

THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

IN

the Days of the Gospel.

**As the alone High Priest, Prophet
and King of Saints.**

*"For I determined not to know anything among you, save
Jesus Christ, and him crucified."*

{I Cor.2:2}

By Thomas Collier,

sometimes Teacher to the Church in York.

{Foreword by Hanserd Knollys}

LONDON

**Printed for Giles Calvert, at the Black-Spread-Eagle
at the west end of St Paul's Cathedral.**

Date: 1641

SUPRALAPSARIAN PRESS

The Epistle to the Reader.

Pious Reader, such is the transcendent Excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, that we may say of it, as the Philosopher sometimes spake concerning the soul of Man. "A small and dim understanding of it is to be valued far above any other science;" and the Apostle esteemed all things loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. {Phil.3:8} Now that thou mayst grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, here is offered to thy diligent perusal a little Treatise, wherein Christ is exalted in all his Offices. It contains three parts, the first treats of his Office as High Priest; the second contains his Prophetical Office; and the third handles his Kingly Office. Thou must not expect Excellency of speech, and the enticing words of man's wisdom, but thou mayest {by God's blessing} learn something more of the excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus, and mayest find the tongue of the Learned speaking a word in season to thy weary soul in the plain and powerful evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and such is the excellency of Scripture learning, which contains in it the flower and quintessence of soul-saving knowledge, that it will abundantly satisfy the hungry soul. A man may have excellent knowledge in other things and yet perish; but this is life eternal to know God and Jesus Christ. {Jn.17:3} There are some shinings forth of the eternal Power and Godhead in the creatures, so that the "invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." {Rom.1:20} We know the diffused brightness of the beams of the sun are not so pleasant in large windows, nor can the bright shinings of Him who is invisible be so clearly, sweetly, pleasantly discerned in the creatures, as in the face of Jesus Christ, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily; {Col.2:9;} and in whose face the light of the knowledge of the glory of God hath shined in the hearts of his Justified and Sanctified ones. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." {II

Cor.4:6} And therefore by way of eminence Jesus Christ is called the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person. {Heb.1:3} O how excellent then is the true knowledge of Jesus Christ; and how acceptable will this little Treatise be unto those who with a spiritual appetite are enquiring after the true knowledge of Christ in all his Offices. The Author being far distant from the City, could not see to the correcting of his Book, and it is an usual thing for some faults to escape the Press uncorrected in such a case, which thou mayest amend with thy pen as thou readest; and for any material thing which thou apprehends not sound, carry it to the touch-stone of the Word. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." {I Thes.5:21} And as we would have others moderate in censuring us, go and do thou likewise; and if but a mite of knowledge shall be {through God's blessing} by this his labor added to thy understanding, let God have the glory, and the Author hath his end.

Thy friend, and the Truths Servant, **Hanserd Knollys.**

THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

The alone High Priest of SAINTS.

CHAP. I.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." {Jn.3:14}

This text presents you with the Exaltation of the Lord Jesus, and the manner of it. Occasioned by a discourse between Christ Jesus and Nicodemus; from the beginning of the Chapter, these words being a part of that discourse, and they are the words of Christ, who is Truth itself and cannot lie; the faithful and true Witness; the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last of all truths, and all heavenly mysteries of the Gospel.

The text is divided in two parts: In this Scripture you may be pleased to take notice of two particulars; first, an act to be done, Christ lifted up. Secondly, how it must be done; even as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness, &c. I shall not meddle with that title by which Christ is pleased to describe himself, {the son of man,} though I might note that Christ is the son of man, and so true and perfect man, as well as God. But I shall rather pitch upon the main glorious Gospel truth held forth in this Scripture, and the truth or conclusion is this.

Doctrine: That the Lord Jesus Christ now in the days of the Gospel, is to be lifted up even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Christ is to be lifted up now in the days of the Gospel.

Note. 1. Christ is to be lifted up in the preaching of the Gospel. 2. In the soul of believers.

1. In the preaching of the Gospel, and that first for Justification and Life, as the alone Priest Atonement and Peace-maker between God and his people.

2. Christ is to be lifted up as the alone Prophet to teach; and as the alone King and Lawgiver to his Church and

people; and this is to be done both in the preaching of the Gospel, and in the hearts of believers.

First; in the preaching of the Gospel, Christ is to be lifted up for justification and life, for this was the end for which Christ came into the world. "I am come that they might have life." {Jn.10:10} O beloved, Christ came to give life to dead souls. "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live;" {Jn.5:25;} and this life Christ communicates to his elect; in giving his life to purchase life for his own, who were dead in trespasses and sins. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." {Eph.2:1} And so freely and fully justifies all whom he intends to save. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." {Rom.3:24} And this justification, although free through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, yet we come to participate in that justification by faith. {Rom.3:26-28} And the preaching of the Gospel is the Instrumental means in the hand of God working faith; for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; therefore Christ is to be exalted in the preaching of the Gospel for justification and life, that men beholding him, may have life by him. {Rom.10:14-17}

See this truth confirmed. "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." {Mt.10:27} Note, what doth Christ doth tell his servants in the dark? He tells them that he is their life, {"Christ, who is our life." Col.3:4,} and their light; their justification, reconciliation and peace; and he tells them in the dark, in secret, that there is no light or life to be attained in any creature or thing beneath the Lord Jesus, and Christ having called them to it, this they are to speak in the light, and to preach it upon the house tops, that is publicly, to make it known to all, that men through the blessing of God may come to the sight of it.

This was the commission Christ gave to his Disciples, to lift up Christ for justification and life in the preaching of the Gospel. See Luke 24:47 compared with Mark 16:15,16. In Luke the Text says, "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations;" and in Mark, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every

creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Note that in the first, remission of sins is to be preached; in the second, salvation through believing; and both these exclusively in Christ. Remission of sins in the name of Christ; salvation and life through believing in Christ, who is the alone Justification of believers; so that justification, remission of sins, &c., through Christ is to be held forth to the view of the soul, that the soul who is a sinner may by the power of God come to see the Son; that is, to see that remission of sins and that justification is held forth in Christ, and so come to be made partakers of it by faith. This you shall see further confirmed by a second word from heaven, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life;" {Acts 5:20;} that is, all the words of the Gospel of Christ, the means God hath appointed by the workings of his Spirit, to discover life unto the souls of men.

Secondly, as Christ thus requires it, so likewise the Apostles practice it, for you shall ever find them exalting Christ, so the Apostle Peter, {Acts 4:12,} exalts Christ to the heavens, above all. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved;" but by the Name of Jesus. Hark you; beloved friends, here is Christ exalted, his name above every name, for the remission of sins, salvation; and thus, is Christ to be exalted above all duties, creatures and everything. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." {Acts 5:42} What did they teach and preach of Jesus? They preached Justification by Christ in opposition to all legal righteousness. "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." {Acts 13:39} This is the Sermon; {beloved;} the Apostles preached Jesus Christ dying and rising again. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." {I Cor.15:3,4} This the Apostle Paul preached first of all unto them; justification and life by Christ. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification;" {Rom.4:25;} that Christ died for sin, and was raised again for

justification. This is the first Sermon that you see the Apostle preach; and it is that which he is ever endeavoring to make it more abundantly clear to the souls of the Saints. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." {Rom.10:4} "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." {Rom.3:20-22} "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." {Gal.2:16} Thus, beloved, you see the Disciples of Christ, they cease not to teach and preach Jesus, that Christ is indeed the Messiah promised, {Acts 9:22,} the very Christ; and that he died and rose again for our justification; and that the Saints participate in this justification and life by faith in his blood. Thus the Apostle Peter came preaching and exalting Christ for remission of sins. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." {Acts 5:31} According to Christ's commission, {Lk.24:47,} so is the practice of the Apostles, "preaching peace by Jesus Christ," {Acts 10:36,} who is "Lord of all."

Note: And this they preached as the command of Christ, beloved, and not as the idle fancy of their own brain, as the servants of Christ are now charged by those ignorant of the righteousness of God, going about to establish a righteousness of their own, {Rom.10:3;} but beloved, they, and so, we, that are the Ministers of Christ, thus exalt Christ; preach justification and peace by Christ, by the command of God. "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." {Acts 10:42,43}

Note again; beloved, this is the command of God. Where is it commanded? Why, Mark 16:16,17; "he that believeth shall be saved," that is, shall have his sins pardoned, his person justified, and so be everlastingly saved; that is, by faith the soul comes to eye it, and apply it, to see it and to hand it; for beloved, the word "saved" implies all, that free and full salvation, held forth in Christ to believers, which is a salvation from all their enemies. "That we should be saved from our enemies;" {Lk.1:71;} but especially, and in the first place, that we shall be saved from sin; that we might through faith in his blood receive remission of sins, be saved from sin, for this Jesus signifies a Saviour. See a blessed word in Matthew 1:21. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins;" and this salvation God hath commanded to be preached; this remission and salvation the Prophet witnesseth, {Jer.31:34,} speaking of the Covenant of Grace, the Gospel Covenant, he saith, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more &c.;" and this remission of sin is to be preached among all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem, {Lk.24:47,} and in some measure this hath, and shall be performed. {Acts 13:46-48}

2. Christ is to be exalted and lifted up, as in the preaching of the Gospel, so in the hearts of believers, which I shall endeavor to speak a word unto, before I come to speak of Christ's exaltation in his offices. I say, that he is highly exalted and lifted up in the hearts of all that rightly believe in him, so the Apostle Paul desires to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified, {I Cor.2:2,} and indeed beloved; he that rightly knows Christ crucified, knows enough, therefore the same Apostle saith, "but God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." {Gal.6:14} Christ crucified is a believers only joy, only delight; therefore the Apostle Paul prays, "now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." {Rom.15:13} That God would fill them with all joy and peace through believing, and why; for by believing, the soul comes to enjoy this crucified Christ, and so justification, and peace. {Rom.5:1}

Question: But some may say, how shall I know that I do {not "I do," but rather that "he is" – God has} indeed exalt Christ in my soul? Answer: First, Christ is then exalted in the soul, when the Lord brings over the soul to look upon Christ, as its alone justification. O beloved then is the Lord exalted, when the soul comes to see that there is nothing but emptiness in itself, when the soul can through the power of God cast down all at the feet of Christ, and look upon all its own righteousness as dung and dross in comparison of Christ; so the Apostle Paul, {Phil.3:7-9,} the Apostle having in the 5 and 6 verses laid down what he was once in divers particulars in his own righteousness, he amongst all the grounds, {as once he thought them grounds of comfort,} one and the least was, he walked "as touching the Law blameless;" but what things were gain that is, I counted gain, and rested upon them, I now count them loss for Christ's sake; "yea doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," and ver.9, "and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." O here is a soul exalting Christ above all, laying all his own righteousness low, even as low as dung and dross in comparison of Christ. What saith thy soul to this? Now man, woman, didst thou ever see thine own righteousness, or at least thine own unrighteousness? Hath the Lord opened thine eyes to see a vanity, emptiness in that you once trusted? Hath the Lord let forth a glimpse of his glory into thy soul, shining down in the face of Jesus Christ? Can you say, "Yea doubtless, I account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Is thy soul carried forth above, and beyond thy self to the Lord Jesus Christ as thine alone righteousness? "Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." {Is.45:24,25} In the Lord Christ thou seest thy justification, and in him thou dost glory; thou canst say, God forbid, I should glory in anything below Christ. "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

{Jer.23:6} This is his name by which he shall be called, "the Lord our Righteousness," the Lord our covering, our justification; this is the ground, when thou canst look upon Christ as thy alone righteousness and justification, and so seeing an excellency in the knowledge of Christ in this particular.

Secondly; a soul then exalts Christ, when it looks so upon Christ, as that it is carried with a principle of love after him, and it is by love as it were glued and knit up to him, so the Apostle; "who shall separate us from the love of God?" {Rom.8:35-38} And when love constrains thy soul to follow God, "the love of Christ constrains us," {II Cor.5:14,} and when love so glues and knits thy soul to Christ; when thou canst follow Christ in all conditions, to trial, prisons, death; nothing severs thee from him, when as with Abraham thou goest forth from thine own Country, thy sins, sinful companions, and followeth Christ, not knowing whether thou goest, whether to liberty or prison, that makes nothing with thee. "By faith Abraham...obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went;" {Heb.11:8;} this flows from faith; "faith which worketh by love." {Gal.5:6}

Thirdly, when the Lord Jesus is the alone delight and joy of thy heart, believe it beloved, if the soul exalt Christ rightly, he will be thy delight and joy, thou wilt be able to sing the song of Mary. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour;" {Lk.46:47;} there will be joy and peace come in through believing, "joy unspeakable and full of glory." "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say rejoice." {Phil.4:4}

Fourthly, the soul that truly exalts Jesus, is satisfied in the enjoying of him, and now the soul hath enough, when it hath Christ, let who will have the world, sin, pleasure, "I have Christ," saith the soul, a goodly portion. Now the soul is fitted for any condition, come affliction, persecution, the soul glories in all, because it enjoys God through Christ in all. After the Apostle has mentioned his afflictions, he concludes that he will glory in all. {II Cor.11:30, 12:9}

Lastly, when Christ is all in all to the soul, then doth the soul rightly exalt and lift up Christ, when it enjoys a fullness in Christ in the want of all things, and sees an

emptiness in all things without Christ; this the Apostle could see and say, "he is all and in all." {Col.3:11} Christ is all and in all, he is the way, the truth and the life. {Jn.14:6} He is the light and life of men. {Jn.1:4} He is meat, drink and clothing as we use to say, to the Saints, he is their meat and drink. "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." {Jn.6:55} O beloved, every believer spiritually eats and drinks the flesh and blood of Christ; that is, lives upon Christ, as he doth not build upon ordinary prayers, duties; "No, No, give me Christ," saith the believing soul, Christ in hearing, Christ in preaching, in the Supper of the Lord &c. Believe it, beloved, nothing less than Christ can satisfy the living, the believing soul and likewise in temporal things, the believer sees all purchased for him by the blood of Christ, and so in every situation, he lives upon the flesh and blood of Christ, and believe it beloved, thus every believer lives upon Christ. "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." {Jn.6:53} Harken ye friends; he that doth not thus spiritually eat and drink the flesh and blood of Christ hath no life in him; a sign of a dead soul that lives upon ordinary creatures without Christ.

2. Christ is clothing and covering also, as he covers the nakedness of men and women that believe. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed." {Rev.3:18} What is this clothing? The righteousness of the Saints. "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." {Rev.19:8} The fine linen is the righteousness of the Saints; Christ Jesus is the Saints righteousness. "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} "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS;" {Jer.23:6;} and so the Saints covering. The Saints spiritually enjoy Christ also in their external covering, so that I say, he rightly exalts Christ in his soul, that sees Christ to be all, and in all to him, &c.

I shall now come to the exaltation of Christ in his offices, in the days of the Gospel, Priest, Prophet and King; in these is Christ to be exalted. Christ is the great High Priest of his people, and in this particular he is to be exalted in the days of the Gospel, that is, as the alone atonement and peace maker betwixt God and man. The Levitical High-Priests under the Law were a type of Christ our Great High Priest under the Gospel. Therefore, for my more clear proceeding, I shall endeavor to unfold unto you what was the Office of the High-Priest under the Law. What their office is, and wherein they agree, for those High-Priests in all their administrations, typed forth Christ our Great High Priest.

1. The Office of the High-Priest was to offer sacrifice for the sins of the people. "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually." "And it came to pass on the eighth day, that Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel; and he said unto Aaron, take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the LORD. And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb, both of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering; also a bullock and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD; and a meat offering mingled with oil, for today the LORD will appear unto you; and they brought that which Moses commanded before the tabernacle of the congregation; and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD; and Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commanded that ye should do; and the glory of the LORD shall appear unto you; and Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin offering, and thy burnt offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people; and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded." {Lev.9:1-7} This hath Christ done; he hath offered sacrifice for sin, and herein Christ doth not only agree with those High-Priests in offering sacrifice for sin, but he differs also, excelling those High-Priests, for they offered sacrifice it is true, but it was the flesh and blood of creatures,

a lamb, a ram, goats, bulls, &c. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" {Heb.9:13,14} Christ offered not the blood of goats and calves, but his own blood, {Heb.9:12,} his own body. {Heb.10:10} Christ hath offered himself a sacrifice. "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." {Eph.5:2} So you see Christ exceeds in the very first, in the offering, in the Sacrifice; he offers his own body, his own blood upon the cross a sacrifice for sin, and indeed those legal sacrifices were but a type of Christ our sacrifice, and in themselves could not do away sin, but as they directed to Christ, therefore Christ is called the Lamb slain from the beginning, or from the foundation of the World. {Rev.13:8}

2. The High-Priests by offering sacrifice were to make atonement and peace for their own sins, and for the sins of the people. "And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin offering, and thy burnt offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people; and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded." {Lev.9:7} The Priest for the unclean woman, was to offer a sin offering, and a burnt offering, to make an atonement for her before the Lord; {Lev.15:30;} this was the end wherefore he went into the holy place, {Lev.16:3,} to make an atonement for the children of Israel before the Lord. {vs.34} This Christ our High Priest hath done; harken you beloved, Christ our High Priest hath offered sacrifice, and by his sacrifice he hath put away sin, made an atonement, that is peace and reconciliation between God and man. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." {Rom.5:10} Note, here is Christ reconciling by his death, Christ a sacrifice dying, and so reconciling; you shall see all along the Scripture, that it is Christ a Sacrifice, Christ dying; that is, our Reconciliation, our Atonement, and Peace. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ;"

{Eph.2:13;} "he is our peace," {vs.14,} "having abolished in his flesh the enmity, &c.," {vs.15,} "and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross, &c." {vs.16}

You see Christ hath made peace by his blood, having abolished in his flesh the enmity of the Law, made reconciliation by his cross. And making peace how? Through the blood of his cross. {Col.1:20} It is by the blood of his cross, by his death, wherein he offered himself a Sacrifice for sin, that he hath made peace for all his people.

Note in this also; that Christ our High Priest exceeds those Jewish High-Priests. Christ our High Priest hath indeed made peace and reconciliation for sin, he is our peace; and that the Jewish High-Priest could not do, their Sacrifice could not make peace farther than the soul was lead unto Christ. "The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." {Heb.10:1} "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." {vs.4} Christ hath done that which the blood of bulls and goats could not do, that which never a High-Priest in the world could do, he hath taken away sin, he hath made peace, and every believer receives the atonement from his hands. "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." {Rom.5:11}

O beloved! What do your souls say to this? Christ hath wrought peace for every soul rightly receiving him, he hath done that which the Priest could not do, he hath done that which thou thyself could never have done, if the Lord help thee rightly to look to him; and this he hath done in offering himself a Sacrifice for sin, dying upon the cross.

How should this inform poor creatures where to look for their peace and atonement? O do not look for it in duties, in tears, in professions; it is not crying but dying that will take away sin; it is not tears but blood that will make peace. {Col.1:20} Without blood there is no remission. {Heb.9:22} Believe it, if ever thou hast peace, thou must have it from a Christ dying. "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, &c." {Rom.8:33,34} Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification; {Rom.4:25;} it is through him who hath given himself a Sacrifice for sin that sinners are brought to see their sin pardoned, if ever they see it pardoned.

O how do poor ignorant blind creatures deceive themselves, seeking peace where it is not to be found, in duties, tears, &c. They hew "them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water, {that is the reason they are so empty;} " {Jer.2:13;} they compass themselves about with sparks of their own kindling; which is the reason they lay down in sorrow; {Is.50:11;} they seek the living among the dead; that is, living consolations amongst dead works, and that is the reason they find it not. Believe it beloved, if ever your souls enjoy true peace, it must be let into your souls by a dying Christ, if ever you are saved it must be by eying of, and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." {Is.45:22}

3. The High-Priest was to bear the names of the children of Israel in two stones between his shoulders. {Ex.28:12} So hath Christ born, not only the names, but the sins of his people also upon his shoulders. "Who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree." {I Pet.2:24} He which knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Believe it, beloved, those sins and corruptions that so much trouble the souls of Saints, he hath borne them all himself, he himself hath borne our iniquities upon his own body on the cross.

4. The High-Priest bore the names of the children of Israel on a breast-plate of judgment, for a memorial before the Lord continually. "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually." {Ex.28:29} He bears their names, and judgments before the Lord, &c., and so doth Christ, our High Priest, bear the names of all his people; yea, their nature, and judgments upon his heart, before the Lord continually; he presents them before his Father continually.

Now Christ may be said to bear the names of the Saints upon his heart.

First, in his continual presenting them to himself, and Father, {without spot} righteous in his own righteousness. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." {Eph.5:25-27}

Secondly, in respect of their nearness unto him. Beloved, that which comes to a man's heart, comes near him; the Saints of God are as near unto him as his own heart; he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye; {Zech.2:8;} he that persecutes them persecutes Christ. {Acts 9:4} O, therefore, let men take heed how they persecute Christians; for it were better a millstone were hanged about their necks, and they cast into the Sea, than offend or persecute the Saints. But the Saints, whom the Lord hath, or shall call, are upon his heart, in respect of his love unto them. Beloved, the elect were upon the heart of Christ from all eternity. {Eph.1:4} That was the reason, why he comes into the world, to take their nature upon himself, their sins; become sin and a curse for sinners. It was his love; the elect of God were so upon the heart of Christ from eternity; and he will give his heart blood before he will lose one of them. O what do your hearts say to this; {dear brethren and sisters;} is not here comfort for your souls? O thou art perhaps afraid whether Christ loves thee; this is the complaint many times of a gracious soul; but know this, you, to whom, God hath given faith in his Son, thou art upon the heart of the Son in respect of nearness, in respect of love, he loves the more than thou canst love him, for God is love. {I Jn.4:8} He bears thee upon his heart, {poor soul,} and what canst thou desire more? "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm." {Cant.8:6} See what Christ saith of his Church. {Cant.4:9, 6:5}

Thirdly, the Saints are upon the heart of Christ in respect of his remembering of them. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." {Psal.112:6} O here is comfort for the poor afflicted souls of the Saints! It may be, you are under

affliction, either external or internal, and art ready to complain, as once David did, as if the Lord had forgotten to be merciful. {Ps.13:1,2} Whatever thy condition be, God hath not forgotten thee; No, No, thou art upon his heart, thou art near and dear unto him, thou art very precious unto him, he hath set thee as a seal upon his heart, and he cannot forget thee.

Objection: But you will say, perhaps, will not God forget me when I forget him? I have a wicked deceitful heart that gives me the slip, when I come to pray, and the name of the Lord is not so precious upon my heart as I wish it were many times.

Answer: But God will not forget thee. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." {Is.49:15,16} O blessed word, the Lord will not forget, thou art not only upon his heart, but upon his hands; also, ever in his sight, his eye is ever over thee for good.

Fourthly, the Saints are upon the heart of Christ, and there he will keep them. "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost." {Jn.17:12} Ah blessed word! Able to bear up the spirits of the Saints, to whom God hath given faith. O you poor doubting Christians, who are sometimes afraid that your hearts will deceive you, and perhaps are ready sometimes to complain with David, "I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul." So thou art ready to say, "O this wicked heart of mine, O this proud, this stubborn heart of mine, I am afraid lest all is nothing, and that I shall one day fall by it." O beloved, you {to whom God hath given faith} are upon the heart of Christ, and if thou canst but once see thyself there, it is enough, thou needest not fear thy falling. Dost think that Christ hath set thee there for nothing? No, No, he will keep thee there; it is true, were the power of standing or falling left to thy self, then thou might well doubt, but thou art kept by the power of God, through faith. {I Pet.1:5} Thou art preserved at, and in the heart of Christ; his love is so to thee that he will not lose thee, for none shall pluck thee out of his hands, he loving thee once, will love thee to the end; however some pretend a falling away from grace, after the soul comes

truly to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is but a vain fancy, and an imaginary conceit, for it is a part of the Covenant of Grace on God's part, to keep thee from falling. "And I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." {Jer.32:40}

Fifthly, the High-Priest was to bear the iniquity of the holy things in a plate of pure gold on their fore-heads, before the Lord, always, that they might be accepted before the Lord. {Ex.28:37,38} So Christ bears the iniquity of the holy things of the Saints, the best Saints, I mean the most holy, is not able to perform any duty to God, but there is a great deal of sin in it, iniquity cleaving thereunto. Now beloved, as Christ hath borne all the rest of the sins of the Saints, so he bears all the sin, all the iniquity of the holy things of the Saints. O comfort for the Saints, thou canst not even hear, nor pray without sin. Christ bears all the iniquity of thy holy things, he presents thy person and prayers to God without spot. {Eph.5:27} There is never a prayer put up unto God in the name of Christ in faith, but Christ presents it. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, it shall be given you." {Jn.16:23} "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." {Rev.8:3} Thus, Christ Jesus, the Messenger {our Covenant Messenger & Priest} of the Covenant, stands at the Altar, and having a golden censer with much incense, that he might offer it or add it to the prayers of the Saints. O beloved, here is a blessed word for the souls of the Saints, whether particular Saints or Churches. Christ adds to your prayers much incense, the incense of his own merit.

Sixthly, the High-Priest was to go once a year into the most holy place, within the veil. "And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements; once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations; it is most holy unto the LORD." {Ex.30:10} "And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not

at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not; for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat." {Lev.16:2} "And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses." {Lev.16:34} Compared with that which is spoken of Christ in Hebrews. "But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people; the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing; which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." {Heb.9:7-12} So Christ our Great High Priest is passed into the heavens, within the veil, into the Holy of Holies. Neither with the blood of goats and calves; but by his own blood, he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. What doth Christ there? Why beloved, as he hath made peace and reconciliation for his people, so he is entered in within the veil to make intercession for them. "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." {Heb.7:24,25}

The second particular is, wherein Christ and those High-Priests differ; wherein Christ excels them? It is true, that in all these Christ excels them, for they were but the Type, and Christ is the Substance.

1. Christ exceeds those High-Priests, as he was the Son of God. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." {Heb.4:14}

The Jewish High-Priests were Aaron and his sons, {Num.18:1,} but Christ our High Priest is the Son of God. "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." {Rom.1:4}

2. They offered the blood of bulls and goats, of lambs and rams, as you heard, {Heb.9:12,13,} but Christ offered his own body and his own blood. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" {Heb.9:14} "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." {Heb.10:10} Christ offereth a better Sacrifice, having "obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better promises." {Heb.8:6}

3. They first offered for their own sins, and then for the sins of the people. {Lev.9:7} But Christ our High Priest offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people only; for he had no sin of his own, there was no sin found in him; he was the innocent, holy, harmless, Lamb of God, slain, without spot, or blemish. He offered himself without spot or without fault to God. {Heb.9:14} Herein Christ wonderfully exceeded the Old Testament High-Priests; they, it is true, had holy garments made them, {Exod.28:2,} typing forth what holiness it was meet a High Priest, a Peacemaker should have; likewise typing forth what perfection of holiness that was in Christ; as he was the perfection of that type. "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." {Heb.7:26} Those High-Priests had holy garments, Christ is holiness itself. Here was a meet Sacrifice, to be offered in the place of those, for whom he propitiated; had he not been such a one, he could not have taken away sin; therefore such a one became us.

4. The Old Testament High Priests offered many sacrifices; once every year they went into the holy place. "Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements; once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations; it is most holy unto the LORD." {Ex.30:10} "But

in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year." {Heb.10:3} But Christ our High Priest offered himself, "by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;" {Heb.10:10;} and then sat down on the right hand of God; a wonderful Gospel mystery! Under the Jewish priests there was a remembrance of sin in the consciences of the sinners, though holy, and godly; for that ministrations, could never take away sin; {Heb.10:11;} that is, never take away the guilt of sin; they held under those sacrifices, but offered present pardon, and so present peace, every new sacrifice being a new remembrance of sin. But by Christ our High Priest, who hath offered himself once for all, and by that one sacrifice, we have obtained eternal redemption. {Heb.9:11}

Objection: Had not the believing Jews eternal redemption by Jesus Christ under the legal Priesthood? Answer: It is true, they had eternal redemption, but by that Priesthood they had it not so sealed to their souls at once, but had their peace coming in by new sacrifices; there was ever a sin consciousness, a remembrance of sin, for if they had had everlasting pardon come in at one sacrifice, there need not to have been an offering for sin again; {Heb.10:1,2;} but we under the Gospel, who believe, have obtained everlasting redemption; that is, see all our sins past, present, and to come, done away, by one sacrifice, so that now there remains no more conscience of sin; {Heb.10:1;} that is, sin doth not lie upon the conscience of believers unpardoned, but they see all done away in Christ.

Use: This may inform you of the reason, why so many poor creatures, go without comfort; they obtaining their comfort by fits, as we often say; namely, when they can pray well, think well, read well &c., and thus their comfort comes in from their duties; an argument of a legal spirit. They pray to get peace from hence; but these things will never make you perfect; that is, bring you perfect and true peace, but Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and the same forever, brings in true and perfect peace, eternal redemption to the souls of his people.

5. The legal high priests were but for a time, until the time of reformation; but Christ our High Priest is an everlasting

High Priest, a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. {Heb.7} Melchisedec was without beginning, that is known, and without end; so is Christ without beginning and without end. {Heb.7:3 & 21} Hence it is that all that ever Christ {as he is a High Priest} hath purchased for his people, is like himself, everlasting. Thus, everlasting reconciliation, everlasting life, &c.

Lastly: The High-Priest entered into the holy place, within the veil once a year; namely, into a worldly Sanctuary, indeed a type of Heaven, {Heb.9:1-4,} but Christ as he hath obtained a more excellent ministry, {Heb.8:6,} so he is "not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." {Heb.9:24} O blessed word for believers! Christ our High Priest is entered into the very heavens, to appear for his people, as he undertook to bear their sins, and pay their debts, so he now ever appears personally for his people, and thus you see that Christ is our great High Priest, and wherein he not only answers the legal priesthood, but also exceeds them.

The second particular to be considered is, that Christ Jesus as he is Priest, is to be exalted and lifted up in the days of the Gospel, and that both in the preaching of the Gospel, and in the hearts of his people.

In the preaching of the Gospel Christ is to be exalted, as the alone High Priest, the atonement, peacemaker, and reconciliation, between God and man; and that in opposition to all legal righteousness, or peace, sought for in a legal way. Thus Christ was exalted in the days of the Apostles. "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; he is Lord of all." {Acts 10:36} Peter came preaching peace by Jesus Christ; and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is the main drift of the Spirit of God to discover; yea to exalt, to lift up Christ, the alone High Priest, holding forth the dignity, the excellency and utility of his office. And this was received always in the hearts of the Saints, Christ our High Priest, Christ our Peace. "For he is our peace, &c." {Eph.2:14}

Now to speak more punctually to the Priestly Office of Christ, it consists in these two particulars, partly in

Reconciliation, partly in Intercession. In Reconciliation; that is, in reconciling God to man, and man to God. Now it is true, God was ever reconciled to his elect in his Son from all eternity, for he loved them in his Son, {Eph.1:4,} from before the foundation of the world; he never looked upon them but in his Son; yet so, as with relation to his death, so working peace. This was the great design of God in sending Christ into the world to make peace and reconciliation. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world {namely the elect amongst the Gentiles, who were always counted for the world, see Rom.11:11,12, &c.} unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." {II Cor.5:19} This was the great work God had to do in the world, when he manifested that great mystery of godliness. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, &c;" {I Tim.3:16;} and this Christ hath accomplished; he hath perfected it, and finished it. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." {II Cor.5:18} "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life; and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." {Rom.5:10,11} "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God;" why, but "to make reconciliation for the sins of the people;" a blessed word for all believers. {Heb.2:17} God is reconciled to them in his Son, God is at peace with them, this was the end wherefore Christ came into the world to make peace for the Saints, and to give life unto them, hence it is that Christ saith, "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have yet more abundantly;" {Jn.10:10;} hence it is, that the Gospel of Christ is called the Gospel of peace; {Eph.6:15;} and the glad tidings of peace; {Is.57:7;} the Covenant of the Gospel is a Covenant of peace; {Is.54:10, Ezek.37:26;} God is a God of peace, and at peace with believers; {Rom.5:1, I Thes.5:23;} and Christ is a Prince of Peace. {Is.9:6}

Thus you see {beloved Christians} what peace and reconciliation here is wrought by Christ for all believers; a God

of peace, a Covenant of peace, a Gospel of peace; God hath reconciled us to himself through his Son; for he is our peace, who hath made both one, and broken down the middle wall of partition, and made us one with the Father, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, to make to himself of two in one new man, so working peace, that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross. {Eph.2:13-16}

The second thing considerable is, the manner how he makes this peace, and that is first in bearing their sins. In laying down his life and blood; in bearing their sins, beloved, Christ bears all the iniquities of all his people. "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. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." {Is.53:4-6}

Note, first, that God laid sin upon Christ. Secondly, Christ did bear them. Thirdly, there God condemned them.

1. God laid sin upon Christ, "all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;" it is all laid upon Christ, so that now the sin of all the elect, becomes the sin of Christ, for they are laid upon Christ. "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}

2. Christ bears the sins of his people, for God did not only lay sin upon Christ, but he bear it. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed;" {I Pet.2:24;} and so hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows. This is the way beloved, by which Christ hath made peace for his people in bearing their sins, for there was no other way left for reconciliation between God and man, but God must become man, that so he might bear our sins, and so our griefs and sorrows, that he might be bruised for our iniquities, and that the chastisement of our peace might be upon him.

3. There God condemns sin, and Christ now bears not only sin, but justice for sin; man sins, justice is offended, and that must be satisfied; Christ steps in, he takes the blow, he becomes Surety for sinners, stands in our room, and pays the debt. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." {Rom.8:3} Note beloved, God did not only lay sin upon Christ, but Christ bears it, and there God condemns it, where God finds sin there he condemns it; God condemns the sin of his people in the flesh of his Son.

O what doth thy soul say to this, dear Christian? Before ever thou couldest be reconciled to thy God, Christ Jesus must bear all thy sins, and the condemnation of them in his own body. O see, see man, what a burden thy sins were to thy Saviour, if thou hast any interest in him, follow him to the Mount of Olives, see him in his agony, {Lk.22:44,} sweating drops of blood, great drops of blood, trickling down to the ground; this was the weight of thy sins laid upon thy Saviour, before ever thy peace was purchased, see him upon the cross bearing thy sins and my sins; {O man, woman; if we have any interest in him; "Behold the Man;"} and the condemnation of them, crying out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Beloved, it went heavy with our Saviour.

Use. Learn hence to take heed of sin, do not take delight in any sin. Truly beloved, if you love the Lord Jesus, you cannot love that which was such a heavy burden unto him. O beloved, how should justified saved persons take heed of sin, of every sin; the least sin that thou canst imagine took hold on Christ as well as the greatest; O therefore take heed of pride, of anger, foolishness, vanity; for the least sin is much unbecoming Christians. O beloved, how seasonable comes in that earnest exhortation of the Apostle? "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." {Rom.12:1,2}

2. As Christ hath made peace in bearing the sins of his people, so also in laying down his life and blood for them. Beloved, before ever there could be peace and reconciliation made, Christ must die for it, give his life and blood for it. All those ceremonial sacrifices under the Law were a type of a dying Christ; hence it is that he is called a Lamb slain from the beginning. Beloved, Christ having undertaken to become a High-Priest, a Peace-Maker between God and man, nothing less than his blood could do it. Without blood there is no remission; {Heb.9:22;} no justification without blood; Christ's dying is a believer's justification; "being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved, &c., {Rom.5:9,} no purging of sin without blood; "how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" {Heb.9:14} "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood;" {Rev.1:5;} there is no pardon and so no peace without blood. {Heb.9:22} Thus beloved you see that all must be done by blood, and that by the blood of Christ too, the blood of all the creatures in the world, nay of all the men in the world, was not able to redeem, to make satisfaction for one soul, nay, for one sin, nothing less than the precious blood of Christ could do it. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." {I Pet.1:18,19}

Objection: But some may say that God had never anything against his elect, for he loved them from eternity. "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love." {Jer.31:3} "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." {Eph.1:4}

Answer: It is indeed true that God ever loved his elect in Christ, and ever intended mercy and love unto them; yea he so loved them as with relation to the death of his Son, that from everlasting He determined to satisfy his justice, to take away sin, and work peace by the death of his Son; and the truth is that God had as really an eye to the death of his Son from all eternity, and saw it as actual then, as if Christ had

already suffered. "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world;" in Him, with relation to his death, to his making satisfaction for sin, not that God could not have made the saints at once, and have saved them presently, and never have suffered them to sin, but this is the way God in his wisdom appointed to manifest his mercy on the vessels of mercy, and his justice on his enemies; so that now beloved, God having appointed this to be the means to bring sons to glory, there could never have been any remission, any peace, but by a dying Christ; therefore he is called, the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" {Rev.13:8;} and indeed, Christ was as a Lamb ever slain in God's account, and he beheld all things as present, and saw both the works of creation, redemption and the glory of his saints from all eternity.

The second part of Christ's priestly office consists in his intercession at the right hand of the glory of his Father. "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." {Rom.8:34} "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." {Heb.7:25} Beloved, this is one part of Christ's Priestly office to intercede for the Saints.

Note beloved, Christ intercedes; {1;} in the Saints; {2;} and for the Saints.

1. In them; "the Spirit itself, {namely; of Christ,} maketh intercession for us {or, in us according to the will of God; that is, God by his Spirit, helpeth us to ask things according to the will of God,} with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." {Rom.8:26,27} "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." {Gal.4:6}

2. He maketh intercession for us; also he ever liveth to make intercession. O blessed word for the Saints; for he maketh intercession for every particular Saint, he maketh intercession for his Churches, "for us" saith the Apostle, and

through him it is, we have access with boldness, unto the Father, &c.

Objection: But some may object, did not Christ make satisfaction, peace and reconciliation when he died upon the cross, when he said, "It is finished?"

Answer: It is true that Christ in his death, and resurrection finished the work of man's justification, "being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him;" {Rom.5:9;} Christ made peace and reconciliation through his blood. "Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself." {Col.1:20} We are not to understand by Christ's interceding any new act of Christ, done, either in way of satisfaction, or justification; neither are we to understand that Christ sits in Heaven pleading with the Father in words, as a counselor pleads a cause before the judge; but Christ is in Heaven with the Father at his right hand; that is, in glory with him, presenting our persons, and in presenting our persons, all our services, in his own person; not by any new act of doing, but by the worth of his merits, the excellency of his person, the near relation of the Saints to himself, viz. members of his body; so that now God cannot look upon the Son but he must behold the Saints in him, he having so near a relation to his Father, both by his personal presence, and the excellent worth of his merits, {whose blood spake better things then the blood of Abel, Heb.12:24,} he continually makes intercession to God for the Saints. "He hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bear the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." {Is.53:12} Here you have the whole priestly office of Christ - bearing sin, and so working peace - making intercession by that means for transgressors.

Use. If so that Christ Jesus is to be exalted and lifted up as the alone High Priest in the days of the Gospel, hence will properly arise four words of application. 1. A word of Admiration. 2. A word of Information. 3. A word of Exhortation. 4. A word of Consolation.

Use; first, a word of Admiration; O what cause have the Saints to admire God, who hath manifested himself in his Son? I say to admire him. 1. His Wisdom. 2. His Love and his

Mercy. 3. His Justice. 4. His Power, all manifested in his Son, to and for the good of sinners, whom he maketh Saints.

1. How should the Saints admire his wisdom? Truly, the wisdom of God as in other things, so in this particular {making peace by the blood of his Son} is very admirable. The wisdom of God wonderfully appeared in the whole work of God, with relation to the creation. "Hearken unto this, O Job; stand still, and consider the wondrous work of God. Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine? Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous work of him which is perfect in knowledge, &c." {Job.37:14-16} "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding, &c;" {Job 38:4;} and this the Saints should be acquainted with, that their hearts might admire him.

But, the redemption of the Saints is much more admirable, for this was God's end in making a world, that he might set forth his wisdom in the redemption of the Saints. {Is.40} The Lord speaking with relation to the coming of his Son, a Saviour, "he shall feed his flock like a shepherd, and gather his lambs in his arms, &c." {vs.11} Again he saith, "who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" {vs.13,14} Certainly none, for there was none to do it, for he determined his whole work, both of creation and redemption before all things. If there had been any being then for any of the sons of men, who could have invented such a way, such a means of recovering, of reconciling fallen man? Truly none but the God of wisdom, and therefore Christ is called in Scripture the Wisdom of God. "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." {I Cor.1:23,24} "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." {I Cor.2:7} Note, the Lord Jesus Christ, the wisdom of the Father, him in whom the Father manifests his wisdom, was ordained before the

world began. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." {Eph.3:10,11} Well may it be called manifold, for it is infinite, there is no numbering of it. "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable." {Ps.145:3}

How should this take off from the Saints all cares and fears concerning the things of this world? He who is infinite in wisdom; wisdom himself hath taken care for thy soul, for thine eternity. Doubt not, but rest upon him, his wisdom shall be for thee, he will so order, and dispose of all thy actions, as shall be most advantageous for his own honor, and thy good. And know this, that nothing comes to pass but by his wise disposing hand of grace; nay, he is made unto thee, that believest, wisdom. {I Cor.1:30} O admirable mercy, that the God of wisdom, should not only, wisely contrive a way for the reconciling of sinners to himself, but should become their wisdom, he is made to us wisdom, admire at this, all the sons and daughters of God; what, God himself become your wisdom; then truly, thy folly shall not harm thee. O thou art ready to say, I am so foolish, so ignorant, &c. O poor soul, it matters not, it is mercy thou seest thy folly; for the truth is, thou must be a fool that thou mayst be wise. {I Cor.3:18 & 4:10} That is, thou must renounce all thine own wisdom as folly; for it is self-wisdom that is the greatest enemy to Christ. Therefore let no man deceive himself, "if any man amongst you seem to be wise in this world, let him be a fool that he may be wise."

2. What cause have the Saints to admire God in Christ for his love! O admirable love! What, God to give his Son to become a propitiation for the sin of sinners? Is not this rich grace, and mercy? For God to take upon him the nature of man, and the sins of men, to make peace and reconciliation for men? What soul can behold this love, this mercy, and not stand admiring in the enjoyment of it? Beloved, this love of God manifested unto men, it is Free, Full and Everlasting. Love, it is free without desert, for there was nothing in man for to procure it, he hath loved thee freely, poor soul. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is

turned away." {Hos.14:4} Beloved, God loved freely, for he loved his before they were; "according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." {Eph.1:4} He loved them freely, for he loved them when they were sinners. {Rom. 5:8} The manifestation of this love is free, for it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. This love he manifests unto them, when they would none of it, when men had rather keep their sins than receive Christ, as a Priest, and an atonement; so Paul {Acts 9;} the Lord meets him and overpowers him, when he was going in a way of persecution, as it is in Is.65:1; "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not; I said, Behold me, behold me, &c." God first seeking and finding, causes the creature to seek after God.

It is full grace and love, great love; "God so loved the world, that he gave his Son, &c." {Jn.3:16} O unspeakable love, that nothing less than the Son of God can serve for a gift, and truly beloved, nothing less could have done the deed, and therefore nothing less could be given from a God of love, who intended in his gift to do good to man. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;" {I Jn.4:9,10;} and herein is the love of Christ manifested to become a Priest, a Sacrifice, to lay down his life for sinners. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." {Jn.15:13} Here is great love, love to be admired of all the Saints.

This love of God manifested in the Son is everlasting love. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." {Jer.31:3} Harken you, {beloved friends,} God hath loved his people from everlasting, and he will love them to everlasting. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end;" {Jn.13:1;} that is, forever. Hence it is that the kindness of God is called everlasting kindness. "With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer." {Is.54:8} His mercy is everlasting mercy. "For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all

generations." {Ps.100:5} His Covenant made with thee {in Christ} who art a believer, is an everlasting Covenant. "I will make an everlasting Covenant with them;" {Is.61:8;} a Covenant that shall not be removed; "for the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee;" {Is.54:10;} neither shalt they depart out of it; "and I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me;" {Jer.32:40;} and hence it is that the joy of the Saints shall be everlasting, for indeed, were not God's mercies, God's Covenant, &c. everlasting, there could be no true joy, but this is that which occasions both true and everlasting joy and consolation. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, &c." {II Thes.2:16} Here is everlasting consolation flowing from the love of God, and truly the consolation could not be everlasting, were not that love communicated through grace everlasting. Here is admirable mercy, admirable grace, free full and everlasting.

3. The Saints have cause to admire God in his Justice; for beloved, those two attributes of God are admirably exalted in this one particular, giving Christ a reconciliation between God and man, his love and his mercy is exalted, in that he accomplished his own end in a way of grace; gives his own Son to become an offering for sin, to this very end and purpose, to reconcile and save sinners. {Jn.3:16} Such was the love of God from all eternity that nothing could hinder this design of grace. The Jews, that had a hand in putting Christ to death, shall have a part in that mercy and grace purchased by his death; for they did nothing but what God in his counsel had determined. "For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." {Acts 4.28}

Now as the mercy of God was herein admirably exalted to men, so is his justice; his severity also. "Behold, therefore the goodness, and severity of God, &c." {Rom.11:22} Behold, here is goodness and severity, mercy and justice, to be admired.

First: The mercy of God is here admirably manifested, in freely choosing some in his Son to life and glory. "That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, &c." {Rom.9:23,24} Here is the mercy of God wonderfully made known unto the sons of men; and note, that this mercy was never manifested but in a way of justice; justice must be satisfied for man's transgression. Now that God may show mercy without any wrong to his justice, he gives his Son to take upon him man's sin, and to suffer for the sins of his people, that so mercy and justice might meet together. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." {Ps.85:10} An admirable work of grace; where God shows mercy and his justice is satisfied. Never any mercy to be expected, but where justice is satisfied. It is in vain for thee, O man, to expect mercy out of Christ; for there justice is satisfied, if ever thou hast mercy, it must be there, therefore Christ calls, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." {Mat.11:28}

Now, the Saints alone may admire and rejoice in the justice of God; for the justice of God is for every believer, and is as ready to plead for them, as the mercy of God. A creditor, that is honest, he will be ready to acquit and clear the principal, when the surety hath paid the debt, and made full satisfaction, and to declare, that he hath nothing against him; it is true the surety may pay the debt, and the principal not know it, and he may be afraid and troubled; but when the surety shall come and tell him that the debt is paid, and the creditor satisfied; and when the creditor shall send his bond, and discharge under his hand and seal; now this satisfies the man, and now he is clear, and comforted, now he walks boldly. So it may be with the poor soul; for Christ hath paid the debt, he hath satisfied the justice of his Father; but perhaps thou wantest the assurance of it? Beloved, to whomsoever the Lord hath, or shall give faith, there it is sure. "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise...the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath

raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." {Rom.10:6-9} The Lord hath sent his Ministers to proclaim it to your souls, "that whosoever believeth shall be saved;" and here he hath sent his word to confirm it unto you, and if that will not satisfy, thou shalt have his seal too. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." {Eph.1:13} And justice is now ready to plead for such a soul, to acquit him, "I am satisfied, I have nothing against him;" and so justice is thine, and for thee, who {indeed} believest.

Second: The Justice of God is manifested in leaving others in a lost condition; herein is the severity of God admirably manifested, especially of the Saints. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." {Rom.9:22,23} "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." {Rom.11:7} O how should the Saints admire at this justice! What? God to leave so many in a hardened blind perishing condition, and show mercy to me? O wonderful! What should God see in me more than in such and such hardened ones? What? God show mercy, perhaps to one, and leave twenty, a hundred, in a hardened, lost condition; and shall I be one of the small number? O beloved, how will the due consideration of this mercy and justice; this goodness and severity of God, set your souls in motion to admire God, and to praise him? This is the new song of the Saints. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." {Rev.5:9} O this is that which will set thy soul a praising God indeed, when thou shalt see people, tongues, nations left, and thou taken out of them; some taken, perhaps one or two out of a family, others left; one or two out of a generation, others left; some few out of a City, a Nation, and others left. O beloved, the due consideration of this one thing, will occasion

your souls to sing that song, that none else could ever learn. "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." {Rev.14:3} Called out from earthly men; redeemed from the earth, from Nations, peoples, tongues, &c.

The Saints have cause also to admire the power, the almighty power of God, working salvation for them, for he doth declare himself to be the Almighty God, able to do whatsoever he pleaseth; he is able to save, he is able to work salvation for his people which way he pleaseth, and the power of God is manifested in Christ, working salvation for his people. "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save;" {Is.63:1;} behold the Lord Jesus is called the mighty God, {Is.9:6,} and a Mighty Redeemer, {Prov.23:11,} and their Redeemer is mighty, he shall plead their cause, &c., and truly beloved, he had need be mighty, for he hath undertaken a mighty work, the redemption and salvation of sinners, and this appears to be a mighty work, because none else could do it. Beloved, God hath done such a work for his people, that no creature, nor created power in heaven or earth could do it. "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me;" {Is.45:21;} none can save beside God, "for there is no Saviour beside me;" {Hos.13:5;} therefore in "vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains; truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel." {Jer.3:23} Beloved, it is in vain to look for salvation from the hills and mountains, from creatures, or anything beneath the Lord Jesus Christ, for "there is none other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved," but by the name of Jesus. {Acts 4:12} O beloved, how should the Saints praise God, and admire him for that great and glorious salvation he hath wrought for his people; this is the song the Saints sing unto his praise: "And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen; Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and

honour, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen." {Rev.7:10-12} They sing forth God's saving power, for who is a God able to save after this manner?

It appears to be a mighty work, exceeding the work of the creation, or any of the rest of the work of God, if we consider the several circumstances, or concomitants thereunto appertaining. Beloved, the Lord made the world with his word, he spake the word and it was done, but it was not a word that could save man being fallen; No, no, beloved, there is more to be done, first, God must take upon him the nature of man, that is, the seed of David, {Rom.1:3,} of Abraham, {Heb.2:16,} and "who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree," {I Pet.2:24,} taking their curse, being made a curse for them, {Gal.3:13,} and their condemnation. {Rom.8:3} And to effect this great work of man's salvation, he that was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, was found in the form of a servant, and became obedient to the death, even the death of the Cross. {Phil.2:6,7} Here is a great work by which man's salvation is accomplished; and was there ever the like work wrought by God, greater than the creation; there a word doth it, here must be blood, not of an ordinary man, but of the Son of God; greater than the destroying or building of Nations or Kingdoms, here a word doth it, {Jer.18:7,8,} here must be blood. {Heb.9:22} Thus you see, beloved, the admirable power of God, manifested in this work of reconciliation.

Use 2. If Christ be the alone High Priest, the alone Reconciler and Peace Maker betwixt God and man, as you have heard he is; for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" {I Tim.2:5;} then here is a word of information, to inform us of the vanity and folly of those that create to themselves other grounds of peace and comfort besides Christ. Note first, that there are many that do thus create to themselves other grounds of comfort, other Saviors besides Christ, notwithstanding the Lord hath said, "there is no other name given under heaven whereby men must be saved;" yet believe it, many there are that rest upon duties and performances, and make that the ground of their consolation. "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. For my

people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water;" {Jer.2:12,13;} my people, that is, not only mine by creation, or election, but by profession, yet they forsake me, and dug cisterns to themselves; for how do men love to draw water out of their own cisterns; to create comforts to themselves, to kindle sparks of their own fire, until the Lord bring them off from it. There were five wise virgins and five foolish virgins; {Mt.25:1;} the foolish have lamps, a profession, and in that they rest, without oil; that is, Christ his grace and mercy; and note, Christ saith, "the Kingdom of heaven is like ten virgins," and it may be the state of the Church for all that I know, men shall content themselves that they are members, and boast themselves, and comfort themselves in it, with a name of Christians, a name that they are alive, and yet are dead; therefore it nearly concerns you, beloved, to look to it; for it is not enough that you hear, profess, pray, or be members of Churches, unless Christ be yours; there is nothing else can make peace but the blood of the Covenant and many there are, that shall deceive themselves.

See the sin; the evil, of trusting upon anything, beneath Christ. It is a vain and foolish thing, therefore the five Virgins are called foolish Virgins, and well might they be called foolish, for they content themselves with Lamps without oil. How long is that Lamp likely to burn, that wants oil, think you? So that professor, that wants Christ. It is a foolish thing for a man to be content with the shell without the kernel, the shadow without the substance. Beloved, all things without Christ, are but a shadow, and will prove nothing. He is the substance of all Ordinances, and professions; farther than you have Christ in them, they are dead. O how foolish would you count that man, that woman, that should strive to catch the shadow, leaving the substance? It is a vain thing without profit, the vanity of it is this, they deceive themselves, they think they have something; when they have nothing. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." {Rev.3:17} This is thy folly, this is thy vanity, thou thinkest, that thou hast much

to say for thyself, because thou hast gotten a form of godliness, when the truth is that all without Christ is nothing; nay, less than nothing, altogether vanity; they cannot help thee; for certainly Christ died in vain, if anything beneath himself can save thee. "I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." {Gal.2:21}

But secondly, to create comforts to thy self, beneath Christ, is an evil and a bitter thing; certainly, beloved, it will prove very evil and bitter one day, either here when discovered to thy soul, or else hereafter, when too late. "Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts." {Jer.2:19} An evil and bitter thing to forsake the Lord Jesus, the fountain; and to rest upon any other thing beneath himself.

Objection. What is the evil of it, perhaps you will say?

Answer. The best end of it is sorrow, for certainly sorrow must needs follow it. "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow." {Is.50:11}

Question: What is the reason, poor souls walk so sadly and so sorrowfully?

Answer: Is it not because they forsake the Lord the Fountain, and dig cisterns to themselves; kindle a fire of their own, and then sit down, and think to comfort themselves; and hence it comes to pass, that so many poor souls lie down in sorrow. Is it not thy case poor soul; if thou settest up this duty and that duty, this prayer, and that ordinance, and expectest comfort in them, and thou wouldest fain compass thyself about with those sparks of prayers and duties, &c., and this makes thee lie down in sorrow, and all because thy soul is not carried through these to Christ, who is the substance of all Ordinances. It is a shameful thing to rest upon anything beneath Christ, certainly, beloved, it will make you ashamed one day, either here or hereafter. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed; for the end of those things is death." {Rom.6:21} What were those things? Deeds of darkness, and certainly to rest upon anything

beneath CHRIST, is a deed of darkness, and will cause shame. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is." {Jer.17:7} "O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters." {Jer.17:13} O beloved, will it not be a shame, when men shall profess Christianity all their days, when they shall hear, and pray, and perform duties, resting in those things, and when they shall come to appear before the Lord Jesus, shall be rejected? "They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them; they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols; {that rest upon anything beneath Christ;} but Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end." {Is.45:16,17} "They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." {Ps.125:1}

Lastly, to trust in anything beneath the Lord Jesus is a cursed, damning sin, so it is, to those that live and die in that condition. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name have cast out devils; and in thy name done many wonderful work? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." {Mt.7:22, 23} O beloved, this will be the sad sentence pronounced against all that shall come before Christ at the last day in their own righteousness. "But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." {Lk.13:27}

A word of exhortation; if it be so that Christ be the alone High Priest and Peacemaker between God and man, O how should this stir up your souls to look to Him for all of salvation? Do not mistake me, I shall not set you upon this duty as if it were in your own power to do it, for it is God that worketh both to will and to do of his own good pleasure, but as a means by which God may come in with power upon thy spirit, working up thy soul above thyself to his Son, and to encourage any poor soul to whom God shall be pleased to come in graciously in his own means. Note, God calls thee to look above and beyond all, to himself, in his Son. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." {Is.45:22}

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." {Is.55:1}

O beloved, God would not have poor souls, for which Christ died, to spend their time for that which is not bread; he hath given Christ the living bread for that very end and purpose. God hath given his Son, a Sacrifice, a Peace-offering for sin, so making reconciliation for the sins of his people, he hath put in us the word of reconciliation. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, {saith the Apostle} as though God did beseech you by us;" to be reconciled to God; that is, to receive this reconciliation held forth by Christ in the Word. {II Cor.5:19,20} O beloved, what do your souls say to this? Is reconciliation and peace with God through Jesus Christ worth the owning? Is it worth the receiving? Men and women consider it! "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth the Lord, to you is the word of salvation sent;" to whomever among you God shall give an eye to see it, and a hand to receive it, to you it is sent. {Acts 13:26} Consider Christ is ready to receive whenever you come unto him; he will not put you off; for all "that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." {Jn.6:37} O beloved, the Lord is ready to receive sinners; the worst of sinners, the greatest of sinners; believe it, the Lord never did, nor ever will cast forth a poor sinner that comes to him in truth; that is, who the Father draws to him. See the Parable of the prodigal son; for "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." {Lk.15:20} O the readiness of God to embrace poor sinners that come unto him! Witness Mary Magdalene; Saul, the betrayer and murderer of the Lord of life. All which manifests the readiness of God to receive sinners; and believe it, he would never invite thee, he would never give thee a heart willing to come to him, did he not intend willingly to embrace thee in Christ.

Exhortation for the Saints: If we have such a High Priest, making peace and reconciliation for us; O beloved, how should this encourage us to hold fast our profession to the end; for this is the use the Apostle in the Epistle to the

Hebrews makes of it. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession;" {Heb.4:14;} or confession; let us hold it fast, with a strong hand {so the word signifies;} hold fast your profession, with a violent or strong hand. Now there are three things that are all most ready to make a poor Christian {many times} to throw away his profession. 1. The power and strength of corruption. 2. His inability and indisposedness to that which is good. 3. Those hard temptations and trials that they are liable unto in their Christian progress. Against these three diseases will flow in from Christ our great High Priest, remedies answerable, even to the satisfaction of the soul.

The first is, the power and strength of corruption; for this is that which troubles thee, is it not, poor soul? O thou hast such a body of sin, such a vile, cursed nature, that thou art ready to cry out, as the Apostle Paul; "O wretched man, that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" And Isaiah who cried forth, "Woe is me; for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; {and this makes thee almost ready to throw away thy profession;} for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." {Is.6:5} To this I shall propound a threefold remedy, all flowing from a crucified Christ, from Christ as he is our High Priest.

1. That all the sins of believers were condemned in the flesh of Christ. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh;" {Rom.8:3;} this "condemned" signified the pronouncing of guilt, and so of condemnation, upon Christ. Beloved, Christ hath borne the guilt and punishment of all thy sins, to whom he hath given faith in his blood; all those lusts and corruptions that so much trouble thee, he hath borne them all. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." {Rom.8:34} "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." {I Pet.2:24}

2. He hath destroyed the power of all thy sins, as he is a High Priest. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;" {I Jn.3:8,9;} that is, as he is born of God, he doth not sin, willingly with his mind; for he can say as the Apostle Paul, "now then it is no more I {that is, I, Paul, born of God,} that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." {Rom.7:17} O here is the power of sin destroyed; though there is, and will be, the being of corruption. So, "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." {I Jn.1:8} Now consider, beloved, is not the power of sin destroyed in thee? Dost thou not look upon it as thine enemy? Wouldst thou not be rid of it? O that is thy desire; why then, be not dismayed, it is the condition of all the Saints, to have sin raging in them; but Christ hath destroyed the power of sin, it shall not reign over you. "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." {Rom.6:14} "For thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?" {Ps.56:13}

3. Christ thy High Priest will have thee to live in Him, and upon Him, out of, and above thyself. Therefore he is pleased to give to the Saints, "a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet" them. He will have thee to fetch all from Himself. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." {Col.3:3} Dead to sin, and dead in yourselves; not able to act or do anything, but as you are carried on by the power of God. "Without me ye can do nothing." {Jn.15:5} Christ is, and will be, all in all to your souls. {Col.3:11} If all sin in the saints were subdued, and they made perfect in this life, I mean personally perfect, they could not live by faith upon Another, and so should not be in a dependency upon Christ; this was Adam's condition, and he quickly lost it; but it is the wisdom of God, and it is much for our good, to keep us in our ways in a state of dependency upon Himself, where our stock remains; for our life, our consolation, our salvation is all hid with Christ in God, and therefore it is sure, although we have not the full enjoyment of it in this world. God keeps his people always in a way of dependency, in a way of believing, in a way of receiving, and so causes them to live by faith; and when they are made meet for such a way, namely perfection, perfect freedom from all sin; that is, when Christ shall change

their vile bodies, and give them glorious bodies, then they shall be made like unto Christ, but not before. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." {Phil.3:21} O consider it, I beseech you brethren; you would fain be glorified in a state of mortality, what need of faith then? This is one end whereby God gives faith unto his people, that they might live comfortably in their patient expectation of what God hath promised in Christ. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." {Heb.10:35,36} Faith is the evidence of things not seen; not seen with a carnal eye, not enjoyed after a carnal manner, but eyed by faith, and expected by hope, and so comfortably waited for. "He that believeth shall not make haste;" {Is.28:16;} therefore that which you and I have to look to, is this, whether Christ be ours? What if there be lust and corruptions? If thou hast Christ, he is thy life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life;" {I Jn.5:12;} if thou hast the Son, thou hast life indeed, for he is thy life, and in him it is that thou art to live, for he it is that is thy fulness, thy all and in all.

The second thing that troubles the Saints is their inability to perform duties. O thou canst not pray without sin, thou canst not perform any duty as thou wouldest, and shouldest; thou canst say as the Apostle, "when I would do good, evil is present me;" and for to remedy this, consider and be sure of these things.

1. That Christ hath done all for thee, so that thou art not to look to thine own righteousness; that righteousness that is of the Law, but the righteousness that is of God in Christ. "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." {Phil.3:9} What doth trouble thee poor soul? O thou canst not pray, that troubles thee. Why, consider first, Christ hath prayed for thee. "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." {Lk.22:32} And certainly he was heard in all things that he prayed for, his

Prayer stands effectual for every believer to the end of the world.

2. He by his Spirit makes intercession in thee, {Rom.8:26,} with sighs and groans which cannot be expressed.

3. He makes thy prayer acceptable, presented in his name. {Jn.16:23} Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in his name, he will give it you. Look upon Christ, for thou shalt see him performing all righteousness for thee that art in thy self unrighteous, doing all for thee that canst do nothing for thy self; he hath prayed for thee that canst not pray; nay, he doth still breath in by his Spirit into thy soul, sighs, desirings, groanings {and sometimes} expressions, and then accepts of his own work in thee.

4. Whatever thy weakness is, he passes it by and pardons it. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." {Micah. 7:18-20}

Thou may think that God hideth his face from thee, when thou seest thy lusts to be strong and prevailing, but he will turn again, he will have compassion on thee, he will subdue thine iniquities, &c. See the Covenant of Grace, that Covenant which Christ hath purchased with his own blood. {Heb.10:29} "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." {Heb.8:12} Thou art afraid that thou art so dead, so unprofitable, so unlike Christ, that he will not own thee, but be assured, it is a part of the Covenant of Grace in the administration of it, to pardon all thy sins. "He is the propitiation for our sins." {I Jn.2:2} If we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins. Christ is thine advocate to plead thy case, look to Christ who is thy propitiation, thy peace.

Objection: O but I have a cursed and wicked nature, there is nothing in it that is good, I cannot pray nor perform duties; certainly now Christ hath shown mercy to me, and made a difference between me and the world, and now he expects something at my hands answerable to his mercy.

Answer: This was the condition of the Apostle Paul. "For I know that in me {that is, in my flesh,} dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." {Rom.7:18} Thou hast nothing that is good in thee, it is true, but no more had the Apostle Paul, "when I would do good evil is present," &c., thou canst not pray nor perform that good thou wouldest, no more could the Apostle, "for the good that I would I do not; {vs.19;} that is, I do it not as I would do, free from sin, from corruption, for evil is present. O this is thy case, I know it is, and this was the case of the Apostle Paul; it is my case, and shall be thine, while thou and I live in this world.

Furthermore I answer, Christ Jesus knew very well before ever he gave his life and blood for thee, a Sacrifice for sin, that thou wouldest have a cursed nature, a disposition in thee to that which is evil, even after he had manifested his love unto thee; he knew that thou wouldest not be able to pray or perform any duty without sin; nay, he never intended it should be otherwise with thee or me, while we are in this world; and that is the reason he gives us such comfortable words to assure us that those corruptions committed after faith, shall be pardoned. "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." {Heb.8:12} For these sins are indeed contrary to the holy and pure nature of God, but he pardons them all in Christ; and now dost think that Christ would give his life and blood for thee when thou wast an enemy to him, and so reconcile thee to himself and Father? And now when he finds sin and corruption in thee, inabilities to perform holy duties, &c., which he knew would be in thee before, dost think he will now reject thee and cast thee off? No, no, he will not cast thee off; do not think it, nay know it, that God expected no better of thee, he knew that thou wouldest have a vain and foolish mind, full of passion, pride, and the like, farther then he gave thee power to subdue it; he knew that

without him thou canst do nothing. {Jn.15:5} O therefore be not discouraged, look to the Lord Jesus Christ thy High Priest, who hath reconciled thee when thou wert an enemy. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." {Rom.5:8-10}

A third thing that many times troubles the Saints; it is those temptations and persecutions they are liable to in this world, for the name and sake of Christ. For this I shall propound these considerations, as remedies, all flowing from Christ our great High Priest.

1. Consider that he hath made the salvation of every believer sure in Christ. The Covenant God makes with his people is the sure mercy of David. "I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David;" {Is.55:3;} that is of Christ. It is sure the devil may rage and men may rage, but they shall never be able to prevail. "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." {Mt.16:18} Fear not hell, for thy High Priest hath the keys of death and hell, there shall not one soul go in there more than Christ thy High Priest ordains; therefore fear not him that can imprison, banish, kill the body, but cannot kill the soul; but fear him that can kill both body and soul. Be not afraid to confess Christ before men and devils, they shall never be able to separate between God and thy soul; see the confidence of the Apostle Paul, and this was his comfort, and this will be thy comfort. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "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.8:35,38,39} True it is, afflictions will come, storms and tempests will arise, but you being founded upon the Rock Christ Jesus shall stand. "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock." {Mt.7:25} A poor weak soul, carried out of itself to

Christ, built wholly upon him, shall stand, when perhaps some that have seemed to be far more glorious professors, building upon the sand, upon duties and professions, shall fall.

2. Consider that Christ thy High Priest hath gone before thee in every condition. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." {Heb.4:15} O how should the consideration of this help thee through thy temptations? Art thou troubled with sin? So was Christ with thy sin, yet himself without sin; for he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. {II Cor.5:21} Yea, and a curse for sin too, and that thou shalt never be. {Gal.3:13} Art thou troubled with the Devil, with temptations, it may be to pride, to the world, &c, so was Christ. {Mt.4:1-11} Art thou persecuted? So was Christ. Art thou contradicted of sinners? So was Christ. Art thou mocked; scorned and set out at naught? So was Christ. Art thou accused perhaps for an incendiary or perverter of the City, of the Nation? So was Christ. "And they began to accuse him, saying, we found this fellow perverting the nation." {Lk.23:2}

3. Consider that Christ hath not only gone before in the sufferings of the Saints, whereby he is sensible and feelingly sensible of all that the Saints suffer; but he goes with them, into their sufferings. Consider, Christ will be as deep in thy affliction as thyself; he takes all as done to himself. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" {Acts 9:4,5} Christ will go with thee into thy affliction. "But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." {Is.41:1,2} "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." {Is.41:10} This you will see verified. {Dan.3:25, Acts 12:7,8, &c.} In all which Christ manifested his gracious presence, both for support and preservation.

4. It is a word of comfort beloved, that all the consolation of Saints flows from the manifestation of God's love in Christ their High Priest. Many are the consolations that issue forth to the Saints from this full fountain of grace, all received in by faith. A Believer's justification which he receives by faith comes in by the blood of CHRIST. "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." {Rom.5:9} Beloved, it is Christ dying, that is a believer's justification. "It is God that justifieth." {Rom.8:33} This is the reason why the Apostle is so careful to make known a crucified Christ. {I Cor.15:3} Christ dying for sin, because it was the first truth to be received for a sinners justification; but now beloved; {supposing I speak to those that have received this dying, Christ as their alone justification;} I shall rather pass this first particular, and come to speak of the true effects of this receiving Christ, which all flows from Christ, as our High Priest.

The first is Reconciliation and Peace with God. Every man and woman that have indeed received Christ in a way of believing, as they are justified; so they have peace with God; this is a precious truth, may the Lord help you to see it. "Therefore being justified, by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." {Rom.5:1} And this peace Christ hath made for us by his blood. "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross." {Col.1:20} This is sweet mercy and rich grace for a poor sinful creature, to be reconciled to, and made one with the God of Heaven. Think upon it beloved! Is not this a ground of consolation? Now God has nothing against thee, to whom he hath given faith in his Son; although it is true, the Devil will have much against thee; the world, that is the men of the world, will have much against thee, for thy religion; as once those against Daniel; {Dan.6:10-12;} nay, thou mayst have much against thyself; yet God hath nothing against thee; he is at peace with thee in Christ, for Christ hath made peace for thee; and secondly, thou hast nothing now against God. Perhaps when thou wast in a natural condition, before faith came, thou mightiest have some hard thoughts of God, like the evil servant in the Gospel, {Lk.19:20,21,} thou thoughtest God to be a hard master; a time was perhaps, that thou thoughtest, do what thou

couldst, yet thou shouldest be damned; but now thou seest that God hath given Christ to do all for thee, to bear all thy sins, to perform all righteousness, to make true and perfect peace; and thou canst say, or at least mayst say it, as the Apostle, "for he is our peace." {Eph.2:14} Christ is my peace! O blessed word! What comfort may this afford your souls? I speak to you believers, it is your portion; whatever men may do unto thee, yet God is thy friend, he is at peace with thee; whatever man or Devil hath against thee, there is nothing in heaven against thee, a high privilege for poor Christians! That can look upon Christ as their peace.

The second spring that flows forth from hence is joy and consolation; peace is a fruit of justification, joy a fruit of peace, and all flows from Christ our High Priest the fountain, received by faith; and here lies the ground of a believer's joy, peace with God. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." {Rom.15:13} "Joy and peace in believing;" through believing of what? That our peace is made with God, through Christ. This is the alone ground of joy. I mean in the first place, for it is true that when once a soul attains to this, he then shall have cause to rejoice in every good thing of God, wherein God is honored, and the Saints benefited. {Acts 15:3}

But this is the first fundamental ground of joy. "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." {Rom.5:11} When once your souls come to receive the atonement, the peace; that is, Christ who is our reconciliation and peace, then your souls will rejoice indeed, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. {I Pet.1:8} What do your souls say to this now? Is your peace made with God? And cannot ye rejoice? Is God become thy friend, thy true friend, thine everlasting friend, and can ye not rejoice? Me thinks, your hearts should leap for joy. What if thou hast corruption stirring in thee? What if thou art persecuted for the name and sake of Christ? Yet rejoice! "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy;"

{Lk.6:22,23;} and this the Apostle Paul doth; "most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." {II Cor.12:9,10} Me thinks your souls should rejoice in the Lord always. "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice." {Phil.4:4} That soul that hath fled to the Lord Jesus who is the alone hope set before us, may have strong consolation. {Heb.6:18}

The third ground of consolation is, that the saints are made priests to the Lord, and so can now through Christ have access with boldness to the throne of grace; for every believer is made a priest in Christ; and note this by the way, that those that dare attribute that name to themselves, by way of office, it is no less than high blasphemy against the Lord Christ; but every believer is made a spiritual priest to the Lord, and so the Church is a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God by Jesus Christ; not propitiatory sacrifice, for that belonged to Christ alone, but yet acceptable sacrifice. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." {I Pet.2:5} "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." {I Pet.2:9} Beloved, here is your privilege, let it be your comfort that now you are made a holy priesthood unto God, you may come boldly to the throne of grace. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." {Heb.4:16} Is it not a mercy, that God should make a way for sinners to come into his presence, and to have access unto him; and that with confidence of acceptance. "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." {Eph.2:18} "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." {Eph.3:12} Now thou mayst go to thy Father, and make all thy wants known unto him, and lay open all thy wrongs before him, as those in Acts 4, from the 24 to the 30 verse.

The fourth ground of consideration that flows from Christ thy High Priest is that assurance of enjoying everlasting peace, joy, and glory with himself in another world, after the resurrection of the just; there shall be a freedom from sin, and a freedom from sorrow. A time will come when there shall be a deliverance from those miseries; that the best of the Saints are now incident unto. Note beloved, you shall be freed from sin. O thou hast a body of sin now, and thou couldest be contented to part with anything to be rid of sin; why thou shalt be rid of it one day, and thy vile body shall be changed, and made like the glorious body of Christ. "Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." {Phil.3:21} "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 Jn.3:2} Then thou shalt be rid of the Devil and wicked men; there shall be no Devil to torment thee, the accuser of the Brethren shall be cast down; there shall be no wicked men to persecute thee; here will be a glorious deliverance for the Saints, when there shall be no bad thing to them, no bad person amongst them; hence it is that there shall be no more death, nor crying, nor sorrow, for the former things are passed away. {Rev.21:4} And they shall not only be freed of those former things, but they shall possess the same glory with Christ. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." {Col.3:4} "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." {Rom.8:17} This glory is conferred on the Saints by Christ Jesus. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." {Jn.17:24} Note here that they were given to Christ, to the end that he might redeem them and save them; {Jn.6:39;} and secondly, those whom Christ hath redeemed, he will not leave them till he bring them into his presence, to behold, and to be made partakers of his glory.

THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

The alone PROPHET of SAINTS.

CHAP. II.

I come in the next place unto the Prophetical Office of Christ, wherein he is also in the days of the Gospel to be exalted. In the handling of which, I shall first show you from the Word of Life that Christ is the Prophet and Teacher of his people; and secondly, that he is to be exalted in the days of the Gospel, as the alone teacher of his people.

First, that he is the Prophet and Teacher of his people. Now for the better proceeding in the unfolding of this particular unto you, I shall go along comparatively, holding forth the Prophetic office of Christ by the Prophets under the Law.

Now there were three things ordinary to the prophets under the Law; namely, teaching, working miracles and foretelling of things to come. Now in all these three, Christ answers them; yea, and excels them all, for he himself is the substance of all their prophecies. "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." {Jn.1:45} "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." {Lk.24:27} "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." {Acts 10:43} "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." {Jn.5:39} "Worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." {Rev.19:10} It was the work of the prophets to teach the people, so Moses a type of Christ; both in respect of Law and Worship, God taught Israel by him; so Isaiah throughout his prophecy; as Jeremiah, {Jer.1:5-7,} and all the prophets. In this Christ have manifested himself

wonderfully to be a prophet, this part of Christ's prophetic office; namely, as he is the Teacher of his people may be considered under these three heads: First, as he was a teacher of his people before he came in the flesh. Secondly, when he was in the world; and thirdly, now that he is in heaven.

1. Before he came in the flesh, Christ taught them by the Prophets; therefore you have ever the Prophets in the Old Testament saying, "the word of the Lord came unto me." {Jer.1:4, 2:1, &c.} This Peter confirms; "for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved {or inspired} by the Holy Ghost." {II Pet.1:21} No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation; {vs.20;} that is, men did not speak of their own private spirits; not that private men {as they call them} may not interpret Scripture; there is no such thing in the word, but the truth held forth to us in it, is, that holy men that write the Scripture, did not speak their own minds, their own fancies, but spake as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and hence it is, that upon good grounds, we receive the Old Testament for Scripture, because it is the Word of God.

2. Christ performed his Prophetic Office when he was in the World; he then taught personally. {Matt.5:2} He teaches his Disciples on the Mount, he teaches a very long Sermon, the longest Sermon we read of in all the Gospel, for it continues to the end of the seventh Chapter. Christ taught the multitudes in a ship by the Sea shore, {Mt.13:1 &c.,} and he continues his Sermon almost throughout that Chapter, speaking to them in parables. In John, you have Christ often teaching, in the third Chapter, teaching Nicodemus, in chap. 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and almost in every Chapter, you have Christ teaching the Jews.

3. But beloved, in the third place, Christ is still a Prophet to his people now that he is in heaven, which is the principal thing I intend to speak unto. In the handling of which I shall endeavor; first, to prove from Scripture that Christ is still the Prophet of his people. Secondly, by what rule he teaches his people now that he is in Heaven. Thirdly, the manner how he teaches. Fourthly, the matter what he teaches.

First: That he is a Prophet still to his people, now that he is in heaven; for he never fails teaching his people, for he is

still powerfully present with his people now that he is in heaven. {Mt.28:20} "And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world;" hence it is that Christ saith, "and they shall be all taught of God;" {Jn.6:45;} and Christ when he ascends promised to send the Holy Spirit. What to do? To teach his people. "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." {Jn.14:26} And this is the new Covenant, the Covenant of Grace. "For this is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." {Heb.8:10,11} "And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD." {Is.54:13} So that you see Christ is still teaching and leading his people as a Prophet in the way he would have them to walk.

The second particular propounded was, by what rule Christ teacheth his people now that he is in heaven, and that is by his Word; for the word of God is the alone rule by which Christ teacheth his people, now that he is in heaven, therefore he saith. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." {Jn.5:39} "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." {Is.8:20}

Objection: But some may say, this was before Christ's ascension into heaven.

Answer: true, but the same rule holds still, see it confirmed after Christ's ascension. "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." {Gal.6:16} Mark it, he that walketh according to this rule, peace shall be upon him, &c. Note first that the Word of God is the rule of a Christian's life; and secondly, they are to walk according to it. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, &c." {II Pet.1:19} A sure word of prophesy, that is the Scriptures, and note that in ver.20, he confirms the Scriptures for that end.

Know this, "that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Now the Scripture brings a sure word of truth. It is that which ought to be the rule of the Saints in all their actions, and believe it, Christ never teacheth contrary to this Scripture. If this be truth, how may this reprove those that cast off Scripture, and refuse to walk according to it, under a presence of being led by the Spirit, and so above Scripture, refusing to receive the Scripture, as the rule by which Christ teacheth, looking upon the Scripture as nothing to them.

It is a very sad thing that men professing Godliness, should fall into such absurdities, in receiving such principles as are destructive to the very power and being of godliness, for how can a man walk if he have no absolute rule? How can a man walk without his compass, his line; he knows not when he is in or when he is out, so it must needs be with those that cast off Holy Scripture, for they cannot know when they walk according to the mind of God, or when they do not.

Objection: Christ hath promised to write his laws in the hearts of his people, and that they shall be all taught of God, and that he would send his Spirit, which should teach them all things; therefore, for those thus taught of God, it is too legal for them to walk by the Scripture.

Answer: First, those that deny some Scripture, must by the same ground deny all; and if one Scripture be not a truth to me, and to be received in any practice, how can I judge of the truth of another; and the truth is, that those, that will believe, but on that Scripture which they have a mind to believe {rejecting the rest} do not rightly believe any Scripture; for there is the same ground to believe all, as to the believe one. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." {II Pet.1:20,21} If you do indeed believe these Scriptures to be a truth, I make no question, but you will soon believe the truth of the whole Scripture, these being opened in comparing them with other Scriptures.

First, Christ promising to send his Spirit, &c. I answer, that it was a particular promise made to the Apostles most principally; and in some measure, to all the Saints. Two things here mentioned in this Scripture, are most principally to the Apostles. The first that is mentioned is that the Spirit shall bring all things to your remembrance, "whatsoever I have said unto you." {Jn.14:26} Note, the Disciples of Christ were with him, saw his miracles, heard his word; but now when Christ is gone to heaven, he will send his Spirit, which shall bring all things that Christ spake or did, {necessary to be remembered for our information and consolation,} to their remembrance; that they might leave it upon record to future generations; and this promise of the Spirit properly belongs to the Apostles of Christ, who were both eye and ear witnesses of all he did or spake; and this may confirm us admirably in the truth of the Gospel, as it was you see, written by the Immediate Inspiration of that Spirit of Promise, bringing it to the remembrance of those that wrote it, and by no means serves to destroy the rest of the Scriptures.

The second thing promised here is, "that it shall teach them all things." Note, here also an admirable word, Christ tells his Disciples, that the Spirit, which he would send them, should teach them all things; that is, all things that God intended to make known to man, for their rule and direction in this life; and this without question, Christ who is truth itself, made good to his Disciples. Therefore I hope this doth not serve to destroy Scripture, but to confirm it abundantly; for if Christ did, {as without question, it is blasphemy to say he did not,} teach his Disciples all things, then are the rules prescribed by the Apostles in their Epistles true, and perfect rules, and you, and I are bound in duty, as we will approve ourselves Christians, to submit unto them, to receive them, as the holy, promised Truth of God.

Objection: But Christ makes this promise not only to the Disciples, but to all the Saints also, for all Scriptures is written for our learning, &c.

Answer: True, but in the first place it is to the Apostles, that they might leave us a perfect pattern from himself, and in this there is much comfort for the Saints, that we have in the Scripture, truth and all truth, needful for a

Christian to know; and secondly, this promise is made good to all the Saints in its measure, God gives them his Spirit to understand the Scriptures, and therefore it is, that the Apostle saith; "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." {II Tim.3:16,17} Note that it is the Scriptures that thoroughly furnishes or perfects the man of God to every good work; and we are said to be built upon the Apostles and Prophets, that is, the doctrine, the truth, laid down by the Apostles and Prophets, Christ himself being the chief corner stone. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." {Eph.2:20}

And for the second Scripture, that God hath promised, to write his laws in the hearts of his people, and they shall be all taught of God, &c. It is true, God makes this promise good, for he writes his law in the heart; where he once comes in a way of grace; that is, he puts his Spirit in them, makes them freely willing to walk according to the rule of Scripture; for the Spirit and the Word do answer each other. If any man will say he hath received the Spirit of Christ, and refuses to walk according to the rules of Christ, "he is a liar; and the truth is not in him." {I Jn.2:4-6}

It is true also, that God teaches all his people, for they are all taught of God; but how? God doth teach, and lead into all truth, by the rule of Scripture; therefore Christ saith in his prayer, "sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." {Jn.17:17} See then what a sweet harmony is held forth in all the Scriptures; the Spirit teaching and leading; and all according to the Scriptures. The Spirit of Christ, where present, leads into truth, and that truth is contained in Scripture. Now for any man to say that he hath the Spirit of Christ, and yet casts away Scripture, or for every man to say, he hath the Spirit of Christ, and yet casts away Scripture, I must give him leave to say it; but he must give me leave not to believe him; and also to tell him, that it is a diabolical lying spirit, that casts away Scripture, for if any man speaks not according to this rule, it is because there is no truth in him. {Is.8:20}

A second sort of people that are here to be reprov'd, are those that pretend to be all for the Scripture, and yet walk not up according to the rules of Scripture; without question, those whom Christ teacheth, he teacheth to walk according to the rules that he prescribes them. Of these there are two sorts; those that do not rightly divide between Law and Gospel, between Legal rules and Gospel precepts; and those that instead of following the rules of Christ follow the rules and inventions of men; that wait for what men will prescribe, resolving to make that their rule.

First, those that do not rightly divide between Law and Gospel. And of these there are both Ministers and people, not rightly dividing the word of truth, as the Apostle exhorts Timothy. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." {II Tim.2:15} And this ignorance which remains to this day, upon the hearts of many, whom I question not for their godliness, and honesty; yet God hath not taught them to this day, that clear difference between Law and Gospel; and the ignorance of these men consists principally under these five heads. 1. In not understanding the difference between Gospel Churches and the Church of the Jews. 2. Gospel Ordinances and the Ordinances of the Jews. 3. Gospel privileges and the privileges of the Jews. 4. The difference between Gospel Ministers and the Ministers of the Law. 5. The difference between the Gospel and the Legal Covenant.

1. The Church of the Jews, before, and the Church of Christ under the Gospel. Some say, the Church of the Jews was a type of the Church of the Gospel, both Jew and Gentile; and hence do draw this conclusion, that as the Church of the Jews was National, so the Churches of the Gentiles under the Gospel must be National; and that it is the duty of the Civil Magistrate, to compel all in the Nation to the Christian Religion. Now here lies the mistake; for it is true that the Church of the Jews was typical, the body of the Jews being the natural seed of Abraham, and so all that was of Abraham's posterity, were born members of the Church.

But the Church of Christ under the Gospel are the spiritual seed, the seed according to the promise. "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the

heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." {Rom.2:29} None are to be looked upon as the sons of Abraham by natural generation, as they are borne of the bodies of believers under the Gospel. {Rom.4:16} "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." {Gal.3:26,29} Observe it, you must first be Christ's, before you are Abraham's seed, not Abraham's seed as soon as you are born, it is by faith that ye are manifested to be Christ's, and being thus manifested by faith, then they are Abraham's seed according to the promise. Abraham's promised seed are only believers, such as are indeed Christ's. It is true, some may profess faith in hypocrisy, of whom we having no ground to the contrary, are bound to receive, but none are indeed Abraham's seed, but they that are Christ's.

2. The kingly power of Christ put in Israel after the flesh, was a Type of the kingly power of Christ, ruling in and over his spiritual Israel; their compelling or enslaving those that would not submit to that government, holding forth that power Christ hath left in his Churches, spiritually to slay those that walk inordinately in any Church of Christ, according to that Scripture. "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." {Lk.19:27} It is true, this shall perfectly be fulfilled at Christ's Second Coming, but in its measure it is, or ought to be fulfilled of every true Church of Christ, according to Acts 3:23. "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear {that is submit to} that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people;" that is, cut off by excommunication; as a dead and withered branch. This is the first ground of mistake between Church and Church.

The second is between Ordinance and Ordinance? They judge baptism to be one with that of circumcision, and therefore is to be administered upon infants, as well as circumcision, and this is the ground of much confusion at this very day. Now for the clearing of this argument, I shall lay down these grounds.

A. That the Scripture nowhere saith it, that baptism is one with Circumcision, therefore it may be a delusion; nay, to

say what the Scripture saith not, is but a mere fancy, and invention of man. Now there is but one Scripture that is mentioned for this purpose by those that stand most strongly in this opinion, and that is, {Col.2:11,12,} mentioning circumcision, that, to wit, that circumcision made without hands in ver.11, saith ver.12, being buried with him in baptism; here, say they, the Apostle saith, baptism is come in the room of circumcision. Judge your selves, whether there be ever such a word in the Text, whether it be not a mere forged and forced interpretation; but say they, the Apostle is here persuading the Colossians from Circumcision, and therefore mentions Baptism, as come in the room of it. I answer, this is also forged, for the Apostle doth not in any measure tax the Colossians with this error of holding circumcision, throughout his Epistle, only in the 11th verse he saith, "in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands," holding forth unto them, what they have in Christ, namely, righteousness through the circumcision; that is, the righteousness of Christ, for Christ being circumcised, performed all the righteousness that circumcision required. This is the first ground. The Scripture nowhere saith that baptism is one with circumcision.

B. The ground why baptism is not one with circumcision, is, because the rule for baptism under the New Testament, is not one with the rule for circumcision under the Law; for the rule for circumcision was, that every male child of the natural seed of Abraham, was to be circumcised the eighth day; and the rule for baptism under the Gospel, is, that whosoever believeth, man or woman; Jew or Gentile, shall be baptized. {Mk.16:17, Mt.28:19, Acts 8:12} Both men and women, hearing and believing, were baptized; so that the command for circumcision and baptism, do in no case agree, the one is for males only, the other for believers, both men and women.

C. Circumcision hath its authority in other things, as namely in the circumcision of the heart, the cutting off of sin, lust and corruption; therefore it is called in the fore-mentioned Scripture, the circumcision made without hands. {Col.2:11} "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew,

which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." {Rom.2:28,29} This was the type of circumcision; and it typed forth Christ in fulfilling the righteousness of the Law, to which circumcision had a relation; {Rom.2:25;} and so of a believer's freedom by Christ; "in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." {Col.2:11} Note, it is by the circumcision of Christ; that is, by that righteousness; Christ being circumcised, and so bound over to fulfill the Law, hath performed for us {namely} who believe.

D. Baptism hath nowhere those titles given unto it which circumcision hath, as namely, a Covenant, {Gen.17:10,} a seal to Abraham, {Rom.4:11,} and baptism is nowhere called a seal, neither do I read of any seal to the believer, but the Spirit of God; although it is true, this of baptism hath {though for all that I know} groundlessly been called a seal. Yet it is true, the Spirit of God in it, may convey comfort to the souls of the Saints, as in other Ordinances.

E. Baptism and Circumcision differ in the thing itself; the one being the cutting off the foreskin of the flesh, only of the males; the other the dipping in or under water, of believers, men or women, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

F. They differ in the ends; the end of circumcision was, to confirm to Abraham and to his posterity, that Christ should come of that seed, therefore it was annexed unto that promise. {Gen.17:21} No such thing in baptism, that holds forth Christ coming and washing away the sins of believers in his blood. {Acts 22:16} "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." {Rom.4:11} Another end was to type forth Christ, who being circumcised, was to perform perfect obedience for all his elect, and so bring in everlasting Spiritual circumcision, that is Righteousness. Baptism holds forth a conformity in the believer, to this Christ in his suffering, in his death and burial. "Therefore we are

buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." {Rom.6:4}

G. Circumcision was no type of baptism because baptism is but a type itself. Now for one type to type forth another, I conceive is very absurd, for Christ was the substance of all types, and therefore of this.

H. Circumcision was no type of baptism, for they were both on foot many years together, all the time Christ preached in the world; baptism was the substance of circumcision, then when the substance is once come, the type should have been abolished.

Objection: But if it be objected that baptism came in the room of circumcision, because that circumcision was the means by which the Jews were admitted into the Church, and so is baptism to us.

Answer: I suppose baptism is not come in the room of it, proved; first it is true, Baptism is that which gives visible admittance after the manifestation of faith into the Church of Christ. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." {Acts 2:41} Believers were baptized and added, but circumcision did not admit the Jews into the Church, for they were born members of that Church, and circumcised because members. Note this, if circumcision gave admittance to the Jews into the Church estate, then they were no members before they were circumcised, and then the Jews when they came over Jordan, into the land of Canaan, were no Church of God, for there was none circumcised but Joshua and Caleb, as you may see; {Jos.5:2;} where circumcision is renewed. But it was an Ordinance God required of the children of Israel merely ceremonial and typical, as all the rest of the Jews ordinances were. Thus you see, what a great mistake here lies in the not rightly dividing between Ordinance and Ordinance.

Yet lastly, suppose baptism were put in the room of circumcision; it gives Christ but so much honor, as to tell you who shall be baptized, and the manner how it shall be done, and so the controversy will be soon ended.

3. A third ground of men's ignorance is in not understanding the difference between the Jews privileges, and the privileges of the Gospel. Hence it is that men are ready to argue for Gospel privileges. O say they, it was the Jews privilege, that their children should be circumcised, and is the Gospel straighter? Have not Christians more privileges under the Gospel than the Jews under the Law? Is there not more liberty, grace and glory under the Gospel than under the Law? Why then should not the infants of believers be baptized, as well as Abrahams natural seed circumcised?

Answer: It is true, there is indeed, more liberty, grace and glory under the Gospel than under the Law; but we are to understand what the Christians privilege is. The Jews privileges would be a believer's bondage; this you say was the Jews privilege, that their children were to be circumcised; it was such a privilege, as binds them over to the whole Law. {Rom.2:25, Gal.5:3} But perhaps you will say; "what advantage then hath the Jew; or what profit is there of circumcision;" {Rom.3:1;} that is, what benefit then had the Jews by circumcision? See verse the second, "much every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God;" the Oracles; that is, the Ordinances of God was amongst them, namely, circumcision and worship, &c., wherein Christ was typed forth to those which had faith, the world being without those Ordinances wherein Christ was thus prefigured.

Question: But what are our privileges under the Gospel?

Answer: We have the substance, they had but the shadow; we have Christ indeed, as a Church of Christ, they had but the Type; we have the righteousness typed forth to them in circumcision, they had the Oracles of God amongst them; these were privileges unto them, yet indeed were held under much bondage by those Oracles, the Law ever ready to condemn them. Our privilege is that Christ hath set us at liberty from these privileges, which would be to us indeed yokes of bondage. {Gal.5:1} And he hath made the Law, a perfect Law of liberty to the Saints, that they may rejoice in that Law, from which they are set at liberty by Christ. In a word, there is never a privilege that can be mentioned that the

Jew enjoys, but would be a Christian's bondage. The Christians privileges under the Gospel are all spiritual, and so are their Ordinances. "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." {Phil.3:3} So that {in a word} the Christians privilege is, that they have received Christ the sum of all the Jews privileges, ceremonies and sacrifices; all is in Christ, which the believer by faith enjoys.

Tell me, what privilege it is for a poor infant to have a little water sprinkled upon him? Will it confer grace, or will it not? Will it regenerate, as you have been taught? O Ignorance! The Lord cause it to vanish. Can the Infant, if elected, make any use of this ordinance, or receive any thing held forth in it, to the eye of faith? Nay, he cannot; faith is required in those that participate of Gospel ordinances; and indeed, men and women are to be baptized because they are regenerate, not to regenerate them.

God owned the Jews under a Covenant of works, and so indeed {for the most part of them} they were but a carnal people; and they had carnal, typical ordinances, and a worldly sanctuary; {Heb.9:1,2;} but God owning his church under the Gospel, in a Covenant of grace, {Acts 20:28, Heb.8:10,11,} hath given us more spiritual ordinances, and these ordinances, are always presented to the eye of faith, in those that receive it. Our privilege is that we are freed from the Covenant of works and bondage, under which the Jews were held, {Gal.5:1-3,} and so being free from that Covenant, {Heb.8:7,8,} are freed also from those carnal and legal ordinances; from all fleshly and carnal privileges, in the spiritual enjoyment of the substance of all, Christ Jesus, who is our light and life; our All in all.

4. A fourth ground of men's coming short, and not walking up according to the rules of Scripture is, in not understanding the difference between Priest and Priest; and this may be taken notice of under a twofold consideration.

First, in not understanding the difference between the Jewish High-Priest, the type, and Christ our High Priest the substance, who hath in deed made present peace and reconciliation for all his people. Hence it is, that many a gracious soul, comes short of that peace, of that consolation,

which otherwise they might enjoy, and not eying Christ their Priest and Sacrifice, they themselves are ever sacrificing for peace, and yet no longer than they are offering sacrifice, can they have peace; and so they come short of walking up with God according to the Gospel, being filled with joy and peace through believing.

The second is in expecting that from those, who {indeed falsely} have appropriated that title of Priest to themselves; which they are to expect from Christ, as namely, Teaching. O how have those men been and still are to this day, set up as Christ, amongst many people, making their words their rule? As if it were not possible such learned men might err; and I conceive it arises partly from the misunderstanding of that Scripture. "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts." {Mal.2:7} Now this usually is applied to the Ministers, who have given themselves the title of Priests, and that the people should seek the law at their mouths; and indeed, they themselves have done, what in them lies, not only to bring people into this error, this ignorance, but to keep them in it; whereas Christ is indeed the alone Priest, the substance of the Jews type; and the people are to seek the Law at his mouth, for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts; he is called the Messenger of the Covenant, {Mal.3:1,} the alone Prophet and Teacher of his people.

Objection: But Christ hath appointed Ministers to teach his people. Are not the people to seek the Law at their mouths?

Answer: Not by virtue of that Scripture, for Christ is the alone Priest, and there is none in that office beside him; though it is true all the Saints are Priests, and the Church a holy Priesthood. We are to receive nothing from any man as truth but what he brings from Christ; and therefore our duty is to try all things, and hold fast that which is good. We are men subject to error, and it is our duty, to try the truth of what is delivered, and not receive any thing because, another saith it; but see whether the Lord hath said it; and so therefore the Apostle saith, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so

say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." {Gal.1:8,9} And the noble Bereans were commended for searching the Scriptures, to try, if those things preached were truth. {Acts 17:11} If the Bereans tested and scrutinized the truth of Paul's doctrine, by the Scriptures, who spake by Divine Inspiration from Christ, much more should you search and try the truth of things delivered; and not build your faith upon any others word, but the word of Christ, your High Priest, who keepeth knowledge for you, and hath promised to teach you himself. "And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children." {Is.54:13}

5. The fifth and last ground of men's {I mean still those that have some knowledge of God} coming short of answering the rules of the Gospel, is their ignorance, in not understanding the difference between Covenant and Covenant.

God owned the Jews as they were a body, a Church, under a Covenant of works, but the church of the Gospel is under a Covenant of Grace. It is true, the Covenant God made with Abraham Gen.17, from the first verse no the fifth, is a Covenant of Grace, and by virtue of that Covenant he promised to be a God to Abraham's natural seed, but he never owned Abraham's natural seed in a Covenant of Grace; if so, then they must all of them have been saved, for the Covenant of Grace is sure to those that were under it. "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an Everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." {Is.55:3} "I will make an everlasting covenant with them." {Is.61:8} "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." {Jer.32:40} But God never made such a Covenant with Abraham's natural seed; nay the truth is, that God never intended such a thing, neither to Abraham nor any man in the world, to make a Covenant of grace with their natural seed, for God himself saith of the Jews, the seed of Abraham, "For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return {or be saved;} {Is.10:22,23;} also; "though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved."

{Rom.9:27} Now the Covenant under which God owns his church, under the Gospel, is an Everlasting Covenant. {Heb.8:10-12} When God spoke of this Covenant in Jer.31:31,32, "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, &c." This Covenant under which God owns the children of Israel as a church, to which circumcision hath a relation, therefore called a Covenant, {Gen.17:10,} binding to this Covenant, the Law. {Gal.5:3, Rom.2:25}

Now there are two evils that usually flow from this misunderstanding of the Covenant. The first is this, {that seeing the covenants are one and the same, under which God owned the church of the Jews under the Law, and now owns the church of the Gentiles under the Gospel, which indeed is not so,} the conclusion is drawn, that we must lay the foundation of Gospel Churches and Gospel Ordinances in the Law; and hence it is, that men are so hardly drawn off from their legal principles. We must have national Churches, we must have infants baptized, the ground ariseth from the Law, because the Jews were a national church, and their males were baptized. O gross legality! Is not this to deny Christ to be come in the flesh? {I Jn.4:3} Truly if it be not, I confess I am yet ignorant of what God intends in that Scripture. O how hard it is, to bring learned wise men to lay the foundation of their practice in the Gospel? It is almost impossible; nay, I had almost said altogether impossible, if God do not mightily work to persuade them, that Christ Jesus as a Son over his own house, is faithful in all things, giving exact rules in every particular, for the well ordering and governing of his house, that is, the Church; {I Tim.3:15;} and for the administration of every ordinance; as Moses himself hath said, "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." {Deut.18:15} If the Lord help you once to see that ye are not under the Law but under grace, {Rom.6:14,} then you will be contented to receive your rules from the hands of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ.

A second evil that flows from hence is this, that many a poor soul {for want of a clear apprehending of the difference between the Covenant, the one of work, and the other of grace} are held under much slavish fear and legal bondage; the poor creature looks upon the Law, the Covenant from Mount Sinai, {Ex.19 & 20 chapters,} where there is nothing, but fear and dread; and hence it is, that no longer than the creature can work, can it have comfort; and the reason is, because it hath been ever set upon working out salvation, not remembering that blessed word of truth, "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest ... but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." {Heb.12:18-23} Believers are not come to mount Sinai, to burnings, blackness, and darkness; they are not called to a Covenant wherein is the administration of condemnation; that is done away to believers, {II Cor.3.7-11,} but they are come in deed to mount Zion, to the city of the living God, to the Covenant of Grace, where there is mercy and pardon in its administration, and "to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." {Heb.12:24} Where there is nothing but cause of joy and gladness; joy unspeakable and full of glory. {I Pet.1:8} All which many a poor soul is deprived of, for want of a right understanding, between the covenants of Law and Gospel.

Thus have I plainly {though very briefly} endeavored to lay open the grounds, or true causes why, many men and women, though otherwise godly, yet come short of walking up with God according to Scripture rules. I must leave it to the great Prophet Christ to reach your souls.

The second sort of people, that comes here, to be reprov'd, are those that pretend to be for Scripture, yet indeed, do make the prescriptions of men their rule; that resolve, whatever the Magistrate requires or commands, they will do. A very sad thing! And as much to be lamented, that ever men that would be counted Christians, should set up man in the room of God, see what a dreadful curse is pronounced upon such. "Thus saith the LORD; {note, it is the Word of God} Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh

flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is." {Jer.17:5-7}

Note that the curse consists in two particulars.

1. He shall be barren "like the hearth in the desert;" dry, empty, poor, nothing of God in him. O this is it that is the cause men grow so barren, dry, empty; because they rest upon man, they durst not entertain thoughts of going farther than they conceive the Magistrate intends; and Ministers wonder why so many gracious people leave them, they see they are grown barren through their dependence upon men, the curse of God is come upon them, they are like the barren hearth in the wilderness. Professors wonder why they are left of their companions many of them; why they are barren, empty, and they cannot profit by them, and all because they trust upon men, they dare not entertain thoughts of submitting to Scripture farther then the Magistrate goes along with them, and therefore it is that they leave them.

2. A second curse is that "they shall not see when good cometh," and this is the reason why so many, choice learned men see not that good which is come; that Truth, that Grace, that Glory that God lets shine through the Gospel into the souls of many of his people; but they oppose it and persecute it, the curse of God being upon them, blinding them because they trust upon man, and make flesh their arm, and their strong confidence, and had rather deny truth than suffer affliction with the people of God. "But blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the LORD is." {vs.7} He shall be fruitful as a tree planted by the rivers of water, &c. O do take heed of receiving, or {at least} of resolving to receive rules from man in matters of worship, without an exact trial of it by the Word of God. "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." {Mt.15:9} If ever men should be as those that teach for doctrines the traditions of men, yet that you would not receive those traditions for your Scripture, for in so doing you can do no less

than incur that curse of being made like unto a barren hearth in the wilderness, &c.

The third thing propounded concerning Christ as he is a Prophet, is the manner how he teacheth his people that now he is in heaven, and that is: 1. Ministerially. 2. Spiritually. 3. Powerfully.

1. Ministerially, by his Ministers, yet ever according to the one rule; namely, the Scriptures. Thus Christ when he ascended to heaven, sent forth his Disciples and promised to be with them to the end of the world, {Mt.28:19,20,} and you shall ever find Christ teaching by this means. Peter preaches and souls are converted, {Acts 2:41, &c,} Philip preaches the things concerning Jesus, and they believed; {Acts 8:12;} and in the church of God, Christ hath appointed Ministers with their gifts, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;" {Eph.4:12;} so that this is the first means by which he teaches. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed, and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?" "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." {Rom.10:14,17} "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." {II Cor.5:18}

2. Christ teacheth Spiritually by his Spirit, for the Word and the Spirit go both together; for the word is but a dead letter in itself, farther than the Spirit goes along with it; therefore John.6:63, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." If the Spirit goes with the word, then the word proves Spirit and life; the Spirit worketh freely in the preaching of the Gospel; thus the word is but an instrument in the hand of the Spirit, by which it becomes effectual in the hearts of those to whom it is sent. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit;" {Jn.3:8;} so it is the Spirit that worketh in the word, and by the word.

3. He teacheth powerfully, for where Christ comes he teacheth powerfully and effectually, therefore the Gospel is

called, "the power of God unto salvation." {Rom.1:16} "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." {I Thes.1:5} So that the Gospel is the power of God, as it is that wherein Christ manifests his power in teaching poor ignorant, unknowing creatures. Therefore it is said, {Mat.7:29,} that Christ "taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes;" that is, his Word had a commanding power and authority over their spirits. Beloved, if Christ once comes to teach your spirits, he will come with power, with authority, and he will make a separation between thy soul and thy sins, for he will pluck thee off from thy base lusts and cursed practices, as once he did Saul. Christ came with power and great authority upon him, and took him off from his persecution, and makes him a preacher of that truth which before he persecuted, and so will Christ deal with thy soul, whoever thou art that cleavest as close to thy sins, as thy skin to thy flesh; he will fetch thee off from it, if thou belong unto him.

The fourth particular propounded, was the matter, which Christ our Prophet teacheth.

First, he teacheth man to know himself, for it is life eternal to know God and Jesus Christ, {Jn.17:3,} and therefore you shall ever find men {in Scripture} appointed by Christ for the work of the ministry, to preach the Gospel; that is, a crucified Christ. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." {Acts 2:36} Peter preached Christ crucified, bringing them to know that it was Christ indeed whom they had crucified; so Philip, {Acts 8:12,} preacheth the truth that concerns the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus. So Paul, {I Cor.15:3,} preached first and primarily that which he also received, "how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." This is the first thing to be preached, Christ and glad tidings by him; and therefore surely this is the first thing that Christ effectually teacheth where he comes. "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." {I Cor.2:2}

Objection: Must men be taught the knowledge of Christ before they know their own misery, by reason of sin?

Surely no man will accept of Christ unless they see a need of him.

Answer: It is the sight and knowledge of Christ that brings men truly to see and know themselves. Saul, {Acts 9,} thought himself a very holy and happy man, till he met Christ on the way; and note, Christ teaches him in the first place the knowledge of himself; "and he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutes, &c." {Acts 9:5;} Christ did not tell him of his sin. "O thou art an accursed and persecuting creature; dost thou indeed ask who I am? Thou haddest more need know thyself, &c." No, no, he discovers himself unto him; and this I am sure was God's usual dealing in the Gospel; for those whom he taught, he taught them first to know Christ; and this, Christ our Prophet, must teach thee, if ever thou be taught.

It is not man's wisdom that will help thee to the knowledge of Christ. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, &c." {I Cor.1:21} All the wisdom in the world cannot teach thee to know God; it may spoil thee, and undo thee, but not help thee. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." {Col.2:8} Man's wisdom may; nay will {if God prevent it not} spoil you forever; for there is no greater enemy in the world in itself {man's corrupt nature so working with it} to hinder man in the true knowledge of Christ, than man's carnal wisdom and learning. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." {Rom.8:6,7} The wisdom of the flesh is death, so the word in the Greek is. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God." {I Cor.1:21} "Where is the wise; where is the scribe; where is the disputer of this world; hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" {vs.20} O take heed of resting upon human wisdom, arts and sciences; they are dangerous things, if the Lord prevent it not, for a malicious devil, and a deceitful heart, to deceive you withal.

Secondly, Christ teacheth these whom he teacheth to know themselves, and that as I have said, by a reflecting back

upon themselves from a beholding of Christ. They come now to see themselves cursed, lost creatures, and believe it; every one whom Christ effectually teacheth, he teacheth them to know themselves, to be poor, lost and undone creatures in themselves. Thus Christ brings those, {Acts 2:37,} from beholding of Christ, to behold themselves; and make them cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? &c.," and so Saul, {Acts 9:5,6,} after he had seen Jesus; "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest &c.," and then he sees himself a poor creature and comes trembling, and astonished, and said, "Lord, what wouldest thou have me do?" So if our Christ come, he will make you see yourselves sinners, with a witness; and this thou canst never do savingly, unless Christ teach thee. Saul could persecute and think he did well, till Christ meets him, and shows him his sin, but he could never see himself a persecutor, till Christ taught him. Saul persecutes, but he confesseth that he did it ignorantly, through unbelief. {I Tim.1:13} So there are many that out of zeal are persecutors of Christ in his Saints; but they do it ignorantly; for they are persuaded, that it is their duty, and that they do God service in it, as Christ himself foretells. "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." {Jn.16:2} But I dare say, {as Saul said of himself,} it is through ignorance, out of blind zeal; thinking they do God good service, that it is their duty so to do. Did they but know, that in so doing, they persecute Christ, who indeed takes every wrong done to his, as to himself; I dare say, they would not do it; but it is the power of Christ that must come upon their spirits, before they can see it. O men can hardly believe it; tell such a man that persecutes and imprisons the Saints, {as did Saul,} that they persecute Christ, they will not believe it; they will be ready to say, as Hazael, {II Kgs.8:13,} when the Prophet Elisha tells him, what great wickedness he should commit; "and Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" So many men who are bitter enemies to the Saints, ready to do any mischief unto them, yet cannot be convinced that they are the men that persecute Christ. "What I such a dog as to persecute Christ?" God forbid, yet these can and will persecute the Saints. Beloved, consider of it; Christ

takes any wrong done to them, as done to himself. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" {Acts 9:4}

Thirdly, where Christ comes in power, he teaches men to believe. This he taught when he was upon the earth. "Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent;" {Jn.6:29;} and verse 47, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." {Jn.3:18} And this was that which he gave in commission to his Disciples to preach. {Mk.16:16,17} To preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; and this Paul preached, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house;" {Acts 16:31;} and this Christ doth not only teach to the ear, but to the heart also where he comes in power. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." {Mt.16:16,17} "And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." {Jn.6:69} And this he taught all that ever came to him effectually. "All that gladly received the word," {Acts 2:41;} that is the truth held forth in the word, the glad tidings of life by Christ preached in the Gospel, and this is the work of Christ, the gift of Christ.

Question: What is that Gospel faith Christ teacheth to his people?

Answer: 1. It is a believing of that record God hath given concerning his Son, with a depending upon him for Justification and Life. 1. It is a believing of the report God hath given concerning his Son; that is, that he is the Son of God. "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." {Mt.3:17} The son of man, God and man. {Rom.1:3,4, Col.2:9} That he is a mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. {Is.9:6} That he came into the world to save sinners. {I Tim.1:15} To save them from their sins, {Mat.1:23,} and from all their enemies. {Lk.1:71} This is the record God hath in Scripture given,

concerning his Son, and faith is given to believe it. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son;" that is, to believe that he is the Christ the Anointed sent of God, and fitted for the work to save sinners. {I Jn.5:10} "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." {I Jn.5:11}

2. Faith is a dependence upon this Christ for life, flowing from a sensible apprehending of all that fullness that is in him. "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." {Jn.6:67-69} Mark here is the Apostles faith, "We believe thou art the Christ, thou hast the words of eternal life;" therefore, whether shall we go but to thee? If all forsake thee yet we cannot, whether shall we go? Here is faith, when a soul believes indeed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, and there leaves itself, sees no way or means else in the world of help, but sticks close to the Lord Jesus in a way of dependency; and this none can do, but by the power of God. "Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou Simon, flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven;" {Mt.16:17;} and none can call Jesus the Lord but by the Holy Spirit, &c. {I Cor.12:3}

Now the fruit of this faith is Obedience, wherever Christ works this faith in the heart it produceth obedience. "By whom we have received Grace and Apostleship, to the obedience of faith," {Rom.1:5,} so is the word in the Greek. Faith is a working grace, it is not idle where it is, it worketh by love. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." {Gal.5:6,} Christ is ever teaching a believer, and he receives this teaching by faith which worketh by love, and constraineth the soul in whom it is, to submit unto the teachings of Christ, which is according to Scripture, as you have heard.

Question: What doth Christ teach a believer after he hath given him faith?

Answer: Christ teacheth many things to his Disciples which they receive by faith, and these may be called {in some sort} the fruits of faith, because by faith we receive them, and submit unto them, but they are indeed the fruits of the Spirit, which Christ our Prophet giveth to his people. {Gal.5:22} But I shall confine myself in the discovery of the teachings of Christ to the Saints under three heads: The first is Self-denial. 2. Universal obedience. 3. To live by faith.

The first is, self-denial, and this Christ teacheth in the first place where he comes, {I mean} to a believer, for self-denial is a fruit of faith. How can a man deny himself till he sees something out of himself worthy of his love? See Christ teaching this lesson. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." {Lk.9:23} Christ teacheth his Disciples to deny whatsoever is of flesh in the creature. Now there are at least ten things in self, which Christ teacheth his in some measure to deny, and to lay all down at his feet.

These are: 1. Self-sinful. 2. Self-righteous. 3. Self-wisdom. 4. Self-glorying. 5. Self-profit. 6. Self-pleasure. 7. Self-love. 8. Self-will. 9. Self-strength & Self-sufficiency. 10. Self ends.

First, Self-sinful, or sinful self; now it is true, that it is in itself all very sinful; for whatsoever is of self is sinful. But for the more clear opening of this grace of self-denial, I branch it forth under these heads; the first is Sinful self, for where Christ is, he teacheth men thus to deny themselves; so they cannot sin willingly. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." {I Jn.3:9} He cannot sin; that is, he cannot sin with a willing mind to sin; he denies his sin, he loves not his sin, therefore he is able to say, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me," as the Apostle, {Rom.7:17,} and therefore he is ever at enmity with his sin, and lusts; the grace of God teaching him to deny them. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." {Tit.2:11,12} The grace of God manifested in the Gospel teacheth men that rightly receive it, to deny

themselves, to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts. Believe it, this is the grace of the Gospel, it is not as some pretend, a Gospel of liberty to sin, but such grace as teacheth men to deny sin; for whoever he be that takes liberty in sin, under a pretense of grace, certainly, it is not that grace that brings salvation, that teacheth men to deny ungodliness and sinful lusts, that teacheth them to live soberly in respect of themselves, righteously towards men, and godlily towards God.

This is the effect of the grace of the Gospel. Saul a persecutor shall be so no more; Zacchaeus an oppressor shall be so no more. The Gospel makes a separation between a man and his lusts, and between a man and his sinful courses. "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice; but I will proceed no further." {Job 40:4,5} So when once the grace of the Gospel comes, then it makes a man lay down all sin and lust, whatever it be, as Saul, {Acts 9:4,5,} "once have I spoken, but I will proceed no farther," perhaps once I have been a persecutor; yea twice, but I will proceed no further; once I have been light, vain, prodigal, walked unbecoming the Gospel of Christ; yea twice, but I will proceed no further. This grace teacheth men to deny ungodliness.

2. There is righteous self, that is in self-apprehension, though it is true, none can do good, and the best actions out of Christ are but filthiness, yet such a disposition there is in nature, that is ever apt to have high thoughts of itself, they that know anything aright know it. But when Christ commeth, he teacheth men to deny it, to cast off all their own righteousness as filthiness. See Paul, who was indeed full of self-righteousness before his conversion, as he himself confessed. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the Tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, and touching the Law a Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the Church, touching the righteousness which is in the Law blameless. {Phil.3:5,6} Here was a righteous soul, who would think now this man should have any need of Christ; but follow him a little, and see the change, for all this must be denied, cast off and rejected, as a thing of naught, as filthy polluted

things. Those things that I once esteemed gain, all that confidence that I had in the flesh, I see they were all nothing, I was content to lose them all for Christ, Yea doubtless, and I account 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 {that is, all that was mine own} and do count them dung that I may win Christ. {Phil.3:7,8} Beloved, here is self-denial in a wonderful measure, to account all your own righteousness but as dung or filthiness, that you may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the Law, {the Apostle exclaims that, casts it away,} but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Here is a denying of righteous self, a rejecting of all his own righteousness as nothing; nay, as very filthiness, and believe it, where Christ comes in some measure, he teacheth this lesson. I confess, this is a very hard lesson, flesh and blood cannot attain it; herein lies the great mystery of the Gospel, which appears to flesh and blood to be the greatest folly, for a man to deny himself, his duties, prayers, best actions, cast them down at the feet of Christ as dung and dross. O it is a hard lesson, yet such a lesson as the Saints must learn, yea, and do learn it, in some measure from Christ. The righteous shall say, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee, or thirsty, and gave thee drink. {Mt.25:37} Note it, the Saints disown all that ever they have done, they take no notice of it, they do not remember it. It was not that whereon they built their consolation; they looked to the righteousness of Christ and there they lay their salvation; and note again, Christ remembers the good work of the Saints when they do not remember it themselves. O it is a sweet thing to be above these things, then Christ will remember them; but when men live upon these things, and come to remember duties as a ground of comfort, then Christ will not remember them; Christ will profess, "I never knew you." Now the want of this grace in this particular, it occasions two evils, the first of them is, and that even to the Saints, it deprives them of much comfort and spiritual peace; the poor soul looking upon its duties, seeing the weakness, the imperfection of them, he is troubled and complains, and doubts and questions its condition, and all for

want of self-denial, that is not looking for anything in those duties. I dare say that the Saints duties kills them in their own apprehensions more than any other of their sins; but if the Lord help you to deny yourselves, that is, not to expect anything in duty, but lay it down at the feet of Christ, and to live upon Christ your all in all, you shall find abundance of influence of grace, and new manifestations of love, and in your duties you shall have more fellowship and communion with God, than ever; it is your expectation of comfort in your own righteousness that deprives you of it; and just it is that it should be so, nay, it is a mercy that it is so, for if God should give thee thy desire in duties, thou wouldest then live upon them, and undo thy self forever.

The second evil that flows from hence is that men do indeed destroy themselves by this means; that is, it is an instrumental means by which they destroy themselves, as all men are destroyed by some means, and that is sin; and by this sin, self-righteousness, men destroy themselves; for men living and dying, trusting upon their duties destroy themselves; and this is that which makes men spiritually proud, lifts up men when they have least cause, when they live upon their own righteousness. But Christ teacheth his children to deny themselves.

3. There is self-wisdom in every man and woman naturally, and this Christ teacheth his to deny also; for men are naturally too wise for Christ, as were the Grecians. "The Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." {I Cor.1:22,23} There is a great deal of carnal and earthly wisdom that naturally dwells in men, and this wisdom is at enmity against God, and God's wisdom appears foolishness unto it, see what the Apostle saith. "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." {I Cor.3:18,19} Here is an exhortation for a Church to take heed of self-wisdom; and you and I have need to learn this wisdom, the Lord help us in it, to see ourselves fools. See who is the right fool, "he that trusteth in his own heart," {Pv.28:26;} or that one who trusts "in the LORD with all thine heart;" and leans not unto his own understanding. {Pv.3:5}

The readiest way to attain wisdom is to lay all our own wisdom down at the feet of Christ; the Apostle Paul had abundance of human wisdom and learning, yet he abases himself, he accounts all, not only his righteousness, but wisdom also, but dung and dross; all loss in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. This is true wisdom indeed, truly to know God in Christ; this is that wisdom which is from above, that brings life eternal with it. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." {Jn.17:3} I beseech you consider of it, hath Christ taught your souls this lesson? Is your wisdom heaven-born wisdom, or is it earthly wisdom? Is it your own wisdom, or the wisdom of God "which God ordained before the world unto our glory." {I Cor.2:7} "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish;" {James 3:13-15;} but now see ver.17, for "the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits;" it is all heavenly, like him whose it is; but man's wisdom is all earthly, sinful, and devilish; which Christ teacheth his in some measure to deny.

4. There is naturally in every man self-boasting and self-glorying in the creatures own wisdom, and apprehended self-excellency; but where Christ teaches, he gives power against this cursed fruit of the flesh, for in some measure there is a disposition of nature even in the Saints, to be exalted, and that above measure, not only in their own personal excellency, but in those graces received from Christ. The Apostle Paul was sensible of both; in I Cor.9:27, where the Apostle saith, he beats down his body, and brings it into subjection &c. There was a lifting up and the Apostle was sensible of it; he found that in him that which was enough {had not God let him see it, and helped him in it, as he apprehended, notwithstanding his preaching to others} to make him a castaway; so also, II Cor.12:7, "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the

revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me;" that was to pull him down, that he might not be exalted in himself. There is in every child of God a natural disposition to spiritual pride, and he that knows anything knows it. The Lord teach you and I to search our own hearts in this particular, and give us power against it. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." {II Cor.7:1} This is the filthiness of spirit that the Saints are liable unto. Truly we have little cause to glory in anything, except in Christ Jesus. "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} Therefore {the Prophet saith;} "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} It is the exhortation of Christ to his Disciples, Luke 10:20, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven;" and this lesson, the Apostle Paul learned, and every Christian in some measure must learn, Gal.6:14, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

5. There is self-profit, which every man naturally is apt to look after. O how hard is it for a poor creature to deny himself? How hard is it for a rich man {saith Christ} to enter into the Kingdom of heaven? The world is a common bait, wherewith the Devil entices man to sin, as Judas, Ananias, with Sapphira; Nay, Christ himself is set upon with this temptation. {Mat.4:9,10} O this profit, the love of money, is the root of all evil. But where Christ comes teaching effectually, he teacheth the soul to deny it self, to look upon the world as a very empty thing; he gives power to overcome the world, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the

world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." {I Jn.5:4} Now the soul sees that it is his duty, not to look only on his own things, but everyone on the things of another. {Phil.2:4} Now he hath learned to sympathize with the body and every member; he looks not upon himself at a distance from the meanest member, making himself equal to them of the lower sort.

6. There is self-pleasure also, and this of two sorts. First: In delighting in pleasures, of these the Apostle speaks of, for men shall be "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." {II Tim.3:4} Beloved, it is much unbecoming Christians to be lovers of pleasure. "But she that liveth in pleasure {or she that liveth delicately} is dead while she liveth." {I Tim.5:6} Now beloved, Christ takes off his people from these pleasures, by presenting better pleasures to them; he makes them drink of the river of his pleasures, {Ps.36:8,} so that the Saints are not without pleasures spiritual, and that abundantly and eternally. "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." {Ps.16:11} God takes off his from those earthly, carnal pleasures, which is indeed dangerous and destructive. "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man." {Pv.21:17} It is true spiritually as well as temporally; carnal earthly pleasures and profits are two great enemies to the power and being of godliness; cares, riches and pleasures is that which chokes the Word, that men bring forth no fruit to perfection. "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." {Lk.8:14} "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." {Rom.8:6}

A second sort of self-pleasure is when men resolve to please themselves. O sad word; that men should have such a disposition to please themselves; but where Christ teacheth, he teacheth men in this case to deny themselves. Now this may be considered under a twofold relation either to God or our brethren.

First: To God, for where Christ teacheth effectually, there the soul will rather deny itself than God. It will rather please God than itself. Christ, who is the Saints pattern, did,

always so walk as to please God. "And he that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." {Jn.8:29} Now Christ as he was man in our flesh, pleasing the Father always in all things, and so was our pattern; so he teacheth his the same lesson. This is a Maxim in Religion, that whosoever chooses to please himself, rather than God, Christ hath not taught him. "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." {I Thes.4:1} As if the Apostle had said, that which ye have received of us is, that ye ought to walk according to the example of Christ, to please God. This is the doctrine, that we have taught you, we beseech and exhort you by the Lord Jesus Christ that ye abound more and more in this grace. This is an excellent choice grace, to please the Lord; ever to have that in thine eye to please God, though thou displease thy self; that is, thy fleshly carnal self. "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." {Col.1:10} O this is a soul taught indeed by the Spirit of God, when he prefers the pleasing of the Lord before himself, or carnal friends, or anything. "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." {Pv.16:7} When a man seeks to please God, in walking answerable to the rule of God, though he displease his enemies, God will make those enemies to be at peace with him. This being rightly learned is that which would carry you along through all oppositions in a way of truth. Perhaps something, yea, some truths, may seem hard to a poor creature to be submitted unto; perhaps the poor creature resolving with flesh and blood, which will have its bouts even in the Saints, may be ready to conclude sometimes, "if I submit to this way, to this truth, I must expect reproach, persecution, perhaps loss of liberty, estate, yea, life and all;" now it would wonderfully please carnal reason to deny such a truth, to hide and conceal such a truth in unrighteousness; but when a soul comes to this; it is my duty to please God; therefore hath Christ required it; will it please the Lord Jesus? O then I dare not but do it; come what will, I cannot but do it; truly you who indeed love the Lord

Jesus, that love will constrain you to please him, although you displease yourselves.

Secondly: Those who are taught of God will rather displease themselves than displease their brethren, the Saints. This is a necessary lesson, a gracious soul will displease himself rather than the Saints; this is a lesson, that both you and I have need to learn; and I doubt we come short in our practice of it. I speak not either to blame or shame any of you, I have more against myself in this particular than against you all; but I speak to inform, to forewarn both myself, and you in this particular; and to prevent any mistake or misunderstanding of what I shall speak concerning this thing, I desire, before I proceed, to let you to know, that I do not intend that you should be men-pleasers, that is, that ye should so please one the other, as to suffer any sin in each other, without reproof, or admonition in love; therein you come to hate one the other. Neither be ye externally in show only such, for the Apostle reproves such, speaking of the duty of servants, "not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ," so pleasing the Saints, as in that you please God; "not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." {I Thes.2:4} "For do I now persuade men, or God; or do I seek to please men; for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." {Gal.1:10}

But to proceed, it is the duty of the Saints so far to please their brethren as to deny themselves, as the Apostle Paul. "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." {I Cor.10:33} The Apostle seeks to please all men, that he might win some to the Gospel, which is every Saints duty; much more to please the Saints in love, rather than in everything to seek to please ourselves. It is this self-pleasure that is the cause of so much division amongst the Saints. How hard a thing is it for one Saint to stoop to the weakness of another? Love would cause us to stoop to each other and to perform every service of love each to each other. "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification." {Rom.15:2} And why? "For even Christ pleased not himself &c." {vs.3} If your hearts and my heart were so molded into this form of doctrine, as that you could count it your joy to please your

brethren, that you could choose rather to please a Saint than to please your selves, and so everyone to have this heart of love toward each other; what comfortable life of love in the Lord might the Saints live? Whereas on the contrary, when everyone stands off to please himself, men run an end, to have their own minds; what whisperings; what bitterness, will arise even in the Saints? Nay, how do they come sometimes even to bite and devour one the other, as the Apostle speaks? But my beloved, I hope better things of you. I speak not to condemn, but to forewarn, both myself and you of this great evil, which too much creeps in among the Saints; and to let you see a glimpse of the amiableness of that grace of love, which is so useful amongst the Saints.

7. There is self-love naturally in every man; so the Apostle fore-tells, "for men shall be lovers of their own selves;" {II Tim.3:2} and that Professors too, and that in the last days. Now Christ who is the Saints Prophet and Teacher, he teacheth them to deny this self-love; not that a man may not love himself, love his soul, love to enjoy good. "He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul;" {Pv.19:8;} so likewise, I Pet.3:10, "for he that will love life, and see good days &c." But that he should not love himself and himself only, this is sinful love. Christ Jesus never taught this love; but a man may so love himself, as that he love his brethren also; nay, he may so love himself, as that he love his brethren as himself. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor {to wit, thy brother} as thyself." {Rom.13:9} This is the love Christ teacheth where he comes, and he doth not only teach it in word, but in example also; he may be said so far to deny himself, as not to love himself, in comparison of that love manifested to us; he loved us better than he loved himself; our life better than his own life; for he gave his own life freely, to purchase life for our souls. Here was great love! "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends." {Jn.15:13} And we ought to be followers of Christ in this grace of love. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us." {Eph.5:1,2}

8. There is self-will also, and this Christ teacheth the Saints to deny, and to submit unto the will of God; this Christ our pattern hath given us an example, who came not to do his

own will, but the will of him that sent him. "Jesus saith unto them, my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." {Jn.4:34} In his prayer before his suffering, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." {Mt.26:39} O blessed example, to be imitated of all the Saints! What? Jesus Christ deny himself, his own will, and shall not the Saints do so likewise, his Disciples and followers? But Christ hath not only given us his example, as our pattern, but he hath exhorted us thereunto also. "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." {Mt.7:21} The Apostle exhorting servants to be obedient to their masters, says, "not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." {Eph.6:6} This self-will is a cause of much stir and division in the world, I had almost said amongst the Saints. What is the cause of this war and blood but self-will? I mean next under God, one will establish one Religion, another will establish another Religion; one will establish Episcopal, another will establish Presbyterian Government; or else the Kingdom must deplore it, being stirred up thereunto on both sides by the Clergy, and is likely to bring ruin upon the Kingdom, if God prevent it not; in teaching those whom it concerns, that they have nothing to do in either side, to compel men to any Religion; that it is the will of men, and never the will of Christ, to give his Kingdom and Dominion to the will of men, to the will of the Magistrate. This self-will is that which causeth stirs and troubles in families, the husband will have his mind and the wife will have her mind; this causeth stirs in Churches amongst the Saints, when everyone will have his own mind; his own way, will please himself, whoever be displeased. O how sweetly might the Saints live if the Lord teach them to deny themselves?

9. Christ teacheth to deny self-sufficiency and self-strength. There is a natural disposition in the creature to think that it hath power in itself to act towards God; and those that hold freewill, make it a part of their faith, that although in word, they seem to deny freewill, yet indeed they hold it; and that the creature acts of his own strength, and may fall from grace, or may stand if he will; but where Christ comes in

power, he teaches men to deny this principle. "Without me ye can do nothing;" {Jn.15:5;} and the Apostle, that had experience of the workings of God, confesseth this principle of grace, "I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." {I Cor.15:10} "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." {Phil.2:13}

10. And lastly, there are self-ends also; and these Christ teacheth his to deny. There is a natural disposition in the creature to seek himself and his own ends in everything. "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." {Phil.2:21} Therefore the Apostle exhorts the Corinthians, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." {I Cor.10:24} Christ teacheth his in some measure to lay down all self ends at his feet, and to seek him and his honor, so that now whatever the Christian doth, it is for Christ; if he preach it is Christ, and for Christ. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." {II Cor.4:5} All that ever the Saints do, they do for the honor of Christ, and why; because they are not their own, they are bought with a price, therefore they are to glorify God in their bodies and spirits. {I Cor.6:19,20}

Question: May not a Christian seek himself in any case? May he not seek his own good?

Answer: Yea, without question a man may seek his own good, but he may not seek himself. He may not seek himself alone, but first, the glory of God, and in seeking to glorify God, he must of necessity seek his own good, for God hath so conjoined his glory and the Saints good together, that it is impossible to glorify the Lord, but the good of the Christian must be included in it; for this is the Saints rule, to do all to the glory of God. {I Cor.10:31} This is the Saints privilege that "all shall work together for good, to them that love God." {Rom.8:28} There are many base and self-ends that professors may have in their actions, as those that followed Christ for the loaves more than for love to him; so it is possible that men may follow Christ for outward and by-ends, although I confess I see but little ground, why men shall now turn Christian for the world, for they are like to enjoy

least of it, as the Scribe that came to Christ, and would follow him whithersoever he went. He thought to gain something by Christ, but Christ tells him, that he was not like to gain what he expected; "and Jesus saith unto him, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head;" {Mt.8:20;} and therefore he had no house of preferment for him. It was a good resolution of the Scribe, had his end been as good to follow Christ whithersoever he went; and this is the noble resolution indeed of every one that rightly comes to Christ, to follow him, whither ever he leads him; they follow him through good report and bad report, through any tribulation, to the Kingdom of heaven. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." {Rev.14:4}

But those that come to Christ in expectation to gain the world, they are likely {for all that I know} to miss of their ends. Some come that they may get heaven, and so they pray, preach, do all to get heaven by it, but they are like to miss of their end. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name have cast out devils; and in thy name done many wonderful works?" {Mt.7:22} Some profess that they may be counted Christians amongst others, as the Scribes and Pharisees, they did what they did to be seen of men, {Mt.23:5,} but these are not the Saints ends in their duties, for they seek Jesus of Nazareth, a crucified Christ, and his glory, and therein they glory and rejoice. {Gal.6:14} Thus you see when Christ teacheth effectually, he teacheth men to deny themselves, and indeed there is good reason for it, that it should be so.

There is great reason that man should deny his own righteousness, or else he is like never to partake of Christ's righteousness. Christ will be the alone Justifier, or else no Justifier, he will be all or none at all. {Gal.2:16, 21; Col.3:11} Therefore the Apostle Paul who once had as much self-righteousness as another man; he thought himself once alive, but when Christ came, he taught him to lay down all that was his own at the feet of Christ, and to suffer the loss of all things, that seemed gain to him before, that he might win Christ. {Phil.3:8}

There is a necessity for Christians to deny sinful-self; and that, as they stand in relation to Christ, who is their Justification, for is it the natural property of grace to subdue sin, to purge forth iniquity; Christ dwells in every justified believing soul, and where Christ dwells, there cannot be a love unto, and a delight in sin. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." {I Jn.3:9} He doth not sin, because his seed remaineth in him; that is, the spirit of grace and of Christ remaineth in him, that now he cannot sin, because born of God; that is, as he is a man born of grace, he cannot sin, he cannot sin with a mind to sin, with a delight in sin, therefore the Apostle Paul saith, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." {Tit.2:11,12} It is the property of grace to teach men to deny ungodliness.

There is great reason why it should be thus; and that, with relation to the great contrariety that is between Christ and sin, Christ and Satan, for all sin is of the devil. "He that committeth sin is of the devil;" {I Jn.3:8;} Christ and Satan, Christ and sin, which is Satan's work, are one of the effects of his work, are open adversaries each to other, and sin and Satan are absolute rebels against Christ, so that they cannot possible dwell together in one and the same soul; and that is the reason, Christ in the Saints is ever weakening and subduing sin and Satan, he ever teacheth the Saints to deny sin, it being so contrary to his holy and pure nature, they being made partakers of the same divine nature, {II Pet.1:4,} their spirits are ever carried forth against sin.

The Saints cannot but deny sin as they stand related to Christ, in relation to his glory; for Christ is holy, and he will have a holy people, that may be for his praise and honor. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." {I Pet.2:9} Christ hath made you and I holy, that so we might show forth his praise; that is, that so we might give occasion to praise God.

Are not the eyes of the world upon the Saints, expecting much from them? Although it is true, they do not, nay, they cannot love holiness, yet they expect the Saints to be holy, and to deny sin. Are they not ready to watch opportunities to scandal Saints and truth withal, and would it not be a very sad and grievous thing, if those that profess themselves to be for Christ, should give just cause of offence? Would it not be very dishonorable to the name of the Gospel and profession of Christ? Therefore Christ teaches men and women where he comes to deny ungodliness and sin, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world. It is his exhortation, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." {Mt.5:16} Let your light shine before the men of the world, that they may have no cause to speak evil, but rather cause to glorify God. Let your light so shine before the Saints that they may rejoice and glorify God. A close walking with God is that which gives great cause of joy and rejoicing in each other, and an occasion of praising God, one for another; so the Apostle thanks "God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." {Rom.1:8} How was their faith spoken of? It was the fruit of their faith, their obedience in walking up with God, answerable to that faith they professed, for by our work we manifest our faith; so likewise the Apostle thanks God for their constant fellowship in the Gospel, from their first submitting to it. {Phil.1:3-5} This is a cause of joy. But on the contrary, for such as bear the name of Christians, to live in, and delight in sin, to be vain, and carnal, and earthly, this is a cause of sorrow and weeping, amongst Saints. "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." {Phil.3:18,19} They cause the cross of Christ, and the way of Christ to be evil spoken of, a cause of sadness indeed to the Saints!

Reason: Why Christ teacheth his to deny self-wisdom, self-love, self-will, and all of self, is, because they are to take up their cross and to follow Christ; that is, they must expect reproaches, afflictions, tribulations for the name and sake of

Christ. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." {Jn.16:33} Now what wise man in the world, can or will suffer reproach, the loss of the world, and the worlds reputation, the loss of friends, liberty, ease; it may be of life itself, in a word, all that is near and dear to the carnal man? What man but a fool {thinks the wise men of the world} is there, that will lose all on such light terms, as the gaining of a crucified Christ. A man not taught of Jesus, as the truth is in Jesus can never suffer with comfort and joy, these things the Saints are like to suffer for the name of Jesus. Self-wisdom and self-love will come in. O saith wise self, when it eyes that persecution, those hardships, that are like to follow those that follow Christ. "May I not pass by such a truth, and such a practice, and yet be a Christian, and get to heaven? What need I to adventure myself upon such hardships, when perhaps for the neglecting of such or such an opinion or practice, I may attain my liberty and my good reputation?" Is it not a sad thing when men professing Christ, should thus consult with flesh and blood? The Apostle Paul did not so, when he was converted to the faith of Jesus. "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." {Gal.1:15,16} It is self-wisdom and self-love that sets men to consulting with flesh and blood; but flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. {I Cor.15:50} That is a man not taught of Christ, not made a partaker of his divine nature and grace, bearing only the image of the earthly Adam, cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

When a man shall come to submit to Gospel Ordinances which are contemptible in the eyes of the world, for which he is like to suffer shame and disgrace, here is need of self-denial. O saith the self-denying Christian, "let me submit to Christ, to every truth; to every ordinance, although I suffer loss in the world, reproach, and shame from my friends, and acquaintance; though I lose the love of my best friends; whether father, mother, husband, wife, &c." for saith the self-denying Christian, "Christ hath said that he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;

{Mt.10:37;} and the love that CHRIST hath shed abroad in my heart by his Spirit, {Rom.5:5,} constraineth me to deny myself, and follow Christ in all conditions." {II Cor.5:14} Thus you see the self-denying soul and none else is meet to be a Disciple, a follower of Christ; for he alone is ready to take up the cross daily and to follow him.

Christ teacheth his to deny self-sufficiency and self-strength, that so they may be able to hold out in the evil day, when a day of adversity comes, when a man is put to it, either by his spiritual or temporal enemy. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." {Ps.2:12} Men standing upon their own strength are gone. "The youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; {that is, those that apprehend a power in themselves to stand,} but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." {Is.40:30,31}

If men stand upon their own strength, they are like to fall. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." But they that see an insufficiency in themselves, and trust upon the name of the Lord, shall be as mount Zion that shall never be moved, {Psal.125:1,} but abideth forever. Christ would have his work to be a perfect and certain work; his Covenant a sure Covenant, {Is.55:3,} therefore he undertakes, not only to bring men and women into covenant, but to keep them there. "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." {Jer.32:40} But if Christ had left the power of standing to man, he might have been as likely to fall away as Adam, nay, and more likely, for there is a body of sin left still in the Saints, matter for the Devil to work upon; but Adam was without sin, therefore there is no possibility for that man to stand, that stands upon his own strength. But it is in the strength of Christ the believer stands; "without me ye can do nothing," {Jn.15:5,} you cannot pray, or perform any duty acceptably, {Rom.8:26,} much less stand and hold out to the end against all spiritual oppositions that a Christian is to encounter withal.

The last reason why Christ teacheth this grace of self-denial to the Saints is that so they might live in love and peace one with another. If every Saint should seek to please himself and love himself, and to have his own will in everything; how is it possible love and peace should be continued amongst the Saints, if there should not be a bearing with, and forbearing one with another; if the strong should not bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please themselves? But God hath so tempered the body together, that they should all seek the good of each other in love; that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one of another, as of themselves. {I Cor.12:25} That every one might seek not their own, but one another's good. That they might all grow up together a complete body, a holy temple in the Lord.

A word of examination and trial, hath Christ been thy Prophet? Hath he taught the lesson of self-denial? This is a very needful use, not only for carnal men, but for Saints; it was the exhortation of the Apostle, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" {II Cor.13:5} Christ is in every Saint; and if there, what doth he there? Surely he is not there for naught, he will be ever teaching the soul, he will be there as thy Prophet, showing the way thou shalt walk in.

Consider a little now, I beseech thee, hath Christ taught thee to deny thy own righteousness? Canst thou look upon it all as filthiness? Or else art thou stuffed and filled with thine own righteousness, lifted up as high as the heavens in thine own conceit? Like the proud Pharisee, I thank God that I am not as bad as other men; I pray and perform duty, I have a good heart, and as good a mind to God as any man. If this be thy condition, the Lord Jesus hath never been thy Prophet; thou art yet in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; thou sayest thou art rich, and wantest nothing, when the truth is {if the Lord open thine eyes to see it} thou art poor and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked. {Rev.3:17}

Hath Christ taught thee to deny ungodliness and sin? Or else canst thou take pleasure in unrighteousness? "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this

seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." {II Tim.2:19} I dare say it, that some there are in the world, that have high thoughts of themselves, yet indeed, make a mock of sin and take pleasure in unrighteousness. If this be thy condition, the Lord Christ hath never taught thy soul. {II Pet.1:9} Christ teacheth to be holy, and humble; he gives power against sin, and lust. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind; nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." {I Cor.6:9-11} Consider you that have been taught of God, hath he taught your souls this lesson, to deny your own wisdom, will, end, strength, and all? To lay down all as nothing, at the feet of Jesus? The Lord help you and I a little now to examine ourselves; how much of self yet remains, self-wisdom, self-glorifying and boasting, self-love and self ends. O how doth the Devil crowd in these things into the souls of the Saints; the Lord help you and I to see it, and give us power against it? Certainly if it be with your souls, as it is with me, you have some experience of these things. Hardly can you perform any duty, but self will present itself to your view in one shape or another. Now where Christ teaches he ever sets the soul a work against those sins, and causes the soul ever to have low thoughts of itself and to have high thoughts of God, and of the Saints, esteeming every one better than himself.

Wherein you find you come short in this duty of self-denial; look up to the Lord for help and assistance, for it is the Lord that teacheth to profit; therefore if you want anything, the exhortation of James is, "ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." {James 1:7} For "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." {vs.17} Therefore have recourse to heaven, make known thy condition to the Lord Jesus, for this thou may do, this thou ought to do, thou must go to God and tell him what thou hath need of,

what grace thy soul desires; tell him that thou hast a poor self-seeking heart that will not stop farther than he bends it and bows it; look to him and he will help thee, come unto him and he will ease thee, and give thee thy heart's desire to love and honor Christ in all things.

Note this one word, for where God hath begun this work in any measure, though you find much of self, and it is thy daily burden, yet here is a ground of comfort for such a soul; for it is mercy that thou seest that evil of self that is in thee, and that it is thy burden indeed. The comfort is that Jesus Christ hath been thy Prophet; for he hath taught thee in some measure to deny thy self, and given thee a desire after the perfection of this grace; and that where Christ hath begun this work he will certainly finish it, he will perfect it to the day of Christ. Thou mayst live upon him henceforth, and expect teachings from him; new manifestations, new discoveries of grace and love, new influences of power from himself as thou standest in need for his own honor, the Saints good, or thine own consolation. {Heb.13:5,6} Thus much for the first consideration which is self-denial.

Secondly; where Christ becomes a Prophet, he teacheth that soul to yield universal obedience to himself; and this is an effect of the teaching of Christ. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." {Mt.28:20} "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." {Acts 3:22,23} And this obedience Christ doth not only require as he is a King, but he teacheth it as he is a Prophet. "And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children." {Is.54:13} It is the Covenant of Grace. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful

to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." {Heb.8:10-12} He will make them a willing people, he will teach them to yield willing obedience, he will teach them to do spiritual things with an appetite and a mind to them. Now this obedience flows from faith, it is a fruit and effect of faith. {Rom.1:5} Christ first teacheth faith, and then obedience.

Question: What are the great commands of the Gospel.

Answer: Love is the great command; and where true faith and love is, there will be the effects of it. "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." {I Tim.1:5} This is both the beginning and end; the first and last in the Law of the Gospel. Love; first God out of love hath given us a law; and we out of love yield obedience thereunto. James calls it the Royal Law. "If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." {Jam.2:8}

Now this love is manifested: 1. To Christ. 2. To the Saints.

1. To Christ, and that, first in keeping his commandments. "Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me, he will keep my words." {Jn.14:23} "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." {vs.24} Love will cause those in whom it is to submit to Christ in everything. "For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." {I Jn.5:3} Here in is our love to God made manifest, in keeping his commandments.

Question: What are the commands of Christ to his children with relation to himself?

Answer: His command is first love, as you have heard. Obedience flowing from love; and this obedience is first: 1. To Gospel commands. 2. In a Gospel manner. 3. To Gospel ends. First, it must be to Gospel commands; we are to hear Christ in all things, not Moses; {Acts 3:22,} "him shall you hear in all things, &c.," believers are to receive every command as from the hands of Christ. "Ye are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you." {Jn.15:14}

The first command that Christ requires of believers, and that next after faith received, is Baptism. He that believeth

and is baptized shall be saved;" {Mk.16:16;} so likewise, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." {Mt.28:20} Disciple Nations, and baptize them; this was the first thing in the commission, to be submitted to, and it was ever so in the Apostles practice, which must be our pattern. "Then they that gladly received his word {that is, believed the truth of the Gospel, and gladly received the Lord Jesus, the sum and substance of the Gospel} were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." {Acts 2:41} So Acts 8:12, "but when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." So Acts 16; Lydia and the jailer; in a word, this was the first duty that ever the Saints performed, the first ordinance that ever they subscribed to after faith received; in the Scripture there is neither precept nor president, either to baptize before faith, or after, to teach faith, or else after faith is received, to neglect or slight baptism, it being a command of Christ. Love in the Saints compelling them to yield obedience to every ordinance of Christ for his own sake, with an expectation of a farther discovery, and manifestation of love and grace from God, in his own ordinance, in his own way.

Now I confess there are many objections that by many are made against this truth, who plead for, and practice the baptizing of infants; but because I have in another treatise endeavored from the light of Scripture to clear the truth and answer those objections, I shall in this place pass them by, only by reason of our late conference, I shall briefly touch upon these three Scriptures we then had in disputation.

The first is Acts 2.38,39; "the promise is unto you, and to your children, &c.," the Promise in this place was concluded upon, that it was remission of sins, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit; hence was drawn this conclusion, that the infants of believers found as large an interest in this promise as their parents, and therefore ought to be baptized. Which I cannot but deny, and affirm, that the promise here was to the Jews, as many as the Lord did call; to their children, as many as the Lord should call; to the Gentiles afar off, as many of them as

the Lord should call. There is a sound truth in the Scripture thus interpreted; for God gave remission of sins, his Spirit, all the good things of the Gospel, to as many as he called, both Jew and Gentile, and so he will to the end of the world, and indeed he never promised it to any other. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." {Jn.3:36} If the promise of the Covenant of Grace, remission of sins, and the good things of the Gospel, had been to the Jews that believed, and to their natural seed, it must then have been made good to them, or else there was no truth in the promise, but it was never made good to them, for then they had not been apostated as they are to this day; nay, the Lord was so far from intending any such thing to the Jews, that he intended their rejection and casting off, {Rom.11:15,} neither was the promise to the natural seed of the believing Gentiles, but the elect of God both Jews and Gentiles obtain it, and God under the Gospel makes no difference between the seed of the believer and unbeliever, with relation to their Generation, but it is sheer grace alone that makes the difference.

The second Scripture was Mark 10:13, 14, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." That which is hence inferred is, that children are blessed, that they are a part of the Church, and therefore have a right to baptism, whereas it is very probable that those infants were brought to Christ to be cured of some diseases, for the Text saith, "they brought young children to him, that he might touch them, and he blessed them," that is, gave them the blessing they came for, to wit, health and cure; and whereas Christ saith, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," that is, of such qualified spiritually as those infants were naturally, so Christ himself interprets it, {vs.15,} "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein;" that is, whosoever doth not receive the Kingdom of God, both of grace and glory, as a little child; that is, humble, meek and teachable, able to do nothing himself, but Christ is his all and in all, he shall never enter therein; so that Christ takes occasion from those little infants, to discover a Gospel

mystery, a mystery indeed to natural men. "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." {Mt.18:3}

The third Scripture was that in I Cor.7:14, "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." Now it was first granted, that the sanctification of the wife is but a civil sanctification, she is sanctified to his use, that he ought not to put her away. This was granted also, that holiness is a fruit of sanctification; then I say, that the fruit or effect cannot be greater than the cause, for the cause cannot produce a greater effect than itself, the cause being only a civil sanctification, the holiness of the children must be the same; so that now under the Gospel, the believer may lawfully keep the unbeliever, whether husband or wife, and their children; whereas under the Law, if a Jew married with an idolatrous Gentile, he was to put away both wife and children, {Ezra 10:3,} but under the Gospel there is no such thing, unless the unbeliever will depart.

After faith and baptism, the will and command of Christ is that his people should yield obedience to all his commands; and indeed he doth not only command, but gives power to perform that which is commanded, for there is a power that goes with the commands of Christ. He is the King of his people, he gives their laws and statutes, and withal gives abilities to do what he commands. Christ knows that without him you can do nothing, {Jn.15:5,} the will and command of Christ is that his people should be holy in all manner of holy conversation; and the will of God is their sanctification. "Ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus; for this is the will of God, even your sanctification;" {I Thes.1:4,5;} and the reason is rendered in the 7th verse, "for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." God hath not given his Son to redeem men, that so they might live in unclean and unholy ways; he does not call them to fellowship with Himself, and one with another, that so they might take their pleasures in the world, in way of sin, for God calls his own to holiness, and therefore the Apostle Peter says, "as he which hath called you is holy, so

be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." {I Pet.1:16} The Apostle Paul's exhortation answers this command, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service; and be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God;" {Rom.12:1,2;} that is, seeing God hath renewed your minds, may your bodies, your external walkings be made conformable to Jesus Christ, and not to the world. O beloved, holiness becomes the saints, especially holiness becomes the household of saints, the churches of Christ; for the Church of saints is God's House, {I Tim.3:15,} his dwelling place, {Ps.132:13,14,} and holiness becomes the Lord's house forever, and it is the love of Christ that constrains the saints thus to walk.

Question: But is it not the saints duty thus to walk?

Answer: Yea, without question it is their duty, for "as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God;" {Gal.6:16;} but they perform this duty of holy walking out of love to Christ, therefore Christ saith, "if ye love me keep my commandments." {Jn.14:15} None hath to do with the commands of Christ but those that love him, which love flows from faith, for faith worketh by love. {Gal.5:6}

A second command of Christ is, love to the Saints, which was the second thing I propounded in the manifestation of love. It is first to Christ, "He that loveth not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed." {I Cor.16:22} "These things I command you, that ye love one another." "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." {Jn.13:34}

Question: Why is it called a New Commandment, seeing it is not new, but the same that was from the beginning.

Answer: 1. It is New, because given anew by Christ, and so are all the commands of Christ given anew, and are new commands given to a new people; namely, to believers. As Moses' commands were given to all the whole body of

natural Israel; so Christ's to the whole body of spiritual Israel, the Saints. None else hath to do with any law as it comes from Christ, but are still under the Law, as it came from Mount Sinai.

2. It is new in respect of the nature of it, which is double. First: As it flows from Christ's love to us. Second: It must be the same as Christ's love was to us ever; "as I have loved you;" and as this is the special command of Christ, so it is the property of the Saints, that the grace they receive from Christ, causeth them to do it; the love of Christ constrains them. Therefore the Apostle thanks God for the Colossians; for the increase of their faith, and love to all the Saints. {Col.1:3,4} Where faith increaseth, love increaseth; for faith increaseth love to Christ; and love to Christ increaseth love to the Saints.

For my more clear proceeding in this particular, I shall endeavor from light and truth to discover unto you, first, what love is. 2. The excellent properties and effects of this love. 3. The manifestation of this love.

1. What love is: Love is an affection of the soul carried forth after, and settled upon, something, from an apprehended worth and excellency in the thing. This I conceive to be love, whether it be spiritual or natural; whether set upon a good or bad object; for it is not possible there should be true love, but where the soul apprehends something worthy to be beloved. First, the understanding goes forth and takes a view of the object presented. If the understanding so apprehend any worth or excellency in the object presented, then the affection of love is let forth upon it, and is not satisfied without the enjoyment of it. Hence it comes to pass that when the understanding is truly enlightened, and the judgment rightly informed, the affection is carried forth, and settled upon a right object; but if the understanding be corrupted and blinded, and the judgment misinformed, the affection of love is carried forth after and set upon wrong objects. When the understanding is so blinded, it apprehends an excellency in the world, in pleasures, in sin, &c., for believe it; it is the blindness of men's understanding usually, that causeth men to love sin fully.

So, on the contrary, when Christ is presented to the view of the soul, the understanding by the power of God is enlightened and comes to apprehend in some measure that excellent worth that is in Him, the affection of love goes forth after Him, and desire is not satisfied until it truly enjoys Him. Thus it was with the Spouse in the Canticles, {5:10,} "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand;" and hence it is, her love is so drawn forth after him, that she seeks him and is never satisfied till she find him, {vs.6,} she is sick of love after him, {2:5,} and this love unto Christ carries forth the soul in love to the Saints, for the sake of Christ, where it sees the Image of Christ; the same love wherewith the soul loves Christ, it loves the Saints. "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? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." {I Jn.4:20,21}

That it is the command of Christ, and the property of the love of God, where it is shed abroad in the heart, to carry forth the soul in love, not only to Christ, but to the Saints, you have heard; for "every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." {I Jn.5:1}

I come now to the excellent properties and effects of this love. 1. With relation to Christ. 2. To the Saints.

Love to Christ refuses to receive satisfaction in any enjoyment beneath the Lord Jesus. A soul truly enlightened in the excellency of the knowledge of God in Christ refuses to take content and satisfaction in anything that comes short of Christ. It is true that there may be many turnings and windings in the heart, and the profits and pleasures of the world shall be presented, {as Satan presented them to Christ,} and duties, creatures, performances, gifts, &c., and thus Satan can, and often doth present himself like an angel of light, and that to the saints too; for they that know anything of God, know too, that if possibly he could, Satan would delude and cheat a poor creature, but the soul truly loving Christ will not be thus cheated and deluded by that old serpent for he must have Christ, and nothing else will satisfy. A living child may be quieted awhile with a rattle, which is nothing but folly; but in conclusion, it finds by experience the emptiness and

vanity of such things and then casts them all away, and nothing but bread will satisfy. So it may be with the soul, the living child of God, for he may receive some contentment in duties and prayers for a time, but in the conclusion he comes to see the emptiness of these things, and then nothing but Christ will contend him. When a soul truly loving Christ comes to see how he hath deluded himself in mistaking Christ, thinking that he hath had Christ, when indeed he had nothing but some external ordinance, visible form, which is indeed the shell without the kernel; oh then nothing less than a living Christ will satisfy. O give me Christ saith the soul or else I die; Christ in every ordinance, for now the soul must enjoy Christ in ordinances, Christ in preaching, and praying, in the supper of the Lord, nothing gives content to the soul but Christ. O this is the excellent quality of true spiritual love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence it is that the spouse in the Canticles so earnestly seeks her Beloved, for she could take no rest until she had found Him, and then she holds Him, and will not let Him go. {Song 3:1-4} This is the property of love, it soars very high, flies aloft like the Eagle, and why? Because God in Christ is its object, and thither will the Eagles be gathered together. Christ is the single Object of faith and love, and to him all true believers come, and in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory; {Is.45:25;} only note this, that the soul comes by faith to enjoy Him whom the soul loves.

A second excellency of love to the Lord Jesus is that it is quieted and satisfied in the single enjoyment of Christ; for the soul that hath Christ hath enough, it can say as Jacob, "It is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive;" so the believing soul, whose heart is truly inflamed with love to Christ for his own excellency, it hath enough, it is content now to lose all, as the Apostle Paul, he accounts all things but loss, yea, dung, that he may win Christ. {Phil.3:7,8} This is the excellency of the grace of love to Christ, it carries the soul above the world, above creature, or anything beneath Christ, it desires nothing but Christ; it glories and rejoices in nothing but Christ, {I Cor.2:1,} and him crucified. {Gal.6:14} If it have the world, so it is, if not, it is still content, it is quiet in any condition; if it enjoy all things, I mean {in the world} yet Christ is the sum of all; if it want all things, yet in Christ it enjoys all, so the

Apostle, as having nothing, yet possessing all things, so that now the soul that believes in, and loves the Lord Jesus Christ, knows how to be abased, and how to abound; that is, it knows how in that lowest condition to live satisfied upon Christ, and it knows how in the highest condition to live also upon Christ, it can do all things through Christ that strengthens it. {Phil.4:12,13} Do you not see on the contrary, men that have no love to the Lord Jesus, how they let forth their hearts upon the creature; they live upon the creature; take away the world from them, you take away their life; but the man that loves Christ, hath enough in the enjoyment of him, whatever befall them in the world, they can say as Christ, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," {Jn.4:32,} the Lord Jesus is the Saints meat and drink which they live upon, and are satisfied with Him.

The third property of love is that it slights all hardships and sufferings that it meets withal for the name and sake of Christ. Nothing can quench this love, many waters cannot quench it; many floods of affliction cannot quench love; when others that love not the Lord Jesus but themselves, and their own ease, start and are affrighted at the reproach of Jesus, as at some strange apparition; when the soul that sees spiritually, that looks not at things that are seen, that is at the outside of things, which carnal eyes only see, but at things that are not seen, that is at the outside of things, with carnal eyes; they hence go cheerfully, slighting persecutions, being persuaded that nothing can make a separation between Christ and their souls; glorying and triumphing in the cross of Christ, being not only ready to suffer reproach, but death itself, if the Lord call them to it, for the name and sake of their Beloved. Thus you see the excellency of this grace, it carries the soul sweetly out to Christ, it lies down in the bosom of love, and there it is satiated, there it is indeed satisfied, there it hath enough, there it lives, and there it dies, yet with Him it shall forever live. O the admirable excellency, in this grace of love, it makes hard things easy, and bitter things sweet; it lives upon that others cannot see, no, not never shall see, unless the Lord open their eyes; it rejoiceth in that which others dread; it takes that for a crown, that others count shame; it

makes their hearts to leap for joy, in the beholding of those things, that makes others faint and fail.

I come to the excellency of this grace of love, in, and to the Saints, for that is the great thing we have now in hand, the excellencies of the grace of love among Saints, among brethren. This love is of a knitting nature, it knits or binds up the souls of the Saints as one, it makes them to be of one heart and of one mind. What is the reason of such divisions amongst Saints, but the want of love? This grace of love is that which would knit the hearts of Christians one to another.

It was the Apostle's desire and care for the Colossians, that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love. {Col.2:2} This knitting together of the Saints is that which makes them meet to watch over each other and to build up each other; it is as the joints and sinews of the body natural, knitting each member together, and so nourishing the whole body. Being "knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." {Col.2:19} This is the excellent property of love, as it knits up the souls of the Saints together; and where it is in truth, there cannot be an easy dissolving of this knot of love. This was the love of David and Jonathan. "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." {I Sam.18:1} This is the true property of love, it knits the soul to the party beloved; and it is not possible, if there were indeed true love amongst the saints, that there should be such divisions amongst them; for in general, if it be but a difference in opinion, presently the love and the fellowship is broken.

A second excellency of true love is that it covers a multitude of infirmities, it is not easily moved, it is not easily provoked, it is naturally easy to be entreated, it will not suddenly believe evil reports, it will not suddenly have bitter envyings and evil surmisings; and this is the excellency of the grace of love, for it will bear much and long, it will not censure without just cause. "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; {love envies not another's prosperity, but rather rejoices in it, as one member of the body rejoices in the prosperity of another;} love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; {love is an humble grace, it maketh those in whom it is, to serve each other in love, to prefer each other before itself;}

doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, {all things that it hath any ground or warrant to believe,} hopeth all things, endureth all things." {I Cor.13:4-7} It hopeth all things, that is, the best of all things, where there is any ground or probability of hope it endureth all things; that is, all things that God himself inflicts or suffers man to inflict upon him, and here is the excellency of love. O, who would be without this grace of love? Nay, but who can ever attain it but those in whom God sheds abroad his love in their hearts by his Holy Spirit? How is this grace of love wanting among the Saints? Whence is it that there are such discords? Such bitter envying? Such secret whisperings? In a word, such rents and breaches of communion and fellowship amongst Saints, for slight things, but the want of this grace of love? Truly, were the love of God shed abroad in the hearts of his people more abundantly it would not be thus; for love is of absolute necessity, for the peace and communion of Saints.

Excellency of love: It is an everlasting grace, it shall be made perfect in another world; other graces fail, but love never faileth. {I Cor.13:8} Prophetesies will fail and faith shall cease, but love shall abide forever, it shall be so far from ceasing, that it shall after the ceasing of faith and other graces, be made perfect, and the Saints that love God indeed here {and from that fountain of love, love each other} they shall then forever live in the bosom of love, their souls being satisfied in the enjoyment of him the Fountain; they shall be then perfectly knit together in one, being filled with the enjoyment of God, made perfect in love, through that abundance of love it enjoys in him.

The third particular propounded is, the manifestation of this love, how the Saints manifest this their love to one another.

1. In a faithful diligent watching over each other in love. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." {Phil.2:4} There should not be such a spirit amongst Christians as was in Cain, who said, "Am I my brother's keeper;" no, no, you are keepers of each other,

and it is love that will make you faithful to each other's soul in this particular.

2. The second manifestation of love is, in building up one the other in the most holy faith, edifying one the other in love, helping forward each other in the way of holiness being "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." {Eph.4:16}

3. In bearing with the weaknesses of each other. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." {Col.3:12-14} Here is the manifestation of love, when you are able to bear with, and forbear one another, from this principle, because God hath borne with you, God hath forgiven you. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye." {Rom.14:1}

4. In restoring a fallen brother with the spirit of meekness. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." {Gal.6:1} Much tenderness is to be used towards a brother in this case; the ground is, we ourselves, the strongest of us are subject to, and may fall by the like temptation, if the Lord prevent it not.

5. In speaking kindly to each other; good words and comfortable. This is the manifestation of love, and truly where there is love in the heart, it will appear in the countenance, in the words; a cheerful and loving countenance, loving words; here will be words both for the Saints, and to the Saints. First, for the Saints to go to God in prayer. {Eph.1:6} For them, in their vindication, when any scandal is unjustly laid upon them; so Jonathan for David, {I Sam.19:4,} "Jonathan spake good of David," and good for David; in speaking kindly one to another, so the Apostle Paul, he ever gives the Saints the title of Brethren, "wherefore holy Brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling;" and Solomon saith, "that a soft answer turned away strife."

6. And lastly, love is manifested in condoling each with one another in afflictions; the Saints are all of them members of the body of Christ, {I Cor.12:27,} and the members of the natural body are sensible of the sufferings of each other, for if one member suffer, all suffer with it; if one member rejoice, all rejoice with it; so it is or should be in the body spiritual, we should bear part of one another's afflictions; be truly sensible of the affliction of each other, and so bear part with each other; be truly sensible of the comforts of each other, and so rejoice together; this is the property of true love where it is. I have very briefly hinted upon some particulars, much more might be said in this particular, but I desire not to be tedious in this place. I might branch forth in many other particular Gospel commands which would be too tedious; only thus, where the love of Christ is indeed shed abroad by the Holy Spirit, there love constrains the soul to yield itself up wholly to the Lord Jesus, and all his commands; whatsoever things are of good report, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are warranted, and required in the Gospel way, the soul that truly loves the Lord Jesus, is ready in the peace and strength of Christ to walk up unto it; it will not consult with flesh and blood, it will not stand upon carnal arguments, but as the Lord Jesus hath glorified mercy, grace, and love, in doing unto the soul, so it will now look what it may conduce to the exaltation of his name, and then the soul that truly loves the Lord Jesus is satisfied; let the name of Jesus have the glory, and the soul that truly loves him, hath its end, and rests satisfied.

Use. It concerns everyone to look if Christ hath been their Prophet; hath Christ given thee a heart willing to submit unto him in all things? Ready in his power to yield universal obedience to all his commands? O it nearly concerns you, to try your selves, and if so, then whether your obedience flows from love? It is possible there may be external obedience from base and by-ends, and then all is nothing. Love is the fulfilling of the Law; whatsoever is done in love, that is, from the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart, is well done; but all done without love is nothing; preaching, praying, professing, communicating, it is all nothing without love. It is one thing to preach, pray and profess, it is another thing to do it out of love

to Christ; for only then it is a fruit of faith. Faith worketh by love, and all work done without this, is not acceptable. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal &c." {I Cor.13:1-3} A man may have excellent words, fine composed sentences, admirable expressions, all flowing from a notional knowledge that may much affect the ears and hearts of the people, and yet all be but a sound of words attained by art, as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, which seems to make a sweet sound to the ear, when there is nothing in it indeed but a composure of human art; and so being brought out of that frame, there is nothing indeed worth looking after, or harkening unto; even so are those persons, who seemingly do glorious actions, and yet indeed have not the love of God in them.

But to proceed; the third thing that Christ usually teacheth his people, as to believe, which faith, you have heard, produceth its effects, so in the third place he teacheth them to live by faith, that is, to act and exercise this faith upon all occasions, in all times, according as they have need, to make use of it; and indeed this is a great Gospel mystery, which the Saints are too much ignorant of. It is one thing to have faith, and another to live by faith; it is one thing to have legs, and another thing to make use of them, to go with them.

Question: What is it to live by faith?

Answer: 1. It is to exercise faith, that is to make use of it as need requires; or, {2,} it is a living upon Christ in the want of all things; or, {3,} it is a living by believing of what the soul shall one day enjoy.

1. It is to exercise faith as occasion calls for it; that is, to exercise it upon the object; for faith hath ever an object, and if it be right and true, the object is Christ. Now it is true, there is occasion for the Christian to exercise faith in every condition, either internally or externally, for the Christian hath many enemies to encounter withal, the flesh, the Devil and the World, all these war against the soul. Now faith overcomes. The flesh that will be ever lusting against the Spirit, Satan coming in, working by it; self will be in every action, self-wisdom, self-priding and self-boasting; this is all contrary to the mind of the Spirit, and now the Spirit is troubled and

grieved, so that many times there is a hot conflict in the soul of the Saint; but how comes the Christian to overcome it? By crying and applying Christ, it can say as Paul, I have a body of sin, a proud cursed and self-seeking nature, but thanks to God through Jesus Christ, &c., and there is no condemnation to them in Christ. It is true, I have a base nature, a wicked, cursed, deceitful, proud, self-seeking heart, yet the Lord hath let forth a glimpse of his glory to my soul, he hath let me see, and hath sealed this by his Spirit unto me, that I am in Christ, and there is no condemnation for me; and so by faith, seeking to Christ, the soul overcomes this enemy flesh. And then secondly, it ever lives in believing, that this fleshly corrupt part, shall be every day more and more subdued, and so is ever crying a crucified Christ, for the killing and crucifying of this body of sin.

2. The Devil, he will come in with his darts, laying hard and heavy things to the charge of thy soul, although the Apostle saith, "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." {Rom.8:33} Although God himself pronounce a man clean and just, yet the Devil will come in and endeavor to make work in the godly justified soul. O saith the Devil, thou art a vile cursed creature, thou hast a base earthly carnal heart, thou art able to perform no duty, but it is full of sin, and as good never a whit, as never the better. Thy services {hadst thou no other sin to be accountable for} are enough to condemn thee; and besides all the rest of thy sins, and thy baseness in performing duty, which is the worst of all, for thou hast a wicked proud heart of thine own; for thou art ready, whenever God hath assisted thee, to take the honor to thyself, and to pride thyself in those weak duties thou performest. What say you to this Christian? Hast thou any experience of this trial in thy soul? I dare say thou hast, if Christ dwell there; but what course will you take to overcome in this combat? {See Eph.6:16} These are the enemies the Saints are to encounter with; they are no small, no mean enemies, {see vs. 12,} and the armor, the Christian's armor, it is all armor of defense; "but above all take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked;" for the Devil will come, and come again, he will have one dart, and another dart; now the way to

overcome, is to take the shield of faith, a shield of defense, so this faith both defends and resists the Devil.

Question: But how doth faith overcome?

Answer: It ever hath an eye to the foundation Christ, it knows that the foundation standeth sure, and so it turns over the devil, and the false conclusion that the devil and the heart is ready to make together to Christ; and now the soul saith, it is true Satan, or it is true heart, I am base, I have a vile cursed nature, I cannot pray nor perform any duty as I should, sin is in my best action, I confess that I am in myself as bad as man or devil can make, not a worse heart in the world more subject to evil, farther than God restrains it; more unable to do good, farther than God enables; and what of all this Satan? I know there is enough to condemn me forever, were I to answer in mine own person for myself; but Christ hath been condemned for me, Satan, he hath borne all my sins, and so my condemnation, and he hath made himself over to me, so that now thou must first have something against Christ, before thou canst shake my hold, and thus by faith flying to Christ, the soul overcomes the enemy; but if the soul cannot thus have recourse to the Lord Jesus, he is gone when the tempter comes, he is not able to resist. Then saith the believing soul, it is true, Satan, I have a proud self-seeking heart, ready ever to take that honor to itself that is due to God alone; but it is as true, that I may thank thee for it, who hast thus metamorphosed my nature, and made it like thine own, and not only so, but commest in and ever stirs up the heart to pride and self-seeking, knowing well by experience, that it is a sin that much provokes God; but this is my mercy, God lets me see into this depth of wickedness, and it is my constant burden, but Christ hath freed me from the power of it, and from the iniquity of it, for he is ever subduing it in me, and one day I shall forever be freed, both from it and thee; thus by faith the soul overcomes the devil. This is the first particular wherein the Christian comes to live by faith, in the exercising of it, according to the manifold occasions it meets withal.

2. To live by faith is a living upon Christ in the want of all things, and that both external and internal.

1. External, in the want of outward things; when the creature is stripped naked and bare, brought even to a morsel

of bread, then to live in believing the Lord will care for you, when that you are brought to Christ's condition, that you have neither house nor home, nor anything in the world, besides a Christ, besides a God to live upon; then when thou canst get a promise, as that {Heb.13:5,} "be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" then stick close to the Lord Jesus in such a promise, for this is a living by faith, when the creature fails to reside in Christ. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation." {Hab.3:17,18} This is to live by faith, when all creatures fail, then to live upon God, then to rejoice in the Lord, believing that God is able and will help, the Lord will sustain. The want of this faith was Israel's sin for "they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" {Ps.78:18,19} How is the deceitful heart of man ready to distrust God in such a condition as those Jews? Can God prepare a table when all is gone? But faith in such a condition believes, and lives by believing, and the Lord will care for me saith the soul, for the Lord hath said it; for "he giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." {Is.40:29-31} This is a hard thing, it is easily said, but not so easily done; you think it is easy, perhaps, to live by faith, while you have a house, a calling that brings in money, perhaps every day or every week, or money by you, or land, &c., you can live comfortably upon Christ and your calling, upon Christ and your house or land, but let all be taken from thee, see then how thou canst live? This may be your condition, and then you will be put to the trial.

2. Spiritually, when the soul hath nothing of its own to rest upon, when duties and performances and all is gone, then to believe and live by believing, this is to live by faith indeed,

upon this ground the soul believes. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." {Rom.4:4,5} He that worketh not, he that cannot perform one acceptable duty in way of righteousness, but sees all is nothing, yet believes in Christ, and so lives by believing, this is the constant stay of a believer; he ever sees his own emptiness, the unrighteousness of his best actions; I say, to believe in, and to live upon Christ in all such conditions, it is to live by faith, above duties and performances; but how do many a professing man and woman comfort themselves in the performing of duties, in their enlargement in duty, and the like, but when they fail in this, then they call all in question again; this faith was not right, for they think they believe, because they can pray and meditate, &c., when indeed the soul that rightly believes, doth believe because he cannot pray, nor act or do anything that is acceptable, and therefore he cannot live by faith, but when that power he has to perform his duty fails, his faith and all fails, this is not to live by faith, yet this hath been the life of most professors in this Nation.

3. A living by faith is to live by believing of what the soul shall one day enjoy, and this mightily bears up the spirits of the Saints. And this we may take notice of under a threefold consideration.

1. That which the gracious soul longs most after is the full enjoyment of God, for nothing less can satisfy the believing soul, the soul that hath tasted how gracious the Lord is. "O saith the Soul, when shall I come to the full enjoyment of my God," and so the soul groans, as the Apostle, {II Cor.5:2,} "earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;" and the reason is, {vs.7,} for while we are here we walk; that is, live by faith, and not by sense; while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; that is, absent comparatively with relation to what it shall be, for the soul has but a glimpse of glory, but a taste of the excellencies it shall one day enjoy in Christ.

Question: Now what is it that bears up the soul in this condition? How doth the soul live in the want of this full enjoyment of God?

Answer: By faith he can look upon God, as having a relation to him, "God in Christ is my God, saith the soul, and I shall one day enjoy him, I shall one day see him and forever be satisfied in the beholding of him." This quiets and satisfies the believing soul, as it is content to wait upon God; for he that believeth maketh not haste. It is in this case with the believing Christian, as with a loving and tender wife, her desire is always to live in the enjoyment of her husband, but when her husband is absent, far away from her, it may be she receives now and then a comfortable letter from him, wherein she sees a glimpse of his love, and reads his letter, and will have as much fellowship with him in his letter as she can; she will look to every word, every sentence, and note what expressions of love she can find there, and then she is cheered and comforted. I have a letter from my husband, saith the loving wife, wherein he lets forth a taste of his kindness and love unto me. O here are sweet words of love, of a tender affection! But saith the wise, this is not all, he will come home unto me at the time appointed, and I shall enjoy him, and this is that which most of all cheers up the heart of the wife, my husband will return at the time appointed.

Thus it is with the believing Christian, for nothing less than the enjoyment of God can give satisfaction to the soul that hath once tasted of him. But beloved, the Lord Jesus, the soul's beloved, is gone as far as any, he hath only espoused and betrothed the soul to himself, and he hath reserved the full enjoyment that the believing soul shall have in him, till another world; only he discovers this his love, lets forth a glimpse of his glory, into the souls of the Saints; and then the soul having once tasted of God, how good, how gracious, the Lord is; then nothing, but the full enjoyment of Christ can satisfy. Now the Lord Christ hath left his word here for his beloved, to have recourse unto, and there he hath made known his love, and his heart to his poor people; and now the soul that longs after Christ, hath recourse to the Scripture, and there searches what Christ hath said, and when the soul meets Christ in the Scripture, then it is cheered, then it is comforted; here is a blessed word saith the soul, Christ is my all and in all, though I cannot come to the full enjoyment of him; and then the believing soul will run to ordinances, preaching, and the

Supper of the Lord, fellowship and communion of Saints to get what it can of Christ, to meet with her Beloved every way God hath appointed for that purpose; but still, this is the great support, my Beloved will come at the time appointed, he is gone to receive for himself a Kingdom, and he will return, and I shall enjoy him in his fulness, in his perfection, and here the soul lives and waits patiently, here the anchor of hope is cast, and holds the soul close to the Lord Jesus, living by believing what it shall one day enjoy. {Heb.11:1}

2. That which the gracious soul longs after is a full and perfect freedom from corruption; it is that body of sin that burdens the Saints; that is, it makes them cry with the Apostle Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" And the gracious soul could well be contented sometimes to embrace death, that it might be freed from this body of death; under which God is pleased {for ends best known to himself} to exercise his children under. Now what is it that bears up the spirits of the Saints in this condition? It is this, the believing of this, that they shall one day be rid of this base proud deceitful heart; a day is coming when I shall change this vile body of sin, and I shall be made like unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." {Phil.3:21} I am already justified, and so made a son, a daughter of God, and this I know, I shall one day be made like unto him, for I "shall see him as he is." {I Jn.3:2} This is that which cheers the heart of a Christian many times, when it is in a low condition, when put to a stand in the beholding of those base haunts of the heart, that it finds within itself; when perhaps it is put to a stand in the beholding of it. O saith the soul; what, I after so much experience of God's love, so much faith in the name of Jesus, and yet have such a base heart, such a thought for wickedness? The Christian is sometimes put almost to a stand here; but then he comes to consider, God is wise, and he is pleased to exercise me under this body of sin, to keep me in a continual dependency upon himself, and this is my comfort, I shall one day be rid of all these enemies of mine, and I shall one day enjoy the Lord Jesus in all his holiness and glory.

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." {Col.3:4} And in this case the believing soul lives in believing what it shall one day enjoy; namely, freedom from sin, glorious liberty, even the glorious liberty of the Sons of God.

3. The Saints of God are subject to afflictions and reproaches while they are in this world, so Christ saith, {Jn.16:33,} "in the world ye shall have tribulation." It is true, Christ hath prepared a Kingdom for them, but they are not like to enjoy it in this world, I mean that Kingdom of glory, although it is true, they enjoy much of God here in this Kingdom of grace, the Kingdom of God is within them.

But the Saints here are liable to persecutions and afflictions; now the believing Christian lives in believing it shall one day be freed from those hard things it suffers here, freed from evil men, and shall one day have a Kingdom. Thus Paul comforts himself, {II Cor.5:1, II Tim.4:6-8,} and this was it with which Peter comforts the scattered Jews, {I Pet.1:3-5,} they were begotten to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, reserved in heaven for them, and this was the ground of that exhortation to constancy to the end in time of affliction. "Be faithful to the death, and you shall have a crown of life." {Rev.2:10}

Thus have I endeavored, both from the light of Scripture, and the light of experience, to hint out briefly unto you a taste of the Christians living by faith, and this Christ teacheth all those whom he effectually teacheth. {Heb.10:38}

I might proceed to other particulars; namely, that Christ teacheth us to own him as our Priest, as our King; it is Christ our Prophet indeed, that teacheth us all things that we rightly know, for we know nothing as we ought to know, farther than Christ Jesus by his Spirit teacheth. But I proceed to the next particular propounded in the office or work of a Prophet, namely to work miracles; this the Prophets before Christ did, Moses a type of Christ, and the great prophet of Israel, wrought many miracles when the Lord sent him to deliver his people.

And this hath Christ our Prophet done, and doth to this day; this he did when he was in the world, turning water into wine, raising the dead to life, restoring those born blind to

sight, &c., and this he still doth, for Christ our Prophet is ever working miracles. The conversion of a soul is a miracle, it is the changing of the nature, and it is above nature to do it, to raise a man from the dead to life is a miracle, and this Christ doth to every soul who is indeed raised. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." {Eph.2:1} "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us, &c." {vs.5} Now to quicken, to give life to a dead soul is a miracle, and this Christ doth efficaciously; and he gives sight unto blind men. It was a miracle for Christ to give sight to the man that was born blind; beloved, every man and woman in the world is born blind, spiritually blind, and this is a greater miracle to cure such; yet this is the ordinary work of Christ; and every man naturally is both blind, lame, and deaf, but Christ when he comes he opens the blind eyes, he unstops the deaf ears, he causeth the lame to walk, and the tongue of the dumb to sing. {Is.35:5,6}

The Prophet did foretell of things to come; Moses and the rest did prophesy of Christ, &c, and so did Christ in many particulars, {Matt., chapter 24 &c.,} but I pass this also.

Christ is to be exalted Prophet in the days of the Gospel. "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." {Acts 3:22,23} Now to examine if Christ hath been thy Prophet. When Christ comes first to the soul, he finds men dead and gives life unto them; he finds men blind and gives sight unto them. Hath the Lord discovered thy dead condition unto thee, and given thee life? Art thou born from above? That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and thou wast born flesh, dead in trespasses and sins; now hath the Lord changed thee from a state of death to a state of life; from a state of infidelity to a state of believing? Thou wast blind, thou wast born blind, not able to see into spiritual things; hath the Lord opened thine eyes? Canst thou say that I was blind, but now I see, I was dumb, but now I speak. O this is worth your consideration!

A word of consolation to the Saints whom the Lord Jesus hath taught; what is the comfort, you will say? Christ

will forever be thy Prophet, and will be ever teaching thee. Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when thou turns to the right hand or to the left, {Is.30:21,} the Lord Jesus will be forever thy Prophet, he will never fail thee nor forsake thee; his eye shall ever be over thee for good, he will direct thee in all thy ways, and is not this a mercy?

Finally, the Lord hath made all his Saints Prophets, he hath poured down a spirit of Prophecy upon them, that now they are enabled by the spirit of prophesy to speak one to another, for edification, exhortation, and consolation, {I Cor.14:3,} and therefore the men of the world might hence be warned to take heed how they meddle with the Saints, to persecute them, for they are the Lord's prophets. "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." {I Chron.16:22} Christ takes every wrong done to them, as done to himself; therefore you had need look to it, for it is that which will work your ruin in the end.

THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

the alone KING of SAINTS.

CHAP. III.

I come to the Kingly Office of Christ; as Christ is the alone King of his people. Believe it, Christ is the alone King of his people. Christ is a King, and he hath a Kingdom. {Psal.45:6} Christ's Kingdom is spiritual, it is not of this world, although it is in the world.

Christ hath a twofold kingdom here in this world. There is the kingdom within the Saints; and the kingdom without; the one in the heart, the other in the Church; and they are both spiritual.

1. Christ rules and reigns in the Saints; the kingdom of God is within you; beloved, Christ hath a kingdom within you, if ye are his; "Christ is in you except ye be reprobates." {II Cor.13:5} And this is a privilege more than all the kings in the earth have, for they may reign here over their subjects, but not in them; but Christ first reigns in them, and then over them; he reigns spiritually over none, but those in whom he reigns. Now Christ reigns in the souls of the Saints; first in opposing all things that are contrary to himself; for there are other lords that will seek to rule in the hearts of the Saints, if Christ subdue them not; the Devil, he will seek to be Lord, {he that is the god of the world, and rules and reigns in the hearts of the children of disobedience,} where Christ doth not rule; but when the Lord Jesus comes he dispossess him, and casts him out, and so keeps him out. The Devil will make many a strong assault, throw many a fiery dart at the soul of the Christian, endeavoring if possible to shake his hold; but Christ, he is the King, he is the Watchman, the Keeper of Israel, he giveth power to the weak fainting soul, to overcome all those laws and edicts, that Satan shall endeavor to set up in the

soul; so that now the Christian espies all Satan's plots and artificial devices to trap and ensnare him, rejects all his temptations, and says as Christ, "Get thee behind me Satan;" when the Devil acts and work in others, he hath no power over the soul where Christ reigns; though it is true he may throw in his darts, sometimes make effects either to tempt to some evil, or to shake the faith of Christians, but Christ the King reigns there still, conquers him, subdues him, and so carries on his own work, that the gates of hell cannot prevail against that soul where he dwells. Thus Christ reigns keeping under Satan, believe it beloved, for Christ and Satan cannot reign both in one soul.

2. Christ opposes the power of sin in the soul, where he reigns; sin bears a strong sway in the soul, now Christ he opposeth it; sets himself against it; hence it is there is such a strong opposition between the flesh and the spirit; that is, the spirit of Christ; the spirit lusting against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit, and these two are contrary each to other. And thus the Lord Jesus continues opposing of sin, of the lust and corruption that is in the hearts of the Saints.

Question: How doth Christ oppose sin and Satan; for sin is Satan's work. "For this cause was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the work of the Devil." {I Jn.3:8} The work of the Devil is sin, he that committeth sin is of the Devil. Answer: Christ destroys sin, which is the work of the Devil, two ways.

First, Christ destroys the guilt of it, and that he did, in bearing both the sin, guilt, and condemnation of it upon his own body; {"who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" - I Pet.2:24 - "for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" - Rom.8:3;} and now he comes, and in the Gospel makes it known unto his people; "and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" - reconciliation. {Rom. 5.11} Secondly; he destroys the power of it by his Spirit, by the operation of his power, working, reigning, and ruling in the hearts of his people. Now Christ subdues this iniquity by his

Kingly Office, reigning in the Saints. "Ye are not under the law but under grace," under Christ, in whom was manifested the fullness of grace.

This doth Christ two ways; first, he comes to the soul of a poor sinner, discovering his excellency, the riches of his grace, and so shedding abroad his love in the heart, as to make the soul willing to receive him out of love unto him, desires to have Christ set up, and his Kingdom within itself; for Christ hath never a Kingdom in the heart of man, till he thus comes and breaks in upon the soul, discovering love; yet now saith the soul, "let Christ be King, and none but him;" although it is true, it is by his power he breaks in upon, and subdues the stout spirit of man, who would not willingly submit of himself, yet Christ makes him willing, by the shedding abroad of his love in the heart. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." {Rom.5:5} So that now, the Lord Jesus with the free consent of the gracious soul, sets up his kingdom in the heart, so that when Christ saith, "My Son give me thine heart;" the soul replies, "Lord, take my heart, dwell there, rule there, set up thy kingdom there;" so that you see Christ doth not rule as tyrant in the souls of his people, but with the free and full consent of the mind of the person in whom he reigns, for this is both the wisdom and power of Christ, that he makes his people a willing people. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." {Psal.110:3}

Then secondly, Christ having purged the heart of man in some measure, overcomes those strong lusts and affections, and makes it a meet mansion house, a Temple for his Holy Spirit to dwell in; as he then sets up laws and statutes in the hearts of his children, in his kingdom, and there he rules, opposing all other laws; for there are, and will be, the stirring of corruption, and that very strongly too. Now Christ first sets up the law of faith in the hearts of his people, and that in opposition of infidelity; for naturally the Saints are subject to infidelity through the motions of corruptions and temptations of Satan. The believing soul, when it sees, what a base nature it still carries about within itself, being sensible of the stirring of lusts and corruptions, Satan helping, then it is seriously

troubled. "O this evil nature of mine," saith the soul, "who shall deliver me from this body of sin?"

Now the law of Christ is to believe, and in this condition to live by believing; and so Christ enables to put faith in exercise, and to believe above hope, almost as Abraham; and so he still quiets the soul by enabling it to believe constantly in the name of the Son of God; and that when it cannot work, for he is the Prince of our faith, the Author and Finisher of it; and so here is in the heart of the Christian a strong conflict between the law of faith and the law of infidelity; the spirit of faith and the spirit of infidelity; infidelity coming in with a mighty commanding authority upon the soul of that Christian, set on by Satan's malice, and perhaps, sometimes seems almost in the eyes of reason to get the victory over faith; but then Christ {who maintains his laws, and puts them in execution} arises and raiseth up the heart above those doubtings and carries on the soul in a way of believing still, and so quashes infidelity, and treads it under feet, and leaves it dead, executed for present by the law of faith. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him; and the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD." {Is.59:19,20}

Christ sets up the law of love in his Kingdom, I mean in the heart of the Saints; and that in opposition to hatred. For the truth is, that every soul in whom Christ reigns not, doth indeed hate Christ; now Christ sets up this law of love in the hearts of the Saints; love to himself, to his holiness, to his Gospel, Ordinances, Saints, everything that have the name of Christ stamped upon it, he loves it for his sake, and this law of love opposeth hatred, for there may come sometimes, hard thoughts into the souls of the Saints under afflictions, and fiery trials, ready perhaps, to say with David, "Hath the Lord forgotten to be merciful? Hath he shut up his tender mercy in displeasure?" Now the law of love comes in, and helps the soul to see that there is in Christ nothing but love to it, notwithstanding the souls present apprehensions, and sees all things shall work for good to them that love the Lord; and so can say with the Prophet, "Lord, out of very love hast thou afflicted me;" and so the soul is knit to Christ in all conditions,

and cannot but have high thoughts of him, even then, when it suffers either for him or from him.

For him; that is, for want of the enjoyment of the manifestations of his pleasing countenance, and the fresh incomes of his love; or for the bearing up of his name in a visible profession of the Gospel of Christ.

From him; Fatherly chastisements out of love, to make us "partakers of his holiness." {Heb.12:10} In all these sufferings, when perhaps sometimes the carnal part is ready almost to quarrel against Christ, this law of love quells and subdues all, brings this heart-rising in subjection, and knits the soul to the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. As it causeth the soul to love the Lord Jesus, so it causeth it to love all that is Christ's, and highly to esteem of it; and opposes any other Law that may seem to arise, as sometimes perhaps through the workings of Satan, with the corruptions of the Saints, there may be some beginnings of slighting the Saints, of entertaining hard thoughts of them, but then Christ stirs up, and revives this Law of love in them, kills that hatred, those hard thoughts, that it was apt to conceive against them, and so knits the soul to them by a more firm united love than ever, and thus this law of love, overcomes this law of hatred. In a word, it causeth the Saints to do all that they do out of love, the love of Christ constraining them. {II Cor.5:14}

3. Christ sets up in his Kingdom the Law of meekness and humility, and that in opposition to the Law of pride and vainglory. "Learn of me, {saith Christ,} for I am meek and lowly in heart;" {Mt.11:29,} and this Christ sets up in the hearts of his people, for he makes them partakers of his own graces, {Jn.1:16,} it is a fruit of the Spirit, {Gal.5:23,} and of the Law of Christ, set up in the souls of the Saints, against which there is no law that can prevail. It is true, there will be a rising sometimes in the spirits of the Saints; pride will thrust itself in, and be ready to lift up the creature in the apprehension of some self-excellency, although there is no cause; yet this is a truth, I believe it, and those that have any experience of the Kingdom of Christ, or of the working of corruption know it right well, for pride will be piercing in, and ready to lift up the creature above measure; sometimes

externally, and to make a difference betwixt himself and others, as nobility of birth, parents or kindred, honor in the world, external carnal excellencies. O how will it work sometimes upon the heart of a poor creature, as if he were somebody above others? O is not thy soul sensible of this sometimes dear Christian? I cannot but think it is. But then comes in Christ with his law of meekness, of humility, and pulls down this pride of heart, and lays it low, and brings the soul again to lay all in the dust. What is honor saith the believing soul? What is nobility of birth? This is my honor, that I am a son, a daughter of Jesus Christ, and so the soul comes down, ready to do any service of love to the meanest Saint, and now the Saints come to serve one another in love, and now they come again to see that they are all one in Christ Jesus.

Sometimes Internally, or with relation to internal gifts received, although we have nothing but what we have received, yet this is the baseness of man's nature, it will grow proud, be ready to be lifted up, even with those graces received. Is it not so with thy heart? Art thou not naturally proud? Doth it not press in upon thee sometimes? I know it doth, and I dare say it troubles thee that art a Christian. But now Christ comes with his law, and casts all down to the ground, lays low those mountains, those strong lusts that exalt themselves thus against the Kingdom of Christ, for this pride is absolutely against the Kingdom of Christ; for he will not have such things in his Kingdom, it will thrust itself in, but the Law of Christ discovers it, and vanquisheth it, and keeps the soul in an humble, lowly, meek condition. O consider of it, for where pride domineers and rules, Christ hath no Kingdom in that soul; there Christ dwells, there he reigns, where he hath made the soul humble. Faith in Christ doth not make men proud and high; no, no, it is the greatest enemy to it in the world; a proud heart did never, can never believe, before brought low in the sense of its own nothingness, and emptiness.

4. Christ sets up in the hearts of his Saints, in his Kingdom, the law of patience and contentedness in opposition to anger, impatience, and discontentedness. Rash anger, impatience, peevishness of spirit, how will they arise and be striving sometimes in the hearts of Christians for a small

matter? How will the heart be out of order and distemper? What words will be ready to flow forth, the heart being in this temper? But now in the heart of a Christian, Christ puts in execution his law of patience and quietness of spirit. O saith Christ to the soul, thou must be patient and meek, thou must learn of me, didst thou ever read that I was moved to anger, and impatience, to fret and fume? No, not against mine enemies; and then saith the soul, "O what a fool am I thus to fret, and then to be angry? How unlike to Christ am I?" And then down comes that proud peevish spirit into the dust, crying out, "O so foolish was I and ignorant, I was even a beast before thee;" and then the soul is turned again into a sweet disposition of love, a compound of patience, not easily provoked, not easily again stirred to wrath.

Sometimes in the soul of a Christian is apt to arise perhaps some impatience and discontentedness under afflictions and persecutions, hardly can it bear with patience, some heart rising this way may arise; but then in comes Christ putting in execution the Law of patience and contentedness, and pulls down all those impatient and discontented thoughts, and then let patience have her perfect work, and the soul is quieted and contented, and willingly submits unto the mind of Christ, and then it can say with the Apostle Paul, {Phil.4:11,} "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content;" and now the soul is quieted, and waits patiently upon the Lord; and now the soul saith, "O how unlike am I to Christ! He suffered {meekly as a lamb dumb before the shearer, who opened not his mouth} for me a sinner; he suffered for me, the just for the unjust, that he might bring me to God, and shall not I be contented to suffer reproach and shame for him," and then come what will come, patience possesseth the soul.

5. Christ sets up the Law of heavenly mindedness in the heart of a believer, and indeed it is no wonder, for his Kingdom is there, heaven is there, "the Kingdom of heaven is within you," {Lk.17:21,} and therefore needs must Christ set up this Law in his Kingdom, and that in opposition to earthly mindedness, sinfulness, or anything that is opposite to holiness and heavenliness; and you know how the spirits of men, nay, of Christians, are apt to be below the Lord Jesus

Christ, sometimes overcome with earthly objects; sometimes, vain, proud, unprofitable things running in the mind, but Christ comes, and scatters those low things, and raiseth the heart to himself, and keeps the heart in such a temper, that nothing can satisfy it but himself, and when it loseth its heavenly temper, its heavenly glory, it is presently troubled, and it cannot possibly take comfort in anything beneath the Lord Jesus Christ; and here is a continual combat and conflict between the flesh and the spirit, the corrupt nature and the divine nature; and certainly here corruption and Satan, many times brings sadness upon the spirits of the Saints, in darkness, in overshadowing their heavenly enjoyment, I mean in way of sense, although they can never shake the faith of the soul in whom Christ dwells, as "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." {Mt.16:18}

Consider now, do you find Christ's Kingdom, Christ's laws, these set up in your hearts? Do you find Christ opposing lust and corruption within you, or do you not? If Christ be there, you will find it in some measure. I confess it, that Christ according to his diversities of operations and workings keeps this law of sin under in some souls more than in others, both the workings of it, and the guilt thereof. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death;" {Rom.8:2;} that is, free from the power, as it comes with authority, as a law; there Christ subdues, although it will be there as a rebel reigning, yet it shall set up no law in the soul where Christ reigns. Consider of it, you that were never troubled about your sins, but all things are at peace within you; it is a sad sign Christ hath not set up his Kingdom there. While the strong man {the Devil} keeps the house, all things are at peace, all quiet, and so the poor creature lives in a fool's Paradise, and pleases himself in this condition; but believe it, when the Lord Jesus comes, "he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness." {Mal.3:3} But who may abide the day of his coming, he will come with the refiner's fire and the fullers soap, he comes not to bring peace, that is, with lust and corruption, but the Lord cuts them down; corruption dies when Christ comes.

Objection: But perhaps, some soul may object; I find indeed some stirring within me, some to evil, and some motions to good, how shall I know that this flows from the kingdom of Christ set up in my soul, or from some other principle?

Answer: There is a conflict between the law and natural conscience, and there is a conflict between the spirit of Christ, his work in the spirit of the Christian, and the flesh, corrupt nature and Satan.

There is a conflict between natural conscience and the Law, or the mind legally enlightened, and the Law; and this may be in a natural man or a hypocrite. Thus it was with Judas, "I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood." Judas saw his sin, he had transgressed the Law, and now he is troubled, not because of his sin, as it was a sin, but because his conscience now dogs him, will not let him rest. This conflict may be in the heart of a poor creature, and Christ never come there in the way of mercy; and the soul deceive and cozen itself, thinking Christ is there opposing sin, when it is nothing else, but the mind of man legally enlightened, apprehending wrath and anger from the breach of the Law; and so now he walks more circumspectly, yields more perfect obedience, opposes sin, as a transgression of the Law, and so thinks himself in a goodly paradise, in a fair way for heaven. And thus many poor souls deceive themselves and undo their souls everlastingly.

Question: But perhaps some may say, how shall I know the difference between mine own opposing sins, from a principal of legal light? Whether the conflict be between natural conscience and the Law, or the Kingdom of Christ set up in my soul, and sin?

Answer: The conflict between natural conscience and the Law is only from the apprehension of the condemnation of the Law. The law saith, thou shalt not sin; if thou doest it, thou must suffer, thou must be condemned; conscience enlightened, seeing this is cast down, and perhaps is much perplexed for sin; sets against sin, opposeth it with might and main, and resolves to sin no more; and immediately sin presents itself, and the Law presents itself, and then out of doors sin must fly, but why? Because of the Law, not because

of Christ. The Law will give it no rest, no peace there? Now to illustrate this by a comparison in these days of war; I do not question, but there are many in this country that are turned Parliamentarians for fear lest the Law seize upon their goods and persons, and so they lose all; their minds are so far enlightened, that they see it is good to sleep in a whole skin as they say, and hence they can perhaps talk sometimes, and do for the Parliament, when indeed their minds are contrary. Well, there comes one whose mind is not so far enlightened as to seek their own external good, while he is here, one whom this man loves, and could gladly entertain him; but for fear of the law he shall be counted and taken for an enemy to the State; out of doors this man go; none dares entertain him; but why? Not for want of love, but for fear. Beloved I have known the truth of this on the other side.

And thus it is with this man, perhaps the poor creature could be content to entertain sin in his bosom, lust, anger, pride, &c., but no sooner doth sin appear, but the Law appears, conscience is troubled, out must go the sin, else conscience cannot be quiet; and so {beloved} for the quietness of conscience, who fears eternal flames, {Is.33:14,} out sin must go, and an external conformity follows, and so the man is become a 'Christian.' It is as a man that hath a loving friend, he brings him to his house, but the wife will not be satisfied, she scolds, out must the man go, else there will be no peace; so sin would find welcome, perhaps, and kinder entertainment with the man, but natural conscience from the apprehension of the Law, scolds and threatens, and out must go the beloved lust, else there will be no peace. I fear that many poor souls split themselves upon this rock.

But when Christ comes and sets up his Kingdom in the soul, he presently writes his law in the heart, makes them partakers of the divine nature, makes them a willing people; and now the conflict is not between the mind and the Law, but between the Spirit and sin; were there no Law, that matters not with the gracious soul, it sees such a great disproportion and distance between its Beloved and sin, that there ariseth a bitter enmity between sin and the law of love, in the soul of the Saints; that the every appearance, the very motions of sin, as it is sin, not as it brings condemnation, but as it is filthy,

polluting, contrary to the mind of Christ. O the soul hath a continual loathing of it, and thus he that is born of God sinneth not, gives not the least allowance to sin, in the very thought; for the very thought of it is bitter.

Question: But what are the effects of this Kingdom of Christ in the souls of the Saints?

Answer: First, is the utter subversion and destruction of the Kingdom of Satan and sin; for all sin is of the Devil, and he that is born of God sinneth not, as you have heard.

2. It is the continual possessing of the soul with the enjoyment of God. Christ always dwelling in the heart of the Saints; for it is his Kingdom and the presence of Christ makes it heaven.

3. It is joy and peace. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." {Rom.15:13} And the kingdom of heaven consisteth not in meat and drink, but in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Joy unspeakable and full of glory; the soul in whom Christ dwells, who lives in the continual enjoyment of God, must needs enjoy much consolation, for in God's presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand pleasures forevermore.

4. He brings over those in whom he rules, to submit to the outward regiment of his Kingdom.

The second particular propounded is that the Kingdom of Christ over the Saints, as Christ reigns in, so he reigns over the Saints. It is this Kingdom in them that brings them in submission to his Kingdom without them; and this is a spiritual Kingdom likewise. Note I pray you, this Kingdom of Christ is all spiritual likewise: 1. There is spiritual matter. 2. Spiritual Laws and Institutions. 3. Spiritual executions. 4. Spiritual ends.

Christ is a King, he is the King of his people, and God will exalt him, and manifest him to be King one day. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." {Ps.2:6}

Christ is King, and he shall reign, notwithstanding the opposition of men, even of great men. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." {Ps.2:1-4} Kings and great men, and wise learned men, they rage, they consult, they take counsel together against Christ to destroy his Kingdom. The most great and learned men in the world at this day rage against the Kingdom of Christ, for they would set up a Kingdom of their own, and then compel men unto it. Whoever it is that establishes a worship with Laws and Edicts, to compel all unto it, and to inflict bodily punishments upon all that refuse it, or cannot join with it, doth what in him lieth absolutely to destroy the Kingdom of Christ over the soul; and if men be erroneous and worship contrary to the rule of truth, it is Christ himself that must judge him, and not man, he {that is, God} hath committed all judgment to the Son; therefore saith the Apostle, {I Cor.4:5,} "judge nothing before the time," and {Jam.4:11,12,} "if thou judge another {saith the Apostle} thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?" Note, for men to pass a final sentence is not to do the mind of Christ, but to get into the room of Christ; for man to set up a law in matter of worship, and compel all unto it, and judge and condemn body and soul for not submitting, is to exalt themselves above Christ, and so indeed is Antichristian; not but that the Churches of Christ have power to judge and determine of things amongst themselves about the spiritual affairs of Christ, and to excommunicate a willful offender; if it is according to the rule, to cut him off from every fellowship with the Saints, as you shall hear anon; but not to destroy his body. But the Church of Christ hath nothing to do to judge or meddle with those that are without. {I Cor.5:12,13} Therefore if any Church or Magistrate would exercise that power they conceive Christ hath entrusted them in, about spiritual Church affairs, I humbly conceive that they have nothing to do with those that are not of the same body with them, or the same society, as many Churches may be in society; but those that are without, be they Saints, be they what they will, good or bad, they are without to them; and what hast thou to do with them that are without? God judgeth them. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden

up; for God is able to make him stand." {Rom.14:4} If it be objected that the Church of England is a true Church, and all these that absent themselves, were members, and therefore they are to be dealt with as offending members in the Church; and if this is all that can be objected against them; for I think their faithfulness to the State, speaks in the ears of every man {almost} of reason; and therefore, the State cannot meddle, where there is no Civil Law transgressed? Therefore for answer to that objection, suppose England's Church were a true Church, {which will never be proved; but I pass it in this place,} yet can they but proceed according to the rule Christ hath given in Scripture? If in this particular, there might be a proceeding according to rule; that is, to admonish those that are contrary minded, if that will not do, to excommunicate, pass the Church censure upon them; this is the furthest that I know can be done by any Church of Christ; and they are then {not to cut them off out of the Land, out of the World} but to admonish them as brethren. {II Thes.3:15} If such as do not or cannot conform to the worship prescribed by man should be cut out of the land, out of the world, what means could then be used for their conversion? Is there not still hope while the creature is yet alive and above ground? Therefore I conceive it to be unchristian cruelty to judge men in this case; for never any we read of, but heathens, that did the like under the Gospel; and Christ hath said, "Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." {Mt.7:1,2} "For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy." {Jam.2:13} Merciless men are the most miserable men under Heaven, and there is no mercy for them, for God will deal with them as they deal with others; it is both the Law and Prophets to do, as we would be done unto. Now consider a little, I pray thee, thou that canst be content in thy heart to persecute those that differ from thee in judgment; wouldest thou be content to be so dealt with thyself? Doth the Lord Jesus the King of Saints, require or accept of any service, but that is free and voluntary? But I proceed; Christ you see is King, and he shall be exalted King, and manifested to be King one day. "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom." {Heb.1:8} Here is a King, a Kingdom, a Scepter,

Christ the King, the Saints the Kingdom, the Word the Scepter. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." {Is.9:7} "There shall be no end;" that is, till there be no more time, till time shall cease in this World; after he shall give up the Kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all. {I Cor.15:28} Thus you see that Christ is King.

I come in the second place to the Kingdom which is wholly spiritual, "My kingdom, {saith Christ} is not of this world." The matter of Christ's Kingdom is spiritual; Saints called out of the world; this is the Church, the Kingdom of Christ; the Saints gathered out of the World, by the preaching of the Gospel, into the order and fellowship of the Gospel; they are Saints, although some think strange to hear of Saints in this World, yet they are in Scripture called Saints, {I Cor.1:2,} "called to be Saints," called to be holy. "Wherefore holy brethren partakers of the heavenly calling;" {Heb.3:1;} so that the kingdom of Christ is, or should be Saints, holy ones; not the world, for all the world are not Saints, but the Kingdom of Christ, are Saints called out of the World. "Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world." {Jn.15:19} The Church of Christ are Saints chosen out of the World, they are not of the World, they are a people separated, or severed out of the World, so was the Church of the Jews. "And ye shall be holy unto me; for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine." {Lev.20:26} And thus it is with the spiritual Israel of Christ, under the Gospel, of which the natural was a type; they are not of this World, they are called out of this World, and severed or separated from the World. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness; and what communion hath light with darkness; and what concord hath Christ with Belial; or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel; and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be

ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." {II Cor.6:14-18} They are to be separated from the world, although the world hath gotten a form of godliness. The Apostle speaking of the last times, reckons up what courses men should take, what sins they should be addicted to, and yet concludes they shall have a form of godliness, but from such turn away, or be separated. {II Tim.3:1-5} So that you see, the Church, which is Christ's Kingdom, are a people called out of the world, they are not of this world as he is not of this world. Then certainly those are no friends to Christ, that would turn the World into a Church, and so make the kingdom of Christ not a spiritual, but a carnal kingdom; and so make the Lord Jesus Christ a liar, for he hath said that, "his Kingdom is not of this world;" but let Christ be true, and every man a liar. The Church of Christ, his kingdom, they are such as are in the order and fellowship of the Gospel, compacted together, according to the Gospel rule, in order and fellowship; it is in the spiritual kingdom of Christ in this case, as in the body political; the whole kingdom under one government is but one body politic, or state; so the Kingdom of Christ, his church, although gathered in many bodies, yet it is but one body, and everybody hath the same power, the same privileges, so that it ought to be a body compacted together, under the reign and rule of one Lord Jesus Christ. "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." {Eph.4:16}

And the external way, by which the Saints enter into this fellowship is by baptism, as you may see. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls;" {Acts 2:41;} but I have spoken of this formerly, and therefore I pass it here.

As Christ hath a Kingdom and that Kingdom is spiritual, in relation to the matter, so he sets up Laws and they are spiritual, for the Laws of Christ in his Kingdom are:

1. The law of love.

2. The law of edification.

1. The law of love. "By love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." {Gal.5:13,14} In James 2:8, it is called the royal Law of God. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, this is the Law of the Gospel, love to Christ, and love to the Saints. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." {Jn.13:34} Now this love breaks forth in causing the Saints to walk up according to every rule of the Gospel, it constrains them to submit to every word, to every command of Christ, it causeth the Saints to watch over each other, to build up each other in the most holy faith, to restore a weak brother with the spirit of meekness, being fallen, to bear one another's burdens, and so to fulfill the Law of Christ. Thus Christ rules in and over his Kingdom, by this law of love. It is the end of the command of the Gospel, love out of a pure heart and faith unfeigned. {I Tim.1:5} Christ gives rules unto his people, out of love, he causeth them to obey out of love, there is no condemnation in his law to his people, but if they sin, they have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, {I Jn.2:2,} who is a Propitiation for their sins. Here is love in the King, love in the subjects, love in Christ commanding, love in Christians obeying, a Kingdom upheld and maintained by the law of love. O that the God of love would increase this love more abundantly, both in your and my soul. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you." {I Thes.3:12} O this love is sweet, amiable, pleasant, {Psal.133:1,} love to the Saints, love to all men, it is the way to win them to the Lord Jesus, {II Tim.2:25,} this is the main law by which Christ rules in and over his Saints, his Churches, his Kingdom; and this is spiritual.

2. There is the law of edification. "Let all things be done unto edifying." {I Cor.14:26} It is the law of Christ in his Church, that all things should be done to edification, for the building up of the Saints in their most holy faith, therefore the Apostle {I Cor.10:23} makes light of that which tends not to edification, "all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not;" that is that which a Christian should look most unto, that

is it that will edify most. It is the end of their compacting and building together in faith and fellowship, that they might edify each other in love. {Eph.4:16} All done in the Church is for the edification of the body, or should be; every Ordinance that Christ hath set up in his Kingdom is for Edification. Watching over each other, exhortation, admonition, it is all for edification. Baptism, Preaching, the Supper of the Lord, Communion and fellowship, it is all for edification and consolation as Christ hath appointed it. {Acts 2:41-47, I Cor.14:3} Church censure, excommunication, it is an Ordinance appointed of God for edification, to bring the sinner into the sight of his sin, and that should be the Churches end in the use thereof. "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." {I Cor.5:5} That is the end of this ordinance, and should be the Churches end in the execution of it. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." {I Cor.16:22} Let him be accursed till the Lord come, so the word 'Maranatha' implies; it consists of two Syrian words, 'maran;' that is, out Lord, 'atha;' that is, come, or till our Lord come. That is, as I understand it, till the Lord come, either in a way of love convincing him by this ordinance, or to judge and condemn him, so that other Scripture seems to imply. "That the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus;" {I Cor.5:5;} the day Jesus comes in to do good unto him, for whenever the Lord Jesus takes an opportunity to do good to a sinner, that is the day of the Lord, or the Lord's day, when he manifests mercy. {See Psal.110:3; II Cor.6:2; also, Rev.1:10}

Thus Christ rules by his Law generally in the Assembly of Saints; but He manifests his Kingly Power in ordaining officers with their gifts and callings, which the Scripture seems in the strictest and most refined sense to call Elders and Deacons, or Bishops and Deacons. {I Tim.3:1,2,3, &c.} Of Bishops or Elders are two sorts, or different administrations, with relation to their gifts; ruling and teaching, these although they ought not to seek it, for they are the servants of the Church, yet by the Church are to be accounted worthy of double honor, {I Tim.5:17,} and in things pertaining to Christ are to be obeyed, for they watch for souls. {Heb.13:17}

Question: But what power hath Christ committed to his Church, wherein his Kingly Office appears?

Answer: He hath given power to his Church. 1. To Judge. 2. To Determine. 3. To Pass Sentence.

1. To Judge, and this under a twofold consideration: 1. Of the faith of members that are to be received. 2. Of proceedings within the same body.

1. Of the faith of members that are to be admitted. This belongs to the Church, or some appointed thereunto by the Church; for if faith be required of those that are to be admitted, then faith is to be manifested in those received, to those that receive it, this is a truth generally held forth in Scripture. {Acts 2:38 with the 41th verse; Acts 8:37; 19:17,18} And likewise there seems to be something to this purpose in that Scripture, {Mt.16:19,} "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven;" whatsoever the Church of Christ concludes on earth, is approved of in heaven, while they walk according to rule, although I believe the great mystery couched under these words is another thing, to wit, the power Christ gives to the faith of Peter, and all that obtain like precious faith; whatsoever is bound on earth {that is, whosoever believes on earth} that is, bound in heaven; whosoever believeth not on earth looseth all, it is loosed in heaven, for it is to Peter's faith Christ commits the keys.

2. There is power to judge of things in the Church, and this every member ought to make use of in looking to the ways of each other. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." {Phil.2:4} Thus all the body ought to watch over each other, and to judge the actions of each other; thus the Elder is to watch over the body, and to judge the actions, and to reprove, rebuke, exhort with patience and love where is occasion; and thus may, nay, and ought the whole Church to watch over {and if occasion be} reprove, admonish, &c., the Elder. Thus is the Kingly Office of Christ carried along sweetly in the Church of Christ, {I Tim.5:19,20,} when all watch over each other, when all are subject each to other in Christ. {I Pet.5:5}

3. Christ hath given power, as to Judge, so to Determine of things, and this for the good of the body, for the

order of the Church of Christ. And also, to pass sentence {I mean} spiritual, by way of excommunication, as you heard before. I conceive the Church and state of the Jews, who were Abraham's natural seed, was a type of the Church of the Gospel, the spiritual seed of Christ. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." {Gal.3:26} They had laws and statutes, so hath the Church of Christ now, only theirs carnal, ours spiritual; for that Church was more carnal than Spiritual, for that was the natural seed, this the spiritual; they were to admit none but those that were naturally or bodily circumcised, we none but those that are spiritual. They were not to touch anything, whereupon was any external uncleanness; we are not to touch the spiritual unclean thing, that is sin, or false and sinful worship or fellowship. {I Cor.6:15-17} They were to put offenders that were gross to death bodily, the Church of Christ spiritually by excommunication. Thus is the Kingly Office of Christ carried along in the Kingdom, in the Church of Christ under the Gospel, and you see both Church and Laws are spiritual.

4. The executions of the Churches Laws are spiritual, but this I have opened already in my foregoing discourse, therefore I pass.

5. The ends of it are spiritual, namely, as you have heard. The good of the body, the edifying of the body of Christ, {see Eph.4:11 &c.,} and the glory of Jesus, the execution of the Laws of Christ, as it tends to the Saints good, so Christ's glory; "ye call me Lord {saith Christ} but where is mine honor?" This should be the end, as of all the actions of the saints, so of all civil actions, the glory of God. Thus you see Christ is King, and he hath a Spiritual Kingdom, and he rules by his Scepter in this Kingdom, and there is good reason for it.

1. Christ was born King, he hath a right to it by birth, it is his birthright. "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" {Mt.2:2} He is a Jew that is one inwardly, and it is Christ's birthright to reign over them, and those who take the rule, the Kingdom from Christ, are no less than enemies and traitors to the royal crown and dignity of the Lord Jesus; and he will take them alive one day, and cast them into the lake of fire. {Rev.19:20}

2. He is thereunto appointed by the Father; for God the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." {Jn.5:22} "And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." {vs.27} God the Father hath given up the Kingdom to the Son, and all government, rule and dominion is in the hand of Christ, as he is man as well as God. "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." {Acts 17:31} "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." {Mt.28:18} Thus you see that all power and authority is given to the Lord Jesus, and he is to exercise it, and not man, farther than he hath appointed, for the good of his Church.

3. He hath purchased this Kingdom with his own blood, and therefore good reason he should reign in it and over it. {Acts 20:28} He hath purchased his Church with his own blood; is it not reason then that Christ should reign over those whom he hath purchased? Those who were lost and undone, children of wrath as well as others, Christ having redeemed them out of the hands of all their enemies, and now rules over them in love for their good, the end wherefore he hath saved them, that he might have a people to serve him in holiness and righteousness. {Lk.1:74,75} So that the Saints are not their own, they are bought with a price. "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." {I Cor.6:19,20} They are God's own by purchase, for he purchased them; that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again. {II Cor.5:15} Thus you see there is good reason that Christ should be King of Saints; for he was born to it; he is thereunto appointed; and he hath purchased them for that end and purpose.

A word of information: If it be so that Christ be the King of his people, and he alone ought to rule in all spiritual things; then, those that step into the throne of Christ and bear rule where Christ should, are no friends to him. He, whoever he be that exalts himself above all that is called God, and sits in the seat of God, is the Antichrist, whom Christ will take as

his enemy, and destroy him with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming. {II Thes.2:4,8} Likewise, those are enemies, who will not have Christ to reign over them, who resolve to submit to the power of man in the things of God; they are no friends to Christ, but enemies, and so he will take them, and so he will deal with them. "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." {Lk.19:27} "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." {Acts 3:23}

So, if the kingdom of Christ be spiritual, not of this World, then those are no friends to Christ, that turn the World into Church; I mean, by a human Law and Ordinance. Let men turn the World into Church by preaching the Gospel of Christ, but to compel all, to bring in earthly, ignorant and carnal men into the Church of Christ, is not according to the mind of Christ. "In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations. And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things; but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves. Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel &c." {Ez.44:7-14} This is none of Christ's Church, but the Synagogue of Satan; the World, and not the Church. And truly I am apt to conceive, from that fore-mentioned Scripture that those that have been chief in this business, who are godly amongst them, shall never be honored with doing much in the work of God; but they shall come in last, they shall be the meanest, and the lowest; I mean with relation to gifts in the house of God. This may seem strange to some, but a truth; for God will have none to glory in their own present gifts or excellency, but that he that glories may glory in the Lord.

Use 2: If the Kingdom of Christ be spiritual, then here is a word of exhortation, to stir up spiritual people, spiritual men and women, to submit to Christ, to come under the Government of Christ, to walk with, to have fellowship with the

spiritual people of Christ. Beloved, it is a sad thing to see spiritual people to walk with the World, to join in the fellowship of the World, in the worship of the World. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness; and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial; or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel; and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols; for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." {II Cor.6:14-18} O that the exhortation might take place in your souls! "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." {Rev.18:4} The Lord's people are a holy people, and the Lord's ways are holy ways. "Holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, forever." {Ps.93:5}

Use 3: A word of consolation and joy for the Saints, the Church and Kingdom of Christ; for you have cause of great joy, and cause of rejoicing. First, that you have such a King, a great King, above all; he that is the Lord of Lords, and the King of Kings; he is our King, he is the King of saints; for the saints have such a King, who is able to defend them, able to save them from all their enemies; and he will save them, for he is able to dash all his and his saints enemies in pieces, like a potters vessel; and he will and shall do it. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." {Ps.2:9} Be wise now therefore, O ye kings, and be instructed ye judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling, kiss the Son lest he be angry, &c., but let the Saints rejoice in the Lord. "Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." {Ps.149:1,2}

The Saints have cause to rejoice and to be comforted, for they are all made kings to the Lord. They are kings and

they shall reign; they reign already over sin and lust, over Satan. {Rom.6:12} Sin shall not have dominion over them; others are slaves to sin and Satan, sin reigns in and over them, but the Saints reign over sin, they have a Kingdom already within them, without them the Church, which is both Christ's and the Saints Kingdom, where Christ and the Christian solace themselves together, and they shall have a Kingdom, although they are now rejected and reproached of men. Servants ride on horseback, and Princes walk as servants on the ground, {Ecc.10:7,} but they shall rule and have dominion, they shall reign, for they are made kings. "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." {Rev.1:6} "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." {Rev.5:10} They shall rule their enemies, those that perhaps formerly have ruled them. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father." {Rev.2:26,27} Thus Christ shall judge, and thus the Saints shall judge. A wonderful comfort for the Saints, but a sad word for the enemies both of Christ and Christians. "Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written; this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD." {Ps.149:5-9} Thus the Saints are made kings you see, and shall have dominion, and rule, and a Kingdom; although they are rejected and slighted, and counted the off-scouring of all things here, by the men of the world, yet they are kings, and shall have a kingdom. A great joy for Christians! "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." {Dan.7:27} "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." {Lk.12:32}

Lastly, this should stir up the Saints to walk humbly, to walk holily, as becometh the subjects of the Spiritual Kingdom of Jesus Christ; that as Christ hath called them out of this world, so they should no longer fashion themselves like unto this world, but walk as becomes Christians, professing godliness, that the name of God be not blasphemed among the Gentiles. And likewise how doth it concern you who are members in the Kingdom, the Church of Christ, to carry on the Kingly Office of Christ in his Church with majesty, that so all things may be done in order, that so confusion and disorders may be avoided, and that every member in particular submit to the order in Christ; and for that end, to ordain officers according to rule, the want whereof I conceive is one means of confusion in the Churches, and causeth some to break from all order. So much briefly concerning the offices of Christ. In all these he is to be exalted now in the days of the Gospel.

Now I come to my text, for the manner how he is to be exalted, as in the preaching of the Gospel, and in the hearts of his people, in his offices, so in my text which sets forth that Christ is to be exalted and lifted up even as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness. Now it is true, this has a primary relation to his lifting up upon the cross; "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all {elect} men unto me." {Jn.12:32} Now John interprets it in the next verse, "this he said, signifying what death he should die." So that Christ was lifted up upon the cross, {Jn.8:28,} so he is still to be lifted up, a dying, a crucified Christ for sin. But he then was, and still is to be lifted up as the Serpent was lifted up in the wilderness.

First, there was the lifting up of the Serpent with the manner of it above all the people. The cause of it, that whosoever was bitten with the fiery Serpent, might look to this brazen Serpent and be cured. Note the lifting up of the Serpent, with the manner of it. "And the LORD said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." {Num.21:8,9}

Here was the lifting up of the Serpent in the wilderness; he was lifted up, upon a pole above all the people, to the end that all that were bitten, might behold him; so Christ is to be lifted up, he is to be exalted above all, as the Serpent in the wilderness; and that either in the world, or in the Church. So Christ is to be exalted in the preaching of the Gospel, in the view of all, above all, that so men may come to the view of him; and in the Church that so Christ may have the preeminence.

Christ is to be exalted above the world, or any creature. O how doth the world prevail amongst men? Nay, too much amongst Christians; but where Christ comes, he sets the soul above the creature. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" {I Jn.5:4,5} It is the clear sight and apprehension of the Lord Jesus Christ that sets the soul above the world, for the more the soul enjoys of Christ, the more it slightes things below; thus Christ is to be lifted up, both in the preaching of the Gospel, and in the hearts of the Saints.

Christ is to be lifted up above duties and all legal righteousness, thus the Apostle lifts up Christ, both in preaching and in his own soul, for he preached Christ and him exclusively. "For I determined not to know {or make known} anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." {I Cor.2:2} Christ as the alone Justifier of all that believe. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ;" {Rom.3:24;} so that he is just, and "the Justifier" of all which believe in Jesus. {vs.26} "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." {Rom.10:4} Christ justifying believers from all things, from which they could not have been justified by the Law of Moses, {Acts 13:39,} and thus is Christ to be lifted up in the view of all. "Preach the Gospel to every creature," {Mk.16:15,} and thus is Christ to be lifted up above all and every name, that is or may be named under heaven, wherein men usually rest and deceive themselves, for "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." {Acts 4:12}

Christ is to be lifted up in the hearts of the Saints, as he is to be lifted up above all duties, legal righteousness, or anything that may be named; all in the soul of the Christian is laid down as emptiness, nay, as dung and dross, at the feet of Christ, and the soul glories in nothing else but Christ and him crucified; thus Christ is to be exalted and lifted up as upon a pole, as the brazen Serpent, above everything or name, that may be named under heaven.

Question: What is the reason that Christ is thus to be exalted?

Answer: Because God hath exalted him and lifted him up for that end and purpose. "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, &c," {Phil.2:9} God hath given to Christ a high transcendent name, a name above every name, the name of a Saviour, and there is no salvation to be attained without him. "And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts." {Hag.2:7} That the desire of all his people in every Nation might be to him, as the desire of the wife to the husband; the King of his people, men may come, and bow and fall down, and worship before him. God the Father hath set him up as the ensign to whom the Nations must come. "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious;" {Is.11:10;} as the Saviour and Governor of all God's elect.

Christ is to be lifted up, that so men may have life by him. The serpent was lifted up, that whosoever was bit with the fiery serpent might live, for the Lord sent fiery serpents amongst the Jews in the wilderness, for their sins, as you may see, {Num.2:6,7,} who bit them that they died, and this was the end, that whosoever was bit with the fiery serpent might look to the brazen Serpent and live. Now I am apt to conceive, that the fiery serpent holds forth the Law, for I find the Law called a fiery Law. "From his right hand went a fiery law for them;" {Deut.33:2,} and the brazen Serpent holds forth Christ. Now as the fiery serpent did bite the children of Israel for their sin in the wilderness, so the Law which hath nothing but fire in it, bites men, and when they are bitten of the Law, they are to look to Christ.

Objection: It seems then that the preaching of the Law is that which prepares for Christ.

Answer: Nay, it is not so, for although all men are under the law by nature, yet it is the preaching of the Gospel that discovers it. I give you these grounds.

A man never savingly sees his evil condition without a Christ, but it is the Spirit of God that discovers it unto him; this all that are sound in the faith agree unto; then the preaching of the Law brings not this spirit. "This only would I learn of you, {saith the Apostle, speak out of your experience,} received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" {Gal.3:2} Beloved, God hath appointed his Spirit to be the means in the preaching of the Gospel, to convince the world of sin. {Jn.16:9} It is the Spirit of God that convinces the world of sin, and that in the preaching of faith, the Apostle was once alive without the Law, that is, without the spiritual understanding of the Law, but when the commandment came, sin reigned, and he died; that is, when Christ had opened his eyes to see into the spirit of the Law, for you may see that the ministry by which Paul comes to see himself, is the voice of Christ, "I am Jesus of Nazareth," then Paul comes trembling, &c.; {Acts 9:4,5, &c.;} so that it is Christ in the preaching of the Gospel which is glad tidings for sinners, remission of sins for believers, and this Gospel, this glad tidings, cannot be rightly held forth to the world; but withal, men must be showed that they are sinners, and the emptiness of duties, all other foundations must be discovered, the danger of not submitting to Christ, &c.; this preaching of Christ and faith in opposition to all legal work and duties, is the means Christ hath appointed to bring men to the knowledge, both of himself and themselves. It is true, every man and woman without faith, is bitten with the fiery serpent, the fiery Law, but are not sensible of it, till Christ come in the preaching of the Gospel, to discover it unto them. So that this is the reason why Christ is to be lifted up in the days of the Gospel, that sinners who behold him may live.

This is the reason following my text, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is the main reason of the exaltation of Christ, that men believing may have life, and this is ever annexed to the

preaching of the Gospel. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized {that is, whose faith produces obedience} shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." {Mk.16:15,16} This is the reason of the Gospel preaching you see, and this is the reason why Christ came into the world, that men might have life through him; {Jn.10:10;} for this end God gave him; {Jn.3:16;} God had never sent his Son into the world, had it not been that men by believing in him might have life; and therefore hath Christ left this Ordinance of preaching in the world, that men might be brought to believe, and therefore those men are {me thinks} much beside the truth and the Gospel, who pretend to hold forth Christ dying for all alike, and yet deny the preaching of the Gospel, the means by which God brings over the souls of men and women to believe. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." {Rom.10:17} Those who deny the preaching of the Gospel, deny the means of working faith.

Question: But may every one that will, believe?

Answer: Everyone to whom God gives faith to believe, may and shall believe, for faith is the gift of God, {Eph.2:8,} and God works faith by the preaching of the Gospel, and this is the main end of the exalting and lifting up of Christ in the Gospel, that men by believing in him may have life, and therefore is he to be lifted up as the serpent upon a pole, above all things, all duties, creatures, legal performances, anything that the creature may rest upon beneath him. Thus you see, beloved, the truth cleared, that Christ is to be exalted in the days of the Gospel.

A word of Examination; and that is double; for ourselves in particular, what say you to this?

Hath Christ been lifted up in your souls above all things? Hath he had the preeminence above all? He who is indeed above all, and in all, and through all? Have your souls seen Christ, the chief among ten thousand? Is Christ exalted in your souls as your alone Priest and Atonement, your peacemaker with God, or else do you look upon anything beneath Christ as the ground of your peace? I fear that the Saints live too much below Christ, and that is the cause of so much sadness of spirit, resting upon duties and legal performances,

they deprive themselves of much comfort they might otherwise enjoy. Is Christ exalted as your alone Prophet to teach you? Are your eyes fixated upon the Lord Jesus in all his dispensations, expecting teaching from him alone? Is Christ exalted as King in thy soul; submitting to him in all things, yielding universal obedience to him, and that out of love submitting to all his laws and statutes.

Examination: Whether Christ have been thus exalted in the Kingdom, in the Nation, as they desire to stand to him under the relation of a National Church as their Priest, Prophet and King, and in all these it would easily appear that he hath not been thus exalted; he hath not been exalted the alone Priest and atonement indeed and in truth, but merely in word and show; but duties, preparations, and qualifications, have been held forth with him, and that none but those thus fitted and qualified might in any case believe. First, bringing men to the Law, and then to Christ, which is a legal way, and not evangelical; it is true, the Jews were first brought to the Law and then to Christ, but under the Gospel men are first to be brought to the Gospel to Christ, and then to duties and the privileges of the Gospel, for all preparations and qualifications whatsoever, which is not of faith, is sin, and I am sure faith comes by preaching of the Gospel, not of the Law. Therefore the preaching of qualifications and preparations before faith is sin, for all things before, or without faith, is sin.

Hath Christ been received as the alone Prophet, to teach? Hath his Word been made the rule of all actions, submitting to him in all things. "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." {Acts 3:22,23} Judge of the truth of it!

Hath Christ been exalted as King, to submit to him as the alone Law giver of his Church of his people? Hath not man been submitted unto? Hath not man sate in the seat of God, making laws and constitutions of their own, compelling all thereunto, as once Darius made a Decree, that all that should ask any Petition of God or man for thirty days, should be cast

into the den of lions? {Dan.9:16} So men set up themselves, their own decrees, and compel unto it; this is not agreeable to the Kingly Dominion of Christ. Christ hath not been exalted King, it is true, there hath been a name of Christ, but that is all; the power of Christ in all his offices, hath been rejected, and the truth is, that the generality have been wholly legal, fetching rules from the Law, from Moses, and so denying Christ to be come in the flesh.

Legal churches, National, as the Jews; a legal Covenant of works made with the Jews, taken away to us that believe, legal preaching, setting up of works with Christ, when the Apostle saith, "He that worketh not but believeth, &c." {Rom.4:4,5} Legal Priests, the very title, and legal maintenance, tithes; but they that preach the Gospel, live of the Gospel. Legal administrations, I mean after legal rules, circumcision, and the like, legal prayers and duties to make peace and atonement; legal laws and institutions compelling all to one worship, persecuting the contrary minded, because the Jews did so. Thus beloved, hath the men of this and former Generations, both in this and other Nations, raised up Moses from the dead, and put his laws in execution, under the name of Christ; and so in deed and practice deny Christ to be come in the flesh, although in word they acknowledge him. The Lord open their eyes that they may see farther into the mystery of the Gospel.

In a word, Christ hath not been exalted as the brazen serpent upon a pole, above everything, all duties, prayers, ordinances, in the hearts of men, and that hath caused so many {as I cannot but judge gracious souls} to go with sorrow to their graves, ever kept in a way of working, under a legal bondage, longer prayers and greater spirituality in religious duties &c., as if a Christian lived by prayer, preaching, and ordinances; no, no, beloved, they live above these, upon the Lord Jesus Christ by faith; not that the Saints do not make use of these, but they not live upon them. Christ is the Christians life, and so far as he communicates himself in these to the Christian, he hath cause of joy, but if he deny himself there, for the trial of the soul, it is to let him see the emptiness of all things without himself, and to cause the Christian to live by faith alone, for we live by faith and not by sense. {II Cor.5:7}

But enough of this, here only let the Saints who are delivered out of this bondage, this spiritual Babylon, this confused Captivity, give God the Glory.

Use 2: A word of Exhortation to the servants of Jesus; in all things to exalt and lift him up; to lift him up in preaching; in their hearts; in their obedience to him, that Christ may be all and in all to your souls; that you give up your selves a holy, living, acceptable, sacrifice to God; that you who have taken his name and truth upon you, exalt him as your alone Priest, Prophet and King in all your conversations; that ye may be such as become the Gospel of Christ; holy, humble, full of love to all, as much as in you lieth do good unto all, but especially to the household of faith; that so your light shining before men, they may have cause to glorify your Father which is in heaven; and that gain-sayers may be convinced by your godly conversation in Christ. Beloved if you seek the lifting up of Christ above all, then certainly your care will be, to live a Christ-like life while you are in this world.

3: Lastly, a word of Consolation for poor sinners. Christ is to be lifted up in the days of the Gospel, that men by believing in him might have life by him. What do you say to this? Is there ever a soul present that wants faith, and is sensible of it, that wants life? Christ came to give life, he is lifted up now in the days of the Gospel for that very end and purpose, that dead men might have life by him. O is not here mercy! Here is a way made whereby sinners may become Saints and slaves may become Sons. Here is a Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, if the Lord help your souls to wash there. What say your souls to this? Is there ever a poor creature bitten with the fiery serpent, with the sense of the evil of sin! O here is a Christ lifted up for that very end and purpose, that poor self-destroying sinners may come to him and live? "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." {Is.45:22} O here is blessed news, a blessed word for sinners if the Lord give you hearts to make use of it! Christ excludes none to whom he gives a heart to receive him. Is it not a mercy that God hath provided an Object for dead souls to look upon and live? Truly beloved, it is the richest mercy in the world, where God gives a heart to accept it.

Here is discovered the blessed condition of the poor despised Saints. O they are in a saved condition, those to whom Christ hath given faith. O they have cause to rejoice ever more; they have cause to be filled with joy and peace, "joy unspeakable and full of glory." What if they are reproached and persecuted for the name and sake of CHRIST their Saviour, their Husband, their all in all; who is the delight of their souls? Yet they are happy, and they shall never perish, but they shall one day be freed from all these enemies, and when Christ who is their life shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory. That Christ who is lifted up high in their hearts, in their souls here, will lift them up one day as high as himself in glory; above evil, above men, above sin, and set them with himself where they shall enjoy pleasure without sorrow, fellowship without mixture, and sing praises and Hallelujahs without end.

FINIS