

The Faith and Hope of the Gospel by Benjamin Ingham

The Preface

I believe that all men now living are fallible. I therefore pretend neither to perfection nor infallibility. I have written what I believe to be the truth, according to my insight and understanding in the oracles of God, but I do not publish it to be subscribed to by other men, as a standard of doctrine.

It is written, *“And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord,”* Isaiah 54:13. And that *“No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, (with understanding) but by the Holy Ghost,”* 1 Corinthians 12:3. And, *“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,”* Romans 8:9. All true and real Christians are taught by the Holy Ghost to know the Lord Jesus and every true and real minister or servant of Jesus Christ hath a divine commission, or is sent of God. Those that preach and are not sent, not commanded of God, *“shall not profit the people at all, saith the Lord,”* Jeremiah 23:32. But I believe that no man, since the days of the apostles, hath been so inspired, or hath had such a commission, as the apostles themselves had. The apostles were eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of what they delivered, and the Holy Ghost brought to their remembrance what they had heard from the mouth of the Lord Jesus, so that they were infallibly guided by the Holy Ghost, both in what they taught by word of mouth, and in what they have left in writing.

I believe that the whole counsel of God to the church is faithfully recorded in the holy Scriptures and that, *“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, throughly furnished unto all good works,”* 2 Timothy 3:16,17. Therefore the holy Scriptures are the oracles of God, and are, and ought to be, the only standard of Christian principles in faith, practice, and discipline.

I believe that no servant of Christ hath now any new revelation to deliver: but also believe that no man can clearly comprehend or truly understand the holy Scriptures without the illumination or teaching of the Holy Ghost. Yet the Holy Ghost neither revealeth, teacheth, impresseth nor applieth anything to any person now, but what is either expressly written, or is agreeable to the analogy of faith delivered, in the holy Scriptures.

I allow that the knowledge of the original languages, reading and study are helpful and advantageous to understand the holy Scriptures. I also allow that every preacher of the word of God may use the talents which he hath to open, illustrate, explain and enforce the doctrine of the Scriptures in the aptest and properest words he can. He may set forth in other words and in many words, what the Scriptures express in few words, provided that all which he delivers, be sound doctrine, and agreeable to the analogy of faith. But every preacher’s doctrine, and every Christian’s faith, experience and practice, must now be examined, and tried by the holy Scriptures. *“To the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,”* Isaiah 8:20.

The faith and hope of the gospel have been confounded together by many writers, as if they were but one thing, although they are as distinct as the foundation and the superstructure. And the assurance of hope hath been made to be of the essence of the faith of the gospel. Some writers have represented faith as if it were a person. Other writers have described the faith of the gospel as consisting of several different acts of faith, and various opinions and disputes have been maintained

about those different acts of faith, as also, how faith justifieth, whether as a cause, condition or instrument.

Much of this altercation and confusion hath been owing to not understanding the sense or meaning of the word “faith” in its different acceptations in the Scriptures, which hath occasioned great error in doctrine. The word “faith” sometimes signifieth belief or believing, and sometimes it signifieth the truth or doctrine, the thing or matter, the object or subject, which either is believed or believed in, or which is proposed to be believed or to be believed in. And sometimes the word “faith” is used to denote not only believing, but also the thing believed and the thing believed in. This is more fully explained in the discourse.

In setting forth the different expressions used in holy Scripture to denote the gospel and believing the gospel, I have not enumerated all the synonymous expressions which are to be found in the Bible. After *“to believe on the name of the son of God”* (1 John 5:13) may be added, faith in the Lord Jesus, faith in his blood, faith in his righteousness, and the reader may add others from his own observation.

In order to vindicate the truth, and to make it appear more plain and clear, I have pointed out the mistakes or errors of several writers, but I have not judged or condemned their persons. I know that to err is human. I have not wrote in a spirit of controversy or from any other motive, I trust, than to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints in meekness and fear, speaking the truth in love, and leaving it to every man’s conscience in the sight of God to be examined and tried by the holy Scriptures.

My discourse is upon a serious and most important subject. I wish I could have treated it better. Nothing more is requisite to make a sinner a Christian than the one faith, and nothing else will do. My aim hath been to make it appear plain what the one faith of the gospel is, and to distinguish it from all counterfeits. If any one thing be of more weight and concern to man than all other things on this side the grave to be satisfied about, it is this: Whether he is in the faith.

I have written for the information of those who have less understanding in the Scriptures, and less experience in the deep things of God than myself, and I am ready to learn of those who have more understanding in the Scriptures, and are better taught of God than myself. I acknowledge that I am yet a learner in the school of grace. And a man can but minister according to the ability which God giveth. *“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (But) if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God,”* 1 Peter 4:10,11.

May the compassionate High-priest and Head of the church forgive every mistake that I have made. May He bless what is agreeable to the truth of God. May his providence which is over all things, make what is here published to work for his own glory, and the good of his church, just so far as to his divine wisdom and good pleasure seemeth meet.

Benjamin Ingham
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The Faith and Hope of the Gospel

A Discourse upon "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" Hebrews 11:1.

Very excellent things are spoken of faith throughout the holy Scriptures. Great and wonderful energy is ascribed to it. Without faith it is impossible to please God. "*Verily, verily,*" saith the Lord Jesus, "*he that believeth on me hath everlasting life,*" John 6:47. But "*He that believeth not on him is condemned already; and the wrath of God abideth on him,*" John 3:18,36. And again, "*He that believeth.... shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned,*" Mark 16:16.

As man was created to be immortal, but by sin became mortal, as his continuance here on earth is short and uncertain, as he is to exist for ever hereafter either in a state of happiness, or in a state of misery, as there is a real difference between pleasure and pain, between happiness and misery, an exceeding great and wide difference between a state of eternal happiness and a state of eternal misery, as joy and happiness is agreeable to all men, as pain and misery is disagreeable to everyone, and as nothing is so shocking to any man as the thoughts of eternal damnation, ought it not to be the chief concern of everyone, how to be eternally happy? Ought not all persons to weigh and consider well, how they may obtain eternal life? Can there be a more important inquiry than this? What shall I do to be saved? What shall I do to inherit eternal life? How shall I obtain peace with God? How shall I regain his favour, or find acceptance with him? Or, as the prophet Micah strongly and elegantly expresseth it, "*Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*" Micah 6:6,7.

As the Lord Jesus Christ is the author of eternal salvation and the only Saviour of sinners, as He alone is the way, the truth and the life, as He is the door into heaven, and no man can enter therein by any other way or means, for He openeth, and no-one shutteth, and He shutteth, and no-one can open, as He hath said that those who believe on Him shall be saved, but those who believe not shall die in their sins and be damned, ought it not to be a matter of serious, calm and deliberate inquiry to all those who profess Christianity, Whether they be true believers or not?

St Paul saith, "*All men have not faith,*" 2 Thessalonians 3:2. The Lord Jesus denoteth the scarcity thereof in these words, "*When the son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*" Luke 18:8. St. Peter calleth faith "*precious*", 2 Peter 1:1. And indeed the precious gift of faith is a pearl of great price. Therefore, it is no insignificant or indifferent, but a grand, important and most momentous matter to "*Examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith,*" 2 Corinthians 13:5.

I shall endeavour in this discourse to explain, describe and set forth the faith of the gospel, in as plain and clear a manner as I can, according to the insight and understanding that I have in the holy Scriptures. I believe that the holy Scriptures were given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, and are able by the teaching of the Holy Ghost to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Timothy 3:15,16. Nothing is to be added to them, nor to be taken away from them, Revelation 22:18,19. "*To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them,*" Isaiah 8:20. If either man or angel preach any other gospel than that which the apostles

have preached, *“let him be accursed,”* Galatians 1:8. I therefore caution the reader to weigh well what I write, and to regard it no further than it is agreeable to the oracles of God. A man may be very positive in his opinion, and yet absolutely wrong. Remember that all men are fallible. Therefore prove everything by the holy Scriptures, and hold fast what the God of truth hath spoken by the mouth of his holy servants the prophets, the evangelists and apostles.

Now though so much mention is made of faith, and the fruits or effects thereof are set forth in so many places, yet the words of my text are the only definition of it that I can recollect in all the Bible. The words are few, but accurate and comprehensive. They are a perfect definition of the faith of the gospel, and may serve for a definition of every other kind of faith. Yet the faith of the gospel is very different from every other kind of faith and from every false faith in religion. By frequent meditation on the original Greek words, I got light and understanding in the faith of the gospel, and also in the meaning of the word “faith” in its different acceptations, about both which I had been perplexed by reading various authors. It is my opinion that both the doctrine and also the very words of Scripture, in the languages wherein they were originally written, were inspired by the Holy Ghost. God gave His holy servants both mouth and wisdom, as He promised, *“I will give you a mouth and wisdom,”* Luke 21:15. *“Which things also we speak,”* saith St Paul, *“not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,”* 1 Corinthians 2:13. The translation of the holy Scriptures into the modern tongues hath been a great blessing, and of very great use to the cause of Christianity. Yet men of learning who have studied the originals, know very well that some places are falsely translated, and others weakly and lamely. It would be well worth the labour of all the learned men in every nation to conspire together to publish an accurate translation retaining the very words of the translation we now have, where the sense is true, and the words are plain and proper. But this by the by.

I shall now proceed to explain the meaning of the words of my text, and afterward to endeavour to open the matter contained in them. And last I shall attempt to explain the sense of the word “faith”.

The Greek word *pistis*, translated “faith,” cometh from the Greek verb *peitho*, which signifieth to persuade, to convince, or to make believe. It is owing to a persuasion of mind that we believe anything, and what we believe is the persuasion of our mind, or our belief. To believe a thing meaneth to assent to and credit it as true. To believe in a thing meaneth to confide or trust in it, to rely or depend on it. The word “faith” hath different senses and acceptations in holy Scripture. Very often it is taken passively, and signifieth what is or is to be believed, or what is to be believed and believed in. And often it is taken actively, and signifieth believing. And by a figure of speech¹, the word “faith” is used in either sense, and sometimes includeth both, and meaneth what is to be believed and believed in, and also the believing of it. I shall produce and explain a passage of Scripture wherein the word “faith” occurs thrice in one verse, and is used each time in a different sense; and afterwards I will further illustrate what I have said.

The apostle Paul saith *“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the just shall live by faith,”* Romans 1:16,17. *From faith* in the first place meaneth the faith or truth of God, the testimony of God, who cannot lie, concerning His beloved son Jesus Christ and his righteousness that by God’s word, testimony, faith or truth is accredited, and ought to be believed. *“He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar,”* 1 John 5:10. Adam fell by not believing and depending on what God had said to him. For he hearkened to the spirit of error, who is a liar, and the father of lies. And whoever doth not believe and depend on what God saith,

certainly hearkeneth to the same spirit of falsehood. *To faith* in the second place, meaneth the belief of man, or to be believed in by man. The righteousness of God, i.e. the divine righteousness of Christ, is revealed in the gospel that man may believe in it for salvation. *By faith* in the third place, meaneth both what is to be believed and believed in, and also the believing thereof. "*The just shall live by faith.*" Those who are justified, live by believing God's testimony concerning Christ and his righteousness, and by believing in and depending on the Lord Jesus, and his divine righteousness, as their only foundation, and the alone ground of their hope of salvation.

The word "faith" in my text meaneth the belief or the believing of what is to be believed and believed in, as will by and by appear more clearly.

Truth is the object of the understanding, as good is the object of the will. Now in the gospel, God's word, emphatically called the truth and the faith of God, is the object of man's faith, or what man is to believe. And Christ and his righteousness is the subject of man's faith, the matter whereon it is to be exercised, or what man is to believe in.

The prophets gave this substantial reason for what they delivered, "*Thus saith the Lord.*" God's word well attested is sufficient ground for man to believe and to obey. For, "*By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth man live.*" (See Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4). Before the fall of Adam, man was to live by the word of God in the law, "*The man that doth them, shall live in them.*" (See Leviticus 18:5; Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:12). After the fall of Adam, man was to live by the word of promise, till Christ came and finished his work. But now man is to live by the word of the gospel of God, "*This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him,*" Matthew 17:5. This testimony of God, called the truth, the record, the word and the faith of God, but most commonly the gospel or the faith, is what is to be believed. But God's testimony is concerning Jesus Christ and his righteousness, his active and passive obedience, to be believed in, and depended on for acceptance with God, for pardon, life and salvation. The testimony of God is concerning the person of Christ, and the work of Christ. Now man is to believe the testimony of God, and upon the authority of it, he is to believe in Jesus Christ and his righteousness, whereof God hath testified that He is well pleased. Therefore the faith of the gospel is the believing of God's testimony concerning Christ and His righteousness, and believing in Jesus Christ and His most perfect and divine righteousness, as the only sure ground of the hope of eternal life.

As the word "faith" occurs so often in Scripture, I will further endeavour to set forth the meaning of it in its different acceptations.

Sometimes it signifieth what is to be believed. As, "*Children in whom is no faith,*" Deuteronomy 32:20. Children who are not to be believed or trusted. Again, "*Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?*" Romans 3:3. In this sense the word "faith" ought always to be taken when it signifieth truth, fidelity, faithfulness, credit, a creed. Public faith meaneth what is to be believed and trusted between one nation and another, and by all people. A creed, or a confession of faith, meaneth the doctrine therein contained to be believed.

Sometimes the word "faith" meaneth what is to be believed and believed in. As "*He that now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed,*" Galatians 1:23. *The faith* here meaneth the gospel, what is to be believed and believed in, as hath already been explained. In this sense the apostle Paul frequently useth the word "faith;" as, "*The hearing of faith,*" "*Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed,*" "*But after that faith is*

come,” Galatians 3:2,5,12,23,25. When the word “faith” is taken actively and meaneth believing, it implies a conviction or persuasion of mind upon sufficient or satisfactory proof, or evidence that the thing to be believed is true. And to believe in, confide or trust in, to venture, rely and depend on, seem to be consequences of believing. A man that acts wisely and deliberately, will not trust in a person, or venture on a thing, unless he believe, or be persuaded, or satisfied in his mind that it is safe and prudent so to do. Faith or believing is weak or strong, as the evidence that supports it is less or more, weak or strong. In these texts following, the word “faith” meaneth belief or believing: “*O ye of little faith,*” Matthew 6:30, i.e. of a weak belief, of a timid or fearful persuasion of mind, scarce daring to believe or depend on God. Abraham “*was strong in faith,*” Romans 4:20. He believed without doubting, he staggered not, he wavered not, he was fully persuaded in his mind, he had confidence in God, he depended on God’s promise. “*Have faith in God,*” Mark 11:22. “*Lord increase our faith,*” “*If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed,*” Luke 17:5,6. “*Stephen, a man full of faith,*” Acts 6:5. “*Joy of faith,*” “*The faith of the gospel,*” Philippians 1:25,27.

When the word “faith” belongs to persons, it comprehendeth and includeth both their believing and what they believe, or believe in. What is to be believed, or to be believed in, doth not become any man’s faith before he believeth it, or believeth in it. My faith, belief or creed, meaneth what I believe, or what is believed, or believed in by me. What I believe, may be true before I believe it, but it is not my faith before I believe it. The gospel is the truth of God, whether it is believed or not. The gospel doth not become a truth upon believing it, for it is the same truth before and after believing of it. But the gospel doth not become any person’s faith, till he believeth it. If I believe not the gospel, yet nevertheless, it is the precious truth of God. But if I believe the gospel, it becometh my faith. If you believe the gospel, it becometh your faith. If another person believeth the gospel, it becometh his faith. My faith meaneth my believing, and what I believe, or believe in. Your faith meaneth your believing, and what you believe or believe in. His faith meaneth his believing, and what he believeth, or believeth in. For instance, “*To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,*” Romans 4:5. Some writers conceiving that the words *his faith*, meant his believing, and no more, have concluded that a person was justified for his believing, if it was but right believing, and that his believing was counted or imputed to him for righteousness or justification. But this is a gross error. For sinners are neither justified for their own believing, nor their own obeying, nor for both together, neither for the truth or sincerity of their believing, or any act of faith, nor for anything they have done, can do, or ever will do. Neither are they justified for anything wherein they differ from others, nor for anything done or wrought in them, or received by them. For the whole and sole cause of the justification of sinners, is the active and passive obedience of Jesus Christ, called the righteousness of God, “*which is unto all and upon all them that believe,*” Romans 3:22. To justify sinners is the peculiar prerogative of the most High. “*It is God that justifieth,*” Romans 8:33. How then can either faith or works justify a sinner? But God justifieth ungodly sinners upon believing (not for believing), by imputing to them the divine righteousness of Christ, which becometh their faith, when they believe God’s testimony concerning it, and heartily believe in it. The words, *his faith*, mean the righteousness of Christ, wherein he believeth or trusteth, when he believeth God’s testimony concerning Christ and His work, as alone sufficient to save sinners, without any other requisite. Again, “*Being justified by faith, we have peace with God,*” Romans 5:1. Being justified by the thing believed in, upon believing, as just set forth. Again, “*Your faith is spoken of,*” &c. Romans 1:8. Your belief of the gospel, or your believing what is to be believed and believed in. It must be remembered that in the gospel there is an object and a subject for man’s faith. God’s truth is to be believed, and Christ and his righteousness is to be believed in, as hath been before set forth.

As it is of great use to understand the right sense of the word “faith” in Scripture, one should carefully attend to the context, wherein it occurs. For misunderstanding the meaning of the word hath led men into great error, as it certainly is, when man’s believing is put in the place of Christ’s righteousness. But I shall now proceed to explain another material word in my text.

The Greek word *hupostasis*, translated “substance”, is used to signify something that is real and existeth, in contradistinction to what is chimerical or an idle fancy. The most holy faith, or the gospel, is a reality, yea, the very truth of God, who cannot lie. It is not an idle fancy or delusion, it is no deceit or error, no falsehood, no lie, nor a “*cunningly devised fable*” (2 Peter 1:16). It is not a scheme of religion invented or contrived by men or devils, as many religions have been. But the living and true God himself is the author and the finisher of the Christian faith.

But the word *hupostasis* literally translated signifieth subsistence, or that which is put and standeth under another thing and supporteth it, being its base, ground or foundation. Every building must have a foundation, but the foundation standeth under the building and supporteth it. If the foundation fall, the building must fall. A house that is built upon firm and sure ground or a rock, hath a good foundation, but a house that is built upon loose and rotten earth, hath a precarious foundation. It is hazardous and uncertain, whether the house will stand. But the word *hupostasis* denoteth also stability and firmness that which standeth under, and is sufficient and able to support what is upon it. The word is also used to signify courage, boldness, confidence, what is not easily moved or soon shaken. The gospel, the most holy faith, is a real, strong, firm, safe, sound and sure foundation of hope. Thus much as to the meaning or sense of the Greek word *hupostasis*, which is translated “substance”, but might have been more significantly rendered in this place, the substantial foundation, or the sure ground of things hoped for.

Things hoped for are things expected. Now faith, be it true or false, is the base, ground, foundation and support of hope of things expected. True faith is a safe and sure foundation of hope that will be crowned with the enjoyment of the good things expected. False faith, or a dead faith, is a precarious, uncertain, hazardous and rotten foundation of hope that will perish; whose end will be shame and confusion and disappointment. Every man’s hope is of the same kind with his faith. The Christian faith and hope are connected together. The faith of the gospel is the ground and support of the hope of the gospel. And the hope of the gospel is that exceeding great and eternal weight of glory, that eternal life, which is the reward of the most perfect and divine righteousness of Jesus Christ, which will be given of God for his sake to all, to whom his righteousness is given. But the things hoped for, will be considered more largely, and particularly hereafter, when I come to treat of the hope of the gospel.

The Greek word *elenchos*, which is translated the “evidence”, denoteth the strongest proof, a certain and infallible demonstration, an evidence that is so full, and plain, and clear that it appeareth to the mind that comprehendeth it, self-evident or that it is so, it must be so, and it cannot be otherwise. As that one and two make three, two and two make four, three and three make six, absolutely and precisely so, and neither more nor less. Now when a thing is fully proved or demonstrated to any man, there is a conviction or full persuasion in his mind of the truth thereof, and that conviction and persuasion in the mind is the man’s evidence, his *elenchos*, the proof and reason for his believing it. Whatever any man believeth, he believeth it upon some kind of evidence or other, whether the evidence be true or false. And every man hath the evidence in his own mind upon which he believeth it. A man of sense will not believe everything he hears or reads, before he examines the evidence, and if it be a matter of consequence, he will require good and satisfactory evidence before

he believeth it. But when a man hath full and satisfactory evidence, he must believe it. Otherwise he acts as weakly and absurdly, as he that doth not believe what he seeth with his own eyes. It is said that seeing is believing, all the world over. But he that hath no eyes cannot see; and he that hath no proof or evidence for a thing, cannot rationally believe it. He that believeth upon weak and uncertain evidence, is a weak and credulous man; but he that believeth without any evidence, is blind in his intellects, and given to fancy. He that believeth upon the testimony of credible men, hath moral proof; but he that believeth upon the testimony of God, hath infallible demonstration. Whoever hath obtained the precious faith of the gospel, which is of the operation of God, and the free gift of God to him, hath this *elenchos*, this evidence or demonstration of things not seen, of all those great and glorious things reported by the gospel, whereof more will be said hereafter.

There is a great difference between human faith and divine faith. I call that human faith that standeth in the wisdom of man, and hath only human, external and moral proof or evidence to support it. And I call that divine faith that standeth in the power of God, and hath the word and witness, or testimony of God, and the demonstration of the Holy Ghost to support it. More will be said of this when I come to show how men obtain faith.

I said above that the words of my text may serve for a definition of every kind of faith. Yet the faith of the gospel is very different from every other kind of faith, and from every false faith in religion. I shall now explain myself, and endeavour to illustrate the matter.

Faith is the foundation of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Whatever then is the ground or support of hope, that is the faith, the thing believed in, or the matter depended upon. And first with respect to political, public or civil faith. What is the ground of hope and confidence between one nation and another? I answer, the laws of nature and of nations, but in particular, the treaties of peace and commerce, the alliances offensive and defensive, which have been solemnly and formally made and ratified by those nations. To observe these strictly, is called, keeping good faith, to break these, is called, breach of faith. Now here the laws and treaties are the things believed in, the evidence of what is not seen, and the ground upon which people venture and trust in their intercourses. Again, what is the ground of hope in England to those who lend money to the government that both principal and interest will be sure and secure? I answer, the laws of the nation. People believe and confide in the sanction of the laws made by the authority of the king and parliament. The laws are the ground of hope to the people, and their evidence of things not seen. Again, supposing two or three honest neighbours come and relate to me some good and interesting news, upon their testimony and authority, I believe it. It becometh the ground of hope to me, and the evidence of what I had not seen. Upon the authority of good historians, we believe matters of fact done long ago, their testimony is to us the evidence of things not seen. Upon the evidence of credible witnesses, causes are determined in courts of judicature. The testimony of the witnesses is to the judge and jury, the evidence of what they themselves have not seen or heard. This is human and moral proof, and this is human faith.

Again, with regard to religion – whatever is the ground and support of a man's hope that he shall be saved, that is his religious faith, be it what it will. Whoever then hopeth to be saved by the profession of any religion, be it the Christian, Jewish, Mahometan or Heathen, that is his faith. Or whoever hopeth to be saved by being in any particular sect, society or party of any of those four great denominations, that is his faith. He trusteth in his morality. He believeth, or is persuaded in his own mind that the practice of morality is sufficient to procure him the favour of God, and that he shall obtain salvation thereby. This is the faith of many persons. Without controversy, all men in all

religions ought to be moral and whoever is an immoral man, is a bad man, whatever religion he professeth. A moral man is a valuable person in civil society, and worthy of respect as a neighbour or a subject, even in a private capacity, and much more so, when he is in a public capacity, an officer or a magistrate. But whether morality, as well as several other things which I am about to mention, be a sound and sure foundation for eternal life, may be gathered from the whole purport of this discourse. Again, whoever hopeth to be saved by praying, reading, fasting, hearing sermons, receiving the sacrament, or by any other religious exercise or duty, that is his faith. Whoever hopeth to be saved by vows, pilgrimages, penance, confession, voluntary poverty or celibacy, that is his faith. Whoever hopeth to be saved by good works, as feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, entertaining strangers, ministering to the prisoners, relieving the distressed, visiting and assisting the fatherless and widows, burying the dead, or by any other good works, that is his faith. Whoever hopeth to be saved, because he hath gone through such distress of soul, or such exercise of heart and mind, having been so often convinced of sin, and so long and so much burdened, pained and grieved upon that account, that is his faith. Whoever hopeth to be saved, because he hath reformed his life, or made a good beginning towards it, or because he is changed and altered, and better than he was before, or better than others, as he himself thinketh, that is his faith. Whoever hopeth to be saved, because he hath now and then a good thought, and putteth up to God a short ejaculation, says a prayer or sheds a tear, or because he hath made or soon purposeth to make, a pious resolution to amend his ways and be good, that is his faith. Whoever hopeth to be saved, because he thinketh that he is justified or sanctified or converted, or for his believing or acting faith, or putting forth an act of faith, be it direct or reflex, or for an appropriating act, or a fourfold act, or any other sort of act of faith; or for diligently endeavouring to believe, or for the truth and sincerity of his faith, or for his orthodoxy, that is his faith. Whoever hath got a very good conceit of himself, thinking himself to be perfect, or in a higher and better state than others, and so more deserving of God's favour than others, and therefore hopeth to be saved, that is his faith. In short, whatever anyone hopeth to be saved by, be it good or bad, true or false, right or wrong, commanded of God or will-worship and superstition, falling down to the stump of a tree, or worshipping the devil, as some of the heathen do, anything done by himself, or done by another man for him, that is his faith, or what he believeth in and dependeth upon for salvation.

And thus much as to religious faith which is human.

It is now time that I come to treat more largely of the most holy faith, the most holy truth of God to be believed, and the most holy person and righteousness of God manifested in the flesh to be believed in. St. Jude exhorts the disciples of Christ to "*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints,*" Jude 3, and to build up themselves thereon. St. Peter calleth it "*precious faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ,*" 2 Peter 1:1, (for so the words of the apostle should have been translated). And St. Paul calleth it "*the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness, in hope of eternal life,*" Titus 1:1,2. This faith is very different from every other kind of faith, and from every false faith in religion. For this is the foundation which God hath laid in Zion.

The Lord Jesus said unto his apostles, "*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,*" Mark 16:15,16. The gospel and what it importeth is the object and the subject of man's faith. He that believeth the gospel shall be saved, but he that believeth not the gospel, shall be damned. This is the declaration of the great judge, whose sentence will be final and irreversible.

I shall now proceed to open the matter contained in my text.

- I. And first, I shall endeavour to set forth more fully what the gospel is, and what it importeth.
- II. Secondly, what the faith of the gospel is, and also what assurance of faith meaneth.
- III. Thirdly, the necessity of faith.
- IV. Fourthly, how men obtain the faith of the gospel.
- V. Fifthly, I shall speak of the evidence of the gospel, and how faith is the evidence of things not seen, and what those things not seen are.
- VI. Sixthly, the blessings consequent upon believing the gospel.
- VII. Seventhly, I shall speak of the fruit, effect or work of faith, and the proof that anyone hath faith.

And when I have gone through these heads, I shall make remarks upon different sorts of believers, and afterwards treat of the hope of the gospel, of assurance of hope, and what belongeth to that subject.

¹By a metonymy, the cause is put for the effect, the subject for the adjunct, or the contrary, and by a synecdoche, a part is put for the whole, or the whole for a part.

I. And first, I must endeavour to set forth more fully what the gospel is, and what it importeth. And it may be of some use to set forth the different terms or expressions used in holy Scripture to denote the same thing, because unlearned persons are often puzzled about words and expressions which are synonymous, or have the same sense and meaning, because they do not understand them. And when words or phrases are used to which they are not accustomed, they are apt to think that some new truth, doctrine or matter, is contained in them.

Now the first intimation of God's purpose of mercy to man after the fall of Adam was in these words, part of the sentence pronounced upon the serpent the devil, "*The seed of the woman (which meant Christ) shall bruise thy head,*" Genesis 3:15. When God entered into a covenant with Abraham, He made His purpose of mercy more plainly known, declaring by His word of promise to him, and confirming it afterwards by His oath that "*in his seed (which was Christ) all the nations of the earth should be blessed,*" Genesis 22:18. The apostle Paul frequently useth the word "promise", to denote Jesus Christ and what was promised in Him. The evangelical prophet Isaiah speaketh of publishing peace, bringing good tidings of good, publishing salvation, Isaiah 52:7. And he saith, "*Lord, who hath believed our report?*" Isaiah 53:1. The angel that made known the birth of Jesus Christ to the shepherds, said unto them "*Fear not, for behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: for unto you is born a Saviour which is Christ the Lord,*" Luke 2:10,11. When the Lord Jesus at His baptism declared that it became Him to fulfil all righteousness, the heavens were opened, the Spirit of God descended upon Him, and lo! a voice from heaven, saying, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,*" Matthew 3:15-17. At this time God gave testimony and approbation to Christ's active obedience. Again, at His transfiguration on the mount, when Moses and Elias appeared in glory, and spoke of His death, which He was to suffer at Jerusalem, there came a voice from the excellent glory, saying, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I*

am well pleased, hear ye him,” Matthew 17:1-5; Luke 9:28-35; 2 Peter 1:17. At this second time, God gave testimony and approbation to Christ’s passive obedience; and commanded all to believe in, and to obey Him. And again, when the soul of the blessed Jesus began to be troubled on account of the bloody agony and bitter death then approaching, which He was to endure, *“Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified (thy name), and will glorify it again,”* John 12:27,28. The Father had already twice glorified His beloved Son, and He promiseth to glorify Him again, by raising Him from the dead, and receiving Him up into glory.

This voice, or word of God, the Lord Jesus called *“the gospel,”* and *“the truth,”* and *“the word of the kingdom,”* Mark 1:15; John 8:40; Matthew 13:19. For testifying this truth, which He heard of God that He was the beloved Son of God, the Jews accused Him of blasphemy, because they said He made Himself God, John 10:33. For this they accused Him to Pilate as deserving death, John 19:7. St. John called this voice of God, *“The Father’s commandment,”* and *“the truth,”* and *“the witness of God, which he testified of his Son,”* 2 John 4; 1 John 5:9,10. St. Peter calleth it, *“The word of the Lord,”* *“the truth,”* and *“the holy commandment,”* 1 Peter 1:25,22; 2 Peter 2:21; and *“the word, which God sent unto Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ,”* Acts 10:36. St. James calleth it, *“the word of truth,”* and *“the engrafted word, which is able to save the soul,”* James 1:18,21. St. Jude calleth this voice from heaven, *“the faith once delivered to the saints,”* and *“the most holy faith,”* Jude 3,20. St. Paul calleth it, his *“gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the commandment of the everlasting God,”* Romans 16:25,26; *“the testimony of God,”* 1 Corinthians 2:1; *“the word of reconciliation,”* 2 Corinthians 5:19; *“the word of life,”* Philippians 2:16; *“the word of the truth of the gospel,”* Colossians 1:5; *“the word of the Lord,”* 1 Thessalonians 1:8; *“the word of God,”* 1 Thessalonians 2:13; and frequently, *“the faith,”* and *“the word of faith.”* And also, *“the word of salvation,”* and *“the word of God’s grace, which is able to build up,”* Acts 13:26, 20:32.

Now all the above expressions, although in different words, denote and mean the same thing. Therefore, to hear Him, to obey the Father’s commandment, to obey the truth, obedience of faith, to receive the word of the kingdom, the engrafted word, the word of God, or, to believe in Jesus Christ, on the Son, or on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the beloved Son of the living God, to confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; to believe the promise, the report, the good tidings of good; to believe the truth, the record, the witness of God, the word of life, the word of faith, the word of reconciliation, of salvation, or the word of God’s grace, or to believe the gospel, the good tidings of great joy, signify all one and the same thing. For all these Scripture expressions set forth the same matter.

The gospel then is the good pleasure of almighty God in His beloved Son, and it is good news from heaven of salvation to lost sinners, on account of a wonderful work, which the Lord Jesus completed and finished. To this work of Christ, the most High gave testimony and approbation, both by word and deed. Thrice He testified by a voice from heaven, and He gave further proof by raising Him from the dead. The Jews, as hath been said, accused the Lord Jesus of blasphemy for saying that He was the Son of God. For this they judged Him to deserve death by law. For when Pilate declared that he found no fault in Him, the Jews answered, *“We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God,”* John 19:6,7. But the living God soon reversed their sentence, and reproveth their false judgment; and with power declared Him, whom the Jews crucified, to be His beloved Son, when *“he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,”* Ephesians 1:20-22.

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,” Philippians 2:10,11.

By the preaching of the gospel, the joyful news of salvation to perishing sinners is to be made known in all the world by the commandment, and upon the word, the truth and the faith of the everlasting God.

I shall now endeavour to open the import, sense or meaning, of the gospel. To know and understand aright the import of the gospel, is a matter of very great moment, and to misunderstand it, is a matter of very dangerous consequence. Who that profess Christianity, will not be ready to say that they do believe the gospel, and believe that Jesus is the Christ, and also believe in Jesus Christ? Yet the prophet complained, *“Lord, who hath believed our report?”* Isaiah 53:1. And God himself saith, *“Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe though a man declare it unto you,”* Acts 13:41. And the Judge of quick and dead saith, *“Strait is the gate and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it,”* Matthew 7:14. And again, *“He that believeth the gospel, shall be saved,”* Matthew 16:16, and *“He that believeth on him, hath everlasting life,”* John 3:36. It is therefore to be feared that many who think that they believe the gospel, are mistaken, and do not understand the meaning of the gospel.

The Lord Jesus said unto the Pharisees, who were disgusted with Him for eating with publicans and sinners, *“They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,”* Matthew 9:12,13. And upon another occasion, when the people murmured at Him, saying that He *“was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner,”* He said, *“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,”* Luke 19:7,10. And to the Pharisees, who hoped well of themselves on account of their own righteousness, and thought well of themselves on account of their good character in the world, He said, *“That which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God,”* Luke 16:15. St. Paul sayeth that *“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,”* 1 Timothy 1:15. And again that *“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,”* and that He *“made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin”* for sinners that they might *“be made the righteousness of God in him,”* 2 Corinthians 5:19,21. And that Christ is made of God to them that believe, *“wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord,”* 1 Corinthians 1:30,31. And also, what hath been already quoted and explained, *“the righteousness of God is revealed (in the gospel) from the faith (of God) to the faith (of man), as it is written, The just shall live by faith,”* Romans 1:17. St. Peter also saith that precious faith is, *“in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ,”* 2 Peter 1:1.

The prophet Jeremiah calleth the Messiah, *“The Lord our righteousness,”* *“Behold the days come, sayeth the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper; and shall execute justice and judgment in the earth. 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,”* Jeremiah 23:5,6. He also called the church, by the same name, as it is usual for a woman, when she marrieth, to take her husband’s name. *“This is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness,”* Jeremiah 33:16. The prophet Isaiah saith, *“In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”* And, *“In the Lord have they righteousness and strength,”* Isaiah

45:25,24. And the Lord God saith that the righteousness of His people is of Himself, Isaiah 54:17. St. John expoundeth the voice from heaven, *“Hear ye him,”* which he calleth the Father’s commandment, *“That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ,”* 1 John 3:23. Now the name or character of Jesus Christ is, *“The Lord our righteousness,”* who hath executed judgment and justice, who hath fulfilled and satisfied every demand of law and justice. He is also called, *“The just God and the Saviour,”* Isaiah 45:21. *“Who hath finished transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness,”* Daniel 9:24. *“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey (or hear) him,”* Hebrews 5:9. From the above Scriptures it appeareth that to believe in, or on Christ’s name, implieth trusting, confiding or believing in, relying or depending on His righteousness, for salvation.

Man was originally made to live by his own righteousness. By the light of nature, and of his own conscience he knoweth no other way. There is also in every man a very strong natural bias or propensity to be saved thereby. But the truth is, *“There is none righteous, no, not one,”* *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,”* Romans 3:10,23. If anyone could fulfil the whole law of God, he would live thereby. But alas! *“The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh (under the law, working for life, unregenerate and unbelieving) cannot please God,”* Romans 8:7,8. *“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh (neither man nor woman) be justified,”* Romans 3:20.

Whoever then thinketh, believeth or hopeth, to be saved by anything of his own, less or more, or, whoever thinketh or believeth that anything less or more is requisite to obtain the favour of God, to find acceptance, or to make peace with Him, than what Jesus Christ hath done and finished, long ago, (when He *“made peace through the blood of his cross,”* Colossians 1:20), neither believeth nor understandeth the gospel aright. For, the import of the gospel of God, or the truth and testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ, is that God Almighty is well pleased, and fully satisfied, with the work of His beloved Son, that work, which the Father gave Him to do, that work, which the Son said, He had finished, and what He attested with his latest breath (See John 17:4, 19:30). This work was to fulfil all righteousness, both the moral and ceremonial law, to do the whole will of God in everything, and to be obedient even unto death, thereby to make atonement for sin by His own most holy and precious blood. This work of Christ, His most perfect and divine righteousness; His obedience in all things, and even unto death, (for the Father gave commandment to him to lay down his life, and therefore doth the Father love Him. See John 10:17,18) is the whole and alone cause of the salvation of sinners. There needeth no other requisite, neither less nor more, neither little nor great. This alone is complete and all-sufficient. And all of all nations, and of all ranks and stations of men, and of all religions that have been saved from Adam’s fall to this time; and all that ever will be saved from this moment to the end of the world, have been saved, and will be saved, for no other cause or reason, than this work of Jesus Christ, called the righteousness of God, and the blood and righteousness of Christ, and by many writers, the active and passive obedience of Christ, and in plain words, what Christ did and suffered on earth in the flesh. And whoever hath any other ground of hope, confidence, glorying or rejoicing, or, whoever believeth or hopeth to be saved by any other name, or way, or means, than by Jesus Christ and this His work, is in unbelief, and on a false foundation. For, *“There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,”* Acts 4:12. *“For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,”* 1 Corinthians 3:11. For, He alone is, *“The way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by him,”* John 14:6.

The gospel publisheth, declareth, and maketh known, a free and full salvation to men of all nations, and of all sorts, upon believing it. Whoever then thinketh, believeth, or hopeth to be accepted with God, and saved, for or by any of the things above-mentioned, when I spoke of religious faith, or, whoever thinketh and believeth that anything whatsoever must be connected or joined with the work of Jesus Christ, as if what He had done was not sufficient of itself, either doth not believe the gospel at all, or doth not understand the import of the gospel. Whoever thinketh and maintaineth that anything else is necessary, either in point of acceptance, or in point of dependence, than believing God's testimony concerning Christ and His work, and believing in Jesus Christ and His work, either never knew the grace of God in truth, or he perverteth the gospel, and is become corrupt and unsound in the faith.

People may think, and they may say that they believe the gospel, and yet not understand the meaning of it. The Lord Jesus maketh a characteristic of the good-ground hearers, or of true believers, that they understand the word of the kingdom. Many hear it, some in a sense believe it, but the real children of God alone, who are born of God, understand it, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. (See Matthew 13:19,23; Luke 8:15).

When Adam had sinned, he had no ground to hope for mercy, till God gave intimation of a Saviour for sinners. The glorious gospel of the blessed God is the only sure ground of hope for sinners. He that believeth the gospel with understanding, as the truth of God, hath good ground to hope for eternal life. But he that believeth in, or trusteth in anything else, maketh lies his refuge, and his hope is the hope of the hypocrite, that will perish.

When the gospel was first preached, the infidel Jews bitterly opposed it, maintaining that the works of the law were sufficient for salvation. Many judaizing Christians allowed the necessity of faith in Christ, but they also thought and taught that it was necessary to be circumcised and to keep the law, thinking thereby to mend the matter. And indeed their doctrine gave less offence; and appeared more reasonable, as it is also more agreeable to the nature of man, to do something towards his own salvation, than to be saved absolutely by grace. It is common enough to hear many, called Christians, nowadays maintain that we must do what we can, and Christ must make up. Few indeed that make any pretence to Christianity, will downright maintain in express words that the work of Christ was no way at all necessary to procure the favour of God, or contributed nothing towards the salvation of sinners. Yet the generality seem to lay very little stress upon it; some next to none at all, if any at all, they lay the greatest stress upon something else. And even those, who lay some stress upon it, more or less, connect something else with it, whereon they also lay some stress, more or less. So that they do not believe that God is well and fully pleased with the work of Christ, as alone sufficient for salvation without anything else at all, but that God is placable, or willing to come to terms with them, upon condition that they themselves first perform those other things, which they think requisite and necessary, either in whole or in part, as preliminaries to make peace with God. So that most men, even in Christendom, are still hoping to be saved more or less, either in whole or in part, by some or other of the things above-mentioned, and that, as hath before been shown, is their faith, and not the gospel of God. All such doctrine the apostle Paul vehemently opposeth, and maintaineth that such, as are for being saved by doing at all, are under obligation to keep the whole law, and such as connect anything at all with the work of Christ, in point of acceptance, or of justification, pervert the gospel, and frustrate the grace of God; the free, full, absolute, unconditional, sovereign grace of God, given to sinners in Christ Jesus upon believing in Him, "*For the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth,*" Romans 1:16. This

appears sufficiently plain from St. Paul's writings, particularly the epistles to the Romans and Galatians.

If any should object, and say that the Lord Jesus and the apostles connected repentance with faith and remission of sins, I allow it. Repentance and faith are duties required by the gospel, because God commandeth all men everywhere to repent, and to believe the gospel. (See Acts 17:30; Mark 1:15; Romans 16:26). It is man's duty to do whatever God commandeth. Repentance to life is the change made upon the mind by the gospel when a man is turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. His eyes being opened, or his understanding being enlightened by the gospel, he ceases to work for acceptance, he turns, (contrary to his natural propensity, which is to establish and live by his own righteousness) to God, believing that He is well pleased in His beloved Son. He denieth himself, he renounceth his self-righteousness, he is ashamed of it, he believeth in Jesus Christ and His divine righteousness. Then he can say of his own righteousness, by which he had thought to get to heaven that he counteth it loss for Christ. This repentance, as well as faith, is the gift of God, Acts 5:31. And they are both given at the same time. Thus much as to the gospel, and what it importeth.

II. Secondly, I shall now in the next place, endeavour to set forth what the faith of the gospel is, and also what assurance of faith meaneth. Now the faith, belief, or believing of the gospel, is a persuasion of mind that the gospel is true, yea, the very truth of God. It is the believing of God's faithful testimony concerning His Son Jesus Christ, and upon God's authority and at God's command believing in Jesus Christ and His righteousness. The assurance of faith is a firm, full, assured persuasion or conviction of mind of the truth of the gospel. It is believing without doubting, staggering or wavering. It is being fully satisfied in the mind of the truth of the gospel.

It hath been already before said that to believe anything is to be persuaded or convinced in the mind, that that thing is true, and that no-one can rationally believe anything without some proof or evidence for it. And no wise man can believe a thing with satisfaction of mind, unless he knoweth and understandeth the matter, and hath good proof for it. If a person believeth the gospel upon the testimony of man, his faith is human faith, but if a person believeth the gospel upon the testimony of God, his faith is divine faith. Some are weak, others are strong in the faith. But all that believeth the gospel unfeignedly, are equally justified, whether their faith be strong or weak. "*All that believe are justified from all things through Jesus Christ,*" Acts 13:39. "*Him that is weak in the faith, receive,*" Romans 14:1.

Some modern divines have defined faith to be *a confidence that Christ loved me and gave himself for me*. But this is not a true definition of faith. This is not the faith of the gospel, though it hath passed current for it with many for a long time. It hath been a prevailing, though not universal opinion, yet nevertheless it is a mistake. It must indeed be granted that if a person can say that Christ hath loved him and given Himself for him, upon as good ground as the apostle Paul said it of himself that he is a true believer. Yet it is presumed that many believe the gospel and will be saved, who neither can in truth, nor dare say with the apostle, "*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me,*" Galatians 2:20. The apostle is here speaking of his conformity to Christ, of his living to Christ, or obeying Him out of love, and of his

living by Christ, or by believing in Him (not living barely by his own believing, but by what he believed of the Son of God, which presupposeth his believing the gospel), and then he asserteth, what implieth the knowledge of his own personal interest in Christ that Christ loved him, and lived and died for him. I hope by and by to make it clearly appear from Scripture that no-one hath the assurance of his eternal salvation upon his first believing the gospel, or can have it, till his faith hath wrought some time, more or less, by love. It will be granted that no-one can be assured that he can be eternally saved, without any possibility of falling away, but by the sealing, witness or testimony of the Holy Ghost. But that no-one is sealed by the Spirit upon his first believing the gospel, is proved by this scripture, "*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 the Holy Spirit of promise,*" Ephesians 1:13. The knowledge of a personal interest in Christ belongeth to the assurance of hope, which hath frequently been called *faith of assurance*. There is, "*the full assurance of the understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God,*" Colossians 2:2. And, "*Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance,*" 1 Thessalonians 1:5. And, "*Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,*" (which meaneth full assurance of the truth of the gospel, what we believe, and believe in), Hebrews 10:22. And there is, "*The effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever,*" Isaiah 32:17. And, "*The full assurance of hope unto the end,*" Hebrews 6:11, which meaneth an absolute certainty of being eternally saved for ever without any possibility of falling away. But the above definition of faith, and faith of assurance, are unscriptural. And the mistake hath arisen hence, that the faith of the gospel and the hope of the gospel have been confounded together, as if they both were but one and the same thing. But though faith, hope and charity, be nearly related, like three twins, who are born at the same time, but in order one after another. Yet nevertheless they are distinct from one another. Faith is neither hope nor charity. Hope is neither charity nor faith. Charity is neither faith nor hope. He that hath the faith of the gospel, hath also the hope of the gospel in some measure, more or less, and also charity. Yet as there is a difference in degrees between faith, and full assurance of faith, or between weak faith and strong faith, so there is also a great difference in degrees between hope, and the full assurance of hope. A person may be fully assured, thoroughly satisfied in his mind that the gospel is the truth of God, and he may have hope, a good hope that he may be saved, although he hath neither confidence nor full assurance that he shall most certainly be saved to all eternity. Confidence implieth a pretty strong hope, a good degree thereof, although sort of full assurance. In the above definition of faith, a good degree of the assurance of salvation, *a confidence that Christ loved me*, is made the very essence of the faith of the gospel. It supposeth that a person must be justified, and sealed by the Spirit, and know, and believe his personal interest in Christ, before he believeth the gospel. According to this opinion, a person must first be sealed by the Holy Ghost, and know that his sins are forgiven, and then afterwards he must believe the gospel, when he is already justified before, and hath a good degree of assurance of hope. This is directly contradictory to the doctrine of the holy Scriptures, "*after that ye have believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.*" For the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of adoption, sealing the children of God, is promised (and therefore called the Holy Spirit of promise) to those, being already believers, who abide in Christ and obey him out of love. And the absurdity of the above opinion will further appear, when it is considered that it maketh the hope of the gospel to be the ground of the faith of the gospel, it maketh faith to stand upon hope, contrary to the words of the Holy Ghost in my text, where hope is made to stand upon faith. "*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for.*" Though faith, hope and charity take place in the soul at the same time, yet faith is first in order; it is the foundation and support of hope. Therefore a man must believe the gospel, and so have the faith of the gospel, before he hath the hope of the gospel.

The apostle Paul saith of believing Abraham that *“he was strong in faith.”* And he explaineth what he meant thereby, adding, *“being fully persuaded,”* Romans 4:19-21. Abraham’s strength of faith, or assurance of faith, was a full persuasion of mind that God would perform His promise to him. When the Lord Jesus once asked His disciples what people said of Him, and whom they thought He was, Peter made a confession of his faith, saying, *“Thou art Christ the Son of the living God,”* Matthew 16:16. Whereupon his Lord pronounced him blessed, testifying that God had revealed that truth unto him. On another occasion, when the Lord Jesus had said much of Himself and of believing on Him, calling it eating His flesh and drinking His blood, and many were offended at His discourse, not knowing who He was, nor understanding what He meant, Peter declared both his faith and the assurance thereof, in these words, *“We believe and are sure, that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,”* John 6:69. St. Luke speaking of the assurance of the faith or belief of the gospel, amongst the first followers of Christ, expresseth it in these words, *“Those things which are most surely believed amongst us,”* Luke 1:1.

Therefore the faith of the gospel, precious faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, is a belief, and the full assurance of it, is a strong belief, or a full and firm persuasion of mind wrought by the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost that the gospel is the truth of God, and that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and the Saviour of sinners, and that His divine righteousness, or His active and passive obedience, is the whole and sole cause of salvation. Thus the believer credits the testimony of God concerning Christ, and he trusteth, confideth, or believeth in, relieth or dependeth on the righteousness of God, the most perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, so that it becometh his faith, or what he hopeth to be saved by. Thus much as to what the faith of the gospel is, and also what assurance of faith meaneth.

III. Thirdly, I shall now proceed in the third place to set forth the necessity of faith, or of believing the gospel. To believe the gospel is the commandment of the everlasting God, on which eternal life hangeth. The Father’s commandment is, *“Hear ye him,”* Matthew 17:5. And St. John saith, *“This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ,”* 1 John 3:23. St. Paul saith, *“The gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ, the revelation of the mystery, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith (or of believing it),”* Romans 16:25,26. The Lord Jesus saith, *“I know that his commandment is life everlasting,”* John 12:50. Therefore He commandeth His apostles, saying, *“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,”* Mark 16:15,16. The gospel is the truth, the faithful word of God, who cannot lie. God’s commandment to believe the gospel requireth persons to believe nothing but what is the truth. The gospel is the same precious truth, whether persons believe it, or not. But the gospel becometh no person’s faith before he believeth it. The gospel reporteth, or maketh known, a truth of God to be obeyed. But how can a truth be obeyed any other way than by being believed? The gospel setteth forth God’s way of saving sinners, and the only way, whereby a sinner can be saved. The gospel publisheth good news to sinners. To believe the gospel is necessary to receive the joy, comfort and satisfaction of this good news. If a man heareth good news, and doth not believe it, he receiveth no joy or pleasure thereby, he is no better for it; but if he believeth it, he hath the joy of it.

The Lord Jesus said of Himself, *“I am the bread of life. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.”* And *“Except a man eat my flesh and drink my blood, he hath no life in him. But whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and dwelleth in me. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed,”* See John 6:48-59. By His flesh and blood He meant His active and passive obedience, the work, which He wrought on earth and finished on the cross. By eating His flesh and drinking His blood, He meant believing on Him, trusting and confiding in His obedience and blood, and so living thereby, the Father being well pleased in Him and in His work, His obedience unto death. For when the Jews asked Him, what work they might do to please God, He answered, *“This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent,”* John 6:29, that is, to work the work wherewith He is pleased. It appeareth from the Jews’ reply that they understood that He spoke to them of believing on Him, on account of some work which He was to work. For they said unto Him, *“What sign shewest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work?”* John 6:30. But they did not know who He was, nor understand what He said, nor what He was to work, they did not believe that He was the Lord Christ come down from heaven to give life to lost sinners. Yet He told them over and over again that everyone that believed on Him should have everlasting life.

To believe the gospel, or to believe on Jesus Christ, is as necessary to salvation, as eating and drinking is necessary to preserve the natural life. Yet it is not eating and drinking, but food, meat and drink, what we eat and drink that feedeth and nourisheth the body. But eating and drinking is the way, whereby we receive food. A person cannot have the benefit of meat and drink, unless he eateth and drinketh it. This illustrateth the necessity of believing. As a man by eating and drinking receiveth the food into his stomach, whereby he liveth naturally, so a man by believing the gospel receiveth Christ and His righteousness into his heart, whereby he liveth spiritually: thus he feedeth on Christ in his heart, or inner man, by faith, or by believing on Him. *“He that eateth me,”* saith Jesus, *“even he shall live by me,”* John 6:57. It is not believing the gospel that saveth sinners, but the Lord Jesus Christ, by what He hath done and suffered, saveth them; there is no other Saviour. Now this truth is reported by the gospel to be believed. But no-one can have the benefit of it, without believing it. If a man should be at the most plentiful table, and eat nothing, what is he benefited thereby? He only enjoyeth what he himself eateth and drinketh. Even so, he only receiveth benefit by the gospel, who believeth it; he only liveth by Christ, who believeth on Him. Yet none are justified or saved for believing, (or for acting faith, or for putting forth acts of faith of any kind, or for any efforts or endeavours to believe, or for the truth or sincerity of faith, as many writers have expressed themselves). But all that ever have been saved, and all that ever shall be saved, have been saved, and will be saved through Jesus Christ and what He hath done and suffered. The active and passive obedience of Christ is the whole and alone cause of salvation. Sinners are pardoned on account of the atonement made by the blood of Christ. They are redeemed from the curse of the law, from the wrath, or vindictive justice of almighty God, and from eternal damnation the punishment due to their sin, by the blood of Christ, and in this respect they are justified only by His blood, but they are constituted or made righteous, by His obedience; whereby they are entitled to eternal life. And the whole righteousness of Christ, both His active and passive obedience, is given or imputed to them upon believing, or when they believe the gospel.

What hath been said of the necessity of faith will hold equally true for the necessity of repentance. A man must repent, and believe the gospel, otherwise he cannot be saved. So long as a man thinketh, believeth and hopeth to be saved by his own righteousness, so long as he is working for life, endeavouring to establish his own righteousness and to live thereby, he can receive no benefit from Christ. He must repent, change his mind, cease from his own works for acceptance with God,

he must turn from his self-righteousness, and believe in Christ, before he is justified, *“for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified,”* Galatians 2:16. And, *“As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse,”* Galatians 3:10. Thus much as to the necessity of faith and repentance.

IV. Fourthly. I shall now endeavour to set forth, how men obtain the faith of the gospel. And indeed God, who of His sovereign free grace gave Christ to redeem sinners, of the same grace giveth to each of them, whom He saveth, to believe on Him. *“Unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe on him,”* Philippians 1:29. *“For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast,”* Ephesians 2:8,9. Man was originally made to live by his own righteousness, and by nature he knoweth no other way. He hath some knowledge of God, as a just God, so that he thinketh, if I am good, God will love me; but if I am wicked, He will hate and destroy me. But the knowledge of God as a Saviour cometh by revelation. Had there been no sin, there would have been no occasion for mercy. Sin, which is the cause and origin of all evil, gave occasion to manifest the mercy of God. There is no enquiry of equal importance to man, as to know how to obtain God’s favour and be saved. Yet the light of nature cannot furnish the answer. Man by nature cannot but think of doing something, or suffering something, or that some change or alteration must be made in him, to difference him from others, in order to obtain mercy. But if a man hath got a good conceit of himself, (and who hateth himself? For nothing is nearer and dearer to any of us naturally than one’s own dear self), and can believe that he is good and righteous, then he hopeth that God will save him. But to think and heartily believe that the righteous and holy God can and will justify and save wicked, ungodly, and hell-deserving sinners, as such, without their doing something first, or being some way fitted, qualified, changed or prepared to entitle them to it, is above the power of nature. It goeth against the common sense and natural understanding of man. Hence it cometh that all persons are for being saved by doing something, and all without exception are inclined to establish their own righteousness, or to be saved by their own works, or goodness, or something of their own, either doing or suffering. But the gospel published, declareth or maketh known a free, full, and complete salvation to sinners, as such, upon believing it, without requiring any fitness, meetness, preparation, or qualification to deserve it. *“Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man (Jesus Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things,”* Acts 13:38,39. And, *“To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,”* Romans 4:5. *“Ho! Everyone 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,”* Isaiah 55:1. For Jesus Christ *“receiveth sinners and eateth with them,”* Luke 15:2. Now to believe this, so as to be comforted and live thereby, is above the power of nature, till it be revealed.

When Simon Peter made a confession of his faith, the Lord Jesus told him that flesh and blood had not revealed it unto him, but God Almighty. And He told the Jews in His discourse, John 6, when He talked to them of believing on Him, calling it, eating His flesh and drinking His blood, that no man could come to Him, or believe on Him, unless it was given to him of God. *“No man can come unto me, except the Father draw him.”* And He explaineth what He meant by the Father’s drawing, *“It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God,”* John 6:44,45. Isaiah saith, *“And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord,”* Isaiah 54:13. And Jeremiah saith, *“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall*

all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord,” Jeremiah 31:34. One man may teach another any natural thing, which he himself understandeth, and the other hath a capacity to learn. One man may teach another Latin, Greek or Hebrew, arts and sciences, trade or business. One man may teach another to make a confession of faith, as children are taught to say a catechism. But no man in all the world can teach another to know the Lord, the just God and the Saviour. For, *“No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost,”* 1 Corinthians 12:3. The faith of the gospel doth not stand on the teaching or wisdom of man, but in the power of the Holy Ghost. *“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance,”* 1 Thessalonians 1:5. The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of faith, He teacheth, He persuadeth sinners to believe the gospel. And how He effectuateth it, the apostle Paul setteth forth in these words, *“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 (or person) of Jesus Christ,”* 2 Corinthians 4:6. The Holy Ghost revealeth Jesus Christ, He maketh known His name, the just God and the Saviour, the Lord our righteousness. He giveth to sinners to feel and experience in their hearts the divine complacence, the good pleasure of God in Jesus Christ and in His consummate righteousness. The sinners now believing on Jesus Christ, and trusting and confiding in His precious blood and perfect obedience, as sufficient for salvation, have the peace of God in their consciences, divine joy in their hearts, and find rest unto their souls. They now believe the gospel and receive it, *“not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe,”* 1 Thessalonians 2:13. The Holy Ghost demonstrateth the truth of the gospel, not in such a way as a philosopher proveth a proposition by a chain of arguments, but by light and power He maketh manifest the truth thereof, so that a condemned sinner can conceive and believe (what is above the power of nature to do) that the righteous and holy God can justify the ungodly consistently with His own divine attributes. To illustrate this teaching or demonstration of the Holy Ghost by what a natural man may comprehend: Supposing a man should be born blind and continue so for forty years; supposing he had extraordinary natural parts and the very best education he was capable of, and that he heard much discourse about light and its beauties and properties, and the difference of colours, he might indeed, and he would, form to himself some sort of conceptions about those things, but having no just ideas thereof, his conceptions would be as wide from the truth as his were who thought that scarlet colour was like the sound of a trumpet. But if it should please God to give sight to such a blind man, then at once to his great surprise he would know and understand the beauties of light and the difference of colours, though he might not know by what names to distinguish and call them. Then also he would soon see and perceive, what strange and false conceptions he formerly had about those things. What a man seeth with his own eyes, and what he heareth with his own ears, he believeth. His seeing and hearing is his evidence, and proof sufficient to himself. And thus the teaching and demonstration, the light and power of the Holy Ghost is to a true believer the evidence of things not seen. The written word of God, the holy Scripture, is also another evidence to him; and his ear is now opened to hear it, and his understanding is enlightened to comprehend it. He knoweth now and believeth that Jesus is the Christ, the beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased, a sufficient Saviour for a lost and condemned sinner. He knoweth now that Jesus Christ is the image, the glory of the invisible Jehovah, God manifest in the flesh, the true God and eternal life. This is the knowledge of the Lord that giveth the essence to the precious faith of the everlasting gospel. As eyes are the cause of seeing, as ears are the cause of hearing, so the knowledge of Christ is the cause of believing the gospel. The essence therefore of the faith of God’s elect is the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, and this knowledge of the only true God, which is eternal life, cometh by divine revelation, by the teaching and demonstration of the Holy Ghost, who maketh sinners, whom he quickeneth or regenerateth, although dead in trespasses and sins, to hear the voice of God, and to know and

understand and believe the faithful word of the gospel of God. The Lord Jesus told His apostles that the Holy Ghost should testify of Him; and that they also should bear witness. *“When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning,”* John 15:26,27. The Holy Ghost will testify of Christ to the end of the world, so also will the apostles by their writings. The faith of the gospel standeth upon a twofold evidence, the witness or testimony of the Holy Ghost, and the witness or testimony of the apostles in their writings, the written word of the holy Scriptures. And thus, *“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,”* Romans 10:17. So that the word of God witnessed by the Spirit of God is the ground of faith in man, or the testimony and authority, upon which man believeth the gospel. And those who have the faith of the gospel, have not obtained it by their own labour, pains, efforts or endeavours, or by any acts exerted by their own minds, but it hath been freely given to them from above by Him, who of His own will begetteth His people with the word of truth, James 1:17,18. So that it is as easy to believe the gospel, when Christ is revealed to any person, as it is to see, or hear, when a man hath eyes and ears. Without evidence a man cannot rationally believe anything; but when he knoweth and understandeth a matter, and hath full, clear and satisfactory proof or evidence for it, he cannot but believe it. Must not a man believe what he seeth with his own eyes, and heareth with his own ears? And, *“If we receive the witness (or testimony) of men, the witness (or testimony) of God is greater. For this is the witness (or testimony) of God, which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness (or testimony) in himself,”* 1 John 5:9,10.

It may be noticed that I have said nothing of a law-work, which some writers say is preparatory to the gospel. Neither have I spoken of conviction of sin, which some writers insist so much upon, as absolutely necessary to fit and prepare souls for coming to Christ, laying down so many steps, and giving so many marks thereof, whether it be of the right kind, in order that persons may try and examine thereby, whether their conversion be genuine or not. I shall here deliver my opinion on these two points.

It is the duty of all men to keep the holy law of God. The obligation of the moral law is eternal. The gospel in no wise maketh void this law, but establisheth it. It hath been a fatal mistake to some, who have thought that believers were under no obligation to the moral law. Hence they have been led to think that God seeth no sin in His own people, or at least that sin was less displeasing to God in His own people, than in others. This indeed is strange doctrine. Is not God essentially holy? Is He not at all times utterly averse to all sin? Is He not of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? Is it not the duty of every creature to obey Him, who is sovereign Lord of all? If persons can bring themselves to think and believe that there is no law, no duty, and that God maketh no account of sin, as if it was a mere trifle in His sight; it will be no wonder if they soon turn Ranters, and run into all manner of wickedness. This is rank Antinomianism, and Libertinism. It is poison to the soul. And when persons begin to think and say that they need not, or do not like, to do a thing, because God hath commanded it; unless they feel a willingness in themselves at that time to do it, it betrays that there is a root of this bitterness springing up in their hearts. It manifesteth that they make their own will the motive of their obedience, instead of the revealed will of God. So they give way to self-indulgence, when they should practise self-denial, and the end of it will be trouble and sorrow.

I conceive that every transgression of the holy law of God deserveth damnation in believers, as well as in others, and that all believers are under obligation to Christ, to observe the moral law. I also conceive that all conviction of sin (unbelief excepted) is by the law, *“For by the law is knowledge of*

sin,” Romans 3:20. And St. Paul saith of himself, *“I had not known sin, but by the law,”* Romans 7:7. I conceive also that all whom God saveth, are convinced that they are sinners. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. And He saith, *“They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick,”* and, *“I came not to call the righteous (for there are none such in their natural state, though some may fancy themselves such), but sinners to repentance,”* Luke 5:31,32. And again He saith, *“When he (the Holy Ghost) is come, he will reprove (or convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment,”* John 16:8.

It may be matter of fact that many persons whom God saveth afterwards in the end, may go under the law for years, and work hard to establish their own righteousness, before they are converted and brought into the new covenant, as was the case of the apostle Paul. Yet they are not thereby qualified or made meet to receive grace, or entitled to it. Their own worth, or work, is not in any wise the cause of the grace afterwards given to them. For, *“It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God that sheweth mercy,”* Romans 9:16. Grace is sovereign and free, and only given in Jesus Christ. Positive, and peremptory, and awful indeed, is the declaration of Almighty God to Moses (*“that no flesh should glory in his presence,”* 1 Corinthians 1:29), *“I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy,”* Exodus 33:19; See also Romans 9:15.

It is man’s duty to keep the law upon pain of eternal damnation. And if he could, and actually did, keep the law, he would live thereby. Man’s sin deserveth damnation; but his own works, which are his bounden duty to do, do not deserve the grace of God given in Jesus Christ. And if any sinful man thinketh, believeth, and hopeth to be saved by his own works, he is thereby carried further from Christ. The more self-righteous anyone is, so much the more is his heart shut up against Christ. For self-righteousness is the root and strength of unbelief. A man that is working to establish his own righteousness (and it is natural for every man so to do) may be often convinced that he falleth short of his duty, and he may be dejected and cast down upon that account, he may be pained and distressed, but by and by he hopeth that he shall do better. Therefore he girdeth himself again; and again he is broken. (Isaiah 8:9 and 9:10). And so he may work on, and be convinced an hundred times over that he falleth short; and he may be distressed, yea, much distressed for it. This is law-work, and such are legal convictions. But all this doth not entitle anyone to mercy. And whatever distress, or plague, or misery, or exercise of soul anyone may thus undergo, yet he doth not for all that deserve God’s grace. I presume it will be granted that one that hath been tormented a thousand years in hell-fire, hath suffered more pain, and plague, and misery, and distress, and anguish of soul, than anyone on earth ever endured under convictions. But doth that fit, prepare, qualify, or entitle to mercy, or deserve God’s grace? If it did, those in hell, are surely best prepared and most deserving of God’s grace. But who believeth so? Some writers and preachers make too much of convictions, and speak of them in such a manner, as to teach people to lay stress upon them, and in part, not only to make a foundation of them, but also to live by them. This is legal doctrine, and derogatory to the sovereign grace of God, the grace freely given to worthless and hell-deserving sinners in Jesus Christ, and for His work’s sake only.

There are but two covenants, the Law and the Gospel; commonly called the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace; but in scripture, *“The law of works, and the law of faith,”* *“The law and grace,”* *“The law, and the promise,”* (See Romans 3:27; Romans 6:15; Galatians 3:18). All men by nature are under the law of works. This law requireth perfect obedience, denounceth curse and death upon every transgressor thereof, and sheweth no mercy. *“The man that doeth them, shall live in them,”* Galatians 3:12. *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die,”* Ezekiel 18:4. *“And cursed is everyone*

that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,” Galatians 3:10. This is the tenor of the law. Who can stand a trial by this holy, strict and dreadful law? A law, which indeed promiseth life to the doer thereof, but sheweth no mercy to the transgressor thereof. “By this law must every mouth be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God,” Romans 3:19.

But the gospel, the glorious gospel of the blessed God, the new covenant in Christ’s blood, the bond of peace between God and sinners, publisheth glad tidings of good; it proclaimeth peace on earth and good will towards men, grace, free grace, saving grace to lost sinners. It declareth a free and full salvation to sinners of all sorts as such upon believing it. And though the gospel be delivered under the notion of a law, and is called the law of faith, Romans 3:27, it being the commandment of the everlasting God to men to believe it, yet the gospel, the new covenant in Christ’s blood, standeth upon free, sovereign, absolute and unconditional promises, as appeareth from the following passages of holy Scripture, *“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt (which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord), but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people, and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more,”* Jeremiah 31:31-34. *“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. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever,”* Jeremiah 32:39,40. *“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you, be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel,”* Ezekiel 36:25-27,31,32. By the clean water and cleansing is meant, as I conceive, what St. Paul calleth the washing of regeneration, and by the new heart and new spirit and the heart of flesh, is meant, what he calleth the renewing of the Holy Ghost, creating the soul anew unto good works, writing the law within, sanctifying, and making it willing to obey out of love. The shame and self-loathing is the effect of gospel repentance unto life, when a sinner in God’s light seeth how it is with him, his self-righteousness becometh an abomination to him. And observe well, God alone doth the whole work Himself, not for their sakes, neither for their worth, nor works. See also Hebrews 8:8 and 10:16,17.

Now that I may with yet more precision set forth how men obtain the faith of the gospel, I shall endeavour to show how God bringeth them from under the law or covenant of works into the everlasting covenant, or into grace. All men are either under the law, or under grace. *“He that believeth not, is condemned already,”* John 3:18, as a transgressor of the law, being under it as a law or covenant of works. *“He that believeth the gospel hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life,”* John 5:24, being under the new covenant. There is no medium between death and life. Everyone is either a dead man in law, being under sentence of

condemnation by the law, or he is passed from death unto life, having obtained grace. To effectuate this momentous matter is the work of Omnipotence, and what the law of works cannot do. The law cannot give life, *“For if there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law,”* Galatians 3:21. The law is the ministration of condemnation and of death. The gospel is the ministration of the Spirit and of righteousness, of peace and life. (See 2 Corinthians 3:6-11). This therefore is a work of God’s sovereign and saving grace. *“But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,”* John 1:17. When God saveth a sinner, it is by the living agency of the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life. *“It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing,”* John 6:63. No man can apprehend Christ, till he is first apprehended by Christ. No man can come to Christ, till the Spirit of Christ comes to him, and draws him. No man can receive Christ, or believe on Him, till it be given unto him, John 6:44,65. All therefore, who are brought into the new covenant in Christ’s blood, are apprehended by the Holy Spirit, being dead in trespasses and sins, lying in their blood under the law. *“You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins,”* (See Ephesians 2:1-10; Ezekiel 16:6-15).

How far or how much the Holy Spirit may bless, or assist devout people working under the law, by awakening their consciences, enlightening their understandings, giving them to taste the good word of God, making impressions upon them, or filling them with joy, is not my point at present. However, a man may be called and much affected by preaching, who is not called of God. Yea, a man may be enlightened, who will not be saved. *“Many are called, but few are chosen,”* Matthew 22:14. Many are almost Christians that are not altogether such. Many partake of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, in whom He doth not dwell and abide for ever. John 14:16,17; Hebrews 6:4,6. The union between Christ and His body the church is made and maintained by the Holy Ghost. *“For by one Spirit are they all baptized into one body, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, and are all made to drink into one Spirit,”* 1 Corinthians 12:13. Christ is in His people and they are in Him by His Spirit. *“Now if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,”* Romans 8:9. The Spirit, who dwelleth in Christ without measure, is communicated from Christ to every member of His body the church. Hereby they become living members of Jesus Christ, flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bones, Ephesians 5:30. These are the generation of the Lord, these are Christ’s seed, who will serve Him; these will declare His righteousness, Psalm 22:30,31. These receive Christ and *“believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,”* John 1:12,13. And, *“Except a man be born again (or from above) he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” “Ye must be born again (or from above),”* said the Lord Jesus most solemnly, John 3:3,5,7.

Now the work of regeneration, this great and wonderful work of God, is absolutely and entirely the work of the Holy Ghost by the word of truth. This is the work of God, whereby a dead and condemned sinner is quickened, or made alive to God. *“His eyes are opened; he is turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that he may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Jesus Christ,”* Acts 26:18. *“He is delivered from the power of darkness (of sin and Satan) and is translated into the kingdom (the holy church) of God’s dear Son, in whom he hath redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, and is made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light,”* Colossians 1:12-14. This work, called regeneration, the new birth, God’s calling, quickening, begetting, apprehending, conversion, the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, being born again or from above, born of water and the spirit, born of the Spirit, born of God, the new creation, cometh not by the will of man, but by the will of God. *“It is not of him that willeth,*

nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy,” Romans 9:16. It cometh not with observation, but in a way and manner, and at a time unexpected, according to the purpose of the most High, *“who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,”* Ephesians 1:11. The first effect of this gracious and saving work is that the person in whom it is wrought, heareth the voice of God, not in words, but in spirit and in power, which effect in Scripture words is thus expressed: *“Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,”* Ephesians 5:14. And this is done at once, and may be illustrated by our Lord’s raising Lazarus from the dead. Jesus cried with a loud voice, *“Lazarus, come forth.”* At His word, Lazarus, although dead, and buried, and bound hand and foot and face, came forth. So God quickeneth souls spiritually dead. The man is astonished, perhaps trembleth, not knowing how he is, or what is the matter with him. But in God’s light he seeth light. He seeth the spirituality of God’s holy law, and now believeth the truth of it. *“The soul that sinneth shall die.”* But he seeth and feeleth himself a miserable guilty sinner. Therefore he standeth self-condemned and confounded. His mouth is stopped, he pleadeth guilty before God, he is conscious that in strict justice he deserveth to be damned. The language of his heart is, *“God be merciful to me a sinner.”* *“O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”* *“What must I do to be saved?”* He is now humbled in the dust, broken in heart, and at once effectually cut off from all confidence in the flesh, from all trusting in his own righteousness, works or worth, or anything of his own. Now God layeth judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail sweeps away the refuge of lies, and the waters overflow the hiding place, as Isaiah expresseth it, Isaiah 28:17. Now the Lord pleadeth with him by fire, and by His sword (by His Spirit and by His word), Isaiah 66:16. The man is now pricked to the heart and wounded in spirit, *“But a wounded spirit, who can bear,”* Proverbs 18:14.¹

In this situation no-one could endure long, the soul would faint. But God saith, *“I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, for (then) the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. I will heal him, I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners,”* Isaiah 57:16,18. And again, *“As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord,”* Isaiah 66:8,9. Therefore according to the above promise and declaration of the most High, the next and immediate effect of the washing of regeneration is that Christ is revealed or made known in the gospel by the Holy Ghost. Upon the knowledge of Christ the man repenteth and believeth the gospel, and is converted and created anew, or becometh a new creature. Now the new heart and the new spirit, the renewing of the Holy Ghost, take place, and the holy law of God, the moral law, is written in the heart. Upon believing in Christ the man becometh happy, now he cometh to Christ and receiveth him heartily, and the hope of eternal life springeth up within him, and he also hath charity. He feeleth love to Jesus Christ (Oh, Christ is precious to him!), love to the people of Christ, affectionate love to them, and also love of good will to all men. This manifesteth that the law is written in his heart, for love to God and love to man is the fulfilling of the law. Upon believing in Christ the man is justified, a heartfelt sense of reconciliation with God is experienced, the guilty conscience is relieved, the peace of God taketh place therein,² and the man findeth rest unto his soul in the Lord Jesus.

So that at once, as soon as he is taught of God to know the Lord, he repenteth and believeth the gospel, he is convinced of sin (of unbelief), and of righteousness, and of judgment, he hath faith, hope and charity, the law is written in his heart, his sins are forgiven. He is made willing (being thus delivered out of the hands of his enemies by God’s almighty power) *“To serve the Lord without fear, in righteousness and holiness before him all the days of his life,”* Luke 1:74,75. For he is sanctified. And all these great things are wrought in the soul at the same time, but in order, the knowledge of Christ is before faith, and faith is before justification and hope.

Now it cannot be said of any one of the above particulars that it is regeneration, or the new birth; but the whole is the blessed fruit or effect of what St. Paul calleth, "*The washing of water by the word,*" Ephesians 5:26. And, "*The washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, whom God sheddeth abundantly according to his mercy on those whom he saveth through Jesus Christ their Saviour. That being justified by his grace they should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life,*" Titus 3:5-7. The man is now born of God, "*for whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God,*" 1 John 5:1. He is now a child of God, "*All that believe in Christ Jesus are the children of God,*" Galatians 3:26.

Some persons are enlightened, and carried on for a while by very sweet allurements, and experience a great deal of joy and comfort, and afterwards are brought to see themselves to be lost sinners, and to know the Lord, and to believe in Him, and are cut off from all confidence in the flesh, or in their own worth or works, without undergoing such travail of soul as others may experience in their conversion. Perhaps such as have been the most self-righteous may undergo the deepest distress. But in divers manners, God bringeth the blind by a way they know not; He openeth their eyes, "*He maketh darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things,*" saith he, "*will I do unto them, and not forsake them,*" Isaiah 42:16. Thus God bringeth sinners into the new covenant in Christ's blood, which is an everlasting covenant of peace, and what He requireth of them by way of law and commandment, He himself worketh in them, to their joy and comfort and everlasting salvation, according to His own exceeding great and precious promises to His people aforesaid.

It may be remarked in the memorable passage in Jeremiah 31, where God promiseth to teach His people to know the Lord, it followeth, "*for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more,*" which implieth their justification, yet there is no mention of faith. But it hath been noticed before that by a metonymy the cause is put for the effect. So in this place, the knowledge of Christ, the cause of faith, implieth that God will give them to believe on the name of the Son of God. A parallel passage of scripture occurs in Isaiah 53:11, "*By his knowledge (by giving the knowledge of himself) shall my righteous servant (Jesus Christ) justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.*"

When Saul the persecutor of the Christian church was converted, he little expected it, and he was in a very unlikely way for it, for he was yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. But Jesus called to him, "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*" He was then quickened and heard the voice of God, but he knew not who it was that spoke to him; therefore he said, "*Who art thou, Lord?*" The Lord said, "*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*" Saul, trembling and astonished, said, "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*" At once, he was made willing, being converted, and from that time forward he followed Christ, and preached the faith which before he destroyed, Acts 9. The jailer was called of God in the earthquake, but he did not know what was the matter with him. But presently he ran trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" And they said, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*" By their preaching of the gospel unto him, Christ was made known to him, and he rejoiced believing in God, Acts 16. When the Lord of glory was crucified, one of the two thieves, who at that time were justly put to death for their crimes, was called on the cross, brought to the knowledge of Christ, and saved as a brand snatched out of the fire. The three thousand, who were converted on the day of Pentecost, were pricked in their heart under Peter's preaching, and said, "*What shall we do?*" And soon after they gladly received the word, or believed the gospel, and were baptized, and the same day were added to the church, Acts 2. Thus I have endeavoured to set

forth, and to illustrate, how men obtain the faith of the gospel. “*Yet there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all,*” 1 Corinthians 12:6.

¹This I conceive is the preparation of the heart in man, which is, “*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts,*” Zechariah 4:6. For, “*No man hath quickened his own soul,*” Psalm 22:29, Ephesians 2:1. This perhaps may be what many writers have called a law-work. But it is not the effect of the law of works, but of the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. See Romans 8:2,3. Whereby through the law man becomes dead to the law that he may live unto God. Galatians 2:19.

²This I conceive is what several writers have meant, by what they have called an application of Christ, and his propitiation.

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V. Fifthly, I shall now speak of the evidence of the gospel, and show, how faith is the evidence of things not seen, and what those things not seen are. And *first*, there is an external evidence for the gospel, which hath been set forth in a very clear light by several men of learning. I mean the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning Jesus Christ, which were all fulfilled in Him; the miracles wrought by the Lord Jesus, and His servants the prophets and apostles, and especially, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a matter of fact well attested, and fully proved by a sufficient number of credible witnesses. But I only just mention, and shall not enter upon the discussion of this subject.

Secondly, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, like two tallies, answer exactly to one another. What the Old Testament foretold should come to pass, the New Testament attesteth to have actually come to pass. Three of the apostles, Peter, James and John, heard the voice from heaven, the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ at His transfiguration. They and the other apostles, saw and conversed with the Lord Jesus after His resurrection, and they saw Him ascend up into heaven. Paul saw the Lord Jesus after His ascension, who revealed the gospel unto him, and he was caught up into Paradise. The apostles were eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses, of what they have left upon record. Therefore, the writings of the apostles are as good as moral proof, or evidence, for the truth of what they have reported, as the writings of any historians are an evidence of what they have related. But no religions, in all the world, have been supported by such signs and wonders and miracles, as the law and the gospel. Neither have the characters of any historians been so supported, by signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds, works done by them, above the power of either men, or devils, God himself manifestly interposing, and working by them. Not to mention that many of them sealed the truth of their testimony with their blood. Now Moses, the prophets, evangelists, and apostles, and all the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, give witness, and bear record to Jesus Christ. They all harmonise, centre, and terminate in the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ and His work, “*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him,*” Matthew 17:5.

Now the holy Scriptures are a standing, lasting, sure evidence for the truth of the gospel. Upon the strength and authority of the external evidence, a man may rationally believe that the gospel is a revelation from God, and that the doctrines contained in the holy Scriptures are true. But this external evidence doth not give anyone the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It doth not give him to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God, the great mystery of

God manifested in the flesh, the mystery of the Father and of Christ. It doth not make him a happy man, a new creature, or a new man. He is neither regenerated, nor justified, nor sanctified thereby. He is not created in Christ Jesus unto good works. He may profess Christianity in any form thereof, and at the same time be carnal, worldly-minded, dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of the world, indulging himself in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. He may assent to the Bible, and contend for the truth of the Scriptures, but he understandeth not the deep things of God. The Bible is as yet to him a sealed book. He may read it, he may hear it read (which to do is well), but he understandeth not the meaning thereof. *“For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,”* 1 Corinthians 2:14. He may say, and he may think that he believeth the gospel, when at the same time he trusteth in his heart, and hopeth, to be saved by his own works, either in whole, or in part. Thus he manifesteth that he neither believeth the gospel, nor understandeth the meaning thereof, nor of the holy Scriptures.

Thirdly, There is another evidence of the gospel, which is the principal, and crowneth all, the testimony of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost testifieth by light and power, demonstrating or manifesting to the understanding and conscience, the truth of God, the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ. They that have this evidence given to them, know assuredly that the gospel is the truth of God, these are taught of God to believe, their faith standeth not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. These have *“precious faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,”* 1 Corinthians 1:30. These are persuaded by the Holy Ghost to believe the gospel; the persuasion of their mind, which is their faith, is the effect of the operation of the Spirit of God within them. This is the faith of the gospel, which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hence it appeareth, how faith is the evidence of things not seen. *“It is the Spirit of God that beareth witness,”* 1 John 5:6, and he testifieth of Christ, John 15:26. *“He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself,”* 1 John 5:10. A true believer having in himself the testimony of the Holy Ghost for the truth of the gospel, and what it importeth, and reporteth, he hath good and sufficient evidence and proof to believe what he hath not seen. Upon the testimony of honest men we can readily believe what we have not seen. *“If ye receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater,”* 1 John 5:9. The testimony of God is greater than the testimony of man. It conveys superior light, and more striking conviction, stronger proof, and clearer evidence, than any human testimony, or evidence can do. Men may deceive one another, but God’s word and God’s testimony are absolutely sure.

I shall here make a remark on the above words, *“He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself,”* 1 John 5:10. The Greek word *marturia*, translated witness, signifieth testimony, evidence, or proof: not the person of a witness, but his deposition, what he testifieth. This text hath been frequently quoted to prove that every believer of the gospel hath the Holy Spirit bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God, but this is a mistake, which hath been noticed before. This text proveth that every true believer of the gospel hath the evidence or testimony of the Spirit that Jesus is the Christ, and that the gospel, or testimony of God concerning Him, is true, and so hath evidence within himself, why he believeth on Him.

The things not seen are all those things reported by the gospel, and recorded in the holy Scriptures, as the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, the coming of the Holy

Ghost, and all the words, and works of God, the whole counsel of God revealed and written in His word. And whoever believeth the gospel upon its proper evidence, hath sufficient proof, and ought, to believe every word of God in the Bible, so far as he knoweth and understandeth it.

VI. Sixthly, I shall now endeavour under the sixth head to set forth the blessings consequent upon believing the gospel. He that obtaineth the precious gift of faith immediately becometh a blessed man. The Lord Jesus pronounced Simon Peter blessed when he believed on Him, saying, "*Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona,*" Matthew 16:17. Joy and peace, more or less, are immediately consequent upon believing the gospel. As a condemned malefactor that is going to the gallows with a rope about his neck to be hanged, would be filled with joy at the agreeable surprise of an unexpected pardon coming to him from the king, so is a condemned sinner filled with joy and comfort, when Christ is made known unto him as the Saviour. And the deeper sense the person hath had of his own wretchedness, sinfulness, and unworthiness, the greater generally is his surprise and joy. "*He that hath much forgiven, loveth much,*" Luke 7:47. He experimentally feeleth that God is well pleased in Christ His beloved Son, for the Lord Jesus communicateth to him by His Spirit, a taste, a share in that divine joy, and rest, and peace, which he himself now possesseth without measure at the Father's right hand, where there is "*fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore,*" Psalm 16:11. The believer is justified, "*By him all that believeth are justified from all things,*" Acts 13:39. He is not under condemnation, "*He that believeth is not condemned,*" John 3:18. He is not under the curse of the law, "*Christ hath redeemed believers from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them,*" Galatians 3:13. He is not under the wrath, or vindictive justice, of God, "*Being justified by faith, we have peace with God,*" Romans 5:1. "*God's anger is turned away from him,*" Hosea 14:4. All his sins actual and original are forgiven, and forgotten, "*I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more, saith the Lord,*" Jeremiah 31:34. He is made righteous, "*By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous,*" Romans 5:19. "*Blessed is the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works,*" Romans 4:6. "*Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe,*" Romans 3:22. He is taken into covenant with God, "*I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine,*" Ezekiel 16:8. "*I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel*" (all believers), Jeremiah 31:31. "*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,*" Jeremiah 32:40. He becometh a child of God, "*I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*" "*I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty,*" 2 Corinthians 6:16,18. "*Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,*" Galatians 3:26. He is sanctified, "*That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them, which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ,*" Acts 26:18. But more of sanctification hereafter.

He is already regenerate, "*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God,*" 1 John 5:1. The law of God (even the moral law) is written upon his heart, "*I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts,*" Jeremiah 31:33. "*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them,*" Ezekiel 36:26,27. He is in Christ a new creature, "*For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them,*" Ephesians 2:10. He is made "*partaker of the divine nature,*"

2 Peter 1:4. He hath the mind of Christ, 1 Corinthians 2:16. He is made conformable to the image of Christ, Romans 8:29. He is begotten again to a lively hope, 1 Peter 1:3. He is an heir of God, *“And if children, then heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ,”* Romans 8:17. Eternal life is his, *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,”* John 3:36. What need I add more? All things are his, for Christ is Lord and heir of all things, and he belongeth to Christ, 1 Corinthians 3:21-23. There is room to enlarge and say more, but I shall have occasion to resume the subject, when I come to treat of the things hoped for. So much therefore shall suffice at present as to the blessings consequent upon believing the gospel.

VII. Seventhly, I shall now endeavour to set forth the fruit, effect, or work of faith; and the proof that anyone hath faith. The faith of the gospel is a working faith. Justification and sanctification are inseparably connected together. *“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,”* 1 Corinthians 6:11. *“Christ is made unto his people wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,”* 1 Corinthians 1:30. I shall now explain myself about gospel-holiness, or sanctification. Sanctification takes place in the soul upon believing the gospel. *“Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth,”* John 17:17. This truth meaneth the testimony of God, the voice from heaven, the record, the gospel, *“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ,”* 2 Thessalonians 2:13,14. *“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied,”* 1 Peter 1:2.

Holiness is either essential, or by communication, or by separation. God alone is essentially holy. Holiness is of the essence of His nature. Had man been created essentially holy, he could not have lost his holiness without losing his very being. Saints are made holy by communication, and by separation. The Lord Jesus communicateth grace from Himself to believers by His Spirit, who imparteth, infuseth, or sheddeth abroad in their hearts the love of God, and formeth them after the image of Christ, moulding their minds according to the mind of Christ, changing them through beholding the glory of the Lord Jesus into the same likeness, from glory to glory. The fruit or effect of this communication is love to God, and love to man, *“joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,”* Galatians 5:22,23. Hereby believers become heavenly-minded, and devoted to God, averse to sin, and willing to obey the Lord. This is what I have called holiness by communication, or through the communion of the Holy Ghost, who maketh and maintaineth the living union and communion between Christ and His members. *“For they are all baptized by one Spirit into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit,”* 1 Corinthians 12:13. And, *“If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,”* Romans 8:9. Holiness by separation is, when a person or thing is set apart for a holy use, or the service of God. And so the Lord sanctified the seventh day, Genesis 2:3. And so the saints are sanctified, or set apart to live to the praise and glory of God. *“That they should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again,”* 2 Corinthians 5:15. Man in his natural state liveth to himself, he is not devoted to God, he followeth his own will, and is led by his lusts. But by the regenerating work of the Holy Ghost, all who come to the knowledge of Christ the truth, and believe, are made a willing people. *“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,”* Psalm 110:3. *“This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise,”* Isaiah 43:21. *“Ye are a chosen*

generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light,” 1 Peter 2:9. *“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,”* Titus 2:14. Holiness, or sanctification, manifesteth itself by hating and forsaking sin, and by devotion of heart to God, or by endeavouring heartily and willingly out of love to obey God’s holy will in all things. *“The grace of God that bringeth salvation, teacheth all to whom it appeareth, to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world,”* Titus 2:11,12. But this sanctification will further appear in all the fruits, effect or work of faith, which I shall now treat of.

1. The faith of the gospel purifieth the heart, *“Purifying their hearts by faith,”* Acts 15:9. The Gentiles, as well as the Jews, were purified in heart, both justified and sanctified, through the belief of the gospel. Believers get the answer of a good conscience towards God; they lose the guilt, burden and condemnation of sin, having hope that they shall be saved. *“The blood of Christ purging their conscience from dead works to serve the living God,”* Hebrews 9:14. The connection with sin in them is broken. *“Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace,”* Romans 6:14. *“Whosoever abideth in Christ, sinneth not, whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him,”* 1 John 3:6. We know *“that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not,”* 1 John 5:18. God granteth unto them, *“that being delivered out of the hands of their enemies, they may serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their life,”* Luke 1:74,75. *“How shall they that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Knowing this, that the old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth they should not serve sin. For he that is dead (to sin), is freed from sin (from the slavery and power of it),”* Romans 6:2,6,7. Jesus said, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,”* John 8:34,36. *“He that committeth sin is of the devil,”* 1 John 3:8. Yet St. John also saith, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,”* 1 John 1:8. And St. James saith, *“In many things we offend all,”* James 3:2. And Solomon saith, *“There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not,”* Ecclesiastes 7:20. *“For there is no man, which sinneth not,”* 2 Chronicles 6:36. These texts of Scripture, which seem to oppose one another, are reconciled thus: Believers have a law in their members, the corruption of fallen nature remaining in the flesh, which warreth against the law of their mind, they are tempted by the devil, they are daily liable to fall, sometimes they do fall into sin. Their strength to obey is not in themselves, but in Christ. If they abide in Christ, they are preserved from sin, and kept by his power through faith. But if they abide not in Him (and it is very easy for them without continual watching and praying, to get into unbelief), then they wither, grow weak, lose their strength, become dry and barren, and may very easily be overcome by sin and Satan, for without Christ they can do nothing, John 15:4,5. Yet they do not love sin, they dare not allow themselves in it. When they sin, it causes them to shame and pain of heart, stinging remorse of conscience, bitter weeping. God will also assuredly rebuke and chasten them for it. When David had sinned, he saith, that *“God’s arrows stuck fast in him, that there was no soundness in his flesh, because of God’s anger, neither any rest in his bones, because of his sin. He was troubled, he was bowed down greatly, he went mourning all the day long, he was feeble and sore broken, he roared by reason of the disquietness of his heart, his heart panted, his strength failed, he had no ease, nor peace, he was ready to halt, to give up all for lost,”* see Psalm 38. Peter also after cursing and swearing, and denying his Lord, went out ashamed, and wept bitterly. God hath nowhere promised to keep believers from sin, unless they abide in Christ, and keep the faith. But he hath threatened to

chastise or correct them, if they forsake His law, Psalm 89:30-32. Whoever then loveth, or alloweth himself in sin, hath no Scripture-ground to think himself to be a true believer. "*Know ye not,*" saith St. Paul, "*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,*" 1 Corinthians 6:9,10. They must not expect it, if they go on in such sins. And again, "*The works of the flesh are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God,*" Galatians 5:19-21.

2. Again, the Lord Jesus saith, "*Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice,*" John 18:37. To be of the truth, or of faith, meaneth the same as to be a believer of the gospel; therefore everyone that hath the faith of the gospel heareth Christ's voice. "*My sheep,*" saith Jesus, "*hear my voice, and they follow me,*" John 10:27. The voice of Christ meaneth His Spirit and His word, whatsoever He hath said, and to hear His voice meaneth to give attention to it, to believe and to obey it. Now the Lord Christ hath made it an invariable and fixed statute of His kingdom to all His subjects to deny themselves, to bear His cross, and to follow Him. "*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it,*" Matthew 16:24,25. See also, Mark 8:34,35; Luke 9:23,24; Luke 14:25-27; Matthew 10:37-39.

Man was originally made to live by his own righteousness, and to have the favour of God together with the enjoyment of this world in its paradisaical state as the reward of his obedience. Therefore there is a natural bias in every man that is born, to live by his own righteousness, and to have the enjoyment of this present world. And fallen man, having lost the chief happiness, the favour of God, through disobedience, hopeth to regain it by obedience, and would fain be happy in the good things of this present life. But sin hath brought the curse of God upon this world, which hath made the whole creation to groan and to travail in pain. And sinful man cannot make atonement for his sins, neither can he work out a righteousness to please God; neither can he find rest to his soul in this present evil world, however eagerly he may pursue happiness in all that the world hath. "*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father; but is of the world,*" 1 John 2:16. Yet the natural man hath his life in these things, but it is a carnal, earthly, sensual life without God. And whosoever will save his life, i.e. will have and enjoy this carnal, earthly sensual life, shall lose a better life; and whosoever will lose his life, i.e. forsake and deny this carnal, earthly, sensual life for Christ's sake, shall find a better, a life hid with Christ in God. He shall have fellowship with God, the *summum bonum*, the chief good, for the enjoyment of God maketh a man completely happy. St. John saith, "*Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*" 1 John 5:5. The carnal man is overcome and led away by the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. He swimmeth with the stream of corrupt nature. He liveth after the flesh. So do some pretenders to religion. Perhaps they may have been enlightened, and professors of the faith, who once promised well, and could talk of impressions, and feelings, and experience, and for a while did run well, but they grew weary of the cross, and of self-denial, and so gave way to self-indulgence, and dwindled by degrees, and have now a life at ease, but have all their happiness in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and are quite overcome by the world. Such plainly enough manifest that they were not born of God. "*For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world, and this is the victory that*

overcometh the world, even our faith,” 1 John 5:4. Yet true believers have need to deny themselves daily of the natural bias to live by their own works, or something of their own, or to connect something with Christ. To keep the faith, or to live by Christ only, in opposition to the innate self-righteous principle, is one material part of the Christian warfare. So long as they abide in Christ, keep the faith, or live by believing in the Son of God, they are kept by God’s power through faith. But they are liable to get into self-righteousness and unbelief, and then they may be ensnared and drawn away by the flesh. But they are to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, that they may enjoy the happy life that is in God’s favour. They are also to deny their own will, and to do, and to be resigned to, the will of God in all things. And this requireth self-denial, as it also doth to take up the cross of Christ. *“All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,”* saith St. Paul, 2 Timothy 3:12. *“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you,”* saith St. John, 1 John 3:13. And the Lord Jesus saith to His people, *“Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you,”* John 15:19,20. Those that are only born after the flesh, always did and will despise and persecute those, who are born after the Spirit (see Galatians 4:29). And it is God’s will to have it so for the trial of His people’s faith. God declared immediately after the fall of Adam that He would put enmity between the serpent’s seed (the devil’s followers), and Christ’s seed or people, Genesis 3:15. When anyone is called of God, he may expect the cross. *“Let us go forth unto him,”* saith St. Paul, *“without the camp, bearing his reproach, for Jesus suffered without the gate,”* Hebrews 13:12,13. And it is very trying to flesh and blood to be persecuted, and hated, and despised by relations, friends, and neighbours, yea, it looketh very hard at first to a person, who would live godly and be saved, to see that almost everybody despiseth him for it. Yea, even some who have made a hopeful beginning in religion, have fallen quite away, when the cross came. The stony-ground hearer, received the word with joy, they made a fine flourish for a while, but when persecution came, they were offended. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. They were afraid of man, and, *“The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe,”* Proverbs 29:25. *“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul,”* saith the Lord, *“but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell,”* Matthew 10:28. Christ will confess those hereafter, who confess Him here, and He also will deny and be ashamed of those hereafter, who deny and are ashamed of Him, His word and people here.

It also requireth great self-denial to obey the following sayings of the Lord Jesus. *“But I say unto you (who are my disciples), that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away (i.e. upon supposition that it is in thy power so to do). Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven (and so imitate his divine goodness), for he maketh his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,”* Matthew 5:39-45.

3. Again, all true believers are to follow the Lord Christ in His obedience to the holy will of God in all things commanded by Him, and particularly in obedience to the moral law of the ten commandments. It hath already been set forth before and proved that God regenerateth all those whom He bringeth into the new covenant in Christ’s blood, and that He puts His law in their inward

parts, and writes it in their hearts. Love is the fulfilling of the law, love to God and love to men. As soon as Christ is revealed, or God is made known as a Saviour, by the Holy Ghost to anyone, he falleth in love with Him. His heart is filled with love to God, for it is shed abroad therein by the Holy Ghost. *“To you that believe Christ is precious,”* 1 Peter 2:7. *“And everyone that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him,”* 1 John 5:1. So that there is love to Jesus Christ, God manifested in the flesh, love of complacence and delight to the people of God, and also love of benevolence or good will towards all mankind. And hereby the person is inclined, or made willing, to walk according to the moral law. *“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour,”* Romans 13:10. Therefore this is another fruit, effect or work of faith, willingly and conscientiously to perform all the religious, relative, and moral duties required by this holy law both to God and man. *“Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything but to love one another,”* Romans 13:7,8. *“Corrupt no man, defraud no man, wrong no man in body, goods or name.”* This maketh good husbands, good wives, good parents, good children, good masters, good servants, good neighbours, good subjects, good magistrates. It maketh every man in his place and station ready to perform every duty required of him. And this proveth and manifesteth that the law is written in his heart.

The moral law in the substance of it hath been in all the covenants which God ever made with man. And though believers are not under it as a covenant of works, a covenant of life and death, as it was given first to Adam, or as a covenant afterwards given to the nation of Israel at Sinai, yet they are under this law to Christ their Redeemer. But it is unto them in Him a law of liberty. They are freed from the curse of this law, Christ having been made a curse for them, Galatians 3:13. They are at all times free to live by Christ’s obedience to this law, and by His obedience to it they are constituted or made righteous, Romans 5:19. *“For Christ is the end (the fulfiller) of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth,”* Romans 10:4. Yet it is a rule of duty to them, not a law, whereby they are to live, but a law or rule, according to which they ought to walk. They are to follow their Lord herein, and to endeavour to be conformable to Him herein. And they have reason to be ashamed that they come so far short of Him. Yea, and if they willfully transgress against this law, or forsake it, *“He will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes,”* Psalm 89:30-32. The obligation of this holy law is eternal, as was aforesaid. It was always good, now is good, and ever will be good. Was it not, and will it not be always right and good, to love God and one another? The gospel hath abolished the whole ceremonial law, except what is accepted in these words: *“It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us (the apostles, and elders, with the whole church), to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well,”* Acts 15:28,29.

But the gospel in no wise maketh void the moral law in the substance thereof, but absolutely and altogether establisheth it, except only that the seventh day is changed to the first day of the week, which is now the Christian Sabbath.¹

Such as think and believe that God’s people are under no obligation to the moral law (except as before excepted), are misled and deluded, and most certainly believe a lie. For the Lord Christ Himself had said, *“Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven,”* Matthew 5:19. And St. John saith, *“Hereby we do know that we know him (and the knowledge of him is the essence of true faith), if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him (or I am a believer), and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him,”* 1 John 2:3,4. And again, *“This is the love of*

God (or the proof that we love God), that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous,” 1 John 5:3.

4. Again, another fruit, effect, or work of faith, is to observe all the ordinances of the Lord, all the institutions of worship commanded in the New Testament, and every one of His words, or sayings, as baptism, the Lord's supper, the Lord's day, hearing or reading the word, assembling together, prayer public and private, thanksgiving, singing of hymns and psalms, continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer, Acts 2:42. The apostles were commanded by the Lord to teach believers to observe all things whatsoever He commanded them, Matthew 28:20. And Jesus saith, *“If any man love me, he will keep my words. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings,”* John 14:23,24.

5. Again, another fruit or effect of faith is that it worketh by love, Galatians 5:6. It not only disposes a person to do justly, but also to love mercy. Believers are *“God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that they should walk in them,”* Ephesians 2:10. *“And let us not be weary in well-doing, but as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith,”* Galatians 6:9,10. *“For Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,”* Titus 2:14. *“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will,”* saith St. Paul, *“that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to excel in good works,”* Titus 3:8. Not to do some little, as a natural man will do, to maintain a good character, but to be eminent therein, to go before and to outdo others, every man according to his several ability, *“In all things shewing himself a pattern of good works,”* Titus 2:7. The Lord Jesus told his disciples that they were the salt of the earth, and the light of the world, therefore saith He, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven,”* Matthew 5:16. Now if there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to *“that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not,”* 2 Corinthians 8:12. A rich man may give much, and yet fall short of his duty herein, and be far outdone by a poor man, that cannot give much. The poor widow exceeded all that cast into the treasury in our Lord's presence, according to His judgment (and He is to be the Judge at last), though she gave but two mites. Many that were rich cast in much, but she gave all that she had, and therefore exceeded them all (See Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4). St. Peter exhorts believers to have an honest conversation amongst unbelievers that whereas they speak against them as evil-doers, they may by their good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of their visitation. And he saith, *“It is God's will, that with well doing they may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men,”* 1 Peter 2:12,15. And St. James saith, *“Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world,”* James 1:27. And again, *“Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also,”* James 2:20,26.

6. Again, another fruit, effect or work of the faith of the gospel (which is a very good proof that a man hath it, for it requireth no little self-denial, but a good degree of heavenly-mindedness to practise it, at least for some persons) is to give a strict obedience to the following royal edict and standing statute of the kingdom of heaven. It shows the generous heart of the King of glory, *“Who openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing, giving them their meat in due*

season,” Psalm 145:15,16. O that His people would imitate His goodness, and “*Set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth,*” Colossians 3:2, they would be the more ready and willing to leave this world to go to heaven. But that the great ones of the earth may not be offended at it, they may be satisfied that it concerneth only the subjects of Christ’s kingdom, which is not of this world. But that believers may pay the more regard to this saying of their Lord, whose name is called the Word of God, and out of whose mouth goeth a sharp two-edged sword (Revelation 1:16; 19:13), it is delivered both negatively and positively thus: “*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,*” Matthew 6:19-21. It may be remarked that the Lord first forbids his disciples to lay up treasures upon earth. Then next He commands them to lay up treasures in heaven, i.e. by distributing to the necessity of the saints and the poor, which is lending unto the Lord (And who hath given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? Romans 11:35). And afterwards, He giveth them a reason for what He said, telling them that if they laid up treasure on earth, it would draw their hearts to this world, but if they laid up treasure in heaven, it would draw their affections from this world and make them heavenly-minded, so that their hearts would be in heaven before they got thither. He also informs them that it would be for their present happiness so to do, “*If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.*” If your hearts be entirely devoted to God, you will enjoy the light of His countenance. “*But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.*” If your hearts be divided between God and the world, if ye love the world, ye will lose the love and favour of God, “*For if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,*” 1 John 2:15. And then He tells them plainly that, “*No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*” Mammon signifieth riches. Ye cannot love God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength, and get riches. A Christian may give alms so as to have and maintain a good character amongst his neighbours, and be accounted a charitable man, and yet not keep this statute of Christ’s kingdom. For He saith expressly, “*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.*” Which St. Paul explaineth, “*I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content,*” Philippians 4:11. “*Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,*” Hebrews 13:5. “*Godliness with contentment is great gain; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things, fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life,*” 1 Timothy 6:6-11. Covetousness is called idolatry, Colossians 3:5. “*Take heed,*” saith the Lord, “*and beware of covetousness,*” Luke 12:15. “*Let not covetousness,*” saith St. Paul, “*be once named amongst you, as becometh saints, for this ye know, that no covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God,*” Ephesians 5:3,5; 1 Corinthians 6:10. And he writeth to the church at Corinth to exclude the covetous from their communion, 1 Corinthians 5:11-13. Covetousness is a sin that easily overtaketh religious people. There is a bias in our earthly nature to this world. And covetousness is covered with fine cloaks, vindicated by strong arguments, and called by specious names, so that its poisonous quality is concealed. And if it is not carried to great excess, it giveth no offence at all to the world, but is rather commended. “*For the wicked blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth,*” Psalm 10:3. Now as religious people are generally sober, and industrious, and honest, and abstain from sports and polite entertainments and fashionable pleasures, and many

extravagancies, whereby they avoid expenses; in a common course of things they get money, and must grow rich. If they disregard God's word, by not giving alms in proportion to their profits, which are over and above what a reasonable provision for themselves and their families requireth, and when they begin to hoard up, then they begin to be covetous, according to the Latin proverb *Creseit amor nummi quantani qua pecunia creseit* (The love of money increaseth as the money increaseth). He that hath nothing, hath no treasure to set his heart upon, but he that hath something, hath a treasure, and the Lord saith, "*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" And if a man increaseth the treasure, he increaseth the temptation to covetousness. The Lord Jesus said unto His disciples, "*How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God*" (which implieth that it is hard to have riches and not to trust in them, See Mark 10:23-27). But though, "*Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called,*" 1 Corinthians 1:26; yet some are chosen of God and called, "*For with God all things are possible.*" To be born to be rich, or to be an heir to an estate, or to become rich by God's good providence, is very different from getting riches. The apostle Paul doth not say that they that are rich, but "*they that will be rich (they that will get riches) fall into temptation and a snare,*" etc. And he saith, "*Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life,*" 1 Timothy 6:17-19. But they that lay up riches, keep not Christ's words. They grow covetous, and their hearts are drawn away from God. They become worldly-minded, make provision for the flesh, fall into self-indulgence, and lose their spiritual life and strength. Covetousness is a canker in the soul. "*For the love of money is the root of all evil.*" When religious people, who perhaps were once lively in their hearts, having had sweet sensations and refreshing joys, begin to lay up riches, they soon become dry and barren in their hearts, and insensibly sink into the spirit of the world, and become stupid and hard, because they do not abide in Christ and obey His words, so they err from the faith, and in the end pierce themselves through with many sorrows.

7. But again, above and after all, obedience to the Lord's new commandment is the special fruit and effect of the faith of the gospel, and the proof or touchstone whereby every man's faith must be tried and manifested at the last day. The blessed Jesus in His last discourse to his disciples just before His death, there enjoined this commandment to His people, and it is mainly insisted upon by all the apostles, as the proof or evidence that anyone belongeth unto Christ. "*A new commandment,*" saith He, "*I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another,*" John 13:34,35. Again, "*This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*" And again, "*These things I command you, that ye love one another,*" John 15:12,17. St. John, the favourite disciple, maketh faith in Christ, and love to the brethren or people of Christ, the two chief commandments of the New Testament. He calleth the former, the Father's commandment, and the latter, the new commandment, "*And this is his commandment (the Father's), that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he (Jesus Christ) gave us commandment,*" 1 John 3:23. (See also 2 John 5). He calleth obedience to the former, "*Walking in the truth, and doing righteousness,*" 2 John 4, and 1 John 3:18-20, and 3:7,10. And he maketh obedience to the latter the proof of obeying the former, "*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death,*" 1 John 3:14. And he carrieth obedience to the new commandment so far, as that, "*We ought*

to lay down our lives for the brethren,” v.16. “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (This love must be manifested not only in words, but in works). “Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth,” vv. 17,18. St. James saith, “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works,” James 2:14-18. St. Peter saith, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth (believing the gospel) through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently,” 1 Peter 1:22. And again, “Love the brotherhood,” 1 Peter 2:17. “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God,” 1 Peter 4:8-10. St. Paul calleth this work of faith, this obedience to the new commandment, “the labour of love,” and he maketh it a proof of election, and the criterion to distinguish the elect from all others. “Remembering your work of faith, and (even the) labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God,” 1 Thessalonians 1:3,4. And, “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,” (so far the apostle describeth what is common to those who believe for a while, being enlightened and having received the word with joy, but do not bring forth the proper fruit of faith, and to those who believe to the saving of the soul, being regenerated and born of God, and bring forth fruit to perfection), “If they shall fall away to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God.” (So when a man that is enlightened, continueth in Christ’s words, and bringeth forth the fruits of righteousness, he receiveth fresh blessings of grace), “But that which beareth thorns and briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.” (So will all enlightened persons be, who do not deny themselves, bear Christ’s cross, and follow Him, and do the works of love). “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.” (Here comes the criterion), “For God is not unrighteous to forget your works and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister,” Hebrews 6:4-10. And St. Paul exhorteth the churches to “Provoke one another unto love, and to good works,” Hebrews 10:24. “Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers. Remember them that are in bonds, and them which suffer adversity. To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased,” Hebrews 13:1-3,16. “Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love. In honour preferring one another; distributing to the necessity of the saints, given to hospitality,” Romans 12:10,13. “By love serve one another,” Galatians 5:13. “Be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another,” Ephesians 4:32. “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others,” Philippians 2:4. “Put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, and above all put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness,” Colossians 3:12-14. Every token, expression, and act of love in obedience to the new commandment, is acceptable to the Lord. But these good works spring from faith in the Lord Jesus, and are done, out of love to Christ, to His people, for the truth’s sake that dwelleth in them, and because they belong to Christ. And this is imitating the love of Christ, who

lived and died to save the church, which He purchased with His own blood. These are the good works, which will be remembered and recompensed at the resurrection of the just. By the works of true charity shall all men know who are the disciples of Christ. But this will not be in this present world, but at the great day. *“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat. I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me in, naked, and ye clothed me. I was sick, and ye visited me. I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”* And though the righteous will answer saying, *“When did we so to thee?”* Yet the king will say unto them, *“Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren (who are set on his right hand), ye have done it unto me,”* Matthew 25:31-40. For Jesus said to his disciples, *“He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet’s reward, and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man’s reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward,”* Matthew 10:40-42. A righteous man meaneth a true believer, who is made righteous by the righteousness of Christ, and a disciple is a follower and learner of Christ.

For want of the above good works will all nominal Christians, all formal professors of Christianity, and all enlightened persons (who stumbled at the cross, or rested in impressions, feelings and joys, instead of Jesus Christ and His righteousness, and who made their own experience the proof of their being believers, instead of the labour of love, the patience of hope, and the other works of faith, however highly they thought of themselves here, and how much soever they might talk of faith, grace, Christ, the gospel, or experience), be convicted and declared to be hypocrites, and disowned by the Lord Jesus, who will say unto them, *“Depart from me. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat. I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in, naked, and ye clothed me not, sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? But the Lord will reply, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these (on the right hand), ye did it not to me,”* Matt. 25:41-45.

True believers are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them, Ephesians 2:10. And although some of God’s people bring forth more fruit than others of them do, yet they all bring forth fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, and some an hundred-fold. And the more good works they do out of love to Christ and in obedience to the new commandment, the greater proof do they give that they belong to Christ. *“Herein,”* said the Lord Jesus, *“is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples,”* John 15:8.

How doth any man manifest that he hath the mind of Christ, who doth not study conformity to Christ in heart and life? How doth any man manifest that he is a follower of Christ, who doth not endeavour to tread in Christ’s steps, and to walk after His example? How doth any man manifest that He is a disciple of Christ, who doth not learn of Him, and hear His voice in all things whatsoever He hath commanded? And how doth anyone prove that he loveth Christ (and whoever doth not love Him, is under the anathema, 1 Corinthians 16:22), who doth not keep His commandments, and do them? *“If ye love me,”* saith the Lord, *“keep my commandments. He that*

hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loves me. he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings,” John 14:15,21,24. Whatever profession one may make of Christianity, or of being in the faith of Christ, no man manifesteth or proveth that he is a real Christian or hath the faith of the gospel, any further than his life and conversation is agreeable to the gospel of God. St. Paul saith, *“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ,”* Philippians 1:27. It costeth a person no labour or pains to obtain the faith, it is the gift of God. Yet saving faith is a working faith. *“The word of God effectually worketh in them that believe,”* 1 Thessalonians 2:13. The labour of love, the patience of hope, and a willing, hearty, and cheerful, though imperfect, obedience to all the commandments of God and special sayings of the Lord Christ, is the genuine fruit, effect and work of faith unfeigned; and this is the only sure proof and evidence that any man knoweth the grace of God in truth (Colossians 1:6), or hath the faith of the gospel. *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation (or the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, Romans 1:16), teacheth all, to whom it appeareth, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things,”* saith St. Paul, *“speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority,”* Titus 2:11-15. *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God,”* Hebrews 12:14,15. *“Every tree is known by his own fruit,”* Luke 6:44. *“Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, and every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them,”* Matthew 7:17-20.

It is granted that hypocrites may do many of the above works, but not out of charity, without which, though a man *“bestoweth all his goods to feed the poor, and give his body to be burned, it profiteth nothing,”* 1 Corinthians 13:3. Yet no man hath Scriptural ground to conclude that he is a true believer, who doth not perform them out of love to Christ in some good measure according to his ability.

It may be remarked that many people either believe, or at least profess to believe the gospel, upon the testimony of man. And as some are Jews, because they were born of jewish parents, and were educated and brought up in the profession of Judaism; and as others are Mahometans, because they are born of mahometan parents, and educated and brought up in mahometanism; and as others are heathens, because they were born of heathen parents, and educated and brought up in heathenism; so, many are Christians by profession, because they were born of parents professing Christianity, and by them taught to believe the gospel. This much standeth in the wisdom and teaching of man. It produceth a formal profession of Christianity without a Christian life and conversation. Thus, many receive Christianity by tradition from their parents; and though some are civil and sober and moral, and observe outward decorum, and conform to modes and forms of worship, yet they walk according to the course of this world, and are in the spirit and temper thereof, minding earthly things, and are overcome by the world. Others are openly profane, living in gross sins; whereby they manifest that they are of the world, and that their faith is dead.

Again, it hath been said above that there is an external evidence for the truth of revelation, upon the authority whereof, a man may rationally believe that the holy Scriptures are a revelation from God. The faith which standeth upon this external evidence, hath a better foundation than that which

standeth barely upon human tradition. And though no man can understand the deep things of God revealed in the Scriptures without the illumination or teaching of the Holy Ghost, yet a man, who believeth the Scriptures to be a divine revelation upon the external evidence, which God hath given to support their authority, may believe that that which is revealed in the Scriptures, may be true, although above his present comprehension. Such a faith, or persuasion of mind, will have an effect upon a man, and make him pay a deference to the word of God, may put him upon searching the Scriptures and praying for illumination, and have some influence upon his whole conduct in life. And those who have heard the gospel, and have had this external evidence laid before them to believe it, and yet nevertheless oppose the gospel, will have something more to answer for to God, than those who have not, Matthew 10:15; 11:20.

Again, there is a believing of the gospel upon illumination, which is attended with joy. Such believers were the stony-ground and the thorny-ground hearers of the word, and such were the five foolish virgins. This faith maketh religious people, fair and flourishing professors, who promise well at first, and appear for a while very hopeful. These frequent the ordinances of God, practise the means of grace, escape the pollutions of the world, the gross wickedness and immorality thereof, through a knowledge of Christ without understanding. These may have great gifts, feelings, impressions and manifestations, and for a while be warm and lively, and edify others. But in time they manifest that they have not root. They may continue in the use of the means, talk of religion and of their own past experience, and give the Lord Jesus many fine compliments in words, but they do not like His cross, nor His hard sayings, they grow weary of self-denial, and want a heart to do all the good works required by the gospel. *“Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,”* 2 Thessalonians 2:10. They do not continue in Christ’s words; they do not abide in Him; so they lose their strength, grow languid, insensibly fall into the spirit of the world, give way to self-indulgence, and in the end are overcome by the love of the world. These people, while their joys and feelings last, are generally very high, full of a good conceit of themselves, and apt to despise and undervalue others. Perhaps they think themselves very near perfection, if not quite perfect, because they never knew their own deceitful hearts, were never baptized with fire, nor salted with salt. The Lord had neither killed them, nor made them alive, he had neither wounded, nor healed them, Deuteronomy 32:39. Their strongholds of self-righteousness were never pulled down, their proud and vain imaginations were never cast down, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, their every thought was never brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 2 Corinthians 10:4,5. They were never broken in heart, nor poor in spirit or rightly humbled. They were never yet made a willing people; because they were never yet washed in regeneration, nor renewed by the Holy Ghost. The Lord Jesus was never revealed in them as the true God and eternal life. They never had the full assurance of understanding of the mystery of God, of the Father and of Christ. They did not understand that God was in Christ; and that the Father and the Son are one God, so they thought that worshipping Christ was not worshipping God. They never understood the gospel, they always had two foundations, connecting something with Christ, in point of acceptance. They never had the one faith. Their faith was always double or manifold, not having one object, and one subject. Though they seemed to be in Christ, they did not abide in Him, and so could not bring forth fruit to perfection. They did not keep the faith, and live by believing in the Son of God; but they lived by their exercise of soul, or by their doings, or feelings, or something else than by Christ and His righteousness alone. They made their own experience the proof that they were in the faith, instead of the works of faith above-mentioned. They judged and tried themselves by their own feelings, and impressions, and fancies, instead of coming to the touchstone, the law and the testimony, the oracles of God. No wonder if such fall away! Their faith and hope is not in God. Of these, St. John speaks, *“They went out from us, because they were not of us; for if they had*

been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us,” 1 John 2:19. Enlightened persons were baptized by the apostles, and received as church members, and respected as brethren, until they manifested the contrary by their words, or works. Many of them were afterwards born of God, but some of them never got further than this enlightening, and fell away. Of these St. Peter speaks, 2 Peter 2:1, 20-22, and St. Paul, Hebrews 6:4-6, 10:26-29.

Again, there is a faith spoken of, whereby a man may cast out devils, remove mountains, and do many wonderful works, yea, a man may have the gift of prophecy, may speak different languages, may understand mysteries, and have great knowledge, he may preach doctrines clearly, connectedly, surprisingly, and yet after all be a castaway, and disowned by the Lord Jesus. See Matthew 7:22,23, and 1 Corinthians 13:1,2.

Again, there is a believing of the gospel, which is an effect of regeneration and the revelation of Jesus Christ in the heart by the Holy Ghost with the word of truth, which hath been set forth. This is the faith unfeigned, which produceth a holy life, Christian self-denial, bearing the cross of Christ, conformity to the Lord Jesus in heart and life, and a willing but imperfect obedience to the laws of His kingdom in the labour of love, the patience of hope, and all the good works required by the gospel. This is THE FAITH, which though it be tried with fire, will be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 1:7.

Let every man examine himself impartially in the sight of God, and by the fruits thereof he may judge for himself of what kind his faith is, dead or living, human or divine. *“Examine yourselves,”* saith the apostle Paul, *“whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”* 2 Corinthians 13:5. By reprobates he meaneth such as will not bear proof, when they are brought to the touchstone. Such professors of the gospel as are only counterfeits, who will at last be disowned by the Lord of glory as rank hypocrites. *“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,”* Mark 4:9.

¹The apostle Paul observeth that there is another day spoken of besides the seventh day, and that other day (as I conceive) is the first day of the week, called the Lord's day. *“Upon the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread,”* Acts 20:7. The seventh day was first instituted as a sign and a memorial that on that day, God rested from the works of Creation. It was again enjoined to the Jewish church as a memorial that God had brought them out of Egypt, the house of bondage, and had given them rest in the good land of Canaan, but that was only a typical rest. Therefore the apostle saith, *“If Joshua had given them rest (i.e. the true rest), then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest (sabbatismos, a sabbatism or Sabbath-keeping) to the people of God,”* Hebrews 4:8,9. The Lord's day is a memorial that Christ hath finished His work, is risen again, and entered into eternal rest in heaven, to which in due time all true believers hope to come.

I now come to treat of the hope of the gospel. And I shall in the first place explain the meaning of the word hope.

The word hope signifieth expectation; and generally it meaneth an expectation of something good, desirable or wished for, but sometimes the contrary. Bad hope is an expectation of something not

desired or wished for. In Scripture the word hope frequently signifieth expectation, and no more. But by a metonymy, hope sometimes signifieth the things expected or hoped for, and sometimes by a synecdoche, it signifieth both the things expected, and also the expectation of them. I shall illustrate this by some texts of Scripture. "*The hope of salvation,*" 1 Thessalonians 5:8. "*The hope of eternal life,*" Titus 3:7. "*The hope of glory,*" Colossians 1:27. In these texts the word hope signifieth expectation and no more. But in the following texts the word hope signifieth the things expected, the good things hoped for. "*The hope which is laid up for you in heaven,*" Colossians 1:5. "*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,*" Titus 2:13. "*The hope of Israel,*" Acts 28:20 (i.e. the Lord Jesus and his salvation expected by the Israelites. See also 1 Timothy 1:1, and Hebrews 6:18,19). When the word hope standeth for what many divines call the grace of hope, it meaneth both the good things expected, and also the expectation of them. The Christian hope, the hope of the gospel, is a well-grounded expectation of eternal life, and all the glory and happiness in heaven. In this sense the word hope occurs often. "*And now abideth faith, hope, charity,*" 1 Corinthians 13:13. "*There is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism,*" Ephesians 4:4,5. "*God hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace,*" 2 Thessalonians 2:16. "*God according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope,*" 1 Peter 1:3. "*That ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost,*" Romans 15:13. Thus much may be sufficient to show the different acceptations of the word hope, and to ascertain the sense and meaning of it in the subject matter which I am now upon.

It hath been said that every man's hope is of the same kind with his faith; for faith is the ground of hope. Therefore if any man's faith be false, his hope is vain; but if his faith be true, his hope is sure. The faith of the gospel is the ground or foundation of the hope of the gospel, which in my text is expressed by the things hoped for. The hope of the gospel is the expectation of all those good things reported by the gospel not yet seen: to be saved with an everlasting salvation, Isaiah 45:17; to be with the Lord Jesus in that place which He is gone to prepare for his people, John 14:3; to live in the presence of God where there is "*fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore,*" Psalm 16:11. As soon as any man obtains the precious faith of the gospel, he is actually and personally justified, and the hope of the gospel taketh place in his heart. Though faith, hope and love be distinct, and though faith be prior in order to hope and love, yet faith, hope and love are equally the effect of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, the new creation, and take place in the soul at the same time. God quickeneth or regenerateth by His Spirit, and by His word, all whom He bringeth into the new covenant. They are all taught to know the Lord, the just God and the Saviour, the Lord their righteousness. The holy law is written on all their hearts. They are all born of God. They are all justified, and they are all sanctified. And all that are justified, are equally justified, and once for ever. All their sins, be they few or many, little or great, are freely and fully forgiven, to be remembered no more. Justification admitteth of no degrees, but sanctification doth. All true believers are sanctified, but they are not all equally sanctified. For there are children, young men, and fathers in Christ, 1 John 2:13. They are all complete in Christ, but none amongst them are all complete in themselves, or perfectly sanctified in this present life. They are all sanctified in all the faculties of their souls; but not completely sanctified as yet in any one of them. For at present they are all in a growing state. All their understandings are enlightened in the knowledge of the truth; all their wills are in some measure brought into subjection to the will of God, for they are all made a willing people, Psalm 110:3. Their hearts and affections are in good measure purified, and they all love God and their neighbours more or less; for the moral law is written on all their hearts. Yet there is ignorance in all their understandings, though some know more of and understand the things of God better than others. All their wills are liable to be refractory; and their hearts and affections may

be drawn aside from God by the creature, if not kept by the power of God, so that they are subject to backslidings. Some of them are weak, and others strong, in the faith. Some are more, others less, conformable to Christ. Yet all of them are conformable to the image of Christ according to the measure of their stature, or growth in grace, Romans 8:29; Ephesians 4:13. Some of them bring forth more fruit, others less, yet they all bring forth good fruit, less or more. Some of them are more fervent in love than others, yet they all love the Lord Jesus, for unto them which believe Christ is precious, 1 Peter 2:7. All that unfeignedly believe the gospel, have the hope of the gospel in some measure; but some are more lively in hope than others. As there are degrees of faith, so also there are degrees of hope. And there is a great difference in degrees between hope at first, and the full assurance of hope, as there is in stature between a new born child, and a full grown man. In holy Scripture there is mention made of the hope of the gospel, of good hope, a lively hope, the confidence and the rejoicing (*kauchema*, the glorying) of the hope, and the full assurance of hope; whereby, as I conceive, are set forth the different degrees of the hope of the gospel. A good hope is the first but lowest degree of the hope of the gospel, and the full assurance of hope is the highest degree thereof. Children are naturally aspiring, and would be men; but there must be time for it. None of Adam's posterity have come into the world, as he did, a fully formed and complete man at once. His offspring grow by degrees from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood. And as they grow in stature by degrees, so also in knowledge and understanding, though some grow faster than others in both respects. In like manner, young converts newly come to the faith, having too much of Adam's fallen nature remaining in them, are apt to aspire, and would be at perfection, and at the full assurance of salvation at once. But there must be time for it. God's children grow unto manhood in Christ by degrees, and though some of them grow faster than others, yet none of them are born fathers, or young men, but little children. It hath been already remarked before that the faith and hope of the gospel have by some writers been confounded together, as if they were but one and the same thing, and what the apostle Paul calleth the *plerophory*, or the full assurance of hope, they have called *the faith of assurance*. They also maintain that *a particular application or appropriation of Christ, a confidence or a good degree of assurance of salvation, is in the very nature or essence of true faith*. So that according to them, none truly believe the gospel, and are justified, but they who believe that the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life through Christ are the free gift of God to themselves in particular. Had they maintained that a lively hope immediately followeth after a man believeth, and is justified, they would have been quite right. Or if they had maintained that such an appropriation or assurance in some degree is in the nature or essence of the hope of the gospel, they would not have been far wide from the truth. Some celebrated divines, whose souls I trust are now in heaven with the Lord, have maintained the above doctrine. Their meaning might be right, but they have expressed it wrong. And who is infallible? I endeavoured before to show that this notion about faith is a mistake, and I proposed to show that no man is assured of his eternal salvation upon his first believing the gospel, which is repugnant to their appropriating doctrine, which is still maintained by some now living. They argue that *God in the word of the gospel maketh an offer of Christ and His righteousness, as a deed of gift or a free gift, to all indefinitely who hear the gospel, and also promiseth remission of sins and eternal life, and further, that God's word is a sufficient warrant to everyone to lay claim to the gift, and that faith is a receiving of the gift, but then it must be an appropriating and applying faith. For no man is possessed of a gift until he receives it; but in receiving of it he obtains a special interest in it, which he had not before*. That God by the word of the gospel maketh known to all indefinitely who hear it that He is well pleased in his beloved Son, and that he giveth his Son, and remission of sins, and eternal life, to all who unfeignedly believe the gospel with understanding, is as surely true as God's word is true. And that no man is possessed of a gift until he receives it, but that in receiving it he obtains a special interest in it, is also true. It is also granted that no man hath Christ, or a special

interest in Him, but he that receiveth Him. But then, doth any man receive Christ before he believeth the gospel? Coming to Christ, receiving or embracing Him, looking to Him, trusting or confiding in, relying or depending upon Him and His divine righteousness, belong to faith, and always accompany it, although they may be deemed immediate consequent effects of it. For no man obeyeth the Father's commandment, "*Hear ye him,*" who doth not believe in Christ. But no man can savingly believe in Christ, before He is revealed or made known to him by the Holy Ghost in the gospel. "*How,*" saith St. Paul, "*shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?*" Romans 10:14. They must hear, and know, and understand the gospel, or the testimony of God concerning the person of Christ and the work of Christ, before they can believe on Him or receive Him. But as soon as they believe the gospel, they believe in Christ, and receive Him joyfully. Upon believing in Him, His righteousness and His whole salvation is freely given to them, and in believing, they obtain a special interest in Him, which they had not before. It is the truth of God that he who believeth God's testimony or the gospel of Christ, and believeth on Christ, hath everlasting life, is passed from death unto life, and shall not come into condemnation. He that believeth, is justified, and he that is justified, hath peace with God, and is begotten again unto a lively hope. As that faith is dead, which doth not bring forth good works, so also is that faith dead that is not followed less or more with joy and peace, and the hope of salvation, the hope of eternal life, the hope of glory. For this is the true hope of the gospel, and the faith and hope of the gospel are necessarily and inseparably connected together. But then it must be remembered that faith is in order before hope, for the faith of the gospel is the ground and support of the hope of the gospel.

Now this good hope through grace is (as I conceive) what the divines aforesaid meant by (but have improperly called), *the appropriating and applying faith, and the appropriating act of faith*. But then, here is a point in debate. Doth God's word in the gospel either offer, declare, or promise eternal salvation to every hearer of the gospel, or to any one hearer of the gospel in particular? – It is granted that the gospel declareth, not that every hearer thereof, but that every believer thereof shall be saved, and that whosoever believeth on Christ, hath everlasting life. But then, doth every man who believeth on Him, know assuredly at the very first that he is a true believer? May not a man believe the gospel and be well persuaded in his own mind that the gospel is true, and yet doubt and question, whether he himself unfeignedly believeth it with understanding? Are there not different sorts of hearers, and different sorts of believers of the gospel? Do not some hear the gospel, "*but the word preached doth not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them?*" (not being believed by them all), Hebrews 4:2. Doth not the Lord Jesus make mention of some, who receive the word of the gospel with joy, and believe for a while; but have not root, and afterwards fall away? And doth He not in his own exposition of the parable of the sower recorded by the evangelists set forth the distinguishing characteristics of the right sort of believers by their understanding the word, keeping the word, and bringing forth fruit with patience? Do not many think that they believe the gospel, who are mistaken, and deceive their own souls? If then, any man layeth special claim to Christ and His salvation, before the Holy Ghost sealeth him, or beareth witness with his spirit that he is a child of God, doth he not aspire too fast? Is he not too hasty and forward? But doth the Holy Ghost seal any man, or bear witness with his spirit that he is a child of God, before that man believeth the gospel? Or doth the Holy Ghost do it upon a man's first believing, so that he is assured of his salvation? To maintain either appeareth to me contradictory to the apostolic doctrine. It is granted that the names of all the redeemed are written in the Lamb's book of life, but who on earth hath read that book? And where is it written in the Bible concerning anyone now living in this world that Christ hath loved him, and given Himself for him in particular? And doth the Holy Ghost reveal anything to man contrary to the written word of God? Are not believers exhorted to give diligence to make their calling and election sure? 2 Peter 1:10. And to be

diligent in the labour of love to the full assurance of hope to the end? Hebrews 6:11. Was it to the unbelieving world, or to a pure church of Christ gathered out of the world that the apostle Paul wrote the epistle to the Philippians? Doth it not plainly appear from the express words of the apostle that he wrote that epistle to a pure church of Christ, a church set in order, having bishops and deacons? He doth not direct the epistle to all the people at Philippi, but, "*To all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.*" He thanks God for their fellowship in the gospel, he expresseth how highly he esteemed them, he commendeth their constant obedience, yet he exhorteth them to, "*work out their own salvation with fear and trembling,*" although God had made them a willing people, Philippians 2:12. Why and wherefore are such exhortations to believers, if assurance of salvation be in the very nature and essence of true faith? Or if every man obtains it upon his first believing the gospel? Where then is the ground in the word of God for this particular claim, this particular appropriation, this assurance of salvation, to every, or to any one hearer of the gospel, before he believeth it, or upon his first believing of it?

Every man that hath the faith of the gospel, must also necessarily have the hope of the gospel. But not all who have the faith and hope of the gospel, have either the confidence and the rejoicing of this hope, or the full assurance of it. The confidence of hope must mean a good degree thereof, which probably may belong to such as have attained to the stature of young men in Christ, who are strong in the Lord, in whom the word of God abideth, and who have overcome the wicked one, as St. John describeth them, 1 John 2:14. The full assurance of hope meaneth the greatest certainty that a man can have of his eternal salvation on this side the grave. It may be well allowed that all believers have not this assurance that they shall be absolutely and forever saved without any possibility of their falling away. This full assurance doth not pertain to such as are but little children, it can only belong to those, whom St. John calleth fathers, who are grown up unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, Ephesians 4:13. Yet every new born babe, every little child of God hath good hope through grace. But none are so apt to be jealous over themselves, and afraid of falling away, as little children of God. It is a good sign of saving grace, when a person is both afraid of sinning, and afraid of falling short. Wheresoever God putteth His fear into any man's heart, it worketh thus. Upon the revelation of Jesus Christ, and upon believing in Him, a man may be very happy and full of divine joy. He may go on without much reflection about his own state, rejoicing in the Lord, for that which engages the attention at first is the new discovery of God as a Saviour, a Saviour of sinners. The soul is charmed, and captivated, and enamoured with Jesus Christ. The heart is warm, and well, and all alive. Thus may a man continue for days, and weeks, or months together. And yet afterwards, when these refreshing consolations, or communications of the Holy Ghost, are in a measure abated, or for a small space withdrawn, the man is at a loss what to think of himself. He may question, whether it hath not been all a delusion. His heart may be sorely pained, and he dare scarcely rely on Christ. He is ready to do anything for Christ, yea, he is willing to suffer for Christ, and to go after Him without the camp, bearing his reproach. But being yet weak in the faith, he dare scarce believe on Him, for he is afraid that he is wrong, but he knoweth not where else to go, yet he staggereth and fainteth, until he is again refreshed by the comforts of the Holy Ghost. And indeed all believers at first are too apt to live by feelings, joys, and gifts of grace, instead of living by the faith of the Son of God. But the dear Redeemer, "*feedeth his flock like a shepherd, he gathereth the lambs with his arm, and carrieth them in his bosom,*" Isaiah 40:11. He hath a tender and compassionate heart, for He is the good shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep, John 10:11,17. His sheep also love Him, and they like very well to feel and enjoy His love to them. "*He hath loved them with an everlasting love, therefore hath he extended his loving-kindness unto them,*" Jeremiah 31:3. But they love Him because He hath first loved them, and shedded His love abroad in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto them, 1 John 4:19; Romans 5:5. Their

love to Him groweth by the enjoyment of His love communicated unto them. And as their faith and love grow, their hope increaseth. And when love groweth cold, hope languisheth.

I shall now proceed to set forth how believers grow in grace, and by degrees attain to the confidence, and to the full assurance of hope. And herein I purpose to proceed according to the law and the testimony. For although every Christian's experience, so far as it is genuine, or the inward teaching of the Holy Ghost, will answer exactly to what is recorded in the holy Scriptures, as face answereth to face in a glass; yet all God's people are liable to mistakes. A man's own experience, when it is according to the word of God, is an evidence to himself, but it is no proof to others. And every man ought to examine and try his experience by the word of God, and never set it up for a standard, however deep it may be, lest he should get into fancy and delusion. There are false impressions and feelings, as well as true ones. There is a spirit of error, yea many; but the Spirit of truth is one. "*Beloved,*" saith St. John, "*believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God,*" 1 John 4:1. No man that is taught of God, need to be afraid to be tried by the word of truth. "*Every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God,*" John 3:20,21. "*He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but he that putteth his trust in the Lord, shall be made fat,*" Proverbs 28:25,26.

The Lord Jesus, whose voice His people hear, and whom they follow, instructeth His disciples how to continue in His favour, and to attain to great experience. "*If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you,*" John 14:15-23,26. And again, "*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you,*" John 15:10-12,14. It appeareth from what I have quoted, but more clearly from the whole discourse which the Lord Jesus made to his disciples just before His death, recorded in the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of St. John's gospel that He promised to His disciples, who already had the Spirit of truth, and the faith (for they had made confession of their faith, and He had pronounced them clean through their believing the truth which He had spoken unto them, that He was the Son of God), that in continuing to believe on Him, and in obeying Him out of love, and in particular, by giving obedience to the new commandment, which He gave thrice unto them, they should receive the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, in another respect, even as the Spirit of adoption, as the Comforter. For although the Spirit of faith or truth, and the Spirit of adoption are both equally the operations of the Holy Ghost, yet they are distinct operations, and done at different times. By the former, sinners are taught to know the Lord, and to believe on Him,

and by the latter, believers attain to the comfortable and experimental knowledge of their personal interest in Christ. But the Lord Jesus promised to them further that He would manifest Himself unto them, and that if they did abide in Him or continue to believe on Him, which He earnestly exhorted them to do, and continue to do whatsoever He commanded them that then they should continue in the enjoyment of His love, and have free access to Him in prayer, and have fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that His joy should remain in them, and that their joy should be full, which St. Peter expoundeth to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This is the confidence and the rejoicing, or the glorying, of the hope of the gospel. And thus our Lord plainly pointeth out the way to all His followers to the end of the world, how to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God, and to attain to the full assurance of hope. They are to keep the faith, and to do whatsoever He hath commanded them, and then they will find that in so doing, there is great reward: their souls will be as a watered garden.

Now though it is granted that a man upon believing the gospel is actually justified, and interested in Christ, and hath good hope, and hath joy and peace, which may be very great, and continue a long time together with some, without almost any intermission, though not so with all alike; yet this is but an earnest, and the beginning of hope, it is neither the confidence, nor the full assurance thereof. Neither is such joy a sufficient evidence or proof that any man is in the faith. For as joys, feelings, or impressions, sweet sensations and comforts, illuminations and participations of the gifts of the Holy Ghost are common to them that believe only for a while, as well as to them that believe to the saving of their souls: to them that believe the word without understanding and without the love of the truth, as well as to them that understand and believe the truth and love it; to them that know the Lord in a sense, and escape the pollutions of the world thereby for a time, but are again entangled therein and overcome (2 Peter 2:20; Hebrews 10:26); to them who have been reputed as brethren for whom Christ died, as if they had been bought and sanctified by His blood (2 Peter 2:1; Hebrews 10:29); having been enlightened, and having tasted of the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and having tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, and yet after this fall away (Hebrews 6:4-6); as well as to them who are indeed bought with the blood of Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit through the belief of the truth, and really are in the new covenant, and endure unto the end; therefore it requireth more proof, other evidence, and a further manifestation of the Holy Spirit than this to evince or prove that a man hath the faith of the gospel, or is a believer of the right sort. I cannot approve the doctrine which some teach that a man may become perfect at once, or assured of his salvation, by putting forth some sort of an act of faith. How the propagators of such doctrines can maintain either of them by the word of God, I cannot understand. To me they both appear quite repugnant and contrary to the whole analogy of faith delivered by the Lord Jesus and His apostles. Jesus said, *“So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear,”* Mark 4:26-28. I conceive that our Lord here intimateth a growth by degrees, both in the knowledge of Him, and in the knowledge of a personal interest in Him. God generally worketh gradually both in nature, and in grace. We all have too much of self in us, but none are so apt to be lifted up and full of a good conceit of themselves, as those who know least of their own heart. The nearer a man cometh to perfection, the worse opinion he hath of himself. The great apostle Paul thought himself to be the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints. And his advice is good for all, *“Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall,”* 1 Corinthians 10:12. It hath been remarked before that enlightened people are very high, and that God humbleth those whom He bringeth into the everlasting covenant, and though upon believing they become happy, yet they are not apt to reflect much about themselves just at first,

whether they are justified, or sanctified, or sealed to the day of redemption. They are full of Christ, charmed and enamoured with Christ, and intent how to please Him. They hate sin, they long to be holy, and to live to the praise and glory of God. They are willing in the ground of their hearts to follow Christ, to deny themselves, and to bear His cross, and so long as they go on thus, believing, loving, and obeying, they continue happy. If they hear the gospel preached, and mention is made, how persons feel when they are justified, perhaps they may think, Am I justified? Are my sins forgiven? But if they hear no mention made of such things, they may go on well and happily, and make little or no reflection about their personal interest, but however they are very intent to get to heaven, and they are walking in the right way towards it, and in due time to know assuredly that they shall come thither. But if such sweet and simple souls cease to look unto Jesus, and begin to be pleased with themselves and think too highly of themselves (and this is very natural), or if they follow their own wills contrary to the will of God, then certainly there will be a withholding of their happiness. Then doubts and fears will arise. And though hope abideth at the bottom, yet it is mixed with pain, and attended with fear, and fear hath torment. Then in holy fear, though out of love to Christ, but with anxiety of mind, such persons seek the Lord. They pray, long, desire, hunger and thirst after Christ, and earnestly endeavour to do what may be pleasing to Him. So they go on working in fear and trembling, as all believers are exhorted to do, Philippians 2:12, until the Holy Ghost sheddeth afresh the love of God in their hearts, and giveth them joy and peace in believing. Now while believers go on thus believing and obeying, the Holy Ghost will refresh their souls, and every time that He sheds abroad the love of God in their hearts, and filleth them with joy, they receive a fresh pledge of God's love to them. Thus they get experience, and experience worketh hope, and hope maketh not ashamed. Thus their faith is strengthened, their hope increaseth, their love is renewed, their hearts are enlarged, and they are animated and encouraged to run the Christian race, to deny themselves, to bear the cross of Christ, and to follow Him, and to be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and to be fruitful in every good work.

But if such happy persons get into a good conceit of themselves, and be lifted up with pride by admiring themselves, and as Ezekiel expresseth it, "*Do trust in their own beauty, because they are decked with ornaments, clothed with fine linen, and fed with fine flour, and honey, and oil, and play the harlot because of their renown,*" (See Ezekiel 16). If they begin to live by their experience, by their privileges, by the promises, or by the change wrought in them, and the graces communicated to them by the Holy Ghost, then they turn from Christ. They do not abide in Him, they do not obey the truth, they do not continue in or keep the faith, they do not live by the faith of the Son of God, as poor, weak, needy sinners should constantly do. The blood and righteousness of Christ is not then the only ground of their hope, confidence, glorying and rejoicing. The flesh and blood of Christ is not then their only meat and drink, the stay, comfort, food and support of their souls. They rejoice in themselves, and their glorying is vain. They get into self-righteousness and unbelief, and so lose their strength, and are liable to fall into sin. And it is agreeable to corrupt nature, and easy to do so. Therefore to keep the faith in opposition to the self-righteous bias, which is natural to man, is one main part of the Christian warfare. Strength to obey the commands of Christ floweth from believing on Him. The commandment to believe on Him meaneth to continue constantly believing on Him, and to live by what we believe of Him. Without Christ believers can do nothing. He that doth not abide in Him, or continue to believe on Him, will certainly wither. When self-righteousness or unbelief prevaieth, a man may soon be drawn away by some lust or other, and overcome thereby. And self-righteousness and the love of the world are as nearly connected together, as faith and self-denial are. Thus true believers may grieve the Holy Spirit, and become dry and miserable in their hearts. And if they then endeavour to help themselves by forced working, as it is natural, or if they

would deny comfort and support from anything of their own either within or without, they are not relieved. Whither then must they go for help? To the atoning blood and everlasting righteousness and strength of Christ. They can have no help until they look again unto Jesus. He is like the green fir-tree, from Him is their fruit found. *“They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine,”* Hosea 14:7,8. But when believers walk contrary to God’s way, then He will also walk contrary unto them, and chastise them, Leviticus 26:27,28. For as many as the Lord loveth, He rebuketh and chasteneth, when they go astray, Revelation 3:19. And whoever sinneth and is not rebuked and corrected for it, hath greater reason to suspect himself to be a bastard, and not a son of God (See Hebrews 12:5-8; Psalm 89:30-32). And no child of God hath reason to expect the Holy Ghost as the Comforter, bearing witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God, unless he keeps the faith, and obeys out of love. It hath been already shown that the labour of love, and the patience of hope, is the genuine work of faith; and the only sure proof that anyone is in the faith; and that the good ground hearers are distinguished from the three other sorts by these three marks: *They understood the word, they kept the word, and they brought forth fruit with patience* (See Matthew 13:19,23; and Luke 8:15). When therefore any man maketh anything but the blood and righteousness of Christ, the ground of his hope, what proof is there that he hath the faith? When any man liveth by anything else than by the blood and righteousness of Christ, what proof is there that he is keeping the faith? When any man doth not continue in the labour of love and the patience of hope, paying regard to all the laws of Christ’s kingdom, and particularly to the new commandment by being fruitful in good works, what proof is there that he is in the faith? When any man is living by his frames, feelings, manifestations, joys, comforts, experience, exercises of soul, convictions, distresses, heart-work, holiness, duties or anything else, what proof is there that he is then living by Christ or keeping the faith? And what proof doth a man give that he is living by Christ, when he doth not obey his commandments? He that keepeth not his words, doth not love Him, John 14:24. Have not then all those persons, who rest the evidence of their salvation upon their exercises of soul, their joys, feelings and experience; but do not bring forth the good works required by the gospel, which are the proper fruits of faith and the only sure proof of it; great reason to suspect themselves to be of the number of the stony-ground, or thorny-ground hearers, or foolish virgins that have lamps, but want the oil?

St. Peter exhorteth all who have obtained precious faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, *“to give all diligence to add to their faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things, is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,”* 2 Peter 1:5-11.

St. James also saith, *“What doth it profit, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works?”* (he meaneth the labour of love done in obedience to the new commandment) *“can faith (such a dead faith) save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warm and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”* James 2:14-17. What proof is there that such a one hath true faith? He shows it in word and tongue, but not in deed and truth. And so he manifesteth that his faith is dead, because it worketh not by love. And afterwards he setteth forth how

Abraham's faith wrought with his works, and thereby was made perfect, or attained to its full growth. Abraham evidenced, manifested and clearly proved that he was a true believer, by his cheerful, ready and willing obedience to the will of God, even when he was put to a very hard trial. Abraham was justified, when he believed the promise, according to St. Paul's sense of justification, for St. Paul treateth of the justification of ungodly sinners before God, and how they are made righteous. But Abraham was proved, manifested, and declared to be justified, when he would have offered his son Isaac upon the altar. And this is St. James's sense of justification, for St. James is not treating, how sinners are constituted or made righteous; but how believers, who are already justified, are manifested, proved, and declared to be so. And the Lord Jesus at the day of judgment will manifest and declare, who were justified here, by the works of love done to His people for His sake. Now when Abraham had given good proof of his faith, God renewed His promise to him, and confirmed it by His oath that He would surely bless him. Then God gave to Abraham the assurance of His salvation, and of fulfilling everything that He had promised to him.

St. Paul likewise in Hebrews 6, having set forth what is common to those who are enlightened and believe for a while, and to those who believe to the saving of their souls, being regenerated and in the new covenant, plainly pointeth out the difference between them, whereby they may be distinguished, and expressly mentioneth, THE LABOUR OF LOVE, obedience to the new commandment; and he desires them to show the same diligence in that work and labour of love, by continuing to minister to the saints for Christ's sake, "*To the full assurance of hope unto the end,*" For he only shall be saved that endureth unto the end, who continueth in the faith, and in the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. "*But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him,*" Hebrews 10:38.

The same apostle also in his epistle to the Ephesians, who were sealed with the Holy Spirit, makes mention of their faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints. And he prayed for them that God would give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him that they might understand and know the hope of His calling, and the exceeding greatness of His power toward them who believe, and that He would grant unto them according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith, that they being rooted and grounded in love, might be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fullness of God. He reminds them that they had been sinners, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others, and that their salvation was of mere grace, and not of works. But he tells them that they were created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before ordained that they should walk in them. And he beseecheth them to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called (and not as other men walked, in the vanity of their minds, who were alienated from the life of God, and past feeling, and had given themselves over to work all uncleanness), and to be careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit by committing sin, but to follow Christ, and walk in love, and to shun all sin both in thought, word, and deed: for because of sin cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Therefore he exhorts them to walk as children of God in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth, and to prove what is acceptable unto the Lord, and to be circumspect and wise, and to redeem the time, and to perform the religious, relative, and moral duties, and to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. "*Put on,*" saith he, "*the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the*

evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore (like brave followers of Christ) having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness,” (Let the leading truth of the gospel that God is well pleased in His Son, be the girdle of your loins, and let your confidence in the righteousness of Christ be your breastplate. Simplicity and godly sincerity, and uprightness of heart, are great virtues in a Christian. But, “*God putteth no trust in his saints,”* Job 15:15. Neither should any of them confide in their own virtues. For the heart of man is deceitful, Jeremiah 17:9, and in many things we all offend, James 3:2). “*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,”* (Peace, love, and good-will towards all men, and be ready to every good word and work), “*Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”* (Believe every word of God, every precept, every promise, every threatening. Trust in the Lord at all times, let Him be the stay and strength of your souls, your refuge and resting place. But trust not in yourselves, or in anything of your own, have no confidence in the flesh). “*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”* (Let the hope of salvation animate you; and when ye are tempted, fight your enemies with the word of God, as the Lord Jesus did, when He was tempted, saying, It is written). “*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”*

Christians should pray constantly, and not faint. They should pray in private, and also join in the assemblies of the saints in prayer, in thanksgiving, in singing psalms and hymns, in hearing the word, and in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, and in contributing according to their several abilities to the necessity of the saints, all which are means to attain to the full assurance of hope, and especially the two last. For in the Lord’s Supper believers commemorate that the Lord Jesus died for them, that His body was broken for them, and that His blood was shed for the remission of their sins; and in communicating to the necessity of His people, they give proof of their love to Him, and of their obedience to His new commandment.¹

St. John likewise plainly sheweth, how believers come to know and to be assured or satisfied in their own hearts that they are of the truth, or in the faith. “*For this,”* saith he, “*is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him, and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us,”* 1 John 3:11,14-24. From hence it appears that believers, by keeping the Father’s commandment, which is to believe on the name of Jesus Christ, and by obeying the new commandment, not in word, but in works, attain the testimony of their own heart or conscience that they are of the truth; herein also they have the sure testimony of the word of God, whereby they are to try and judge themselves. And the Holy Ghost, as the Comforter, will be given to them, by whose testimony they will know and be satisfied that they are

children of God. For although believers should have the testimony of their own consciences tried by the word, and thereby have rejoicing in themselves, yet they would not be quite satisfied without the testimony of the Holy Ghost, who sealeth them, and beareth witness with their spirits that they are the children of God. (See Romans 8:15,16; Ephesians 4:30).

From what hath been said, it may be concluded that the assurance of hope, the sure knowledge of salvation or of a man's personal interest in Christ, standeth on the testimony of a man's own conscience tried by the word of God, and on the sure testimony of the word of God, the marks and proofs laid down in the holy Scriptures; and on that which crowneth the other two, the sure testimony of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of adoption, or the Comforter, who sheddeth abroad the love of God in the heart, filleth it with divine joy and peace, and sometimes with a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. And thus believers abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, Romans 15:13. And the way whereby they attain to the full assurance of hope, is plainly enough pointed out by the Lord Jesus and His apostles.

Now if any man would try himself by the word of God, and examine himself whether he is in the faith, let him first weigh and consider well, *in what* he believeth, or *by what* he hopeth to be saved. If he hopeth to be saved by his own worth or works, either in whole or in part, then his foundation is not according to the Scriptures. But if upon serious examination he findeth that he maketh Jesus Christ his only foundation, and that his whole trust and confidence is in Him and in His blood and righteousness only, this foundation is according to the Scriptures. In order then to try whether this is indeed his faith, let him weigh and consider well, what influence and effect it hath upon his heart and life, and whether it produceth the fruits of righteousness. And herein he must try himself by the Scripture-evidence, the fruits of faith, which have been set forth. Let him examine, whether he hateth and forsaketh sin; whether he denieth ungodliness and worldly lusts, and liveth soberly, righteously and godly; whether he loveth the Lord Jesus, and out of love to Him is willing to deny himself, and to bear the cross, and to follow Him in obedience to the will of God in all things whatsoever He hath commanded; and whether he loveth the people of God, not in word, but in deed, and in truth.

It is granted that upon strict examination a man may be ashamed and confounded to find that he comes so much short of his duty, and is so little conformable to the holy Jesus, and yet he may have the testimony of his conscience that it is the purpose and desire of his heart to please God, and that he doth not love sin, or allow of it; but that he doth willingly, though imperfectly, obey the Lord, and hath respect to all His sayings, and doth bring forth good fruit, and is ready to serve the people of God out of love to Christ. The apostle Paul saith, "*Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself. But if a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself;*" Galatians 6:4,3. As every man certainly doth, who thinketh himself to be a believer, when his conversation is contrary to the gospel of Christ, and his faith neither overcometh the world, nor worketh by love.

But if upon examination a man hath the verdict of his own conscience that he doth believe in the Lord Jesus, and that he hath love to the people of God, and is ready to serve them as he hath opportunity and ability, and yet nevertheless is not satisfied about his own personal interest in Christ, then let him continue in the faith, trusting only in Jesus Christ, drawing all his hope of salvation from the blood and obedience of Christ, and let him go on in the strength of Christ, observing and obeying all things whatsoever the Lord Jesus hath commanded, and in due time he will receive satisfaction, if he fainteth not. The Spirit of God will bear witness with his spirit that he

is a child of God. This appeareth plainly from the following words of the Lord Jesus, *“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,”* John 8:31,32.

It may be observed that although I deny that any man is assured of his eternal salvation before he believeth the gospel, or upon his first believing it, yet I maintain that a living faith cannot be without a lively hope and fervent charity in some measure or degree. As soon as any man believeth the gospel unfeignedly with understanding, the hope of eternal life springeth up in his heart, and he findeth rest unto his soul in the Lord Jesus. As the body without the spirit is dead, as faith without works is dead, so also is that faith dead which is not accompanied or followed with a good hope of being saved through grace.

Be it also observed that I have limited no time, how long it is, or how long it must be, before any man is sealed by the Holy Ghost after he believeth the gospel. This dependeth upon the good pleasure of almighty God. Observe also that the following words, which have been quoted, *“In whom also **after** that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,”* (Ephesians 1:13), are not literally translated. There is no word in the original for *after*, but the passage is well translated according to the analogy of faith, which is a good rule both for translating and expounding the holy Scripture. The Greek words literally rendered are, *“In whom also **having believed**, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.”*²

The words literally translated prove that the Ephesians believed in Christ, before they were sealed by the Holy Ghost, as the promised Comforter or the Spirit of adoption. The apostles believed in the Lord Jesus, and were justified, before our Lord’s death, for He Himself pronounced that they were clean (John 13:10), but they themselves did not receive the Holy Ghost as the Comforter, until after our Lord’s resurrection, and they were ignorant of the nature of His kingdom until the day of Pentecost (See John 20:19-30; Acts 1:6).

But further, I allow that the very first time that the Holy Ghost sealeth a believer, or beareth witness with his spirit that he is a child of God that then he may say in truth at that time that Christ hath loved him, and given Himself for him. But though a believer can say so at that time, yet while he is weak in faith, and neither grounded nor settled in the faith, nor confirmed in the hope of the gospel, doubts and fears and suspicions may arise after that, when he is not under the refreshing consolations of the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth them that are His, the sealing on God’s part remaineth firm and sure, but the believer is not fully satisfied about it in his own conscience. And from hence arise his doubts and fears, which do him no harm; but serve to quicken him to give diligence, to make his calling and election sure.

But when a believer abideth in Christ, and Christ’s words abide in him, and he continueth to go on, thus diligently and faithfully, then by repeated experience of the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, he will become very lively and strong in the hope of the gospel. And after the Holy Ghost, having sealed him to the day of redemption, hath confirmed him in the hope of the gospel, by powerfully bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God, shedding the love of God abundantly abroad in his heart, filling his soul with the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and with joy unspeakable and full of glory, thenceforward he will hardly be troubled with any more doubts about his eternal salvation, unless he backslideth shamefully, or falleth into gross sin, whereby he grieveth the Holy Spirit exceedingly, and desperately woundeth his own conscience, and thereby cometh under the sore displeasure and heavy chastisement of almighty

God. In such cases the Lord may send upon a believer wonderful and great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. Yea, the Lord his God may give him a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And his life shall hang in doubt, and he shall fear day and night, and shall have none assurance of his life. In the morning he shall say, Would God it were even, and at even he shall say, Would God it were morning, for the fear of his heart wherewith he shall fear. So that he shall be mad, for the sight of his eyes which he shall see. (See Deuteronomy 28:15-68). And generally great pride of heart, or a high and haughty spirit, goeth before such a dreadful fall.

But he that walketh humbly, walketh surely. He that abideth faithful, shall abound in hope. And by repeated enjoyment his love will be perfected. And perfect love casteth out the fear of coming short, 1 John 4:18. "*To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace,*" Romans 8:6. Therefore all true believers, who continue steadfastly in the faith, and give diligence in the labour of love, and in a cheerful obedience to all the commandments of Christ, shall walk under the light of God's countenance, they will go from strength to strength, they will make their calling and election sure, they will experimentally know the truth, and thereby be made free, they will attain to the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Such will have the testimony of their own conscience, and the testimony of the word of God, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God.

I shall here point out some mistakes.

Those writers and preachers who maintain that the assurance of salvation, the assurance of hope, cometh by a direct act of faith, or by an appropriating act of faith, or by any other sort of an act of faith, are mistaken, for the assurance of hope, the assurance of eternal salvation, cometh by no act of faith, but by the testimony of a believer's own conscience, and by the testimony of the word and Spirit of God, as hath been set forth.

Again, the one faith, which is the faith of the gospel, is not a faith of doctrines. A man may have the one faith, and be a happy man, and yet ignorant of several of the doctrines contained in the Scriptures. But every believer ought diligently to search the Scriptures, and to pray that his understanding may be enlightened in the knowledge of the things of God. St. Paul saith, "*Brethren, be not children in understanding, but in understanding be men,*" 1 Corinthians 14:20. And it is also written, "*That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good,*" Proverbs 19:2. But a man may have a faith of doctrines, and not have the one faith. A man may hold a system of doctrines clearly and connectedly, and yet be an unconverted man; he may be a strenuous advocate for the doctrine of particular redemption, and yet he himself may prove to be a reprobate at last. Some are more apt to judge and condemn others for their ignorance, than to judge themselves, and to examine, whether they themselves are in the faith. It is to be feared that some make the doctrine of election their foundation, instead of Christ and his righteousness, and because they believe the doctrine of election, they conclude that they are elected. But this may prove to be a fatal error to them.

Again, some writers and preachers lay down so many steps and stages of conviction, and speak of so many different sorts of acts of faith, for which they have no authority in the word of God that they greatly perplex the minds of serious people. But this is not the worst of it. Such doctrine hath a tendency to teach people to establish their own righteousness, and to turn away their minds from the atonement made by the blood of Christ, and from His everlasting righteousness. For serious

persons, when they hear such doctrine, will be very apt to examine and search into themselves, whether they have gone through such exercises of soul, and whether they have put forth such acts of faith, and if they think that they have not, they will be perplexed and distressed to no purpose; but if they think that they have, then, unless God prevents it, they will be ready to build upon such things, which may be nothing but their own workings or fancies, and from thence they will be apt to draw hope that they are right, and shall be saved, and so may get into a good conceit of themselves to their own loss and damage. But whoever derives his hope of salvation from any other source than the blood and righteousness of Christ is in a great error.

Again, the doctrine of a sinless perfection, which some have warmly maintained by writing and preaching, is another error, which hath a twofold evil tendency. It oppreseth and greatly distresseth awakened persons, who feel the corruptions of their own sinful nature, and yet long to be holy, and groan for deliverance, and it setteth them (when they are persuaded to believe it) upon a self-working and wrestling to attain it, instead of going to Christ as poor and helpless sinners as they feel themselves to be, and hoping only in His mercy. But this is not the worst evil. For, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, He knows when to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to open the prison to them that are bound. It doth the most mischief to those who think that they have attained it, and really believe that they are perfect. It filleth them with vain imaginations, and a very good conceit of themselves. And no wonder, if such should fall into gross sins, and strange delusions. This doctrine is repugnant to the whole analogy of faith. St. John the favourite disciple wrote his first epistle to the churches, not to the unconverted world, but to the believers, as appeareth from this passage, *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God,”* 1 John 5:13. Yet he saith unto them, and he ranks himself among them, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,”* 1 John 1:8,9. He that hath no sin, hath none to confess, or to be forgiven. So he hath no need to pray any more, as the Lord Jesus taught his disciples to pray, *“And forgive us our debts,”* Matthew 6:12. But it would be well for such persons to weigh themselves in the balance of the sanctuary, to examine themselves by the most holy law of God, and consider well, whether they fulfil every jot and tittle of it in thought, word, and deed. If they offend in one point, they are sinners, and God’s commandment is exceeding broad, Psalm 119:96.

Again, there are some men, who were once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and received the good word of God with joy, and escaped the pollutions of the world for a while, but afterwards grew lukewarm, and were again entangled by the world and overcome, yet they support themselves by their past experience, and by the doctrine of final perseverance, and hope that they shall do well at last. But their hope may prove to be the vain hope of the hypocrite that shall perish. And it certainly will, unless they are roused out of their spiritual lethargy. For men may experience all that such persons have experienced, and yet nevertheless be unregenerated, and never brought into the everlasting covenant. The five foolish virgins were enlightened, and made a great profession of religion, perhaps they might think themselves to be the elect of God, and the favourites of the most High, and never questioned their interest in Christ, because they took it for granted that their feelings and impressions and joys were sufficient proof and evidence that they belonged to Christ. But they went down to the grave with a lie in their right hand, Isaiah 44:20, and never found out their fatal mistake, until the door of heaven was shut upon them. Awake, ye that slumber, if ye be in Christ, arise and trim your lamps. *“Watch (and be ready), for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh,”* Matthew 25:13.

Again, true believers are too apt to live by other things than by Christ alone. This is a practical error, which hath worse tendencies than we are soon aware of. It is the duty of every believer to keep the faith, and constantly to live by believing in Christ. This seems to some to be a very little matter, so they give little attention to it, they almost overlook it. But it is a momentous matter, a lesson that is not soon nor easily learned. Man fell by unbelief, and he is slow of heart to believe what God hath spoken, Luke 24:25. To keep the truth in opposition to the natural propensity which is in us all to live by our own righteousness, or something of our own, is the principal part of the Christian warfare. It is like the pendulum in a clock, which moves all the wheels; and if the pendulum stoppeth, then the whole clock stands. All our strength to obey flows from believing in Christ. He that abideth not in Christ, is cast forth as a branch, and is withered. He that abideth in Him, bringeth forth much fruit, John 15:5,6. The apostle Paul both did, and suffered a great deal for Christ; and he had extraordinary gifts, and uncommon experience, yet the greatest thing that he saith of himself at last, is this, *"I have kept the faith,"* 2 Timothy 4:7. There is but one bread which God hath provided for His children to live by. And the bread of God is He, who came down from heaven, and giveth life to the world. His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed. He that eateth His flesh, and drinketh His blood, dwelleth in Him, and He in him. He that eateth of this bread, shall live forever, (See John 6). But he that liveth by anything else, erreth from the faith, and will hurt his own soul. Whoever then resteth on, and liveth by his frames, feelings, manifestations, joys, comforts, experience, exercise of soul, heart-work, inward or outward holiness, works or duties, by the precious promises, by doctrines, or even by what affords the greatest satisfaction to a child of God, I mean the testimony of the Holy Ghost bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God, is then erring from the faith, and straying from the right path. For Christ is the believer's resting place, and his proper food is the blood and righteousness of Christ, by which alone he ought to live. *"I rejoiced greatly,"* saith St. John, *"that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father,"* 2 John 4. By walking in the truth he meaneth keeping the faith, continuing in the faith, believing in Christ and His righteousness, and living thereby. For, *"This is his (the Father's) commandment that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ,"* 1 John 3:23. And again, *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God,"* 1 John 5:13. To have an experimental knowledge of eternal life, to be assured of being saved with an everlasting salvation, is a very great blessing, and a cordial to the soul. But he that hath it, ought not to live by that, but by Christ. All the heavenly frames, sweet sensations, manifestations of God's love, all the joys and comforts, which are the gifts of the Holy Ghost, are all and each of them valuable blessings, for which God's people should be thankful, and whereby they should be animated to run with patience the race set before them, but they should not live by them, but by Christ. Every impression, every moving of the Holy Spirit within a man, and whatever the Spirit worketh in the heart, is good and precious work. All God's people are holy, for without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Hebrews 12:14. All the works and duties of believers which are done in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, are pleasing to God. All the doctrines revealed in the book of God ought to be regarded and believed. The precious promises are recorded for the comfort and encouragement of God's people in trials and temptations, and when they are under the cross of Christ. And believers should use the word of God, the promises, threatenings, and precepts thereof, as the Lord Jesus did when He was on earth. Believers also should conscientiously observe all the ordinances and all the means of grace appointed by the Lord, and they should earnestly seek the Lord's face and fellowship with Him in the performance of them all. But believers are not to make a Christ of any of these things, nor to live by them, but by Christ himself.

I hope the reader will understand my meaning, and not run from one extreme to another. I caution believers to take heed that they do not live by anything done in them, or done by them, or by any blessings or gifts of grace which they have received, for if they do, it will turn their minds from Christ, and lead them into selfishness and pride and vain glory, and the end of it will be loss and shame. I exhort them to look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, and as needy and dependent creatures to hang on Him, and to live by Him, by believing in Him and what He hath done; and cheerfully and with all their heart to serve Him by giving obedience to all things whatsoever He hath commanded. By beholding Him they will be changed into His image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Corinthians 3:18. They will neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord. Their souls will be like a watered garden. I maintain that a living faith cannot be without a lively hope. A religion without feeling is a lifeless religion. Believers should by no means be careless and indifferent, whether they continue in Christ's love, whether they walk under the light of God's countenance, and have fellowship with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or not. It ought to be the daily care and concern of every child of God, how to walk and to please God that he may feel and enjoy much of God's presence in his heart. He that goes on daily, and is empty in his heart, and doth not earnestly seek the Lord's face, hath a cold heart towards the Lord Jesus. He hath good reason to suspect, whether all be right and well between him and his Redeemer. Read the Song of Solomon, and there you may see the heart and affections of the church towards the bridegroom. *"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine. Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee, we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine, the upright love thee. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love."* St. John saith, *"If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full,"* 1 John 1:7,4. The Lord Jesus said, *"I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me (continueth believing on Him), shall never thirst,"* John 6:35. And He said that His Spirit should be in His people, *"A well of water springing up into everlasting life,"* John 4:14. And the Lord saith, *"Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness,"* Isaiah 55:2. *"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation,"* Isaiah 12:3. The Lord Jesus would have His people to abide in Him, and to obey Him cheerfully, and to continue in His love and be happy. *"These things,"* saith He, *"have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full,"* John 15:11.

I shall now proceed to speak more largely and particularly of the things hoped for, not yet seen. I have already spoken of the blessings consequent upon believing the gospel, and on setting forth how believers attain to the full assurance of hope. I have shown that there is an increase of their happiness, provided that they keep the faith, and cheerfully do whatsoever Christ hath commanded them. For, *"Great peace have they which love God's law,"* Psalm 119:165. And, *"Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river,"* Isaiah 48:17,18. For the Lord will keep him in much peace, whose mind is stayed on Him, because he trusteth in the Lord, Isaiah 26:3. But believers at present are in a state of warfare, therefore they must not expect absolute and uninterrupted happiness on this side the grave. In the Lord Jesus they may have peace, but in the world they must expect tribulation, John 16:33.

The apostle Paul observeth with regard to his own experience that after he had been caught up into Paradise, "*Lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure,*" 2 Corinthians 12:7. After very great blessings and extraordinary joys frequently follow great trials and temptations. David, in his prosperity said, "*I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong.*" But his next words are, "*Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled,*" Psalm 30:6,7. When a believer is full of joy, he is in a happy frame; but he is not perhaps at such times the strongest, or in a situation, which is most safe from temptation. When a believer is poor in spirit, very low in himself, and deeply sensible of his own weakness and unworthiness, although it causeth some pain and smart of heart unto him, and maketh him to pray earnestly and to cry to the Lord, yea, to hunger and thirst for fresh supplies of grace, yet he is then strong, and in a growing state, and in a good situation. The apostle Paul saith of himself, "*When I am weak, then I am strong,*" 2 Corinthians 12:10. But in my opinion, a child of God is in the very best and safest state, when his heart being warmed, and melted, and enamoured with the love of the dear Lamb of God, he is also at the same time humbled in the dust, and bowed down with shame, under a sense of his own poverty, so that he blusheth to think that such grace should be so freely given to such a poor and unworthy creature. For then he cometh nearest to the heavenly state, wherein the redeemed are represented as casting down their crowns from a sense that they did not deserve them; and yet at the same time with hearts glowing with love and gratitude, and transported and ravished with joy, sing, "*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, who hath redeemed us to God by his blood,*" Revelation 5:12,9. But God's people in this present world experience different frames or states. They have here joys and consolations, and also crosses and temptations. However God maketh all things work together for their good, Romans 8:28. They have good things at present, and before long they will have better things, but they will have their best things at last.

"*It is appointed unto men once to die,*" Hebrews 9:27. And the hour of death is an awful season. "*But the righteous hath hope in his death,*" Proverbs 14:32. For, "*Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints,*" Psalm 116:15. "*The sting of death is sin,*" 1 Corinthians 15:56. But when sin is pardoned, the sting of death is taken away. Death entered into the world by sin, "*and death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,*" Romans 5:12. Sin reigned unto death, but death will put an end to sin in the children of God. All believers do not die in the same triumphant manner, yet when they walk through the valley of the shadow of death, they shall fear no evil, for the Lord is with them, His rod and His staff they comfort them, Psalm 23:4. And "*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them,*" Revelation 14:13. At death there will be a full end of all their crosses, all their temptations, all their trials, and of all their sinful corruptions. The good angels will carry their souls into Abraham's bosom. And, "*There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest,*" Job 3:17.

In the separate state their souls will be at rest. There they will enjoy the sweet and comfortable fellowship of their brethren in Christ, who lived, and died before them. Fellowship with the people of God is a comfortable refreshment in this imperfect state, then it will be more pure. There they will be free from sorrow, there it will be better with them than it was here, and there they will contentedly wait in hope of better things to come.

St. John in the Revelation saith, "*And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great*

multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 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. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God,” Revelation 19:5-9. And again, St. John saith, *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them, and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years,”* Revelation 20:4-6. I know that some men say that the first resurrection is to be understood in a spiritual sense, but if so, why not also the second? But, *“There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust,”* Acts 24:15. *“And they that have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation,”* John 5:29. And those that have done good, and are not recompensed here, shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just (See Luke 14:12-14).

How, or where, or when, this glorious reign of Christ shall be, I do not say. But I believe that there will be such a state, because it is revealed in the Scriptures. And this is one of the good things to come, not yet seen. It may be presumed that this will be as happy a state at least, as Adam had before he fell, if not better. For the second Adam, the Lord Jesus, will be there in person among His people. And the people of God will have better things then, than they have now in this present world.

Another good thing hoped for at the resurrection is that the present vile body shall be changed, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Lord Jesus Christ, Philippians 3:21. *“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”* 1 Corinthians 15:53-55. Thenceforward the saints will have no more sickness, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, nor misery, nor plague, nor death.

Again, when the day of the Lord shall come, *“In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up,”* 2 Peter 3:10. *“When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe,”* 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10. *“When Christ shall appear, then shall his people also appear with him in glory,”* Colossians 3:4. The day of judgment will be a day of honour and triumph to the people of God: but to the wicked it will be a day of horror and dreadful dismay. They will wish for the rocks and mountains to fall on them to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? Revelation 6:16,17. But the people of God will lift up their heads, and sing for joy of heart. *“Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he*

will save us, this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation,” Isaiah 25:9. Then will the Lord God take away the rebuke of His people, and wipe away their tears. He will pronounce and declare them just and blessed. He will make mention to their praise of their works of love done for His name’s sake. He will confess them to be His people before angels, men, and devils. He will give them crowns of glory. He will grant unto them to sit with Him in his throne, Revelation 3:21. “*Know ye not,*” saith St. Paul, “*that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?*” 1 Corinthians 6:2,3. (See Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:29,30). These indeed are wonderful things, and extraordinary. How much better will it then be with the people of God, than it is at present? Here they meet with hatred, scorn and contempt from men, there they will receive praise, honour and glory from God. Then shall the righteous stand in great boldness before the face of such as have reviled and persecuted them, and made no account of their labours, and their enemies will be terribly confounded before them, as it is finely set forth in the fifth chapter of the wisdom of Solomon. These things are not yet seen, but hoped for at the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

At this most glorious day of triumph the Lord Jesus, the King of glory, will give His people possession of the heavenly inheritance, saying, “*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,*” Matthew 25:34. Then there will be an eternal separation made between believers and unbelievers. Then, “*The fearful* (all who were ashamed of Christ and His words through fear of man), *and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars* (all that taught any other way of salvation than by Jesus Christ, for St. John saith, “*Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ,*” 1 John 2:22) *shall depart, and go away into everlasting punishment, prepared for the devil and his angels, and have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death,*” (See Revelation 21:8; Matthew 25:41,46). But the righteous shall go away with songs of praise, and everlasting joy upon their heads, and enter into eternal life, and into the joy of their Lord. There will faith end in sight, and hope in fruition. For there will be fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. Then will the Lord Jesus fulfil the promise which He made to His disciples before His death, “*I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also,*” John 14:2,3. There the saints shall behold the glory of their Lord; and shall see His face, and shall ever be with Him, (See John 17:22,24; Revelation 22:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

But how shall I find words to set forth that heavenly state, that inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away (1 Peter 1:4), that exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 4:17), that eternal life which is to be the reward of the most meritorious work of Jesus Christ; that kingdom which God hath prepared for his beloved Son? When the apostle Paul was caught up into Paradise, he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter (2 Corinthians 12:4). How indeed can words express those things which God hath prepared for them that love him, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man (1 Corinthians 2:9)? The good pleasure of God resteth on His beloved Son, in whom His soul delighteth, whom He hath appointed heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2). What reward then will He bestow upon Him for that most perfect obedience unto death, wherewith He is well pleased? Undoubtedly, the greatest reward, the greatest glory, and the greatest happiness which God Almighty can give. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork (Psalm 19:1). We see His wisdom, and power, and goodness, and majesty by the things which He hath made in this present world. But we neither see, nor know, what He can do. The creation of this world, and all the wonderful works of God, which have been, now are, and hereafter

shall be to the end of time, are only an apparatus for the glorious kingdom of Christ. The prophets have spoken great things of it, (See Daniel 7:9-14; Isaiah 65:17-25). The glory and honour of the nations shall be brought into it (Revelation 21:26). The good land of Canaan, and the kingdom of Israel was a type of it. But the kingdom of Israel, even in the days of Solomon in the very height of all his glory, was but as a twinkling star to the sun, when compared to the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Had Adam stood and never sinned, he would have lived thereby, and would have enjoyed this world in its paradisaical state together with the favour and friendship of his Creator. But he could not have merited anything more. For it is the bounden duty of every creature to do the will of God in its place and order in the creation, and no creature can merit of God. The holy angels, which have stood faithful, continue happy, and enjoy the favour of God in their order in the creation, but they are not entitled to that happiness and glory, which is the reward of the righteousness of God manifested in the flesh. For "*Christ took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham,*" Hebrews 2:16. The holy angels worship the Lord Jesus, and serve Him now in the affairs of His church, for they are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation (See Hebrews 1:6,14). They rejoice at the conversion of a sinner (Luke 15:10). And they will not be losers, but gainers, by the wonderful work of man's redemption, for they will know more of God, and have a nearer access to Him, than they had before. The rays of the Deity which were before intolerable (for God dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto, 1 Timothy 6:16) are now qualified through the humanity of Christ. And the angels, being subjected and put under the Lord Jesus as the Head of the whole Creation, will probably be thereby preserved and secured from falling, and confirmed in their happy state for ever (See Colossians 1:20; Ephesians 1:10). For they join with the church triumphant in giving praise and adoration to the Lamb that was slain (Revelation 5:11,12).

But what is most amazing and surpasseth thought (for who could have conceived it, if it had not been revealed?) is that man, who in his first and perfect state, was made lower than the angels, and who forfeited his happiness, and utterly ruined himself by disobedience, should be exalted above the angels, and have the nearest access to God. For where Christ is, there also is the church His bride to be, and the glory which He hath, His spouse also will have, John 17:22-24. O the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ to His church, which passeth knowledge! O the unsearchable riches of God's grace given to sinners in Jesus Christ, and for His sake only! The saints of all creatures will indeed have the greatest reason everlastingly to love, and praise, and adore their dear Redeemer. Well may they cast down their crowns and sing, Worthy is the Lamb!

The Lord Jesus said unto his disciples, "*Because I live, ye shall live also,*" John 14:19. Once He died to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, but He rose again, "*And behold, he is alive for evermore, Amen, and hath the keys of hell and of death,*" Revelation 1:18. Therefore the saints shall live for ever, and shall be with the Lord Jesus for ever, where they will be happy, completely happy, always happy, uninterruptedly happy, they will be filled with all the fullness of God. Therefore they will be absolutely and most perfectly happy to all eternity. This is the HOPE of the gospel.

Well might the apostle Paul say, "*Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,*" Philippians 3:8. To know Christ is to be wise unto salvation, for it is eternal life, John 17:3. Solomon describes Jesus Christ under the character of Wisdom, and introduceth him speaking, "*Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man. Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children, for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear*

instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whosoever findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul, all they that hate me, love death,” Proverbs 8:4,32-36. And it is written, “*Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand: and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is everyone that retaineth her,”* Proverbs 3:13-18. “*Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee, she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee,”* Proverbs 4:7-9.

Now to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of the kings of the earth, who hath on His head many crowns, and a name written that no man knoweth but He Himself; to Him, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any one thing made that was made, to Him, by whom all things consist, who is King of kings and Lord of lords; to Him, the Lamb once slain, who is Head of His body the church, which He purchased with His own blood; who now is exalted to the right hand of the majesty on high, and is the appointed heir of all things; who as the Son of man now reigns before His ancients gloriously, on the mount Sion in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, whose head and whose hair are white like wool, as white as snow, and whose eyes are as a flame of fire, whose feet are like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and whose voice is as the sound of many waters, who hath in His right hand seven stars, out of whose mouth goeth a sharp two-edged sword, and whose countenance is as the sun shining in his strength; to Him with the Father and the Holy Ghost be blessing, and honour, and glory, and power for ever and ever, Amen.

Grace and peace be with all in every nation under heaven, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

¹The contribution or offering usually made in most churches at the Lord’s Supper is very proper at that time. In the primitive church it was called sacrifice, and *koinonia*, the communion or the fellowship. The apostle Paul saith, “*But to do good, and to communicate, forget not. For with such sacrifices God is well pleased,”* Hebrews 13:16. See 2 Corinthians 8:4.

²The very same Greek word which in this passage is translated *after that ye believed*, occurs in Hebrews 4:3, and is there translated *have believed*. “*For we which **have believed**, do enter into rest.*” I conceive that all true believers enter into rest immediately after they have believed. And they have good hope and an earnest in their hearts, but are not yet assured, of their eternal salvation.
