

A Cluster of Canaan's Grapes

Several experimental truths received through
private communion with God by His Spirit,
grounded on Scripture, and presented to open
view for public edification.

By the Right Honorable,
Sir Robert Tichborne,
Lord Mayor of the City of London.

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the
world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen
the weak things of the world to confound the things
which are mighty." I Cor.1:27.

Imprimatur, Joseph Caryl.

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RECOMMENDATION

I have delightfully looked upon these "Clusters of Canaan's Grapes," and have helped them to the Press, that they may be wine for common drinking; I only mind the reader, that these grapes yield the New Wine of the Gospel; let him take heed that he puts it not into the Old Bottles of envy or of malice, of prejudice or of contempt; for if he do, his bottles will break; and though the wine {because it is saving wine} cannot but be safe, yet he himself will be a loser, yea, in danger to be lost; whereas, his Profit and Salvation are {I believe, on this side of the Glory of God} the highest end of the author, in this Publication, as they are of the Licenser, Joseph Caryl.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY

**To the Right Honorable and Truly Noble,
Thomas Lord Fairfax, &c.**

I have observed, that persons engaged by love, have used this way to make their acknowledgments that when they give their labours to the world's view, they present them to that hand which has by kindness most obliged them; I judge this practice to arise from ingenuity of spirit, that where men cannot pay a debt, there they will acknowledge themselves debtors. Now I beseech your Excellency to give me leave to take up this practice, as I am not able to pay the obligations of your lordships love and kindness to me; nor in this do I attempt any higher thing, than to acknowledge myself your lordships debtor for more undeserved favours than any person I know, amongst those many thousands that are fellow-debtors with me. And if your Excellency shall be pleased to own and accept of this poor acknowledgment, I shall declare it to be the fruits of your own wonted goodness, and myself not at all the less, but the more your debtor. I am the more encouraged to dedicate this to your lordship, from the observation that I have made of your spirit, to be willing to own truth and honesty in the lowest person

and the meanest dress. What I have presented to your hands, I trust will be found truths by the Word and Spirit of truth; but I confess unto your lordship, it is a very mean attire, without the ornament of human learning; and I express worldlings should slight and scorn it upon that account; but if they appear truths, as the truth is in Jesus, I am confident they will be beautiful in your eye. I have had much struggling between my flesh and spirit, whether to bury, or to bring forth these breathings of God upon my soul. The Spirit of God hath made them very sweet to me, and my spirit judged they might be so to others, therefore was I willing to breathe them forth; but then my flesh objected that the style was low and mean, and that this subject out of my hand would administer matter of scorn from the world; and if one of a thousand did value it, yet a thousand for one would slight me and it. Until it pleased God to carry me above scorn, I could not rise to this resolution, to bring that forth to the world, which God by his Spirit had brought into my soul; but when I had resolved the world should have it, I was not long to seek in myself of a hand first to present it to, but resolved to pursue upon your exceeding love and goodness, so as to present it unto your lordship as the acknowledgment of my real affections and abundant engagements to your Excellency. Sir, I bless the Lord that I have no base ends in this appearing to the world, for if the reasonings of my flesh could have prevailed, this had never been an object for worldlings scorn. And if the Lord shall give you time to read it, I hope it will appear to your Excellency, and to every spiritual eye that shall look into it, that my Design is to lift up something above myself, namely God in Christ. And finding the same spirit to be in your bosom, I am encouraged to dedicate this following treatise to your lordship, and take that boldness as to subscribe myself your very much engaged, and ever faithful servant,

Robert Tichborne.

THE CONTENTS OF THE SEVERAL CHAPTERS CONTAINED IN THIS BOOK.

Love to all saints shows union with Christ. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35.

What Christ has borne for saints they shall never bear themselves. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith; but, the man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Gal.3:10-13.

God's children have His Spirit to walk and work in. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom.8:14-16.

God's love gives saints to know they shall appear like Christ. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." I John 3:1-2.

Christ is the food of living souls. "I am that bread of life." John 6:48.

Christ's reign by His Spirit is the saints liberty from bondage. "To redeem them that were under the law, that

we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal.4:5-6.

Saints are complete before God in their union with Christ. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." Col.2:9-10.

Free Grace in God justifieth and redeemeth through Christ. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Rom.3:24.

Christ and the new creature are inseparable. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Cor.5:17.

Vanity and vexation of spirit compasses all things under the sun. "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Eccl.1:14.

A saints excellency is to have no will in himself but the will of God. "Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Luke 22:42.

No man exceeds another in excellency, but by received mercies. "For who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" I Cor.4:7.

None but Christ can be a proper subject for a saint to glory in. "That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." I Cor.1:29-31.

Saints have victory through Christ over death, and by faith glory in it. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I Cor.15:55-57.

Biographical Sketch.

Robert Tichborne, eldest son of Robert Tichborne of the Skinners' Company, was born in London around 1610. His Grandfather was John Tichborne of Cowden, Kent, who was a direct descendant of Sir Roger de Tichborne, a Noble Knight who flourished in the Reign of King Henry II. Brought up to follow his father's business into the Skinners' Company, {who engaged in the trade of skins and furs,} from apprentice in 1631 to his freedom in 1637; young Tichborne ranked high among the City Merchants of London at the outbreak of the Civil War. In 1636 he joined the Honourable Artillery Company of London, and by 1642 served as a Captain in the Yellow Regiment of the London Trained Bands, which at that time were the City of London's Militia, composed of householders who fulfilled their constitutional obligation to maintain arms and serve in the defense of their City. On the outbreak of civil war he was quick to display a militant Parliamentarianism, and in 1643 became Lieutenant-Colonel of a regiment of London Auxiliaries. In the spring of 1643 he joined other City militants on a London subcommittee established at Salters' Hall to raise a volunteer citizens' army. This brought him into close contact with other emerging leaders of political Independency in the City. After the passing of Cromwell's "Self-Denying Ordinance," in April of 1645, when the Parliamentary Army was remodeled, he obtained a Captain's commission in that Army. Tichborne was speedily promoted to the rank of a Colonel; and in 1647 was appointed Commander of the Tower of London by General Thomas Fairfax.

By this time, he was considered as one of Cromwell's 'saints' and according to an official journal entry dated December 24, 1647, at a Council of War, "Cromwell, Ireton and Tichborne prayed, and from Scripture exhorted to Unity and Obedience to Commands." He likewise appears to have been one of the greatest advocates for the destruction and execution of King Charles I, presenting a petition from the Council of London for his trial; and as a Commissioner of the High

Court of Justice, gave judgment, and signed the fatal warrant for his execution on January 27th, 1649. It was also during that eventful year that both his religious works were printed. "A Cluster of Canaan's Grapes," dedicated to Lord Thomas Fairfax; and "The Rest of Faith," which he dedicated to Oliver Cromwell. Notwithstanding the pressure of political involvement during this period, it would appear that he also still managed time to attend to his trade, and thereby largely increased his fortune. Civic honours were heaped upon him, and with the ensuing political transformation in London, Tichborne was elected Alderman for Farringdon in July 1649, and a London Sheriff and Master of the Skinners' Company in 1650. In 1653 Tichborne was elected as one of the members for London of that Parliament which gave Oliver Cromwell the Protectorship. The Lord Protector himself knighted him on December 15, 1655, and summoned him to his House of Lords in December of 1657. In the autumn of 1656 he was elected Lord Mayor of the City of London, and took his oath of Office at Westminster, on October 29, 1656. Of course, upon Cromwell's death, {on the 3rd of September in 1658,} Tichborne's political world began to crumble; and as early as April 1660, {after the failure of establishing Cromwell's son Richard as Ruler of England, and just prior to Charles II being proclaimed King again on May 14th,} Tichborne, along with John Ireton, {John Ireton, 1615–1689, also Lord Mayor of London, and brother of General Henry Ireton. He was knighted by Oliver Cromwell. In 1652 he was appointed a Sheriff of London and in 1658 elected Lord Mayor of London. In 1660 at the Restoration, he was excepted from the Act of Indemnity, and for a time imprisoned in the Tower of London,} who were both now considered highly dangerous from their firm adherence to Cromwell, were both arrested, charged with high treason, all their wealth confiscated and were sent to the Tower of London to await their trial. Tichborne writes, "it is not unknown to us under how many scandals we groan, and how our Names hang up a sunning in all parts of the Nation, all bedaubed with infamous imputations, like an old greasy pair of breeches embroidered with Fullers Earth. We confess that

according to the proverb, men that have ill names are as good as half hanged."

Upon sentencing Tichborne humbly confessed to his activity in the execution of Charles Stuart; and among other things said, "my Lord, it was my unhappiness to be called to so sad a work, when I had so few years over my head; a person neither bred up in the laws, nor in Parliament, where laws are made. I can say with a clear conscience, I had no more enmity in my heart to his Majesty than I had to my wife that lay in my bosom - had I known that then which I do now, {I do not mean, my Lord, my afflictions and sufferings; it is not my sufferings make me acknowledge,} I would have chosen a red hot oven to have gone into as soon as that meeting - the Great God before whom we all stand hath shown his tender mercy to persons upon repentance. Paul tells us, though a blasphemer and a persecutor of Christ, it being done ignorantly, upon repentance he found mercy. My Lord, mercy I have found, and I do not doubt mercy I shall find. My Lord, I came in upon proclamation; and now I am here, I have in truth, given your Lordship a clear and full account, whatever the Law shall pronounce, because I was ignorant. Yet, I hope, there will be room found for that mercy and grace that I think was intended by the proclamation, and, I hope, by the Parliament of England. I shall say no more; but in pleading of that, humbly beg that your Lordships will be instrumental to the King and Parliament on my behalf." This humble confession and the fact that he had previously saved some Royalists from death by execution, kept him from immediate execution, but he never regained his liberty. He spent the rest of his days in prison, although his wife and children were permitted to live with him during his imprisonment in Dover Castle in 1664-74. He died in the Tower of London on 6 July 1682, and was buried with the utmost confidentiality in Mercers' Chapel. The irony of his imprisonment is that he became a prisoner in the very fortress of which he had once commanded.

In an attempt to vindicate himself from the slanders cast upon him, he wrote {whilst imprisoned} this rather whimsical account of himself, "for myself, I was

always pragmatical, and withal very schismatical; and being in the cave of Narrow-fortune, I made my Mother the City drunk with the Clusters which I brought from Canaan, {"Cluster of Canaan's Grapes," was published in 1657,} and she in her drink made me a Colonel. Now because I had not so much money then, as I have now, I even contented myself with my Lord of Pembroke's old clothes, and in them my thought was that I was as fine as the best Colonel of them all. Some that saw me march before my Regiment would say, what is the old Earl of Pembroke risen again from the dead? No foolish Galatians, it was not he, for the dead live not, so that it was not my Lord of Pembroke that lived in my clothes, but I that lived in my Lord of Pembroke's old clothes. Why if the Earl of Pembroke had carried his old clothes to his grave, I could not have had them, neither should I have desired them; but since that he had no need of taking them along with him, as indeed there is no need of clothes where whoremasters and swearers remain, because the place is heated with perpetual fires, even like a Glass-house, should my Lord of Pembroke's old clothes have been thrown away? Nay verily, but they are in an error that say so; and I shall say this to the face of the whole world, that for my part I think my Lord of Pembroke was more beholding to that servant that sold me his clothes, than to any man in the world, for that he raised unto his Lord a living monument. But it was not my Lord of Pembroke's clothes that made me famous, it was a certain deliberate, grave, serious, pithy, godly, and most obstreperous piece of {I will not say} sense, because I was the Author, but let them be judges that have patience to read it. Truly it will require some patience in a man to read it all over. So that if patience be a virtue, he that reads it quite through must needs be virtuous. I entitled it a Cluster of Canaan's Grapes, meaning the grapes which the spies brought out of Canaan. Truly I think it is ominous to bring Grapes from Canaan; for from the time I brought home my Clusters, have I been counted a Spy too, not without reason; for to tell the truth, I have been a spy upon the City ever since. This book made me appear to the world such a simple fellow, as if butter itself would

not melt in my mouth. But Cromwell my very good Lord and Master, a man of a most piercing apprehension, finding that my mouth was not only able to melt the butter, but that my throat also was wide enough to swallow the gudgeons, and perceiving me to have an ostrich conscience, he took me into his arms, and said, Friend Tichborne, I find thee as fit for my turn as if I had made thee myself, and therefore do but help me to carry on this great work of mine, and I will reward thee, not, that like a saint thou shalt trust me till the world to come, but I will reward thee in this world, yea even in this world wherein thou now livest. Dost thou want honour? I will make thee Lord Mayor of London. Dost thou want money? Thou shalt be my Danae, and I will shower gold into thy lap. Say you so, thought I, money will make a Mayor to go. Truly it made me to go about many designs which few men but he thanked me for; and I will say thus much for myself, and a fig for myself, that if faithfulness and reality be virtuous, I was virtuous, for I was always faithful and real to him I served."

He further writes, "thus, I hope, we have fully satisfied the world, if the world be not as unreasonable as ourselves; for I confess I think 'twas not a small matter that satisfied us. 'Tis true, perhaps we may be a little puzzled what to say at the last day; but be of good comfort Brother Ireton, for if it be impossible for Saints to err, then it will go well enough of our side. Now I am as confident as I stand here we are two Saints; for I have proved it in my most odoriferous treatise of Muscadine, {a grape vine,} which gives you such essential marks of a Saint, that it may indeed be called the saints butter-print. You may there see a saint cut as exactly as a French gown. Now does anybody think that my soul could breathe forth such experiences and holy truths, and I be a knave? Now if there were nothing else, this were enough to satisfy any reasonable man. And therefore I shall say no more till I shall come to preach to the multitude upon a Ladder, {a reference to the ladder leading up to his execution, which would of giving him a brief platform to vindicate his cause, which at that time, he felt certain, would be his dreaded portion,} and then

you shall hear as much again, if it be but only to delay time." {THE APOLOGY OF Robert Tichborne & John Ireton. Being a serious VINDICATION of themselves and the GOOD OLD CAUSE, from the Imputations cast upon them, and it by the triumphing City and Nation in this their day of Desertion, London, 1660.}

According to Wilson, {Dissenting Churches Vol. 1,} there is a report that Tichborne preached frequently in William Kiffin's Devonshire Square {Particular Baptist} Assembly during the reign of Oliver Cromwell; and another source informs us that Tichborne also had strong spiritual ties with George Cokayne, {1619-1691,} an Independent Minister, whose London Congregation met at St Pancras, Soper Lane, and of which congregation Tichborne himself was a member. This is the same Cokayne, who joined with Henry Pinnell in 1646, in writing a long recommendatory preface to the works of Tobias Crisp. {"Christ alone Exalted," Volume III, 1646.} A close examination of Tichborne's "Cluster of Grapes" warrant the speculation that these were preached sermons that were {after their delivery} edited, and perhaps improved by the author; and if so; {and if Tichborne did frequently preach at Devonshire Square,} these discourses may indeed be the closest example of the type of preaching that characterized this formative Particular Baptist Assembly. Certainly, when one compares the contents of this work with the body of truth as set forth in the London Confession of 1646; the writings of Samuel Richardson, {another early Particular Baptist,} and the early sentiments of William Kiffin himself; one can see a beautiful Gospel Accord, as these messages flow simultaneously with the essence of Heavenly Truth contended for at this time; and more especially in their essential exaltation of Christ. {A note of interest obtained from the Cromwell Family Papers at the Cambridgeshire Record Office is the fact that Tichborne; who was Lord Mayor of London at the time; performed the marriage ceremony of William Kiffin's daughter Hannah, who in 1657 married Benjamin Hewling; a rich and eminent Turkey merchant, and citizen of London. The paper states

that the marriage was witnessed by both William Kiffin and Hanserd Knollys.}

Joseph Caryl, {Nonconformist 1602-1673,} in an attempt to promote Tichborne's book said, "I have delightfully looked upon these Clusters of Canaan's Grapes, and have helped them to the Press, that they may be wine for common drinking; I only mind the reader, that these Grapes yield the New Wine of the Gospel; let him take heed he puts it not into the Old Bottles of envy or of malice, of prejudice or of contempt; for if he do, his bottles will break; and though the wine, {because it is saving wine,} cannot but be safe, yet himself will be a loser, yea, in danger to be lost; whereas, his profit and salvation are {I believe, on this side the glory of God} the highest end of the author, is this publication, as they are of the licenser."

In conclusion let us examine a few of Tichborne's own motives for sending forth his book, as found in its Preface to the Readers, "I know that you will wonder why I mean to appear in print, especially in these times, when plain truths from the most of men, will find nothing else but plain scorn; most men have sight but on one side, and their stomachs so full of crudity's, that they cannot else but vomit up with scorn in the face of him that brings them, even saving truths; beside you will think I cannot be ignorant but to know, that my very name will prejudice these truths unto many that live by fancy more than faith; such as will cavil with all Truth that comes by hand they like not, and have little other grounds for the Truth they take up, but that it come by such hands that they at present fancy. I confess that I cannot make myself so ignorant as not to understand these things; nor is it my design by appearing in print to make myself public, for I expect by it to be the derision of most men; nor do I print because I think the press wants work, for I am thoroughly convinced that much evil hath overspread this Land by those many unsavoury pamphlets, and those rending, dividing principles which have this way been spread abroad, by which the members of Christ have been scandalized, rent and divided and have almost made themselves a prey to the wild boars, and the subtle foxes,

which have no higher ends but to destroy the tender vines. The reasons why I choose to render myself to the world's scorn in this matter and manner are these. It is the manifesting of his Free Grace that is my design in giving forth freely as I received; and I shall I trust with much more ease bear the reproaches of the world than I could a concealment of the love of God in Christ. - God hath molded me into his will, and I do freely cast myself upon his love and power, to bear up my spirit to carry me through good and evil reports, and I hope shall ever esteem of this worlds scorn as not worthy of thoughts in that day when God shall manifest his will and work to me. A second reason why I thus appear, is that I might be a Christian servant to fellow saints. God is as free in giving as he is in saving, he gives what he pleaseth, how he pleaseth, when he pleaseth, and by whom he pleaseth; and this I have in some measure experienced of God, and I think it my duty to be a servant to God and to fellow saints, to bring unto them what I have received from him. When saints reveal their knowledge and experience of God, they do thereby confirm, strengthen and build up one another in their most holy faith; and I know of no higher work that saints on earth have than this, and were it more in practice, I do verily believe that the beauty of holiness and the power of godliness would be more transparent; but instead of serving one another this way in the Spirit of God, we are devouring and destroying one another by an evil spirit of lying and slandering, and needless jealousies one of another. This is either in the beginning or the end of most men's discourses, of their printings; and it hath been, {where I am sure it ought not to be,} in men's preachings. These tares which the evil man hath sown amongst the good seed have exceedingly scandalized the Gospel of Christ with the professors thereof; and if God delight in this generation, he will exceedingly humble us under this very thing. Instead of crucifying Christ in one another, saints should be servants to carry Christ to each other; I mean their light in Christ, and their experiences of the love, faithfulness and holiness of God. This would increase love to God and his people instead of devouring; beget embracings into the

bosom and arms of love, and faithfulness; not to stab and scandalize, but to honour and vindicate every child of God. A third reason that moves me in this, to stir up those many thousands which this land affords that are abundantly more able to take up this necessary work. Truly it is sad to see how frothy and light things do take up the spirits of able and godly men, when is this only thing necessary is as it were quite forgotten, not only dead but buried out of sight. I do believe these last seven years have brought forth as little of this fruit, as any seven years before, in which men did complain that they dare not send truths abroad, lest in so doing they should be confined to prisons. Had the seven years liberty that the Press has had been improved in this, through the blessing of God, it might have left such monuments of God in the world as after ages might have blessed him for. I do believe Satan hath blinded much of this work from appearing by the scandal and reproach of the world which is usually cast upon it; truly I found it a very hard thing to get over, but when God gave me to understand, that the good and comfort of one soul was of greater weight than the reproach of all the world, I was immediately carried above that temptation, and I hear mention it to stir up others to the same work; for doubtless God hath many thousand poor saints in this Kingdom which will gladly gather up those pearls of Divine truths, which the swine of the world trample under their feet; and if but one soul bless God in truth for the revealing of these truths, though many thousands profane ones should come scorn me to my face, yet I shall not lose my end, nor repent of my reproaches, if God be honoured by them. My last reason is to give the world a true discovery of my spirit, and light in those things which I count weighty, and every truth of them to be more concernment than a thousand worlds. I cannot tell the thoughts of men concerning myself, nor will presume to take the place of God to judge the thoughts of any; but this I can truly tell that in the following truths I have clearly opened my heart to the view of every reader, and have faithfully given to the world what light God hath given to me in those main truths and fundamentals of

Salvation, in which my soul lives, and what I can cheerfully die in, the next moment. - I shall hold you no longer in the porch, but open every door of the house that you may both read and see the truths of God made known by his Spirit, to the weakest, and one as unworthy as any of his servants."

In conclusion, whilst we warmly recommend these choice discourses to any discerning believer in Christ, we likewise would bring to the attention of any weak, wounded or dejected brethren, struggling daily with the body of their death, and perhaps confounded by reason of their many failures and shortcomings; and, lest in discovering the heavenly nature of that life of separation, self-mortification and almost 'hyper' spirituality as sometimes contended for by the author, would tend to become nearly confounded as enabled to contemplate the 'poor' state, {in comparison,} that they often find themselves in, so easily forgetting the riches that belong to them in Christ Jesus, {who is indeed made unto his people all their wisdom, righteousness and sanctification,} that we look not to the things which are seen, felt or even agonized over, but, that as enabled to do so, consider only Him, that saves to the uttermost all that the Father intended for him to save, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." Phil.3:13. Overall, these messages emit such a distinctive savor of Christ, that those who have been granted a spiritual appetite to relish all things relating to his Person & Work, will not go away dissatisfied!

TO THE READERS.

Readers, if you know what you look for, I will tell you what you shall find; that so you may either save your labours or attain your ends; you shall have truth in a mean attire set before your eyes, the truths of God which to a spiritual eye carry their own beauty; but you will find them without art, not adorned with human learning, and so without

beauty to a fleshly eye. I know you will wonder what I mean to appear in print, especially in these times, when plain truths from the most of men, will find nothing else but plain scorn; most men have sight but on one side, and their stomachs so full of crudities, that they cannot bear but vomit up with scorn in the face of him that brings them, even saving truths. Besides you will think I cannot be ignorant but to know, that my name will prejudice these truths unto many that live by fancy more than faith; such as will cavil with all truth that comes by a hand they like not, and have little other grounds for the truth they take up, but that they come by such hands that they at present fancy. I confess that I cannot make myself so ignorant as not to understand these things, nor is it my design by appearing in print to make myself public, for I expect by it to be the derision of most men, nor do I print because I think the Press wants work, for I am thoroughly convinced that much evil has overspread this land by those many unsavory pamphlets, and those rending, dividing principles which have this way been spread abroad, by which the members of Christ have been scandalized, rent and divided and have almost made themselves a prey to the wild boars, and the subtle foxes, which have no higher ends but to destroy the tender vines. The reasons why I choose to render myself to the worlds scorn in this matter and manner, are these.

First, in satisfying my conscience in obedience to God in some Scriptures set upon my spirit by the LORD himself I trust, when as my flesh and spirit did contend about this matter; and the first is this. "Freely ye have received freely give;" though this was spoken first to the Apostles, yet I think it does not exclude any, but includes every Saint and Disciple of Christ to be Free in the giving forth of their knowledge, experience and enjoyment of God in Christ by His Spirit to the world; and this is my case, for what I give I have freely received from the Lord in secret, when no eye but his own eye did see me. I do acknowledge it is the Free Grace of God that makes known any tittle of truth to me, and if my heart deceive me not, it is the manifesting of this Free Grace that is my design in giving forth freely as I receive; I shall I trust

with much more ease bear the reproaches of the world, than I could a concealment of the love of God in Christ. In another Scripture I find that light is not to be put under a bushel but to be held forth, that according to its nature it may lighten others, and because what Saints have, they have received, and every talent is to be improved to the Master's use, and the standing rule to God's people; that all things be done to edification, and that most which may edify most, therefore in obedience to these Scriptures, God hath molded me into his will, and I do freely cast myself upon this Love and Power, to bear up my spirit to carry me through good and evil reports, and I hope that I shall ever esteem of the world's scorns as not worthy of thoughts in that day when God shall manifest His will and work to me.

A second reason why I thus appear, is, that I might be a Christian servant to fellow Saints. God is as free in giving as he is in saving, he gives what he pleases, how he pleases, when he pleases and by whom he pleases, and this I have in some measure experimented of God, and think it my duty to be a servant to God and to fellow Saints, to bring unto them what I have received from him. When Saints reveal their knowledge and experience of God, they do thereby confirm, strengthen, and build up one another in their most holy faith; and I know no higher work that Saints on earth have than this, and were it more in practice, I do verily believe that the beauty of Holiness and the power of Godliness would be more transparent; but instead of serving one another this way in the Spirit of God, we are devouring and destroying one another by an evil spirit of lying and slandering, fomenting unchristian and needless jealousies one of another. This is either in the beginning or the end of most men's discourses, and of their printings; and it has been, where I am sure it ought not to be, in men's preachings. These tares which the enemy hath sown amongst the good seed have exceedingly scandalized the Gospel of Christ, with the professors thereof; and if God delight in this generation, he will exceedingly humble us under this very thing; instead of crucifying Christ in one another, saints should be servants to carry Christ to each other; I mean

their light in Christ, and their experiences of the love, faithfulness, and holiness of God; for this would increase love to God and His people instead of devouring; beget embracings into the bosom and arms of love, and faithfulness, not to belie and scandalize but to honour and vindicate the Grace of God in its influence of love to all the members of Christ.

A third reason that moves in me is this, to stir up those many thousands which this land affords that are abundantly more able to take up this necessary work. Truly it is sad to see how frothy and light things do take up the spirits of able and godly men, when as this only thing necessary is as it were quite forgotten, not only dead but buried out of sight; for I do believe these last seven years have brought forth as little of this fruit, as any seven years before, in which men did complain they durst not send truth abroad, lest so doing should confine them to prisons, had these seven years liberty the press has, been improved in this, through the blessing of God, it might have left such monuments of God in the world as after ages might have blessed him for; as I do believe that Satan hath blinded much of this work from appearing by the scandal and reproach of the world which is usually cast upon it. Truly I found it a very hard thing to get over, but when God gave me to understand, that the good and comfort of one soul was of greater weight than the reproach of all the world; I was immediately carried above that temptation, and I here mention it to stir up others to the same work, for doubtless God has many thousand poor Saints in this Kingdom which will gladly gather up those pearls of divine truths, which the swine of the world trample under their feet; and if but one soul blessed God in truth for the revealing of these truths, though many thousands profane ones should scorn me to my face, yet I shall not lose my end, nor repent for any reproaches, if God be honoured by them.

My last reason is this, to give the world a true discovery of my spirit, and light in those things which I count weighty, and every truth of them to be of more concernment than a thousand worlds. I cannot tell the thoughts of men concerning myself, nor will presume to

take the place of God to judge the thoughts of any; but this I can truly tell that in the following truths I have clearly opened my heart to the view of every reader, and have faithfully given to the world what light God hath given to me in those main truths, and fundamentals of Salvation, in which my soul lives, and what I can cheerfully die in, the next moment.

This is all I shall say, that I bless the Lord I am single hearted in this work, let men judge of me and it according to their light, for I have no other end than this, that the Eternal Loving Kindness and Free Grace of God may be lifted up in the world, and that all His children may know the absolute goodness of the Lord. I confess these truths of God were in my soul, like new wine in old bottles, and that my flesh could imprison them no longer, and now they are abroad give me leave reader with them to give thee a word of caution.

If thou be spiritual and understand these truths of God in the spirit, and find them sweet, then bless the Lord, let thy heart praise him and thy eye be singly set on him, overlook the creature wholly, unless it be to glory in the Lord that has magnified his Free Grace to so weak a one as myself is.

I acknowledge the truths to be God's, and revealed by his Spirit of Truth, so that the beauty of them must center nowhere but in him, but all the failings and weaknesses from first to last are mine, the fruits of my flesh and darkness.

I beseech you let God have His due Glory, though you blame me for my failings; let not any weaknesses prejudice any soul against the precious truths of the Gospel of Christ. I trust there is nothing but what are truths of God, though weakly managed, and if any one amongst those many thousands more discerning eyes than mine shall find out anything that is not so, I trust if in a spirit of love and meekness it may be made known to me, and I shall bless God for that soul, and honour his truth by acknowledging my own errors.

And to the scorner I shall only say this, I wish you could singly scorn me in it and not God, for then would your sin be the less, and so would my sorrow too; for God

hath carried me above your scorns, and were not your sins increased by it, the care of either side would be very small. Let me deal plainly with you, for you wrong your selves, not me, for I can both live and die full of joy and rest in the love of God; though you shall please your selves in scorning and deriding me, and all the return I shall make to this, will be to pity your darkness, and to pray the Lord to give you the light of His Spirit, by which you may truly know him, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; and then I know you will be new creatures.

I shall hold you no longer in the porch, but open every door of the house that you may both read and see the truths of God made known by His Spirit, to the weakest, and one as unworthy as any of His servants,

Robert Tichborne.

A Cluster of Canaan's Grapes.

Chapter 1.

Love to all saints shows Union with Christ.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35.

The foregoing verse holds out a Command from Christ, that all his Disciples, those which love and follow him should love one another; and to this command our Saviour holds forth his love as a pattern and incitation to us to love one another, "that ye love one another, {saith Christ,} as I have loved you." John 13:34. Our Saviour spake these words a little before his death, that they might be of the more force, and make the more impression upon the souls of his Disciples, as if he should say, remember my dying love, and let it live in your bosom, as a precept and example for you to love one another. In this thirty-fifth verse our Saviour advances love, holy spiritual love, and makes it a beacon of discovery. This love is the love of Christ within us, for without him we can do nothing. Now Christ makes a double discovery by this love; the first is this, that he reveals God his Father and our Father, and himself to us; secondly, by this love he makes a discovery of saints to the world, as they are in union and communion with him; the latter of these is that which is held forth in this verse; namely, a saint manifesting to the world his Union with Christ, by his love to every fellow member, as bearing Christ's image.

The point that naturally flows from these words is this, that love to all saints is a plain manifestation of our Union and Communion with Christ. When I say all saints, I admit of no distinction but only saintship, living in the spirit up to their interest as disciples and followers of Christ; not saints of such or such a judgment in point of worship; nor saints of a higher or lower growth; nor saints distinguished by their various forms of discipline, but as

branches of the true Vine, which in their Union with Christ brings forth the fruits of the beauty of holiness and the power of godliness. Christ gives this as a general command to all his disciples, to love one another, John 15:17, our Saviour tells us this, as I am in the Father, so are you in me, and this is a good foundation of love, therefore "love one another, as I have loved you." John 15:12. And in I Jn.4:21, "and this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also," as if the Holy Ghost had said, those that truly love God will love his image wherever they find it. Our Saviour in John 17:20,21, prays upon this principle, for he prays for all that shall believe in him, as his love is not stinted only unto Apostles or Disciples, persons of greatest gifts and graces, but it runs as strongly to the weakest believer. So in the 10th verse of that 17th of John, "and all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." Christ by an eye of love beholds that Union which the weakest believer hath with him, and behold his glory in that union. Here we have Christ the purest fountain of love for our pattern, his love runs to all in union with him, and so should our distinguishing love extend to all that hold the Head Christ Jesus, and walk in the light and life of the Spirit. This Truth is so clear from the first text that I need not anymore to prove it, though the Scripture be abundant in it, as that, I John 4:19-21, John 15:12, and so take in I Thes.4:9, "but as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." The Apostle makes it as it were a needless thing to write to them their duty in this, to love their brethren in Christ, for, {says he,} you yourselves are taught of God to love one another, as if he had said, you know nothing of God if you have not a spiritual sense of this paramount obligation; for if you know your union with Christ, you will know that that love which made you one with him, hath made you so with every one of his members. So in that, I John 2:10-11, the Holy Ghost there speaks the same thing with the first text, and makes love to the brethren to be a discovering beam of Christ the Lord of Light and Glory in us. The text is plain, for he that loves not his brother, abides not in

the light, but is in darkness and walks in darkness, not knowing whither he goes, because he is without Christ the light of life, who is the light of that soul he lives in, which soul loves Christ, and all that is like him. In all these Scriptures you may observe how the heart of Christ and all those that act from the dictates of the Holy Ghost, is upon this very thing; for God calls himself the God of love, and fills his children with his Spirit, and would have them bear his Name too, that the world may know, that the Father of love hath begotten children of love in his own likeness.

I'm afraid that we all live much below this eminent discovery of our interest in Christ, by our love to all saints, in that latitude which Christ intends it; therefore to stir up and engage our hearts more in this glorious and heavenly duty and privilege, let us in the Spirit of Christ seriously weigh these reasons and considerations following.

First, the oneness of all the elect believers in the original love of God; for consider if we all have not one fountain of life, and were not all in the first Adam involved into one death of transgression, was there any fallen soul less guilty in the Fall of the first Adam than another? Or was there any that God saw more worthiness in, than in another, to move him to choose such a soul? Surely no; for then that word of Eternal Truth could not stand in Ephesians, "for by Grace are ye saved, not of ourselves, it is the sheer gift of God." Eph.2:8. Every saved soul is a child of Free Grace, and its Salvation the gift of God. In the 5th verse of that chapter, "even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ," there is all in one state of death, and all in one state of life; and the original of this life he brings in a parenthesis, "by grace ye are saved." Love is in God the original thereof, and it never degenerates from this first principle, until it comes through the muddy hearts of fallen creatures; and we so much degenerate from God, and from love, as we live below this love in the original. John 17:23, latter part, our Saviour there prays that the world may know that God loves saints as he loves him, "and hast loved them {saith Christ} as thou hast loved me;" thus is Christ and saints in one original love; and if Head and member, then

surely member and member. All true saints lie in this one womb, the original love of God; and thus all saints are of one body, one calling, have one Lord, one God and Father of all; the original love of God makes this oneness in all the saints, and speaks very strongly this thing; that there should be a uniting of affections amongst all saints upon the interest of saints.

Secondly, consider as saints our oneness in Union with Christ, the Rock from whence we are all hewed, whom God hath chosen to manifest to us his Eternal love, and to make us capable of enjoying the fulness of that love. This Union our Saviour speaks to in John 17:23, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Consider that the perfection of the saints lies in this Union, and surely their affections should flow from this Union. A saint's completeness is in Christ. Col.2:10. Union with Christ hath all the arguments of love in it; for there is the beauty, the fulness, and the completeness of Christ upon such a soul. The Excellency of Christ seems to have but little beauty in such an eye or heart, as cannot love upon the naked interest of the Saint. If Christ be enough to gain thy love; as Christ is the all-absorbing interest of every Saint, for every believer is quickened together with Christ, who in all is for eternal interest alike to all that the Father hath given him. His blood equal redemption and satisfaction, his Righteousness is as complete a robe to all his members, as to any; where Christ is the Head, every member is complete in him. Christ is the Head to the whole elect believing body, and the foot hath as good an interest as the hand, or eye. God is no respecter of persons, for he chose merely of his own Free and Sovereign Grace, and a Revelation of that Free Grace fills every elect soul with an apprehension of the fulness of love which resides in Christ. So that through that free, full Grace, every soul is complete in him; and if this Union engage not love, it can be no spiritual object which will do it, for the fulness of the Godhead bodily is in Christ, and saints are one with Christ; every beam of the love and glory of God shines through Christ. Whence is it then that Union with Christ takes not all the affections? Surely Christ hath but little love from such a

soul that finds not this argument enough to persuade him to love his brother that is one with him in Christ, and lives up to his union with Christ, bearing his image. Faith works not lower effects than flesh and blood doth; refined affections make stronger and pure emotions than the highest piece of simple nature can do. Now flesh and blood will act thus high, I must love, he is my brother, as we had one spiritual womb to be conceived in; I must love, he is my child, as he bears my image. Surely faith works higher than this! Spiritual affections make stronger and purer emotions upon union and relations than carnal affections can do. Motion from affection made in the soul by a light of this interest saith, he is my brother, one womb of love conceived us both, and we are both build upon one Rock of Ages. This love beats out the pulse of carnal affections, though it beats very strong; for love to God and Christ is at the bottom of this motion, and carries it strongly on. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" I John 4:20. If there be love to God and Christ, there will be love to every soul that is in communion with Christ.

Thirdly, consider the oneness of saints in the engagement of God to all; namely his Covenant of Free Grace, in which all his people have equal interest; it is free from God and so equally full to all his elect, God freely engaging to be our God, and that we shall be his people, and that he will freely forgive our iniquity and remember our sins no more. God makes this New Covenant to all the new creation, to the whole body of his elect in Christ, which as the Holy Ghost tells us, "are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Eph.2:10. There is not any soul that hath anything to plead for his standing in Christ, but mere Grace, and this is the free engagement of God to every soul that he hath given to Christ; this is the sure mercies of David; this is that better and eternal Covenant that is made in God and cannot be broken. And in all this glorious interest all the saints are one; for there is not a beam of this glory from God that takes in one saint and shuts out another; for the weakest

believing soul may as truly say, "God is my God in his Covenant of Free Grace," as the strongest believer.

Fourthly consider, the oneness of that way which God and Christ hath chosen to manifest their love and their will to all saints namely, the Holy Spirit. "Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," and "he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:17,26. Here is a general promise to all saints, that they shall be taught all things, and this shall be by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, whom the Father will send in Christ's Name, and he shall dwell with them, and shall be in them. Whatever truth of God any saint hath learned in truth, he hath received it from this Spirit of Truth. Though God as a Free Agent gives to his children as it pleaseth him; to one more light, to another less; but all receive of this one spirit; and this I take to be that one baptism spoken of in Ephesians 4:5. Jesus Christ administering himself, by this one Spirit, to all his children, by which they come baptized into Christ, into his death, and have put on Christ, Rom.6:3,4, and are led by the Spirit, Rom.8:14, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. To be led by the Spirit is the interest and prerogative of every child of God. This Union runs through all the heirs of heaven. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith; all and every of these in any, and in all the saints is the fruits of this Spirit, in which every child of God as a child of God walks. All these and every branch of holiness is wrought by one and the same Spirit in every saint; so that all gifts and all degrees of gifts flow from one and the same Spirit. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." I Cor.12:4. "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth," Eph.5:9, for whatever of these is in any saint, and in all the saints of God, it is the fruit of this Holy Spirit; this is that life blood which runs in the veins of all the saints of God, from which all motion and acts of life flow. "Through Christ that strengthens me, {saith Paul,} I can do all things," and so must every saint

say, for it is Christ in the Spirit that makes all holy motion in the soul. This Union of the Spirit in saints is an eternal union, though here in this life some have a greater degree of it than others; yet in Heaven every saint shall be filled with the fulness thereof; and this Spirit is that Spirit which raised Christ from the dead, that dwells in all the saints, and shall quicken our mortal bodies, as members of Christ our Head, at that great day when he shall come to judge the world. This makes a very close relation in all saints one to another and speaks very loud for strong affections.

A fifth consideration may be this, that the saints when they joy and glory properly as saints, then they have all one joy and glory in this life; namely, the Lord our Righteousness, for "he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." II Cor.10:17. "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." Jer.9:24. And he that rejoices in the Lord and makes him his joy, may rejoice always. Phil.4:4. This was Paul's spirit, for he would glory in nothing but in Christ and him crucified. A saint will acknowledge all his springs to be in God, so that he hath no spring of joy or glory but what flows from God, which is the fountain of all, the beauty his eyes see, of all the sweet his soul tastes, and of all the glory his soul makes after, or makes mention of, for God is all in all, and to all his people. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, {saith the prophet,} or whom on earth in comparison of thee?" Spiritual joy and glory in all the saints have but one Fountain and Object and that is God himself, as all the joy and glory of saints center in Christ, so should all their love, and this will soon teach us to love one another.

Lastly, consider that saints shall have all one glorious being to eternity. John 17:24. Christ will manifest his love to all eternity to his people, for he will have them as happy as himself. Then shall we know indeed the life of our union with Christ and with one another. Methinks the discovery of that love which hath made this Union should beget love in all those that are thus minded in the Eternal Love and Glory of God. Col.3:4. Christ is the life

and glory of all his people, and at his appearance they all appear in glory. I Thes.4:16-17. Oh, how should this draw forth our love to one another, that we shall ever be with the Lord of love! If saints be one in all these, and that these comprehend the whole of a saint, then why should we not be one in affection?

Possibly some may say, we are not all of one judgment, and therefore cannot be one in affection? That {I am verily assured is our own, not God's} is of the flesh and not of the spirit; through Christ, says Paul, "I can do all things." If we look upon one another in Christ, then we shall find that we can love because in Christ. I would ask this question, whether is the greatest argument of love; being children of one Father or being children of equal growth or stature? For I am persuaded this will comprehend all the differences among the saints, namely, our state and our growth as children in our Father's house; the branches in Christ live and grow because in him; shall we be angry if God who is a Free Agent gives out more or less of Himself to our brethren than to ourselves? Growth is as God dispenses of Himself to us; and "what have you that you have not received" says the text? It was the fleshly argument of Joseph's brethren not to love him because they thought him dearer to their father than themselves, and because God would use and honour him above them. It is the sin and shame of saints to make this the rule of love to their brethren, that they are of one judgment, at one pitch of light in the discoveries of God, and not because he is a brother, and bears our Father's image. If God intended to dispense alike to all His children, why then hath he provided milk for babes, and stronger meat for stronger saints? And what is the meaning of God when he requires the strong to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and to receive them, but not to doubtful disputations? If a saint makes oneness of judgment to be the rule of his love to his brother, he must then make the cause of his dislike to proceed from God, because he that is free in giving hath not given equal light to all. Let us take heed in this our quarrel that we be not found fighters against God. He that makes his judgment to be the foundation of his love to

his brethren, I doubt he lays a greater weight upon it than the foundation will bear. Saints knowledge in this life admits of a mixture, we know but in part, and we see but in part, thou seest something of God that another sees not, and another sees something of God which thou at present seest not; and God beholds much of flesh and darkness in all Saints. Now consider if this glimmering light, this knowing in part, and this mixture of flesh and spirit, be foundation strong enough to lay the weight of our love to Saints upon, for spiritual love is of the greatest weight that can be; this love is God, for God is love, so that no foundation is strong enough to bear the weight of this love but God Himself. "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." II Cor.5:16. In the foregoing verse, Paul looks upon himself and all Saints as dead and alive with Christ, and therefore he resolves to know all Saints as they are in Christ, to know no man after the flesh, no not Christ Himself; he makes God alone the Object and the Foundation of his love. And if Saints now did resolve with Paul to know neither Christ nor Saints after the flesh, I believe our forms and our apprehensions of the ways of God, which have in the best of them so much mixture of fleshly darkness, would not be made the foundation and the bounds of our love one to another. I know in Scripture language but of two seeds in the world, the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent; saints are all of one seed, though they may differ in light; some more in the spirit and others more in the flesh, yet all have the principle of eternal life in them.

"For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided; was Paul crucified for you; or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" I Cor.1:11-13. When the Apostle heard of the contentions that were in the house of Cloe; that some were of Paul, some of Apollos, and some of Cephas, and some of Christ; his answer is this, is Christ divided? As if

he had said, it is your fleshly apprehension that divides you to Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. Did you judge in the spirit, you would see yourselves to be one in Christ, for Christ is not divided; Christ and His people are one; as Christ is one with God, so are His people one with him. "And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them...that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Jn.17:10, 21-23. "All mine are thine," says Christ to his Father and our Father; and therefore prays for a spirit of union to fall upon all Saints, as Saints. "All that are thine are mine," Christ's bowels yearn to all His members as members one with Himself and His Father. His heart is not satisfied till they be all with him in Glory, verse 24, he doth not say, Father I will that those which thou hast given me, that have the highest light be with me where I am to behold my Glory, and those of lower light to be kept under the beggarly rudiments of the world; but His arms of love do encompass all; that they all may be one, and those which thou hast given me, says Christ; as if Christ had said, thou art free in thyself to choose whom thou pleaseth, and those which thou hast chosen, my heart is fixed on them all, so that I must have them all with me in Glory. Thou wert free in choosing of them, and art still a Sovereign Free Agent, so that thou mayest give them light as it pleaseth thee O Father, but they have my heart; as they are thy gift, Thou hast given them me, and I have given Myself for them, and to this end I died for them, and live in them, that they all might be one in me as I am one in Thee. Christ's love flows from Union in Himself, and not from those apprehensions in Saints, which are mixtures of flesh and spirit, for Christ is like His Father, who will not quench the smoking flax, or break the bruised reed; he loves the least of his Father's image wherever he sees it. Christ's heart is in the midst of His

Body, he tenders a foot or a hand as well as an eye, because it is a member of His body, I Cor.12:13-15, 26-27, and gives it us in charge, that as His Body we should suffer and rejoice with every member, which must relate to Saints in general, for says verse 27, "you are the body of Christ, and members in particular;" every particular Saint is a member of Christ, and all Saints the Body of Christ; to be a member of the Body, a Saint, this draws forth Christ's love; and by this will it appear that we are disciples, followers of Christ, if upon interest in Christ we love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you love Saints, because of my image, and not because of your own.

Again, consider this; if that worldlings finding us contending with, and hardly using of our brethren, fellow Saints that are below or above our light, shall cruelly entreat us; will they not have a fair plea to God at the last and great day, when God shall lay it to their charge, that they have persecuted His disciples; may they not answer Lord we did not know them to be Thy disciples, for Thou hast told us we shall know Thine by loving one another; but we found these contending among themselves; their unkindness to one another did demonstrate them to be the children of the world, not heirs of Thy Kingdom, and walking like children of the flesh, and this world; we judged that we might safely lay our iron rods upon them. If they should answer thus, sure I am, this would be as good a reason for the world's cruelty to us, as our differing apprehensions of the mind of God, will be for our not loving one another. We have two examples in the Old Testament why love and brethren should go together. First, Abraham and Lot, let not us fall out, for we are brethren. "And Abram said unto Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee - for we be brethren." Gen.13:8.

Secondly, Joseph to his brethren in their journey; fall not out by the way for you are brethren. "So he sent his brethren away, and they departed; and he said unto them, see that ye fall not out by the way." Gen.45:24. To be children of one Father is an argument of love; saints are all in their way to Heaven, and Christ is their way, the

way and the end are both arguments of love. The whole current of the Gospel runs this way, and that which involves all in one is Christ's command to "love one another as I have loved you." Christ loved us to give us light and life; so that light could not be the cause of His love, no more should it be the cause of our love; for we should love as Christ does, from union with God. "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me," which is enough to Christ, if an interest in God, he loves them. God calls Himself the God of love, and Christ is the manifest testimony of God's love. Now the great testimony that Saints give to the world of their being in God and Christ, is the life of love to God, and all that bear His image, even the meanest of His disciples. None can love spiritually and truly, but those that live spiritually and truly in God; for God is love in the fountain, and whatever is love in the streams, it is the flowings forth of God into such a soul. And the true reason of our little love to Saints, as Saints, is this, our living so much in the flesh, and so little in the spirit; so much in a form of godliness, and so little in the power of godliness, laying so much weight upon things that perish, as so little upon the Rock of Ages; and surely when God by the fire of His Spirit shall burn up and consume our fleshly principles, then will the panting of our souls be pure, like the Spouse in the Canticles. "Tell me {says she} where is he whom my soul loveth," and this "he" was Christ. So will our souls say, when they seek an object for their loves, tell me where Christ is; and if we find Christ in such a soul that is not at our pitch of light, and in matter of form bears not our image; yet I have found Christ here, and it is he whom my soul loves; so that now my love must run forth to Christ; in this soul is an object so drawing, that all fetters are shaken off, and all bolts loosed, so that the soul of this saint runs forth to Christ, and every soul in whom Christ lives; as it is said in another case, the love of Christ constrains us. This soul can imprison his love no longer, the glorious image of Christ hath so overcome it, that it can now no longer argue upon forms, but give itself up to the power of God that now lives in it by the Spirit. Let this shame us who profess ourselves Saints in all our forwardness one

to another; we can see a mote in the world's eye, and not a beam in our own. If the world like itself be froward to us, we can be soon sensible, and complain of it, when at the same time, we altogether unlike Saints, are froward, and become thorns in the sides of our brethren, and can sooner say it is impossible to be otherwise, than complain of our base hearts. And I may justly fear, that many a soul, which but a few years since would creep into corners with other Saints to complain to God of the injustice and unkindness of the world to them; yet now their feet have been out of the stocks, are become the first that lift up their hand against their brethren. I know no cause of it but this, in afflictions they looked for God in one another, and then love lived in them; but in prosperity men look for self and form, and that not being found, love grows cold. I shall not much question that object to be a stranger to God, which makes my soul a stranger to love. And truly this very thing hath put a veil upon the glory of all the forms that I have seen under the sun! Persecution is such a foreigner to heaven, that I may safely say, whatever brings it into a person, or a nation, never came from God, and it will beget a pale countenance at the day of death, when consciences shall witness that Saints have done that to Saints, which they judged unjust from the world to them. If God by His Spirit set this home upon our hearts, it will make us willing to take shame to ourselves, and give Glory to God, and stand admiring that God should not suffer the world to devour us, when we have been so ready, and so thirsty to devour one another. Truly I am afraid that there is a discontented spirit in some, that God hath not suffered us to devour one another. It is a very bad spirit that can be angry at the kindness of God; for it is well for us that God's ways are not like ours, nor His thoughts like ours; that His ways should be ways of love to us, when our ways are not love to him nor His; and that he should have thoughts of kindness towards us, when we have hard thoughts of His kindnesses, and are ready to call our deliverances our troubles. It is no kindness but the kindness of God that can save a people against their will; but this has been God's way to us; and oh that it might kindly melt our hearts, and form us into

His own image, to be love as God is love, to love God and all that bear His image, that His kindness might eat up all our forwardness, and His sweet overcome all our bitter, then shall we appear his disciples by our love to one another.

Secondly, let this teach us as Saints, to eye all those things wherein we are one, and see if they do not justly challenge love from us, as we are all begotten of one love, all hewed from one rock, the Rock of Ages, all under one Covenant of Free-Grace, all baptized with one and the same spirit, and have all one joy and glory in this life, and to eternity. Now what but flesh and darkness can make such rending, and willing to rend and devour one another; we see not our proper interest to be our Father's love, and darkness in this makes us to fall out by the way home. The more light we have in God, the more love it begets to God and our brethren. In the froward fits of our flesh we complain of new lights, as if that were the cause, when the true cause is our old darkness. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, but darkness cannot discern what is born of the Spirit; it is only the things of God, or more properly, God in everything, which can engage the soul to love. Now the natural man {says the text} discerns not the things of God, and gives the reason of it because they are spiritually discerned. God is never seen but in His own light, and when we have spiritual eyes to discern him, we shall see our interest in him, and love one another better.

Thirdly, let our petitions at the throne of Grace be for more sensible enjoyment of our Father's presence; though our God be always present, and knoweth the secrets of our hearts; yet many times we have not spiritual eyes to see him; for surely were we sensible of our Father's presence, we durst not fall out with our brethren as we do, whence is it that Saints miscall one another, and then throw dirt in the faces one of another, and at last scratch till the blood comes? Is it from hence, that we discern not the presence of God our Father? Were we more sensible of the presence of God, we should as Saints see so much of our relation in God, that our affections would be swallowed up in God, and in one

another; surely if God be lovely to us, His image will be so too; and when we see him, and one another in him, then will our affections go kindly out in the Spirit of God one to another. If we cannot love when we see the least of God's image in a saint, it is much to be doubted we love our own image than God's, I John 5:1, "every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him," God and Christ is the true object of a Saints love; and it is a cold and frozen love that does not melt and yield when God and Christ appears.

Fourthly, let us study God and the power of Godliness more. To study self and forms, will make us carnal and froward, but to study God, and the power of Godliness, will in the spirit make us holy and humble. The experience of this present age is a sad but true witness of the former of these; how full has press and pulpit, and all conference men in contending about the former, and in them {I very much doubt} self-interest has been contended for. Now look back and read the fruits of these labours, has it not been the cooling of spiritual love, the quenching of those flames among Saints, and the blowing up of those flames of zeal without knowledge, which hath almost consumed the moisture and vigor both of Christianity and Humanity. If men's apprehensions differ in a form, though there be much of God in the man, that is not discerned, or not esteemed; nay very natural relations upon this account come to be forgotten. Oh, the hideous effects of these fleshly ways, which destroys all that is good of outward and inward man.

Oh, that the streams of our contentions might be turned, and our strivings to exceed may be built upon a better foundation than a bare form of Godliness, even upon the power of Godliness; let us strive to exceed in holiness and humility, who shall be most likened to our Head, and be made most conformable to the death of Christ. A fine piece of nature may talk up much of Christ, and contend much for Gospel-forms, but it is only by the workings of the Spirit, by which a soul doth live up much of Christ. Circumcision or un-circumcision avails nothing but the new creature and it is a spiritual worship that God requires. "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must

worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24. And in Romans 8:14, "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." This Spirit discovers the mind of God to His people in every form that he would have them to receive, but it also carries the soul through and above every form to live upon Christ Himself, and on the power of Godliness. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." Galatians 5:22-23. And in the 25th verse, "if you live in the Spirit, also walk in the Spirit." It is not a bare talking either of form or spirit, but a living up to God in the spirit, the fruits of which is love, and so forth; and a spirit wrought determination to exceed in these fruits, is that which God will own and crown; and a sweet diving into these Gospel waters, these are heights, and breadths, and depths, and lengths indeed, but God is to be found in them all, so that there is no scare of miscarrying; but empty forms without God become our ruin. I may truly say with the Prophet, that we give our money for that which is not bread, when we spend the zeal of our spirits in contending for forms of godliness. I shall ever account best of that which leaves most of God, and least of self behind it. And truly my experience tells me, that when my thoughts and affections have traveled most through this pleasant path of God in the spirit, and the power of godliness; this has been the effect of it, God has in a good measure dispossessed the old man in me, and given procession to the new man the Lord Jesus. Now this experience begets this advice that our hearts and affection should be more pitched upon the power of godliness, and doubtless we shall find that power in it, as to engage our affections one to another, by which the world will know us to be Christ's disciples.

And lastly, this may comfort us when we consider those that hate us purely for godliness sake. Look upon them under this consideration, they are not Christ's disciples, nor can they in such a work be owned or helped by him. They may boast of their horseman and chariots, but all their strength is weakness, for they engage without God; nay they engage against God, and that makes them

lighter than vanity; and saints in their sufferings are followers of Christ, and contend in his might. God is the strength of his people, and their portion forever. Let us love our brethren then, and not fear our enemies. Love to God and Saints, and suffering for the spirituality and the power of godliness are two undeniable witnesses that we are disciples and followers of Christ.

Chapter 2.

What Christ hath borne for saints, they shall never bear themselves.

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident, for, the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith, but, the man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Gal.3:10-13.

The general scope of the Apostle in these verses, I humbly conceive to be this; namely, to empty the creature of all hopes or possibility ever to attain a happy and blessed condition in itself out of Christ; in which work he strips the soul of all external privileges and duties in points of Justification, and then makes Jesus Christ to be all in all to every redeemed soul.

The former part of this tenth verse is a positive conclusion that whoever is under the works of the Law for life, is also under the curse of the Law for death; that is, he which chooses to be approved and justified in the sight of God by the works of his own hands and heart must also be condemned before God in the failings and imperfections of those works.

The latter part of this verse is a full proof to the position laid down in the former part of it; that if all things in the book of the Law be done and fulfilled, then the curse of the Law attends and seizes upon every soul as would live by the works of the Law. "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen." Deut.27:26. That soul which would fetch life from the works of the Law must perform all, or he loses all that he hath done, and his soul,

along with his dying duties. The observations which I have received from hence are these.

Observation#1. That God hath not made a separation of the works of the Law from the curse of the Law to that soul which would live by them, and if God hath not, man cannot! This is that state of bondage spoken of in Galatians 4:9,23,30,31. Those who are children of the freewoman, are such as whom Christ hath made free. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36. And those are children of the bondwoman that are obliged to anything that is holy in their own strength without Christ. There is no soul free from these bonds but those which are bound up in the arms and cords of Christ's love; and this is the redemption which Christ made of his elect body, when he was in the flesh, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, to the adoption of sons. Gal.4:4,5. Christ was made under the curse of the Law, Gal.3:13, for the curse and the work of the Law was not separated to Christ when he came to satisfy Divine Justice, no more is it to any soul.

In the 11th verse is a second position of the Apostle, which is also a confirmation of the former. The position is this, that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God; and the demonstration of this truth followeth in the end of the same verse, and in the 12th verse, which shows; first, that God never intended life by the Law. Gal.3:21. If there had been a Law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. This is plain, for it was never God's design and purpose that Righteousness should be by the Law, because he hath not given such a Law out of Christ, which is able to give life. "For by Grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Eph.2:8. All Salvation is entirely of Grace, wholly out of ourselves. God had another end in giving the Law than that the soul of his people should work life from it; and this end is fuller of glory to his own Grace, and of safety to our souls; namely, that sin might become exceeding sinful, and Grace to be exceeding riches of Grace. The Apostle tells us that he had not known sin but by the Law,

and had there been no Law, there had been no transgression; and if no transgression had been, nor any sin known, then the glory of Free Grace had not been lifted up as it is now in Christ. If the Law had not discovered sin, the soul had never known the want, nor the worth of a crucified Saviour, who is the great gift of the Free Grace of God, and a perfect Eternal Redeemer of a poor lost soul.

Secondly, as God never intended life to fallen man by the works of the Law, so man can never gain life by the works of the Law. Lev.18:5. There must be a perfect performance of all the statutes and judgments of the Lord, by every soul that means to live in them and have life from them. It is not a tittle less than keeping the whole Law which can advantage any soul that seeks life from it; so as that soul which in itself cannot keep the whole Law, shall never gain life by the works of the Law. Gal.2:16. The Apostle there speaks positively twice, that no man is justified by the works of the Law; and that by the works of the Law no flesh shall be justified. This is such a standing truth, that nothing which either is, or can be done shall contradict it.

Observation#2. That the Law of works condemns every soul in the first Adam, but justifies no soul. The Law speaks only thus, 'do and live,' which to fallen man is nothing but the language of death. Rom.7:8,9. A righteous Law to an unrighteous soul gives life to the sin, but death to the soul. Observe the text, "when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." By the command sin became exceeding sinful. A soul fallen from God can in itself make no other use of the knowledge of God's righteous Law, but to sin against it; consult the text in this case. "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence," Rom.7:8, as if he had said; when once God discovered his holy Law, that sinful nature and unholiness that is in me, made use of it by way of opposition, to run into all manner of concupiscence. Though the Law of creation justifies a Holy Creator, yet it condemns a fallen unholy creature. "By the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified in his sight," but that soul

which lives upon them shall be accursed and condemned in the want of one tittle; there lies a curse, a condemnation in the Law to fallen man, but no possibility of being justified by it in the sight of a holy and just God.

But now that we may not be as souls without hope, though he strips us here of all our own righteousness and leaves us by nature under the curse of the Law; yet in the next verse he shows us a Perfect Redemption from the curse of the Law by Christ who was made under the Law to bear the curse and to fulfil the Law on our behalf. And here I shall be a little more large than in what hath gone before; for I have found by experience, that the more clear knowledge the soul hath in this point, the more is the Free Grace of God with the comfort and safety of a poor soul advanced. In this 13th verse, the Apostle lays down a third position; namely, that every elect soul is redeemed from the curse of the Law through or by Christ being made a curse for us. Deut.21:23. The text speaks plainly thus, he that is hanged is accursed; and it is a parallel place with the end of this 13th verse, "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Thus Christ was made a curse; now that Christ was thus made a curse for us, for his elect body which was under the Law, look into that word in Galatians 4:4,5, where the text saith, "but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." None can doubt but that Christ is here meant by the Son of God; and then the text plainly speaks, that God in the fullness of his own time sent Christ in the flesh, made under the Law, to redeem his elect body, that were under the works and the curse of the Law, and to bring them to receive the adoption of sons; and in this work Christ was made a curse for us.

The first observation from hence is this, that whatever Christ hath borne for a believer, that a believer is fully redeemed from. It is the Apostle's own argument in this place, for that Christ being made a curse for us, we are thereby redeemed from the curse. The same Apostle in Romans 8:32-34, hath the same argument. If God delivered Christ up to death to die for us, then we

are indeed delivered; and Christ having died for us, who shall lay anything to our charge, for it is God that justifies, and Christ that died. Christ died that God might justify. Christ was made a curse for us, so that God in justice might acquit us from the curse. So in the first two verses of Romans 8, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The Law of the spirit of life in Christ makes the soul free from the Law of sin and death; and in John 8:36, "if the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." This is our Saviour's answer to those Jews which thought themselves not to be under bondage, because they were Abraham's seed in the flesh; though our Saviour tells them that this external interest did not make them free men; for says he, notwithstanding this, you are under sin. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin," verse 34, and your fleshly interest in Abraham does not acquit you from the bonds and servitude of sin, but "if the Son hath made you free, then you are free indeed." As if Christ had said, Abraham could not bear your sins, and the wrath of God due to them for you; and therefore you are in bondage still; but what the Son bears, he makes them perfectly free from, for all for whom he bears it. Christ came to save those that were lost, and he tells us when he gave up the ghost upon the cross, that the work was finished; and in John 17:4, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Christ tells his Father that he had lost no glory in sending him upon the work of Redemption; for says he, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do," which was to work out a perfect Redemption for his people. "To bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Isa.61:1. If this be a truth, as doubtless it is, that whatever Christ hath borne for a believer, that a believer is fully redeemed from; then it will be worthy a saints best and most serious consideration in searching the

Scriptures, and in the spirit giving ear to hear and heart to consider, what they say Christ hath borne for us.

First, I find by that verse in II Cor.5:21, that Christ hath borne sin for us, "for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The text speaks in the abstract, "he was made sin for us." There cannot be a fuller expression! There is the act, God making Christ to be sin for us, or taking all sin off from us, and laying it upon him, as was typified under the Law in the scapegoat, which went into the land of forgetfulness. "And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness." Lev.16:9-10. Now the issue and effect of this act followeth in the text, "that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him." This expression is as full as the former, the Holy Ghost expresseth the sinner for whom Christ was made sin, to be as fully acquitted from sin, as Christ is made sin. Mark the words, "made the Righteousness of God in him," so perfectly righteous that God owns the soul as one with himself, righteous as being one with Christ, who is the Righteousness of God.

Now the soul that is thus righteous must needs be acquitted from all sin. The Righteousness of God and Condemnation for Sin is as light and darkness, which cannot be together in one soul. If Christ once comes into a soul, and tells that soul by his Spirit, that he hath borne all its sins, and so makes the soul to believe in the Free Grace of God, and to rest upon Christ as his Righteousness, that soul is as fully in the sight of God acquitted from sin, as Christ was by God made sin for it. This soul stands before God complete in Christ, not having spot or wrinkle in it; all that can be said, is said in this; that soul for whom Christ was made sin is thereby made the Righteousness of God in him; so that Christ having borne the sin, that soul never more bears that in his own person before God, but doth always stand, both before the throne of Justice and the throne of Grace, as fully

clothed with Christ his Righteousness, as Christ upon the cross was with his sin. "The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa.53:6. Iniquity is one with sin here; now then read this truth with an eye and heart of faith, that what Christ hath borne for us, we are fully delivered from, and then will the glory of Free Grace be lifted up, and our souls made to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory in believing.

Secondly, Christ hath fulfilled the Law, and borne the curse of it for his people. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal.4:4,5. Christ was made under the Law to redeem his people from all the weight and burden of the Law; yeah, from the curse of the Law itself. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law." Gal.3:13. From the reigning and condemning power of the Law; Christ hath fully satisfied the Law on our behalf. In Gal.4:5,6, there Christ hath redeemed us to the liberty of sons, the spirit of adoption reigning in our consciences and conversations above the letter of the Law. So that in Rom.8:2-4, there the Apostle tells us, that by virtue of the Law of the Spirit of life in his union with Christ Jesus, he had freedom from the Law of sin and death. That Law of commandment by which sin revived, and the soul died, he was delivered from by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. For says he, what the Law could not enable the soul to do because of the weakness of the flesh, that did God by sending his Son in the flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that is, condemned our sins, and satisfied his Law and Justice for them all in the death of Christ; so that now the Righteousness of the Law is fulfilled by Christ for us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The Law was fulfilled and had its accomplishment in Christ; that is, the Law in the letter, and the soul now through union with Christ is taken up to live in the Law of the Spirit of life; that is, the Spirit of God lives in the soul, and is a law, and a life to it, not only teaching, but leading the soul into all Truth. It is the Law of the Spirit, and so the Law of life; it is the Law of love, and so the Law of life. Nay it is God

himself dispensing his love, and reigning by his Spirit in the souls and consciences of his people, and so it is the Law of the Spirit of life; and all this to the souls of his people in Christ Jesus. "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Gal.5:18. A soul which lives not, and acts not upon Christ in the spirit, {so far as he doth not,} is under the Law of Sin and Death in all that he doth; but it is a certain deliverance from the law of the flesh in our conversations, and the law of the letter in our consciences, it is to be led by the Spirit of Christ, and to walk in that Spirit. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light; for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, &c." Eph.5:8,9. They were never without the letter; yet sometimes dark saith the text, but the light of the Lord, in which the redeemed of Christ should walk is the light of the Spirit. Now we in Christ have all this freedom, because the Son hath made us free, by bearing those burdens for us; and what Christ hath borne for a believer, that a believer is fully redeemed from.

Thirdly, Christ hath borne the punishment due to sin for us. Observe the text, "surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." "He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation; for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken; yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." Isa.53:4-11.

I know not how fuller expressions could be made to set forth this act; that Christ hath borne the punishment due to sin for the believer as fully as he hath the sins themselves.

With his stripes we are healed; that is, the punishment of our sins which he did bear for us; so that as the wrath of God due to sin, we shall never bear them again; for what Christ hath borne for us, he hath delivered us from the bearing of it in our own persons, otherwise Christ died in vain; and this text is not made good if we be not healed by his stripes. Now if the punishment be not taken from the believer, as well as the sin, how are the wounds of that soul healed by the stripes that Christ bore for it? And if any shall say, God made Christ to bear the believer's sins, but the believer must bear the punishment due to those sins, though Christ was wounded, bruised and chastened for them. Such an affirmation will bear very hard upon the Justice of God, and question that truth of our Saviour upon the cross, that he had finished the work of Redemption, part of which is the punishment as well as the sin. I verily believe when Christ bore the curse of the Law, he did bear the punishment due to all the sins of his people; and though I do believe that God chastens every child whom he loveth, yet those chastenings are the fruits of his love and not of his wrath; Christ hath borne all that in being made a curse for us.

Lastly, Christ hath borne death for us as it is the wages of sin. I Cor.15:53-58. By which means death is swallowed up of victory; the sting of death which is sin, and the strength of sin which is the Law, hath lost themselves and their strength when they entered into Christ; so that now a believer can bless God, and through Christ he hath victory over death, sin, hell, law, and the grave; and why so? Why, because Christ had gone through, he has borne and overcome all these for us; and we are more than conquerors through Christ that loved us. We are more, because none of these can conquer Christ; but he hath to all eternity overcome them for us. This sting of death is swallowed up of victory, for it is buried in the wounds of Christ; and Christ is risen, and is seated at the right hand of God, and because he lives, we live also. John 14:19.

The second observation is this. Whatever the Free Grace of God has taken off from His elect, and laid upon

Jesus Christ; that His divine justice neither can nor will at any time to all eternity lay upon the elect soul again. This is justice suitable to his Covenant of Grace, in Jeremiah 34:31, "for I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their sins no more."

The faithful God engages Himself to remember His people's sins no more, and to make it good, he lays them upon Christ, which satisfies His justice, and carries our sins into the land of forgetfulness. Do but observe how God's justice as well as His mercy is engaged to make good His own Covenant of Grace; for the law of creation {that is do and live} self could never satisfy, and therefore self must die. Now surely the law of Grace is not stricter than the law of Creation, so that Christ having fulfilled the whole law, and performed every tittle of His Father's will for us, the justice of God is engaged to acquit Christ, who has paid the utmost farthing, and in him to acquit us for whom he has made this full satisfaction. As it was Free Grace in God to make us one with Christ, so it is complete justice that we live in Christ who has died for us, and whatever Christ as the gift of Free Grace has borne for us, God in justice will never lay upon His elect in Christ again. Whoever will deny this, must deny God to be just, and His covenant of less value than the covenant of a faithful man; His Grace neither Free nor full Grace; Christ not a complete Saviour, and then His death of no effect.

Now look back upon this truth, and you shall behold sin. The curse of the law, punishment due to sin from the law of creation, and death with its sting in it, all borne by Christ for His elect body, so that they shall never bear any of them more in their own persons! Then glory in the Free Grace of God, and the full redemption of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, observe here the exceeding love that Christ shows to those poor souls which His Father hath given him; that he would take upon Himself the curse of the law, the punishment of sin due to fallen man, and all this to redeem them which His Father had given him, though they lay under sin, law, punishment, and death. It had been great love and condescension in Christ, being

God, only to have taken our nature, though he had never taken anything else. But then what love is this, to take our sins, and all that followed sin upon him. He hath borne that weight for us, which would have pressed us to Hell if we had lain under it in our own strength. These are heights, and breadths, and depths, and lengths of love. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom.5:8. This commends love indeed, to choose to bear all evil to deliver the sinner from it, and by the same act to involve the sinner into all good.

Fourthly, observe from hence, the glorious condition of a soul in union with Christ; he is taken up into the Glory of God, the bosom of His love, he lives because Christ lives, and {as Christ} lives above sin, above a condemning, reigning law, above the punishment of sin, and above death as it is the wages of sin, above all that is below God. Our fellowship {saith the text} is with the Father and the Son, and these things we write unto you that your joy may be full. It is a life in the spirit above the flesh, a feasting upon the fat things in God's house, and a resting upon the full love in God's heart, by which a saint is brought with David, to profess his heart is fixed; his heart is fixed, and he will sing and give praise. Psalms 57:7.

Galatians 3:28-29 runs thus, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Here first the Apostle strips them of their national privileges and their outward endowments, as he had done before of their legal performances; the same Apostle in Ephesians 2:3 puts all flesh by nature under one and the same lost condition. "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Galatians 3:22, "but the Scripture hath concluded all under sin." In these generals we find no exception for national privileges or outward endorsements. Ephesians 2:4-5 tells us, that God who is

rich in mercy magnified His great love to us when we were dead in sins and quickened us together with Christ, so that it is by Grace that we are saved. And that text in Galatians 3:22 shows the reason why all is concluded under sin, namely that the promise of faith in Christ Jesus might be given to them that believe, so that if Salvation be the purchase, nothing of self shall be the price; or if Salvation be the end, nothing but Christ shall be the way. Christ is that Rock of ages which can bear, and bear up the weight of souls to all eternity.

Secondly, as he empties the soul of all hopes of good in itself, so he makes Christ to be all good to the soul, for if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." I Cor.1:30. This text I take to be full to this purpose, the scope and tendency of it is to hold out Christ to be all to a believer, as he is made so of God. So, in I Corinthians 3:22-23, all things are ours, as we are Christ's. Interest in Christ, is interest in all God; God doth not strip His children naked that they might remain so; but he strips us of our own righteousness, to clothe us with the perfect robe of Christ's righteousness; he empties us of our own wisdom, to fill us with Christ our wisdom.

Though God makes it impossible for us to redeem ourselves from His wrath; yet he freely gives us Christ who is so full a Redeemer, that nothing can be laid to the charge of those for whom he hath died. Romans 8:33-34. And though we are fallen from God, by nature it is impossible for us either to quicken or maintain the least truth of grace in our own souls. Yet God having made Christ our sanctification, sin shall not reign in our moral bodies, because we are not under the Law, but under Grace. And whoever is in him, they are thereby made new creatures; he so waters with His own Spirit, and shines with His own love, that he makes every branch in him to bring forth fruit. Christ is a living interest, and though he finds souls dead by nature, yet he makes them alive by Grace, so that they are in him as souls alive. From these observations I shall set down three Gospel truths as I

humbly conceive, which Christ hath made known to my soul.

The first is this. That man out of Christ, considered under whatsoever notion you will, is the most miserable, emptiest, undone piece of the whole creation.

You will grant me this truth when you look on fallen man in this consideration which the Scripture holds forth. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others," Eph.2:1-3, being led by Satan to do all his will, and answer all the lusts of the flesh. But then take him under the most glorious performances of the work of the law, under the highest external privileges in these days of the Gospel; call them Church privileges, or what you will; or in the fullest enjoyments of the creatures, till it say, soul take thine ease, as the fool in the Gospel. If all these, or whatever else can be thought on, should meet in one man, yet at this very instant of time the absence of Christ writes death upon the soul with all it hath or does. Christ is the life of every soul that truly lives; it is two deaths in one for a dead soul to enjoy anything without Christ; it is nothing more than a dead man wrapped up in his winding-sheet, both dead alike, so that neither has life, much less can give life each to other; the whole creation is dead till Christ give it life. Now the more created things we find without Christ, the more deaths are centered in a soul dead before. Ephesians 2:1. This death remains upon the whole creation till Christ quicken it. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then {and not till then} can any soul appear in glory.

The second truth is this. That a man united to Jesus Christ, is united to the love of God, the redemption, the righteousness, purity, and the glory of Christ, in truth to all that is communicable in God and Christ.

That which hath gone before does prove this truth, but I shall offer some more texts of Scripture. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." I John 2:1. Union with Christ makes Christ to plead His own righteousness for the sinner. The saint through weakness may fall into sin, but sin cannot separate from the love of God; for Christ lives forever to make intercession, and he as our Advocate pleads His righteousness to be ours. John 17:10,21-23. In this Scripture Christ bears witness to a saints union with God and Himself, "all mine are thine, and thine art mine," in the 10th verse, and then in the following verses we see what use he makes of this union, namely to ask His Father that all His might be made perfect in His Glory, and to manifest to the world that he loves those in union with Christ as he does Christ Himself. So that I Corinthians 1:30, Christ is all to a saint, and all Christ's, is a saints. In this text is union with the righteousness, purity and redemption of Christ. "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." Col.2:10. The text speaks plainly, after the Apostle had told us of the fulness of Christ, he tells us that we are complete in him; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. Romans 8:17. God is a saint's inheritance, as the saint is united to Christ. If God be our portion, we are Christ's fellow-heirs, who is the first-born of many brethren. The end of God's uniting a soul to Christ is, that he might always behold that soul in Christ, so as to be ever well pleased with it, and to delight in it. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." II Cor.5:21. God hath made Christ the foundation of his eternal love, when he beholds the travail of his soul he is well pleased, which he doth in every soul he has united to him.

The third Gospel truth is this, that a saint does then only truly and properly enjoy his life when he lives by faith upon God and Christ in the Spirit. It is not enough to know the rule of the law in the letter, and some of the work of the law in our lives, to know all the forms of God's worship under the Law and Gospel, to know and to be

under all these is nothing, when ignorant of the knowledge of God through Christ in the Spirit.

Knowledge in all the former subtracted from the latter is but to know that we are under the chains and the power of darkness. Our life consists neither in circumcision or uncircumcision, but in the new creature, Christ, the hope of glory in us, and we in Christ. The life that we now live, it is by the faith of the Son of God, by faith feasting and satisfying our souls upon the love of God in Christ. The Spirit that teaches and leads the soul into all truth, even the God of truth, and there the Spirit teaches the soul to read, God to be a God of love, and so to enjoy him, and live in him through Christ, as a God of Grace, and a faithful God that will keep covenant with His people, and not impute sin to that soul for whom Christ has died. Our life shall be forever with God and in God, enjoying nothing but God, and all of God in Heaven. This is truly our life now as we are one with Christ, only the clouds of mortality darkens it; and so far as we live upon God through Christ in the spirit, so far, and no further do we truly enjoy life in any condition; and what we strive for here below, is not our life, nor truly worth our contending for. All the weary pursuits of the heart of man which center not in Christ must wither before they come to their journeys end, for they have no life to carry them through. A child of God can find no rest, but the bosom of His Father, and no way to that rest, but Christ the great gift of His Father's love, so that God and Christ is both the way and the end of a saints rest; that is, enjoying our life in Christ, who is all in all to all His people. Gospel truths should be teaching to Gospel-Saints, and these truths accompanied with the Spirit of truth may first teach and inform all Saints where our life and interest lies, namely in God and Christ; God opening the bosom of His love, and giving us Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ giving out His blood, His life, and all that God requires to satisfy justice, and to make a complete redemption, Christ putting on our flesh, and taking upon him the curse due to us, and all to this end, to be Mediator, to stand between a displeased God and a poor soul, to become sin for us, that we might become righteousness in him.

Our life lies neither in the works of the law, nor the forms of the Gospel, but in that love which gave Christ to be made under the law, to fulfill the law for us; and in that Jesus which is the Lord, and the life of the Gospel; the Gospel is glad tidings, which is Christ crucified. The highest form is but a dark representation, a cloud without a light if Christ which is the light of life be not in it. It is God in Christ that is our life; let us not turn again to the beggarly rudiments under which we shall be in bondage; but in the Lord of Glory to live only upon God in Christ, who is the true light and life of saints; to seek life in anything else, is to seek the living amongst the dead.

Again, these Gospel truths should teach and exhort saints to believe in God, he is a God of Grace, and he is a faithful God, who makes good his covenant of Grace, that our sins and iniquities he will remember no more, to charge them upon the believer, for he has fully charged them upon Christ and hath satisfied his justice to the full in Christ. And hence it is, that by way of comfort our Saviour in John 14:1, bids us to believe in God through him. Ye believe in God believe also in me; that is, look upon the everlasting covenant of redemption, and all the promises of God made good in me; believe, that what my Father hath given me to do I have finished it, all the work of your redemption, and whatever God hath laid upon me, shall never more be laid upon you, though it made me sweat drops of blood, and at last give up the ghost, yet I have finished the work, I conquered by yielding, and overcame by dying, and I am risen again to bear witness of my victory over sin, death, hell, law, and the grave for you, and thus I would have you to believe in me and in God, who gave me out of his bosom of love to be all this to you. Distrust of these truths, is to put a question upon the faithfulness of God and the fulness of Christ! God promises to pardon freely, Christ undertakes to satisfy fully, now to doubt thereof is unworthy in him that is an heir of both.

In the next place methinks this calls for much love from Saints to God and Christ. Oh, how should we love God that hath freely given us Christ, and with him all things. The great God of heaven and earth had no greater

gift than Christ to give, and him he hath freely given us, and in Christ himself, his Spirit, his Kingdom, and his Glory too.

Who would not love a heart so full of love as God's heart is? How can we choose but love a hand so full of love as God's hand? Whatever may justly command or invite love, it is in the heart and hand of God, there are mercies free and full in God; at his right hand is fulness of joy for evermore. Love had its first conception in the heart of God; we love him because he loved us first; the glory of his love is the rise of our love, the piecemeals of beauty and glory which we earnestly seek and pursue after in the creature, they all center in God. Whatever it is that may be taken to our affections, that is in its primitive glory as it is in God; and truly did we see God by an eye of faith as we do things below with an eye of sense, the brightness of his glory would darken all lower glories, and all the streams of our affections would run into God, who is the fountain and original of all love and loveliness.

David had great glimmerings of this glory, when he called upon his soul to bless the Lord. "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name," Psal.103:1, and so all the Psalm through. David had discerned God in the glory of his love and he could do nothing but bless and praise God because he loved God. When a soul once tastes God in his love, it can relish no love besides God's love; and if this soul has any blessing and praise in its heart and lips, he lays them all upon God.

David spends several Psalms upon this subject of blessing and praising God, about Psalms 103, and so forward. Now the ground of all this is that David was in love with God. We know by the temper of our own hearts how apt man is to praise that which he loves; love takes delight to spend itself in setting forth that which it loves. So does David here, he summons up all the strength of his soul to set forth the beauty and the glorious excellency of that God whom he loved. Love makes the strongest of all motions; it will not only say much for God, but it will do and suffer much for God; and truly methinks God's love may justly challenge love from his people in all the

properties of it; for God has put forth his love to his people in all its properties as it is the full and free love of God in Christ.

Secondly, O love Christ that has redeemed us out of the hands of all our enemies, that we might serve him without fear; he that hath taken away all ground of fear may justly command all love. Though Christ utilizes not fear to constrain his followers to serve him, yet love hath such a commission from the hands of Christ; if you love me keep my commandments; the love of Christ constrained him to die for us. O how should that love constrain us to live to him! There is nothing but God and Christ worthy of our love, and if they have all our affections, our actions will soon follow.

My people {saith God} is a willing people in the day of my power; that is, when his love overpowers the heart, it soon commands all the actions. That soul which loves Christ, makes no dispute who shall command it; love is cords to draw, and legs to carry the soul to all the revealed will of Christ. It is Christ's way to deliver his people from all their enemies, and lead them by his own love; and truly these are speaking arguments to saints to love Christ. And indeed, these Gospel truths afford much consolation to all the people of God. Why should we not now be always looking upon the original love of God, and Christ the Rock of Ages, who is the great gift of his love, and so rejoice forever. Though self be nothing, yet Christ is all; though the Law condemn us, yet Christ made under the law saves and acquits us. Now we may look upon sin as all our enemies drowned in the Red Sea of Christ's blood, and lying upon the shore of his flesh dead, and for an eye of faith to behold. Now we may see death swallowed up of victory, and triumph with the Apostle in Romans 8, the latter end. What shall separate? It is the word of truth; he that glorieth should glory in the Lord. I Cor.1:31. We may now glory in all God, his justice as well as his Grace.

There is nothing in God but what a believing soul may glory in, it may through Christ come with as much rejoicing to God's bar of justice, as to his throne of Grace; for Christ is our completeness at both; he presents the

soul to God, as that soul which God gave to him, and for whom he has given himself, John 17:6,10 & 23, and so presents the soul perfect in himself. If Christ be enough, Saints have enough to rejoice in. If his love satisfied God's justice to the full, as doubtless it hath, God is well pleased when he sees the travail of his soul, Isa.53:10, then it should quiet our consciences. If Christ's righteousness be perfect in God's eye, it should be so in ours, and we should rest and rejoice in it. If Christ be the way to his and our Father's bosom of love, we should bless that love which made him our surer way, and seek no other way but Christ.

If Christ be God's way to convey all his loving kindness and glory to our poor souls, surely then we should rest in God's wisdom, and rejoice in his love. This is eternal love, it had no beginning with time, nor can it have any time to end; it is what God is, the same yesterday, today and forever. No soul can outlive his love, or die that is in his love, therefore there is a foundation to that expectation in Philippians 4:4, "rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice."

The end of Christ's bearing our sorrows, was, that we might be made partakers of his joy, he therefore took our flesh, our sins, and was made under the law, and the curse of the law for us, that we might be taken up into the fulness of God and himself to all eternity, to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. And has raised us up together with Christ, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his Grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. Mark it, therefore hath he made us one with Christ, that to all eternity we might be filled with the exceeding riches of his grace and kindness to us; that is, that he might fill us with himself.

Oh, what a glorious life is a saints life, when by faith he eyes his interest in God and Christ, for he may then rejoice indeed. A perishing world can neither give to, nor take from this more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. All our dying days are in this life, and shall soon have an end; in heaven it will be always day, there is nor

can be neither night nor day where God and Christ is. Heaven is that home where everyone is an heir, and every heir in full possession, God is all to all, with all, and in all, to all eternity.

Chapter 3.

God's children have His Spirit
to walk and work in.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom.8:14-16.

In this whole chapter we find the Apostle full of assurance of the love of God in Christ to him, that he is above all condemnation as he is one with Christ, and from hence he is full of joy and holy boasting, and as full of exhortation to holy walking with God in the Spirit. And I conceive that these three verses hold forth the ground and the reason of all these.

First, he is full of assurance from the testimony of the Spirit of God bearing witness with his spirit, as in verse 16, and from hence he is raised up into such fulness of joy and holy boastings by receiving the spirit of adoption, which delivered him from the spirit of bondage and fear, and enabled him to cry Abba Father, as in verse 15.

Now being thus filled, he breaks out into exhortation to holy walking, out of the flesh and in the spirit, and in verse 14 makes it the character of the sons of God to the world, their being led by the Spirit. I may fitly call this portion of Scripture the lively image of a saint living in God and to God in the Spirit; and for methods sake I shall set down two heads, upon which I shall hold forth that which God shall give unto me upon the meditation of this Scripture.

The first is the sealing work of the Spirit of God in a saint, or a saint sealed up to the eternal love of God by his Spirit, and that I gather out of the 16th verse, and the latter portion of the 15th verse.

The second head is this, a saint walking and working in the Spirit, or the Spirit reigning in a saint; and this I gather from verse 14 and verse 15.

In this work I shall endeavour to waive all fleshly reasons as a subject above it, and keep myself only to the testimony of the Word of God. And as a foundation to this building, I judge it very necessary in two or three Scriptures to show how we live under the promise and the pouring forth of this Spirit in Luke 24:49. There our Saviour promises to send the promise of the Father; so that the certain coming was under a double promise. "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:49. And in John 15:26, our Saviour explains who he meant by the promise of the Father. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." John 15:26. And in John 16:7, the Lord Christ does fully promise at his going away from the world by his corporal presence, that he would send the Comforter, which in the last Scripture mentioned is discovered to be the Spirit. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." John 16:7. Now that Christ has made this promise good, take only that one place in Acts 2:1-4, and I shall keep you no longer from the heads propounded, but as they are laid down to expound them.

I begin with the first of them; namely, the sealing work of the Spirit of God in a saint, or a saint sealed up to the eternal love of God by his Spirit. The Scriptures first mentioned are as full a proof of this as any in the book of God, for they tell us plainly in so many words, that the Spirit of adoption being received, bears witness to the spirit of a saint that he is a child of God; and in this assurance so satisfies the soul of a believer, that he cries Abba Father; and that this is the office of the Spirit to seal up a saints interest in the eternal love of God and his oneness with Christ. Let us consult that place, Ephesians 4:30, where the Apostle makes it an argument against

corrupt or vain worldly discourse in the saints; that you may not grieve the Holy Spirit of God {saith he} whereby you are sealed up to the day of redemption.

As if the Apostle had argued thus, you know {saith he} the Spirit hath sealed you up to the love of God in Christ, yea, into all God and Christ, all the love of God, and all the blood and redemption of Jesus Christ, all the righteousness of the Son, and the glory of the Father. Now for you to be corrupt, vain, and worldly in your communication, you seem to deny this seal of the Spirit, or your interest in God, and so you grieve the Spirit, whose proper work it is to seal you up to God. So in Ephesians 3:16-19, we find the Apostle praying for the saints. Now let us consider what he prays for; first, that they may be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward man, so as that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, and that they may be rooted and grounded in love, that they might be able to comprehend with all Saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passes all knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God. Pray mark it, for here is Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, and the soul rooted and grounded in the love of God and Christ, from whence it comes to know in some measure the height, and breadth, and depth, and length of the love of Christ which passes knowledge, and so comes to be filled with the fulness of God. But whence arises all this? Why look into verse 16, from being strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward man. This Spirit seals up and bears witness to the soul that it is the eternal love of God in Christ; and so in all that satisfaction which Christ has made to his Father's justice, and hath an interest in all that righteousness which Christ has as the Head. And thus, Christ by his Spirit takes possession of the heart, and dwells in it by faith, so as he turns all into spirit. The knowledge is made spiritual, as he comes to know heights, breadths, depths, and lengths of love. Letter is now turned into spirit, and the soul now neither knows Christ, nor anything of Christ in the flesh, but in the spirit; being thus strengthened with might by the sealing of the Spirit, the soul is able to unfold the

mysteries of God and Christ in the flesh, and can suck in, and feed upon the spirit of the Word, and when it reads Isaiah 53, compared with II Corinthians 5 last, it can draw out by the Spirit matter for the soul to live on to eternity. "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." II Cor.5:16-21.

I, says a spiritual soul, I now see that God has set Christ in my room, and that Christ hath so really and fully all my sins imputed to him, and all the punishments due to them laid on him, that he is said to be made sin for me, and he was so made sin, that God has made him to bear all the punishments due to my sins.

Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Christ was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all; yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief, and his soul is made an offering for sin, and he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied, for he shall bear their iniquities. I, says the soul, now I see in the spirit, and believe that Christ was made sin for me, and so has taken all my sins, and the punishment due to sin, from me, and that as he was made sin for me, so am I made righteousness before God to all eternity in him; he is the full satisfier of divine justice for me, so that I am completely righteous in the righteousness of God in him;

thus doth the Spirit seal, and root, and ground, and establish a soul by faith in Christ.

And in this assurance it is that the saints have access by one spirit unto the Father, as in Ephesians 2:18. In this assurance the soul runs with a holy boldness, and throws itself into the bosom of the Father.

In this spiritual light the soul sees that there is nothing but Christ between him and his Father's bosom, and this Christ to be him that hath taken all sin and punishment due to the sins of his people on himself, so that there is not the least tittle of them to stand between God and the soul, nothing but Christ between, and this Christ stands only as the way to the Father's bosom; not to keep out as the angel with his sword at the entrance of the garden, but to carry home, and to present spotless to his Father, so that God may truly say of us, we have his righteousness in Christ. For further proof look into that Ephesians 1:13-14. There the Apostle having spoken of the secrets of God, his election and predestination according to his purpose in Christ, in whom after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which {says he} is the earnest of our inheritance, plainly making the Spirit to be the seal, and the earnest of a saints inheritance. It was from this seal that Job could say, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall behold him with these eyes. Job 19:25. And so the Apostle; I know {says he} if this earthly tabernacle were dissolved, I should have a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And thus the soul is carried above all fears under the spirit of bondage, by living upon God and Christ in the spirit of adoption, bearing witness to the soul that it is a child of God, as so filling the soul with heavenly treasure, that it is quiet and established, and lives boasting in God, as the Apostle Paul in Romans 8 the latter end. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who shall condemn or separate from the love of God in Christ? Nothing, not life, nor death, nor anything shall be able to do this. How knew he this? Why he tells you in verse 16, the Spirit of God did bear witness of this to his spirit. And thus the soul through the seal of the Spirit quietly waits for his confirmation in a state of Grace,

till he be swallowed up into the fulness of that glory which is by the same Spirit sealed up for it, as in Galatians 5:5. We through the Spirit wait, {saith the Apostle,} yea, and not only wait, but wait satisfied; under possession the soul is satisfied with the fulness of eternal life in Christ, as in John 4:14, "but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." There is the Spirit poured forth into a satisfying of the soul, that it thirsts no more after anything but Christ, and is satisfied with Christ, for it is a well of water springing up to eternal life. I shall satisfy myself with thus much in the proof of the first head, namely, the sealing work of the Spirit of God in a saint, or a saint sealed up to the eternal love of God by his Spirit.

By this we should examine our assurance of God's love, whence we fetch it, whether from within, or from without; whether from external duties and privileges, or from an internal seal; we see it is God's end in giving his Spirit, that by it saints may be sealed up to the day of redemption, and that we may thereby know that we are his children; and this we find to be in the experience of the Apostle Paul and other Saints. Now let us ask our souls, does our assurance rise from the witness of the Spirit of God to our spirit? Truly we shall never be established in our spirits until we come to this pitch. If we live only upon those graces that flow from the Spirit, it will be a very uncertain life; for our own hearts can best witness how many ebbs and flowings of the fruits of the Spirit is within us. Now if God's love ebb and flow to us, as our love does to him, how changeable shall we make God to be, and how unsettled must our spirits needs be? Says God, my love is unchangeable, and to assure you of it, I give you my Spirit to bear witness with your spirit that ye are the children of my love. God gives his Spirit that we may look on himself which is unchangeable; he loves because he will love, and as we can give no reason of his love, so God gives no period to his love. And when once the soul of a believer comes thus to live upon God himself by his Spirit, then he is an established soul.

But I hasten to the second head; namely a saint walking and working in the spirit, or the Spirit ruling and reigning in a saint; and this I gather from the 14th and 15th verses of John 14. There is the spirit of truth dwelling and being in a saint, and the saint knowing of this possession. Here is a being and abiding; a possession that leads to a ruling and a reigning. The Spirit in a saint is Christ in a saint; that Christ is a saint's Head to rule in him, and reign over him. And in verse 26, the Spirit puts forth an act of sovereignty, teaching all things; a saint acting knowingly, acts from the Spirit that teaches. And in John 16:13-14, there is a further discovery of what the Spirit shall do when he hath possessed a soul; when he makes discoveries of Christ to the soul, for he shall receive of mine, and show it unto you, and thereby you shall be guided into all truth. And as a saint is elected into God and Christ, so the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, he lives in, and to God and Christ possessing all fulness in God and Christ; and making all his performances from God and Christ; and thus he walks and works in the spirit, and the Spirit rules and reigns in him. Thus Romans 8:1-11, speaks very precisely of a saints walking in the spirit, and the Spirit reigning in a saint. They that are in Christ Jesus {saith he} walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. And in verse 2 he tells us that he acts only in Christ, and lives by the law of the spirit in Christ Jesus; which hath freed him from the law of sin and death. As if he should say, all my duties and performances it is Christ living and acting by his Spirit in me. For saith he in the 3rd verse, that the bare law of commandment could not raise me up to holy walking; for flesh which was my own strength, that was weak, but God having made up that in his Son. Now says he, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. And shows in the 5th verse, what it is to walk after the flesh, and what after the spirit, and in the 6th verse tells us flesh and spirit is the way of life and death, but in the ninth verse he shows who are in the spirit, namely those in whom the Spirit of God dwells. And says plainly, that those which have not the Spirit are none of Christ's. And

in the two next verses, shows us that Christ lives in a soul by his Spirit, then the body of sin dies.

There is a reigning power indeed, the whole body of sin set up for destruction, by the Spirit's dwelling and reigning in a saint, and now all the action and motion of such a soul is from God. The soul now in all its wants can have access to God to Christ in the spirit, as in Ephesians 2:18 and in Ephesians 3:16-18. By the Spirit in the inward man, the soul is an established soul, and a knowing soul, and so is enabled to act for God in the spirit. John 7:38-39. There is a promise to believing souls of being so filled with the Spirit, that there shall be flowings forth. Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. And this {saith the 39th verse} is spoken of the Spirit, which they that believe in him should receive.

Now what is the end of this fulness of the Spirit, but that it should rule and reign in a saint, and that a saint should walk and act in it. In Romans 6:14, there is a promise that sin shall not have dominion over the saints, and the reason is given, because {saith he} you are not under the Law, but under Grace. Christ is your sanctification, and his Spirit of Grace shall deliver you from the dominion of sin. In I Corinthians 2:14-15, there a saints knowledge is spiritual, and so distinguished from the world, and this spiritual knowledge living in action in a saint. We shall find in I Corinthians 12:11, in the former part of the chapter, the Apostle speaks of spiritual gifts, acting diversely in several Saints, but all these workings are from one and the same Spirit; so as it is the Spirit that does all in the saints. In II Corinthians 3:16-18, there is a soul made light by having the veil taken from its eyes, and in that light beholding God {saith the text} is changed into his image. Now mark it, all this is by the Spirit's living in a soul. A soul living upon God in the spirit, hath the veil taken away and lives in a glorious vision of Christ; by which the soul is changed into the image of God, and this is by the Spirit of the Lord, saith the end of the 18th verse. And so, in II Corinthians 5:14-17, there is a new creature made by the love of Christ, which constrained the soul from the powerful operation of the Spirit. Wherefore henceforth saith he, we know no man,

no not Christ himself after the flesh. No, how then? Why in the spirit, that Spirit that sheds the love of Christ in our hearts, and thereby constrains us to live in him that died for us, and in whom we are dead to the flesh, but alive in the spirit, and thus the Spirit acts the new creature. So in Galatians 5:16-25, there is an exhortation to walk in the spirit, by which a saint is delivered from obedience to the lusts of the flesh; though the flesh lusteth against the spirit, yet saith the 18th verse, "if ye be led by the Spirit ye are not under the law," and in the 22nd verse shows the fruits of the Spirit, and concludes in the 25th verse, "if you live in the spirit then walk in the spirit;" making all a Saints life and action to be in the spirit.

I will only touch one particular of the life of a saint out of this general, namely, his worship; and show you how all that is in the spirit. For a saint worshipping God in this spirit, take John 4:23-24, which is our Saviour's answer to the woman of Samaria's question in the 20th verse, she as one without the Spirit questions about the places of worship, going as far as an eye of nature could carry her to externals; but the Lord Christ in the 21st verse tells her, "woman the hour cometh when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father." Your light is only in externals, and you worship you know not what; and then preaches himself to her, "Salvation is of the Jews," as if he had said, God will have his people, only worship him, and that in the spirit, for the time comes and now is when the true worshipers shall worship God in the spirit, and gives the reason of it, {for saith he,} "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." This truth is very fully confirmed in Philippians 3:3, false teachers in the foregoing chapter would have brought the saints under the law of works again, and the yoke of circumcision, but the Apostle in this 3rd verse tells us, those are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit. As if the Apostle had said, these false teachers endeavour to bring you under a formal worship, and make you debtors to the law of works again; but we are above it, and we are to live in the spirit, and to worship in the spirit.

In I Peter 2:5, the Apostle tells you who they be that are fit for communion with God; they be living stones, alive in the spirit, and acting in the spirit, to offer up spiritual sacrifice to God by Jesus Christ. But when is a man a living stone, fit to offer up spiritual sacrifices? See that in I John 2:27, "but the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." Then is a man a visible saint, a living stone, fit to worship God, and to have communion with him, when he hath received of the unction of the Spirit; by which he is taught of God to worship in the spirit, and in truth. This truth is not taught of man but of God, and therefore it abides in him; thus you see he that worships God truly, worships him in the spirit.

What a spiritual saint is? First, he is more than a moral man, for he that is less than a moral man is a beast, and he that is at the height of a moral man is but merely a man, a fine civilized piece of clay, loving himself, and therefore doth not devour one another, because another man should not devour him; decked with his own accomplishments, and glorying in his own Babel, but surely a spiritual saint is more than this!

Yea secondly, he is more than a formal or legal professor. What is a formal professor? He is one that lives by sense, and not by faith, that is only taught of man and not of God, that hath all his light from within him from the practice and notion of others, and not from the precepts or Spirit of God within him. A formal professor is one that can see and practice anything which may please all, or, the most of men; he is always learning, but never learned, because he is always studying man and never Christ; he is one which you shall ever find in the crowd where the majority are, there you shall be sure to find him. If you meet him and tell him of a Christ crucified, "I but, {saith he,} doth any of the Pharisees believe in his name?" He is a man much in worship, but the inscription is to the unknown God; his eyes are in another's head, and therefore he is led about by another to act as a blind

man; no form comes amiss to him, for he is nothing else but form; he is one so ignorant as that he thinks it a crime for any man to see more than himself, though he himself be blind; and if a man that sees will but deny his light, he will do the best he can to pluck out his eyes. He is so proud of his chains of darkness that none shall live where he can rule that will not wear his feathers; this soul is mother and nurse both, to that brat of hell, the persecution of the true saints; this man of form knows no heights, depths or lengths above himself, and if he snatch a piece of the Word of God, he only hath it in the letter, and so never reaches Christ in it. This is a formal professor!

But what is a legal professor? He is a man seemingly nearer heaven, but if he be not carried along further, there is no man farther from it, for he is a man full of the word in the letter, but altogether empty of it in the spirit; he is a man exact in the language of Mount Sinai, but cannot pronounce a plain syllable of the language of Zion; he can tell you that God is a just God, and a severe Judge, a revenger of himself upon sinners, but is not able to pronounce God as a Father, and a reconciled God in Christ; he is exact to tell you of precept, duty and transgression, but is not able to unfold the mysteries of Godliness, Christ in the flesh. If a word of Christ drop out of his mouth, it is to tell you what qualifications must fit you for Christ as he thinks; when he hath found a leprous soul of sin, he cannot show it Christ, but says he, "go wash in the tears of repentance and you shall be clean," though he never show him Christ which must wash his repentance; if he finds a poor saint under some affliction, he cannot make up the wound by leading the soul to the love of God, from whence that affliction came, but saith he, "look into yourself, inquire for that sin the punishment of which you now lie under, God is a just God, if you will sin you must bear the indignation of the Lord for it; go fall on your knees, weep and fast, and pray and vow, make God some amends." This is all the relief he can give, and so he pours oil into the flames of sorrow, and vinegar into the bleeding wounds of poor saints. This legal soul lives upon his

duties, and not upon the Free Grace of God in Christ, and therefore he can give no other counsel than he hath experience of, for he never tasted in the spirit the goodness of the Lord, and therefore can never speak good to his own soul, or any other from God; and if he speak any good to a soul it is from duties, "do and live," is the effect of all his language.

I only give this as a word of caution, that we hearken not to the councils of such men, lest we become like those foolish Galatians, which began in the spirit, but were like to end in the flesh. Let this be enough in the negative what a spiritual saint is not.

But then what is a spiritual Saint? Why he is one that lives by faith above sense; one that is all in Christ, and nothing in himself; he is taught of God to know him; he is drawn by God to love him; he is persuaded by God to trust in him; he is filled with God, and lives upon him; he is satisfied with Christ, and rejoices in him; he so lives in Christ, that he makes his boast of him, as the Apostle, Romans 8, the latter end. "Who shall condemn; nay who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" He is one which in the spirit is able to look from eternity to eternity, and therein behold that eternal love of God which gave out Christ to manifest his love to us in him, and hath made him one with Christ in all his merits, righteousness and benefits; he is able to see into that love and eternal purpose of God that made Christ to be sin for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." He can see God his Father, and in the spirit of adoption call him Father; he can read his Salvation written in the Covenant of Grace; he can behold himself one in Christ, as Christ is in God; he assuredly knows that Christ hath borne his grief, and that God hath wounded Christ for his transgressions, bruised him for his iniquities, and laid the chastisement of his peace on him, and all this so fully and really, as that by the stripes that God laid on Christ, his soul is healed. He sees that God hath made Christ's soul an offering for the sins of his people; and that he hath beheld the travail of his soul, and is well pleased; so that now this spiritual man draws up this conclusion. Whatever of sin and punishment was mine, was taken from me, and

made Christ's, and he has fully satisfied for the one, and borne the other; so that now from the justice of God I can conclude this, that neither of them shall be laid on me again. Christ's Righteousness and his glory is so made mine, that I stand spotless in the one, and shall be perfect in the other to all eternity. Thus is a spiritual soul led up to God, and made to know his great design from eternity; namely, to make Christ his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, and that in all these he stands perfect before God, in the perfection of Christ.

This soul lives in the region of God's love, and in Christ's Righteousness, and sees himself above all condemnation; and yet the least transgression {in him} discovered to him by the love and Spirit of God, melts his contrite heart into nothing. "I see, {says he,} that I am alive in Christ through the eternal love of God, and that makes me thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. I died to sin in Christ, and if now I live, it should not be to myself but to Christ." II Cor.5:14-15. And to this the love of Christ constrains me; for, {says he,} "this I know, whoever is in Christ is a new creature, old things are passed away and behold all things are become new." And therefore saith he, "whatever is sin is the old man," and of this he cries out as the Apostle in Romans 7:24, "O wretched man that I am," the law of my flesh rebels against the law of my mind. Sin hath less entertainment nowhere than where the love of God by his Spirit dwells, for perfect love casts out fear, {saith the text,} and perfect love kills corruption. Love to Christ kills and buries sin, when legal fear only lays it on the ground, and thus it lives again and possibly kills the legalist at last; but the spiritual man keeps nothing to himself, but carries all to God and Christ; he lives only in God and Christ; and when he finds corruption in himself, he presently by the Spirit lays it down at the feet of Christ, and tells him, "Oh Lord, my glory, {saith he,} is to live to thee and whatsoever is thine."

"Oh then, {oh Lord,} be zealous of thy glory, for thou has taken the guilt and punishment of all my corruptions from me; is it not also for thy glory to take the reign and the power of them from me too?" Yes,

{saith Christ,} and I will make my promise good, for "sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under Grace." Rom.6:14. "True Lord, {says the soul,} and I believe it, that to live under the reign of Grace is the only way to keep sin under me."

Thus a spiritual soul having a sight of his sins, of all men hath least fear in point of condemnation, because this soul is filled with the perfect love of God which casts out fear, but the inbeing of this love of God in the soul makes as little love to all the incitements of sin, as it hath fear of the condemnation thereof. Sin in all its temptations hath the quickest denial from such a soul of any, for he answers sin thus, "sin, {says he,} the love of Christ constrains me to hate thee;" this soul tells sin he will but lose his labour in tempting him, "for, {says he,} I am not at my own disposing, I have given myself up to Christ already, and Christ have taken possession of me, and lives in me by his Spirit, and for thy temptations I shall carry them to Christ, and sure I am thou canst not live in his presence, for he hath overcome thee for me, and he will destroy thee in me." Thus the Spirit changes a soul from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, and is made to live in this light, which is the light of God's reconciled countenance in the face of Christ; and in this vision of God in Christ the soul is changed into the image of Christ from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. II Cor.3:18.

This spiritual man as he lives upon God in the spirit, so he worships God in the spirit; he knows neither the Mount, nor Jerusalem as his place to worship in; he only knows Christ as the proper medium to worship God in, and he knows not Christ after the flesh neither, but after the spirit; his feasting is with God and upon God, and he knows no form or figure, nor externals to make him a rest of, for he can only rest in the bosom of God and Christ; he knows no fellowship but with the Father and the Son, and as he enjoys God and Christ in the saints, so he hath sweet fellowship with them. God is both the light and the life of his worship; his way and his end in his worship. This is a dove that can rest nowhere but in the ark; Church fellowship to him without Christ, is no

more than a selected piece of a sunken world; the ordinances, {if Christ be not in them,} is to him but as the grave. When Christ was risen all his inquiries are, "where is he whom my soul loves?" "Show me Christ in a saint, Christ in an assembly, and Christ in an ordinance, and then you show me my life, and upon this ground I can live and die with you," saith he. This soul can measure all men and things by Christ; but Christ by nothing but himself, that Spirit of Christ which dwelleth in him; and thus you have some weak discourses of a spiritual saint.

This exhorts saints to live in the spirit upon God and Christ, and act from the endowings of that Spirit as the image of God and Christ. It is very plain that it is the interest and privilege of God's children to live on himself in the Spirit, and from that life spiritually to make all its motions.

Oh, why will you live out of God! Did you ever find any beloved like this beloved? Did you find anything that is all, but God? Why God is making all grace to abound, and that you should live upon all, his all in Christ, and to be filled with his fulness. "O come my beloved, eat of my banquet of love. Drink, O drink abundantly and be satisfied," saith Christ.

All our sadness and complaints arise from our living out of God. Be it whatever it can be that is the most like God, yet if it be not naked and clearly God, the soul will be complaining of wants. 'Tis not duties, Church-fellowship, ordinances, or anything that we conceive or propose to ourselves, which can of themselves give the soul rest; it is only a living in, and upon God and Christ, by the Spirit.

Oh, let us stand in that liberty with which Christ hath made us free; we can stand in none but in Christ, and that is the freeness of Grace, that we should stand forever spotless and blameless in the sight of God through him.

Again, this should stir up saints to act in God; we have no cause now to act doubtingly; if Christ be our strength, the Spirit will teach us to pray and to cry Abba Father, for he is our Father. Is corruption too strong for

us? It is not too strong for Christ, we should lay it at his feet.

And now tell me believing soul, canst thou that livest in the love of Christ live in sin? No says the soul, sin is for the love of it slain in me, by what law? Even the law of love living by the Spirit in me. It is impossible says such a soul that I that am dead to sin should live unto it. "My life {says he} is hid with Christ in God, and it is not I that live now, but Christ he lives in me. Christ lives, and I die {says the soul} I, that is, all I, my righteousness as well as my unrighteousness." If I mistake not, this is the strongest argument against a Saints living in sin that can be, why a saint cannot sin, but it must be without excuse. A carnal man may sin, I could do no better in my own strength. I, but a saint cannot plead so, for he hath Christ for his strength. Why then in the Spirit of God, let Saints consider what a course of sin would be in them, it is little less, than proclaiming Christ a sinner; for a saint is looked upon to live and act in Christ, and that Christ does all in him.

Oh then, if the glory and honour of God in Christ be dear to us, how can we that are delivered from sin live any longer therein? It is impossible that we can love Christ and sin too; and therefore where Christ lives by his love he constrains the death of sin. The exhortations is to saints to live in the spirit; and that is, trampling upon all below God and Christ, and behold ourselves heirs of that glory, and co-heirs

Chapter 4.

God's love gives Saints to know, they shall
appear like Christ.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." I John 3:1-2.

God's love in the manner of it, in making of us his sons, is here by the Holy Ghost set forth with a behold, and truly none but such as have received the Holy Ghost can behold it. It is too bright a glory for any but a spiritual eye to look on, therefore the world knows not God's children, the heirs of glory, because they know not him the Lord of Glory. Spiritual objects are only discerned by spiritual eyes and such are here called to behold the original love of God which hath made us one with Christ; in him sons of his love and heirs of his Glory.

There lies very much in these two verses, and I shall only for methods sake put them into two general heads, and make observations from them. The first is this, that at the glorious appearance of Christ, will come the fulness of a saints glory as he is united to Christ. The second general head is this, that this fulness will be the fulness of Christ, for we shall be like him, and see him as he is.

To the first head, that at the glorious appearance of Christ will come the fulness of a saints glory as he is united to Christ. By this glorious appearance of Christ, I understand that appearance when he shall come to judge the world, when he shall give the damned their full portion, and his children theirs, for then says the text, we shall be made like him, and see him as he is, which is a state of perfection. I shall now endeavour to prove this first general head.

First, take this parallel Scripture as a proof, Colossians 3:3-4, "for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Here Christ is said to be a Saints life, there is our union with him, and at his appearance then we appear in fulness of Glory. That soul which is one with Christ is united to him in his death and in his life. We are dead with Christ {says one text} and this text says, we are alive in Christ. Nay, Christ is our life; so that when Christ manifests his own glory, he manifests our glory as we are united to him. We may read the will of Christ in this point of our glory with him in John 17:24, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me."

To behold the glory of Christ, is to be swallowed up into the glory of Christ, yea into Christ himself; for his Glory is not to be beheld out of himself, and then does the fulness of a saints glory appear when he does come to behold Christ as he is united to him in his fulness of glory. So likewise, Romans 8:17, "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

The Apostle's scope is to show, that in our union with Christ we are heirs of glory, joint heirs with Christ, and so have joint interest in his Glory, so that when the fulness of Christ's Glory appears, then the fulness of our glory appears. The Holy Ghost does fully clear this point, and shows wherein this glory lies, in that I Thessalonians 4:16-17, "for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This place speaks of that coming and appearing of Christ which I mentioned in the beginning; and it clears this point fully, that we shall appear with Christ in Glory {says the text} and so shall we ever be with the Lord; not only appear with him in glory, but also abide forever with him, and so

be filled with the fulness of his glory. These Scriptures in addition to many more which might be produced, will fully serve to make proof of the first general head, that at the glorious appearance of Christ will come the fulness of a saints glory as he is united to Christ.

The second general head proves itself; it hath in it a double proof, that our fulness is the fulness of Christ; for first {says the text} we shall be like him; now nothing but our union with Christ can make us like Christ, to be filled with his fulness. And another text says, "of his fulness {meaning Christ} we received, and grace for grace." John 1:16.

The second proof in the text is, "we shall see him as he is." Now Christ is so bright a glory, that he can be seen in no light but his own; he is the express image of his Father, and the brightness of the glory of God, so that his brightness darkens all other glories, and is discerned in nothing but himself.

I shall now make some observations of this Scripture, and these general heads. And the first observation shall be this; namely, that a Saints worst condition is in this world. When the world shall end, then shall all the clouds of the people of God be blown over, and the brightness of Christ appear, and we will be like him, says the text. When the little world that we carry about us in this body of sin and death shall give up the ghost, then shall a harvest of gain come in, as the Holy Ghost tells us in Philippians 1:21. Though to live be Christ, yet to die is gain. Though the beams of Christ shines through clouds in this world, and so maintains life in his members; yet here lies the gain, to be carried above the clouds, and to be lodged in the bosom of the Lord of Glory. As the fore named text, to be ever with the Lord, there lies the gain. God's Word tells us of a time when all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, but it is not in this world, for our Saviour tells us the world will hate us, and it shall be a place of tribulation; it must not seem hard or strange to those that shall reign with Christ to suffer with him, all our sufferings are in, and from the world, but the fulness of our reign is with Christ in Heaven.

Thus are we made conformable to the image of Christ, in this world we enjoy least of Christ, and therefore must needs be a saints worst condition. That is the darkest day to a saint in which the least of Christ's presence and glory appears; therefore is the world a saints worst state, because it is not able to bear the fulness of the glory of Christ, which shall be revealed in Heaven. There will be no need to inquire for him whom our soul loves, for we shall always be in his presence. When mortality has put on immortality, then comes in the crown of glory; we may have glimpses of glory in this life, but the more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory is in the life to come. The top of our life here is of faith; we live by the faith of the Son of God, {saith the text,} and another Scripture opening the nature of faith, says, it is the evidence of things not seen; but in Heaven we know as we are known of God, the eye will then be made suitable to the object, and there will be defect no more on our part to diminish the glory, so that you see, if we set aside all the sorrow of the world, and take a Saints sweetest morsels he hath below, yet it is far short of the glory which shall be revealed. Wherefore the observation stands very clear, that a saints worst condition is in this world.

The second observation is this, namely, that a saint hath relief from the worst of the world by faith, waiting for the appearance of Christ, as in the text. A saint by faith looks upon his union with Christ as a son, and so satisfies himself with the appearance of God. So, the Apostle Paul in Romans 8, the latter end, he eyes there his union with Christ, and so is carried above tribulation or distress, or the worst of the world. He concludes that there was nothing which could separate him from Christ, and therefore he is at rest; as if he should say, notwithstanding all these which he named before, as tribulation, and the rest, yet Christ and I shall be one in glory, and when his fulness of glory appears, then shall mine. A saint by faith can argue thus, whatever may seem best at present to a carnal eye; yet I know when Christ shall appear, that is, the righteous judge of the quick and dead, then shall my head be lifted up, for my full

redemption draws nigh. When a state of good and evil for eternity comes, then shall my state and condition appear good. I know whom I have trusted, Christ will preserve his own glory, and mine with his; my state of glory shall be that which shall accompany the appearance of Christ. The best and worst of the world hath but a moment, a little time to attend it, but the glory of Christ hath eternity with it, and this is my portion. Thus, hath a saint by faith relief from the worst of the world, waiting for the appearance of Christ.

A third observation. Love makes the soul quick-sighted. The soul that loves Christ, sees by faith his appearance, though afar off, and rejoices in it; though no affliction but is grievous for the present; yet by faith the soul sees the appearance of Christ, though at some distance, and in the joy of it is carried above the present affliction. Hence it is, that saints can overcome the world, even their faith {says the text} that eyes the appearance of Christ; for if they saw nothing but the world, the world would overcome them, but it is a higher glory that carries them above the world. The believing soul says, he that shall come, will come and will not tarry and so quickens Christ's appearance to the relief of his own soul.

A fourth observation. A saint values himself, according to his interest in God, and what relief comes in by that interest, he eyes it though afar off, and satisfies himself with it. Let the world value me at as low a rate as they will says a saint; yet I will value myself according to my interest in God. If they say my wisdom is folly, yet I will say Christ is my wisdom, and so I have true wisdom. If they say I shall want bread to eat, I can say by experience that I have food to feed on which they know not of; and when they shall want their husks, I shall find bread enough in my Father's house, and love enough in my Father's heart to satisfy and fill my eternal soul. I bless the Lord says such a soul, I value this above ten thousand worlds, my union with Christ; and knowing that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, and that nothing shall be able to separate me from this glorious interest. Romans 8. I can value this, I am through Free Grace a child of God, and heir of Glory, and

that which the world adores, I in the spirit of Christ can trample upon; I know God has freely given me Christ, and with him all things, the world is an addition and overplus. Christ and glory is my portion, and when the worldling gluts himself with this present dying world, I can rejoice in my interest in the living God, and eye my glory as a son of God, and an heir with Christ, as it shall be revealed at the great and glorious appearance of the Lord Jesus. My soul shall be satisfied with its interest in God, when the world and worldlings shall be confounded in their own glory. My life is hidden with Christ in God, and when Christ who is my life shall appear, then I know that I shall appear with him in Glory. As a believer's life is hidden in God, the world cannot see it, yet through the Spirit of God I can see it, and rejoice in it, and thus a gracious soul filled with the Spirit, values itself according to its interest in God and Christ.

The fifth observation is this; namely, that a gracious soul relieves himself in beholding God's love in the original, and the glory of it. He looks upon God's love as it elected and chose him to be a son, and he looks on the glory of that love as it shall be manifested at the glorious appearance of Christ. In a cloudy day such a soul goes to the Son of Righteousness for relief, and in a day of death to this inexhaustible fountain of life. This soul goes not to his outward esteem in the world, not to his external advantages, or endowments of parts and the like for his relief; he does not boast and rejoice himself in this, that he is a member of a Church, or is under this or the other ordinance above men, or that his parts are greater, or his esteem with the world more than other poor saints, but he fetches his relief from the fountain of life, that original love which made him a son. His eye is with the Apostle in Ephesians 2:5, upon that Grace which first gave him life, "even when we were dead in sins, hath he quickened us together with Christ, by Grace ye are saved." He eyes that Grace which made him one with Christ, that original love of God, and from this object the soul draws very high and glorious conclusions in all the dispensations of God to it. I am now a son and in all God's dispensations to me he is my Father, and I stand as a son

in his presence, begotten by his own original love, and therefore I know all is the kindness of my God and Father to me in this life; but when Christ shall appear in the fulness of his glory, then shall all know I am a son, for I shall be like him, and see him as he is. Thus, a child of God fetches his relief from his interest in God, and an heir of Heaven makes up his glory in his soul by that glory which waits for him, and shall to all eternity be revealed to him with God and Christ in Heaven.

The sixth observation is this; namely, that a saints glory which now is hid from the world, when it is fully manifested shall destroy the world. When Christ shall come to judge the world, and to put an end to all corruptible things, then is it that he will reveal the fulness of his own glory, and so our glory as we are by Free Grace united to him.

Original love hath more grace and glory in it than the world can bear, so that when it shall be fully manifested it will eat up all the vanishing dying things. Should any soul in this life partake of the fulness of the glory of its interest as it is one with Christ, that soul would soon break through the clay walls of the body, it would be like new wine in old bottles, the bottles would soon break; the heartstrings would be like the locks and bolts of the prison doors, that opened of themselves, to the Apostles. The sun in the firmament is a type of the Son of Righteousness, and is the glory of the present world, but when Christ the natural Son of God, and the thing typified appears in his fulness of glory, then all these small brooks of glory shall run into this Fountain.

The worldling then must lose his glory, viz., the world, though he find not a higher glory, God in the face of Christ; but when the world shall thus be swallowed up, then shall a saint be no loser, but shall be carried from narrow shallow streams, into the ocean of original life and glory. A saint can lose nothing in losing the world, for he finds all fulness in Christ; the type ceases, the thing typed forth appearing; the life of faith ends, and the life of vision begins; fulness of glory then arises before his eyes, and never sets any more.

The seventh observation is this, though at the glorious appearance of Christ the world shall be consumed, yet then his own shall be made like him. Vile bodies made like his glorious body, and so taken up into an eternal beholding of God and Christ forever. For {says the text} we shall see him as he is. That glorious appearance of Christ which shall eat up the glory of the world, and so leave worldlings howling for want of a glory; that I say shall swallow up saints into itself, and fix them in singing hallelujahs to all eternity. The world passes away, that saints may have entrance into those mansions prepared for them by original love, where the same love will fully discover itself to all eternity, and satisfy the soul with those discoveries.

The eighth observation is this, namely, that a saints glory is a certain glory. For as our lives are hidden with Christ in God, so the fulness of our glory is in Christ, and appears at his glorious appearance. A saints fulness of glory shall as certainly appear as Christ shall come to judge the world. And this shall be the beginning of glory, "come ye blessed of my Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world," enter into your Master's joy.

Now feed my beloved, and be satisfied to eternity; you shall have no interruption of the full enjoyment of God forever; whatever is in God communicable, you shall have it; you shall know God as you are known of God, and be filled with the fulness of that glory that flows from the presence of God, and fills Heaven and all the heirs of glory to all eternity. Christ in whom our life is hid, though he make it an obscure life from the world; yet it is a certain life to a saint, the being of it is as sure as Christ's own being. Because I live, you live also; and the glorious manifestation of it as certain as the appearance of Christ.

The ninth and last observation is this, that that day which will be most dreadful to the world, and their entrance into the fulness of all horror to eternity, even that day shall be a day of fulness of joy to the people of God, and an entrance into fulness of communion with God and Christ, which as another text speaks, is fulness of joy, which is at God's right hand for evermore. Yea, that shall

be the coronation day, when the righteous judge shall crown us with righteousness. II Timothy 4:8, "henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not me only, but all them that love his appearing." And then shall Jesus Christ give up the Kingdom to his Father, and all the floodgates of glory shall be set open; love shall then flow from God as it is in God, and the soul made capable to receive suitable to such a fulness.

These truths may be useful to us in these particulars following. First, let this persuade us to be much in beholding our interest as we are the children of God, and as we are fixed with Christ in the eternal love of God. It is the exhortation of the Holy Ghost in this place, "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God."

Herein is the glory of the life of faith, that it looks into the love of God, and our interest in Christ, as co-heirs with him in the love and glory of God. This is a fountain that always gives forth the water of life, and refreshes the City of God, namely, to eye God in all his dispensations to us as a Father of love to his children. Does God lay us upon beds of sickness; and lead us through a wilderness of afflictions in this life; yet behold, now we are the sons of God, and in all this God is a loving Father, and all his dispensations are filled and managed to us by and with his love. Now, even now from all eternity, and to all eternity, are we the children of God. There may be many times when it may be truly said, we do not act as the children of God; but there is no time when it can be truly said, that an elect soul is not a child of God; for now, even before all time were we sons, though yet we enjoy not the fulness of our interest as sons.

If you object and say, must I apply this time now when I sin? Must I then look on myself as a child of God? I answer yes; we must, and no time more needful than that; I shall demonstrate this truth under these considerations.

First, that according to the law of the Gospel, and the covenant of Free-Grace, there is no other way left to restore a soul fallen in sin, but by beholding our interest

in the free love of God, and so in Christ the great gift of his love, that died for us, is risen again, and now lives for us, and makes continual intercession for us at God's right hand in Glory. If sin be the wound, what shall be the cure but Free-Grace? If self slay self, who shall make us alive but Christ as we are united to him in the love of God? Whether shall we go from the Rock of Ages to find relief in so sad a state; and how shall we justify it at the throne of Grace, if we fly to duty, {and possibly under such a notion as this,} to fit us for Christ and for mercy. Will Free-Grace approve of this? Is not the law of boasting excluded by the law of faith? And what advantage {poor soul} will it be to thee, when thou art stung with sin, that fiery serpent, to look on thy duties, will one sin cure another? No, Christ is the balm of Gilead, it is only looking upon thy interest in God and Christ, that will restore thy soul. It is nothing but looking upon Christ who was typified by that brazen serpent in the wilderness, which can fetch out the sting of the fiery serpent of sin. If we look to the cause in our hearts, that keeps us below our interest, poring upon a duty to relieve us under a sinning condition. We shall find the cause to be unbelief, and now poor soul tell me, is not this the top of all sin? Unbelief makes a soul deny the Lord that bought it; it undervalues the Covenant of Free Grace; the soul must have no life till it have something of itself to live upon, if unbelief may rule; and truly this is the workings of our unbelieving hearts, when in a sinning state we do not eye and improve our interest as we are the children of God, by improving our interest in God as our Father, by the Spirit. The poor soul that sins, and is within the Covenant of Grace, can look upon that love of God which made Christ to be made sin for us, and we the righteousness of God in him. II Cor.5:21.

That soul which eyes its interest in God and Christ, hath by virtue of it in the spirit, power over sin in all points. Sin shall not condemn. There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. Rom.8:1. So in the reigning power of sin; sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the Law, but under Grace. Rom.6:4. But if a soul decline Christ and its interest in the

love of God for its object under a sinning state; go whither it will, sin will revive, and the soul shall die.

This is the first demonstration of the truth; that no other object but our interest in God and Christ is able to restore a sinning soul to life again; all other objects besides this increases sin in the soul, and there is no object but this which can carry the soul above sin.

A second demonstration why an elect soul should under a sinning state look on its interest in God and Christ is this. Because no other object but this can destroy sin. Sin will reign till Christ reign; and one text says, Christ is made to us of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. It is in the great design of God to glorify his Free-Grace, that Christ should sanctify us, not ourselves. So the Apostle, "and if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin." Rom.8:10. The power of sin dies only where Christ lives. So the same Apostle, II Cor.5:17, "therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, all things are become new." It is only the presence of Christ that overcomes the old nature in man, and slays the old corruptions; go to what pool you will to be cleansed of your corruptions, they will be all helpless in themselves. If we go to duties and to ordinances, we may lay there all our days, and never have a cure of this evil of sin, till Christ the angel of the covenant come and trouble the waters; and not only to move the waters, but to put them in too, with his own hand of love, as all the cure must lie entirely in his hand. This is the top of our glory, that we are merely passive, Christ and Free-Grace is only active in all that concerns the good and welfare of our souls. What reason then hath a sinning soul to look of his interest in God and Christ since there lies all his relief. It is Satan's counsel we take in, by so looking anywhere else. The mind and will of God is, that we should look upon him whom we have pierced; when we mourn, I deny not any soul to melt into evangelical tears over the least sin that lives and moves in it; only be sure of this, that when thou dost look on a living sin, that thou lookest on it through Christ that died for it, and lives for thee. This

will make kindly child-like mourning over sin, and sweet steadfast resting on the Free Grace of God in Christ.

This is the meaning of the Holy Ghost in I John 2:1-2, "and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." As if the Holy Ghost had said, a sinning soul hath no place to fly for relief, but to his interest in Christ, and to look up to God through him, {for says the Holy Ghost,} he is our only Advocate with the Father, to plead for us in such desperate cases, he can plead his righteousness to be ours, and the propitiation that he hath made for us, and there is no other pleader either at the bar of Justice, or the throne of Grace, but Jesus Christ. There is no other name under Heaven by which men can be saved, but by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh then, where should poor sinning souls look, but to their interest in Christ as sons of God, and co-heirs with Christ. The Prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 53:11, speaking in the verse before of God's bruising and putting Christ to grief, making his soul an offering for our sins, saith, "he shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." God is satisfied with no other object but his Son? He looks on all his people through him. Now we must eye what God eyes, the travail of Christ as our public person, and in that object the soul will live, and sin will die. God has lodged the glory of his Grace here, that all our relief should come in and through the Lord Christ; he came from the bosom of God's love upon this design, to be eyes to the blind, legs to the lame, and to set the captive and those that are bound in fetters and chains free. Is not Christ then, and the bosom of Free Grace that gave him, the only object for a sinning soul to look on for relief! An experienced soul in these realms will tell you that a glimpse of God's love in the face of Christ is the only expeller of the being and the reigning power of sin in it; and such experience as this the Apostle speaks of in II Corinthians 5:14-15, "for the love of Christ constrains us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then we were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." Mark the spirit

of the Apostle, he eyed his interest as one with Christ in death and life; and speaking of sin, {says he,} love constrains me thus to judge that I am dead to sin, and can live no longer to it, because Christ is my interest. This is an object indeed able to slay sin in the soul, to behold our interest in Christ; and that love which made this interest constrains our souls thus to judge, and thus to act as being dead to sin because we are alive to Christ; so that I hope it is clearly made out, that a soul in a sinning condition must eye it's interest in God as a Father, and in Christ as a Head and a Husband, for no other object besides this can either raise a soul fallen in sin, or slay that sin which lives in the soul. Therefore the exhortation stands firm, and should make its impression upon our souls; namely that we should be much in beholding our interest as we are the children of God, and as we are fixed with Christ in his eternal love. I may safely say this is our duty as well as our privilege, to be always eyeing our interest in the love of God; for herein we serve the ends of God in magnifying his Grace to us, and shedding his love abroad in our hearts. This is fully proved in that Romans 8:14-16, "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Mark it, the Spirit is given to bear witness of our interest in Christ, and this is not a spirit of bondage, but that Free Spirit in which we behold our interest as children, and {says the text} cry out Abba-Father. If we have received the Spirit, it is our duty as well as our privilege to improve it to this end, the constant beholding of our interest as the children of God, and in Romans 8:17, "if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Oh, eye this interest! As we love our lives let us eye this interest, this is our living upon that life which is hid with Christ in God; the perfection of which shall be a full enjoyment of God and Christ to all eternity.

Again, let this persuade us to prize highly, and thrust heartedly for this most glorious appearance of

Christ. If our hearts put that day far from us, we put our highest glory far from us, for till then we are as heirs under age, not in full possession; for Free-Grace hath given more, and the blood of Christ hath purchased more, and Heaven contains more glory for us than the world can bear to be revealed, but Christ shall come and manifest it all, which glory shall consume the world, all corruptible things shall die before it, and then soul and body both shall be carried above corruption, to be filled and crowned with immortal glory. Though now we are sons; yet many times there is such clouds of corruptions and afflictions on us, that it hardly appears what we are, much less what we shall be. Our glory now as children is more than the world can see; and when Christ thus appears, it shall be more than the world can bear. Oh, let this bear up our spirits, the few moments that are behind, and all in this world be not enough, Christ is near by, and he will bring enough with him. Wait cheerfully, as those that believe such an appearance of Christ at hand, in which we shall appear in our interest and our union with him.

Again, let this teach us what value we are to put upon the world, too weak a foundation to bear all our glory, when we come to possess our full inheritance as co-heirs with Christ, the world will be too narrow to contain it; and if it be so, then surely the world is not worthy of our love, our joy, nor our fear. That soul which God loves, the world is too little for its love; God only can and will satisfy that love; he makes us love him, because he loved us first; the flames of love which he kindles in our bosoms he satisfies with that fountain of love which is in his own bosom. That soul which hath interest in Christ, and waits for his appearance, the perishing world is too low a thing for him to rejoice in. But he may always rejoice in the Lord, for there is a suitable portion, and truly there is no just cause for a saint to fear the world, when Christ has undertaken for him at the throne of Grace. The world must hate us because it hates him whose image we bear; but here is relief enough, Christ that is our interest in Heaven, he has overcome the world for us. We may be encouraged to go to the Father in Christ's name, to be kept from the evil of the world; but

there is no cause why we should fear that the world shall overcome us; for Christ is able and faithful to preserve all those the Father hath committed to his charge. Were the world as little in our affections as it is in our interest, we should enjoy it more, and fear it less; it is our carnality that makes it a king, and sets it on the throne, and then we fall down and worship it; but God hath made the world our footstool, as it is Christ's, for he is our interest, and what is his glory as our Head, is our glory as his members. When the world concerning Saints is mentioned by God it is an additional thing; but Christ and his righteousnesses is a saints interest. The Holy Ghost gives the world this title, the meat that perishes, but Christ is that portion which endures forever; call not that enough which is not enough for a moment; a frown from God can in a moment darken all the world, and a smile from Christ will as soon out shine all the beauty of the world. Oh, then Saints, let this teach us to know our full interest in God, and all the emptiness of this empty perishing world.

Lastly, this calls all saints to rejoice in the glorious appearance of Christ; that will be a day of glory that never will have night; the sun that will give light unto that day will be the Son of Righteousness, and the God of Grace. We shall from that to all eternity never behold nor enjoy a lesser glory than God himself; God filling us, and all that glorious company above, not only revealing, but communicating the fulness of his glory to us, so that our vile bodies shall be made like unto his glorious body, and the whole soul and body made capable to receive, and shall be satisfied with the fulness of God, all the glory of Heaven shall center in our bosoms, and that shall be the feast which the Lamb and his wife shall keep to all eternity. Is not this a fit subject for our joy, if such a day as this be at hand? Oh, then rejoice all you whose interest is in Christ, for every moment in this dying world hastens to this day; all the clouds we see in this dark world are flying away, that this Sun of righteousness may break forth in its full splendor and glory. The world dies, that we may live; things that now appear, they perish to make way for this glorious appearance of Christ, and therefore live now upon this, not only because we are children, but

knowing that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for {says the text} we shall see him as he is.

Chapter 5.

Christ is the food of living souls.

"I am that bread of life." John 6:48.

These words are a clear and plain testimony of our Saviour concerning himself. In verse 33 of this chapter, he tells the Jews that "the bread of God came down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world," and then again in verse 35, and verse 48.

First, the Lord Jesus Christ is that bread which came down from Heaven. Secondly, the Lord Jesus Christ to be that bread which gives life to the world. For proof of this first head, we need go no further than this chapter, in which every testimony to this truth is the witness of the Lord of truth, even Christ himself. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." John 6:38. So in verse 52, "I am the living bread which came down from Heaven," and likewise in verse 58, "this is that bread which came down from Heaven."

Christ speaking in the verse before this of his Father's sending him; the Scriptures proving the truth. But it will be said, every good and perfect gift comes from above; and wherein lies the peculiarity of Christ in this more than in other gifts of God? I answer that in the consideration of the next head, which is, that Christ is the bread of life, or that bread which gives life to the world; in this I say, the peculiarity of Christ coming from Heaven will appear.

This is the marrow and the life of all our Saviour's discourse in this chapter as it were centered in this 48th verse. "I am that bread of life." In verse 33, he calls himself, "the bread of God," and the "life of the world;"

and in verse 38, he shows how he came to be the life of the world, even by the will of God, sent by God, and his business the work and will of God. In the 39th and 40th verses, he tells us, "and this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Here our Saviour clears up whom he meant by the world; namely, the elect and chosen of God, which are given to Christ by his Father, and then declares that his work is his Father's will, and tells us what it is; namely, that all which God his Father had given him, should have everlasting life in him. He tells us how faithful he will be in this work, so that nothing shall be lost that God hath committed to him; and tells us that this is the will of God, that every soul which he hath given to Christ should have a discovery of him, and believe on him, and that in all this will of God runs the seed of eternal life. For that part which is capable of lying down in the dust to sleep, even that part shall not be lost, but shall be raised up at the last day; that is, the last day of the world, which passeth away like a dream in the night. Now if we lay all this together, must we not needs acknowledge this truth, that Christ is the bread of God, the bread of life; yea, the God of life! Our Saviour uses this term of bread indulgently to the weakness of our flesh; but his work is in the Spirit, and if God give us the Spirit with the letter, we shall discern the glory of Christ as he is our life in his own light. This appears by our Saviour's own words in verse 63 of this chapter, "it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

Christ's words are spirit and life, because he himself is our spiritual life. In verse 49, Christ tells us what he doth mean by this bread of life. "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead," as if Christ should say, no externals whatsoever in your life; you may feed on them all your way in the wilderness, and yet soul and body die. But in the two next verses, he speaks

plainly what is the bread that he meant. "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6:50-51.

Here I say Christ demonstrates what is the bread that he meant, namely himself in the flesh, and he becomes this bread of life by giving his life in the flesh for us. In the 53,54,55 & 56 verses of this chapter, our Saviour shows us how that interest in him as a crucified Jesus is our life, and that he may fully clear this out to us, he holds forth himself not only a crucified Saviour, but a living God. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." John 6:57.

Our Saviour's argument seems to be thus, I live as one in God, and you as one in me; and thus is Christ that bread of life, or that bread which gives life to his own in the world. Thus much for proof to the two heads that were first to lay down; I shall now hold out such spiritual observations from what hath gone before, as I have received from Christ, and the first observation shall be this namely, that Christ only is a saints life.

By this I mean, that every spark of a saints life lies in Christ, and so in Christ, that it is nothing else in which Christ is not all. Christ is so fully and solely a saints life, that take all duties, ordinances, privileges and external advantages, whatsoever subtracted from Jesus Christ, and they are all dead things; like the grave clothes in the sepulture, when Christ was risen. Our Saviour himself bears witness to this truth, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but by me," is a truth so dear to God and Christ, that Christ speaks to it in this place as fully as terms can express it, both in the affirmative and the negative. "I am the life," {saith Christ,} that is, in the affirmative; and so the life, that no man comes to my Father, the fountain of life, but by me; there is the negative and affirmative; affirmative, both in the negative exclusive from Christ, and in the affirmative, inclusive. If we consult that place and John 16:14, where

our Saviour speaks of the office of the Spirit, and his work in the hearts of his people, we shall find him speak to this thing that we have in hand. "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

Mark it, the work of the Spirit is to reveal Christ to us as he is our life, and so glorify Christ in showing him to be our life. And as Christ had said, the Holy Ghost when he comes, he shall show you your names written in the Book of Life with my blood; all your sins laid on me, and that I have buried them in my own wounds, so that they shall never rise up in judgment more against you; my Righteousness your robe of glory, perfect glory in the sight of God; my Law of love written in your hearts to be the power that shall slay sin in your lives. Thus the Spirit shall glorify me in showing you that I am your life in whole and every part thereof. Christ as he is one with God is our fountain of life, &c., and in all our addresses to God, he is our way, truth, and life. For further confirmation take the experience of the Apostle; for says he, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God," Gal.2:20, and in another place, "for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Col.3:3. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." I Cor.1:30.

Mark it, for here Christ is made all by God to us; for what can you call life, that is not bound up in some or all of these. The 29th verse of that chapter gives a good and full reason why God made Christ all to his people; namely this, that no flesh should glory in his presence. This reason is so full that the truth stands strong upon it against all gainsayers; grace would be no grace if flesh had anything in itself to glory of in the presence of God; our life to be only in Christ, preserves as entirely the glory of God, free Grace, as it doth the safety of our souls; for that soul that glories in Christ as his life, glorifies the free Grace of God which gave that life. When the Apostle speaks of the acts of life in his soul, he makes Christ all; for says he, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." And the same Apostle in another

place says, it is merely of Grace that I am what I am; so that you see where Christ is made all, there Free Grace hath the glory of all, and this is the great design of God to all eternity to glorify his free grace in Christ. Thus much shall suffice for the first observation that Christ only is a saints life.

A second observation is this; that if it be thus, saints should value and esteem Christ as their life. Saints, what mean these carnal fears? Does not Christ live? If the world be nothing, is not Christ enough? Why fear ye so much to lose that meat which perishes, when Christ this bread of life lives forever; cannot you be content that the world should bring forth wants? Why there is no other place of want but that, for there is bread enough in your Father's house. Heaven only is the proper place of fullness; so doth it not speak an undervaluing of Christ that carnal fear shall possess our spirits in want, when Christ the fullness of the Godhead bodily is our life and our portion. Nay, what mean these stoopings and bendings of our judgments, affections, and services to the world, and worldly ends; is not this the end of it, to live in their love and esteem, for as to make a portion of perishing things and friends of the unrighteous mammon? Saints, will this stand with an esteem of Christ as our life? A soul that truly values Christ, it pants thus in spirit, "O let me know truths as they are in Jesus, and obey them in the Spirit of Christ. God hath made the world my footstool, as it his, and I am one with him; Christ is only my life and glory; I would trample upon my footstool, and lie down in the bosom of Christ who is my life and glory." This is a soul that truly values Christ. But tell me saints, if we value Christ as our life or portion, and our crown of glory, our best and truest friend, our faithful brother and our loving husband, one that hath borne all God's wrath for us, who hath died that we might live, and whose love is so great. If we thus look on Christ and value him, why is it that we so easily grieve him?

Ingenuous nature reaches this, to be tender of offending them that we value, and put a price upon their love. Doth not Grace exceed nature in this? Surely it doth! Oh, then let our lives speak our love to Christ, and our

value of him. Love and value of Christ wrought this frame of spirit in the spouse; she was tender of the pleasure of Christ, and improves all her interest amongst the daughters, that Christ might rest in his pleasure. Is not the spouse here a type of a godly soul that hath interest in Christ? If so, then sure her spirit should be ours; if we value Christ, it will make us tender that he rest in his pleasure; it is but equal Christ should have rest in us, for he has travailed for us, and trod the winepress of his Father's fury alone.

Now tell me Saints, do you think Christ can rest, and take pleasure in our bosoms, when they are so full of worldly love, and carnal aims and ends, with pursuits answerable? Do we esteem Christ when we make him such a bed to lie in; can we say we love and value him, when we entertain those in our hearts with him, that crucified him, namely our lusts? Is this entertainment and company for the Prince of Glory? Oh, if we prize and value Christ, that will be only dear to us which is dear to him; his rest and his pleasure will be our rest and our joy, and whatever wounds Christ will wound us. That soul which sees its interest in Christ, and values that, beholds Christ upon the cross, wounded and bleeding for his sins, and is so affected with that kindness of Christ, that whenever he sees Christ's bleed afresh with any sins committed by him, the soul is as it were in Christ's room, he is then crucified, not to satisfy for his sin, for that he sees is fully done by Christ for him, and could never have been done but by Christ; but the reflection of love and the value of Christ wounds this soul clean through. Christ {says such a soul} traveled as low as Hell to redeem me, for there I was by nature. The first Adam left me there, and the second Adam plucked me out; and in this travail he sweat drops of water and blood; he tore his way through his own bowels to redeem my soul, he puts his own robe of righteousness upon me, and never leaves this pursuit of love till he brings me into his Father's and his own glory, and I can never sin against less love than this! Oh, this valuation of Christ, it makes a gracious soul exceeding tender of anything that may displease Christ whom his soul loveth.

An experienced soul in the ways of Christ will tell you that it is the hardest travel that ever it went, to step a step in the ways of sin, after it hath apprehended the love of Christ and been taught by the Spirit to value that love; and I believe that if Satan could speak truth, he would confess it to be the hardest work he hath to draw a soul that beholds Christ's love and values that love in any soul. Therefore as the only remedy against sin, eye Christ, love and value him! But saints, if we thus value Christ as our life and our all, whence is it that in time of distress we seek relief of broken cisterns, and forsake the Fountain of Life? My meaning is this, when under a weak or wounded state by sin, we fly to duties for relief, and not to Christ to renew the graces of Christ in us, and not to eye our interest in Christ as he is the gift of free Grace; this is an undervaluing of Christ who in Proverbs 3:18 is said to be a tree of life! Those graces you would live on is the fruits of this tree, and are only fruits of life as they flow from interest and communion with this Tree of Life. Do but consider the folly of your spirits when we fly from Christ to duties, and to the stirring up of gifts and graces in us for our relief in such a state, for fallen man is a creature that can act no grace in himself, and grace without the breathings of Christ is as dead as man, as no grace can act itself. Take our Saviour's testimony to this truth, "abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." John 15:4,5.

Our Saviour in this main point thinks it not enough in the comparison he made to show fully how that all the acts of life in us flows from himself which is our life. But he concludes in these plain words, "without me {says he} you can do nothing." The spouse of Christ in Canticles 4 last, she honours Christ in believing this truth, for she calls for the Spirit of Christ to blow upon her garden of spices that they may flow forth. The spices here are the graces of a saint, and it is the breathings of Christ in the spirit that gives them all life. No Grace hath life in itself,

nor can it act itself; but Christ is the life and the motion of every grace. It is a mistaking Christ, and an undervaluing of him, when we go to duties that they may carry us and commend us to God. Christ is the only way to God, and he alone carries us as living souls to duties, and through duties, in and by his own Spirit. The Apostle knew this well enough, when he made that prayer, Colossians 1:11, "be ye strengthened with all might according to his glorious power." In verse 10 he makes this petition, "that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." His desire was, that the Colossians should live up to Jesus Christ and walk worthy of the Lord. Walking is an act of life, and this he knew was out of themselves, and not in any of their external privileges or advantages whatsoever, and therefore he seconds it with this petition, "that ye might be strengthened with all might according to his glorious power." The Apostle here speaks his experience; for in another place he does acknowledge that he did all things through Christ that strengthened him; and he prays here for the same strength, because he well knew there was no other strength sufficient to this glorious work. The same Apostle in Hebrews 12:2 sets a high value upon Christ, and makes him all in this work of Grace, and gives it us in direction, to look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith. Did we thus eye Christ and value him as he is, we should not so often look below him, and go in our own strength to finish faith, that our faith might be the author of Christ; for so we do when we will not embrace Christ till we have qualified ourselves, nor think Free-Grace enough in itself, till we have such and such qualifications in us which we think to be fit for Grace, if not worthy of Grace. Truly I know no worthiness of our own that Free-Grace calls a fit subject for, to work its own glory out of. Rather, I find God mentioning his Grace under this consideration, loving us when we lay in our blood, and no eye to pity us. Grace lives when all help below is dead. Now such thoughts as these are exceedingly below Christ, that is our life. Is this a true value of Christ, who hath done, suffered, pardoned and

purchased so much for us as he hath? That when we are in straits, to go to duty for relief, and not to the God of duties who is the life of soul and duties. Is not this matter of reproof to those foolish Galatians, which began in the spirit and would end in the flesh.

I think that there is not any piece of the old man in saints that darkens more of the glory of God's Free Grace, and damps more of the comforts of his people than this doth, to go any wither but to Christ in straits; for this must needs put a dishonour upon him, and be an undervaluing of him; for doth it not imply thus much, that the thing we seek after is not to be had in Christ, or not so soon in Christ as in duties, or at least that it is not only to be had in Christ, but it is all one whether we go to him or not. Now all these are conceptions of the old man in us, when we through the Spirit look upon Christ as our life, we shall see all fullness in him; grace enough to pity, to pardon, and to die for us; righteousness enough to clothe us, and to present us spotless to the pure eyes of his Father's glory. Power enough to take us out of Satan's hands, and to defend us from all enemies and all evil. Wisdom enough to make us wise in him, to guide and to govern us, that our conversations may be like children of light and heirs of glory; goodness enough to supply all wants in us, and to give out fullness of his own grace to us, yes and happiness enough to satisfy our souls to all eternity, and the soul says, Christ is enough; yea, he is all, and whether should I go but to him, for he hath the words of eternal life; yea, he is my eternal life. This is the frame of such souls as do truly prize Christ as their life.

A third observation is this, that if Christ be a saints life, that a saint only enjoys his life as he lives upon Christ in the spirit. When I thus mention Christ, I do it as he doth it himself, "I and my Father are one," {says Christ,} and "as I am in the Father, so are you in me." We are one with Christ through the love of God, and enjoy this life through the Spirit of God. In John 6:63, Christ tells us that it is "the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing," as if he had said, whatever you enjoy of me as your life, it is through my Spirit, it is not the fruits of your own flesh, it is what comes from me, that is spirit and life

to you. Our Saviour clears up this truth in his discourse with that woman of Samaria, in John 4:23-24, "but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and truth." And in another text, the natural man discerns not the things of God, nor cannot, because they are only spiritually discerned. The Spirit only reveals the hidden things of God, and so the Apostle in Galatians, "for we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith," and thus, "this I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh," for "if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the Law."

In the beginning of this chapter, the Apostle exhorts them to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and in these verses he tells them what this liberty is, namely to live upon Christ in the spirit. So likewise in Ephesians 3:16-19, "that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with the fulness of God." The sum of the Apostle's prayer is in short this, that they might live upon Christ as their life, to know his love in all the demonstrations of it, which is above human knowledge; but he begins thus in verse 16, "that they might be strengthened with all might by his Spirit in the inward man." He lays down this as the foundation; as if the Apostle had said, whoever lives on Christ by faith, knowing and enjoying his love in the breadths, lengths, depths and heights of it, must do it by his Spirit, that only can make true discoveries of Christ and our interest in him. This is the proper office of the Spirit, as he is the Comforter promised; which we may see in Ephesians 4:30, "and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Our interest in Christ as he is all to us, is sealed up to us in the spirit, it is not a fleshly, formal, historical knowledge of Christ, in which we can live on him as our life, but it is to know him and enjoy him in the spirit, which is a lively knowledge of Christ, and an enjoying of Christ as our life.

A fourth observation may be this, if Christ be a saints life, then a saint should take heed of doing anything that is against Christ. You cannot wound Christ but you wound your own lives. Christ is your life, and if he look back on thee as he did to Peter when he denied him, thou wilt soon feel the wound in thy own bosom. If this truth take place in any soul, let it then consider how dear every soul is to Christ; he that touches you {saith Christ} touches the apple of my eye; so dear are saints to Christ, and Christ so tender of them; and in another place, our Saviour says, whoever offends one of these little ones {his Saints} it were better that a millstone were hanged about their necks and that they were cast into the Sea. So dangerous is it to wound Christ in his people! Oh, that this present age could spiritually receive this truth; that when they wound Christ in his people, they wound their own lives, and the sad experience of persons and nations which have died of these wounds, might be enough to warn this present age from wounding the children of God; if God will give them spiritual understanding. Show me any example where the spiritual people of God were made the butt for any nation, or person to shoot at; but that the arrows flew back, and wounded the heart that shot them, even to death. These sad undertakings have ruined so many kings and kingdoms. This mountain will overturn all the world; for worldlings will be always engaging against spiritual saints. The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent will be continually at variance, till they be parted as far asunder as Heaven and Hell; but the seed of the woman shall prevail. As Christ for a saint, so Christ in a saint shall be a conqueror; and though thou mayest wound Christ in a saint, yet if Free Grace make not a cure that wound will be thy death! Thou art gravely mistaken poor soul, if thou thinkest thou layest all thy blows upon the saint which thou aimest to unrest, no, Christ himself

bears the blows, and thou must reckon with him for them. "And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Acts 9:4-5. This truth makes the present age to have a sad and a pale countenance in my eye, for I cannot think they will live long that have so many of these wounds in their souls. There is not a more deadly path that sinful man travels in than this, when he wounds deepest he kills himself; sure it is weighty work Saints should be doubly careful that Satan lead not into it, upon any pretenses whatsoever. Christ will let such know it is ill requital for his wounds, that when they wound their brethren, and so wound him in them.

A first and last observation shall be this; if Christ be only a Saints life, then here we may observe that sad condition of a Christless soul. It is a dead soul, dead in sins and trespasses, walking according to the course of the world, and the Prince of the power of the air; and by nature the child of wrath; as it is in Ephesians 2:1-3. If Christ be not made sin for thee, thou bearest thy own sin, and must also bear the sting of sin, which is eternal death, and then thou art a dead soul indeed. Christ speaks in these words, "I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." John 10:9. Now that soul which comes not in at this door, never comes into the bosom of God, where only is Salvation, and therefore a Christless soul must needs be in a miserable condition. For further proof to this, take that in John 3, last verse, "and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." If this makes not up a condition fully miserable to have the wrath of God abiding on a soul, I know not what does; and this is the state of every Christless soul, though it may have a name to live, yet in the account of God such a soul is certainly dead; for as God is the fountain of life, so he hath made Christ the way to this fountain, and if God look upon any soul out of Christ, he looks on it as a dead soul, and when we come to see things as they are, we shall see them as God sees

them, a Christless soul to be a dead soul. This may be useful to saints.

First to exhort saints to eye Christ as their life. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6:51. So our Saviour again in John 14:19, "because I live, ye shall live also." In both places Christ speaks our life to be in interest with him, and that we should eye this interest and to feed on this bread of life. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." II Cor.5:21. So in I Corinthians 1:30, "but of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." Mark it, how the Holy Ghost sets out all our life in Christ; that we might look on it by faith, our interest in Christ as he was made sin for us, and we the righteousness of God in him, and as he is made of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to us. What is the end of God in this, thus to hold out our interest in Christ, as our life in the parts and whole of it?

But that we should glorify that Grace which hath made Christ thus to be all to us, by looking upon Christ as he is our life. The Prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 53:5,10 & 11, bears witness to this truth, and carries on the same design in showing saints the original love of God, and making Christ to be our interest of life. He holds forth Christ as he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace laid on him, so that with his stripes we are healed. God making Christ's soul an offering for sin, and in the beholding of the travail of Christ's soul is fully satisfied. I say Christ is thus held forth in his Word that we should so look upon him in the spirit. In Galatians 3:13, it is thus written, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." This is a precious and safe object thus to look on Christ. What a life of heavenly joy will come into our soul in beholding Christ thus as our life. Christ hath borne the curse himself, and lays nothing but the blessing upon us; he bears all the stripes, and doth

clothe us with his own righteousness; he leaves not a tittle of wrath for an elect soul to bear, for he bears every stripe, and all the curse himself, till God acknowledge himself fully satisfied with the travail of his soul. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Eph.2:13. Christ's so bears all the curse, and takes away all the wrath of God, that he by his blood brings the soul near to God, into the bosom of God, so that such a soul is a happy soul. In every condition, if it be Christ to live, it is gain to die. Philippians 1:21. This is an object fit for precious saints, spiritual souls to look upon; we are too earthly in our object when we look below the Lord Jesus Christ. If we make duties our object, it is too low, they are not our life, but the fruits of life. A man does not live, because he acts, but he acts because he lives.

The Apostle desires to know nothing but Christ and him crucified, and plainly speaks this, not to be found in his own righteousness, but in Christ's. Ephesians 2:8-10, "for by Grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast, for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." Mark it, here is works as the fruits of our life, and interest in Christ, and the reason is given in the first words, namely the great design of God for his own Glory, that all may spring from Grace.

Now this is our interest in Christ, and the life and sweet of all this will fill our souls, when in the spirit we look on Christ as our life. This may invite every soul to cast itself on Christ as its life, and rest on him. Let the soul that is the worst of sinners in its own eye remember this, it is of Grace that we are saved, and Christ is the great gift of God's Free-Grace. The prodigal when he said there was bread enough in his father's house, doubtless eyed Christ. There is in God's eye price enough, blood enough, righteousness enough, which makes life full enough, for Christ is all this. Romans 8:33,34, "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that

died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." The Apostle here makes a challenge, but he doth it upon a sure ground, namely God's justifying a soul through its interest with Christ in his death, resurrection and intercession.

This treasure is laid up in God for thee poor soul, that sayest thou hast no worthiness of thy own. It is the will of God that the ends of the earth should look up to Christ, so that those might have milk and honey freely, which have no price nor no money of their own. Poor soul, I will give thee one text to live upon forever, Ephesians 2:4,5, "but God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. By Grace ye are saved." Make thy condition worse than this if thou canst, to be dead in sins, and then know this, God is rich in mercy, his love is exceeding great, it exceeds the greatness of thy sins. This love is so great, that it can take souls dead in sins, and quicken them together with Christ; and if you will know the reason of all this, it is by Grace that we are saved.

What canst thou say now, poor doubting soul? All life is outside thyself, it is by Grace that thou art saved. If thou canst not see thyself worthy, why yet see God is gracious; it is not God's design to look out worthy souls, but to take unworthy souls, and magnify his Grace to them. It will be no presumption but faith and obedience to rest on Christ, to such an end as to magnify the Free Grace of God. When we rest exclusively upon Christ as our life, we do as much as in us lies to justify and magnify that Free-Grace which gave Christ to be our life. And on the contrary, when we will not rest on Christ wholly as our life, until we have wrought up some qualifications in ourselves; we deny this gift of God, and our life to be from Free-Grace. The text speaks plainly it is of Grace that we are saved.

Oh, let God have the glory of his Grace, for the life of our souls lies in it; there is no other way to enjoy interest in Christ, but to lay hands on him as the gift of Grace. A Christless soul is a dead soul. Is it better to be

dead souls than to have life merely from Grace? If not, oh then honour Grace, let Christ be our life; though we are wholly dead in ourselves, yet cast thyself upon Christ as the gift of God's Free-Grace for thy life.

But in the last place, if Christ be only a saints life, and a saint enjoys this as he lives upon Christ in the spirit, then let this teach us always at this throne of Grace to be pleading the promise of the Father and the Son to pour out the Holy Spirit upon us, and not rest satisfied without the Spirit, in any or in all externals, not in a bare literal knowledge, no nor a Christ only in the flesh, but only to know God and Christ, and to live on them in the spirit. To know truths as they are in Jesus, is to know them in the Spirit of Jesus, and this is our Saviour's own promise, John 14:26, that "when the Comforter {which is the Holy Ghost} comes, he shall teach you all things."

We are therefore seeking something below Christ, and are so apt to desire a form, because we know so little of Christ in the Spirit. In John 7:38-39, there is a glorious promise of the full pourings forth of the Spirit upon believers. "He that believes on me {as the Scripture hath saith} out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." This promise is the interest of all believers, and it is worth the pleading at the throne of Grace. The Apostle in Romans 8, tells us what use saints make of the Spirit. They walk by it above the flesh; he calls it the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which hath made us free from the law of sin and death; this is the Spirit that dwells in a saint, and shall raise him up at the last day.

In the 11th verse, this Spirit is a quickening spirit, and denotes a saint's interest under the Gospel; the saints worship God in the spirit. John 4:23, "but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." A saint is wholly carried up to Christ his life by the Spirit, and all the acts of his life are the workings of the Spirit in him. Galatians 5:5,16-18. There the soul waits for the righteousness of Christ by faith through the Spirit, and when he comes to walk in God, and to live up to his interest in Christ. It is

all through the Spirit, and it is only through the Spirit of God in them that dead ceremonies are made living ordinances. The institution is, do this in remembrance of me; now it is the Spirit which gives an ordinance to this life. Our Saviour tells us in John 6:63, "the flesh profiteth nothing," nor the word apart from the Spirit, for it is the Spirit that quickens and makes alive. The reason is clear, God and Christ are in the Spirit; now to enjoy God in his original love with Christ in all he is as the fruits of this love; this is our life, and this can only be in the Spirit. Oh, then it concerns us to plead our interest as children for the spirit of adoption, as it is in Romans 8: 14-16. It is the breathings of the Spirit which makes dead bones to live. All ordinances and souls will be both dead without Christ in the Spirit; it is expedient to go {says Christ} to send the Comforter, and it is as needful that he give the Spirit; without it we can never have fellowship with the Father nor the Son, in whom only our joy, our life, and our glory will be full. In this Spirit only can we live upon Christ as he is the bread of life, and our bread of life.

Chapter 6.

Christ's reign by his Spirit is the saints
liberty from bondage.

"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal.4:5-6.

The Apostle Paul in almost this whole epistle, makes it his business and design to discover to Saints their liberty in Christ, and as it appears by his writing to them in the foregoing chapter and in this.

These Saints to which he did more particularly write, lay under legal principles, and moved with legal spirits; now for a remedy of this to them, and all Saints after them, in these two verses the Apostle holds forth Christ under a double capacity; namely, Justification and Sanctification to the believer. And in both a perfect freedom from the law, so far as it is freedom, to be delivered from it.

The first of these two verses hold out Christ justifying of his people in the redemption of his blood from whatever the law could accuse them of, or charge upon them. The latter verse holds forth the fruits of this redemption, or indeed a part of this redemption itself; namely this, that because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba Father.

Either of these two parts are worthy a saints study and admiration forever. I shall lay the foundation of what shall follow in this point, namely, that it is part of the redemption of the blood of Christ to a believer, that no law should command or rule in the conscience or spirit of a believer, but the law of love, and the Spirit of adoption is here given forth to that very end, that in it the soul may keep its communion close with God, and Christ, and be always able to cry Abba Father. In the proof of this we must consider the first and second Adam. As we were in

the first Adam we lay under a law of creation, and a covenant of works, as creatures to obey our Creator, and in obeying to have life; do and live, but transgress and die; in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death. But in the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, the covenant we are under is not of works, but of Grace, the law is not in the letter but in the spirit, and not written in tables of stone, but in the hearts of his people by his Spirit, as appears clearly where the Covenant of Free-Grace is recorded, as in Jeremiah 31:33, 34, and in Hebrews 8:10. In both places God does not only covenant to be our God reconciled to us, not imputing sin and iniquity to his people any more, but also to put his law in our inward parts, and to write it in our hearts, so that this way he will teach and rule in the hearts of his people, under that covenant of which Christ is the Mediator. God is a Spirit and when he promiseth to write his law in our hearts, we must understand him thus, the workings of his Spirit in the hearts of his people; letter shall be turned into spirit, Christ shall be a King as well as a Saviour, and as a spiritual King, so that his law and his government are spiritual; and that the Lord Christ and his Father may appear one in this great engagement of teaching and ruling in the hearts of his people by the Spirit let us look into Christ's promise in John 14:15-17, 26 & John 16:13-14. Here the Lord Christ promises to perform that office of his intercession to God for us, that he would make good his own covenant, and give his Spirit to comfort, lead, and guide the souls of his people. Now the making good of God's covenant, and the efficacy of Christ's intercession for the Spirit to rule in the hearts of his people, every soul in its particular can best set forth the faithfulness of God, and Christ. But the Apostle Paul in the power of the Spirit lets it out at large, in Romans 8:1-27. Observe the expressions of the Holy Ghost in the second verse, "for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death." There is mention of a double law, and as distinct each from the other as life and death; the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and the law of sin and death. I look on these two as that which depends on the two covenants, that of Works, and that of

Grace, or as it is elsewhere expressed, the law of the first and second husband, which is the first and second Adam. Now whilst the first Adam is alive in the conscience, the conscience is kept under his law, which is thus the law of sin and death; as it makes known sin, and the wages of sin which is death, but sin, saith the text, is not imputed where there is no law. Rom.5:13. And in Romans 6:23, the wages of sin is death, and then in Romans 7 beginning, the Apostle saith this law hath dominion over the conscience so long as the first husband lives. From these places I judge I am not mistaken in the interpreting the law of sin and death; but that the Holy Ghost clearly means that law of creation, do and live, or the bare letter of command in the conscience. Only let us consider what is meant by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which I understand thus, that through that union the soul of a believer hath with Christ it is made spiritual, Christ in his kingly office enthroned in the conscience, and the soul resting in the bosom of Christ as a dutiful spouse in the bosom of her beloved husband; and his law is the law of the spirit of life, that law which is life itself, and turns letter into spirit. One thing more I would explain myself in, and that is how I understand the Holy Ghost in this freedom, that the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made to a believer from the law of sin and death by the spirit of life, I understand Christ in the Spirit. Now the freedom the Lord Christ hath made for the souls of believers from this law of creation, under the covenant of works; it is double. Namely, from the condemning power, and the ruling, or reigning power of the law in the conscience.

Of the first of these, there is the least scruple, and not being so fully within that I desire to hold to, I shall wave it, and keep only to the latter, namely, how Christ hath freed the believer in his conscience from the ruling or reigning power of the law of creation in the letter only. For light in this, consider Romans 8:4, and so forward; taken in the latter part of Romans 8:3 and it will appear to be the design of God in sending Christ in the flesh, that Christ in the Spirit might rule in the souls and spirits of his people. "God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful

flesh," that the "righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit," that is, to walk after the rule which is not the flesh but the spirit, and so goes on to show the difference between flesh and spirit, making it all along a part of our redemption in Christ to live in the Spirit, making the Spirit our light and our life, our rule and our strength. In Romans 8:14, there the Apostle speaks plainly, and makes it a demonstration of our sonship to be ruled by the Spirit, "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." He speaks in Romans 8:16 following, of the seal of the Spirit; but here he speaks distinctly of the ruling power of the Spirit, that hath power of a man, to lead the man as he pleases; and that is the term here, sons of God led by the Spirit of God. That this Spirit is sufficient to rule the consciences of believers; we may plainly see in Romans 6:14, "sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law but under Grace."

I know not what can be plainer than this; here is a promise, sin shall not have dominion over us, and the reason given is, that part of the redemption of Christ to the soul of a believer from the ruling power of the law, to the ruling power of the Spirit of Grace. Mark the inference, "therefore sin shall not have dominion over you," because sin shall not find you under the ruling power of the law in your conscience, which affords no strength against it, but sin shall find you under the law of the Spirit of Grace, which is in Christ the law of life to the soul, and death to sin, therefore sin and death shall be swallowed up of victory and you by the Spirit of Christ, as it was for you in the death of Christ. Sin hath its repulse in the soul from the change of the law that rules, the law of sin and death turned into the law of spirit and life. "I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me," saith the Apostle. I am not delivered from the dominion of sin, because I have the light of the law of creation to discover sin; but I am under the law of the spirit of life and grace, not only to discover but to destroy sin. Sin hath not dominion, because that which opposes it, is Christ, not I.

Thus, I have endeavoured to let you understand that light God hath given me in this part of the redemption of his blood, for his Son to deliver us from the ruling power of any law in our consciences, but the law of love in the spirit of life.

But that I may be rightly understood, I desire you to remember a clause that I laid down in the beginning where I endeavoured to open these verses; the clause is this, that a believer in the blood and spirit of Christ hath perfect freedom from the law so far as it is freedom to be delivered. I laid it so down, that I might have here room to distinguish between the ruling power of the Law, and the matter and substance of the Law.

In the first sense, the ruling power of the Law I do really believe from what has been delivered already, and some further reasons that I shall discover. That the conscience of a believer is by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made free from the law of sin and death.

But for the second part, the matter or substance of the Law, which I take to be the whole revealed will of God, and is in its utmost power and purity written in the heart of every believer; not only the whole revealed will of God in his Word made flesh, and dwelling among us, but made spirit, and dwelling in us.

Thus, to give you a little light, I shall be more full in what follows. Give me leave to add some further reasons to prove the former thing. As first, if the Law in the letter be the rule in the conscience of a believer, then Moses, not Christ must be the King, for says the text, Moses was faithful in his house as a servant, but Christ as the Son. Heb.3:2-5. Moses may indeed rule till Christ comes, but as Christ had none to help him in the work of redemption, no more will he in the work of ruling.

Secondly, if Moses be to rule where Christ hath redeemed, where is the making good of God's covenant, to write his law in our hearts? What benefit in the promise of the Comforter, that Spirit of truth, to lead into all truth. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he

shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." John 16:13-14.

Thirdly, if the Law rule, and Moses be King, the strength must be in ourselves to obey, for neither Moses, nor the Law in the letter can give any strength. If either could, Christ has died in vain, and if strength be in ourselves, then God's design in sending Christ is lost, which is to justify his people freely by Grace, so as there may be no room for flesh to boast in; not the law of works, but the law of faith is to be pleaded, as it appears in that third chapter of the Romans.

Lastly, if the Law be to rule in the spirits of God's people, then obedience to that law must quiet and satisfy the hearts of God's people. Now as the Apostle in Galatians 3:2, "this only would I learn of you; received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith," and thus say I, and appeal to the consciences and experience of every saint that tastes the joys of life in Christ. Received it you by the works of the law, or in the seal and working of the Spirit of life, in which you are freed from the law of sin and death?

So, I shall come to that second part, the matter and substance of the Law. Under this comprehend the whole revealed will of God in his Word. Not to distinguish between that part of God's Word, more distinctly known by the Ten Commandments from any other part of the revealed will of God in his Word, for to the eye of a believer, beholding God in every part of his revealed will in Christ, all is alike. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God." That was spoken of Christ; now the believer is always beholding God in Christ, which is his original Word and the Scripture. Only Christ written out in the spirit doth behold God in his original, and in his written Word, and every part of it one; so that every part is of like beauty and preciousness to the soul of a believer.

Having opened myself thus far, I shall do it further, and declare, that to have any hope left to live as sinful nature pleases, casting the revealed Word of God behind their backs, and under a notion of redemption to deny the Redeemer; to talk of Free-Grace, and to trample Grace under foot; to deny the Lord that bought them in

walking as do others that know not Christ. This is so far from entering into my thoughts, from that freedom I have pleaded for all this time; that if I should name this and call it darkness, I should call it gross Egyptian darkness, so far from freedom, that it is bondage beyond expression. The second of the Ephesians sets it out best in these terms, as it speaks of the power of the Prince of the air ruling in the children of disobedience. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Eph.2:1-3.

But that freedom I plead for, is the power of the Lord of Glory, ruling by his Spirit in his children of light and life. My aim is not to take away that holy, just, and good law of God out of the conscience of a believer, but as God doth with his people in the New Covenant, and in Christ the Mediator of it, establishing them in a better covenant, Hebrews 8, upon better promises, so would I only hold out the matter of the law taken out of the hand of Moses, which was but a servant, and established in the heart of Christ, which is the Son, and by the Son in the Spirit of light and life, written in the heart and conversation of every believing soul; and less than this I think is not in the Covenant of the Almighty, when the Lord covenanted to put his law in our inward parts, and to write it in our hearts. For my authority in this, I shall say as the Apostle Paul, in Romans 3, the last verse; for when in the greatest part of the chapter he has pleaded this very cause that I do, he concludes in these words, "do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid, yea we establish the law." So that it is clear, the law of life that makes us free from the law of sin and death, which is Christ living by his Spirit in the conscience, is not to make void, but to establish upon better promises from a law of death to be a law of life. Thus much in general.

But more particularly I lay down this as my light, that the Law is now in the Spirit and in the Gospel for a believer to walk by; the Law is made Gospel, as Christ is made flesh, the Gospel is both a perfect law of life, and righteousness of grace and truth; why should we separate that which God hath in his Free-Grace joined together; namely, Law and Gospel in one, under the government that is given to our Saviour Christ. Nor is the holiness or sanctification that God looks for in his believing Saints, such as is fashioned by the law, or outward command, but by the preaching of faith, by which the Spirit is given, which renews and sanctifies a believer, and makes him the very law of commandments in himself and his heart, the very two tables of Moses. And though the law be a beam of Christ in substance and matter, yet we are not to live by the light of one beam; now when the Son of righteousness is risen himself, that was a fitter light for those who lived in the regions of the shadow of death. It is with the law now, or light of righteousness, as it was with the light in the creation; when that which was scattered was gathered into one body of light. So Christ now being revealed, holiness and righteousness as well as grace and love is revealed in him, and gathered up in him; the Word is now made flesh, and dwells amongst us, and we behold his glory as the glory of the only begotten, full of truth as well as grace, which in substance by the Spirit is set down in II Corinthians 3:16-18, "nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." There is the veil taken away in turning to the Lord. There is Christ held forth to be the Spirit, and the spirit of liberty to his people. But observe the fruits of this liberty, it is from sin not to sin, "but we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," or of the Lord the Spirit, as it is in the margin. Thus is Christ that sun to us which warms us in the very shining upon us, and the believer

works, walks, and lives under the Gospel, as beholding his perfect redemption wrought in Christ, and so brings forth the power of this redemption and salvation through the spirit of adoption, freely working to the praise of his Free-Grace, and freely obeying from the life of this redemption, doing everything in love, because of his love shed abroad in our hearts; and neither the warnings of judgment, hell, or damnation; nay, nor the promises of heaven or glory itself, is to force on the work, or quicken the duty, but doing all from the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, except when corruption or temptation hinders the freeness and spiritualness in the duty. A spirit at this pinch is Christ and his beloved, both met in his garden of spices, and by feeding on the honey in the honeycomb, Christ fills the soul with himself, and delights himself in that fulness that is himself. So, the soul in communion with Christ in the spirit sees itself complete in Christ, and so joys in its Master's joy, always satisfying itself in that love that is Christ himself, and is able to trumpet out its glory to the world. "My beloved is mine, and I am his," Song.2:16, this is Christ and his olive branches setting about God, always feeding on the banquet of love, and sitting under the banner of love, God beholding every elect soul in Christ. The soul beholds God in Christ, and Christ beholds himself and all his elect in God, and this vision in one spirit swallows up all into one. God beholds every elect soul as Christ, Christ beholds every branch in him as of God, beholding us in that glory we shall have with him when he appears in his fulness of Glory, and the believing soul in the spirit, beholding its justification, sanctification and redemption in Christ, the soul is in this light carried up into the bosom of the love of God, knowing no divided Christ, or parted God; every particle of revealed truth, which is Christ written out by the Spirit, it is all God and Christ in one, and this Spirit that reveals Christ to the believing world in the word, and to the believer in his soul, this Spirit is God too, and this is the freedom the believer in his conscience hath from the law in the letter, it is not destroyed, but established; it is taken out of the hand of Moses the Servant, and put into the hand of Christ the Son; it is not made void, but

fulfilled for us and in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Now behold the Law in its glory, changed from Law to Gospel, from letter to spirit, from Moses to Christ, from death to life, from an angry God to a loving Father; as it is Gospel, so it is Spirit, it is Christ, yea it is God himself. Oh, the glory of that law which is God, not only declaring the mind and will of God, but in the spirit of love, filling the soul with strength to obey, from whence we find Christ in the Gospel calling upon those that love him to keep his commandments. God, Christ, and the Spirit being in the law, it becomes the law of life, when the law in and of itself had in it but a naked demonstration, as to what a Creator might justly require of a fallen creature, but gave no strength to fulfill its rigid demands. It is held forth under the terms of the law of sin and death, by which it had not that glory to invite a poor soul to look on it, because the soul could see nothing but its death therein, but as Christ being made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, has satisfied his, and our Father fully in it for us, so he has turned this law into his law of love, into Gospel, into spirit, into himself and his Father.

Now this law hath that beauty which allures and takes every believing soul; nature turned into grace, it is now meat and drink to a believer to do the will of God in the Spirit. First, this will let us truly to understand who they be that be Antinomians; those that deny the law, if I may judge, I should say it is those that would keep it in the hand of Moses, the servant, and out of the Son, Christ. What can be a greater denying of it, than to keep it in the letter out of the spirit, to rob it of that glory which is God and Christ in the Spirit.

What soul dare put itself under the law out of Christ, when in so doing it makes itself a debtor to the whole law, and as the Apostle in Galatians 3:10-11 says, "so many as are under the works of the law, are under the curse of the law," and under that law which can never justify before God. Now to keep the law in such a state as this is, will make every soul shun it, not daring to come under it, as seeing nothing but death in it. Satan is the

souls greatest enemy, in so darkening the mind with legal principles, that it sees not Christ; so are those the greatest enemies to the holy, just, and good law of God, that would put that nature of Christ in his Spirit from it, and leave it still, the law of the letter in the hand of Moses, when God and Christ hath made it Gospel-law, the law of love in the Spirit.

The Law may here complain, as the spouse did of those watchmen that rent her vail. Those that rend Christ from the Law, rend the beautiful vail, the glory of the Law from it. These hold forth the Law dead, like Lazarus in the grave, stinking, and those that follow it, weeping. Or as Pharaoh to the children of Israel, doubling the tale of bricks, and giving no straw, what glory is there in this? But those that hold out the law in the Spirit, hold it not only forth as a law that lives, but a law that gives life, so far from requiring the tale of brick to be doubled, and give no straw, that in every duty it brings Christ in, whence we are able to do all things. This makes it plainly appear who they be which deny the Law, and may justly be distinguished by the name of Antinomians.

Again, this exhort Saints, that seeing it is part of the redemption of the blood of Christ, that no law but the law of love, the spirit of life in Christ should rule or reign in the conscience of a believer. To take the counsel of the Apostle in Galatians 5:1, "stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." God hath not given, nor Saints received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father. This is the life of our lives, to live in the Spirit. It is the great promise of the Gospel to give the Spirit. This would I know, when does the soul feast but when God spreads tables of love, and in the Spirit bids us "eat my beloved, eat abundantly, and be satisfied."

Nature teaches the outward man to stand for liberty; oh, then what should grace do, how should this stir us up to stand for that liberty which is our life. Lose this, and lose all your spiritual life in a moment; do but once look on the law out of Christ, and it will be with us as those in II Corinthians 3:15, "but even unto this day,

when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart." This vail will be a vail of darkness, that the soul shall not see Christ in propriety in any of his offices, benefits, or merits. If any or all these be dear, oh then stand fast in this liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. This is that freedom the Son hath made; which is freedom indeed; but if the Son make us not free, then are we bond-men to eternity. If thy heart be hard, look on him whom you have pierced and then it shall be evangelically melted. If sin sting thy conscience, look upon him that is lifted up, which the brazen serpent typified; this is our freedom, and Christ's prerogative, the government is on his shoulders; he is that King, and his Spirit that law, which is only to reign in the consciences of his people.

Why should not our souls count dear of that which is so dear to Christ and all his people. This is that glory Christ will not give to another; therefore this is that glory we should only give to Christ. Oh, then admire and extol forever this glory of the riches of the Free Grace of God in Christ, that hath freely given this state of Grace, this glorious state to us that were by nature the children of wrath as well as others. It does not yet appear what we shall be, so that more glory shall be than is yet revealed; but our souls must confess, that which doth indeed appear is more glory than we can express. Sure then it is our duty to admire and extol the riches of this Free-Grace, which hath freed us from the law of sin and death, translated us from the power of darkness to the kingdom and government of his dear Son, enthroned Christ in our heart, and written his holy law there in the spirit.

Oh, let us extol this God in the fruits of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against which there is no law. Thus, I shall conclude; this is our freedom so to live in the Spirit, as to be led by the Spirit.

Chapter 7.

Saints are complete before God in
their union with Christ.

*"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead
bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of
all principality and power." Col.2:9-10.*

This portion of Scripture is a part of Paul's Epistle to the Church of God at Colosse, it is the very center of all those sweet comforts that the Holy Ghost hath dropped down in this Epistle. Nay sure I am, it holds forth the cornerstone of all the building. A saints perfection, and the reason of it is the subject-matter of this Scripture. The reason stands first in reading, as a foundation is laid before a sure building. The Apostle holding forth a saints completeness, sets before it Christ's fulness. From these drops we may observe these two points. First, a saint hath no completeness in the sight of God, but as it is united to Christ. And secondly, a saint is one with Christ, so he stands complete before God in God's own fulness.

First, that a saint hath no completeness in the sight of God, but as it is united to Christ. To prove this, first observe the scope of the Holy Ghost in this Scripture, "for in him, which is Christ, dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Here the Holy Ghost takes in the Godhead in all the fulness of it, and centers it in Christ, and so makes out the saints perfection in union with him; as if he had said, all fulness in perfection dwells in Christ as the fountain or the body, and is so in you as you are in him, he filled for you, you filled in him; he complete as one with God, you complete as one with him, as Christ says himself, "I in the Father, and you in me." Mark it, till the Holy Ghost had centered all fulness in Christ, he mentions no completeness for a saint, which points at this truth, that had not Christ been full for us, we had never been complete; and when he does mention the saints completeness, he doth it inclusively, complete in him.

This is not only full mercy, but also it springs from pure love, it is Free-Grace that we are complete in him, for Free-Grace sees no completeness but in him. "Thou art my beloved Son, {saith God, speaking of Christ,} in whom I am well pleased." And in another place, "I beheld the travail of his soul, and am well pleased." I never met with any mention of God being well-pleased and satisfied, but Christ was the Alpha and Omega, all in all. This which is already laid down, makes a way for such a query as this is.

Pray, wherein lies the completeness of a saint? What are the parts or substance of a saints completeness or fulness? To this I answer, it will be best discerned by its contrary. The saints fulness and completeness before God in Christ will be most transparent, when we spiritually discern our condition in the first Adam; and that will appear in Ephesians 2:1-3. The Apostle speaking there of a state of nature, speaks of a person dead in sins and trespasses, walking according to the course of the wicked world, and the will of Satan, that prince of the power of the air, fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, and so by nature the children of wrath.

This is the state of a natural man under the wrath of God, separated from the bosom of God, and so dead in sins and trespasses; a vassal to Satan, led by his will according to the course of the wicked world, fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, alienated from God and Christ, and from the commonwealth of Israel, breaking every holy law of God so often as Satan will; and then {not having Christ made a curse for him} lying under the curse of the law, and the wrath of God to all eternity. A soul fully delivered from this state, and completely stated in the bosom of God, and in glory with Christ, will be acknowledged a full completeness.

First, observe the state of nature drawn into these heads. First, the wrath of God. Secondly, vassalage or slavery under Satan, to be led to the fulfilling of the lusts at his will. And lastly, to be dead in sins and trespasses. In opposition of these I shall hold out justification, sanctification and glorification. And in these three heads

I shall endeavour to show how we are complete in him, namely Christ.

First, how Christ is our complete justification; see this in Romans 3:20-25, "therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Here justification exclusively and inclusively is set forth. In Romans 3:20, "by the deeds of the law no flesh is justified in his sight." There the Holy Ghost shows where it is not by deeds of the law, I understand our best duties, the highest performances we can make to the will of God in this, no justification. But then look into Romans 3:24, and there you shall see justification lying between, or in these two breasts, that always flow with eternal life, namely the Free Grace of God, and the Redemption of the blood of Christ. Here is Free-Grace giving Christ to be our redemption and Christ in his blood giving satisfaction to his Father's justice, bringing us to lie down in the bosom of this Free-Grace, which gave him out for us. He doth this by being made a curse for us, Galatians 3:13, God and Christ are one in this as in all things else; for says the text, "he has made him to become sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Isaiah 53:5 & 11. Mark there, Christ is wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace laid on him. Now mark the issue, with his stripes we are healed, and God sees the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. Here is God satisfied, our souls healed, and all this through the wounds of Christ. The whole book of God is full of this; take the proof only in these two places more, Colossians 1:13-14, and then I think it will stand fair to view, that

the elect saint stands before God for justification complete in Christ; this is one part of the completeness we have in Christ, and so delivered from the wrath of God; for as one text says, were there no law, there would be no sin; if no rule, then no transgression; so may I say, the curse being born, and the law satisfied for us, we are free from all wrath and condemnation; and thus are we freed and delivered from a first part of the state of nature, the wrath of God. Christ satisfies, and God justifies, as the Apostle expressed it in Romans 8, the latter. Who shall condemn {says he} Christ hath died, and is risen, and God justifies. So that there he makes a challenge, who shall condemn? He saw in this his completeness in Christ, and so glories in it!

The second thing in a state of nature is vassalage to Satan, to which in opposition I proposed our sanctification by Christ, as a second part of our completeness in him. For proof of this take that known place where the Holy Ghost says, Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, where Christ is made by God our satisfaction, he is filled for us, and we filled of his fulness, as that ointment which fell from Aaron's head down to the skirts of his garment; so doth the Spirit of God descend from Christ to us, dwelling plentifully in us, and so becomes our sanctification; as in John 14. The Spirit shall lead into all truth, not only discover truth, but lead into truth. So, Colossians 2:6-7, rooted, built up, and walking in Christ. The Apostle in another place acknowledging his own insufficiency to any good works; yet {says he} through Christ that strengthens me I can do all things. Colossians 1:10-11.

There is fruitfulness in every good work, as we are strengthened according to the mighty power of Christ; Christ the vine, and we the branches; a saint bears fruit as he is in Christ. "Without me you can do nothing," says Christ, a saint has life to live up to the will of God, only as he lies in the bosom of Christ, and sucks life from him as being one with Christ, so as the branches do from the vine. Colossians 3:3, "for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." A dead man cannot walk, no more

can any man out of Christ walk in the ways of God; but the Saints life is hid with Christ in God; and therefore says the Apostle, it is not I that live, but Christ in me.

I might abundantly enlarge in this, but I forbear, for I well know that the Spirit of God in our souls is more than ten thousand witnesses besides, thus is Christ the saints completeness in point of sanctification, the which I hold out in opposition to that vassalage that a natural man lies in under Satan.

The third thing that makes up the natural man's bondage is that he is dead in sins and trespasses. To which I hold forth as our completeness in Christ; the saints life and that a life of glory. To prove this, look into Colossians 3:4, there is Christ held out plainly as our life, and saith the text, at his appearing we shall appear with him in Glory. There is life in Christ, and glory in Christ; Christ our life, and his glory our glory, which agrees with that of our Saviour, because I live you shall live also; and were I am you shall be. As if the Lord had said, my beloved Saints you are as safe as I am, our lives and our glory bound are up in one. I laid down my life to take up yours, and now I have laid up your life as sure as my own, both in my Father and your Father's bosom. I in the Father and you in me; my love, my fair one, my undefiled; you are where I am. This truth as sealed on Paul's spirit, by the Spirit of Christ made him triumph in this glorious inheritance, and trample upon all the glory below it. II Corinthians 5:1. Paul knew his interest in an eternal house, a building of God in Heaven; and in another place the same Apostle, "henceforth is laid up for me a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Romans 8:30. There is all these three branches proved, and this glory in the end of all, but itself without end, eternal glory. This point needs no more proof, as it is so clear a truth, both in word and spirit, proving this I conceive the other is proved also, that as a saint is in Christ so he stands complete before God. I shall now give you some reasons of that which is gone before.

First, were there any completeness for a believing soul but in Christ, and not a full completeness for a believing soul in Christ, then God could not be a just God,

which is blasphemy to imagine; for God having made Christ to bear our sins, and wounded him that we might be healed, this being the decree of God, if there were any redemption but in Christ, God could not be just to Christ.

And secondly, if in his blood there were not a full redemption, God could not be just either to Christ that suffered, or us for whom he suffered, "I came to do thy will O Father," {saith Christ,} now Christ having performed every tittle of his Father's will, God in justice must make all redemption to come through him, and to be to us a complete redemption.

A third reason, if it were not thus, then Grace were not Free-Grace, nor full Grace. If there be any completeness of Christ then it must be our own, and then Grace is not Free-Grace; and if that we have in Christ be not complete, and does not make us complete before God, then Christ is not full. Now truly, this a hard thought of God as either of these must run against the whole current of the Word of God, and the experience of the saints.

In the spirit Saints may improve these truths by way of direction. If God by his Spirit show us our own natural deformity, Oh, then fly to God's own treasury for perfection and completeness, namely, to Christ, in whom is all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and to this very end that saints might be complete in him. It is Satan's light that leads us to our duties for completeness, for the Holy Ghost leaves it upon record that completeness is only in Christ, and surely if that leads the soul, it shall be led to Christ for completeness. Did we believe this Scripture we must needs believe in God's completeness, namely, Jesus Christ; the Apostle desires to know nothing but Christ and him crucified, for he saw completeness in him; never to want completeness in the eyes of God, is to go to him in that completeness that is God, namely, Christ, for he is our completeness, as the fulness of the Godhead is in him.

Secondly, having pitched on Christ for our completeness, let us believe strongly, be established fully in him, not doubting in the least, for our completeness is a total completeness in the sight of God, as he makes us

complete in himself. God must be displeased with his own perfection if with a saint in Christ there be any defect, for a saint's perfection is in Christ, and Christ is the fulness of the Godhead. If we summon in Satan, law, divine justice, conscience, the remainder of the old Adam within us, and whatever can be thought on, yet here is a full answer to all, Christ is ascended into Heaven as our completeness, and Satan the accuser of the brethren is cast out; he was made a curse, and did bear it, and overcame it for us, and in it satisfied the holy law, and the justice of God on our behalf. If the remainders of the old Adam struggle, and conscience join with it to accuse us, Christ answers, you are not complete in your own duties, but in me. I am perfect, you can find no spot nor wrinkle in me, and in my perfection lies your completeness; so that every believing saint eyeing his oneness with Christ, may triumph as Paul in Romans 8, the latter end. Who shall condemn? Or what shall separate? And conclude as he does; nothing shall be able to do it, for I am complete in Christ. From all this there runs great consolation to the children of God.

We have here had a view of that perfection and completeness that God in his Free Grace has given unto us, and that the eyes of this pure God will behold us in it to all eternity, which is the fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Christ, and we in him; he complete as God, we complete in him, justice can lay no more to our charge than to Christ, for our completeness of justification is in Christ; the wrath of God can as soon rise on Christ as on us, for he is our complete discharge from wrath, having borne the curse for us, sin can no more separate us from God, than Christ from God, for Christ is our complete atonement, our sins being taken from us, and laid on Christ. Death can no more separate us from God than it has done Christ; he bore all the sting of death for us, death is to Saints but a dissolution in the flesh, that we might come home and possess to eternity that completeness with him. What can the soul desire for comfort that lies not in this? Christ is full for us, and we complete in him; if God and Christ be enough for thy soul, then satisfy it here. Herein is God's completeness, yea that completeness which God hath made our

completeness. What can our souls judge will be the end of this love? Truly it will be love without end, that love which has made us complete in Christ, that love will make us complete with Christ, not only glorious heirs, but heirs in glory; not only decked as the King's daughter, but lying forever in the bosom of Christ as his Spouse; not only to have visions of the Kingdom, but possession of the Kingdom, mortality putting on immortality will not be all, but there shall be added to it a crown of Glory. It doth not yet appear {says the text} what we shall be, but when he appears, we shall appear like him. It will be enough surely to be as Christ is? Oh, then here let our souls center, no reaching soul can reach after more than is in Christ, he is complete enough to answer all desires, to quiet all spirits, to fill all hearts; to clothe all naked souls; he is bread and bread enough. Let us beg a mature steady eye of faith, always to behold Christ the fulness of the Godhead bodily for us, and we complete in him, then may we in life and death lift up our heads with joy unspeakable, and full of glory in believing; thus to live will be Christ, and to die will be gain. The soul will quietly wait till God loose the body, and rejoice to be dissolved, knowing it shall be with Christ, the droppings of heaven will stay the soul quiet here, knowing that the completeness and fulness of glory that God and Christ is in shall swallow it up to all eternity. And thus it is and shall be, to be complete in Christ.

Chapter 8.

Free-Grace in God justifieth and redeemeth through Christ.

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Rom.3:24.

The Holy Ghost does confirm and explain that positive truth, he lays down in this verse by some verses going before and after, as from Romans 3:20-28. In the verse before he tells us, all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God, and therefore stand in need to be justified. And in Romans 3:20, he tells us, that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God. Had the Holy Ghost stopped here, it had been an addition of misery to fallen man, and the sad cries in the soul of man would have been like those evil spirits to our Saviour, that he was come to torment them before their time. But God's design is love, and the Holy Ghost is to proclaim it, so that all which goes before is but like the ministry of John, to prepare the way for Christ, to break the clouds, that the Sun of Righteousness may appear, and that saints may see by an eye of faith that they are no losers in that the menstruous rags of their own duties should not be a justifying righteousness to them in the pure eyes of God, but that full justification is given of the Free-Grace of God, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

In these words is a birth, the womb that gives it forth when it had conceived it, and the midwife from whose hands and sides we receive it; and all these infinitely holy and glorious. The birth is justification to a soul that has sinned and come short of the glory of God; the womb that conceives and brings forth this glorious birth is the Free-Grace of God, and the midwife from whose hands and sides we receive this, is Christ crucified. One observation from these three, which is this, that all the glorious life of an elect soul delivered from the state of a fallen sinner, and made a redeemed saint, is from

eternity and to eternity wholly conceived and given forth, in and from the womb of the Free-Grace of God.

This is demonstratable under these two heads. First, in considering a soul under a state of nature. Secondly, under a state of grace. Or, if you will, in the first and the second Adam, in both which I think the exceeding glory of that great womb, the Eternal Love and Free-Grace of God will appear, in taking lost creatures out of the first Adam, to make them glorious saints in the Lord Christ, that second Adam. I know no other light nor rule but the Word and Spirit to make out anything of God to any soul; therefore first, search the Word for that light it gives us to discern our state by nature, or the natural condition of fallen men and women.

To take this in the beginning of Holy Writ, let us turn to Genesis 3:6-10. Here we find the fall of our first parents, in which we all fell, and the effects of this fall in them. They fell by disobeying God in eating the forbidden fruit; but then observe the effects of this fall, when they knew their nakedness, the only relief they found was aprons of fig-leaves, which are as it is in the margin, things to gird about them, and here they rest content. They saw their nakedness, a great advantage truly, but having girded themselves with fig-leaves they knew no want of God, for, verse 8, when they heard the voice of God, and that in the cool of the day, they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the garden; and when God came so near to them as they were fain to confess the reason why they fled from his presence, they acknowledged they were afraid. Genesis 3:10. Compare these first appearances of nature in our first parents after their fall with the experiences of our own natural heart, and others, and it will appear in all that is miserable what exact images we are by nature of these our first parents.

They were naked, so are all by nature of any righteousness to stand in the sight of God; they knew they were naked, so does many a desperate sinner whose conscience flies in his face; but the remedy they sought was only an apron or girdle of fig-leaves. So does our natural hearts lick their wounds whole, and cover their

nakedness, by legal and formal duties and performances, girding our loins, strengthening our hearts in them and covering our nakedness so as the eye of man cannot discern it, and in this posture as our first parents hid themselves among the trees of the garden from the presence of the Lord, so we cover ourselves under public external ordinances after the fashion of the world, and resting in beggarly rudiments to defend us from the presence of an angry God, and yet notwithstanding all this when God comes close to the soul, though it hath girt itself about with fig-leaves, its own righteousness, yet it is not established, but does confess in all the actions under such a state that it was afraid because of its nakedness, and this fear does inflame the misery of it, and causes it to fly and hide itself from the presence of God. Here are the first buddings of nature, and truly it is an exact miserable condition, for it is wholly in self, and wholly out of God, the relief this soul finds is in flying from, and being out of the presence of God. Now sure I am, every saint experienced in God's love, will call this state a state completely miserable, knowing that all its life happiness lies in a close communion with the bosom of God, and a continual beholding of his face in Christ, yet this state thus completely miserable does not belong to Adam alone, but all his seed in him, of which by nature is all the world as is fully expressed in Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God." The misery of this state of nature may be further amplified concerning that antipathy that is in all to that holy, just and good law of God, and that impossibility which is in man to perform it. One place saith, speaking of the law, it is that which neither we nor our forefathers could bear, we could not stand under it to justify ourselves by it. The Apostle in Romans 3:9-19, speaks plainly in regards to this general evil state by nature, and the fruits of it in many particulars, in opposition to all the laws of a holy God. And in verse 19, it speaks plainly, that the law makes all the world guilty, and so makes his inference in the 20th verse, that none can be justified by the deeds of the law, and then he gives his reason for it, which is this; "for {says he} by the law is the knowledge of sin." God's

pure nature discovers the impure nature of fallen man, so in the following verses speaks of a blessed and a justified state for a poor soul under another head, but all this speaks the miserable, irrecoverable lost state of natural man in himself, the fruits of this tree of nature we may see in Ephesians two, the first 3 verses. Though it be a dead tree, yet it bears fruit, but it is the fruit of death, trespasses and sins, walking in them according to the course of this world, and the power of the prince of the air, that spirit which works in the children of disobedience, who are by nature the children of wrath.

Any of these particulars rightly understood, and set home upon the spirit of a man, will make it cry out as the Apostle. Oh, wretched man that I am, and in me {that is in my flesh} dwells absolutely no good thing. But certainly, if ever we come to see that sink and mass of sin and corruption that is in us by nature, and that the wages of sin which is death; we shall then acknowledge if ever God discover his thoughts of eternal love to us, that it is all Free-Grace.

The second demonstration of the point is, to consider a saint under a state of Grace in Christ, the second Adam. To take this in the beginning as it stands in the Word, let us turn back to Genesis 15:4, where Christ is promised in the seed of the woman, and what to do? To break the head of the serpent, that is, to kill and overcome him. The Apostle in I Corinthians 15:25 says, "he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." And in this conquest over his own, and his people's enemies, he does the will of his Father; as we have his own word for it. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." John 6:38. This does exceedingly set forth the Free Grace of God, that when he found all mankind in a state of rebellion, so soon as ever he had inquired into the fault, he makes a promise of the Lord Christ in whom the state of a poor soul is better than in innocency. As if the Lord had said, Adam though thou didst run from me, and were afraid because thou wert naked, yet now establish thy heart in beholding my fulness which is thy clothing; cast from thee the works of thy own hands, and that fig-leaf

righteousness thou hast girt thyself with, and lay hold on the workings forth of my eternal love in this promise of Christ. The serpent hath been too hard for thee when he found thee in thy own strength; but I will give out Christ that great gift of my love, and he shall as he is one with me from eternity, in my everlasting power and fulness make war with the serpent; and in that warfare, though the serpent shall bruise his heel, wound his flesh; yet he shall break the head of the serpent, and overcome him! This must needs be Free-Grace to make such a promise to fallen Adam and his posterity that ran from the presence of God, and were content with fig-leaves for a covering of their nakedness. You may see in nature that there is a little desire of Christ and his righteousness, as there can be of discerning; for here is flying from the presence of God and a satisfying itself with its own righteousness; and certainly this righteousness is nothing but menstruous rags; that is that state in which God loves a soul though it lies in its blood, so as no eye but the eye of God himself can pity it, and is not this Free-Grace then? Let us consult with the Covenant of Grace, and see if it be not Free-Grace from first to last. Jeremiah 31:31-34, "behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." The engagements in it are from God, and thereupon God freely engages himself to make a man eternally happy in his love; God engages himself to be our God and we shall be his people; that he will forgive

our iniquities, and that he will remember our sins no more, and that he will put his law in our hearts, and to write it in our inward parts.

What soul can discern this in the Spirit, but he must acknowledge God in the riches of his Free-Grace. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God." Heb.7:19. The Holy Ghost speaks plainly, that the law makes nothing perfect but the bringing of a better hope. As if he had said, it is Free-Grace, not the deeds of the law that perfects any soul. That soul which is complete before God, it must be in him, namely Christ. And says another text, "if the Son hath made you free, you are free indeed," which implies there is no freedom or completeness but in Christ. Now Christ says the text, is the redemption of the Free-Grace of God, and that the Apostle knew full well, when he desired to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. In Romans 8, the Apostle glories in the Free-Grace of God. "It is God that justifies {says he} and Christ that hath died, who shall condemn?" As if he had said, Free-Grace hath magnified itself to me, in which I am safe, so that none can condemn, and in this I glory. And the same Apostle in Romans 5:2, makes mention of the access that Saints have by faith into the Grace wherein they stand. If we look into Isaiah 53, we shall there find particulars of much of that Grace of God under which we are; namely, the sufferings of Christ for us. The text says plainly, he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, and he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and it is by his stripes that we are healed, and his soul was made an offering for our sins, and that God beheld the travail of his soul and was satisfied. This is a state of total grace indeed; for if we compare this with II Corinthians 5 the last, we shall see there a plain discovery of the design of God's Free-Grace; says the text, "for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The Lord which had no sin of his own, had never been made sin; nor had he borne sin with all the punishments due to them, but for this end and design of

God, namely, that fallen sinners in the first Adam, might be his righteousness in the second Adam the Lord Christ.

Now surely, this is a state of absolute grace, to be the righteousness of God in Christ. The Apostle tells us, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth," Rom.10:4, and this salvation is of the Free Grace of God; we have this righteousness freely of his Grace. Galatians 2:16, "by the works of the law shall no man be justified," Gal.3:10, "for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." But in Galatians 3:13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." In short, this is the state of Grace, Christ made ours, and we his; he made sin for us, and bearing all punishment due to sin for us, satisfied God's justice, and made a redemption to a perfect state of innocency in him. Thus Christ hath taken all that is ours, and given us all that is his; his blood to cleanse us, his righteousness to perfect us in the sight of God, his Spirit to guide us, to lead us into all truth, to do all our works in us, Gal.5:16-18, and at last to resign us up to his Father to enjoy a fulness of glory with him to all eternity.

Now read all this backward and forward, and behold the heights, the breadths, the depths, and lengths of it, and then you will find it all the Free-Grace of God, and sure I am, every soul which in the Spirit comes to know and behold himself thus fully justified, will give God the Glory, and acknowledge it to be freely by his Grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

This gives all to know that God's way in justifying of his people is through Christ, the great gift of his Free-Grace, not of works, {says one text,} no not from good meanings, or from good doings; all good in a saint arises from his oneness with Christ, in whom both persons and duties are justified by the Free-Grace of God. It is not our externals which makes our beauty in the sight of God, nor our getting into fellowship with the saints, and enjoying ordinances and privileges with them, but our fellowship with Christ. "I in you and you in me," saith Christ; and the spouse, "my beloved is mine and I am his." Herein lies the glory and the interest of a justified saint. Christ

says to him, "come ye blessed of my Father," and the Father says that, "ye are complete in him." Here is God making a soul from all eternity one with Christ, and pronouncing him forever justified in the blood and righteousness of Christ.

Oh, then when you have but a thought of standing justified before God, lay down all but Christ. If you have an eye to duties, look upon them as the fruits of Christ in you, by whom you are justified of the Free-Grace of God; you may look on duties as the fruits of your justification, but none but Christ as the root and foundation of it!

Secondly, it should beget admiration, in considering God's giving freely such eternal love, and loveliness to his elect saints, though by nature they hated him. Let us ask our soul in the truth of that word, which tells us, God loved us before we loved him, and that he chose us, we did not choose him. What strugglings hath our natures made against his love shed abroad in our hearts.

Oh then, what vile hearts had we before he dropped love into them, yet to us God doth not only drop drops of love, but he gives us all his love, and to witness it he gives Christ the Son of his love which knew no sin, to be made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; the perfection of righteousness.

Oh, here is love making loveliness; here is Christ given to a soul, which is infinite love, and being found in his righteousness is made perfectly lovely, without spot or wrinkle {says the text} complete in him. Can we consider this, and not admire it; we can as men admire that we can give no reason for. Oh, then let us admire this love of God, which surpasses all our reason, and can never be apprehended but by an eye of faith, why any should be vessels of wrath, and not we, or why we vessels of honour, when others are vessels of dishonour. If you can give me no reason, then admire this love, this free gift, this full and eternal love! Oh, what beloved like our beloved that could love such wretches as we, and so love us as to make us one with himself to all eternity. This is only fit to be admired by Saints.

First, this calls upon saints to trust God, and to live upon him by faith. Secondly, to love God and Jesus Christ which hath thus loved us. Lastly, to lie low at the feet of God and the weakest saints!

Oh, trust God. Who is like him to be trusted? Which hath forgiven us freely, and justified us freely and fully, when God might have glorified his justice in our damnation, but hath freely chosen to glorify his grace in our Salvation. Oh, for a saint to distrust God? How unworthy it is of that love and free-grace by which we stand justified in his sight forever! If God should argue with us thus, "why do you distrust me? Do you think I either am, or will be wrath with you? Why I have made you one with Christ, and I can as well be in wrath with him as with you. What should I do more, I have cleansed you in the blood of my Son, and clothed you with my own righteousness, and do you think I can now be wrath with you? Surely then you think me unjust?" All this may the LORD declare unto his people, and more so, &c., "I have told you I am satisfied in Christ, and how can I as a just God satisfy my wrath on you again? Nay I have put my Spirit into your hearts by which you have come to me crying Abba-Father, and yet do you distrust me! Surely it is your flesh, and not my Spirit in you, which creates these hard thoughts of me." I say if God should argue thus with us, who should be able to answer him?

God is a gracious God to us, a God of Free-Grace. Oh then, live on the Free-Grace of this gracious God. What though thou canst not see those qualifications in thee that would persuade thee to love thy enemy, were they in him; yet measure not God by thyself, he is a God of infinite Free-Grace, his ways are past finding out. Now if he tells and persuades thee by his Spirit that he loves thee, believe it, for this love was from eternity, and shall abide to eternity; inquire no reason, God is above thy reason, live on him by faith alone. If God tells thee that he has laid thy iniquities on Christ, and the grief and punishment due to them, and that he stood as the sinner in thy room, because thou mightest forever stand righteous in him. I say, if God tell a poor soul this in the Gospel, those glad tidings of peace, oh then go not back

to Satan and thy own heart to find reason of this love and qualification suitable to this love, before thou wilt believe God's Word; but lie down at the feet of Christ, and cast thyself at the throne of his Free-Grace, for there is thy Salvation, believe that the reason is in himself, and the suitable qualification shall spring from communion with himself, and the Lord Christ in the Spirit.

Secondly, oh love God and Jesus Christ which hath and doth thus love us, oh that our hearts did truly say there is no beloved like our beloved, "who will shew us any good," says one text. Why soul, wilt thou not love those that show thee good? Oh then love God and Christ in whom is all thy life, and all the good of it bound up, whatever may engage love, it is all in God and Christ; there is the fulness of riches, and glory, and mercy, and beauty, and pleasures, and honours, and all that the soul can desire to be found in fellowship with the Father and the Son. If there were no other argument but this to love him, it would be quite enough, because he loved us, and gave himself for us. The Father gave him, and he willingly became sin for us; and he tells us the end; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Oh, that now in the beholding of this love, we might be changed to his image, to be love as God is love.

Lastly, oh lie at the feet of God, and the weakest saint, when we look upon all our glorious inheritance as heirs, and co-heirs with Christ, yet remember it is all of Free-Grace. It is of Grace we are saved out of the jaws of hell. What hast thou which thou hast not received; you shall find it in the design of God to exclude boasting; as in Romans 3:27. "Thus saith the LORD, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the LORD," Jer.9:23-24, for truly a saint has no glory but as he is in God and Christ. The Apostle Paul desired to know nothing but Christ and him crucified, and only to be found in his righteousness; this was his glory; and says he, if I boast

I will boast of the cross of Christ. He had according to the outward man learning and honour, and much to boast of; but this is self, and he throws it down at the feet of Christ, and will only glory as he is one with Christ. And truly when a soul can say, my beloved is mine, and I am his, he hath spoken all at once, and this glory of the sun puts out the light of the stars, and now all that is self is nothing. I, {says Paul,} in me, that is in my flesh, in all that is myself, there is no good.

Thus is a saint living on the free-grace of God, nothing in himself, but all in Christ; and from hence he comes to prize the weakest saint, he looks on him as hewed out of the same Rock, as an heir of the same glory, as a soul created in that free-grace that himself is, and so argues thus; he is my brother, and though he be weak and I strong, yet I must not boast, but bear his infirmities; not boast over him, but bear him up in my arms. If I have more gifts, they are all for the edification of the body, and not to discourage the least member, but to help all, and therefore says he, my bosom shall be a bed for my brother to rest in. And if he may see further on my shoulders, I will lie down at his feet that he may get up. If I have gifts, it is to bear the burden of the weak; gifts truly sanctified, heightens Christ, but they humble a saint. Christ discovers himself by them, and the saint in beholding Christ's fulness does see his own emptiness, and so owns and admires God, but abases and denies himself. The soul argues thus, that justifying Grace I have from Christ; it is for myself, and I rested in it; but my sanctifying Grace, those gifts and fruits of the Spirit, they are in me for the good of others, and therefore looks on it as his duty, and that he is obliged by the law of Christ shed abroad in his heart, to become all things lawful to all men, that he may gain some; a gaining and not a destroying work is in his eye, and this makes him indeed and in truth to lie low at the feet of the weakest saint, and this he doth from a spiritual consideration, how that he stands justified to all eternity by the free-grace of God through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, for we are justified freely by the Grace of God through Jesus Christ.

Chapter 9.

Christ and the new creature are
inseparable souls.

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,
old things are passed away; behold, all things
are become new." II Cor.5:17.*

The Apostle doth in this Scripture {as in all others} like a good and faithful servant, make it his whole business and design to advance his Master's Glory - the Lord Jesus Christ. A new creature is the most glorious object that the world affords, and the Apostles care is to hold that forth in all its glory, namely in Christ.

A creature in Christ is a new creature indeed, and a new creature is in Christ indeed. As if the Apostle had said, there is not any man who is in Christ, whatever he was before, but by virtue of that union he is made a new creature, though before a wild olive; yet so soon as engrafted into Christ the tree of life, he brings forth good fruit. As you cannot gather grapes from thorns, nor figs of thistles, no more can the members of Christ be barren, or bring forth briars or thistles instead of the fruits of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, &c. Christ is the saints fountain that is united to him, out of whom can flow no bitter water. He that is born of God sins not, so far as the new birth is in him, though there be a law in the members, in the flesh of saints, which serves the law of sin, yet with the law of their minds they serve the will of God; so that you shall find saints in this same, complaining of self, and admiring of God, condemning of self, and justifying of God, the remainder of the old man in me, that is myself, my flesh saith a saint; but the new creature that is Christ in me the hope of glory, that is, the King of Glory come into my soul, and displaying the glory of his presence there, that is Christ in me, and I in Christ, in whom I made a new creature; therefore if any man be in Christ he is a

new creature, and if any man be a new creature it is Christ in him.

That there may appear a method in what follows, take this one general observation, namely, that being in Christ and the new creature are inseparable, they always go together.

If in Christ, then a new creature; and if a new creature, then in Christ; as it is impossible to be a new creature before being united to Christ; so it is impossible to be truly in Christ, and not to be a new creature. As those dead bones could not live before God had united them, covered them with skin, and breathed life into them, no more would they remain dead bones when God had so united them, and breathed life into them. For testimony to this truth, take in the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:10, "and if Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." He gives us this truth as it were upon his experience, as if he had said, I have found this, that ever since I have been in union with Christ, the body of sin is continually dying, and the spirit of life has carried me forth to the fruits of righteousness, I am dead now to the commands of sin and flesh, by which I have formerly been led captive and am now made to live in my spirit to the works of righteousness; and if you ask me a reason of this, it is Christ in me; and if Christ be in you, he will be so with you too, your bodies will be dead to the commands of sin, and your spirits alive in the fruits of righteousness, you will find Christ a living Christ, the second Man from Heaven, heavenly; and as a living Christ, so he makes life wherever he comes, and the life he brings is heavenly. Christ makes the new creature, and therefore can never be without the new creature, for what hath it's being from Christ cannot be without Christ. Now the new creature has its being from Christ, and thus it could not be but in Christ, and by Christ, so that it must needs follow the fact that it is always with Christ. Where Christ is, there is the new creature indeed, the new creature is nothing else but Christ possessing himself of a soul, living in it, and reigning over it by his Spirit, as Satan does in the mere natural man. A saint dies with Christ and he lives with

Christ; Christ dies for him and lives in him, and we shall find the Apostle Paul in Galatians 2:20, making this confession and acknowledgment, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." He doth acknowledge himself to be dead, crucified to himself in the death of Christ, then lays hold of another life, but it is out of self, by faith in Christ, "this is my very life now, whilst I am in the flesh, {says he,} and truly this my life is Christ in me, and it is not I but Christ that lives in me, that faith which is in me is not self but Christ." As if he had said, "my life is a new life, and that life is the new creature, and that new creature is Christ in me, I am that temple which you see Christ lives in, but Christ is the life of that temple; without me {says Christ} you can do nothing." True Lord says Paul, but through thy strength I can do all things, as if Christ had said, you cannot be new creatures till you be in me and I in you; I find that truth says Paul, for in me that is in my flesh, there is no good. But I have also experienced this truth, that if once in thee I can be no longer an old creature, as he tells in Galatians 1:15-16. So soon as ever God had called me by his Grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately, I obeyed and did not stand to confer with flesh and blood. Not to see by his old eyes, nor to act upon his old principles, flesh and blood must no longer teach and lead Paul, when God had called him by his Grace, and revealed Christ to him, as if Paul should say, I am now united to the Lord Jesus Christ, and I cannot but be a new creature, the kingdom of God is within me, and it will burst out, and is like new wine in old bottles, as my flesh was not able to act the new creature without Christ, no more is it able to conceal the new creature now that Christ is born in me. I am now led by the Spirit and I walk in the Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, &c., and such are they that are in Christ, for they have crucified the flesh with the lusts thereof. That is, Christ in them has crucified the flesh, and they are in Christ dead, so that their life is in the spirit, and they both live and walk in the spirit,

because Christ lives in them, and they live and act merely from Christ. Saints in Christ are branches in the vine; and if Christ be the root then holiness will be the fruit; for no other fruit can grow from that root.

The demonstration of this truth may be found in the particulars following, the first demonstration is this, that it is God's design from eternity, that such as are united to Christ, should be made new creatures in Christ, that Christ should work holiness in saints, and that saints should work holily, as created unto holiness in Christ. For proof to this take that full place of Scripture in Ephesians 2:10, "for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." In the foregoing verses, he tells us that we are saved merely of Grace, and though God makes faith the hand to lay hold upon this Free-Grace of his in Christ; yet that faith is the free gift of God, as well as Christ which faith lays hold on, and so wrapped up all Salvation in Free-Grace, and in Ephesians 2:9, excludes works wholly upon that account. But now lest the wicked natural heart of man should conclude thus, my Salvation is only upon Free-Grace, good works adds nothing to it, therefore as my Salvation is left to Christ, so my conversation is left to myself, if I believe in Christ for all of my salvation, I may live as I want. I say to answer this simple, arguing of our natural hearts, the Holy Ghost tells us that though holiness and good works are not under the account of justification, yet that the conversation of saints in truth is as purely out of their own hands as their justification is, for says the text, we are his workmanship, {that is God's,} created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. The Holy Ghost speaks methinks very fully to this truth in this place, that it is ordained and decreed by God from all eternity, that such as are saved by Christ should be sanctified in Christ. As it was the design of God from all eternity to save souls merely of his grace through Christ, so is it the same design of God to sanctify every soul whom he saves through Christ. Now, this is the decree of God, that if any man be in Christ, and Christ be his justification, that Christ shall be in him and his

sanctification; so that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; for the one is as fully the design of the Free-Grace of God as the other. Holiness is the work of God, committed {as I may say} to the hands of Christ. The same Apostle tells us that Christ is made of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. And God carries on this decree of his, when he calls a soul to lie in his bosom, and to have communion with himself through the Lord Christ. The Apostle makes it an argument in I Thessalonians 4:7, "for God hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness." His business in the foregoing verse is to exhort them to holiness, and to avoid the lusts and concupiscence of the Gentiles, which saith he, knew not God, and makes this the argument to his exhortation; for God hath called us to holiness, God hath united us to Christ, and in that union he hath decreed that we shall be sanctified as well as saved, so that to me this is a full demonstration, that if any man be truly in Christ he is a new creature; for this is the decree of God from all eternity, and shall abide to all eternity.

A second demonstration of this truth may be this; that the teachings of Christ in those that are truly taught by him, is to put off the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts of the flesh, and to put on the new man, which is to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. The proof of this doth appear in Ephesians 4:20-24, "but ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

By this Scripture it appears, that such souls as have learned Christ, and truths as they are in Jesus, they are thereby renewed in the spirit of their minds, so as that the old man which is after the flesh is put off, and the new man put on, which is after God created in righteousness and true holiness. Christ teaches with power, and his teachings make a change from flesh to spirit, and from

the carnal conversation of the old man to the image of Christ in the spirit, according to righteousness and holiness. Christ renews the mind and the conversation, when he teaches, as his teachings reach the internals; the root receives life from him, so that the fruit is the image of God in righteousness and true holiness; not a bare formal professed holiness but a true holiness, that is holiness in truth, which is in Christ the truth itself; so that the demonstration is full, Christ and the new creature always go together. But, as if the Apostle had said, there may be many formal, carnal wretches that may profess Christ and lay claim to him; but this is a standing truth, they have not been taught truths as they are in Jesus, and for their formality and carnality, they have that from the old man whatever they profess of Christ; for sure they have not so learned Christ. His teachings are spiritual, and his renewings are in the mind, which makes the image of God in righteousness and true holiness in the conversation; not only a naked professed holiness, for if Christ, then the new creature.

A third demonstration may be this, that God is light, and in him is no darkness, so that whoever hath fellowship with God and Christ, walks in the light as God is light. For proof of this, take a Scripture or two. I John 1:5-6, "this then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."

This is the message which the Holy Ghost brings, that God is infinitely light and purity in himself, and if any man have union with him, he walks in that light of Christ; and if he walk in the dark, and profess union with God and Christ, he lies, and the truth is not in him. Now by light and darkness often in Scripture-language is meant the old and the new man, the regenerate, and the unregenerate man. As in that Scripture, the night is far spent, and the day is at hand, walk as children of the day, or children of the light, Rom.13:12, that is, children of the Gospel, such as Christ by his Spirit hath taken possession of. This Gospel-light, the Spirit of God teaching, it teaches

to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. God is this light in himself, and he makes this light wherever he dwells. That soul which truly hath God, hath this light, and that soul which acts from God, acts from this light. Now says the Holy Ghost, it is a lie for you to say you live in God, and God in you, and yet you walk carnally as do others. Saith God in the Psalms, "I am not such a one as thyself." Where there is union between God and a soul, God is not brought over to the soul, but the soul to God. If any soul owns union with me, saith the Lord, know that I am light, and in me is no darkness. I overcome the darkness of dark souls, which have fellowship with me by my light. I find all souls in darkness, but I keep no soul in darkness. I find every sinner in his blood, but I purge as well as pardon. It is true that regeneration is not in every soul alike for measure and degree, but God leaves no soul as he finds it. His light is always expelling darkness; the old man dies daily, and so is the new man renewed, Christ that stronger man so soon as ever he possesses a soul, sets upon that work of casting out of the strong man of sin; and as he told Paul, so he tells and makes it good to every saint, "my grace shall be sufficient for you, sin shall not reign in your mortal bodies."

Christ's presence is manifested by his power, where he lives, sin must die, so that sin, Satan, and the soul shall know it. You shall know {saith Christ} if you be in me, as I will make you new creatures. It shall be your meat and drink to do my will, as it was mine to do my Father's and my commands shall be sweet to you as the honey and the honey-comb; my yoke shall be easy and my burden light to you. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." I John 2:29. This is the effects of union with God in Christ, to do righteousness, which is, to walk in the light as he is light, to walk by his light, the light of his Spirit, which does both teach and lead saints into all the will, work, and ways of God; so that this demonstration does further clear the truth, that whoever are in Christ they are new creatures. Christ and the new creature are inseparable, they always go together.

A fourth demonstration may be this, that such as are truly saints in union with Christ, they have all their life from him; their buddings forth is from the sap which they receive from the Lord Christ. We may receive this truth from our Saviour himself in John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches, he that abideth in me, and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing." Now if this be truth, which none but the spirit of untruth can deny, then I argue thus from hence. That if saints be in union with Christ, as the branches are in the vine, and have all their sap and life from Christ, then the life, and actions of life in saints must all bear the image of Christ. In nature like begets like; that which is begotten, is like that which does beget, as we see in the bringing forth of all creatures, and so is it with the new creature. Christ begets it, and the begotten is Christ, so that the new creature is Christ in the soul. As that text, "know you not that Christ is in you, except you be reprobates," and, "ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost." And if this be granted, we that Christ begets after his own image, then none with color of reason can deny that whoever is in Christ is a new creature; for whoever is in Christ is as the branch in the vine. He is not his own, but belongs to the root, his life and his fruit is not his own but the roots; for if the branch be separate from the root, it has neither life nor fruit; well then, if in union with Christ we are not our own but Christ's, and our fruit not our own, but the fruit of Christ. Then tell me, how can any man be in Christ and not be a new creature? Is Christ a dead Christ in any soul? No, he is not only a living Christ in every soul united to him but he is the life, and puts forth all the effects of life in such souls; then if Christ be all, then all must be Christ, and whoever is in Christ they are new creatures, so that Christ and the new creature are inseparable.

Take this fifth and last demonstration, that wherever Christ is, he is chief in command, Lord Paramount, he rules and governs whatever soul he takes possession of. Now the scepter of Christ is a scepter of holiness and righteousness; where Christ is King, his love makes laws, and his Spirit gives light and life. Christ's

subjects are a willing people in the day of his power. The pouring forth of his Spirit makes his will their will, so that to all his will they are made a willing people; then surely where the power of Christ over-powers any soul, that soul acts by the power of Christ in him, and must therefore act according to the will of Christ who gives the power, and that will and work is the new creature in such a soul. The power of Christ in souls is suitable to his own walking on earth. "I come to do thy will O Father," saith Christ, so when he overpowers any soul, the effect of his powerful presence is to frame such a soul in obedience to the will of God. One text tells us, he that is born of God sins not. So much of the regenerate part that is in any man, so much that man is above the committing of sin; and we find the Apostle Paul distinguishing between a law in his members and a law in his mind, as he thanks God through Jesus Christ, that with the mind he served the law of God, though with the flesh the law of sin. The Lord Christ ruled and governed the mind of Paul, and he does acknowledge it, for he thanks God through Jesus Christ, he served the law of God with his mind, and so bears witness to this truth, that where Christ commands and governs, there God's law is obeyed. And the same Apostle in the next chapter, Romans 8:2, "for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." As if he had said, I was in bondage under the law of sin in the condemning and the reigning power thereof, until Christ came to command in my soul by his Spirit, and then I found deliverance, so that now I can say, it is not I, but Christ that lives in me. The old man, the law of sin, was in command till Christ came, but now we that were sometimes darkness are made light in the Lord, and that light is the light of life, and the love of Christ shed abroad in our hearts is both root and strength to a new life. So the same Apostle, "I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me." Though the new creature be a work too hard for my flesh, yet it is not too hard for Christ in the Spirit. Nay, it is the certain, and the constant work of the Lord Jesus to make the new creature. He is made to us of God sanctification as truly as redemption,

so this is an undeniable truth, that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature.

In this meditation there is much to inform us, much that is exceedingly useful for a Christian's knowledge. As first, it informs all of the holiness and purity of God, that though his grace can pity and pardon the worst of sinners, yet his purity will clear no soul but in Christ, and in Christ he makes them new creatures. The Lord Christ himself tells us in one text, that no man cometh to the Father but by him, and this text tells us that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, so that such souls as come and lie down in the bosom of God, come through Christ in whom they are made new creatures, as God in himself is that perfection to whom there can be no addition; so he is that perfect purity which cannot have communion with any impure thing. God is that light which discovers all darkness, and that fire which burns up all dross, so that if filth approach his presence, his light discovers it, it cannot be hid from him; all thoughts and things are always naked before his presence, and his fire consumes it; for God out of Christ is a consuming fire. Truly he knows not God which says in his heart, that God and Belial may live together. Our God is a God of glory, and the glorious God; he is not a God which hath eyes and sees not, ears and hears not, hands and handles not. He is the all of all, the first, the fountain, and the fulness of all; so that God is so infinitely pure, that he is all but what is impure; he is pure in the fountain, and the fountain of purity. Purity flows only from God, and that only returns to God. Nothing but purity can dwell in God, for God is pure.

And if thus, then secondly this informs us of the riches of God's Free-Grace, which hath not only given us a justifying, but also a sanctifying Jesus. That Christ should not only deliver his elect from the condemning power, but also from the reigning power of sin; not only deliver from the justice of God in satisfying justice for them, but so carrying them in his own righteousness, unto the bosom of God, where he bids them all to "eat my beloved, feed abundantly and be satisfied." A saint's life is bound up in God, and his blessedness is to have

communion with God in Christ. Now considering the purity of God, and the impurity of fallen man; if Free Grace had not made Christ our way, and our sanctification as our redemption, we could never have been blessed in communion with God. If the bosom of God be a place of rest? If the love of God be the food of eternal life? If the glory at God's right hand be more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory? Oh, then what riches are those riches of Free-Grace which hath given all this freely, and Jesus Christ in whom we have these and all the fulness of glory, not only freely, but full, and that to all eternity. If this be the fruit of grace, then surely it must be rich and glorious Grace, the fountain must needs be precious, the streams are so full of glory. If we be saved, sanctified and glorified merely by grace, then it must be rich grace that gives forth so richly to all eternity.

Thirdly, this informs us of the sad and miserable condition of profane carnal wretches; the fruit of such lives tell us plainly that Christ is none of their root. The fruits of darkness are discovered by the light, but cannot be the proceeding or issue of the light. The flesh has works as proper to it, and flows as naturally from it, as any the Spirit has. And the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:5-8, Ephesians 5:8-9, Galatians 5:17, to the end, does discover both the root, and the fruits of flesh and spirit, which are as clearly to be distinguished between as light and darkness, and is in no nearer union than the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. Truly these are but sad tidings for such poor souls that are yet old creatures, not yet renewed in the spirit of their minds. It speaks very loud and plainly to them that they are not yet united to Christ, for were they in him, he would soon make them new creatures. The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:17-19, speaking of the Gentiles, walking in the vanity of their minds, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance and blindness of their hearts, who being past feeling, had given themselves over unto all lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. In Ephesians 4:20, "but ye

have not so learned Christ." As if he had said, such a life as that is the proper fruit of a natural condition of a man out of Christ, for Christ teaches no such things; but on the contrary, as in Ephesians 4:22-24, Christ teaches, to put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. It is sad indeed for poor souls to gather that of which sin and Satan is the root, and to please itself with that which is sweet only to the palate, but bitter in the belly, and carries a curse with it wherever it goes. Now this is a sad condition of Christless souls, such poor wretches as have given over themselves to work all uncleanness with greediness; these poor souls walk according to the course of the world, and the power of the prince of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, fulfilling the lusts and the desires of the flesh. Ephesians 2:2-3. And if this be not a miserable condition, I know not what can make up misery. As it is the blessing of Heaven to live in Christ, and Christ in us, so it is the misery of hell upon earth to be fulfilling the lusts and the desires of the flesh, in which the poor soul is ruled by the Prince of the air, led captive by Satan at his will. This is a sad condition of profane, carnal, Christless souls, such as are not new creatures, but if any man be in Christ he is a new creature.

Fourthly, this informs us of the desperate wickedness and hypocrisy of those wretches, which with their lips lay claim to Christ and Free-Grace, and yet are not new creatures, but make a profession of Christ to be a protection and covering of the old man in them. This is the growing and thriving sin of these last and evil times which we are fallen into. If the single witness of the lip may be taken, Christ had never more followers than in these our days; but this truth is so precious and of so great a consequence, that it well deserves two witnesses, I mean the life as well as the lip. Our Saviour tells us at the time of his being upon earth, of many belly and eye followers, that he had such as followed him for the loaves and to see the miracles that he did. But for lip followers

of Christ, I believe our present age outstrips all that went before it; and as the Lord Christ did discover the hypocrisy that was in the former, so do I verily believe he will this general profession of him in our days. God hath gone a great way in this work already, as I verily believe the earthquake we are in will not cease till God has perfected the good work which he hath begun. Men deceive themselves when they entitle their wickedness to Christ, he is too bright a glory to be veiled over, and too clear a light to be deceived by any darkness? Profession cannot dazzle the eyes of perfection. Christ is perfect, and can discern and discover the secret hypocrisy of the heart. Man's eyes may be deceived with a bare profession, but when Christ is confessed under a cloak of hypocrisy, will not the God of truth engage himself to discharge himself of those branches which are only in him by profession, and so leave them to a withering state, as men without the sap of life, and that I think is the meaning of our Saviour in John 15:2, "every branch in me {meaning Christ} that beareth not fruit, he {meaning God} taketh away." That is, Christ hath many which profess him, and bring not forth the fruit of union with him, which is the new creature, and them God {to clear up his own power and purity} takes away, as if the Lord had said, the evil heart of man thinks to hide the old man of sin under a profession of me; but if you look into the fruits and lives of such men, you will find them only branches in profession, which in the fittest time for lifting up the power and purity of God, God will take away, and Christ will discharge himself of them.

The Holy Ghost methinks is very full to this purpose, in I Corinthians 3:11-13, "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." Every man would be saved, and there is no foundation which is or can be laid but Christ; this is a general rule. Now upon the foundation some lay gold and precious stones; others lay wood, hay,

and stubble; the former have Christ in truth, the latter only in profession. But Christ deals with all alike, he is resolved to make all manifest, and therefore he brings all to the fire, by which gold appears to be gold, and silver to be silver, and precious stones to be such, because they abide the fire. And this fire makes wood, hay, and stubble to appear to be such, because the fire consumes them. If we understand here by fire, the fire of affliction and persecution, why under that sense the truth will stand firm, for such as have not learned truths as they are in Jesus, will deny truths and Jesus too if affliction come.

An unsound profession is soon burned up in the fire of persecution, for it is too hot a fire for wood, hay, or stubble to contend with. Wood may last longer than hay, or stubble, but all the time it lasts it consumes it. It is not like gold and silver that is refined and made more pure than it was before it came into the fire. Like that seed which had only the shallow routing of profession, that withered so soon as the scorching beams of the sun came upon it.

The Apostle had more than a naked profession, Romans 8, the latter end, when under this fire of persecution. "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter," yet he professed in all his sufferings that he was more than a conqueror through Christ that loved him. He was true gold indeed, that was a gain by this fire, and whatever is but bare profession will soon consume when it comes to this fire. And truly God is now shaking not only the earth but the heavens also; not only carnal wretches but even all professors, and this shaking will shake off all that are not one with Christ. This shaking is that those which cannot be shaken may appear to remain.

But I rather think by fire is meant the fire of the Spirit, those bright beams of the glorious presence of God. As if the LORD should say, "you wood, hay, and stubble, that built by profession upon my Christ, and deceive the world by your forms, empty of the power of godliness, you shall know that Christ is the only and proper foundation for gold, silver, and precious stones to build upon, and I am resolved to make a discovery of the

difference between them and you. I will pour out my Spirit, and that precious fire will inflame their love and your hatred to Christ, saints, and truth. That light shall try and discover your darkness; for till that light appears, your darkness will be taken for light, but when that light does appear, it will discover your darkness in hating the light." Bare formal profession is so true an enemy to nothing as to spiritual light, and an empty form enraged against nothing more than the power of godliness; and therefore God makes trial of all professing and professors by the pourings forth of his Spirit.

Truly, if God did not affirm that such as worship him must worship him in spirit and truth, he might have worshipers all the world over. If the Spirit and the power of godliness were not the distinguishing character between professors, Christ would have all to follow him, and saints and truth none to oppose them; but when the Spirit of truth gathers up saints into truths as they are in Jesus, above this or the other naked form, and into the power of godliness, bringing forth the fruits of holiness; then will not only carnal wretches, but also naked formal professors rise up against them, and thus by this fire of the Spirit of God doth discover all professors that build upon this foundation the Lord Jesus, whether they be gold, silver, and precious stones, or whether they be wood, hay, or stubble, by their abiding or consuming. Truly, forms or no forms can give no good testimony to this new creature. I judge of form and no form, as the Apostle of circumcision and uncircumcision, that they avail nothing but the new creature; and I believe as the power of godliness shall increase, all the contending in the world about forms will decrease. That which I am troubled at is this, when men are rigidly zealous for forms; yet then negligent of the power of godliness in themselves, and opposite to it in others, especially if they differ in forms, which makes it evidently to appear, that their form is their god, and they have no god but form.

And on the other side it is as sad, if not more sad, to behold such as pretend to higher communion with God than others have, which walk in the use of forms, and yet in their lives as loose, as vain, and as empty of God as

those which have nothing but form. That which I contend for is the power of godliness, and I would all the contentions in the world were swallowed up in this, namely who should live up most of Christ, to exceed each other in the power of godliness. This contention would kill none but our lusts; love to Christ, saints, and truths would live indeed, and it would be our life to live in this love.

But there is another sort of people in the world which this truth informs us of, that is such as talk much of the Grace of God, and yet turn that Grace into wantonness. Such wretches did never spiritually understand this text, that whoever is in Christ is a new creature. Nor do they consider how they engage the purity of Christ to discover their impurity. The Apostle Paul in Romans 6 makes it a matter of abhorrency to continue in sin, upon this consideration, because grace did abound in God, and truly God does abhor to own them under a notion of grace. Be not deceived, God is not mocked, he will make his word appear truth against all the wretches in the world, they shall know that such as are in Christ are new creatures.

I have heard it reported, that there be some which deny the Scriptures; that which is understood by the titles of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God. I can say no such thing knowingly; but sure I am, that many thousands which acknowledge it with their lips, deny it with their lives, and that in this one text, "that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature," for they will lay claim to the one, and deny the other; talk of their interest in saving grace, but deny his sanctifying grace. Such wretches as these bring an ill report upon the Gospel of Christ, and the Christ of the Gospel. The Gospel of Christ is glad tidings, being the proclaiming of Christ crucified, as the gift of Free-Grace for poor sinners.

Now when such as hate to be reformed talk of the Free-Grace of God, they put a dishonour upon it, and a stumbling block before weak Christians, as it makes them stagger at grace to see graceless men profess it; and grace in truth hath harder thoughts of many, and is less esteemed of because of this false profession of Grace, and I fear that it makes a poor legal soul to make a God of

their duties, when they see these vile creatures to abuse the Grace of God. I know not what is more vile than this, to live in sin under a profession of Grace. These are seared consciences indeed, that can sin and name it grace, and then call the God of truth to witness to that lie; nay to make God himself a liar; for he saith whoever is in Christ is a new creature; but they say they are in Christ, and yet remain old creatures. God will unmask this hypocrisy, and prove himself the God of truth. Christ hath no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; such as are in Christ, their fellowship is with the Father and with the Son; such as have fellowship with Christ are those that live in Christ, and Christ in them, that live by the faith of the Son of God, and in the Spirit of the holy God, so that they are changed into the image of God. This is the new creature, the gracious soul indeed, and such as have the power of godliness in their lives. "It is not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that knoweth my Father's will and does it," saith Christ. It is Grace in truth and act that consists with union and communion with Christ; if in Christ then a new creature; and all profession of grace without the new creature, will appear our own fancy of grace, and not the grace of God in truth, for that always produces the new man. If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.

Lastly, this informs saints indeed of their duty and privilege; for truly it is both, and it is this; that we live to no other end, but to live up Christ who is our life; and if Christ be our life, then we are new creatures, and the life of the new creature is to live up Christ which is its life. Children of the day should walk as such, in the light of the Lord, in the power and might of his Spirit. It is the Apostle's exhortation, in Galatians 5:25, "if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." As if he had said, it is not only our business as saints to live in the joys of God, but also to live up the God of our joys; not only to live upon God in the spirit, but to walk with God in the spirit; that is, in the fruits of the Spirit, for that is the subject in the verses just before this. Christ is a living Christ, he appears wherever he is. The Apostle James in

James 2:17, tells us, that faith without works is dead. That is, I know not that you believe in Christ if you show not the fruits of faith; for I know Christ is a living Christ, and if you live in him, then he will appear in your life. It is the life of those which live in Christ, to declare Christ to be their life in living him up. A saints glory lies in this, that Christ is his life, and therefore counts it his only business to advance the glory of Christ which is his life and his glory. "Whom have I in Heaven but thee," says the prophet David, "and I have none in earth in comparison of thee." So says a saint in truth, when I come to heaven God is all my glory, now that I am on earth God is all my Glory; I have no other to glory in, and no other glory to lift up but God and Christ, and God in Christ, the Free-Grace of God making Christ to be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to me, to be my all, and all I am to be his. This is a saints glory here, and to all eternity and the declaring this in his life is all his business upon earth.

The Apostle Paul, I Corinthians 15:10, tells us this, "by the Grace of God I am what I am." He had all his life from Grace; so it is with every true believer, grace in God is the fountain of his life, and that grace shed in his heart makes all the motions and actions of life, therefore this conclusion flows naturally from it, that it is the only end and business of a saints life to live up the Free-Grace of God, and Jesus Christ the gift of his Grace, and the same Apostle in Galatians 2:20, tells us that he is "crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live yet not I, but Christ in me." As if he had said, I am crucified with Christ to sin, world and self, and yet I live, {but it is not do that which I am crucified to in Christ, but to Christ,} for he is my life and all my business in the world is to live up him. I am dead to all but Christ, and what life you see in me, it is not myself, but Christ in me, not the old, but the new creature. The Apostle in Philippians 1:21, "for me to live is Christ," and all my life my business is to live up Christ.

This is general; what do you mean by living up and upon Christ? I mean this to be nothing, to do nothing, nor deserve anything, but in all which the glory of Christ may be lifted up, in the beauty of holiness and the power of

godliness. 1. That the name of the holy God may plainly appear in all we be, do, or desire to do; that in all we are, holiness to the Lord may be written upon it. But this is yet something in the dark. Why then more particularly; he that lives up Christ, must be single in his heart to Christ, the profession of his lips must have its commission from the singleness and sincerity of his heart. Christ begets his own image; it must be Christ within which truly makes Christ without. The more Christ is in any soul, the less self is there, and the less self, the more singleness of soul, and it is the want of this that makes so much profession of godliness, without the power of it in the world. It is easy to talk and profess up a Christ, but it very hard to live up a Christ, and follow him wherever he goes; and the reason is this, because the soul must be single, it must be an unselfed soul that will follow Christ.

The young man in the Gospel found this is a hard thing to sell all, and to be unselfed for to follow Christ; truly this singleness of heart is the rarest thing in the world to be found in these days, and it makes me fear indeed, that notwithstanding all the large profession of our days, there is but very little of the power of godliness, of this living up to the Lord Christ in truth; and as singleness of heart, so lowliness and meekness, learn of me {says Christ} for I am lowly and meek; the proud man God abhors, and truly he knows that God abhors pride in all, but most in himself, for by knowing God he comes to know himself, and there finds no cause to be lifted up, but to be abased. Self and Christ are contrarieties, both cannot be lifted up at once, so that the proud man which lifts up himself, cannot lift up Christ; the proud man's business is to hold out himself to the world not Christ.

Pride lifts up itself above all others, and cannot endure that any other should be lifted up above it; therefore the proud man can never live up Christ, because he that truly lives up Christ, must not only make him uppermost but all. Christ also owns meekness as an emblem of himself. "I am meek," {says Christ,} and when any soul is most meek, it is most like Christ. This is the constant associate to a lowly souls meekness, as they go hand-in-hand together, and Christ goes with them both,

and wherever they go, they speak Christ to be present. It is the meek soul that lives up Christ the Lamb of God. Christ had some followers that called for fire from Heaven to revenge themselves, but our Saviour rebukes them, and tells them that they know not what spirit they were of. As if he had said, you do not in this follow me, my Spirit is meek, but your spirits are evil in this. If you will live like your Master, and live up your Master, you must be lowly and meek. Christ in this reproof speaks to the fiery spirits in all ages; what is written is written for our instruction, the more heat in the flesh, the less of the fire of the Spirit; the more cruelty, the less Christ. Meekness and temperance are the fruits of the Spirit of God, Galatians 5:23, and surely that soul lives most of Christ, that lives most in the Spirit.

Again, to live up Christ is to be doing good to the souls and bodies of all we meet with, as Christ did, and as his Word exhorts us, do good to all men. A saint should have no eye of revenge to see evil withal, but to render good for evil; his eye should be to watch over souls and bodies for good, to watch over souls where and when he may drop in information, exhortation, brotherly reproof and consolation, when to cut dead flesh, and when to bind up green wounds, and be ready to all this, to tell forth its experiences of God to others, &c. A saint should so live up Christ, that wherever he comes, those souls he meets with may bless God for him and that of God which they learn by him. A saint should be a living monument of Christ, in whom may be beheld a Christ crucified in a soul, crucified to sin, self, and world, and a Christ crucified in a soul risen with Christ; seeking these things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Having its affections on things above, and not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:1-2. As Christ, so saints in the world have no other business but to do the will of their Heavenly Father.

Now truly the consideration of this may well put all saints upon that great work of self-examination. We are so apt enough to see a mote in our brothers eye, when we overlook the beam that is in our own; but it is the only business of every saint to live up Christ; then it is worth

the looking into our lives how much of Christ we can find there, what singleness of soul is in us to all the ways, will, and work of Christ, whether we follow Christ for love, or for the loaves? For what he is, or for what he gives? Whether it be his love that constrains us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; or whether fear of hell, shame or punishment, stops the eager pursuit, and stops the practice of sin? Or whether our profession of godliness, under what forms or whatever, be to lift up Christ or self? Whether if heaven and sin might go together, we would not rather have sin live in our souls than Christ? Whether that the profession of godliness which we seem so much to delight in, be not a burden to us in the power and the life of it? Whether that day in which Christ is most, and self least in our souls, be best to our souls contentment? Whether it be the souls desire and petition at the throne of Grace to be unselfed in everything, and that Christ may be all in all? Whether the soul does indeed count that a lost day, hour, or moment, in which he does not in some measure lift up Christ, and declare the indwelling of Christ in his soul, by the outgoings of Christ in his life. It is worthy a souls examination, how the old man dies, and the new man is renewed in him day by day; how pride and passion is brought under the feet of Christ in our souls; how through Christ that loves us, we are more than conquerors over sin and self by the love of Christ that conquers them in us, and enables us by his love to live like conquerors, rejoicing and glorying in the Free-Grace of our God; the new creature is Christ in truth, and truths as they are in Jesus; godliness in power, and the power of godliness; holiness in its beauty, and the beauty of holiness; God in the Spirit, and the Spirit of God; heavenly mindedness, and a mind in heaven, &c. It is living and walking in the Spirit; it is a soul united to Christ, Christ in it, and it in Christ, &c. "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature."

Chapter 10.

Vanity and vexation of spirit compasses all things under the sun.

"I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Eccl.1:14.

This Scripture is the testimony of the wise man concerning all things under the sun, and it is so upon seeing and trying all these things. In the verse before this he tells us how he gave his heart to seek, and to search out by wisdom concerning the things that are done under heaven. He has attained the beholding of what he gave his heart to seek; so that both seeking and seeing in wisdom, he finds all to be vanity and vexation of spirit. The vanity of the whole creation is the subject matter of all his book. He begins it thus in this Ecclesiastes 1:2, "vanity of vanities, {saith the preacher,} vanity of vanities, all is vanity." His heart is so full of the matter, that he doubles the sentence, and as he begins with it in the general, so in his whole book he follows the same subject in the particulars thereof, and concludes his book with the same general, in Ecclesiastes 12:8, "vanity of vanities, {saith the preacher,} all is vanity." The psalmist in Psalms 144:4, bears witness to this truth in the top-branch of all the creation, "man is like to vanity," and he proves it, for "his days are as a shadow that passeth away." And in Psalms 62:9, which takes in men of high and low degree in the proof of this general truth, "surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie, to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity." The vanity of the creature is a subject well worth the study of a wise believer, and truly none but Christ our wisdom can give us light into this vanity! For method sake we will draw out one general truth which I think is visible in this Scripture.

That upon true discovery and knowledge of all things under the sun, we shall find them vanity and

vexation of spirit. For the proof of this truth let us search the Scripture and our own experience, the wise man to prove this truth, begins with man in his labour, Ecclesiastes 1:3-4, "what profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever." So, in Ecclesiastes 2:22-23, man reapeth no content from all his labours under the sun. They fill him full of sorrow, travail, and grief, and so at last he cannot lie down and rest in them. They are a bed of thorns, unfit for rest; yea when the poor creature comes to lie down indeed, and sleep that sleep of death, it finds no rest in all its labours under the sun of what kind soever. So in Ecclesiastes 1:6, 17-19, he tells us that man's labour under these vanities are so great, that he cannot utter it, and that without any satisfaction, though what is pursued be enjoyed. For though the eye see, yet it is not satisfied with seeing; and though the ear do hear, yet it is not filled with hearing. The creature can never give so long, and so much, until that which receives from it says it is enough; though it give objects to the eye, yet the eye wants more objects than it can give, and though it offers to fill the ear, yet the ear is not filled with all that it can give; there is no new thing under the sun, but that which hath been, shall be, and that which is done, is that which shall be done, so that though I give my heart to know all things, wisdom, madness, and folly, yet I find nothing now in them. And instead of content in all this variety of knowledge, I find vexation of spirit; for I will tell you the best, and then judge you the rest. And in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increases knowledge increases sorrow. And if this be the best of the best, who can tell what is the worst of the worst? He comes to particulars in Ecclesiastes 2:1, as he intends to prove his heart with mirth, and the enjoying of pleasure, and in the proving, his heart does experience those things, and finds them vanity, and behold this also is vanity. Ecclesiastes 2:2, "I said of laughter, it is mad, and of mirth, what doeth it?" So in Ecclesiastes 2:4, and so forward, he tells us, that he made him great works and buildings, planted vineyards, made gardens and orchards,

planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits, got him servants and maidens, servants born in his house, so that he had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before him; he likewise gathered up silver and gold and got men-singers and women-singers, with the delights of the sons of men, as music-instruments and that of all sorts, so that he was greater than all that was before him in Jerusalem. And, in Ecclesiastes 2:10, he gave out his heart to take joy in all this, and kept not his eyes from anything that they desired. But in Ecclesiastes 2:11, he gives in this report of all this fulness, and his full experience thereof. "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had labored to do, and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

I cannot imagine a fuller proof than this Scripture. Here is wisdom possessing and trying all things under the sun, and finding no profit in any, or all of them. They yielded no return of benefit to his labours, there was more sorrow and travail than enjoyment; nay not only no profit, but vanity and vexation of spirit in all; yet he tells us he possessed more than all that went before him, and none that cometh after him should exceed him; for, {saith he,} what can the man do that cometh after the king? He may not think to grasp more of the world than I have done? And when he hath all, he hath but so much vanity, and along with it vexation of spirit. The wise man gives an instance of this vanity in Ecclesiastes 4:8, "there is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, for whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail." As if he had said, I will make you judge of all the labours of man in the things of the world; for look upon the man that spends all his time in labour after the world, he increases daily in riches, but not in contentment; he is not the more at ease for the more he possesseth; but more of the creature he hath, the more desire and travail increases. Nay, {saith he,} this is a great vanity, he doth all this to increase his

labour, of which there is no end; though he have no satisfaction in his riches, nor any to leave them to, he is like the barren womb that is never satisfied, nor bringeth forth any to be satisfied after it. Man may find creature to love, and vanity enough in the world to possess, but in all, his love shall be lost, and shall not find satisfaction in any abundance under the sun. Ecclesiastes 5:10, "he that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase, this is also vanity." And if a man should gather up a state of contentment {as he thinketh} in these vain things; so that with the fool in the Gospel, he bids his soul take ease, he hath goods laid up for many years; yet the wise man saith, "for as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool, this also is vanity." Ecclesiastes 7:6. So he tells us that in respect of the world, man and beasts die alike, Ecclesiastes 3:19, "for that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast, for all is vanity." As the one dieth, so dieth the other, all go unto one place, all are of the dust, and all return to dust again. So, Ecclesiastes 2:16, the wise man and the fool dieth both alike. Thus the wise men hath given in his experimental testimony to this truth, both in the life and death of man. For further proof let us look upon Job, both in his full and his empty conditions, they were both under the sun, and therefore a certainty in neither; he that had so much of everything, in a few moments had nothing but his body full of sores, and a potsherd to scrape them with, and his low condition had the uncertainty of the world in it; for that passeth away, and his latter end was greater than his beginning.

I cite it only to this purpose, to demonstrate the vanity of all outward conditions under the sun, whether they be full or empty. Jonah had pleasure in the gourd, but it was short-lived pleasure, for in one night the gourd withered, and his pleasure turned into anger. This gourd is a true emblem of the whole world, the momentary delights they give produce nothing else but anger at their parting.

Jonah said that he did well to be angry; and so doth every poor creature when the world withers and dies like itself, saith it does well to be angry with God, because itself is no wiser, than to think the gourd would last always. This is the world, and this is vanity and vexation of spirit. The Israelites in the wilderness, which are saints in the world, found vanity in every step they took, their quails and manna had vanity in them; nay, the flesh they carried about had vanity in it. "Your fathers, {says Christ,} John 6:49, did manna in the wilderness and are dead." The world has vanity enough in its own womb to eat up all its fulness. Witness Joseph's store-houses at the end of the seven years famine, there is the time for the lean cattle to devour the fat. The flourishing world hath a grave in itself to sepulcher itself in. Though here be enough to prove this truth; yet it will not be amiss to add our own experiences, let health speak for sickness and sickness for health, the strong man for the weak, and the weak man for the strong; when they have changed each others condition, sickness tells health, thus I thought when I was sick, that if I could but be in health as you are, it would have been a gourd that I should have had contentment in; but when I had it I found it wither, and then I said I did well to be angry. Health tells sickness, I thought I should never have been in your condition, but now I find there was vanity in my health because it withers. The strong man tells the weak, I thought my strength had been my own, and I could have kept it, but now I am weak as you are; I find that I was vain in my thoughts, and my strength is vanity. So says the weak man to the strong, I thought if I could have stood upon your legs, I might have stood strongly, but now I find that my strength is weakness, and the worm of vanity is at the root of that tree which gnaws it till it dies. Ask the rich man if a pillow stuffed with gold could make him sleep? Nay does not his bags of gold keep him awake? Ask the great man whether all his greatness could satisfy his spirit? Nay, is not the spirit of Haman there, which is restless if Mordecai bow not his knee. Ask him that has conquered all the world what he wants, and he will tell you that he wants more worlds to conquer. After

asking let us come to offering, set dainty and delicious food in the abundance of it before a sick and a soft stomach and bid it eat to satisfy, he will tell you he is best satisfied, not to eat at all, for instead of loving, he despises it. Then set it before a strong and healthy stomach, and bid him eat and be satisfied; he eats to satisfy, till he destroys both health and stomach, so that he which eats not is not satisfied with emptiness, nor he which does eat made glad by his fulness; for both conditions are under the sun, and there is vanity in them. Man lives not by bread alone, not by anything below God, for all things under the sun are vanity. Offer a man that gasps for breath goodly buildings and glorious apparel; though says he, my coffin and my winding-sheet is of nearest relation to my condition, they must be my apparel and my dwelling. Your offer is vanity, for I now find the world to be such. Vanity will not satisfy my living soul, which is now bidding adieu to my dying body. The world's vanities may dazzle and deceive a man that lives in pleasure, but they can never please not satisfy the eye and heart that is going to sleep the sleep of death and lie down in the bed of the grave. The whole world is but a world of vanity, and therefore to all that rest upon it, must first or last prove vexation of spirit, the proofs of this truth are a cloud of witnesses. Every moment of our passing through this wilderness of the world, brings forth sin. Now because what is written, is for our instruction, it will be wisdom in all to make use of this truth which the wise man holds out to us upon his own experience, and which all Saints in their experience must and do bear witness to.

And first we may improve it thus, as it gives us a discovery of the fruitless labours and contentions of all those that labour and contend merely for the world in part or in whole. For if this be truth that all things under the sun be vanity, then it must needs be fruitless labour and contention; which if it obtained what it seeks, yet finds nothing but vanity, and in it vexation of spirit.

If this were truly set home upon our spirits by the Spirit of God, Satan would have fewer to worship him upon that temptation which he assaulted our Saviour

with, in showing him the world in all its transitory glory. As we come more to know God in the spirit, so that we by that Spirit know the world in its vanity and emptiness, then shall we labour and contend less for the vanities of the world, and the world of vanities; then shall we see the vanity of our labours in contending for that which is but vanity, till then we shall be laying out our money for that which is not bread, and our spirits for that which profits not, for till God gather up our spirits by his Spirit to himself, the world will hold us, and all that while we are but wrapped up in the arms of vanity and dandled upon the knees of death, for all things under the sun are vanity. All that is below God is too low for a saint to labour after, or contend for. This truth not only concerns those worldlings that are buried alive in the world, but may make saints blush; yea the best of saints, to consider how they have stretched forth their hands to grasp the wind, and opened their hearts to let in vanity, and upon this regard have been ready to conclude, it is good to be here, let us build tabernacles; and so have laboured to blow up this bladder of vanity with these pleasing imaginations to our flesh, of honour, profit and pleasures, of this world, till God prick the bladder, and let out this wind, so that then we see it as altogether vanity and vexation of spirit. But truly so much of this old man as it is in saints makes a very uncomely sight, that heirs of glory, joint-heirs with Christ in glory, such as have a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory prepared for them, which waits to swallow them up to all eternity, should be pursuing after vanity. It best becomes saints to be always upon the wing of faith for Heaven, above those vanities.

There is no footing in the world for a saint. The world is an ocean of uncertain waves, that goes one way, and the other way, as the wind drives them, so that the dove can have no rest for the soul of her foot, till she comes to the ark from whence she went out. A saint shall find rest in nothing but in God his original, and therefore it is vanity in all to pursue vanity, but especially in saints, for their lives are hid with Christ in God. It is a great folly for an empty stomach to suck in the wind for its satisfaction, and this title we may give to the wisdom of

the wisest worldling, which makes the prodigals choice to feed on husks, if he could have had enough of them. This wind may temporarily blow upon our hearts and minds, but it can never satisfy. But sure, this is exceeding folly in saints, who have bread enough in their Father's house, and their treasure in Heaven, to have their hearts anywhere but in Heaven where their treasure is. And it is much to the dishonour of God who is the glorious and satisfying interest of his people, that they should be running to empty cisterns, when he himself is an eternal fountain of love, life, and exceeding glory to them, and doubtless saints in truth are very tender of the glory of God. These elect children are much in love with their Father's glory, it grieves their spirits to see profane wretches dishonour him, but it does exceedingly wound them if they be found actors in such a work themselves; and if so, then we should be very watchful lest we be under the fruitless labour and contentions of those that labour and contend for the world in part or in whole.

If this truth were spiritually understood, surely saints would be more careless of the worlds frowns, and less solicitous for their smiles and favours, their best gifts, and their sorriest looks are all comprehended under this term vanity, and he that has their smiles hath no less of vanity than he that hath their frowns for they are vanity themselves, and the fruit can be no other than the tree is, and it is the darkness of that flesh which is in saints that keeps them from a clear discerning of that truth, and makes them smile when the world smiles on them, and be sad when the world frowns on them. Vanity could not unsettle our spirits, if vanity were not in them; it is that vanity which is in our flesh that puts a value upon the vanity that is in the world; but truly it is our exceeding shame, that having the Lord to glory in, that we should glory in anything but the God of our Salvation, and having so sure and abiding glory, that any frowns from vanity should make the least damp upon our glory. Saints are of an eternal glory and substance, and therefore should not labour for, nor glory in anything but what is suitable, that which will abide forever, and upon this consideration the whole world, that lump of vanity is cut off at once, it

withers in the using, and certainly dies either before or with our flesh, it is not able to satisfy either our souls or bodies, therefore unworthy to be laboured or contended for by any, but especially by saints, that have God to live and delight in.

Again, the wise man's discovery is, that all things under the sun are vanity, carries along with it this counsel, that we should use the world as if we used it not. Value it no higher than vanity, let it be so in our eye and hearts; let God's end in creating of the world be our end in using of it. He made the world to serve man, and man only to serve himself; so may we use all things not sinful, moderately, and with thanksgiving, making the whole creation our servants and our footstool; so that in all and with all we serve our God, and live in his bosom of love which is too bright a glory, that it swallows up all the glory of the world, and makes that something or nothing merely as God appears in them or not in them. God is so perfect a glory, that he makes the darkest lantern of the creature, when he appears in it, to shine glorious; and when he withdraws his presence, the lantern is dark again, suitable to its own nature. This should the world be in a saint's eye! What of God is in whole or any part of the creation, embrace that, keep close to that, lift up his reign, his power and his glory in all, so use the world, as to lift up God above it. My meaning is this, use all power, all place, all honours and interest among the sons of men, to lift up the name of God. This is a precious spirit indeed, that can despise the world's glory, when God's glory goes not with it, and can rejoice in the world's reproaches, when in that he may more advance the glory of his God. This is to use the world as if we used it not, to take it up and lay it down only as it may serve the highest end of our being, the lifting up of the glory of our God.

If there were anything but vanity in the world, I verily persuade myself it should have been part of the saints portion; but as it is, it is too low a region for the saints to live in. God gives full blessings to his children, and therefore has given himself to be his people's inheritance, and has done them no injury in binding up the whole world under vanity, for it is not their portion, it

is at most but their wilderness, footstool, Christ is their Rock of Ages, heaven their more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Saints would soon have low thoughts of the world, if their hearts were lifted up to their interest, the King and Kingdom of Glory; it will then appear that we used it as if we used it not, then when we have it, it is no part of our life and glory, so when it is gone we have no want of it, for God is our all, and we have at all times in God. It is not the creature, which is vanity, that makes a saints joy, but Christ risen in glory, and if that vanity vanishes away, yet the comfort does not, because that is bound up in God, which lives forever. God does often vary in his dispensations to his children, but not in his love, which is their life, though in reference to the world, he leads them through good and bad reports, through sickness and health, high and low, honourable and dishonourable esteem of the world; yet in all this his eternal love is always the same; and saints knowing this, are as full of life and joy in the one condition as in the other; because God and his love is their life and joy in all conditions. And hence it comes, that saints use the world with so much slighthness, because not any of their life and interest is bound up in it. If the gourd be green and flourishing, yet God and not that, is their life and glory; if the gourd wither and die, yet they do not, for they have lost nothing in the gourds being nothing, because God who is all, is their all. Oh, that this spirit did live more in Saints! Then should we live more in God, and less in the world; then should we truly use the world as if we used it not.

This truth does also show us the glorious interest of saints that have a God to live and glory in, though there be vanity in all things under the sun. Sure it could not but be amazement to that tyrant, to behold the three children in the fiery furnace, and not consumed. And were it well considered, it would be as great an amazement to the world, to see saints full of rest, joy, and peace in their spirits, though the world be full of changes, and altogether vanity. Put these together, and we shall find the cause to be one and the same in Daniel 3:25, the text tells us, that four men walked in the midst of the fire, and

the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. The text gives us the reason why the fire could not consume them according to its own nature, because the presence of God was there; the reason is the same, though the saints have their being among the vanities under the sun, yet they have their real being and their life in the bosom of God, and his Spirit lives in their bosom, so that it is his presence which makes that rest, joy and peace that is in their souls. A rock that gives forth water in a dry and long wilderness, has its double beauty; such is God to his children in this wilderness of vanity; he is a rock and water of life both; and such as experience him, can tell they have meat to eat such as the world knows not of, and when the world shall be forced to confess that their food is husks, and not enough neither, then can such as have an interest in God, make this their boastings, that they live upon the living God, that to them it is Christ to live and gain to die, that they want nothing here, and have this assurance in their bosoms, that there waits to swallow them up to all eternity, a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The vanity of all things under the sun, does only make them miserable, whose lives are so low; but for such as have their interest in God, and live upon him, they live in the Sun of righteousness that is above all vanity, and in the love of God which has not the shadow of things in it. Contrarieties sets forth each other; the misery of that soul which has nothing but a vain world to live on sets forth the glory of him which has the God of glory to his portion; only herein they differ, the world is not so perfect an emptiness as God is fulness; there is more in God to satisfy than can be in the world to dissatisfy. If all the vanity and emptiness of the world appear at once, to disquiet and distract a spirit, yet if at that moment one glimpse of God's love do but appear it stills and quiets all. This shows how gracious an interest God is to his people, that a world of vanities is not able to disquiet where his love appears.

The loving kindness of God is better than life, it is all our life, it is life in death, and above death, it puts the soul upon this triumph, that nothing shall separate us from the love of God and Christ, neither life nor death,

things present or things to come, or anything because God is my interest, my life and my glory. That can never come to nothing, which made all things out of nothing. Now that is God, he made all things out of nothing, but can never be made nothing himself; all powers springs from him, therefore no powers can be above him. He said, "let there be light, and it was so, let the sun rule the day, and the moon the night, and it was so." It is this power and glory that is the interest of saints, so that an empty world can neither take from, nor add to their felicity, because their lives are hid with Christ in God, and when Christ shall appear, then shall all his appear with him in glory.

Furthermore, it will be the wisdom of saints to learn from the wise man's experience. First, not to trust in the world or anything under the sun because all is vanity. He that rests upon a broken reed does not only lose his hopes and his ends, but is wounded by that which he trusted in. The world is this broken reed, it makes a show, but can bear no weight; the soul that trusts it must find it so, because it is vanity, and in the experience of this vanity there are not only hopes lost, and disappointments in their room, but also vexation of spirit; it was so with Jonas when the gourd failed him, saying that he did well to be angry. Disappointments have a mighty weight upon a natural heart, the hopes of the world do pass up like a bladder, which is filled only with wind, but the disappointment of the world come like a millstone that presses down to the dust. Nay, the hopes of the world have so many fears mixed with them, that it is hard to discover which is most, the hopes or the fears; but when the disappointments come, then the former hopes increase the present grief, and the complainings then are as the prophets were, saying, "my friend that lay in my bosom hath betrayed me; I neither knew it nor feared it to be a broken reed, till I had placed my hopes and confidence in it, and that weight discovered it."

Indeed says this poor heart, though I had no mind to think of dying, yet I could not tell how short my life was, but I well hoped this, that the pleasures, profits, and honours of the world would not leave me in this life,

therefore I gave out my heart to them, bound up my spirit in them, lay down to rest by them, and expected they should be a gourd to shelter me from sun and storms. But the poor soul which thus trusted in the world, does not see its vanity, is not knowing of the worm that is at the root of the gourd to consume it; his heart says as the fool in the Gospel, "soul take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years," but does not hear that voice that says, "thou fool this night shall thy soul be taken from thee." It is a great burden to be disappointed for the present; but to be disappointed to eternity is more misery than can be expressed, and thus must every soul be that trusts the world, and lays out itself upon it.

All things under the sun have their creation and their being from God, therefore must needs be what God intended them to be. A created being which must return to its first nothing; the world is a ship of vanity, never intended by its original to be an object of faith or hope. It is the earth that must be shaken until it be crumbled to nothing, therefore very unfit to be trusted or rested in; the vanity under the sun will be no better satisfaction to such souls as trust in them than the fig-leaves were a garment to cover the nakedness of our first parents, neither of both can beget confidence enough to come into the presence of God. Where the Spirit seals up this truth to any soul, sure there will be no more trusting of, or in the world, or in anything under the sun, because vanity comprehends at all. Psalms 62:9, "surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity." So that trust man or men of what degree soever, they must deceive because they are vanity; the man of high degree in his outside promises more than him of low degree, but he will prove a lie; there is a worm at his root, he will wither to nothing. Methinks the prophet's counsel, Psalms 2:10, comes in very suitable to this purpose, "be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled {yea but a little} but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Observe it, and it amounts to thus much, that the highest and greatest among men rest not in themselves or any other piece of vanity, but to look to Christ and trust in him; for says the prophet, there will appear a day of blasting all these lower vanities, and then you will find them to be blessed that put their trust in him.

Oh, that kings and judges, parliaments and people had learned this heavenly wisdom to kiss the Son, to be looking to Christ, to do his work, to lift up his scepter and his glory, to trust under the shadow of his wings, to renounce self aims and ends, and glory, to be wise for Christ, and not for self, to use more piety and less policy, to look upon all things under the sun as vanity, not to be so vain as to spend their precious time and spirits in going about to make perishing things permanent. Not to build tabernacles, and think it is good to be here; for the tabernacle that they build withal is perishing and has but a few moments to be here. Oh, therefore be wise, and while it is called today look to Christ exclusively. All things below the sun are vanity, and if you trust the world you'll find it to be so indeed. The wise man tried the world, and found it so; such as love the world will find it lost love, and those that serve the world most, will find they serve nothing but vanity, and truly that is a very ill master, the latter end of that service will be worse than the beginning. It is great pity then that the world has so many servants, seeing it is so unfaithful a master. How many are there that serve the world as they should serve God, with all their souls, their spirits, and their strength, improving their lives, liberties and interest to serve vanity, and to lift up flesh, though in that work they do their utmost to wound Christ in his members. It is a sad employment to blow up those flames that shall burn him that blows it to ashes! This is the evil of that work to serve the interest of the world against the interest of God, they dig their own graves, they wound their own souls, and heighten the fury of those flames, which will make them cry out for a drop of water to quench their thirst. This work in the end will not only make the heart ache, but the conscience roar, this work indeed will prove vanity and vexation of spirit. To wind up this subject, it is God and Christ only that is

worthy to be trusted, served, loved and delighted in. There is vanity in all below God, but no vanity at all in God. We may trust him, for he is faithful, all that ever have trusted him have found him so. Witness the Israelites at the Red Sea, he bid them by Moses to stand still, to trust in him, and that they should see his salvation, and he proved himself a faithful God. God is worthy to be served, because he commands that which is worthy the service of a holy soul, and then he gives strength to perform the service he requires, he gives his Spirit both to teach and to lead, and his service has life and glory both in the way and end; he spirits the soul, and then commands spiritual service. This is a service worthy to be owned and obeyed.

God is also worthy to be loved of all his, because he loved us first, and that first was when we lay in our blood, and no eye could pity us; he is the original of our love, therefore worthy to be loved by that which flows from himself; he has all loveliness in him, and therefore worthy to have all loves center in him. That which is the fountain of love, may justly claim to be the object of love.

Saints may well say of God and Christ as the spouse did of Christ, that there was no beloved like her beloved for love and loveliness, and the best way of expressing this, is to let God and Christ have all our affection. By this we plainly tell, that there is no object our eyes can look on so lovely as God and Christ. Communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son is a place of delight for the souls of saints; love takes delight in God and Christ, for there are banquets of love, and banners of love, a bosom full of love and words of love, electing love, and redeeming love, and justifying, sanctifying, and glorifying love, these are objects of delight indeed; here we may feed abundantly and be satisfied, but can never be cloyed. Oh, be wise then, stand aside perishing world; away with all those vanities under the sun, there is a brightness which outshines it, and a glory that swallows it up. There is no beauty below God, nor any excellency out of God, and whoever has a spiritual knowledge thus of God, will by the same light be able to say as the wise man, "I have seen all the works

under the sun and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

Chapter 11.

A saints excellency is to have no will in himself, but the will of God.

"Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." Luke 22:42.

These are our Saviour's words when he was entering into crucifying work, his flesh would have shrunk, but his spirit bore it up, and makes this the result of all the thoughts within him, to have no will but the will of God, and to desire that no other will should be done and fulfilled but the will of God.

Christ is the head of saints, and it is the glory of saints to be made like their Head. This work is too hard for flesh and blood, but as it was not too hard for Christ, no more will it be for a saint when Christ is in him. Though it be hard to learn, yet it is very sweet in the attaining, the pains of the travail will be swallowed up in the birth of this beautiful man-child. The scope of our Saviour in this Scripture to me seems to be this, that whatever his flesh might desire, yet his spirit leaves all to God, and not any will to be done but God's will. Our Saviour in this does, and so should every saint in conformity to him, resign up the whole soul and body unto the will of God, to be and to do in all times and things, according to his will, so as that in everything his will may be done.

That such as read may the better understand, take these two heads as a ground-work of the ensuing treaty. First, that it is the duty of saints in conformity to Christ their Head, to have no will but the will of God. Secondly, so far as Christ lives in any soul, it is the desire of such a

soul, that the whole will of God, and no other but the will of God, may be done in all times and things.

And first to the first of these. That it is the duty of saints in conformity to Christ their Head, to have no will but the will of God. The first Scripture makes this clear, that the Lord Christ our Head, would own nor stick to no other will but the will of God. If there be in my flesh anything which is not in thy will let it not be done; for he confesses he came to do the will of his Father. So, in John 4:34, Christ tells us, that his meat is to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work. As if the Lord Christ had said, my work and will is bound up in God, and it is my joy and content to be doing his work, and fulfilling his will. And in John 5:30, "I seek not my own will, but the will of my Father which has sent me." I pursue the business that I came about, to perfect the will of him I came from. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." John 6:38. So that in all these Scriptures it appears, that Christ owns nor does no will, but the will of God.

Now as it was the Lord Christ's work to do the will of God in all things; so it is a saints duty in conformity to Christ their Head, to be willing and doing no other will but the will of God. If the Lord Christ will allow in himself no other will but the will of God, then certainly he will not do it in his members; it is both the duty and privilege of saints to be made conformable to Christ their Head. As the branches in the vine receive that sap which comes from the root, and brings forth such fruit as that sap produces; so is it with saints united to Christ, they have their life and fruit from union, and he owns them to be united to him, that hear the word of God and do it. "And he answered and said unto them, my mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it." Luke 8:21. This is so clear a truth, so much of God in it, that I cannot doubt but it carries its proof and commission with it into the bosom of all such as own God and Christ, so that the improving will be more edifying than the proving.

Therefore, consider the second head, namely, that so far as Christ dominates any soul, it is the desire of such

a soul, that the whole will of God, and no other but the will of God may be done in all times and things. What Christ is in himself, that he is in his members; he is in himself one with the will of God, so that where Christ lives in any soul, so much Christ, so much oneness with, and conformity to the will of God. Such a soul speaks in Christ's strength, and so speaks Christ's language to God, "not my will but thy will be done." There is in the best of saints on earth, as in Paul, a double law, one in the members, and another in the mind; one of the flesh, and another of the spirit; as the Apostle, Romans 7 last, through Christ he served God with the mind. Where Christ possesses, there God is obeyed; if he lives and reigns in any soul, that soul so far knows no will to obey, but the will of God, and if any part of that man know any other will, it is the fleshly part, which Christ has not fully subdued to himself; but where Christ lives, there he suffers no other will, but the will of God to bear rule. And as the fire of God's Spirit does consume the lusts of the flesh in saints, so does the will of such saints run more and more into the will of God. They are lost unto themselves, and found in God, they will and do every day less of self, and more of God, they are crucified with Christ to the world, and the world to them, and the life that they then live, it is by the faith of the Son of God in conformity to the will of God. Christ makes the desires, shapes and forms the will in such souls as he lives in, to God; and God is sure to have that which Christ new makes, for it is his business to do his Father's work. Whenever Christ new makes, or makes the new creature in any soul, his end is to make for God, and to lift up his own name in lifting up God, for he tells us in John 17:21-22, that himself and his Father are one; and as there is but one will in God and Christ, so there is only that one will in every soul that Christ powerfully lives in, so far as he does live in it by his Spirit; for it is the property of the Spirit as fire to burn up, and consume all but substance, whatever is dross is consumed, where that holy fire comes. Now all flesh and self is dross, both in will and work, and that the Spirit burns up, and leaves nothing remaining in such a soul where it lives, so far as it has overcome, but the

substantial and holy will of God. And from hence it is that any soul comes to be changed in its desires, because it is changed in itself, or more properly out of itself from flesh to spirit, from self to Christ, from its own will to the will of God.

But now if any shall object and say, this is a hard saying, who can bear it? This makes Christianity to be such a burdensome thing as the world reports it to be, that a man must be always crossing and denying himself of any will or content of his own, so as by this rate the way to Heaven is to have no pleasure upon earth.

To this I answer, it is the ignorance of God and his ways that makes this objection; this sounds like the answer of Nicodemus to our Saviour in John 3:4, when Christ had been showing him the necessity of regeneration, and spoke in the spirit to him of being born again, he understood not the Spirit, and as he understood him so answered him in the flesh, how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Christ spoke in the spirit, but Nicodemus understood him only in the flesh, and therefore judged it hard, or impossible, that there should be a regeneration, or new birth, though Christ had told him the necessity of it. So do all that are ignorant of God and his ways thus conclude of him as they understand him, so that when he speaks in the spirit, and they understand him in the flesh, they conclude according to the light they are under, that what is impossible with man, is so with God to them, because they have no other knowledge of God but in the flesh. But let such as are spiritual consider.

First, God gives what he commands, and then commands what he gives. God that commands to be worshiped and obeyed in spirit, gives his Spirit to worship and obey him in. God is no hard master, he takes not up where he lays not down, he covenants freely and makes it fully good, to put his law in the inner parts of his people, and to write it in their hearts. Jeremiah 31:33. And to give them his Spirit of truth to dwell with them, and he in them, and to teach them all things. John 14:17,26. Now none but a fleshly understanding can condemn God for a

hard master, and his will swallowing up our will, to be a joyless, comfortless, burdensome thing, when as he gives his Spirit to do that in us, which he requires of us.

In this the Apostle Paul found when he made that holy boast, "I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me," I have from God and all that I return to God, God has my will, and I have my will spiritualized by God; God's Spirit lives in my will, and I thereby live in the will of God, that which is impossible with men it is not so with God; though of myself I could not give up my will to God, yet God of himself can give me his Spirit, and by that swallow up my will into his. When God bid Abraham leave his father's house and go into a strange land, the whole frame of the design was against flesh; yet God gave him a spirit to go through with the work. Nay, when he commanded him to offer up his son, his only and his beloved son Isaac, against which work flesh might have found arguments enough, yet to this so exceeding hard work to flesh and blood, God gave him such an abundant measure of faith, that he stuck not in it, his own will was swallowed up into God's, because God had given him suitable strength to so hard a work. The Apostle speaking of faith, tells us it is the gift of God, that if we consult the Scriptures, we shall find Abraham did all these great works by faith, Hebrews 11:8-18, so that in one text he is called the father of the faithful. Now if Saints do the will of God by faith in his Spirit, and he gives both faith and the Spirit; then God is no hard master, but a gracious God in commanding what he gives, seeing he gives what he commands, and it is nothing but ignorance of God's way and working, that begets hard thoughts of God and his ways.

Secondly consider, God leads his children, he does not drive them; he wins and overcomes them by his love, he does not force them but as love constrains them, by converting and changing the old man into the new, God appears in the soft and mild voice, God makes choice of a meek Moses to be his messenger to his people, to call them out, and to lead them after him. When God designs, he uses {if any} the very quintessence of means to affect his design. Now in this design of God's to bring his peoples

will over to his, so that they may be dead to their own will, and alive only to his, he makes his love the means. That is a notable text to this purpose, where it is said, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, that is, God was manifesting his love to his own in the world by Christ, and the appearance of that love reconciles them to God; that is, makes them to have good thoughts of God, and seeing how he loves them, it makes them willing to resign themselves wholly up to him. If I would seek a bosom to take up my rest in, to resign myself over to, so as to be wholly led and ruled by it, I would above all things else, be sure to choose a bosom of love, one in whom I was sure of a full interest of love; for then I could satisfy myself, that whatever was willed for me, or to me, it was the best it could be for me, because love contrived, willed, and wrought it for me; and we know the commands of love are easy both in the commander and the commanded. Now this is God's way in bringing over his peoples will to his, he opens his bosom of love to them, he makes known a Christ crucified, and in him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, and in all this his love, nay his love as the ground of all this, he makes known that he pardons iniquities, transgressions and sins for his own name's sake, and he calls himself the God of love, the Apostle tells us, Ephesians 2:8, that is by Grace we are saved, that is original love as is in all our Salvation. Now by the discoveries of God's love to the souls of his people by his Spirit he overcomes them; and whereas before they were at enmity with God, looking upon God as an enemy, {and all that see God only in the flesh,} but the Spirit opening their understandings, now they become reconciled to God. We love him because he first loved us, and trust in him because we see he loved us from all eternity, gave Christ and Pardon, Heaven and Glory in this love, and to resign up ourselves into the bosom of God, to be preserved, directed and ruled by his love. The soul by discerning the love of God in the Spirit, is convinced that whatever it has, flows from his love, and it is ever satisfied and blest in this love, and therefore resigns up all to the love of God, it's whole will and affections, which makes and rules all its motions. The love

of God, God himself, and when this is used as a means, it must needs affect its end. God cannot be frustrated, but what he wills he works; if he wills his love to conquer the love and the wills of his people, it shall surely do it; and this is God's certain and sweet way of melting his people will into his own. My people says God, shall be a willing people in the day of my power; when God pours forth his Spirit upon any soul, and in that Spirit manifests and reveals his own love to that soul, then is the day of God's power upon such a soul, and it becomes a willing soul, it is melted into God's will, and owns no will for itself but the will of God; and upon this foundation of love Christ commands his disciples, John 14:15, if ye love me keep my commandment. And in John 14:23, "if any man love me he will keep my words." And he that loves me not, keeps not my sayings, as if he had said, it is my love shed abroad in your hearts that is your ability to do my will, and this will demonstrates that I have given you my love, if you obey my words. God owns no service but what flows from love, and the fruits of love, as the fruits of God, for God is love. Now I never heard any complaining of the conquest of love! Where love overcomes, the conquest is so lovely, that the overcomer admires, but never repines. And sure I am, that will in man which is overcome by God's love to deny itself, and only to own God for its director and commander, will be always admiring the power and the glory of that love, but never be found repining that it is captivated by the loving kindness of God; and this is the way of God's working upon the souls of his people; therefore let such as are under the darkness of the flesh, be silent and not say, that to have our wills melted into God's will, is a burdensome thing, and to be crossing and denying self and flesh, is to make the way to Heaven without joy on earth; for so saying, they only discover this, that they are in the flesh, and neither discern nor favor the things of God.

Thirdly, when God brings in the will of his people to his own will, there he changes the objects in the affections of such souls so that the will chooses God and his will as its center to rest in. That which the Apostle in the third of Colossians exhorts to, God by his Spirit works

in, and enables the soul to perform; as such as are risen with Christ, should seek those things that are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, that our affections should be there; because Christ that is our life is there. Now when God's Spirit comes, and processes any soul, it sets upon this work immediately, carries the soul upward above the world, shows it God and Christ; the love of God in Christ shows it it's glorious union with God and Christ here, and in glory to all eternity, darkens all the world by revealing but one glimpse of this more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and in changing the object, the affections soon alter. This more exceeding glory carries away the souls love from the world of perishing glory. When the prodigal but considered the fulness of bread in his father's house, he soon resolved to leave his empty trough of husks, and his swinish company; but surely, when he had been embraced in his father's arms, and tasted the love in his father's bosom, when he had possession of what he longed for, and was in the vision of his father's kindness and glory, he then quite forgot the swine, and the husks, his affections and wishes, did not then run to obtain enough of them, no, the object was changed, and the affections with it, and having been taken up into his Father's Glory; he does not choose to go back, and feed with swine any more. Now he chooses to center in God. Thus does God bring in all his prodigals, when they have tasted the world's perishing love, then by his Spirit he makes known his eternal love to them; when they have tried, trusted, and looked upon the world so long, till they find it empty, then he by his Spirit shows them his own fulness. When they have had the pleasure of sin for a season, and the bitterness of sin hath seized upon them with the visage of eternity, then God by the same Spirit makes known himself to be a God of Grace, that pardons freely, nothing to move him but his own love, and how great that love is, he makes manifest by a crucified JESUS, and now says the soul, I know where to center, where to sit down, and where to give up myself, even into the bosom of God's love. This is God's way of conquering the souls and wills of his people; he alters the object that alters the affections and centers

the will in God. The object is according to the eye, if the eye be flesh, it discerns no object but in the flesh; so if the eye be spiritual, it spiritualizes every object; the Spirit of God inquires for God in all it sees and where God is made the only object, there he is sure to gain the affections; for he has all love and loveliness in himself; and the affections being taken, the will goes where ever they go; he that lives in love, has his will in that he loves, not in himself; so the soul that has his affections drawn into God by his love made known unto it in the Spirit; has no will in itself but in God, in whom it lives by love. Thus God does sweetly gain and win unto himself the will of his people, by revealing the glory of his grace and love to them in the Spirit, till by that Spirit they make choice of God to give up their wills unto, and say as Christ their Head, "not my will but thy will be done."

Fourthly, God when he gathers in the will of his people to his own will, he gives in higher and fuller joys and contentments into their souls than ever they had at any time, or in all times and things before. The Prophet David in the fourth Psalm, gives in the light of these truths. Psalms 4:6. "There be many {says he} that say, who will show us any good." Now mark his answer in the same verse, "Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance unto us." And as he had said, do they inquire for any good? Lord do thou but smile upon us, look graciously on us, and there is all good in that. Nay in Psalms 4:7, he tells us his experience of it; thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn, and their wine increased. This speaks to the very thing; here is a time of more fuller joy and gladness in the heart of God's people, than under the enjoyments of the world; for I judge the terms of corn and wine comprehends the whole; but observe when is that time? Why, when the Lord lifts up the light of his countenance, when God by his Spirit makes known himself to be their Father in Christ, then is the soul filled with gladness. But in the last verse observe the effects of this upon David's soul, "I will lay me down in peace, for thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety," as if he had said, I will now resign them all up to thee, and take my peace in thee, and expect my safety from

thee, thou hast so filled my soul with thy joys, that I cannot leave thee, but leave myself with thee; continue but to lift up the light of thy countenance upon me, and then lead me where thou wilt, and do with me what thou wilt, for I will lay all down before thee, my will and my ways, thou shalt be my peace and my safety.

Observe the working of the Spirit of God in the Apostle Paul's spirit. When God had brought over Paul's will to his, to go upon hard and suffering work, such a work as he was told, he should meet with sufferings in Acts 21. When he would needs go to Jerusalem, Agabus the prophetess prophesies to him, that the Jews should bind him, and deliver him to the hands of the Gentiles. And in Acts 21:10-12, this people besought him not to go up to Jerusalem; but in Acts 21:13, he answers them, "what meant you to weep and break my heart; for I am not only ready to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." As if he had said, you only with a fleshly eye look at the difficulty of the work, you know not the inward supply of joy in Christ that I have do this and the whole will and work of God; do you think God is a hard task-master, to command brick and give no straw? Do you think the work God gives is more than the strength he gives? If so, you are mistaken, for I am supplied with joys and incomes of God, not only to go through binding work, but also dying work for Christ; I go in God's strength to do his work, in the light of his countenance, and the glory of his love; let me go whether he will, and into what work he pleases, my strength to perform all is derived from himself; therefore my will shall be his, his love is my life in his work, therefore I love only to live in doing his work, and whether his work for me be to live or die, God shall choose for me, and not I for myself, because he has given me the joys of his love, in which I am able not to be bound only, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus. So the same Apostle, II Corinthians 4:7 to the end, tells us of the troubles, persecutions, and afflictions that himself and the other disciples with him suffered daily, for owning and preaching Christ; yet in II Corinthians 4:16, "we faint not, but though the outward man perish, yet the inner man is

renewed day by day," for these are light afflictions, and but for a moment, but the Spirit of God through them carries up our spirits to live upon a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. As if he had said, in all this hard and suffering work for God, we have more incomes from the grace of God in Christ Jesus than we lay out, we have a full supply of joys, so that it is no hard thing to die day by day in the outward man; for the inward man is borne up by a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. So, in Romans 8, latter end, what shall separate us from the love of Christ; shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No says he, this cannot do it, for we suffer all this for the name of Christ; nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

If we consult with flesh and blood, this will be found very hard work for to give up our wills to God's willing; but when in the spirit we come as the Apostle, to understand the love of God and to live in it, to understand aright the tribulations of the world; we shall find that in God's love we are more than conquerors, we have more strength than work; we have love enough from God to overcome more tribulation than the world has; and not all these tribulations, distresses, persecutions, famines, nakedness, perils and swords, nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. So that God by his love gives into the souls of his people greater and fuller joys than they part with in the world, when they are enabled to give up their wills to this will.

In Philippians 3, the Apostle tells us what value and esteem he put upon all his external endowments and enjoyment; for after God had made known his love to him in Christ, he tells us, he had as much in the flesh to glory in as any other, and shows in what. Circumcised the eighth day, and so forward, &c., but in Philippians 3:7, "what I counted gain, I now count loss for Christ; yet doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for

whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him." Observe it, and we shall find this clearly in the text; that an enjoyment of Christ makes a low esteem of all things below Christ; all his legal righteousness he counts it dung, and desires never to be found in it, but forever to be found in Christ. It proves the thing in hand, that when God makes known himself to a soul in Christ, and by that brings over its will to his own will; and that God does not bereave the soul of joys and contentment, but gives in more in given himself, that he takes the soul from in taking it out of the world and itself; and this we see the saints acknowledge. As Paul here, after he had known Christ, all but Christ was dross and dung with him. When God gives to his people, he gives to them as he requires of them; he gives in the Spirit. Galatians 5:22. The fruits of the Spirit is love and joy. The Spirit reveals the love of God to his people, and seals them up to that love, and this makes joy in God; so that all his ways are pleasant, and his paths sweet to such souls. It is not killing work to the soul, when God comes to win over the will to himself. Doubtless Abraham had more joys in God than in his father's house, otherwise he would never have left his father's house to have followed God, nor have given up his will to the will of God, that he might lead him where he pleased; nor would he have slain his son Isaac, the son of his love at God's command, if he had not lived in a higher region, the bosom of God's love. And if God's love had not been in his bosom, if he had not found more joy and love in God than in Isaac, he would never have slain Isaac to have pleased God. No man will crucify his highest joy; therefore it is till Christ come into a soul the world is never crucified, because till then the world is the chief and highest joy the soul has; so that if Abraham had not had a higher joy than Isaac, he could never have been willing to offer up his will in his son Isaac to the will of God. It is the union of better and higher joys, that makes a soul forsakes its lower joys, and give up itself and its will to God.

The three children's choice in choosing Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, rather than to worship

his golden image, speaks the truth of this thing; for if they had not had a better life in God than in the world, they would not have chosen God rather than the world; nay they had so much joy and life in God that they believed the flames of fire could not destroy it, therefore they were not careful to answer the King. All their care was to keep close to God, in whom doubtless they had a more exceeding and eternal weight of joy and glory, otherwise they could never have given up their wills to the will of God in the flames of a fiery furnace. So likewise, Paul and Silas, after they had endured many stripes, and were cast into prison, and their feet fast in the stocks, Acts 16:23-25, yet for all this, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto the Lord. What does this speak, but that the joys of Christ in the souls of his people do exceed all their sufferings, and that though God in conforming the will of his people to his own will, does bring them into sufferings, yet he gives greater incomes of his love by his Spirit, than the affliction needs, that they are not only able to bear them all, but to joy in Christ, though under manifold tribulations. This is to be more than conquerors!

This is the way that our Saviour took with his disciples, when he was to leave them, so that they could have no more of his fleshly presence, his design was to comfort them, and give in that which might bear up their spirits. Therefore John 14:1, "let not your hearts be troubled," but believe in God through me, behold the love of God in sending me, and your interest in that love; then consider that in my Father's house are many mansions; fulness of glory enough for all Saints. And my going from you is but to prepare a place, to take possession for you as your Head; and I will come again and receive you to myself, for Heaven can never part me and my members. And I will pray the Father that in my absence he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, which shall dwell with you and abide with you, and teach you all things; and if in that spirit you ask anything in my name I will do it, I will effect it for you. And in John 15:9, "as the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, continue in my love." And in John 17, Christ prays for his disciples and all his members, telling his Father, "all mine are

thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them." And therefore after he had prayed God to keep them in the world, and from the evil of the world; in John 15:24 he prays that they may be with him in glory, "Father I will, that all whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me," so that he gives in the spiritual joys and comforts to support and carry them through the fears they were under, and the tribulations they should find in the world. He gives in the joys of Heaven to carry them through the sorrows on earth, and the joys exceed the sorrows, as Heaven does Earth. If God deal thus with his people, that when he leads them into suffering and difficult work, yet then they have a greater income of strength than service, of joy than sorrow, of rest in God, than trouble from the world; then surely this way of God's working the will of his people over to his will, is not a hard, but a pleasing work, and all these Scriptures makes this good; that God when he brings over the will of his people to his own will, does not make them comfortless, joyless people, but gives in heights and fuller joys and contentments into the soul, so that the soul makes choice of God, to delight itself in, and give itself up to this resignation, "nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

Fifthly, and lastly, when God brings over his people's will to his own, he convinces them, and makes them to believe, that their own present, future and eternal good is bound up in this will, so that as God works his will upon his people, it is not so hard a work as the world thinks, for saints to surrender up their will unto the will of God. God dealt thus by Noah, it was his will that Noah should build an ark, to save himself and his family from perishing with the old world. God convinces him, and makes him to believe, that the present and future good of himself and family was in the thing, and immediately Noah's will was as God's will, for he being warned of God by faith {says the text} he built an ark. Hebrews 11:7. So Peter, though at first he denied our Saviour to wash his feet; yet when Christ told him, that if he washed him not he had no part in him; nay then says he, not only my

feet, but also my hands and my head. John 13:8-9. This fully proves the thing in hand, Peter's will opposed Christ's; now our Saviour to bring over Peter's will to himself, takes this course, shows him and convinces him, that his own good was in submitting to his will.

The Apostle no sooner believes this, but our Saviour has his end; nay then exclaims, "Lord not my will, but thy will be done; not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." The Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:12-13 tells us, he knew both how to be abased, and how to abound, to be full, and suffer hunger, to abound, and suffer need. I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me. That is, he could in all conditions give up his will to God; not dispute with any of God's will, but submit to all. And methinks the same Apostle in Romans 8:28 gives us the ground of this sweet and heavenly frame of spirit in him; for {says he} we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. That is, the good of God's elect in all the will of God; God wills nothing, but what shall work together for this good; so that my soul believing of this, I can give up my whole will to God. I know whatever he does my good is in it, therefore whether God in this life make me to want or abound, I am content in both, and choose his will for my will, because I am convinced, and do verily believe that my good is in it; I have this faith in Christ, that my good is in all God does, therefore I can submit to God's will, and do all things through Christ that strengthens me. Thus God in Christ enables his people to give up their wills to him by convincing them and making them believe that their own good is in his will; so that gather up all these together, and it will plainly appear, that it is ignorance of God and his ways in any soul that shall make this objection, that God's ways upon the souls of his people are hard and burdensome ways, such as if a man once centers into and gives up his will to God's will, then he must be ever crossing and denying himself, making the way to Heaven without any pleasure or joy on earth.

This is false; for, first, God gives what he commands, then his commands cannot be hard.

Secondly, he leads his children, he does not drive them, he wins and overcomes them by his love, he does not force them. Thirdly, he changes the objects and affections of the soul, and so overcomes the will. Fourthly, he gives in higher and fuller joys and contentments into the souls of his people when he melts them into his own will than they had at any time, or at all times before. And lastly, God convinces and makes the souls of his people to believe that their good is bound up in his will. This way of working must needs convince, that the work, the way, and the end of God is sweet, safe, and pleasant to the souls of his people when he brings them to this frame of spirit to say in sincerity, "not my will, but thy will be done, O Father."

Doubtless it will be worthy of our pains to consider the benefits that do accrue the souls of God's people in having their wills involved into the will of the holy God. First, this giving up our wills to the will of God, it lifts up and magnifies the glory of God in his love, power and wisdom, upon our own souls, and in the world. By this Saints declare to all the world, that they have found more sweetness in God's love than in theirs, because they have given themselves from the world, to be ruled by, and satisfied with his love.

Abraham did this in an imminent manner, when he left his Father's house to follow the will and command of God. It speaks plainly this, there is the most love in God, therefore the soul loves always to be with God, and to that end has given itself wholly up to God, and that it rests upon the power of God to defend it, and therefore gives up himself and his will to God's work, and leaves his protection in all his work to God's power; sure Abraham did so, for the text tells us, he knew not the place to which he went; then he could not know the dangers he should meet withal; but he knew whom he had trusted, and under what protection he was, namely the power of the Almighty God, to whom he had committed his own will and way. This also does much manifest the glory and wisdom of God, when his people give up their wills to his, what is it but a declaring, "Lord, we are folly, but thou art wisdom, swallow us up into thyself, that we may be wise

in thy wisdom, let our foolish wills appear no more, but thy will and thy will be done." Let Christ be our wisdom, lift up thyself in this, the soul gives itself to God, because it would appear no more in itself but in God. As Paul, not in his own righteousness, which is of the Law, but in Christ the righteousness of God. Now does not this plainly appear that the soul judges God's love better than all other love? His power above all other power, and God's wisdom to exceed all his own, and the wisdom of the world, else why does the soul in its will give up itself to the will of God. So the Apostle Paul, I through Christ can do all things. He would not so much as mention himself; I have given myself up to Christ {says he} and what is done Christ does it in me, I have found his love, his power, and his wisdom better than my own, or any besides; therefore I have given myself up to him, and I act in him.

How exceedingly does this frame of spirit declare the glory of God, and that this frame of will to God's will was in the disciples. Luke 5:5. When Christ bid them cast their net into the sea again, they told him they had toiled all night and caught nothing; yet nevertheless at thy word we will let down the net. How does this manifest their love to Christ in obeying him contrary to all their reason and experience of that night's labour; also it magnifies the power of Christ, as if they had said, we will cast it in at thy command, for thou has power to make our labour successful; and so it doth set forth the wisdom of Christ, thou art wiser than all we, therefore we will obey, not dispute thy commandments; mark that clause {yet nevertheless} at thy word we will let down the net. As if they had said, should we own our wills to be our own, we should find arguments enough in our flesh to dispute thy commands. Yet nevertheless, that there be so many fleshly arguments against thy command, yet our wills being thine we readily obey; this nevertheless gives the more glory to the love, power, and wisdom of God.

A second benefit of the will of man given up to the will of God, is this, that it takes the soul off from vain and needless pursuits and inquiries, and wholly puts it upon seeking after the will of God. When the soul is brought to

this, to seek and to have all its light, life, and strength from Christ, it then seeks nowhere else; so when it has given itself up wholly to be acted and disposed of by Spirit of the Lord, then it looks for nothing but God to manifest his will in what the soul or body should do or suffer. This single object is a mighty advantage to a believing soul. How miserably are such poor hearts puzzled, which have more than this single object to look to for rules to act by, such as when God by his providence brings them to a trial, that they must act or declare for or against him, own him or deny him before men, then they have strugglings within themselves. First, to know {after the manner of men} which is the strongest side; and if they find that, yet they fear lest it should not continue; so they would seemingly own God, but yet dare not let go the arm of flesh; they know not how to trust God's power and wisdom above the power and wisdom of the world, and this makes them say one thing one day, and another the next; this uncertainty and perplexity in men's spirits, arises from hence, that Christ is not their single object, they would do that which cannot be, serve God and Mammon too, they are ambitious, and would be always uppermost, therefore they keep their wills in their own hands, that they may as they think be able always to gratify the strongest party. But this makes miserable work in the soul, and altogether unfixes the motions. You shall never tell where to have that man, that cannot tell where to be himself; he must turn with the wind, and unless you can tell where and when the wind will change, you shall never know how or where to find him. This is misery enough for any man, and it is great pity that any such man, or men, should have power to make the more miserable than themselves; but the mercy of this man sets forth the beauty and the benefit of that will which is wholly given up to God, and to whom Christ is the single object it looks after. When God brings forth the soul to discover itself to the world, it goes directly to the Lord and begs of him to discover and manifest his will concerning its motion; for, says he, "Lord thou knows I have no will of my own, my will is in thee, thou must discover thy will, before I can know or do my duty." Now

when the soul is fixed upon this single object, it is free from all those poor and low distracting considerations; and though he be made to wait a while to know God's way, yet he waits patiently, because he knows he has pitched upon an object that cannot deceive him, and upon a faithful God that will make known himself to him, so that both in waiting and working, has a settledness in it. Where Christ is the single object of any soul, and then is so when the will of man is brought over to his will, it has then nothing to inquire after but the will of God, and whatever soul has that singly in his eyes shall never want a clear object, for God will never hide himself from that heart which he inclines to inquire after him, much less to such a soul as has resigned itself wholly up to the Lord, to see with his eyes, to hear with his ears, and to work with his hands, to know nor do nothing but God's will in his spirit. God can never leave that soul to itself, which has given itself up to Christ. And this is the language of such a soul, when as duty, worship, and service is required of it, show me the will and command of my God in what you require, and I will soon obey, otherwise I must deny what you require, until I see it to be the will of my God, for there is my will bound up; and truly where God appears not, I must deny myself to you and all the flesh; for I am not my own but belong to Christ, I Cor.6:20, and cannot act but by the command and in the strength of my God, it is not my will nor your will, but God's will that my spirit can yield obedience to, for Christ is my single object upon whom I look, and from whom only I receive light in what I should do, and strength to act according to that light. This is a great and glorious benefit which comes in to that soul whose will is given up to the will of God, it inquires for God, and pursues after the knowledge of his will in all things; for this is the breathings of his spirit to God, "not my will but thy will be done."

A third benefit of our wills given up to God's will, is this, it carries the soul resolvedly and steadily to its duty and leaves the issue and success to God. If God make known his will to the soul, it does not protract its obedience till God has made known unto him in particular

what shall be the issue of that which he requires, but makes this conclusion. The duty is mine, now God has declared himself in it, and the success belongs to him, it is in a safe hand, and I know in the general it shall be good, because it is in God, and comes from God; but let God take his own time to declare that, he has at present made known his will concerning my work, my inquiry is now at an end, and I will obey. Queen Esther is an imminent example in this, when as God by Mordecai had shown his wills and her duty in that great and weighty business of her interceding with King Ahasuerus for altering of his decree that was to take away the life of Mordecai, and all the Jewish nation, though in the performance of this work she must go into the King without his sending for her, which was not according to the law, and in which she hazarded the loss of her life as well as her petition; yet duty being made known, she resolves to obey, though ignorant of the success, she takes up the duty with these words in her mouth, "if I perish I perish." This is a resolved duty that comes from a steady soul which has given itself up to the Lord, as if she had said, if the issue be to perish, I shall willingly take up that when God declares himself in it; but at the present God has declared his will that I should go, and that will of God I shall obey though I perish. She does not stay to know the issue before she goes, whether perish or not perish, but she obeys the command, and leaves it to the Lord in his own time to make known his will in the success as well as the work, whether it be perishing or not. It was a precious spirit, yea it was the Spirit of God in her, and it is the same spirit that brings over the will of saints to the will of God and makes them to be steady and resolved in their duty. It was thus with Paul, he could not forbear his going to Jerusalem, though his friends begged him with tears, and he knew bonds should take hold on him there, nevertheless God had declared his will for him to go, and go he must, his will was as God's will, and that manifested his obedience as steady and resolved. So it is reported of Luther that he should say, he would go and preach the Gospel though he met with as many devils as tiles on his own house. Difficulties cannot hinder duties in

such a soul as has given itself and its will up to the Lord, when God does but declare his will; for that is all which souls look after, and when God has declared that, the soul takes it up resolutely to obey it, and casts itself and all its works and ways upon God, that he would own him and his work, so as to carry the soul through it, according to the glory of his mighty power, whereby is able to work all things to himself, and leaves the issue in God's hand to the same end, the glory of his name, saying to God, "not my will but thy will be done."

A fourth benefit of our wills being surrendered up to the will of God, is this, it sanctifies and beautifies the life and conversation of saints with the image and presence of God. If the will of God be that fountain which giveth life to all our motion, then surely that motion will be the life of the law of the Spirit in Christ Jesus. That soul which will take up no practice upon trust, but does try all, and make God's will the touchstone to try them, shall be sure never to be deceived with copper instead of gold; that soul which will embrace nothing but what God shall first approve of, is in a sure way of keeping itself pure and undefiled. Now this is the frame of spirit which is in such souls as have given up their wills to God's will; for their wills being in God, they will be sure to see his will in all which they do, they can take up no practice but what they have his precept for, and they will give you this for an unanswerable reason, that they have no will but what is in God, therefore can take up, nor obey any work, nor will, but what is the work and will of God. And such as walk by this rule, says the Apostle, peace be to them and to the Israel of God. God is such a rule as can produce no other end, and whatever soul takes its work only from God's will, must needs be doing the will of God, which is in a few words, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, because what that soul receives is from a righteous God. That soul which has all from God, is always with God, and the presence of God changes souls into his own image, and that soul which has its will in God, must needs have God in his will and work, which will certainly make a holy will and a holy work, because both are made by a Holy God. The new

creature is the most glorious being on earth, for it is God in the creature; now this is the will of man swallowed up in the will of God, put forth in the soul and life of man; and this is the soul that speaks to God truly in the spirit, "not my will but thy will be done."

Fifthly and lastly, when our wills are melted and molded into the will of God, it puts the soul and spirit into a quiet, peaceful, restful, and serene condition, and it must needs be so upon this consideration. For what can make it otherwise, when all things work according to the desires of that soul; everything distinct, and all things together, perfects the end, that this soul drives at, and the soul knows it, therefore must needs be at rest. The property of this soul is that it has its will in God, and desires the fulfilling and accomplishment of no other will but the will of God. Now tell me, what can disturb the peace of this soul? Nothing but what is able to frustrate God of his will, and that can be no created being, because God that made it, can when he pleases, make it return to its first nothing. That soul has its peace above disturbance, which has in it the fulfilling of the will of God; for all the workings in Heaven and Earth do but fulfill the will of God, and make up the peace and rest of that soul which is bound up in the will of God. And upon this consideration our Saviour tells his people, that their joy shall no man take from them because their joy and rest is in God, above the reach of man or men; and this is the main reason of that vast difference that is in the spirits that live in him, and the men of the world that live in the world, in regard to the rest and peace that is in the bosoms of the one, and the perplexing distractions that are in the hearts of the other. Says the soul that has given up his will to God, I am at rest, for I know in all the workings in the world, he is perfecting his own will, and setting up his own glory; and his will is my will, if God's will be done, I have all done that my soul desires, therefore nothing can disturb my rest. Now ask the worldling how it is with him in point of rest? Oh, {says he,} never worse, the world is so unquiet, so full of trouble, hazards, and change, that a man cannot tell where he is safe, nor when he is well, nor do we know

when it will be better, when some hopes of rest appear, then new troubles nip that in the bud, so that I am hopeless of any rest in the world. This is very true, says the gracious soul, for the earth that must be shaken, and is ever shaking, was never made for a place of rest; but did you enjoy God, and live in the fulness of that love which souls live in that have abandoned their own wills, and given themselves up to Christ, your mournings would be turned into joys, and your sad complainings into admirings of the power and wisdom of God, that makes all things, perfects his ends, and lifts up his glory. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom.11:33. Truly, says the soul, I remember the time when it was with me as with David, my heart repined to see the wicked fat and flourish; but since my will has been molded into the will of God, I can repine at nothing, because now I know all things shall fulfill the will of God.

I have known the time when my spirit has been disturbed if God should seem to set me aside, and use others in my place to do his work; but truly no such thing disturbs me now, my will is in God's hand entirely, for it is the will and work of God to be done, that I now mind; not the instrument that does it; nay, God's will in altering of his instruments, satisfies me as much as any other part of his will, for it is the doing of his will that I rest in, and this makes me always at rest, because God is always accomplishing his own will; and therefore, says the Psalmist, in Psalms 46, "I will not fear nor be disquieted, though the earth be removed, and the mountains carried into the midst of the Sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, and though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." No, why not? What is the reason of it? Why the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. This is the reason, he lived in the power, love, and faithfulness of God, and so could not be moved; that which could move the earth, and carry away the mountains, the great men and powers of it, but not disquiet him, because these could not remove him from his God. Our Saviour intimates thus much unto his

disciples, John 14:1, "let not your hearts be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me." Believe in God, live in God, and rest on God through me, and your hearts will be at rest. When the will of man centers in the will of God, the peace of God centers in the bosom of that man; when God makes any soul to sit down in his will, he does also make that soul to be at rest in his will, and his love, till he take it up for ever into the fulness of his glory.

This is an unparalleled benefit which the soul enjoys that has given up his will to the will of God. We have an example of this in David, II Samuel 12:16, while the child was sick, he besought the Lord for it; but when he knew the child was dead, he arose from the earth, washed and anointed himself, worshipped God, and went to his own house, ate bread, and refreshed himself. II Samuel 12:19,20. And in II Samuel 12:22,23, he tells us the reason of it. While the child was living, he besought God for it, he could not tell but it might be his will that the child should live; but when God had declared his will in the death of his child, that satisfied David, so that we can see clearly, it was the will of God he looked after, and that being revealed, the heart is at rest; and it's only a heart that is thus bound up in God and his will, that can be at rest. God's will is either the rest or the trouble of every soul; where it is the rest, that soul must needs be at rest, because his will shall always be done; but where it is the trouble, that soul must ever be in trouble, because his will is ever fulfilling. Now it cannot but be the rest of that soul which has its will in God, and the disquietedness of such wills, as are out of, and contrary to God. That soul must needs be at rest, which hath his will in God's, because let God strip it of what he pleases, yet it finds more in God than it can lose for God, more love, more life, more joy, more riches, more honours, and more pleasures. Then it must need follow, more peace and quiet in such spirits. The only way to be at peace and quiet, is to be out of ourselves, and of the world in our wills, and in God. This soul gains its will by losing of it, he has what he desires, that in all times and things God's will must be done on earth as it is in heaven.

But if our hearts should ask this question, if there be such great benefits that do accrue to the souls of God's people, and having their wills molded into the will of the Holy God; then what hinders that this work is not wrought upon the will of every man? To this I answer, there be three things especially which hinder. 1. Ignorance of God. 2. Unbelief. 3. Love of the world.

First, it is ignorance of God, of his love, and the working of his love, that makes the soul long to give up itself and his will to God, and this appears clearly in what has gone before. The blind man cannot judge of colors, as he that knows not an excellency, can never close with it; it is all one to a swine whether he tramples upon pearls or pebble-stones, he cannot distinguish. There is not a greater evidence of ignorance, than in such a question as was put to the spouse, what is there in thy beloved more than any other beloved? It is a sign they were ignorant of her beloved, that should make question what was in him more than in others. Had they known him as she did, they would have considered how he had been the fairest among ten thousands, and admired his excellency, not compared it by a question to poor low empty things. Now from this ignorance it arises that men keep their wills to themselves, and do not surrender them up to God, because they know not God, nor what gainers they shall be in so doing.

Secondly, unbelief, and this is the grand cause; for though men may have a fleshly knowledge of God and Christ, yet if they know not God and Christ in spirit, and in truth, there will be no trusting in them, nor believing on them; and there can never be a resigning the will over to God. All the eminent examples which we have in Scripture of this giving up the will to God's will, we shall find it in the fruits of faith, Hebrews 11:7, by faith Noah obeyed the will of God and built an ark. Hebrews 11:8,9, and so by faith Abraham gave his will up to God, in leaving the place he was in, to go to a strange country which he did not know, and sojourned in the land of promise as a stranger. And in Hebrews 11:17, when God tried Abraham in that superlative straight to the flesh, whether he had given up his will to God's will in commanding him to offer

up his son Isaac, the text says, by faith he did it; he had by faith resigned up his own will to God's, and did believe God's will better for him than his own, so by faith he obeyed. It was by faith that the parents of Moses hid him three months, Heb.11:23, that their will was God's will comes from faith. So by faith Moses when he came to years, obeyed God's will, and left Pharaoh's court. And by faith the children of Israel gave up their wills to God, and followed his will through the Red Sea and the long wilderness into Canaan. Thus it is belief in God that centers the will in God, and so consequently unbelief that keeps off the will from centering in God.

Thirdly and lastly, inordinate love to the world keeps off the will of man from closing with Christ; they are afraid to lose something of the world, if they give up their wills to Christ. This made the Gadarenes to desire Christ to depart out of their coast, Mark 5:17, because in the fulfilling of his will, when as he cast the legions of devils out of the man, and suffered them to go into the swine, so that the swine ran into the Sea and were drowned; they desired no more of his will to be done, if it took away their swine. This worlds love is swinish love, it loves not that God's will should be done, if in the fulfilling of it there be but a cropping of any creature bud. This love puts a great value upon the things and esteem of the world and therefore refuses to give up its will to God, because he sees that the will of God commands the offering up of an Isaac, and he not being acquainted with the spiritual incomings and communications of Christ to his soul, nor believing the love and faithfulness of God, refuses to resign up his will to God, but as the unjust steward would make friends of the unrighteous mammon, gives up his will to the possessing and esteem of an angry world, values them more than God, loves them better than God, and therefore give up their will to the world and not to God, reading this lesson backward, and say to God, not thy will, but our will be done.

This truth is full of beauty in its information, and in the application of it, and the soul closing with it, makes for a truly humbled and compliant believer, a beatified Christian indeed! First, it informs us whence all trouble

and rest both within us and without us do arise; and that is clearly in this from our wills out of God, and our wills in God; that will which is not in God, is in opposition to God, and so is God to it. Now hence it is that all troubles arise both within and without the soul, because the Lord is always fulfilling his own will; and this is a continual crossing such a will as is out of God. That will that lives in itself is tortured every moment of self-disappointment, which does follow it all its days, and in all its designs, because it wills and designs contrary to God. Disappointments are dreadful things to such a man as wills for himself, and lives in his will, his will being disappointed, in which his life was bound up, the man must needs be a lifeless miserable man. This was the ground of Pharaoh's troubles about the children of Israel, his will was in opposition to God's will, in their going to worship God in the wilderness. God in every act of his providence was fulfilling his will, and this ate up the very bowels of Pharaoh; and this is the very curse that makes those tyrants over the consciences of God's people in these days so restless, because in opposition to them God is fulfilling his own will; he will have his people free from their wills to worship him in his Spirit; and though they pursue with all their might to hinder this will of God in his saints, yet they imagine but a vain thing, and shall compass nothing in the conclusion but their own ruin. God may suffer them so far to have their own wills, as to drive saints to the Red Sea; but all that shall fulfill God's will, not their will; for then will God bring their greatest disappointment, and certain ruin.

This was also proud Haman's case, his will was to destroy the whole nation of the Jews, as we may see in Esther 3. But this was not God's will, Haman designs according to his will; but it being without God, observe the fulness of his disappointment, and the justice of God returning into his own bosom. In Esther 6, Esther 7, and verse 10 of chapter 6, the king asked Haman what should be done to the man the king would honour? Doubtless Haman thought the king meant himself, and therefore makes him this answer in verse 8, "let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse

that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head; and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour." It appears clear by this council that self was in his heart, but observe in verse 10, the miserable disappointment of this proud selfish man. "Then the king said to Haman, make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate; let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken." Est.6:8-10.

First, Haman is disappointed in that he is not the man. Secondly, to aggravate his misery, Mordecai whom he hated is the man, {for whom he had been inventing death and dishonour,} God makes him the instrument to invent honours, and to complete this miserable disappointment. Haman himself must be the King's servant to honour Mordecai whom he hated, we see by Haman's answers to the king, what proud and selfish men seek after; but their wills being out of God, the higher they climb, the lower they fall, and the greater their expectations be, the fuller of misery is their disappointment; yet the justice of God left not this proud cruel wretch, but brought him to be hanged up on the gallows of 50 cubits high, which he had in his will appointed for Mordecai. This is the fruit of having our wills out of God's will. So Jonah, his will was that the gourds should continue; but that was not God's will, therefore die it must. Now how does this disquiet the man, even so much that he seems to justify his anger; there was no cause of his discontent, but that his will was not in God's will.

Secondly, this doth inform us whence this rest and quiet that is in the bosoms of God's people doth arise; namely in this, that their wills are in God's will. Therefore when God declares his will under any dispensation in the world, they are at rest; for the appearance of his will makes their rest; all things besides this brings

disappointments upon the spirit; but when the will of God appears it silences all dispute, and quiets all thoughts in the heart of him that has given up his will to God's will. This soul does not quarrel with, but kisses the feet of Christ, when the will of God lays it there. Even on a sick bed, his spirit is at rest, because of that peace of God, {in all his appointments,} which permeates his mind. Disappointments in the outward man do not excite such a man to disturbance, because the will of God is in them, and that is his rest. He is best at rest in that wherein he sees most of God's will discovered to him, whatever it be in its own nature; this soul can say with David, when God's will appears in it; it is good for me I have been afflicted, and makes this the discovery of the good and evil of all he meddles with; namely, the will of God. If God's will appear in it, he acknowledges it to be good; but if he see not that, he cannot own it as his good, or anything for him to rest in; for he rests wholly in Christ, and it is nothing but the appearance of God's will that makes his spirit at rest under every dispensation of God, and from thence this soul has a quiet being.

But again, this truth does inform us as saints of our duty, to inquire after God's will in all that we do, or require others to do. The will of Christ was, that the will of God should be done; so is the will of saints in conformity to the will of Christ their Head; and if to be done, then surely to be known; nay, saints ought to do nothing before they know the will of God in it. If this rule were observed, there would not be so much doing and undoing as this uncertain age affords. If God led men into what they do, he would so own them that they should not be ashamed of it; this is the true reason why men do and undo, because in what they do they seek their own wills, not God's will; but he that has given up his will to God's will, before he works he will see God's will. This is the true reason why the men of this world with all their power and policy cannot make saints worship as they do {to the unknown god} or at leastwise in such a manner as they know not, whether it be the will of God or no. I say this is the reason, because they are bound up in the will of God, so that they cannot worship any unknown God, nor the

God they know in any manner, but what he makes known to them, to be his will that they should worship him in. "For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order." I Chron.15:13. If men be truly zealous for the worship of God, it can go no farther than this, that such as know him and his will, should worship him according to his will made known to them; for anything else cannot be the true worship of the true God. Now such as know God and his will in truth, the spirit of truth, they are a willing people, to worship God according to his will made known to them by his Spirit, in which they worship him. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24. If this were seriously considered in the Spirit of God, it would appear to be the beauty of saints not to act before light, to know God's will, and so to do it, therefore saints should be reaching one another in the spirit, but not to force anywhere the Spirit hath not taught. Then there is no need of forcing, for the Spirit of God that teaches, does also lead his people into obeying of his truths and will. The saints in truth speak thus in the spirit of truth to God, "not my will, not the will of any man or men, but thy will be done. Therefore, Lord show me thy will, and it suffices." He that rules should inquire after the will of God to rule by; and he that is ruled, for the will of God to be the rule of his obedience. Oh, that our rulers did inquire after, and find out this rule to rule by; then would righteousness flourish in the land as a green bay tree, and the branches of it would cover the land, with that much desired peace. It is the want of this which makes the want of peace. Did Governors and governed seek God's will and not their own, both they and the land would soon be at peace in the righteous will of God. If men did truly inquire after God's will, that they might lose their own wills in his, the contending for our own wills would be at an end, true rest and peace would come into our souls and this nation; for this is the only true rest to rest in God and his will.

But then how excellent is this in that soul, which does in the Spirit of God truly apply it, and close with it, that has indeed its will only in the will of God, and desires

nothing to be done for it but the will of God, nor in it, but God's will, nor to it but God's will, that desires to think, speak, nor do nothing but God's will. That has but this one single object to look after, the will of God, and finding that, has found its joy, hope, peace, riches, glory, aims and ends, with all the good which can be named, so that the soul can joy in the Lord always, have this hope always lively, his peace continually within him, his riches constantly by him, his glory certain, because above himself in the will of his God, and his aims and ends certainly accomplished, because he has all these in God, his will being only in the will of God. The workings of God in the world, which perplexes other men, satisfies this man, because the will of God is done in them, and by them. This is indeed the very top branch of Christianity; this was Christ's lesson when he was going out of the world, and that soul which learns this lesson is going with Christ out of the world, I mean not bodily, but spiritually; not the flesh dying in the world, but his spirit dead to the world; as Paul crucified to the world, and the world to him, both agreed. Paul had as little spirit for the world as the world had satisfaction for his spirit; his spirit was bound up in God, and that must needs make an excellent soul, which has its all in God, and from God; its will so in God, that it can will nothing to be done, but the will of God, "not my will, but thy will be done."

Chapter 12.

No man exceeds another in excellency,
but by received mercies.

"For who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive; now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" I Cor.4:7.

This Scripture is to my understanding, one of the most humbling pieces to the flesh, and fleshly pride of all men and women, that the whole Book of God affords. Humility is the general scope of the Apostle in it, and he has very fitly suited his arguments to this; the Apostle both argues and proves his argument in this Scripture by way of question. This Scripture may fitly be called a pair of questions, or a two-fold question, and it speaks most properly to a pair of grand lusts and sins, that are in the hearts of all men and women by nature; namely, pride and peevish repining. Now to the finding out, and answering of these two in the Apostle language, I shall bend my meditations.

And first the proud heart. Now if you ask me a definition of a proud heart, I shall first answer in general; the tree is known by the fruit, and the fruits are so many that they cannot be gathered all into so narrow a compass, but so far as God does enable me, I shall give light into it by these words following; namely, a proud heart is a heart lifted up in itself, despising all that are below it, and envying all that are above it.

Pharaoh is a full testimony of this truth, Exodus 5:2, when Moses and Abram went in and told Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let my people go, that they may hold a feast with me in the wilderness; mark his answer, and Pharaoh said, "who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" As if he had said, do you tell me of the Lord, is there any above me that should require this people out of my hands?

Here is an exact emblem of a man lifted up in himself, and despising of all below him and above him too; but when God by his judgments had forced him to let these people go, in which God and his people were above Pharaoh, see then how full of envy this proud man is to God and his people, that he musters up all his strength to hinder God in his design, and to destroy his people; so that Pharaoh is a full proof to all these particulars of a proud heart. That poor wretch Herod was also lifted up in himself, who when he had made his oration, and the people cried out, the voice of God and not of man, he took it to himself, for that was his end to lift up himself. This is the foundation principally of all proud hearts.

So Nebuchadnezzar, in Daniel 3:14, when he had threatened Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, what he would do to them, if they should not at his command fall down and worship the golden image which he had set up, that he would cast them into the fiery furnace, and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands. This is indeed superlative pride, the man in his own thoughts had set up himself above God. So he that built Babel tells us his design, that he might say in the conclusion, is not this great Babel that I have built? His proud heart was lifted up in himself, and that made his work suitable to his heart, to lift up his own name, so that he might call Babel which he had built.

These also are the proper characters of proud Haman, who was so lifted up in himself, that if poor Mordecai bow not his knee, the man is restless, despises him, plots his ruin, and with him all the Nation of the Jews, yea even Esther the Queen that was above him. The proud man to set up self, despises and envies all below him and above him, a proud heart is boundless in seeking to set up itself. So proud Goliath despises little David, though he be fit for nothing but to trample upon.

These proofs of Scripture, with the spiritual discoveries of this sin in ourselves and other hearts and lives, will be a testimony enough to prove the definition of a proud heart. That a proud heart is a heart lifted up in itself, despising all below it, and envying all above it.

It will well become humble saints to consider how fully the Holy Ghost by the apostle doth answer and silence this proud flesh and spirit in every part of it, and that by way of questions which can receive no answer but in the plucking up of pride by the roots. As if the apostle should say, you that are lifted up in yourselves, and make your boast of your own wisdom, riches, strength, power and greatness above others, come you forth and answer me this question, who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou which thou hast not received? Dost thou indeed call the wisdom, strength, power, and greatness that God hath bestowed on thee thy own? And, is thy business to lift up thy own name by these? This is thy mistake, thy pride is thy own indeed, thou mayest call thyself and the first Adam thy own original, for all sin and evil, but God is only the original of all good. Now if thou exceed theirs in evil, it will be no advantage to lift up thyself by, for the more sinful, the more miserable thou art, but if thou exceed others in good, as knowledge and the like, thou thinkest that thou hast in this a little reason to lift up thyself, for thou are not the original that thou dost glory in. It is what thou hast received that makes the two differ from another, wilt thou lift up thyself as if thou wert full, because God is full? I tell thee, oh proud man, thy difference is from donation, thou art more than another, because God gives thee more than another, not because thou art more in thyself, therefore show me a reason why thou art lifted up in thyself. Will thou be proud of thy sins, for thou hast nothing else of thy own? Nay, it is thy sin to be proud of anything thou hast received. Will thou lift up thyself in that which belongs to another? Rob God of his glory to cover thy own nakedness. Nay, wilt thou be so wicked as to make thyself as it were God? His wisdom thine, and thyself the original of his gifts? That forgettest and seemest to deny that thou hast received that which makes thee to differ, when as thou goest about to set up thyself.

Again, show me your reason why you despise all that are below thee, and envy such as are above thee; is the one too low, and the other too high? Why consider who it is that makes the difference in them, it is the same

powerful God that makes you to differ, by what ye have received more than those below you, and less than such as are above you. Now you can never despise the one, nor envy the other, but you do it to God in both; for the same wonder-working God which makes you to differ in excellency and glory from them, makes them also to differ from you in the same. What you have received, so have they; when you can make one of your hairs black or white, you may have some seeming good to lift up yourself, and expect other channels to run into you, but till then be silent; and if you cannot answer these questions, who maketh thee to differ from another? And what has thou that thou hast not received? Then for shame lay down thyself at the feet of that God from whom thou receivedst all that good and excellency which makes thee to differ from the lowest degree of sin and misery. This Scripture to a proud spirit, is like those words of our Saviour to him that came to the marriage feast without a wedding garment, "friend {saith Christ} how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" And the texts says that the man was speechless; so truly I believe will every proud spirit be, that God puts to answer these questions, have nothing to say, but lie silent under this conviction, that God is all good, and himself nothing but a spring of evil. From whence comes his pride, but in that he differs not from other flesh in a state of nature; and I wish it could be truly affirmed, that pride were not in any but such as are in their natural condition. But this I dare affirm, that so much pride which is in any man or woman, so much of the old Adam is still remaining in that soul; for pride is a fruit of the flesh, and which God hates, and sets himself against. I may say of pride it is the original of the devil, and there is no sin in the soul of man or woman which give the devil more service than this does.

We have in what has gone before some weak discoveries of the principles of it. If the Spirit of God be our light, it will not be lost time nor pains to look into the practices of those principles in these few following particulars.

At first, the proud man seeks to raise up himself, and not in all to lift up God higher than himself; his work

is all climbing work, he cannot endure to have any man above him, this is that he plots for and acts for; namely, to lift up his own name, and his own will. He is very industrious to build Babel, that he might say, this is great Babel that I have built, he seeks to be uppermost, that all law and rule may come from his lips; and if this be opposed, the man is abundantly enraged, as appears by Nebuchadnezzar, when his visage was changed by his wrath, and he commanded the fiery furnace to be heated seven times hotter than before, and that Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, should be cast into it, because they disobeyed his commands, and would not fall down to worship the image he had set up. This very thing is the practice of all proud hearts so far as they can reach. God chains up such spirits as he did Satan from Job; but this is properly their hearts, and so far as their chain will go, they practice. The proud man makes use of one step to advance him to another, but not in any to lift up Christ above himself, for that is a contradiction to the principles he acts by. Where Christ is lifted up, there the flesh is thrown down, but the proud man's glory is his flesh, not Christ, and that is really his business wherever he is, to lift up himself, and it is the disquietments of his soul when this design does not prosper; but let such spirits take the Apostle's questions to answer, who maketh thee to differ? And what hast thou that thou hast not received? Dost thou know thy original, and by what power thy progress hath been made from step to step? Hast thou mounted with thy own wings, and climbed up to what thou art with thy own hands? Or hast thou received that by which thou differest from another? Look upon dead bones, and tell me if they can live; if you say no, I say it is your ignorance, they can live by the same power you live, you that were dead clay, live by what you have received, so can these dead bones. Where the Spirit of God sets home these questions upon any soul, it will not only silence, but crucify this principle and practice of pride in it.

Secondly, a proud man's practice is to keep others under him, that he may keep up himself, to make the comforts of other men, the footstool of his pride, to trample others into nothing, that he might make himself

all. So did proud Haman in his heart and design against poor Mordecai, and the whole nation of the Jews. Pride is a lust that burns up others to maintain itself, and builds upon those ashes; it must either have the knee or the life of all that stand before it, and he that will not bow must break, when a proud man is supreme in power. For this is the improvement of his power, to keep others under that he may keep himself up. The proud man is so malicious, that he would have none happy but himself, and therefore makes the proprieties of other men a sacrifice to this his lust, and so pleases himself for a few moments, like those that have the crackling of thorns under a pot for their joy; but the Apostle's question, {who maketh thee to differ, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive,} will be as hard to the proud man in this practice, as in the former. For he that only differs by what he receives, will but ill justify his trampling upon another, that hath not received so much as himself. When God that gives the talents, makes inquiry after the improvement of them, and finds it to be only so, he will not give the testimony, nor the trust of "well done good and faithful servant" to such a soul. God makes it his glory to lift up his people, to make them heirs of himself, joint heirs with Christ in glory. Therefore the proud man that keeps others under, that he may keep up himself, has not his precept, principle, practice nor example from Christ, and therefore has no reason to expect, that in his way of pride God should either own him, or prosper him; but that Christ in lifting up of his own glory, should trample the proud man under his feet, as he does others for the keeping of himself.

Thirdly, a proud man scorns and slights such as are below him, because he is above them, he scorns and slights them in their counsels, in their kindnesses, and in their request. A proud man's scorn he which has less power and greatness than himself, should advise him, and from hence slights the counsel, and if the poor man serve the proud man with kindness, he takes it as duty, so slights the love, and scorns the man and his service. And if he make request to him, nay though it be for justice; if he do not admire him, he must keep off, and know his distance, and he shall be heard at leisure, he is not of

magnitude enough for his consideration, he is above low persons and things in his thoughts, he cannot look upon anything below him, with any other eye than an eye of scorn, as the proud Pharisee upon the poor publican. This practice in proud men and women, does better discover itself than any pen can do it; but to so much I shall also give the Apostle's two questions, "who maketh thee to differ? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" And when they shall be answered, I believe both the principle and this practice of pride will be rooted out of the heart, when the soul is made to confess that the Lord alone makes it to differ; and it has received all its excellencies from Christ, it will then scorn none below itself, but by such an object consider from what God has raised it, and admire that power and goodness which has bestowed excellences upon it, pitying not scorning any below itself.

Fourthly, a proud man when he has any power, will soon be imposing beyond the just limits of his power. A proud man is in nothing more discovered than by his impositions, it is the pride of his heart which puts his power upon imposing; else says that heart, my power will not be known. Now when pride sets power on work, it carries it quickly beyond its bounds; pride is a swelling lust, very hard to be bound; but where it is chief in the heart, and gives rule to the power which is in the hand, that hand and heart soon forgets its bounds. We have an example of this in the decrees of Darius the King, Daniel 6, his pride, though his power had no bounds because he was a king, therefore he makes a decree, according to the advice of his wicked council, which was suitable to his own proud heart, "that whosoever shall ask any petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of himself, should be cast into the lion's den." The ground of this decree was to make a snare for Daniel, whom they confess {in the 4th verse} to be faithful to the Kingdom, and that they had no hopes though they sought to destroy him, but they knew that he was as faithful to his God, as to the Kingdom, so that if a decree were made against his worshipping of God, that would reach him. I shall forbear to open this Scripture in this place, because it is not so

proper to the thing in hand, though I believe the doing of it would open the hearts and practices of many men in our days; but only make use of it thus far, to prove that pride in men of power makes them to impose beyond their power to set themselves above God, and make decrees against God. Instead of defending the praiseworthy, to make laws against that which is praiseworthy, because God has set or suffered them to be in the throne amongst men, they put forth their power into the throne of God; namely, the conscience of his people. That power which pride sets to work, sticks at no decrees; if men that would lay snares for the people of God to destroy them, come and desire this power to make laws and decrees how God's people shall worship him, or that they shall not worship him at all; these decrees shall soon have their hand and seal. The devil doth make power by pride, which is ready to oppose anything of God, and to impose anything upon the people of God, as it is the property of pride to seek the ruin of such as bear the image of the humble Redeemer. Now if nothing can be laid to their charge of unfaithfulness to the place or people where they live, then a decree concerning the worshiping of their God must be made to reach them, though such as make it, go beyond their power, that shall not be stuck at where pride guides the hand. Pride seeks power to make that it's servant; that which pride wills, the power it hath, shall work; power in the hand serves pride in the heart, and therefore keeps not within its bounds, because it is the servant of pride. But to this also the Apostle's questions are very proper, "who makes thee to differ? And what hast thou that thou hast not received?" Is thy power thy own, or must thou account for it? When the Lord calls his servants to give an account of their talents, dost thou differ in this that thou hast more power than others? Tell me, who made thee to differ? Is thy power originally in thyself, or didst thou receive it from God? Thou wilt not say thou art thy own original, because thy perishing condition will dispose thee. Now tell me how thou wilt answer the Lord in going beyond thy received power, especially when the same hand that gave thee power, gave thee also a rule to bound that power by, that thou

shouldest not be a terror to good works but to evil; therefore he that doth good, should not be afraid of the power. For the end of power is from God, to protect and defend those that do good, and walk praiseworthy. Now that proud heart which puts forth the power that is in its hands, beyond these bounds, will have a sad appearance before God at the day of account. His pride that over acts his power, will not then excuse him, but condemn him; and it will then be his chains of misery to consider how his pride has in his power out run the bounds that God has set him, and exceeded the latitude of that commission which he had received. But this is the effect of power when it is in the hands of a proud heart.

Fifthly, and lastly, a proud heart is proud of itself, of what it is, and what it has, of his gifts, ornaments and qualifications. You shall find some proud of beauty, that at most is but skin deep, and some so wicked as to paint their skins, to make a subject for their pride. Such as have their beauty by nature, without art, must know this, that they have received it, if in that they differ from others, and that one storm of sickness can blast it, which their flesh is capable of, and as subject to as any others, and that there is a certainty of time for pale and grim death to take up its habitation in those faces, so that they have little reason to be puffed up with perishing beauty, that which must as certainly fade as the flower in the field. You shall see another proud of his honourable titles as he calls them; and truly this is the emptiest of all bubbles, it is but a breath, it cost him but little that gives it, he will spend as much breath upon the lowliest subject that affords him matter of discourse, these titles are indeed the pleasing dreams of deluded fancies, if put in one equal balance, and held by a steady hand, "sir" will weigh as heavy as "your honour." But if honour be given where honour is due, according to God's rule in his Word, there honour is more than a title. But there it will be no subject of pride, but humility, for such as are honourable in spending, and being spent for the cause of God and Truth {and other true honour I know none} such as I say do well know they have received all from his fulness, which maketh them to differ from others, and therefore their

business is to lift up Christ, and not themselves, and if to glory, to glory in the original of their honour, which is Christ himself.

Another it may be, is proud of his wealth, which he has, as he thinks in his own hands, more glittering clay than his poor neighbors have, and therefore he thinks himself great, Lord of all, and to be feared and obeyed by all; he forgets that it is uncertain riches, which make themselves wings and fly away, he remembers not the case of Job, that was stripped of all his great possessions in a few moments. Sure I am, such as are proud upon this account, did never spiritually understand and consider the Apostle's questions in this Scripture, "who maketh thee to differ? And what hast thou that thou hast not received?"

Another man is proud of his wit, good language, learning, and good education. I confess these are very good when sanctified to such as attain them; but exceedingly abused when they are made the subjects of pride; thou canst not deny but these are received gifts and qualifications, where then is the ground for pride, why dost thou glory as if thou hast not received them? Thy wit thus abused, may justly be called home again, and thou left a fool for thy pains. He that is proud of his wit forfeits his wisdom, and is no better than a witty fool in the eye of a humble wise man, who justly accounts him a fool that is proud of his wit and parts, because he that is truly wise, is humbled by what he received, and not made proud by it. This route of pride has a numberless number of branches, but this one Scripture cuts them all off, and tells the proud man plainly. You have nothing to be proud of, whatever you have you received, and if you differ from others, it is because you have received more than they. It is reported of the Popish religion, that they hold ignorance to be the mother of devotion, and I may truly say, because I make it good, that ignorance is the mother of pride. For whosoever is proud must needs be ignorant! That what they have is all freely bestowed and received. Were this truth spiritually understood, it would pluck the wings of pride, and make the peacocks plume to fall, to consider that he stands upon another's legs, sees with

another's eyes, acts by another's strength, and is nothing but what he receives from a fountain which he cannot command or comprehend, {and that inexhaustible fountain is God in Christ,} who makes of all clay what he pleases, and gives to all according to his own good pleasure. The proud man is proud of his sin, for he has nothing else of his own, for all that which he pretends to be, he is a debtor for.

Having thus far looked into the principles, and some of the practices of pride, it will become wise Christians to improve what God discovers to us. And first methinks this should put an odious visage upon pride, in the eyes of every understanding Christian, and makes the sin to be abhorred wherever it is found, and most of all in our own bosoms and practices; for pride makes a man a fool whatever he thinks himself; in it a boast of that which is not his own, as though it were his own, and so no truly wise man will do. The folly of a proud man is to set up and advance himself when himself is nothing but an empty vessel, to be full or empty as it pleases God.

I know no greater folly under Heaven, than this. The confused chaos at the creation, might have pretended to as good a title of glory in itself, as proud man can do; if God withdraw himself, and his gifts from man, I know not what title to give that which is left, but a scrap or piecemeal of the first chaos, and has no more right to glory, than the lump or heap of confusion which it came from.

Pride in the heart doth not only make a man to be a foolish man, but it also makes him a wicked man; if he can but get power to show himself in his own colors, this man will not stick to crucify the lives, liberties, consciences, and all that is indeed dear to others, to make a sacrifice for his lust of pride; though he has no power but what he has received, yet he has so much cruelty as to make use of that power, beyond and contrary to that end he received it for; otherwise the impositions upon the people of God, in the matters of their God, and the persecution of them {for not obeying men rather than God} would find no footing in the world. If pride in men do not make them act further than they have received

rule and commission from God, his people would not complain; as they do at the throne of Grace, for being persecuted; because the rule of God is that every man be fully persuaded in his own bosom; for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. Romans 14:5,23. But the proud man puts forth his power beyond the bounds which God has set him, and is so cruel that he cannot hear the cries of the poor people of God, which only plead for Christian forbearance, and do profess a singleness of heart, as in the presence of God, they are ready to obey their commands to the uttermost, so far as God shall fully enlighten and persuade them it is his will, so that in what they do, they may not sin through unbelief. And sure I am, nothing but pride and cruelty can stop an ear to these cries.

How ugly now must pride needs look to the eye of a godly soul? And how does such a soul observe the folly and cruelty of pride? This should make every soul exceeding earnest at the throne of Grace, that the Lord would by the fire of his own Holy Spirit, destroy the lust of pride in them. It is the throne of the devil; Oh, beseech the Lord to destroy that throne; it is the very flames of hell in the soul, Oh, beg of the Lord to quench them, and wholly to extinguish them by his Spirit. Pride in the soul is the devils banner of defiance against God. Oh, be earnest with the Lord of Hosts to make himself in thee a conqueror over this lust. Where pride reigns, God abhors; where that is king, Christ is an enemy. Oh, therefore implore the power of Heaven to keep this under, to destroy it, and root it out of all its strong holds in the soul; all the devils in hell without the soul, are more easy enemies than pride within the soul, that man is a perfect slave, which has pride for his master; and until the Son and Spirit make a soul free, it will never be free indeed.

We should be therefore often with God, beseeching him that Christ may live in us by his Spirit, to make us free from the sin and slavery of pride. That soul which begs of God the death of pride in itself has a promise attending its petition; for it is according to the will of God. God having declared himself an enemy to pride, Oh, that all Saints were like God in this, open

declared enemies to pride in themselves and others, improving all their interest at the throne of Grace, that God would destroy this piece of self and Satan, root and branch out of the soul, that neither fruit nor branch may ever grow upon it more.

Again, from this discovery of a proud man in his principles and practices, I have learned thus much, that if ever I should be called to put power into the hands of any man or men, and to entrust all those liberties which I could commit to trust into such hands, I would make this a general rule, of all men to avoid a proud man; for I would never trust a fool with power, nor a cruel man with my liberties, and I am sure a proud man is both these; so that surely that person or nation shall never but be miserable that committeth power and trust into such hands. Such men as single persons are the burden of a land; but put power in their hands, and they will be so far as their power will reach, the ruin of that land. Though men as God's instruments give a proud man his power, yet he soon forgets that he has received the power, by which he differs, and so tyrant-like makes use of his power to pluck down them that set by him, and to sacrifice those rights and liberties which he is instructed to preserve, to his own pride. This I am sure, that he can never be true to me, that is faulty to God; but a proud man is so, because in substance he denies God to be the original of his power; for did he acknowledge himself to receive that by which he differs, he would never be proud of his debt and his duty, nor use his power contrary to, or beyond the rule of God, who gives both rule and power.

It is a humble heart which only has a hand fit to put power into, and to instruct anything that is dear and precious withal, because there is acknowledgments in receiving that wherein it differs. This man is most like to be a faithful steward, to give an account of his trust; for he acknowledges himself to be a steward, a trustee, or indeed a trusted servant, for the good and happiness of them that have trusted him; the weight of his work sanctified by the Spirit of God, keeps this man humble; it is this humble man which will be a blessing to them that trust him. He that God makes humble, is a fit man to

make honourable, and by putting trust in such hands will nations and kingdoms be made happy.

And now I must crave leave to be plain and single hearted with men in power, only in asking them the Apostle's questions. Who maketh thee to differ from another, and what has thou that thou hast not received? Have you more power than others; yet remember you have received that power from God as the fountain, from men as the streams, and it is only in what you have received, by which you differ from other men; and pray remember this, your account will be as great as your power, because your power is received. That may beg you to consider what is God's end and man's end in trusting you and putting power into your hands? God's end is his own glory, that you should lift up his name in all you do, defend his people with all your power, to be a defense to all that is praiseworthy, and a terror only to evil doers, to make his will your work, not your own wills a law, his Word and Spirit your rule, his single glory your end, the people of the covenant of his Free-Grace your beloved ones; that you should establish righteousness, justice and judgment in the land, which will be the firm end and lasting pillar of peace. This is God's end in giving you power, and according to those ends will God have from you an account of your using that power he has committed to you, and which you have received from him. Man's end in putting power into your hands is their own good, that you should by that power defend them in all just and righteous ways, maintain to them their properties, and not to diminish, but increase their just liberties, such in which all just men may be happy, and no sort of men enabled by your authority to entrench upon, or violate the peaceful rights and liberties of others. You that are trusted by the whole should have no squint eyes, nor crossing of hands when you give forth your blessings, but carry the whole in your hands, heart, and eye; you should be as Melchizedek, without father and mother, related to no party but the whole. This is man's end in committing that to your trust, which is in their power to commit to trust; now who ever casts up this account, will find no cause to be proud of his employment

or his power, but to lie low at the feet of Christ for his continual presence, that he may have the strength of Christ to discharge this duty and trust received, for nothing less will carry any soul well through his work. The discharge of this trust will be judged by an impartial Judge; before whom all things are naked, such as God shall acquit may walk and lie down in peace; but if God charge any soul of misusing and abusing this received trust and power, it will be with such a soul as with Belteshazzar, when he perceived the handwriting upon the wall, his countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. Yea and conscience will be wounded too, that which none can bear, will be the weight to press down such a miserable soul. I judge no person, nor shall I enter into particulars, only profess my sadness to hear so many complain; some for want of justice, others of injustice; most men say the eye is not single, it is divided into parties, so that the whole is neglected, all men's mouths are open, and God has at one time or another made them to discover their hearts; but when they cry up, tis some for Paul, and others for Apollos and a third for Cephas, when in truth all should be for Christ. It is this division of the flesh which divides the land, and so feeds a spirit of discord, as to destroy this and after generations, if the Lord prevent not by the pourings forth of his Spirit, to unite us again in that common root and head of all Saints, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The magistrates work {as I humbly conceive} to effect this happy union, is this, singly to eye Christ, so as to give forth their power for protection to all that in the beauty of holiness and the power of godliness do but live up his image, leaving Christ his own throne, the consciences of his people; this so far as I can see is according to the trust committed both by God and man. I think the want of peace does arise from the want of this righteousness, justice, and judgment to run down in the land, and till God gives this spirit and practice amongst his people, I shall have but little hopes of lasting peace; for sure I am, whatever peace shall be made upon other terms, the foundation will be too weak to bear its burden,

so that the building cannot long stand. I think this is the controversy God hath with all the nations of the earth at this day, and until their hearts be humbled and their minds turned, we shall not have peace. Oh, that all which desire peace would take God's way to establish it. Peace is the common theme of all men; but this way of God to it is the practice of very few, if any; this peace to some, and war to others, protection to some, and destruction to others of the people of God, is man's peace, not God's; for Christ takes care of the whole body, the hand and foot as well as the eye, and that peace which man makes without God, God can and will soon destroy, by or without man; and if men should prove false to that trust they have received from God and man, yet God will never fail his people, nor be faithless to his covenant; they shall find him his people's God, not protecting part only, but the whole; and when men act according to what they have received from God they will do so too.

Such as have the present truth have another weighty consideration which lies upon them; seriously, and in the fear of God consider how many times God has given you your lives, when you have been appointed by men to be a sacrifice to their lusts, and in the will and end of these designs, the knife has oftentimes been almost at your very throats, when you have not seen nor known it; but the all-seeing eye of God hath discovered, and his all-powerful arms prevented for the most part in the very nick of time, when cruelty thought to have affected his ends, to have made glad their hearts with washing their hands in your blood. These life-saving kindnesses of God sure will make the deep impressions upon gracious and ingenuous spirits; but this is not all, you have yet further to consider, how many thousands of those which chose and trusted you with their lives, temporal liberties and estates, have to maintain you in being for these ends, spent their estates, denied themselves of their liberties, and have lost their lives. Oh, look upon the crippled limbs, the bleeding wounds, the widows and the fatherless, Rachel weeping for her children because they are not. I have told you before what is the end of all this both in God and man, many thousands have given you their lives

already, and others go on still in this self-denying work; and all they cry for is this, that the living may have their just rights, liberties and privileges, for which ends only they have called you, and put power into your hands, and have obeyed your call to take up arms, in which they have laid down their lives, and do daily drop away that you may be preserved to make good these ends, and in them to be a blessing to this bleeding and distressed land. You have had the prayers of God's people for you at the throne of Grace, take heed you return them not evil for good; for if these prayers be once turned against you, they will soon overturn you. I cannot tell what to call this faithfulness and kindness from God and man to you, for it is so great; but sure I am, where it finds unfaithfulness in any, it will beget a heavy account. Remember this, you act upon received power, and must give an account of your stewardship; the longest day is hard by, in a little time death will close your eyes, and then you can be no longer stewards; that by which you get for now, will leave you then; your bones and dust will not be known in the grave from others.

But you may remember in the beginning, I told you that this Scripture by its double question did speak properly to two grand lusts, peevish repining as well as pride, and I promised to inquire after them both, and to apply the Apostle's questions by way of answer to them; to define a peevish repining heart and spirit, I shall do it thus. It is that which earnestly desires everything, but likes and is pleased with nothing, shapes out its own happiness, and presently mistakes its own handiwork, this makes all things sweet which cannot reach, and therefore pines after them; but nothing sweet which it does enjoy, and therefore is peevish, and not content with whatever it possesses. This makes for a foul stomach, for that which will nourish another, does annoy and burden it; he is like a sick man that finds fault with every bed, because his disease is in his body, and he carries it with him from bed to bed; he repines that some others have more than himself, but is not content though he hath more than many others, he sucks the sweet out of everything before he comes at it by his earnest desire to

it, and his over-prizing of it; so that when he does reach the thing it reaches not his ends, therefore the heart is always repining. This eye multiplies things at a distance, but diminishes when near at hand; this man forgets what he has, and only remembers what he would have; this repining heart must needs be an unthankful heart, for such as bless God do acknowledge that they receive blessings from God; so does not the repining heart, for he cannot count that a blessing which he repines at; this is a sore evil among the sons of men, and it arises from this two-fold ignorance of God and ourselves.

First, ignorance of God, that all fulness is in him, and that he is a free agent to dispense, when, work, and how he pleases. Secondly, ignorance of ourselves, that in ourselves we are mere empty nothings, and that whatever we have or enjoy, it is all received. God makes us passive to receive what he gives, and that is the uppermost glory of self. Now, to this heart the Apostle's questions come very close and home; tell me, oh peevish repining heart, who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou hast not received? Canst thou give me a reason why thou wert not created a worm to crawl upon the earth, a fit subject for every foot to tread upon, rather than a reasonable and sensible creature. Wert thou clay in the Potter's hands, and dost thou quarrel at what thou art made? Hast thou received a tongue, and shall it speak against the giver? Does thy heart live by life received, and yet murmur against the hand that gave thee life? It ill becomes such as are beholding for everything, to pine at anything. It is nothing but mere mercy, kindness, bounty, goodness, and free-grace in God, that makes thee to differ from the most wickedest wretch on earth, from the veriest fool alive, from the most miserable man or woman in the world; yea, that makes thee any tittle beyond the lowest and most despicabliest piece of the whole creation, or not being left in thy first lump of confusion. Now quarrel, if thou canst justify thyself in it, with the dispensations of God to thee; if thou hadst made thyself, why didst thou not do it to thy own contentment? But if God have made thee anything out of nothing, why dost thou quarrel with God? If God be

free in Himself, and hast freely blessed thee, why dost thou show an ill heart and spirit to quarrel with, and repine at the free workings and blessings of his own grace? Consider man, the whole family in Heaven and Earth is God's, he gives thee day by day thy daily bread; thou dost wear his clothes, and breathe in his air; thou walkest in his strength, and lies down to sleep on his bed; thou hast received all from him, and he gives nothing, so as to put the property out of himself.

He that gives all, can take all away when he pleases, and then murmuring heart thou mayest know thy want of that which thou didst not prize the enjoyment of; thou that repinest must repine at this, that the will of God is done. Now do but consider the exceeding evil of that spirit which can be angry because God is pleased, when at the same time this man lives, moves, has his being, and his well-being from the good pleasure of this God. God is pleased to do good to him, but he thinks it not good that God should be pleased, for he is not pleased with the good will of God; he that repines at the workings of God, does by that imply that he thinks himself wiser than God, and if he had power, could mend the workings of God in the world. Thou hast nothing but what thou hast received; wherefore thou canst not be displeased with what thou hast, and art, but thou mayest find fault with the giver as well as the gift, and art thou not in this an ignorant and unthankful wretch? This is not the Apostle Paul's frame of spirit, for he makes this acknowledgment, it is by the grace of God that I am what I am; and upon this account we find the same Apostle content in all conditions; he knew both how to want and abound, and in all estates to be content, for Christ had taught him. That grace in God dispensed all conditions to him, he knew that he received all from Free-Grace, and that the Free-Grace of God was in all that he did receive; and this made his soul to be satisfied, and kept repining from his heart and lips. Sure if God by his Spirit reveal and set home this truth upon the hearts of any, though murmurers and repining proud ones before, yet then they will lay their hands upon their lips, and lie down at the feet of Christ, confessing that they are fools, and in this

as ignorant as brute beasts; that they have not known all this, even whilst that they have lived upon Free Grace, and spent upon received mercies and kindnesses from God, and then the stream will be turned, from repining to admiring, as he did. "Lord what am I and my father's house. What is man that thou dost regard him; nay, what was I, before thou madest me what I am; I have received all from thee, even my first being, oh how wonderful is the Lord, and his ways past finding out," says this humbled and enlightened soul. Nay, I have had continued to me abused mercies, I have wronged God with his own mercies, and yet he has continued to be gracious, he has filled my bosom with those kindnesses that I have unkindly thrown in his face. Oh, now break heart, melt soul, and fall before the ever-living God, whose eternal love thou hast lived upon, and abused; thou hast resisted God with his own strength, turned his Grace into wantonness, the gifts and parts thou hast received from him, to the opposing of his will, and the abusing of his members. Blush then, and be ashamed, oh, thou proud heart, be silent and complain not, oh, repining soul; find no fault, for thou art a debtor, thou hast been all this while a receiving, and hast no cause to make mention of the returns thou hast made. Admire thou art not in Hell, that God should not choose rather to glorify his justice than his grace upon thee. Admire his goodness, and admire his patience; it was not want of power in God to destroy thee, which hath been thy preservation; for had he but withheld what he hath given, thou hadst perished in that; thou hast lived all this time, upon what thou hast received, and hast sinned with nothing but received mercies; thy person, thy parts, thy riches, thy honours, and thy all, are but thy receipts, thy trusted talents, not thy inheritance. Thou hast all this while been proud of that which is not thy own, and hast repined against Free Grace; for nothing else could have borne with thee all this time, and not destroyed thee. I hope you can make no other use of all this loving kindness but this; to look upon thyself as preserved to praise the Lord. Oh, tell forth the fulness of his love, the greatness of his power, and the exceeding riches of his grace to thy soul and body. Take up David's

resolution, all that is within thee, and all that comes from thee to praise the Lord, because all this thou receiveth first from him. If ever thou be asked this question, who maketh thee to differ from others, acknowledge God; nay, even if thou art not asked it, yet declare it by thy humble, just, and holy conversation, and by a sweet contentedness of spirit, with all the dispensations of God; let the world know from thy lips, that it hangs by the power of God, who can as soon make it nothing, as he made it what it is; that it is the same power which keeps all that made all, and that God is always giving, otherwise the whole world would cease being. Declare this fulness of God, and thy receiving all from him, by thy full relying on him; let thy trusting him declare to the world that thou hast tried him, and by experience found that thou receiveth all from him; and having so sure a foundation to supply thy wants, which can never be drawn dry, therefore let thy hopes be always green, and thy faith ever flourishing; thou livest not upon thy own stock, but upon God's fulness. This Scripture is as reviving as humbling; for though it throws a man out of himself, yet it throws him into the kindness, faithfulness, goodness, mercy, and grace of his God. We are no losers though, neither in spirituals nor temporals; we cannot live by the works of our own hands so long as all is bound up in the grace of God, and from this fountain we receive that wherein we differ, not only from others, but from being nothing; for it is with us as with Paul, only by the grace of God that we are what we are; and this is the answer that saints have to make to this Scripture, who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive. Truly nothing; for by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8. And it is only by the Grace of our God that we are what we are.

Chapter 13.

None but God can be a proper subject
for a saint to glory in.

*"That, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him
glory in the Lord." I Cor.1:31.*

The great and supreme end of God in all things, ought to be the same in all his people; now the great end of God in all the works and workings of his eternal love, free-grace, mercy, holiness, power, justice and judgment, is for to manifest, declare, and lift up his own glory, this should also be the single end of all God's people in all their works and workings; namely, to manifest, declare, and lift up the glory of God, in his eternal love, free-grace, mercy, holiness, power, justice and judgment, to follow all glory to its original, which is God; then to manifest and declare the glory of the Lord by glorying in the Lord. The Holy Ghost by the Apostle gives us in the foregoing verses of this chapter, some discoveries of the way of God's workings in the world. I Corinthians 1:26-28, "for ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." We see here, when God makes use of instruments to do his will, and to declare his glory; he does not choose after the manner of men, or according to the course of the world, the wise, mighty, and noble after the flesh, but the foolish, weak, and despised of the world does God choose, to confound the wise and the mighty, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are. I Corinthians 1:29, gives the reason of it, "that no flesh should glory in his presence." As if the Holy Ghost had said, God hath wrapped up all glory in himself,

so that no flesh shall glory neither in what they are, nor in what they do but in him.

So, I Corinthians 1:30, strips all flesh from glorying in itself concerning spirituals; for {says he} Christ as the gift of God, is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption to us. And then he quotes this place of Scripture out of the prophet Jeremiah, "he that glories let him glory in the Lord." So that the Apostle's premises, and the conclusion he draws from them, runs all into this one general, that as God makes it his great end in all he does, to lift up his own glory, so should his people make it their work and end, only to glory in the Lord.

This Scripture is a directing exhortation, it exhorts to glory, and directs to the proper subject and center of glory, namely the Lord; as if he had said, you souls that glory, make the Lord the only subject of your glory, and then glory on.

For edification's sake, and that the lowest capacity may gather its portion of God's manna in the wilderness of this world, I shall from this Scripture draw up two general observations, upon which shall depend what follows.

The observations are these. First, God is, and ought to be, the subject of all his people's glory; or thus, that the people of God should glory in none but God. Secondly, that in God there is fulness of glory for all his people; or thus, that in God is bound up in the fulness of his people's glory.

For proof to the first of these, take notice of the precepts and practices of the people of God declared in Scripture, as first, the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 9:23-24, "thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." This Scripture is a full proof to the thing in hand, both in the negative and in the affirmative.

First, in the negative, not to glory in anything out of God, or besides God, not in wisdom, power, riches or any other thing of that nature, anything below God himself, is too low for the people of God to glory in. If you will glory, here is a subject fit for your glory, namely God, to understand and know him to be the Lord which exercises loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; he that truly knows God, may glory in God, who is the only fit object of glory. God is so glorious, that he makes the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, weak things the mighty, and despised things to bring to naught things that are. Therefore wisdom, power, riches, nobility in the world, are not proper subjects for a saint to glory in; no, God is the only single subject of his people's glory, and when you find them glorying, it is in the Lord. As in I Corinthians 1:30, the Apostle glories in this, that through the Free-Grace of God, Christ is made to his people, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. His glory is in God and Christ, Christ as the gift, and God as the giver. Christ made of God, and so forth. This is my glory, God's wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, Christ is in all this to saints of the Free-Grace of God. Therefore he that glories let him glory in the Lord. His self is nothing, but Christ as the gift of God, his all and his glory. So the same Apostle in Galatians 6:15, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." He tells them there be such which make a fair show in the flesh, that would have them to be circumcised, that they might not suffer persecution. But {says the Apostle} tell me not of these poor low shifts or glory, for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new creature. And in another place, "Christ in us the hope of glory." I can glory in none of these empty outsides and shadowy things, it is the new creature, Christ in me, the cross of Christ, the redemption of Free Grace, the eternal love of God, that I can glory in, or make the subject of my glory, as in that most remarkable place, Ephesians 2:8, "for by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast." Mark it and we shall find there is

a sure provision to keep all the glory upon God's head, so that whoever glories must glory in God. Why? Because the whole matter of Salvation comes of, by, and from the Free-Grace of God; yea, even faith, the hand that lays hold of the Free Grace of God, is also the gift of God's Free-Grace; work, self, is wholly excluded, because God will have no flesh to boast or glory in his sight, or in anything but himself. Therefore God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; therefore it is by Grace that we are saved. Christ loved us when we lay in our blood, when no eye pitted us; his love is first to us, and from hence he makes a covenant of Free-Grace to be our God and that we shall be his people, that he will put his law in our hearts, and teach his people by his own Spirit. What doth all this prove but thus much, that God alone is and ought to be the only subject of his people's glory, and we shall find the Apostle Paul in this Ephesians 1, not only in the precept but in the practice of this thing, blessing God and glorying in Christ Jesus. In Ephesians 1:3, "blessed be the Lord God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Observe it, he blesses and glories in God, he mentioned nothing to glory in, but God in Christ. God himself, when he speaketh of choosing, electing, love and glory, he doth it in Christ, Ephesians 1:4, "chosen us in him before the foundation of the world," and so forward in Ephesians 1:5, "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to himself according to the good pleasure of his will," Ephesians 1:6, "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us acceptable in the beloved," and in Ephesians 1:7, "according to the riches of his Grace," Ephesians 1:8, "wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence."

Thus the Apostle spend the whole chapter in declaring the glory of the full love and Free-Grace of God to his elect in Christ, he is in a very glorious frame of spirit, full of glory and blessing, but God is the subject of all his glory and blessing. So we may find him in his

triumphing chariot. In Romans 8:1, we find that there is "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," those who walk after the Spirit, in which there is freedom from the law of sin and death. Nothing to be laid to the charge of God's elect which God justifies, and that nothing can separate from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:33. God's love is the subject the Apostle glories in, it was the love of God and so everlasting unchangeable love; it was justification by the Free-Grace of God, therefore above condemnation. Mark it, God is the subject of his glory, God justifies, and God loves. So, in Romans 11:33-36, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory forever."

The apostle finds all to be in God, and God the only subject for him to glory in and give glory to. Whatever God doth himself, is the glory of all his works, and God is a depth of riches, wisdom and knowledge, he is unsearchable in his judgments, and his ways are so full of glory that man cannot trace them, he is so pure of glory, that he can be discerned in no light but his own. "For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light." Psalms 36:9. I Corinthians 2:14, "but the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." God is so great a glory that he darkens all glory besides himself, so that nothing but himself can be a discovery of himself; and this the Apostle declares as the glory of God, he is an unsearchable and more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Therefore says he in II Corinthians 4:7, that the Lord dispenses his Gospel by earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us, as if he had said, we bring you the revelation of the free grace of God in the letter, but that is the furthest that such earthly vessels as we can go, and God intends to use

us no further, that the glorious revelation of this in the spirit might appear to be the excellency of his power, exceedingly beyond the power of the weak instruments he uses. If you observe it, he is careful in keeping the glory in the hands of God, so as he might make God the only subject of his glory, II Corinthians 10:17, "but he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." To this end the apostle makes his prayers for the Ephesians in the third chapter, that he would grant them according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by his Spirit in the inward man. He had preached Christ to them in the letter, but he knowing that not to be enough, he prays to the Lord to pour on them his rich and glorious Spirit, that they might be filled with his glory and strengthened in the inward man, according to the riches of his glory, so that still God himself is the only subject of his people's glory. The practice of this is very eminently seen in the apostle Paul, Philippians 3:7,8, "but what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

In the foregoing verses he tells us what it was that he had counted gain and gloried in, his being circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, and so on. These were such things as were without God, but when God had once made himself known to him in Christ, then he had found God only to be a proper subject of glory, and the Apostle doth acknowledge it, for {says he} all that I had before, it was but as dung compared with God and Christ for glory, as dung to be abhorred in the presence of God, though in Philippians 3:4, he tells us, if any other man thinketh he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more. And all this more is but loss and dung where God appears to him in Christ, the scales were then off his eyes, and he could distinguish of glory in its proper subject, namely, God in Christ, so that all along we find the Apostle the same, only glorying in the Lord. To back this, we shall find him of the same spirit, Colossians 2:9-10, "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,

and ye are complete in him which is the head of all principalities and powers." He sets up the glory of God in Christ before the Colossians, for them to glory in. As if he had said, your only true glory lies in your union with Christ, for the fulness of the Godhead is bodily in him, and that is the only true subject of glory; for your glory is as you are complete in him, united to him, then is Christ your glory, and you have a proper subject to glory in, he is the Head of all principality and power, and this is your glory to glory in this your Head. And in Colossians 3:3-4, "for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Mark it, he strips them wholly of any glory in themselves; for ye are dead, that is, without any beauty, glory, or excellency in your selves, no more than dead persons have, but your life of glory is with Christ in God, so that when Christ appears in glory, you as in union with him shall appear with him in glory; therefore you have nothing else to glory in, or to glory of but that your life is hid with Christ in God, so that God is the only subject of your glory. And upon this account the Holy Ghost puts a "behold," a mark of excellency and glory upon the love of God in making us his sons, and in that first epistle of John, 3:1, this love of God, it is God himself, the perfection of glory, therefore worthy the beholding. Thus we see all along that the Prophets, Apostles, and all the Servants of God, make God the only subject of their glory; these text of Scripture I think make up full proof to the first general observation, the general scope of all Scripture comes into this truth; therefore I cannot expect it to be denied by any that know and acknowledge God and his Word.

The second general observation is this. That in God there is fulness of glory for all his people; or thus, that in God is bound up all the fulness of his people's glory. This will be in word I think denied by none; but indeed it is denied by all such as seek something else to glory in beside the Lord; nay many times without and against the Lord, therefore this truth as the other I shall endeavour to prove from the nature of God, and the declared experiences of his people.

First, from the nature of God, God is such an infinite glory in himself, that no flesh can behold his glory and live; nor has any seen the Father at any time but the Son, and those to whom the Son hath revealed him. God is too bright a glory for a created being to see immediately; therefore Free-Grace made Christ a Mediator, to make known and discover God in his glory to his people, and through this glass saints with open face beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image. II Corinthians 3:18. I know not how better to express the nature of God than thus; that he is the first, the fulness, and the all of all true glory and excellency. If you call mercy, justice, wholeness, righteousness, purity, power indefiniteness and eternity to be glory; this is God, all this is God, and God is all this, and more than all that man can comprehend, much less declare. He is the first, and the fulness, and the all of all this. There is not a glimpse of glory, but it is a beam of God, all vessels of glory receive what they have from him, he is that fulness which filleth all things with himself; the whole creation speaks nothing more plain than this, the infinite fulness of glory that is in the Creator. And the Holy Ghost by John, in Revelation 21:23, speaking of the glory of the new Jerusalem hath these words, "and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Exceeding much may be written upon this head, but I hope this little will fully satisfy all but atheists, that God is the first fulness and all of all glory.

But what advantage this is to saints, how their glory is in God, is next under consideration. And for this, first consider the prayer of our Saviour to his Father and our Father in John 17:24, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." And in John 17:22, "the glory which thou gavest me I have given them." This is truly the end for which Christ was given of the Father, that in him, namely Christ, the people of God might be made partakers of his glory. Christ prays according to the will of God, that God would perfect in his

elect body the work of his Mediatorship; namely, that God and his people might have full communion in that glory which Christ had with the Father before the world was. John 17:5. For I conceive that to be the glory which Christ calls {my glory} that to which he was ascending. Our Saviour seems to make these the grounds of this prayer, "I in them, and thou in me," John 17:23, and "the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, therefore let them behold my glory." Let them be filled with thy self, for thou art my glory; for there is no other way of beholding God but in the person of Christ, by being made partakers of Christ and filled with his fulness. There is another full text to this purpose, in Romans 8:17, "and if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Mark it, first every child of God is an heir, and God himself is the inheritance of all his children, heirs of God. But how do saints enjoy this their inheritance? Namely, God communicates himself in his glory to saints as to Christ. Saints beholding God in Christ, receiving of his fulness, partakers of his righteousness. This is as full a proof as words can make, that in God there is fulness of glory for his people, because himself is the inheritance of his people, which saints enjoy as fellow heirs with Christ, having their lives bound up with God in Christ, their glory appears with Christ in God. The experience of this made the Apostle to glory, Philippians 1:21, "for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." The Free-Grace and Eternal Love of God in Christ is my life; wherefore to die to this body will be my gain; for I am an heir of God with Christ; my glory is with God, and were I out of the body, I should be fully in God, so a gainer in glory; but whether to live or die, God in Christ is all my glory; and the same Apostle in Philippians 4:4, gives this exhortation, "rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." Be glad, and glory in the Lord; surely he had found fulness of glory in Christ, otherwise he would never have given such an exhortation as this, to rejoice, and rejoice always. This speaks this, that there is always fulness of joy, and glory in Christ for his people. The saints of old living under God could glory in tribulation, that is in God, though under tribulations, as Shadrach,

Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace; Daniel in the lion's den; Paul and his fellow prisoner in the stocks, when as their stripes were sore. And as the same Apostle in Romans 8, the latter end, though under tribulations, distresses, persecutions, famines, nakedness, peril, sword, and killings all the day long; yet under all these more than conquerors through the love of God. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom.8:37-39. So that it appears clearly that a saints glory is in God, because when he enjoys God in his love, he is more than a conqueror over all afflictions, more because God is his glory, that glory is greater than all the trouble of the world; it must needs be great and communicable glory that can keep the head above water, and the soul from being overwhelmed by that sea of afflictions which is before expressed; and thus we see God is fulness of glory for all his people, and I am confident the experiences of God's people in these days can produce a numberless number of testimonies to this truth. I shall add no more, but leave the reader to read the makings forth of the glory of God upon his own soul; the sum of all is this, that in the Lord is all glory; therefore he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

But if any shall say, I am not edified by this general theme of glory in God, for his people to glory in, show me the particulars of this glory in which the people of God may and do singly glory in God? To this I answer, I will tell you what God has shown me, but it is only himself that can show it you by his Spirit, for his glory is too great to be beheld in any light but his own; and to such as God gives the light of his Spirit, it will appear in these particulars following, wherein saints may and do in all their glory, glory singly in the Lord.

The first particular is this, the original, full, and eternal love of God to all his elect in Christ, a soul that glories in God upon this consideration, may glory singly

in God, and will tell you that God is the original of love; for God is love, he is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Nay, his love as himself, from all eternity, without beginning and without end; this soul will tell you God's love is full; for the fulness of all that is lovely proceeds from it, he is the first of love, for he is the first in love, he loved us first, and his original love is the womb of our love. We love him because he loved us first, it is this original love of God which conceived and brought forth heirs of love; Christ the eldest Brother is the gift of this love; and this original love is so full, that it makes every child a joint heir with Christ, and this love so eternal, that the inheritance is as eternal as God himself, for God in the fulness of his love is his children's eternal inheritance. The soul will tell you, all I have and am to all eternity, which hath life and glory in it, is the effects and workings of this original, full, and eternal love of God, the state of innocency, the restoration and redemption of Grace, the beauty of the first Adam before his fall, and the perfection of the second Adam, all which doth proceed of this original love of God. Ephesians 2:4-5, "but God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Mark it, it is love in God, which is the original of life in saints, it must needs be full love that should give life to souls dead in sins; and it must be eternal love, because it gives eternal life, for it quickens souls together with Christ, to live because he lives. John 14:19. Now says the soul, I thus glory singly in Christ, which you cannot in anything besides. That holy and divine love is originally in God, love in all the dimensions of it is lovely and full of glory; how full of glory must it then needs be in the original of it, which is God. The ocean sea is the glory of all waters, so is love in God the original glory of all love. Now says the soul, give me leave to glory in my God as the God of love, who is the eternal fountain of love, to whom I never went to in Christ, but I found love; and this I find, love in God is that which assures me, and carries me to him, and truly ever since I have known him in Christ, I have found him a God of love, and his bosom of love a place of rest. It is full love, as I never

wanted anything, when enabled to lay down and rest therein; it is unchangeable love, at no time a bed of thorns. This love of God is so full of glory in the enjoyment of it, that it is the glory of all I do enjoy; it is God's love in every mercy, that makes it a mercy; where God's love is not, the glory is departed from that thing; love in God is love in the original of it, and there are heights, depths, breadths, and lengths of love, such heights as none can out-reach; none can love more than God, for he is the original of love, or is originally love, in him are breadths of love enough for all souls to spread themselves unto satisfaction, and yet breadths of love to spare; yea in him are depths of love as deep as eternity; original love, as no soul can fathom its bottom or beginning, it is such a deep so firmly fixed, it cannot be shaken to all eternity. This love of God is not only the rivers of the waters of life, but also such a deep as can never be drawn dry; even lengths of love too, love without end; he calls it lengths, because he cannot tell how long it exceeds both measure and expression. This is all the account which can be given of the length of the it, it is God's love, and God is love; so that what God is, that is this love; now he that can measure God may measure love, this is love singly in God; so in God, as in none besides God, the fruits and effects of this love will appear in the next particular; but as love is originally, fully, and eternally in God, so is God the only subject of his people's glory; wherefore he that glories of love, let him glory in the Lord.

The next particular is this, the freeness of God's Grace. That Grace is Free, none will appear so ignorant as to deny; for the nature of the thing confirms it, it could not be Grace were it not Free; but if that should not be understood, yet the fruits and workings of God's Grace will demonstrate it to be Free Grace in all the operations of it from first to last.

And first, let us look into predestinating and choosing Grace. Ephesians 1:4-5, "according as he hath chosen us in him in Christ, before the foundation of the world having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Mark how Free-Grace runs through,

and gathers up this whole work, predestinated and chosen, the very terms speaks freeness; but says the text, this it is in Christ Jesus, and this makes it still Free Grace, for Christ is wholly without our reach in ourselves; but that which puts all out of doubt is this, the text speaks plainly, this work is according to the good pleasure of his will. God does all in and by the freeness of his own Grace, nothing to move him but his own bowels. It is the Apostle's argument upon this very question. Romans 9:18, "therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." That is as I understand, the scope of the Holy Ghost in this place; God chooses whom he pleases in his Free-Grace to make them vessels of mercy in union with Christ, and the others he chooses to leave in the first Adam, dead in sins and trespasses. If you ask me the reason of this, I will answer you with the Apostle's argument in Romans 9:21, "hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour." That I mention it for, is to prove the freeness of God's choosing and electing Grace, and to that it is a very full Scripture; for if you observe one clause in it, it makes God to be as free in the vessels of honour, as in the vessels of dishonour, that is the same lump, is out of one and the same lump of clay that God does both. Now it must needs be Free-Grace that makes vessels of mercy to be filled with the riches of his glory, out of the same lump that others remain vessels of dishonour; thus God's Grace is free in choosing his own vessels whom he will fill with the fulness of his Grace and glory to all eternity.

Secondly, the Grace of God is free in the calling of his chosen vessels out of themselves unto himself. Whom he predestinated before all time, he calls in the fulness of his own time, and both in his Free-Grace. Ephesians 2:5 is a full proof of this, "even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; by Grace ye are saved." It is this Free-Grace of God that runs through the whole matter of Salvation; observe but the time of calling, and it will appear to be Free-Grace in God that calls, even when dead in sins. What could here move God but his own Free-Grace? The soul is dead; there is no beauty in a dead

soul to allure a living God, nay dead in sins; can this move a Holy God to call such a soul to lie down in his bosom? No, that which moves God is in himself, the freeness of his own Grace, and the fulness of his own bowels of love; God can work from himself to man, though there be nothing in man to invite, but to distaste God, and this is the glory of his Free Grace. He calls a Moses out of Pharaoh's court, a Saul out of the sect of the Pharisees, even when his heart was resolved in his commission to persecute the saints, and by this call does not only change his name from Saul to Paul, but his spirit from a persecutor to a preacher of Christ crucified. What does this prove, but that God is free in his effectual-calling grace, and that it goes hand-in-hand with his choosing; he chooses to call, and calls whom he chooses, and is free in his grace in all, for nothing moves God in all this but his own Free Grace.

Thirdly, God justifies his elect and called by his Free Grace. See this in that plain text, Romans 3:24, "being justified freely by his Grace." In three or four of the next foregoing verses the Apostle shows us, how that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God, and that it is only God's righteousness {which is Christ} that will be found righteous in the pure eyes of God; for he says in Romans 3:23, "we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God," therefore our justification is merely of his Free Grace, not by any deed or duty under the law; Romans 3:20, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." The law condemns, it does not justify any, it is only Free Grace that justifies. So, Galatians 2:16, "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." And, Galatians 3:11, "but that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for the just shall live by faith." By the law and the works of the law in these Scriptures is comprehended all the best, holiest, and most exact performance of any soul, though according to the commands of God, that in none of these, nor all these together, is any soul justified in the sight of God, for that is only the work of Free Grace. But lest any should stumble at this, that faith is so much mentioned in the

matter of justification; the Holy Ghost in Ephesians 2:8 takes off all occasion of offense in that, "for by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God." He binds up the whole matter of Salvation, of which justification is a part in the Grace of God, for "by Grace are ye saved." Now God hath made faith as the hand to lay hold upon the Salvation of his Free Grace, and that it might appear to be all Grace; this is also the gift of God, the workings of Free Grace, it is so much the more free that God gives, both the hand and the gift too. So, the Apostle, Romans 8:33, "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth," of his own Free Grace. God does so fully acquit, that nothing can be laid to the charge of those whom God does justify, thus freely does God acquit such as cannot justify themselves by any deeds of the law. Though there be sin in the best duty, yet there is justification in the Free Grace of God; though not of the sin, yet of the person. There might be very much written on this subject, but I only touch it here, because it is more fully done in another place.

Fourthly, God is Free in his sanctifying Grace; his Holy Spirit, as the wind, blows where it listeth. Sanctification must needs be a free work, because it is the work of a Holy God in unholy souls; there is no more in us to move God to cleanse us from our blood and pollution, than there is to move him to love us when we lay in our blood, so that no eye but the eye of his grace could pity us. That power that overcame self, must needs be freely without self; now this is the sanctifying grace of God in the souls of his people. And the Apostle Paul speaking of the work of regeneration in his soul, confesses, it is merely of Grace that I am what I am. Our state in the Kingdom of glory to be ever with the Lord; that is also the workings of original love and the free grace of God, to be heir of God, to possess God, and as joint heirs with Christ to be filled with his glory to all eternity, this is Free Grace, it is too big to stand upon any other foundation.

But as two undeniable testimonies in the Free Grace of God in all these particulars, take God's covenant

of Free Grace, and Jesus Christ the gift of his Free Grace, into consideration. First his covenant in Jeremiah 31:33-34. What out of God could oblige God to make such a covenant as this is, God engaging himself, to put his law in our inward parts, and to write it in our hearts, and that he will be our God, and we shall be his people, that all shall know his way, and that he will forgive our iniquity and remember our sins no more. This may well be called the covenant of Free Grace, for it is the Grace of God freely engaging himself to do all this for us and in us; it is too large to open where it is only brought as a proof; but this I can truly say of it, it is in every part, and in the whole, the Free Grace of God, he forgives all iniquity, blots out all sins, writes his holy law in the hearts and inward parts of his people, teaches them all to know his way, and all this of his Free Grace, and to all this freeness of Grace he binds up himself by covenant, not to make himself more faithful, for he is eternally and infinitely faithful, but to make us more believing, because by nature we believe in works, not in Free Grace.

But consider the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the great gift of God's Free Grace, in whom God fills his people with grace and glory to all eternity; whom God predestinated to the adoption of children, he does it by Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:5. Whom he calls and quickens, he does it together with Christ. Ephesians 2:5. Whom he justifieth freely of his Grace, he does it through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Romans 3:24. When God in his Free Grace gives wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, he gives it in Christ, and makes Jesus Christ to be all this to his people. I Corinthians 1:30. When God glorifies his people with himself forever, he does it as joint heirs with Christ. After he had suffered in the flesh for us, he goes to heaven and glory to prepare mansions for us and comes again to receive us to himself. Now upon all these considerations, tell me whether all of salvation in part or whole of the people of God be not the only workings and design of the eternal love and free grace of God, I hope none will be so graceless as to deny it; and to such as acknowledge it, to them I say, this is a general full of particulars, for such as

glory to glory in the Lord. A believing soul will tell you this, he can glory in his election, through the Free Grace of God in Jesus Christ, that none is, or shall ever be able to pluck him out of God's hands; and he will tell you that he is called into union with Christ, by that Eternal Free Grace of God which will surely keep him, that he can never fall totally away; Christ must have his whole body complete in heaven, not lose one member; he will also glory through the Free Grace of God in this, that Christ is made his righteousness and justification, so that he stands complete before God in him. Free Grace made Christ sin for me says the soul, that I might be made the righteousness of God in him. II Corinthians 5:21.

Jesus Christ in the design of God's Free Grace has borne sin, death, hell, law, and curse for me; that I am forever acquitted from the condemning, reigning, or devouring power of any, or of all these. Now says this soul, tell me you that understand; is not this God of Free Grace the only object of a saints glory? Nay, I will tell you more; God himself is the fulness of his people's glory to all eternity; he lets the worldlings for a little time to glut themselves with the world, but himself is the free, the full, and eternal glory of his people in the ages to come, even to all eternity. He is filling his people with the exceeding riches of his grace and kindness in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:7. God doth to all eternity set open his bosom and give to such as are heirs of himself, not merely flagons, but inexhaustible streams of love and glory. It must needs be glory if it be God's love; now this, and more than this, more than eternity can tell is the Free Grace of God, therefore let him that glorieth glory in the Lord, for he is God, the only fountain and fulness of Free Grace.

But if any shall object and say, if Grace be thus free in God, to elect, call, justify, sanctify and glorify his people merely of his Free Grace; why then did Christ take flesh, and in the flesh satisfy the utmost of God's justice for the sins of his people? It seems to appear that God was satisfied in his justice, he had the debt paid, how then do you make it Grace?

To this I answer, that in its proper place I shall make use of this argument to clear up the glory of God in the exactness of his justice, but it does no ways diminish the freeness of his grace to us; for it is Free Grace that made Christ to be the Satisfaction of Divine Justice for our sins, and that God satisfies his own justice in himself, does no more make his Grace not to be free, than the making his covenant in himself could keep that from being Free. That justice is satisfied makes it full redemption to us, but that God does it in Christ, which is wholly out of ourselves, keeps it very exactly to be the Redemption of Free Grace. "We are justified freely by his Grace through the redemption that is in Christ." Romans 3:24. That God does satisfy his justice in Christ, it is that through him we might be made partakers of the redemption of his Grace. Christ the gift of God's Grace cannot diminish this Grace; that which God gives his people through Christ, though he satisfies his justice in the way, yet he magnifies the freeness of his grace in the work.

A third particular is this, the riches of God's mercy. The Apostle Paul glories in God upon this very consideration in Ephesians 2:4, "but God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us." God to manifest his great love wherewith he loved his people, bestows on them the riches of his mercy, namely his Eternal Love, his Free Grace, his beloved Son, and in him election, calling, justification, sanctification and glorification, and his Holy Spirit in these. Now this will be acknowledged to be rich mercy! Many do pretend to be givers, though they have nothing but what they first received, but I am sure none but blasphemers can pretend to be givers of such rich mercies as these. God is the only fountain and giver of these more exceeding and eternal weights of glory. Nay, that which worldlings make their god {namely the world} was created by him and for him, and though it be a curse to them that know no other God, yet every piece and parcel of it sanctified is a blessing, and a rich mercy of God to his chosen people. Love makes all conditions to be the rich mercy of God to them. It was a rich mercy to a dark world, to say, let there be light, and it was so; but then how rich is God in mercy

when he makes known his eternal love, and shines through the wounds of Christ by his own Spirit into a dark soul, and bids the soul to be of good cheer, it's sins are all forgiven; it stands complete in Christ, and is an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ. However men may slight the riches of these spiritual mercies, even whilst they are glutting themselves with the world, yet let them remember the time is not far off, when death shall close their eyes, and their hearts will sink in silence, and then a glimpse of a reconciled God in Christ will be found a rich mercy indeed. The Apostle calls the love of God heights and breadths, depths and lengths of love; he takes in all that he could reckon up to show the exceeding riches of it. God is the fulness of glory and the fountain of mercy, therefore his mercies must needs be rich and full of glory, and so then as these riches of mercy are a subject of glory, let him that glorieth glory in the Lord.

In the next place, consider the faithfulness of God in making good of his promises. God is a free God in all his promises, he only engages himself, no soul can engage God; for to receive all from God, and yet to oblige God, is a contradiction; the first is a truth of God, what the latter is, I leave the reader to judge. But as God is free in all his promises, the whole workings of God in the world are an ample testimony to this truth and faithfulness of God; but yet for more particular proof take two or three Scriptures. First, God's promises at the fall of the first Adam, to give the Lord Jesus Christ the second Adam, in Genesis 3:15, that the seed of the woman {namely Christ} should bruise the serpent's head. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

This serpent is the devil. Now to the making good of this promise, the whole Word of God, and the Salvation of his people is a full testimony. For another great promise, take that of God's giving his Spirit to his people to teach them, and to lead them into all truth, and by which he does write his law in the hearts and inward parts of his people. "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the

LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jeremiah 31:33. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:26. Now how God does make good this promise, such as be truly spiritual can give in their testimony, and I doubt not but God has many thousands such witnesses in the world, though such as know him not, do blaspheme and scoff at him, in scoffing at his Spirit in his people, yet Saints in truth will tell you, that they in themselves are darkness, and God is only light, and it is the Spirit of God in them that is their light, that they know no truths of Jesus but by the Spirit, nor did they ever truly worship, or know how to worship God in truth, but in and by the Spirit of Truth; and until they received this light, they worshiped the unknown God. Though God will be free in the manner, measure, and time of his dispensations, yet he is certainly faithful to the matter of his promises, so that all his people shall bear him witness, that he is a faithful God in making good of his free promises. In a case more particular, take God's promises to Abraham concerning Isaac, how justly did God make that promise good, though from a dead donor, and a dead womb, yet nothing can hinder the living God from being faithful to his promises. Nay, though God commanded Abraham to sacrifice this son of promise, and to suffer the knife to be almost at his throat, yet God makes good his promise, and does all this but to try Abraham's faith, not to break the least tittle of his own faithfulness. The wicked that know not God, and despise him, shall find him a faithful God in the making good all his judgments upon them. Now says the believing soul, here is another particular, the faithfulness of God in making good all his promises, therefore let him that glorieth glory in the Lord.

A fifth particular is this, namely, the exactness of God's justice. That one example of our Saviour Christ, will stop the mouths of all the gainsayers to this particular, when Christ did in the flesh hang upon the cross, bearing all the sin of his people upon him, and having the whole

debt to satisfy, he did then finish his satisfaction before he came down from his suffering, our Saviour tells us himself that the work was finished. So the author to the Hebrews, Hebrews 10:14, "for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Christ by this one offering of himself did make a perfect satisfaction to divine justice, otherwise such as he died for could not be made perfect, nor could that word of the Apostle be a truth, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1. Nay God himself by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 53:11, doth acknowledge satisfactions in the sufferings of Christ, "he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." God in Christ doth behold his Divine Justice fully satisfied for the sin of his people, for that is the whole drift of the prophet in that chapter, to show forth the sufferings and satisfaction of Christ to God's justice; so that we see the exactness of God's justice, that his beloved Son, when once made a propitiation for sin, must pay the utmost of the debt, so that he does perfectly discharge. There is exceeding much in this for believers to glory in God, but I shall forbear enlargements. I am sure it is a full proof to that which I produce it for. Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, is another remarkable testimony of the exactness of God's justice; so were those murmurers and idolaters in the wilderness, and God's dealing with that king which cut off the great toes and thumbs of so many kings; and so that we see God is exact in his justice, and exceeding glorious in it. So, in this particular, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.

In the sixth place, consider God in the perfection of his holiness, righteousness, and purity; so that if you can find spot or wrinkle in him, nay he will not leave either spot or wrinkle in any he takes into union with himself, he makes himself to be his people's inheritance, that so they may be holy in his holiness, righteous in his righteousness, and pure in his purity. God is so perfect in holiness, that he abhors every unholy thing, so exact in righteousness, that the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees is no better than dross and dung when Christ the righteousness of God appears. God is so full of purity,

that he is nothing else, and yet he is all, but he is all pure in all he is, so that in this consideration also, such as will glory let them glory in the Lord.

Again, consider the infiniteness of the power of God's wisdom. Heaven and earth are full of this glory; by his power he makes and preserves, gives being and maintains being to all things. Heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footstool, monarchs are but worms under his feet. So are the nations of the earth as the drop of a bucket and counted but as the small dust of the balance, when they are counted to God, they are less than nothing and vanity. "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing." Isaiah 40:15.

If all created beings were summed up in one, they are all but vanity, and make nothing to be compared with the infinite power of God which created them. God is not only infinitely full of power to do what he will, but he is infinitely wise to know what to do, how to do, and when to do for his own glory. To this of the wisdom of God, I think I shall offer one proof, which will be either convincing or silencing all that do acknowledge God, and that is namely this, the mystery of godliness, Christ in the flesh. It is a mystery above any wisdom but God's to reveal; oh then how great is that wisdom which could make such a mystery! This mystery may be admired by saints on earth, but it will never be fully understood until we come to Heaven. The reason is, it is so great a mystery, then surely it must be infinite wisdom that is the fountain of this mystery; the depths of God are deep indeed, infinitely deep! My meaning is not to enlarge in these particulars, but only to give a taste of things wherein God only will appear the proper subject of his people's glory, so that such as glory may glory in the Lord.

The last particular I shall mention is this, the eternity of God, that God is eternal in all he is, the Lord tells us in one Scripture, "I am God that changes not," he waxeth not old as does a garment, he dwelleth in eternity, Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Now this is a fit subject for saints to glory in, not only a glorious

God, but the God of eternal glory, and a God that is eternally glorious.

Now give me leave to sum up all the former, and to add this to them, and then see what we can say for this glory, and for this God the subject of our glory, who is. First, the God of original and eternal love. Secondly, the God of free grace, and eternally so. Thirdly, a God rich in mercy, and that to all eternity. Fourthly, a God faithful in making good all his promises, and in this also he is an eternal God. Fifthly, God is exact in his justice, and this to all eternity. Sixthly, God is a God perfect in holiness, righteousness, and purity. And in all these God is eternal. Lastly, a God infinite in power, and wisdom, and in these eternal, his power is eternal power, and his wisdom eternal wisdom.

Now tell me if the first Scripture be not a weighty exhortation, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord. Take this as a foundation and carry it all along in our eye. That purely what God is in himself, is the only matter and subject of his people's glory. For that is the exhortation, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord. And I desire to carry souls home to God himself, that our souls may drink the water of life at the fountain of life, where it is eternally the same. A soul that doth truly and purely glory in God himself, will tell you that it finds God to be a God of original, eternal love and free grace. And therefore says this soul, blessed be this God, I believe all my iniquities are pardoned, and my sins blotted out by the blood of Christ, so they shall never more be remembered, or charged against me; for the original love and free grace of God hath laid them all on Christ and he hath given exact satisfaction to the Divine Justice of God, so that through eternal love and free grace, I am acquitted and justified in the sight of the eternal, holy, righteous, and pure God; and in this eternal love and free grace of God, I am united to Christ, so that Christ the wisdom, sanctification, and redemption of God, is mine, and I am his, Christ made sin for me, and I made the righteousness of God in him, so that when I glory in my redemption, I glory in God, in his original love and free grace, and when I say the law of God cannot condemn me, I do not affirm

that I have kept the law in myself, and so glory in the righteousness of the law, which is of works; but I glory in the original eternal love of God and his free grace, that hath made Christ my righteousness, who hath fulfilled the law for me, and is daily doing it in me by the power of his Grace. "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Romans 6:14. And give me leave to glory then, says the soul, though it be great things that I glory of, so long as God himself is the subject of my glory. No legalist can hinder God of his sovereignty, of his original glory and free grace, so that when God assures any soul of his salvation, and the soul glories in it, this soul glories in the Lord. Come and see, says this soul, the glory of the Lord, I am saved merely by the free-grace of God, his original and eternal love hath plucked me out of sin, self, eternal death, hell, law, grave, the power of Satan, and eternal condemnation and made me one with Christ, an heir of himself, a joint-heir with Christ in eternal glory. This is my God, says the soul, all this is the fruits of his love, and free-grace, riches of mercy, and faithfulness in his covenant and promises, the exactness of his justice upon Christ, his perfection of justification to my soul in union with Christ. The perfection of his holiness, righteousness and purity, is the glory of my soul, whose life is hid with Christ in God; the baptizing of his Holy Spirit, in which the elect in Christ are buried with him to sin, makes the resurrection of Christ, and the new creature in me, says this soul. And all this is God, merely what God is in himself, saving, justifying, sanctifying and glorifying grace, all is God's Grace, all this is Free Grace, and all this Free Grace is my God, says the believing soul. Therefore, {says this soul,} "come O man, and taste how good the Lord is." Here is milk and honey freely without price, and without money. Isaiah 55:1. If this soul meet with a believing heart, it presently holds forth a bleeding Christ; and if a soul that argues against its own salvation, why says this soul, consider grace is free, your salvation has no other foundation but the original love and free grace of God. God hath concluded all under sin, that salvation might be of Grace. No soul since the fall of Adam could ever plead itself before God,

as the whole frame of Salvation stands upon the Free Grace of God. Now you have nothing to argue against but Free Grace. Your not being worthy can never make God not to be gracious; you see nothing lovely in yourselves that cannot hinder, for God is the original of love. You can in no measure keep the law, the law was to convince of sin, not to justify any soul; but Christ the gift of Free Grace, he hath satisfied and fulfilled the law for all his elect, say what you can, I will answer you, says this soul in union with Christ, with everlasting love and free grace.

If God should suffer self, says this soul, to have a share in Salvation, I were as miserable as any soul alive; for I am as much under sin in myself, as any other soul, but the glory of my salvation is my God, this I believe by his Spirit, that himself is my salvation, his own Eternal Being is my eternal life, his original love and his free grace which is of himself, is the everlasting salvation of my eternal soul. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:3. And says this soul, upon this assurance I am able to go to God himself through Christ, by his Spirit, to plead my interest in him, to plead my Salvation, because it is the eternal salvation of his own original love and free grace; so that it can never fail and come to nothing, because it resides in God Himself; and when Satan should shake me out of my assurance, I carry him to my God and let Satan know, that my Salvation stands not upon my own legs, but is the work of the eternal love and free grace of my God, which is above the reach of Satan, because in the very Being of God. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Eph.1:4-6.

Thus a believing soul makes God the only subject of his glory; and from this foundation such a soul can never want a proper subject to glory in. Saints would be glad to find lovingkindness, mercy, faithfulness, justice,

holiness, righteousness, and purity among men; and truly these beams of God in his people, makes them very glorious; and the want of these is not only a shame, but the misery of this our present age. These sparks of God make men truly noble, and the going out of these is the immobility of the times we live in, but nevertheless God's people are not at a loss for a subject of glory; for God is this, all this, and eternally this, in the infinite fulness and glory of it. Therefore what remains but to press home, and to take up the Apostle's exhortation, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord, in the God of Grace, and that our names are written in the book of life with the blood of Christ, the gift of his Grace, that we have our inheritance in the New Jerusalem, so that if these earthly tabernacles were dissolved, we have a building with God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. II Corinthians 5:1.

This will be lasting glory, when as the longest day of the worldlings glory lives, is but till the earthly tabernacles be dissolved; their joy and glory amounts to no more than the crackling of thorns under a pot, it is certainly perishing, because it is not anchored in Christ himself. It were well if saints did not suck in too much of this perishing glory. But there is another glory which saints too often sit down in, and too much make their boasts of which is short of the true subject of glory, even Christ himself. And that is circumcision and uncircumcision; Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, externals, forms, outsides, somethings in the way of God when they should only glory in the end, God himself; a soul that truly lives in God, submits to all the will of God, and walks in all the ways of God, revealed to it by the Spirit, but looks upon them all as below his rest. He can fix and glory in none but Christ himself. It often pleases God through mean things to make known himself to his people, and to have communion with his people therein; but he contrives and makes up the salvation, the life, rest, and glory of his people in his own eternal love and free-grace, and would not have his people lie down in the streams, but pass through them into the ocean of his own bosom of love and free grace. It will be a small advantage when Christ comes

to make up his jewels, for any soul to say, I was of this Church, or of that Church, known by this name or the other; circumcised or not circumcised avails not at that day; Christ looks for the new creature, his own image, the work of the eternal love and free grace of God in every soul. The glory of that day will be, God is mine and I am his; his Free Grace is my Salvation, and my Salvation is the work and fruits of his own Eternal Love and Free-Grace. Therefore says the Apostle in I Corinthians 3:22-23, "let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Glory not in men, nor any thing that comes by man, all these are yours in that great gift the Lord Jesus Christ; glory in him exclusively, and only then you have a right subject for your glory, namely God in Christ. Paul and Apollos is yours to use, but not to glory in; Christ and God in Christ is the only center for a saint to rest and glory in. Oh, then away with any lower glory than the Lord himself, he is a never-failing glory, at his right hand are glories and pleasures for evermore. In Revelation 21:23, the glory of God is the light of the New Jerusalem, and the Lamb is the light thereof. It is only God in Christ that is the glory of heavenly souls, therefore let such souls glory in nothing else! It is very unbecoming of the heirs of Canaan to take up their glory in the wilderness provision, much less to hunger after the onions of Egypt. It is not husks with swine, but bread in our Father's house that is our portion as children, then surely our glory should be in God and in Christ the bread of life. All lower glories are the sin and shame of saints; and when God's people do take up lower glories, it pleases the Lord in much mercy to take away those dung glories that his people may be ashamed to glory in anything but himself, who is the everlasting God, inasmuch as the riches of the eternal love and free grace of God hath made himself the inheritance of his people and their glory. It is not presumption, but true interest and the privilege of every saint in point of glory to overlook all of this side God

himself, and not to rest but in the eternal, original love and free grace of God.

I shall conclude with this cordial truth to all the people of God; your real and proper glory can never be taken from you, because it is God himself; the world may hate and persecute saints because of this, but they shall never be able to strip us of our glory, it may be they think to do it when they shall scatter churches and saints from one another; but this is their darkness, as they know not saints proper glory, Christ himself being their glory, and he is the glory of all church-fellowship and communion with saints. Worldlings are mistaken if they think to put out this glory, though God doth many times make use of means in which he makes known himself, yet he is not bound up to any means. If the men of the world could so scatter saints, as they should never see the faces one of another more, yet by this they cannot hinder them from seeing the face of God in Christ, and this is the saints glory. It is an inexpressible glory, that our glory is in God, and that God himself is his people's glory; though the malice of men seems to be boundless, yet certainly their power is bound, they are in fetters and chains before they come to their own home; though they may perfectly envy, yet they cannot in the least disappoint or destroy saints in their glory; God can in a moment unpower and destroy them, but they can never un-God him, they cannot diminish his original eternal love, free-grace and rich mercy, they cannot make him unjust or unfaithful, {though in their darkened minds they shall feel that he is both.} They cannot strip God of his holiness, righteousness, purity, power, perfection, infiniteness, and eternity; therefore they cannot strip saints of their glory, because God in all this, and all he is, in his people's glory. Saints have this glory above a dying world, therefore above the reach of dying men. Oh then Saints, rejoice in the Lord always, glory in God who is fulness of glory; let the world see we have meat to eat which they know not of, and a God to glory in which they can never hinder us of. Let them see that we are already risen with Christ into his glory, and do know that if these earthly tabernacle's were dissolved, nothing could hinder us of the full

enjoyment of our God in glory, who is our God and our glory, so that the Spirit of God hath imprinted in our hearts and lives this precious exhortation, "he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

Chapter 14.

Saints have victory through Christ over death,
and by faith glory in it.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I Cor.15:55-57.

The subject-matter of this whole chapter is death, and the resurrection from the dead. The general scope of these three verses is death and that under a two-fold consideration; death in its strength with its sting, and death under victory bereaved of its sting.

Death is a general subject, it concerns all flesh, for it reaches and puts a period to all flesh; and truly as this and other Scriptures holds it forth, it is a very weighty subject, and is worthy of the most serious meditations and considerations of all dying flesh that is in this life but clay walls and prisons to immortal souls; such frail buildings death shall certainly crack, and leave in the grave till they be crumbled to dust, from whence they were taken; but the weight of death lies not barely in this, as it puts a period to the being and breathing of all flesh, but in the sting of death which is sin, and the strength of sin which is the law, and under these considerations the Apostle takes it in this Scripture, and in I Corinthians 15:55, puts a holy triumphing question, "O death where is thy sting?" Not that he was ignorant what was the sting of death; for in the very next verse he tells us what is the sting of death, and the strength of that sting; but he puts the question to let death know, that in the Free Grace of God through Jesus Christ he had victory over him; as if he had said, death I know that sin is thy sting, and the

law is the strength of sin, but this I know in the Spirit of God, that Christ hath borne my sins, fulfilled the law and satisfied divine justice for my soul, so that now death thou hast no sting in thee for me; Christ in taking sin from me, hath taken thy sting from me; so that now thanks be to God which giveth me victory through my Lord Jesus Christ, I can with glory put this question to thee; "O death where is thy sting?" Death shall certainly sit in the bosom, look in the face, and close the eyes of all flesh; but whether in this presence death appears a friend or an enemy; whether with, or without his sting, this is the great main thing to me inquired after; to be resolved in this, the soul must look up to Christ, behold death first in him. To be more distinct upon this weighty subject, take some particular heads and observations from the words.

First, that union with Christ gives death to sin, gives satisfaction to the law and victory over death. The Apostle does acknowledge that sin is the sting of death and that the law is the strength of sin; but notwithstanding he blesses God for victory over death through our Lord Jesus Christ; so as that which gives victory over death must be the death of sin, and the satisfaction of the law; and that is says the text, our Lord Jesus Christ, union with, propriety and interest in Christ; Christ by dying for his elect body, did not only save them from their sins, in being made sin for them, II Corinthians 5:21, and redeemed them from the curse of the law being made a curse for them, Galatians 3:13, but did thereby give us a victory over death. Christ by taking away sin, bereaved death of his sting, by which Christ conquers death, for all that have union with him, and interest in him; so that through Christ that loved us we are conquerors over death. Death where it has no sting can have no victory, but the death of sin is victory over death. Christ overcomes sin and death by dying, he dies for his people, and his conquest over death was for them for whom he died, so that a believing soul looking upon death through Christ, does triumph as the Apostle here, "O death where is thy sting," and does with Christ reign over death, as an enemy destroyed, and put under his feet. I Corinthians 15:25-26. The believing soul in his union with

Christ is above death, as Christ is above it; not but that the bodies of saints shall for a time sleep in the grave, but death being without its sting, is in that but a servant, to put God's children to bed for a time; till corruption shall have put on incorruption, and mortality hath put on immortality, and then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

The second observation is this, that such as die not in union with Christ, they die under the sting and victory of death. Death is as I may say, death only in the sting; when the sting appears in death, then and then only hath death a grim countenance. It is sin that puts the terror into death, but when the sting of sin was taken away, the Apostle could glory in and over death; but to Christless souls death comes in its full power; it is appointed for all men once to die, and after death to come to judgment. Now to a Christless soul death and sin appears together, and the sting of death which is sin will go along with the soul to judgment; this makes death to be dreadful to such poor souls; and here death is not a servant to lay the body to sleep, but a jailer to bring soul and body in sin before the just and righteous Judge; to a soul out of Christ, it is death to think of appearing before a righteous and holy God; but when death comes, and the soul must certainly appear before this tribunal, this is death indeed, a thousand deaths in one; to such a soul it is death to live, because the sentence will be, go you cursed, this shall be your curse, you shall live forever out of the presence and glorious enjoyment of the ever living, holy, and the glorious God; the sting of death is sin. Where death and sin meets in one soul there death stings to death, and then it is truly death, because it has its sting, and there sin hath its strength, the law of God to accuse, and the curse of that law to condemn to all eternity; thus is death in strength to Christless souls, souls not in union with Christ.

I intend not in this meditation to take in all the parts of this subject, for then I should be very large. Nor shall I in this place take into consideration how Christ has delivered his people from sin and the curse of the law, though both are proper to this Scripture, because I have

done it in some other parts of this book; I shall take that for granted, and confine my meditations to that which I judge to be chief with the Apostles. In this Scripture, which is namely this, the glory and excellency of saints, as we may glory in and triumph over death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

First, a saint through Christ may glory over death in the very nature thereof. Death here is no death, the sting being taken away, it has as it were lost its nature, it is changed, it is not what it was at first; it is the nature of death to devour and destroy, that appears by the sting which is sin; but to Christ death is bereaved of this power, having lost its sting, instead of a destroyer, it becomes a servant, not only to God, but to saints also. Death is through Christ a servant to all saints, to wait on them till they have finished their work on earth in the will of God, and then lays them to rest in the dust; it waits till all the work be done, and then does its work in the appointment of God, resting the weary body from its labours, cracking the clay walls, that the thirsting soul may meet its beloved in perfection of glory; so meet, as never to part more, but to be forever with the Lord, to behold the love of God in glory, and be forever swallowed up in the glory of that love.

Death, which in itself is grim and frightful, is through Christ to a saint welcome and pleasing, because it comes without a sting, and has no other business but to serve God's end, in freeing both soul and body, sets the soul free from the body of death, and the body from a weary and toilsome life. Death is but a sleep in which the body lies, till at the glorious appearance of Christ it rises incorruptible. The nature of death is through Christ but to be our Father's messenger to bring us home, that we may see his reconciled face in glory, and enjoy the mansions prepared for us; that we may taste the love of his heart, know him in himself, reap the full harvest of all our hopes, processing glory above the life of faith, our feasting in heaven will be fruitions, not a crown of glory in promise only, but in actual possession, the joys, the hopes, the desires of a gracious soul in all his life, is by death brought in at once; the joy of this soul is, that the

day draws nigh, in which the body shall be dissolved, and it shall be with Christ; it hopes to meet its beloved in perfect glory, and never part more, it desires to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord; and in all, this death is through Christ a servant to a saints death, hath all its poison in its sting, and Christ taking away the sting from death, has quite changed the nature of it; death with its sting kills where it conquers, but death without its sting only changes the body of saints from worms to cold clay. So Job, he waited all the days of his appointed time till his change came; by death saints change their place, but not their company, whereas before they lived in Christ, now they live with Christ. Saints on earth have communion with God and Christ in the Spirit, and saints in heaven have the same company, but in greater glory. Death changes our place of communion, but not those we have communion with. Saints on earth live upon the love tokens from God and Christ sent to them by the Spirit; but in Heaven upon the original and fulness of all that love. Here by the Spirit we read the love and kindness of God and Christ in a covenant of Free Grace, and many gracious promises; but in Heaven we taste of love in the fountain, in the very bosom of God and Christ to all eternity. Here we glory that glory waits for us in Heaven, there our glory is to be swallowed up into glory, and to be made glorious in the fulness of that glory. In this saints glory over the nature of death, it does not kill them, but changes them from a cloudy, to a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and as for the bodies of saints, it may be said of them as Christ did of the young ruler's daughter, she is not dead but sleepeth. Death changes them in this, their sleep is something longer than at other times, yet they are not dead but sleep, for Christ is the life of saints and because Christ lives, they live also. John 14:19. Their clay is colder in this sleep than in others, and by degrees crumbles into dust; here is a change indeed, and it is no more; for this corruptible must put on incorruptible, and this mortality must put on immortality, and then it will fully appear that death is swallowed up in victory. I Corinthians 15:53-54. The nature of death is changed by Christ's taking the sting away, from being the

king of terrors, it becomes the messenger of glad tidings; death is now so free from terrors that it brings tidings of the greatest joy to saints, as it tells the spouse of Christ that she shall go and be forever in her Beloved's arms. Your wilderness days are accomplished, in which you went many times to the watchman to inquire for your Beloved, and you found them in the dark as well as yourself; but now you shall find your Beloved, and be filled with his love, and live in the light of the Lord forever.

Death tells the children of God that he is come to fetch them home to their Father's house; yea, to their Father's Kingdom, in which they shall all reign with him. They shall be as children under age no longer, they shall now possess the mansions prepared from eternity to eternity, not only have all tears been wiped from their eyes, but to live forever in the beholding and enjoying perfection of glory. Death brings glad tidings both to body and soul; it tells the body that you shall ache no more, stomach you shall be sick no more, heart you shall tremble and be afraid no more, flesh you shall bleed and smart no more; I am come to put an end to all these fears and troubles. God will lock you up in the cabinet of the earth, that you may there sleep in peace till Christ raise you incorruptible and carry you into glory. And to the soul says death, you shall have no more time for sin and vanity; perfect holiness to eternity shall now swallow you up, I come only to put an end to sinning days; you shall now groan under sin no more, that body which held you, and was subject to temptations, shall now go to sleep in the dust till the tempter be chained up in eternal darkness; instead of mourning under sin, you shall now forever glory over sin, your fears shall end, so shall your faith; for instead of the evidence of things not seen, you shall both see and enjoy the heights, breadths, depths, and lengths of the love, grace, kindness, faithfulness, and the glory of that God you have believed in. Fear not me says death, I come from your Father, so as you may be sure I have no commission to hurt you; Christ your beloved Husband, Brother, Head, and Redeemer took care that I should not be able to hurt you, for he took my sting from me before I should come unto you. I am come

without a sting to tell you that God and Christ loves you; but that is not all my errand, they love you so well, that they can suffer you no longer to be out of the full enjoyment of their love, and I am sent to crack the clay walls which is your prison, that you may fly home, and be at rest; there your rest shall be as high as Heaven, and filled with God, where no troubles can ever reach you, nor no power be able to unrest you; this is the true nature of death to saints, Christ having taken sin from them, which is the sting of death; so that in all this, and exceedingly more may believing saints glory in the very nature of death.

Secondly, a saint through Christ may glory over death in the time of it, though it be as certain in the time of its coming, yet that hinders not a saints glory. For a believing saint knows whenever death comes, it shall be without a sting; and this made the Apostle to glory, in Philippians 1:21, "for me to live, is Christ; and to die, is gain." If death stay longer before it comes, yet I can glory in the length of time, for to me to live, is Christ; and in the strength of Christ I can wait patiently all the days of my appointed time, till in the will of God my change shall come. And if death be at hand, and settle itself in my bosom the next moment, yet herein I have glory, for to die, is gain.

A believing saint can tell death he has his time as well as his work appointed him; you have both your time and your power given you by my Father, and though to me it is a secret when your time shall be, yet in the Spirit of God this is revealed to me, whenever you come, the love of God my Father comes with you, and your work shall be to have me home, that I may feed upon the banquets of love forever. Therefore says such a soul, I fear not the time of your coming, but wait patiently for it in the will and Spirit of God; yet in all that time, thirst earnestly to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.

The uncertain time of death may justly be sad and amazing to such as have their good things, and their portion of good only in this world, and that by term of life, for here death crops all in a moment, and they are left empty, though their barns be full as the fool in the

Gospel; but to such a soul, whose life is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ who is it's life shall appear, we shall then appear with him in glory. Here the uncertain time of death can be no disadvantage, because Christ to this soul is eternal life, so that it lives certainly and eternally with Christ in God, Colossians 2:3-4, it hath a certain life, and therefore can glory in it, and over the uncertain time of death. II Corinthians 5:1, "we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Though we know not the time of the dissolution to this earthly tabernacle, yet this we know, when it shall be, it will be a time of advantage, for we leave a tabernacle that may and must be dissolved, to possess a building of God, an eternal mansion house in heaven. Therefore says a believing soul, "death I can glory in thy time, for Christ hath made thee my friend by taking my sins, which was thy sting, away from thee, and now I long and earnestly desire to see thy face; O death my friend; if I must wait yet a few days or years before the appointed time shall come for thee to lay my weary body asleep in the dust, yet I do see the beauty of my Father's will in that, but if thou be presently at hand, thou art truly welcome, if the next moment be thine for me, it is a blessed moment, the moment of my first entrance into the full fruition of blessedness, this thy time is the time of wiping all tears from my eyes, and revealing all glory to my soul; of putting an end to all misery, and the beginning of joys without end, thy time is my triumphing, my waited, hoped, longed for moment; I did tell the world that scorned me that I was an heir of glory, had mansions and a crown prepared and waiting for me in my Father's glory; and art thou now come O death to fetch me home, to bring me to Christ my Head, with whom I shall forever possess that glorious inheritance, which I have gloried in, this is a blessed time and moment, in which I beheld thy face, thou art not come before thou art welcome, I have nothing to stay me here, I waited long for thee, my God and Father is in Heaven, so is Christ my beloved there, perfection, purity is only there, my treasure is there, so is my heart also, and art thou now come to set me clear

of this corrupt empty perishing world, that I may be only there and forever there; O blessed be the Lord that thou art come, thy time is a welcome time, a time of deliverance from sinning in the body, and the body of sin, thy moment puts an end to all hours of temptation; and though the men of the world may trample over my clay, yet my soul shall triumph in real glory above this imaginary glory." Thus may a believing soul glory over death in the time of it.

Thirdly, a believing saint through Christ may glory over the fears of death. Whatever fears there be in death they are only to Christless souls, for souls in Christ may glory over them all, because to them death hath no sting, as first the grand fear in death is this that it may prove eternal, the hailing of soul and body out of the world, to come before the righteous Judge of the quick and dead, where it shall receive this sentence; go you cursed into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels forever. This is more than a fear, for it is really so to Christless souls, where death comes with his sting in him; but when the sting is gone this fear is gone too, and the believing soul in Christ may glory over death as it is bereaved of his sting, and so over death in this great fear. The Scripture tells us, it is appointed for all men once to die, and after death to come to judgment; that is, to come before the righteous Judge, but the description which the Word of God gives us of that day, is, that there shall be a right and a left to distinguish between the sheep and the goats on his left hand. "Depart from me you cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt.25:41, so to the sheep on his right hand he will say, "come you blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt.25:34. The fear in death is a fear of judgment, but the judgment day is a blessed day to all the members of Christ; it is that day when soul and body shall meet again to be blessed forever, in inheriting of the Kingdom prepared for them, it is the day of the bodies full redemption and eternal nuptial with the soul; this day is so far from administering fear in death to souls in Christ, that is the comfort in which those earthly tabernacles go

to the dust; believing that what is sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption, what is sown in dishonour shall be raised in glory, and what in weakness shall be raised a spiritual body. I Corinthians 15:42-44. So that the fear of eternal death and judgment is wholly taken away from this natural death, where Christ hath taken away the sting.

But secondly, the men of the world will tell you, they are afraid of death because it cuts them all from their worldly delights, they can find no other fault with the world but that it perishes, could they enjoy it forever though there be many briars in this wilderness, yet they could make their Canaan in it, so that they might never be stripped of it; but they know when death shall once close their eyes, they must bid adieu to all their worldly delights never to see or enjoy them more, and upon this consideration as well as the former, death is the king of fears and terror unto them.

But it is quite contrary with the soul in Christ, he concludes if his hopes and comfort were only in the world, he were of all men most miserable, he blesses God for every wilderness mercy, but he lives only in God himself, it is his joy to look upon the world as perishing and his body a decaying, for the top of his glory and the expectation of his soul, is to be dissolved and to be with Christ. He counts the worldlings choice of mercy to be the greatest misery, to be ever in the world would be worse than ten-thousands of deaths to his body; his pantings are to be absent from the body, that he might be fully present with the Lord, he doth acknowledge God to be glorious in his footstool but as an heir of God, he thirsts to be in the glory of his throne, if you tell him of pleasures and delights in the world, his answer is that communion with God is full of pleasure and delight wherever it be, but says he, "the world cloudeth these joys, and eclipseth this communion, therefore O that I were stripped of this dying flesh that I might have full communion and fellowship with God in the spirit, that I might drink freely of the waters of life in the fountain." This soul esteems all the delights and pleasures of the world to be amongst the wise man's vanities, and having tasted Christ the bread

of life in his Father's house, and in him the love of his Father's heart, can neither feed upon nor delight in the empty husks of this perishing world. If any ambitious worldling tells him it is very good to be honourable, "I" says he, "if you mean that honour which flows from being precious in the sight of God, and having an interest in his love." Isaiah 43:4. He gives this one answer to the worldling in all his proposals, of pleasure and beauty in this life; says he, God is the beauty of the whole creation as the original fulness of it, so that it wholly depends upon his will, and that which is our glory is God himself, who is the glory of heaven and earth, though the world withers yet he is forever glorious and he is his people's glory; therefore the worldlings fear in death upon this account is not a saint's fear, for his glory is out of the world even in Christ, and his delight and affections are in things above not in things on the earth, and that is because he is risen with Christ; his affections are risen before his body is dead, the delight of his heart is in Heaven, though the flesh of it be in his body. This soul is crucified with Christ to the world, and the world to him, Galatians 6:14; so that neither his joys nor his fears are with the worldling. If death can only strip him of the world, he hath no cause to fear death, nay death comes too late in that, for he through Christ is dead to the world while he lives, and is above all the fears of death, because his life is hid with Christ in God.

But says the worldling, "I am afraid of death because it takes me away from all my sweet relations here on earth." I must die to them and they to me, it is true indeed; but herein the believing soul is no loser, he leaves the drops of corrupted creatures love to be swallowed up into the ocean of God's power and eternal love; he leaves those broken cisterns of love, which in a little time would leave him, and is taken up into the Father, and the fountain of love in the glory of love and free grace forever; he now comes to taste love in the original, and reads it as it was in the heart of God to him from eternity, and shall be to eternity in the fulness of God's love, so full that there will not be the want of any sweet or relation, for all will be made up in God. There is

no complaining in the streets of this New Jerusalem, no want of relations, God will be a Father, Christ will be a husband, saints glorified our brethren, sisters and associates to all eternity, we shall want no relations in Heaven, nor shall any relation there want perfection, for all there shall be complete in Christ and filled with the fulness of God. We leave a world of wants, and it is to possess a heaven of fulness and glory. "I," but says a tenderhearted father or mother, "will not my children, my little babes want me?" Truly no, for your work in the decree of Heaven is done before God suffers death to cut your thread of life, and it is our unbelief that tells us it were better either for us or ours that we had more work in the world than God has appointed us, had we more days we could not in them make a hair black or white, we could not in ourselves add that little to our little ones. Our Father's kindness will be our children's comfort; and he lives when we are dead to them and alive with him, the presence of God with our children will be their blessed portion though we be absent. To believe in this his love and faithfulness will be a blessed rest to us and ours, we shall leave them well in leaving them with God; and need not fear the leaving them when we are going to God, death in taking us from our children, to carry us home to our Father will advantage us and not disadvantage ours, for though he fills us with all fulness of love and glory in Heaven, yet he is nevertheless full, but can also fill our children on earth, and such as taste of his love and grace have no cause to doubt of the freeness and fulness hereof. "I," but says the flesh, {it may be of a saint,} "I am afraid of the pains of death in dying." Truly this is a fear of our own creating, for how many thousands go out of the world when bystanders can scarce tell whether they sleep or die; but grant it that the pains of death be strong upon thy flesh, yet take this with thee, it is all the pains that ever thy flesh shall bear, men to live a dying life are oftentimes content to have their limbs cut from their bodies which I believe is far more pain to the body than when death cracks it to let out the soul, but the gain far exceeds, thus is soul and body at ease both, when the other is but the dying of one limb a little before the rest

of the body, it is but the deferring of death and it may be many deaths assaults the body in that time. This is but a bugbear in the fancy to fright children, not worth the naming amongst saints, let God break what he will, when he will, and how he will, he makes all good again to his people in himself. It was Christ's end in taking the sting from death not to leave any ground of fear for his people, so that believing saints through Christ may truly glory in and over death and all the fears of it.

Fourthly, believing Saints through Christ may glory over death in the manner of it. Whether it be according to the terms we use for distinction, either natural or violent death, yet to a saint through Christ it is in both but death without a sting, and that which our flesh calls the worst of these, the violent death, God has and does make to be the portion of many of his dear saints; the prophets, apostles, and those glorious primitive Christians did many {if not most of them} drink of this cup, and did it with so much joy in Christ, that the tyrants of those times were more unable to invent cruel deaths, then they were to undergo them; and the reason is visible, for though these deaths had the cruelty of man in them, yet there was also the kindness of God in them, Christ had taken away the sting of death, which was sin, and though men might add to their cruelty, yet they could put no sting into death. The martyrs of late times as histories tell us, have gone leaping and rejoicing to the stake, being joyful in the embracing of flames; and as one said to his fellow martyr, "be of good cheer, though our breakfast be sorrow, yet our supper will be sweet in Heaven," as if he had said, though these flames brings smarts with them, yet they will put an end to all smarts, this is all the sting that is in death, and it will soon have an end; we shall sup with our beloved Jesus, and abide in that love forever; it is sin in death that makes it bitter, whatever the manner be; but if sin be taken away, there is no sting in death, let the manner be what it will, it is all one to a saint where he meets with death, whether in the field or at home in his bed, whether it takes him in his greatest strength, with his bones full of marrow, or in his decaying state, when his eyes grow dim, and his other

facilities fade; he minds not the manner of dying, but the matter of death, death is without a sting; so that where, when, or how death comes into his bosom, that is of little value with him; he only minds this to find death a friend without its sting, and then through Christ he glories in and over both the matter and manner of death.

Fifthly, a believing saint through Christ may glory over death in the end of it. There are two main ends in death which is proper to saints. The first is to put an end to a dying life, to finish that work which begins so soon as we begin to live in these bodies of clay. Man begins to die, so soon as he begins to live, because the whole life is but a progression of death, or a dying life; all the time we live we die invisibly, and when we die indeed, it is but visible death; that which we carry about with us in the world then appears to carry us out of the world; that which sleeps with us, many a short sleep, now casts us into one long sleep, this is properly the end of death in Saints, to put an end to all dying; for it is a real truth, though a mystery to the world, that saints die whilst they live, and live when they die; so that this end of death is a saints glory, not his grief, not what he fears, but what he hopes for, counting himself most miserable of all men, if deaths end were not to put an end to his dying life.

The other main end in death is to pluck up the flowers of heaven that grows in the earth by the roots, that they may be planted in their own kingdom, and flourish there forever. I mean those precious souls of saints which are here enclosed in those earthly mounds of our bodies, by which the beauty of those heavenly flowers are exceedingly short of that glory they shall have with Christ above, and do many times taste and savor of the earth they grow in. Christ is the proper root of those branches, and Heaven the only place for them to grow and flourish in; now death comes only to transplant them from Earth to Heaven, to crumble that clay into dust which holds these flowers of Heaven so fast, that they cannot get home into their own kingdom. Now a saint may well glory over this end of death, for death is herein the souls servant to bring it home to glory, and to un-prison it from all the bonds it lies under.

But lastly, a believing saint through Christ may glory over death in its victory. My meaning is, the victory which saints have over death; death in the will of God lays saints to sleep in their corruptible bodies; but saints through their union with Christ rise again, and that in incorruption; though it go to the dust corrupt and noisome clay, in dishonour and in weakness like a natural body, yet Christ will raise it again a spiritual body, full of power and glory. There is no loss to saints in dying, no not to their corruptible flesh for that has an interest in Christ, and Christ having conquered death for his people, though their bodies shall by death be sown in corruption, yet they shall not lie there forever; the grave shall have no victory, but shall give up its dead, and such as rise in Christ, shall rise as Christ, spiritual bodies. Though the earth shall have leave to root the corruption of the body of saints, yet Christ will preserve his interest, and raise it as the fruit of his redemption and resurrection, even a spiritual body. Death has its office, and the grave its proper work; but Christ has the command of both, when death hath laid the bodies of saints in the dust, there is the end of his office, and when the grave hath swallowed up the corruption of those bodies, then it's work is done too; but then Christ hath an eternal work in his hands, to raise it a spiritual body, that the fulness of his redemption made be made up, so as that soul and body, both may be filled with the fulness of his redemption; and in this work Christ commands both death and grave to give up their dead bodies and then he spirits his own, suitable to that eternal life which they are to possess. The Scripture tells us, that Christ is risen from the dead, and became the first fruits of them that slept. I Corinthians 15:20. That is, Christ is first in the resurrection, but so as he is the first-fruit, a testimony of resurrection to all that sleep, and in Romans 8:11, the Apostle tells us, that the same power which raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken our moral bodies by his Spirit. So, in I Thessalonians 4:16, "for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first." I mention these Scriptures to show the victory that Saints have in

Christ over death and grave, and to me they have full satisfaction and ample proof in them to the thing in hand, that neither death can hurt, nor grave hold so much as the body of a saint in Christ; but on the contrary, that the very bodies of saints have victory over death in dying, and that saints have exceeding cause to glory over death under this consideration as well as all or any of the former.

I shall next take into consideration in some few particulars the benefits and advantages that believing saints through Christ have by death, both in our souls and bodies; I will begin with the bodies. First, death frees us from all the natural infirmities and diseases of our bodies. One complains that wind makes a torturing tumult all his body over, the bowels and the body full, and they fill the head, so that there is no free part. Another complains that flux of water hath filled his veins, chilled his blood, and ruined his joints, so that aches are in all his bones.

A third complaint is that gravel lies in his veins, tears his kidneys, and stops his bladder, so that his whole life is as it were upon the torturing rack. There be many more complainers besides these which go from man to man to make their moan, and beg their help for a little ease, though but for a little time, which sometimes they find, but often return from fellow-creatures as miserable as they came; but when death comes without his sting, he makes a perfect cure of all sorrows and pain forever. Among creatures we seek ease with tears, but death brings full and lasting ease, and wipes away all tears from our eyes; death puts an end to hunger and thirst, to cold and nakedness, to labour and weariness; in short to all wants, and to all woes. The grave is quiet, it is the only piece of quiet earth that man can meet withal; though a little above the grave on the earth there be cryings out, and complainings, yet the grave is quiet, nothing can disturb the rest and quiet of that bed, it is not capable of disturbance, therefore exceeding useful to rest in. This I assure you is a greater benefit than all the living world enjoys besides, crowns have their crosses, states their cracks, all persons and things their wants, every person, state, condition, and thing under the sun wrapped up in

vanity; all wants are buried nowhere but in the grave of death; the body of man never bids adieu to all want till it be embraced in the arms of death, and laid to rest in that quiet center of the earth; but when death comes without its sting, it brings this certain benefit and advantage with it.

A second benefit and advantage of the body of saints in death without its sting, is this, it takes from the worlds scorn and cruelty. When the bodies of saints are in the grave, worldlings must seek some other object for their slander, scorn, or cruelty; they will find no sap or moisture in the dust of saints to feed these lusts withal; the derision and persecution of God's dear Saints on earth, is the past time and practice of sinning souls; like the fly that sports itself about the candle till she have burned her wings; but God hath his time to ease his people of this burden, and if not before, yet certainly and fully when death comes, is this work effected. Saints whilst they live in the body, are with their spirits above the world's scorns and cruelties; but when death comes, then the body gets beyond them too; so that here is another benefit in death, it frees them from the scorns of fools, and the cruelty of cruel men. The wicked worldlings counts a saint to be the only troubler of the people, and place wherein he lives; but when death comes to a saint, he is very willing to leave the world, their portion, and their elbow room, he is not desirous to trouble them any longer; all he desires is a little earth to lie down to sleep in, and that the world is content withal, wishing that all the rest were there too. This is a benefit which a saint with submission to the will of God desires many an hour before it comes, he is as willing to be at home in his own inheritance as the worldling is to have him out of his, now death crowns these longings in Saints, and brings in the harvest of many prayers which the Spirit hath made for this very thing, so that in these and many more particulars is death beneficial and advantageous to the body of saints. But I shall mention two generals in which death without its sting is through Christ exceeding advantageous and beneficial to the souls of believing Saints.

First, it delivers them from the body of sin, a place of temptations and darkness which is the whole complaint of saints, whilst they are in the flesh. The Apostle Paul complains of the law in his members, which rebelled against the law of his mind and of the body of death, and how often doth the prophet David pray to be kept from temptations and to be enlightened in his darkness, that God would show him the way he should walk in and make his paths straight. Saints desire to be unclothed of the body of flesh because they are capable of sinning in that body, nay it is a body which tempts to sin, and in which the soul is under much darkness, and therefore groans within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Romans 8:23. It is very sweet to be delivered from temptations that they get not the upper hand, so as to lead the soul captive at their will, but to be above the reach of all temptations where we can never possibly be tempted more. How exceeding precious and glorious is this, a saint would, if it were in his power give the whole world so that he might never sin more, it must then needs be of great advantage to him to be carried above the reach of any temptation to sin. You shall never meet a saint at the throne of Grace but his breathings are, Lord enlighten me in thy will, make thy mind clearer and clearer out unto me by thy Spirit, leave me not in the darkness of my own flesh. Now then, how precious must it needs be to this soul to be taken out of all clouds, to have all clouds even the clouds of the flesh done away, so that not the least shadow of darkness does remain.

Why all this and much more is the advantage of a saint's soul in the death of his body, for this death without the sting of sin is death to the body of sin that it can be no more a body to sin in, it separates light and darkness, the soul and body, that both might go to their proper place and then the soul complains no more of darkness; it is dark clay that hinders the souls light, when it is quit of that it is perfect in light, and this makes saints so thirsting to shake off the rags of flesh, their clouds of darkness, their places of temptation, and their sinning body. Now when death comes he satisfies all these thirstings, fills up all these desires, and accomplishes the

present design of God concerning the fleshly body, in which the precious souls of believing saints are through Christ abundantly benefited and advantaged, but this is not all the benefit and advantage which death without its sting through Christ brings to the souls of believers; there is another general which is this.

The soul is now taken up into the perfection of God's eternal love, free grace, full glory, everlasting purity, and thus to be forever with the Lord. When I say this comes in with death, I mean it is then so perfected as it could be never so before, for the bodies of saints must be sown in corruption before they can rise in incorruption, and the soul is never perfect till it be quit of the corruptible body and this evil world, but this being once accomplished, then a soul in God and God in the soul makes up perfection to all eternity; the soul has now no hinderance to the full enjoyment of his Master's joy, it is now a child of full age, nothing can hinder him in possessing his full inheritance in his Father's love and glory. The mansions prepared from all eternity are now possessed to all eternity, the love which lay hid in our Father's heart, and was too great to be revealed in the world, is now spread open to the soul, and the soul is bid to partake of these heavenly treasures. Oh, drink abundantly and be satisfied, this feast of love will hold out forever, eternity cannot exhaust it, it is the love of God, this is the supper of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world in the design of God's Free Grace, this mystery is now revealed and the souls of saints filled with the glory of it. Saints in Heaven are in the light of the Lord and all filled with the Lord their light; perfection is there the portion of every soul; Christ has given up the Kingdom to his Father, and God is the perfection and fulness of all his children. This perfection of glory is God's in redeeming his elect that we might be heirs of God, fellow-heirs with Christ in his eternal love, full glory and everlasting purity, never to know sin or sorrow more, to be above the breathings of any defilement or the buddings of any vanity. What we shall then possess will be nothing but all God, it will be all God and always God, God will be the light of our eyes, the life of our souls, the excellency of

our glory, the sweet of our sweet, and the perfection of our purity, in Heaven. Heaven is the presence of God, the full, perfect, glorious, and the eternal presence of God will be our Heaven when death has laid our dying bodies asleep, when the corruptible sleeps away it's corruption, the incorruptible soul possesses a crown incorruptible and full of glory, so that the time of death without its sting is through Christ to a believer of great benefit and advantage, both in soul and body. Saints in Christ ought to improve the joys and consolations which comes from the Free Grace of God to their souls, amongst which I am sure this truth is very eminent and therefore ought to be well improved, and first this calls upon believing Saints, {to whom through Christ, death whenever it comes will be without the sting of sin,} that they should not have sad or hard thoughts of death. We should not make fear in our flesh or spirits to be the associate of the thoughts of death, there is no cause for it, the sting being taken away. By this needless and unbelieving fear of death in saints we do prejudice ourselves and bring an evil report upon our friend; first we prejudice ourselves, so through a fearful fancy of evil and danger in death, we many times do what we should not, and leave that undone which we ought to do; how many stretch their consciences to do that which they have no rule for and otherwise would not do but that they fear it may cost them their lives if they should not, and how much duty is neglected upon this very consideration, upon a fear in doing to lose or endanger life, the fear indeed is to meet with death in doing, therefore choose rather to omit duty, but it is safe and blessed through Christ to meet death in duty. Sad and hard thoughts of death I verily believe do much prejudice saints in their straight and even walking with God through this wilderness; it were helpful that if in reading we could read our own hearts.

But secondly, these fleshly fears of saints bring an evil report upon death, which through Christ is our real friend. It is very unbecoming saints to scandalize any, but that we should do this to death who is so real a friend to us, and the messenger of such glad tidings as what has gone before proves him to be, this is very disingenuous.

If saints look upon him with a fearful eye he will then be taken for an enemy to all the world, for to others he comes with his sting, so as they have just cause to fear, but to all saints death is a reconciled friend in Christ, and we do him injury whenever we look upon him as any other, nay truly we dishonour Christ to fear death after he has conquered him. The redemption of Christ for his people is so full that they may and ought to serve him without fear, the victory over death is part of the redemption of Christ, so that now the fear of death is no less than diffidence of that redemption. Saints should be very watchful that they harbor no sad nor hard thoughts of death, because in so doing we dishonour a true friend, nay Christ that made death thus to be our friend.

In the next place, this calls upon saints that when death comes to sit in our bosoms, we should bid him truly welcome, and give him the entertainment of a friend, that is, be truly joyful to see him, let him find by the joy of our hearts that he is welcome to our bosoms, let his countenance be pleasing to us, for though he be pale death to our flesh yet that flesh shall be a gainer by its paleness, and find nothing in death but a quiet rest till it shall put on incorruption, but to the spirit, death is a messenger from God and Christ of glad tidings, and the feet of those which bring glad tidings should be beautiful to us, let death when he comes find he is a long looked for friend, that he is not come before he is welcome, but should have been welcome if he had come much sooner; that thou dost take him for so good and so real a friend that thou art heartily willing to go with him and to leave all thy friends in the flesh, that thou hast kept them company until he comes, and now art willing to leave them all to go with him. Saints may well bid death welcome as a friend, for Christ is in him and the love of Christ possesses him; when Christ took sin from saints which was the sting of death, he gave them love in the room of sin, for as before we had sin in all, now we have love in all, and though death to saints have not the sting of sin, yet it has the love of Christ, and is worthy to be bid welcome and entertained with gladness, when he comes.

But in the next place, this calls loud to saints that they believe strongly in that love of Christ who has taken away the sting of death, which is sin, and thereby made death that was an original enemy to be a true and constant friend. The Scripture tells us, I Corinthians 15:26, "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Now death as an enemy to saints is destroyed in the death of Christ, for his sting which is his enmity is taken away by Christ. That I infer is this, saints have much cause to believe strongly in that love, the strength of which has overcome all enemies for us, Christ has overcome death, the last of enemies, why should we ever then fear the fading of that love which has left no enemies to make us afraid. Saints fears are of their own creating, for whatever might have been a true cause of fear has been under Christ destroyed, for he has destroyed all enemies and where no enemy is, there is no true ground of fear; what remains then? Why nothing but a firm and lasting foundation of faith, the love of Christ is a strong foundation for a saint to believe strongly in. What should we fear, death is our friend, the love of Christ has made him so, the breakings forth of this love is ground sufficient to banish all fears; if death be no enemy, then there is no enmity between death and us, for death is the last destroyed enemy, and the love of Christ has destroyed that enmity.

Saints have many that hate them but none that can hurt them! Take this for proof, death is a saints friend, there can be no greater testimony of love than the destroying of enemies, for no man will destroy the enemies of him that he is an enemy to himself, enmity would make enemies; it is only love that destroys them, and this love is Christ to his people. His love is so great that he will leave us no enemy; that is, no person, persons, or things shall ever be able to destroy a saint, then surely saints may and ought to believe strongly in the love of Christ, as worldlings know their nails are too short to scratch out this love, their strength too weak to shake this eternal foundation; if they suck our bloods they may choke themselves, but do us no hurt, for through the love of Christ saints are conquerors over death. Saints

may believe strongly on the love of Christ, for a worse enemy than the world shall never be able to destroy them, even sin; for Christ has destroyed sin, and in that death, for all that believe in him, so as a saint triumphs over death in the want of its sting, is in the love of Christ which has taken away sin, and this is that love which the souls of saints should believe in, and rest strongly upon. Saints need not fear, they cannot lay more upon this love than Christ is able and willing to bear; nay, that he has borne already, for he has borne all the transgressions, iniquities, sins, grief, sorrows, stripes and chastisements of his people. Isaiah 53. So that he has redeemed his from the whole of sin; and believing saints may not fear to venture their souls in all upon the love of Christ; nay doubtless it is the duty of Saints to live, believing strongly in the love of Christ, which has put death to death, and overcome all enemies for them.

But in the fourth place, saints should make this improvement of these truths to wait upon God patiently in believing. Death will assuredly come and deliver them from all their troubles in the flesh. Faith made Job to wait patiently all the days of his appointed time till his change did come. There is an appointed time in which the change shall come and beyond that time it shall not stay; there can be no loss of faith in this thing; for death waits upon our Father's will, and shall certainly come at his appointed time. I confess it is hard for saints that are heirs of heaven and know it willingly to stay longer out of heaven, and their heavenly Father's embracings, and in that time to be in a body of sin, and a sinful world, to bear the infirmities of the body, with the scorn, slanders, and persecutions of the world; yet remember that this is the fulfilling of the will of our God, and all this time death our friend is a coming; every moment brings this longed for blessing nearer and nearer, and we cannot tell but it may be at the door, that death may be in the next moment in the world's fear; let it be a saints joy, and serve to quench immoderate thirst; here is this to answer all fears it will certainly come, and cannot be far off. Christ longs more for us than we do or can do for him and though we think him long, yet he that shall come, will come, and will not

tarry. Remember the body is made of brittle earth, it will be soon cracked, or molder away, it cannot by its constitution last long; the word of truth calls him a fool that counted upon many years when he was in clay; the flour soon fadeth, the grass is soon withered, the shadow soon gone, and the weavers shuttle passes swift away, and this is the time of our flesh in Scripture account. Consider again the waiting is but a moment, compared with the time of enjoying; the next moment may end the one, but the other is eternal without end, and the first entrance into our Father's glory will take quite away the remembrance of all sorrows and sufferings here below; nay the very beholding of death without his sting will make us amends for all our waiting. Now surely saints have great reason to wait for God's time patiently and believingly; though we be at present in the wilderness, yet Canaan cannot be afar off, and Christ will go with us all the wilderness way to bring us into Canaan, he is faithful which has promised never to leave nor forsake his people, the waiting time shall not be wholly without him, but when that time is accomplished, then we shall be fully and forever with him, therefore our waiting should be in faith and patience on the will of God, all the days of his appointed time for us.

And lastly, the whole life of saints should be a life of holy joy in God, and a glorying through Christ over sin, death and the grave, believing saints should live up those joys which accompany death without the sting of sin; they should glory in the free grace of God and the God of all grace. They should glory in the redemption of God's free grace; and as the Apostle here makes a holy triumph over death without its sting of sin and over the grave, which has no victory, but must give up those bodies which are sown in corruption to be raised in incorruption. We should let the world know how kind a God we have, that will not leave any sting in death, or victory in the grave, but puts an end to sin, and thereby an end to all sorrow, which makes death the worldlings fear to be our friend, and the time of stripping us from the world's dying beauty, to be the time of filling us with his own glory. Saints may well glory over death, that have God and Christ for their life;

saints may safely question with death about his sting; when Christ hath taken it away for us, we may safely glory in the times of deaths approach, and the hour of his coming; when as Christ hath taken away his sting from him, we may truly say, there is no God like our God, no beloved like our beloved; for none but such as have an interest in the love of God and redemption of Christ, can glory over death; for to all others death has his sting, and whenever he comes, comes with his sting. The fear of such hearts to see the face of death, speaks very much of the glory of God's eternal love in Christ to all that believe on him, in taking away the sting out of death, but which means they can glory in, and over death, look death in the face with joy and rejoicing; where death comes with his sting, there is a thousand deaths in one; but to a saint death is no death only a change, or a dissolving to be with Christ. Then let us proclaim this to the world, and so glory in our God, that they may know their perishing idols are no ways to be compared with our real interest in Christ; the day of death that is at hand will fully prove the truth of this, therefore we may boldly say thus, we shall make it good in both living and dying. The glory of a believing saints' death does abundantly exceed the worldlings life; nay indeed, his own life; for though to him it be Christ to live, yet it is gain to die. It is more Christ to die than live; in life saints' glory in Christ as he died for them; but in death they glory in Christ as they lived with him, the first is the glory of purchase, but the latter of possession. In the first we glory in that the inheritance is given, but in the latter that it is received, which makes up perfection of glory. And to saints this is the next step to death without its sting, so that they may hear in glory and triumph as the Apostle, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

FINIS