the contempt that is cast upon it by men of corrupt minds and profane hearts, and therefore we hope we are not in such imminent danger of losing the gospel as your fears suggest.'

Answer. If there were not such a sprinkling of saints among us, our case would indeed be desperate, *conclusum esset de nobis*--the shades of that dismal night would quickly be upon us. These are they that have held the gospel thus long among us. Christ had, as to his gospel presence, been gone ere this, had not these hung about his legs, and with their strong cries and prayers entreated his stay. But there are a few considerations as to these, which, seriously weighed, will not leave us without some tremblings of heart.

1. Consideration. Consider what little proportion, as to the number, I mean, do these that embrace the gospel bear with those that continue to reject it --those that desire to keep Christ among us with those that wish him gone and would gladly be rid of him. Were it put to the vote, would not they carry it by thousands of thousands that care not whether we have a gospel or not? And doth it not prophesy sadly when the odds are so great? In all the departures of God from a people, there were ever some holy ones mingled amongst the rout of sinners. Sardis had her 'few names which had not defiled their garments;' but yet the 'candlestick was removed.' All that they could get was a promise for themselves in particular--'They shall walk with me in white,' Rev. 3:4--but no protection for the church. God can pull down the house, and provide well for his saints also that he finds there. A few voices are easily drowned in the outcry of a multitude--a few pints of wine are hardly tasted in a tun of wine--and a little number of saints can do, sometimes, but little to the saving of a wretched people among whom they live. Possibly, as in a weak body, where the disease hath got the mastery, nature putting forth its summum conatum--its utmost strength--may keep life a while in the body--some days or weeks--but cannot long, without some help to evacuate the distemper; so a few saints, shut up in a degenerate age amongst an ungodly Christ-despising people, may a while prorogue the judgment, and relieve a while the life of such a people; but if there be no change made upon them for the better, ruin must needs break in upon them.

2. Consideration. Consider, of these few gracious ones found amongst us that embrace the gospel, how many are new converts--such, I mean, as the gospel hath of late days won to Christ. I am afraid you will find this little number of saints chiefly to consist of old disciples--such as were wrought upon many years since. Alas! the womb of the gospel hath been in a great measure shut up of late, as to the bringing forth of souls by a thorough solid work of conversion. Indeed, if they may pass for converts that baptize themselves into a new way and form of worship, or that begin their religion with a tenet and an opinion, we have more than a good many to show of these. But in this old age of England's withered profession, how great a rarity is a sincere convert? We cannot deny but God is graciously pleased to bring the pangs of the new birth now and then upon some poor souls in our assemblies, that his despised servants may have his seal to confirm their ministry, and stop those mouths which are so scornfully opened against it; yet, alas! it is but here and there one. And doth not this prophesy sadly to this nation? I am sure, when we see a tree that used to stand thick with fruit no bring forth but little--may be an apple on this bough, and another on that--we look upon it as a dying tree. Leah comforted herself from her fruitfulness, that therefore her husband would love her and cleave to her, Gen. 29:34. May we not, on the contrary, fear that God will not love, but leave, a people when they grow barren under the means of grace? God threatens as much, 'Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee,' Jer. 6:8. And if God's soul departs, then he is upon his remove as to his visible presence also. So indeed it follows, 'lest I make thee desolate, a land not

inhabited.' O my brethren, those golden days of the gospel are over when converts come flying as a cloud--as the doves to their windows in flocks. Now gospel news grow stale; few are taken with them. Though a kingdom hath much treasure and riches in it; yet, if trade cease, no new bullion comes in, nor merchandise be imported, it spends upon its old stock, and must needs in time decay. Our old store of saints--the treasure of their times--wears away apace, what will become of us if no new ones come in their room? Alas! when our burials are more than our births, we must needs be on the losing hand. There is a sad list of holy names taken away from us; but where are they which are born to God? If the good go, and those which are left continue bad--yea, become worse and worse--we have reason to fear that God is clearing the ground, and making way for a judgment.

3. Consideration. Consider the unhappy contentions and divisions that are found among the people of God yet left upon the place: these prophesy sadly, the Lord knows. Contentions ever portend ill. The remarkable departures of God, recorded in Scripture, from the church of the Jews, found them woefully divided and crumbled into parties. And the Asian churches no less. Christ sets up the light of his gospel to walk and work by, not to fight and wrangle; and therefore it were no wonder at all if he should put it out, and so end the dispute. If these storms which have been of late years upon us, and are not yet off, had but made Christians, as that did the disciples, Mark 6:48, to ply their oar and lovingly row all one way, it had been happy. We might then have expected Christ to come walking towards us in mercy, and help us safe to land. But when we throw away the oar, and fall a scuffling in the ship, while the wind continues loud about us, truly we are more like to drive Christ from us than invite him to us, we are in a more probable way of sinking than saving the ship and ourselves in it.

[A word of exhortation to unbelievers

and also to believers.]

Use Third. A word of exhortation to you who have not closed with the terms of the gospel, and also to you who have--to believers and to unbelievers.

1. To unbelievers. Be persuaded to receive the message of the gospel kindly, believingly, into your hearts; it is the best news you can send back to heaven, as a gratulatory return, for the glad tidings that the gospel brings from thence. Thy embracing Christ preached to thee in the gospel, will be as welcome news to heaven, I can tell thee, as the tidings of Christ and salvation through him, can be to thee. 'There is joy in heaven' at the conversion of a sinner. Heaven soon rings of this.

The angels that sang Christ into the world, will not want a song when he is received into thy heart; for he came into the world for this end. Christ descended when he came into the world, but now he ascends. That was an act of his humiliation, this of his exaltation. The highest created throne that God can sit in, is the soul of a believer. No wonder then, that Christ calls all his friends to joy with him at a soul's return to him and reception of him, Luke 15:9. What joy is now in heaven upon this occasion, we may collect from the joy it drew from Christ when on earth.

It was some great good news that could wring a smile then from Christ, or tune his spirit into a joyful note, who was 'a man of sorrows,' and indeed came into the world to be so. Yet when his disciples whom he had sent forth to preach the gospel, returned with news of some victorious success of their labours, 'in that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father,' Luke 10:21. Of all the hours of his life, that is the hour wherein Christ would express his joy; which, with the care of the Spirit to record this passage in the history of Christ's life, shows that Christ had an especial design in that expression of his joy at that

time.

And what could it be, but to let us know how much his heart was set upon this work of saving souls? and that, when he should be gone to heaven, if we meant to send any joyful news to him thither, it should be of the prosperous and victorious success the gospel hath over our hearts. This, this which could make him rejoice in the midst of all his sorrows here on earth, must needs be more joyous to him in heaven now, where he hath no bitterness from his own sufferings--which are all healed, past, and gone--to mingle with the joy of this news.

And, if the kind reception of the gospel be such joyful news to him, you may easily conceive how distasteful the rejecting of it is to him. As he rejoiced in spirit to hear the gospel prevailed; so he cannot but be angry when it meets with a repulse from the unbelieving world. We find, Luke 14:21 'the master of the house'-- that is Christ--'angry,' when his servants, sent to invite the guests--that is, preach the gospel --return with a denial from those that were bidden (for so their mannerly excuses were interpreted by Christ), yea, so angry, that he claps a fearful doom upon them--'not one of those which were bidden shall taste of my supper,' ver. 24.

God can least bear any contempt cast upon his grace. The Jews, though they had many grievous calamities which befell them for their idolatries and other sins, yet never any like that which the rejecting Christ brought upon them. Under those they relented, but under this they hardened. They would not come when the supper was on the table; and therefore the cloth is drawn, and they go supperless to bed, and die in their sins. While they shut the door of their hearts against Christ, this padlock, as I may so call it, of judiciary impenitence is fastened to it.

Christ needs take no other revenge on a soul for its refusing him, to make it miserable to the height, than to condemn such a one to have its own desire. Christ thou wilt not, Christ therefore thou shalt not have. O unhappy soul thou! that hast offers of Christ, but diest without Christ! Thou goest with thy full lading to damnation. None sink so deep in hell, as those that fall into it with a stumble at Christ. That gospel which brings now good news, will, when thou shalt have a repetition sermon of it at the great day, bring the heaviest tidings with it that ever thy ears heard.

2. To believers. You who have entertained the message of the gospel, rejoice at the news. Glad tidings and sad hearts do not well together. When we see one heavy and sorrowful, we ask him, what ill news he hath heard. Christian, what ill news hath Christ brought from heaven with him, that makes thee walk with thy folded arms and pensive countenance? Ps. 132:16. To see a wicked man merry and jocund, or a Christian sad and dumpish, is alike uncomely. 'A feast is made for laughter,' saith Solomon, Ecc. 10:19. I am sure God intended his people's joy in the feast of the gospel. Mourners are not to sit at God's table, Deut. 26. Truly the saint's heaviness reflects unkindly upon God himself. We do not commend his cheer, if it doth not cheer us. What saith the world? The Christian's life is but a melancholy walk. Sure, thinks the carnal wretch, it is a dry feast they sit at, where so little wine of joy is drunk. And wilt thou confirm them in this their opinion, Christian? Shall they have an example to produce Christ and his word, which promise peace and joy to all that will come to this feast? O God forbid that thy conversation, wherein thou art to 'hold forth the word of life'--to live in the eyes of the world--and which ought to be as a comment or gloss upon the word, to clear up the truth and reality of it to others--forbid that this should so disagree with the text, as to make the gladsome tidings spoken of in it, more disputed and questioned in the thoughts of the unbelieving world than before. It is an error, I confess, and that a gross one, which the Papists teach--that we cannot know the Scriptures to be the word of God, but by the testimony of the church; yet it is none to

say, that a practical testimony from the saints' lives hath great authority over the consciences of men, to convince them of the truth of the gospel. Now they will believe it is good news indeed the gospel brings, when they can read it in your cheerful lives. But when they observe Christians sad with this cup of salvation in their hands, truly they suspect the wine in it is not so good as the preachers commend it to them for. Should men see all that trade to the Indies come home poorer than they went, it would be hard to persuade others to venture thither, for all the golden mountains said to be there. O Christians, let the world see that you are not losers in your joy since you have been acquainted with the gospel. Give not them cause to think by your uncomfortable walking, that when they return Christians, they must bid all joy farewell and resolve to spend their days in a house of mourning.

Is the gospel a message of glad tidings? Do not then for shame, Christian, run on the world's score by taking up any of its carnal joy; thou needest not go out of God's house to be merry. Here is joy enough in the glad tidings of the gospel, more than thou canst spend, though thou shouldst live at a higher rate than thou dost or canst here on earth. Abraham would not take so much as ' thread,' or shoe;latchet' from the king of Sodom, lest he should say that he made Abraham rich, Gen. 14:23.

A Christian should deny himself of the world's joy and delights, lest they say, These Christians draw their joy out of our cistern. The channel is cut out by the Spirit of God, in which he would have his saints' joy to run. 'If any be merry, let him sing psalms.' Let the subject of his mirth be spiritual; as, on the other hand, if he be sick, let him pray, James 5:14. A spiritual vent is given to both affections of sorrow and joy. Aliter ludit ganeo, aliter princeps--a prince's recreation must not be like a ruffian's.

No more a Christian's joy like the carnal man's. If ever there was need to call upon Christians to feed the lamp of their joy with spiritual fuel, holy oil, that drops from a gospel pipe, now the time is, wherein professors do symbolize with the world in their outward bravery, junketings, fashions, pastimes, and are so kind to the flesh in allowing of, yea in pleading so much for, a carnal liberty in these things, that shows too plainly that the spiritual joy to be drawn out of these wells of salvation does not satisfy them; or else they would not make up their draught from this puddle;water, which was wont to be thirsted after only by those that had never drunk of Christ's cup.

O what is the reason for those, who would pass for Christians, forsake this pure wine of gospel joy, for the sophisticated stuff which this whore the world presents in her golden cup to them? Is it because the gladsome message of the gospel is grown stale, and so its joy--which once sparkled in the preaching of it, as generous wine doth in the cup, and cheered the hearts of believers with strong consolations--hath now lost its spirits? or can that pure stream of spiritual joy, which hath run so long through the hearts and lives of the saints in so many generations, with our mingling with the brackish water of the world's sensual pleasures, at last fall in with them, and be content to lose its own divine nature and sweetness in such a sink?

O no! The gospel is the same it was; the joy it brings as sweet and brisk, as spiritual and pure, as ever it was, and will be as long as God and Christ continue to be the same, out of whose bosom of love it first flowed, and is still fed; but the professors of this gospel now, are not the same with those holy men and women of primitive times. The world grows old, and men's affections with it chill and become cold. We have not our taste so lively, nor our spirits so chaste and pure, to relish the heavenly viands dished forth in the gospel.

The cheer is as good as ever, but the guests are worse. We are grown debauched in our judgments, and corrupt in our principles; no wonder then if carnal in our joys. Error is a whore, it takes away the heart from Christ and his spiritual joys. The head once distempered soon affects the heart, and, by dropping the malignity of its principles upon it, poisons it with carnal affections; and carnal affections cannot fare with any other than gross and carnal joys. Here, here is the root of the misery of our times.

Hath not, think you, the devil played his game cunningly among us, who, by his instruments--transforming themselves into the likeness of angels of light--could first raise so many credulous souls into a fond expectation of higher attainments in grace and comfort from their new pretended light, than ever yet the saints were acquainted with, and then at last make them fall so low, be so reasonable, or rather unreasonable, as to accept such sensual pleasures and joys as this world can afford, in full payment for all the glorious things he promised them? Well, sirs, this I hope will make some love the gospel the more, and stick closer to it as long as they live.

O Christians! bless God for the glad tidings of the gospel; and never lend an ear to him that would be telling you other news, except you mean to part with truth to purchase a lie. Yea, let it make you careful to draw all your comfort and joy from the gospel's breast. When a carnal heart would be merry, he doth not take the Bible down to read in that. He doth not go into the company of the promises, and walk in the meditation of them. It brings no joy to him to think of Christ or heaven. No, he takes down a play-book, may be; seeks some jovial company; goes to the exchange or market, to hear what news he can meet with. Every one, as his haunt lies; but still it is from the world he expects his joy. And now where lies thy road, Christian? whither doth thy soul lead thee for thy joy? Dost thou not go to the word, and read there what Christ has done for thee on earth, and is doing for thee in heaven? Is not the throne of grace the exchange, to which thou resortest for good news from that far country, heaven, where all thy estate lies, and thy best friends live? Art thou not listening what promise he will speak peace from to thy soul? If so, thou hast not thy name for naught, thou art a Christian indeed. 'True students,' saith Erasmus, 'that love their book indeed, when they have wearied their spirits with study, can recreate them again with study, by making a diversion from that which is severe and knotty, to some more facile and pleasant subject.' [1] Thus the true Christian, when his spirits are worn and wasted in the severer exercises of Christianity, such as are fasting and prayer, wherein he afflicts both body and soul for his sins, then can he recover them at the feast of God's love in Christ, where he sees his water turned into wine, and the tears that even now his sins covered his face with, all washed off with the blood of Christ. When his soul is struck into a fear and trembling with the consideration of the justice of God, and the terror of his threatenings and judgements for sin, then the meditation of the sweet promises of the gospel recreate and revive him; so that, in the same word where he meets with his wound, he finds his healing; where he hath his sorrow, there also he receives his joy.

DIRECTION VII.--SECOND GENERAL PART.

[What is here meant by Peace.]

The second inquiry follows, viz.--What peace is here meant that is attributed to the gospel. Peace is a comprehensive word. 'We looked for peace,' saith the prophet, 'but no good came,' Jer. 8:15. Peace brings, and carries away again with it, all good, as the sun doth light, to and from the world. When Christ would to the utmost express how well he wished his disciples, he wraps up all the happiness which his large heart could beterm them in this blessing of peace--'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you,' John 14:27. Now, take peace in its greatest latitude, if not spurious, and it will be found to grow upon

this gospel-root. So that we shall lay the conclusion in general terms.

Doctrine. True peace is the blessing of the gospel, and only of the gospel. This will appear in the several kinds of peace, which may be sorted into this fourfold division:--first. Peace with God which we may call peace of reconciliation. second. Peace with ourselves, or peace of conscience. third. Peace with one another, or peace of love and unity. fourth. Peace with the other creatures, even the most hurtful, which may be called a peace of indemnity and service. Let us begin, where all the others begin, with peace of reconciliation with God. For when man fell out with God, he fell out with himself, and all the world besides; and he can never come to be at peace with these, till his peace be made with God. *Tranquillus Deus tranquillat omnia*--a tranquil God tranquilizes all things.

FIRST KIND OF PEACE.

[Peace with God the blessing of the gospel.]

Peace with God we may call peace of reconciliation; and peace of reconciliation with God is the blessing of the gospel. Three things are here to be done in prosecution of the point.

First. I shall show you that there is a quarrel depending between God and the sons of men. Second. I shall show you that the gospel, and only the gospel, takes this up, and makes peace betwixt God and man; therefore called the gospel of peace. Third. I shall show you why God conveys this second piece of reconciliation into the world in this way, and by this method.

[Need for peace with God.]

First. I shall show you there is a quarrel depending betwixt God and the sons of men. Open acts of hostility done by one nation against another proclaim there is a war commenced. Now, such acts of hostility pass betwixt God and man. Bullets fly quickly to and fro on either hand. Man, he lets fly against God--though, against his will, he shoots short --whole volleys of sins and impieties. The best saints acknowledge thus much of themselves, before converting grace took them off. 'We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures,' Titus 3:3. Mark the last words, 'serving lusts and pleasures.' They were in pay to sin, willing to fight against God, and side with this his only enemy. Not a faculty of the soul or member of the body of an unconverted man which is not in arms against him. 'The carnal mind,' saith the apostle, 'is enmity against God,' Rom. 8:7. And if there be war in the mind, to be sure there can be no peace in the members--inferior faculties, I mean--of the soul, which are commanded all by it. Indeed, we are by nature worst in our best part; the enmity against God is chiefly seated in the superior faculties of the soul. As in armies, the common soldiery are wholly taken up with the booty and spoil they get by the war, without much minding one side or other, but the more principal officers, especially the princes or general, go into the field full of enmity against them that oppose them; so the inferior faculties seek only satisfaction to their sensual appetite in the booty that sin affords, but the superior faculties of the mind, these come forth more directly against God, and oppose his sovereignty; yea, if it could lay a plot effectually to take away the life of God himself, there is enmity enough in the carnal mind to put it in execution.

And as man is in arms against God, so is he against man. 'God is angry with the wicked every day;...he hath bent his bow and made it ready; he hath also prepared for him the instruments of his death,' Ps. 7:11-13. God hath set up his royal standard in defiance of all the sons and daughters of apostate Adam, who from his own mouth are proclaimed rebels and traitors to his crown and dignity; and as against such,

he hath taken the field, as with fire and sword, to be avenged on them. Yea, he gives the world sufficient testimony of his incensed wrath, by that of it which is revealed from heaven daily in the judgements executed upon sinners, and those, many of them, but 'of a span long'--before they can show what nature they have by actual sin--yet crushed to death by God's righteous foot, only for the viperous kind of which they come. At every door where sin sets it foot, there the wrath of God meets us. Every faculty of soul and member of body are used as a weapon of unrighteousness against God; so every one hath its portion of wrath, even to the tip of the tongue. As man is sinful all over, so is he cursed all over; inside and outside, soul and body, written all with woes and curses so close and full, that there is not room for another to interline or add to what God hath written.

In a word, so fiery is the Lord's wrath against sinful man, that all the creatures share with him in it. Though God takes his aim at man, and levels his arrows primarily at his very heart, yet as they go they slant upon the creature. God's curse blasts the whole creation for man's sake; and so he pays him some of his misery from the hand of those creatures which were primarily ordained to minister to him in his happy estate, yea, contribute some drops to the filling of his cup. As an enraged army makes spoil and havoc of all in their enemies' land--destroys their provision, stops or poisons their waters, burns up their houses, and lets out his fury on all his hand comes at--truly thus God plagues man in every creature, not one escapes his hand. The very bread we eat, water we drink, and air we breathe in, are poisoned with the curse of God; of which they who live longest die at last. All these, however, are no more to hell than the few files of men in a forlorn[2] to the whole body of an army. God doth but skirmish with sinners here, by some small parties of judgments, sent out to let them know they have an enemy alive, that observes their motions, takes the alarm their sins give him, and can be too hard for them when he pleaseth. But it is in hell where he falls on with his whole power. There sinners 'shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,' II Thes. 1:9. And so much for the first, that there is a quarrel between God and man: the second follows.

[The gospel effects the peace needed.]

Second. I shall show you that the gospel, and only the gospel, takes this quarrel up, and makes peace between God and man:--therefore called the 'gospel of peace.' This will appear in two particulars. First. The gospel presents us with the articles of peace which God offers graciously to treat upon with the children of men, and this none but the gospel doth. Second. The gospel, preached and published, is the great instrument of God to effect this peace thus offered.

First. The gospel presents us with the articles of peace which God graciously offers to treat and conclude an inviolable peace upon, with rebellious man. In it we have the whole method which God laid in his own thoughts from eternity of reconciling poor sinners to himself. The gospel, what is it but God's heart in print? The precious promises of the gospel, what are they but heaven's court-rolls translated into the creature's language? In them are exposed to the view of our faith all the counsels and purposes of love and mercy which were concluded on by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the recovery of lost man by Jesus Christ, who was sent as heaven's plenipotentiary to earth, fully empowered and enabled, not only by preaching to treat of a peace as desired on God's part to be concluded between God and man, but by the purchase of his death to procure a peace, and by his Spirit to seal and ratify the same to all those who --believing the credential letters which God sent with him in the miracles wrought by him, and especially the testimony which the Scripture gives of him--do by a faith unfeigned receive him into their souls as their only Lord and Saviour, Gal. 3:23.

This is such a notion as is not to be learned elsewhere. A deep silence we find concerning it in Aristotle and Tully. They cannot tell us how a poor sinner may be at peace with God. Nothing of this is to be spelled from the covenant God made with Adam. That shuts the sinner up in a dark dungeon of despair--bids him look for nothing but what the wrath of a just God can measure out to him. Thus the guilty creature is surrounded on every side as with a deluge of wrath --no hope nor help to be heard of--till the gospel, like the dove, brings the olive branch of peace, and tells him the tide is turned, and that flood of wrath which was poured on man for his sin is now fallen into another channel, even upon Christ, who was 'made a curse for us,' and hath not only drunk of the brook that lay in the way and hindered our passage to God, but hath drunk it off; so that where a sea was now appears dry land, a safe and fair causeway, called, 'a living way,' Heb. 10:20, by which every truly repenting and believing sinner may pass without any danger from the justice of God now appeased into the love and favor of God.

'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,' Rom. 5:1. We are entirely beholden to the gospel for the discovery of this secret, which the apostle solemnly acknowledgeth, where Christ is said to bring 'life and immortality to light by the gospel,' II Tim. 1:10. It lay hid in the womb of God's purpose, till the gospel arose, and let us into the knowledge of it, as the light of the sun reveals to the eye what was before, but what could not be seen without its light; and therefore, it is not only called 'a living way,' but 'a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us,' in the place forementioned--so 'new,' that the heart of man never was acquainted with one thought of it, till the gospel opens it, according to that of Isa. 42:16, 'I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known.'

Second. The gospel, published and preached, is the great instrument of God to effect this peace. Before peace is concluded betwixt God and the creature, both must be agreed; as God to pardon, so the sinner to accept and embrace peace upon God's own terms. But how shall this be done? The heart of man is so deeply rooted in its enmity against God, that it requires a strength to pluck up this equal with that which tears up mountains, and carries rocks from one place to another. The gospel preached is the instrument which God useth for the effecting of it. 'I am not ashamed,' saith the apostle, 'of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation,' Rom. 1:16. It is the chariot wherein the Spirit rides victoriously when he makes his entrance into the hearts of man--called therefore 'the ministration of the Spirit,' II Cor. 3:8. He fashions anew the heart, as he framed the world at first, with a word speaking. This is the day of God's 'power,' wherein he makes his people 'willing'--power indeed, to make those that had the seeds of war sown in their very natures against God willing to be friends with him. Unheard-of power! As if the beating of a drum should carry such a charm along with its sound as to make those on the enemy's side upon the hearing of it to throw down their arms, and seek peace at his hand against whom they even now took the field with great rage and fury. Such a secret power accompanies the gospel. It strikes many times not only the sinner's sword out of his hand while it is stretched out against God, but the enmity out of his heart, and brings the stoutest rebel upon his knee, humbly to crave the benefit of the articles of peace published in the gospel. It makes sinners so pliant and tractable to the call of God in the gospel, that they on a sudden, upon the hearing of a gospel sermon, forget their old natural affections which they have had to their beloved lusts, and leap out of their embraces with indignation, lest they should keep God and them at odds one moment longer. Now follows the third.

[Why God effects peace by the gospel.]

Third. Why doth God convey this peace of reconciliation unto the sons of men in this way and by this method? or, in plainer terms, why doth God chose to reconcile poor sinners to himself by Christ? For this

is the peace which the gospel proclaims, Col. 1:20, 'And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself;' and, ver. 21, 22, 'and you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.'

But let us reply. They are too bold with God who say that he could not find out another way. Who can tell that, except God himself had told him so? Alas! how unmeet is the short line of our created understanding for such a daring attempt as to fathom the unsearchableness of God's omnipotent wisdom! --to determine what God can, and what he cannot do! But we may say, and not forget to revere the Majesty of heaven, that the wisdom of God could not have laid the method of salvation more advantageous to the exalting of his own glorious name, and his poor creatures' happiness, than in this expedient of reconciling them to himself by Christ our great Peace-maker. This transaction hath in it a happy temperament to solve all the difficulties on either hand; and, for its mysterious contrivance, it exceeds the workmanship which God put forth in making this exterior world--though in its kind so perfect and so glorious that the least creature tells its maker to be a Deity, and puts the atheist to shame in his own conscience that will not believe so; yet, I say, the plan of reconciliation exceeds this goodly frame of heaven and earth as far as the watch itself doth the case which covers it. Indeed, God intended, by this way of reconciling poor sinners to himself, to make work for angels and saints to admire the mystery of his wisdom, power, and love therein, to everlasting.

O, when they shall all meet together in heaven, and there have the whole counsel of God unfolded to them!--when they shall behold what seas were dried up, and what rocks of creature impossibilities digged through, by the omnipotent wisdom and love of God, before a sinner's peace could be obtained, and then behold the work, notwithstanding all this, to be effected and brought to a happy perfection--O how will they be swallowed up in adoring the abyss of his wisdom, who laid the platform of all this according to the eternal counsel of his own will! Surely the sun doth not so much exceed the strength of our mortal eyes as the glory of this will their understandings from ever fully comprehending it. This, this is the piece which God drew on purpose, for its rare workmanship, to beautify heaven itself withal. When Christ returned to heaven he carried none of this world's rarities with him--not its silver and gold, not crowns and diadems, which here men venture their lives, yea part with their souls, so prodigally for. Alas! what are these, and the whole pride and gallantry of this world, to heaven? That which it glories most of, suits heaven no better than the beggar's dish and scraps do a prince's table; or the patched, tattered coat of the one, the wardrobe of the other. No, the Lord Christ came on a higher design than this to earth. The enterprise he undertook to achieve was to negotiate, yea effect, a peace betwixt God and his rebel creature man, that had by his revolt incurred his just wrath and vengeance. This was a work that became God himself so well to engage in, that he thought none high and worthy enough to be trusted with the transacting of it beneath his only Son, who stayed here but while he had brought his negotiation to a happy period, and then carried the joyful tidings of its being finished back with him to heaven, which made his return infinitely welcome to his Father, and all the glorious inhabitants of heaven, his attendants. But I shall proceed to give some more particular answer to the question propounded.

[Particular reasons why God adopts

the method of reconciliation by the gospel.]

Reason First. God lays this method of reconciling sinners to himself by Christ, that he might give the deepest testimony of his perfect hatred to sin in that very act wherein he expresseth the highest love and

mercy to sinners. No act of mercy and love like that of pardoning sin. To receive a reconciled sinner into heaven is not so great an advance as to take a rebel into a state of favour and reconciliation. The terms here are infinitely wider. There is reason to expect the one, none to look for the other.

It is pure mercy to pardon, but truth, being pardoned, to save, Micah 7:19, 20. Well, when God puts forth this very act, he will have the creature see his hatred to sin written upon the face of that love he shows to the sinner. And truly this was but needful, if we consider how hard it is for our corrupt hearts to conceive of God's mercy without some dishonourable reflection upon his holiness. 'I kept silence,' saith God, Ps. 50:21. And what inference doth the wicked draw from thence?

'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself,' that is, 'thou thoughtest I liked sin as well as thyself.' Now, if so plain and easy a text as God's forbearing mercy be wrested, and a false gloss, so repugnant, not only to the end of God therein, but to the holy nature of God, imposed, how much more subject is forgiving mercy--that is so far superlative to that, and infinitely more luscious to the sinner's palate--to be abused? Some men gaze so long on this pleasing object that they are not willing to look off, and see any other attribute of God.

Now, in this way of reconciling himself to sinners by Christ, he hath given such an argument to convince sinners that he is an implacable hater of sin, as hath not its fellow. It is true, every threat in the Bible tells us that sin finds no favour in God's heart; the guilty consciences of men, that hunt them home, and follow them into their own bosoms, continually yelling and crying damnation in their ears; the remarkable judgments which now and then take hold of sinners in this world; and much more the furnace which is heating for them in another world, show abundantly how hot and burning God's heart within him is in wrath against sin.

But, when we see him run upon his Son, and lay the envenomed knife of his wrath to his throat, yea, thrust it into his very heart, and there let it stick--for all the supplications and prayers which in his bitter agonies he offered up to his Father, 'with strong crying and tears'--without the least sparing of him, till he had forced his life, in a throng of sad groans and sighs, out of his body, and therewith paid justice the full debt, which he had, as man's surety, undertaken to discharge--this, this I say, doth give us a greater advantage to conceive of God's hatred to sin, than if we could stand in a place to see what entertainment the damned find in hell, and at once behold all the torments they endure.

Alas! their backs are not broad enough to bear the whole weight of God's wrath at once--it being infinite and they finite, which, if they could, we would not find them lying in that prison for nonpayment. But behold one here who had the whole curse of sin at once upon his back. Indeed, their sufferings are infinite extensivè--extensively, because everlasting; but his were infinite intensivè --intensively. He paid in one sum what they shall be ever paying, and yet never come to the last farthing of.

'The chastisement of our peace was upon him,' Isa. 53:5. 'the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all,' ver. 6. Or [as it is in the margin], 'he hath made the iniquity of us all to meet in him.' The whole curse met in him, as all streams do in the sea--a virtual collection of all the threatenings denounced against sin, and all laid on him. And now, take but one step more, and consider in how near relation Christ stood to God, as also the infinite and unspeakable love with which this relation was filled, and mutually endeared on each hand, and this at the very same time when he ascended the stage for this bloody tragedy to be acted on him in; and, I think, that you are at the highest stair the word of God can lead you to ascend by, into the meditation of this subject.

Should you see a father that has but one only son, and can have no more, make him his mittimus to prison; come into court himself, and sit judge upon his life; and with his own lips pass sentence of death upon him, and order that it be executed with the most exquisite torments that may be, yea, go to the place himself, and with his own eyes, and those not full of water, as mourning for his death, but full of fire and fury--yea, a countenance in every way so set as might tell all that see it, the man took pleasure in his child's death;--should you see this, you would say, Surely he bitterly hates his son, or the sin his son hath committed. This you see in God the Father towards his Son. It was he, more than men or devils, that procured his death. Christ took notice of this, that the warrant for his death had his Father's hand and seal to it. 'Shall I not drink of the cup my Father gives me?' Yea, he stands by and rejoiceth in it. His blood was the wine that made glad

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