

A Body of Divinity

by Thomas Watson

The Thomas Watson Reading Room

From A Body of Divinity, contained in sermons upon the Westminster's Assembly's catechism

- A Preliminary Discourse To Catechising
- Man's Chief End
- The Scriptures
- The Being of God
- The Knowledge of God
- The Holiness of God
- The Mercy of God
- The Trinity
- The Providence of God
- Original Sin
- The Covenant of Grace
- Christ's Humiliation In His Incarnation
- Christ the Redeemer
- Justification
- Sanctification
- Peace
- A Believer's Privilege At Death

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

A Preliminary Discourse To Catechising

'If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled.' - Col 1: 23.

Intending next Lord's day to enter upon the work of catechising, it will not be amiss to give you a preliminary discourse, to show you how needful it is for Christians to be well instructed in the grounds of religion. 'If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled.'

I. It is the duty of Christians to be settled in the doctrine of faith.

II. The best way for Christians to be settled is to be well grounded.

I. It is the duty of Christians to be settled in the doctrine of faith. It is the apostle's prayer, I Pet 5: 10, 'The God of all grace stablish, strengthen, settle you.' That is, that they might not be meteors in the air, but fixed stars. The

apostle Jude speaks of 'wandering stars, in verse 13. They are called wandering stars, because, as Aristotle says, 'They do leap up and down, and wander into several parts of the heaven; and being but dry exhalations, not made of that pure celestial matter as the fixed stars are, they often fall to the earth.' Now, such as are not settled in religion, will, at one time or other, prove wandering stars; they will lose their former steadfastness, and wander from one opinion to another. Such as are unsettled are of the tribe of Reuben, 'unstable as water,' Gen 49: 4; like a ship without ballast, overturned with every wind of doctrine. Beza writes of one Belfectius, that his religion changed as the moon. The Arians had every year a new faith. These are not pillars in the temple of God, but reeds shaken every way. The apostle calls them 'damnable heresies.' 2 Pet 2: 1. A man may go to hell as well for heresy as adultery. To be unsettled in religion, argues want of judgement. If their heads were not giddy, men would not reel so fast from one opinion to another. It argues lightness. As feathers will be blown every way, so will feathery Christians. *Triticum non rapit ventus inanes palae jactantur.* Cyprian. Therefore such are compared to children. Eph 4: 14. 'That we be no more children, tossed to and fro.' Children are fickle sometimes of one mind sometimes of another, nothing pleases them long; so unsettled Christians are childish; the truths they embrace at one time, they reject at another; sometimes they like the Protestant religion, and soon after they have a good mind to turn Papists.

[1] It is the great end of the word preached, to bring us to a settlement in religion. Eph 4: 11, 12, 14. 'And he gave some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the edifying of the body of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children.' The word is called a hammer. Jer 23: 29. Every blow of the hammer is to fasten the nails of the building; so the preacher's words are to fasten you the more to Christ; they weaken themselves to strengthen and settle you. This is the grand design of preaching, not only for the enlightening, but for the establishing of souls; not only to guide them in the right way, but to keep them in it. Now, if you be not settled, you do not answer God's end in giving you the ministry.

[2] To be settled in religion is both a Christian's excellence and honour. It is his excellence. When the milk is settled it turns to cream; now he will be zealous for the truth, and walk in close communion with God. And his honour. Prov 16: 31. 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.' It is one of the best sights to see an old disciple; to see silver hairs adorned with golden virtues.

[3] Such as are not settled in the faith can never suffer for it. Sceptics in religion hardly ever prove martyrs. They that are not settled hang in suspense; when they think of the joys of heaven they will espouse the gospel, but when they think of persecution they desert it. Unsettled Christians do not consult what is

best, but what is safest. 'The apostate (says Tertullian) seems to put God and Satan in balance, and having weighed both their services, prefers the devil's service, and proclaims him to be the best master: and, in this sense, may be said to put Christ to open shame.' Heb 6: 6. He will never suffer for the truth, but be as a soldier that leaves his colours, and runs over to the enemy's side; he will fight on the devil's side for pay.

[4] Not to be settled in the faith is provoking to God. To espouse the truth, and then to fall away, brings an ill report upon the gospel, which will not go unpunished. Psa 78: 57, 59. 'They turned back, and dealt unfaithfully. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel.' The apostate drops as a wind-fall into the devil's mouth.

[5] If ye are not settled in religion, you will never grow. We are commanded 'to grow up into the head, even Christ.' Eph 4: 15. But if we are unsettled there is no growing: 'the plant which is continually removing never thrives.' He can no more grow in godliness, who is unsettled, than a bone can grow in the body that is out of joint.

[6] There is great need to be settled, because there are so many things to unsettle us. Seducers are abroad, whose work is to draw away people from the principles of religion. I John 2: 26. 'These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.' Seducers are the devil's factors; they are of all others the greatest felons that would rob you of the truth. Seducers have silver tongues, that can put off bad wares; they have a sleight to deceive. Eph 4: 14. The Greek word there is taken from those that can throw dice, and cast them for the best advantage. So seducers are impostors, they can throw a dice; they can so dissemble and sophisticate the truth, that they can deceive others. Seducers deceive by wisdom of words. Rom 16: 18. 'By good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple.' They have fine elegant phrases, flattering language, whereby they work on the weaker sort. Another sleight is a pretence of extraordinary piety, that so people may admire them, and suck in their doctrine. They seem to be men of zeal and sanctity, and to be divinely inspired, and pretend to new revelations. A third cheat of seducers is, labouring to vilify and nullify sound orthodox teachers. They would eclipse those that bring the truth, like black vapours that darken the light of heaven; they would defame others, that they themselves may be more admired. Thus the false teachers cried down Paul, that they might be received, Gal 4: 17. The fourth cheat of seducers is, to preach the doctrine of liberty; as though men are freed from the moral law, the rule as well as the curse, and Christ has done all for them, and they need to do nothing. Thus they make the doctrine of free grace a key to open the door to all licentiousness. Another means is, to unsettle Christians by persecution. 2 Tim 3: 12. The gospel is a rose that cannot be plucked without prickles. The legacy Christ has bequeathed is the CROSS. While there is a devil and a wicked man in

the world, never expect a charter of exemption from trouble. How many fall away in an hour of persecution! Rev 12: 4. 'There appeared a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns; and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven.' The red dragon, by his power and subtilty, drew away stars, or eminent professors, that seemed to shine as stars in the firmament of the church.

To be unsettled in good is the sin of the devils. Jude 6. They are called, 'morning stars,' Job 38: 7, but 'falling stars;' they were holy, but mutable. As the vessel is overturned with the sail, so their sails being swelled with pride, they were overturned. I Tim 3: 6. By unsettledness, men imitate lapsed angels. The devil was the first apostate. The sons of Sion should be like mount Sion, which cannot be removed.

II. The second proposition is, that the way for Christians to be settled is to be well grounded. 'If ye continue grounded and settled.' The Greek word for grounded is a metaphor which alludes to a building that has the foundation well laid. So Christians should be grounded in the essential points of religion, and have their foundation well laid.

Here let me speak to two things:

[I] That we should be grounded in the knowledge of fundamentals. The apostle speaks of 'the first principles of the oracles of God.' Heb 5: 12. In all arts and sciences, logic, physic, mathematics, there are some praecognita, some rules and principles that must necessarily be known for the practice of those arts; so, in divinity, there must be the first principles laid down. The knowledge of the grounds and principles of religion is exceedingly useful.

(I.) Else we cannot serve God aright. We can never worship God acceptably, unless we worship him regularly; and how can we do that, if we are ignorant of the rules and elements of religion? We are to give God a 'reasonable service.' Rom 12: 1: If we understand not the grounds of religion, how can it be a reasonable service?

(2.) Knowledge of the grounds of religion much enriches the mind. It is a lamp to our feet; it directs us in the whole course of Christianity, as the eye directs the body. Knowledge of fundamentals is the golden key that opens the chief mysteries of religion; it gives us a whole system and body of divinity, exactly drawn in all its lineaments and lively colours; it helps us to understand many of those difficult things which occur in the reading of the word; it helps to untie many Scripture knots.

(3.) It furnishes us with armour of proof; weapons to fight against the adversaries of the truth.

(4.) It is the holy seed of which grace is formed. It is semen fidei, the seed of faith. Psa 9: 10. It is radix amoris, the root of love. Eph 3: 17. 'Being rooted and grounded in love.' The knowledge of principles conduces to the making of a complete Christian.

[2] This grounding is the best way to being settled: 'grounded and settled.' A tree, that it may be well settled, must be well rooted; so, if you would be well settled in religion, you must be rooted in its principles. We read in Plutarch of one who set up a dead man, and he would not stand. 'Oh,' said he, 'there should be something within.' So, that we may stand in shaking times, there must be a principle of knowledge within; first grounded, and then settled. That the ship may be kept from overturning, it must have its anchor fastened. Knowledge of principles is to the soul as the anchor to the ship, that holds it steady in the midst of the rolling waves of error, or the violent winds of persecution. First grounded and then settled.

Use one: See the reason why so many people are unsettled, ready to embrace every novel opinion, and dress themselves in as many religions as fashions; it is because they are ungrounded. See how the apostle joins these two together, 'unlearned and unstable.' 2 Pet 3: 16. Such as are unlearned in the main points of divinity are unstable. As the body cannot be strong that has the sinews shrunk; so neither can that Christian be strong in religion who wants the grounds of knowledge, which are the sinews to strengthen and stablish him.

Use two: See what great necessity there is of laying down the main grounds of religion in a way of catechising, that the weakest judgement may be instructed in the knowledge of the truth, and strengthened in the love of it. Catechising is the best expedient for the grounding and settling of people. I fear one reason why there has been no more good done by preaching, has been because the chief heads and articles in religion have not been explained in a catechistical way. Catechising is laying the foundation. Heb 6: 1: To preach and not to catechise is to build without foundation. This way of catechising is not novel, it is apostolic. The primitive church had their forms of catechism, as those phrases imply, a 'form of sound words,' 2 Tim 1: 13, and 'the first principles of the oracles of God,' Heb 5: 12. The church had its catechumenoï, as Grotius and Erasmus observe. Many of the ancient fathers have written for it, as Fulgentius, Austin, Theodoret, Lactantius, and others. God has given great success to it. By thus laying down the grounds of religion catechistically, Christians have been clearly instructed and wondrously built up in the Christian faith, insomuch that Julian the apostate, seeing the great success of catechising, put down all schools and places of public literature, and instructing of youth. It is my design, therefore (with the blessing of God); to begin this work of catechising the next Sabbath day; and I intend every other Sabbath, in the afternoon, to make it my whole work to lay down the grounds and fundamentals of religion in a catechistical way. If I am hindered in

this work by men, or taken away by death, I hope God will raise up some other labourer in the vineyard among you, that may perfect the work which I am now beginning.

From *A Body of Divinity*. Published by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

I. MAN'S CHIEF END

Q1: WHAT IS THE CHIEF END OF MAN?

A: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

Here are two ends of life specified. I. *The glorifying of God*. II. *The enjoying of God*.

I. *The glorifying of God*, I Pet iv 11. 'That God in all things may be glorified.' The glory of God is a silver thread which must run through all our actions. I Cor x 31 - 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' Everything works to some end in things natural and artificial; now, man being a rational creature, must propose some end to himself, and that should be, that he may lift up God in the world. He had better lose his life than the end of his living. The great truth is asserted, that the end of every man's living should be to glorify God. Glorifying God has respect to all the persons in the Trinity; it respects God the Father who gave us life; God the Son, who lost his life for us; and God the Holy Ghost, who produces a new life in us; we must bring glory to the whole Trinity.

When we speak of God's glory, the question will be moved, *What are we to understand by God's glory?*

There is a twofold glory: [I] The glory that God has in himself, his intrinsic glory. Glory is essential to the Godhead, as light is to the sun: he is called the 'God of Glory.' Acts vii 2. Glory is the sparkling of the Deity; it is so co-natural to the Godhead, that God cannot be God without it. The creature's honour is not essential to his being. A king is a man without his regal ornaments, when his crown and royal robes are taken away; but God's glory is such an essential part of his being, that he cannot be God without it. God's very life lies in his glory. This glory can receive no addition, because it is infinite; it is that which God is most tender of, and which he will not part with. Isa xlviii 11. 'My glory I will not give to another.' God will give temporal blessings to his children, such as wisdom, riches, honour; he will give them spiritual blessings, he will give them

grace, he will give them his love, he will give them heaven; but his essential glory he will not give to another. King Pharaoh parted with a ring off his finger to Joseph, and a gold chain, but he would not part with his throne. Gen xli 40. 'Only in the throne will I be greater than thou.' So God will do much for his people; he will give them the inheritance; he will put some of Christ's glory, as mediator, upon them; but his essential glory he will not part with; 'in the throne he will be greater.' [2] The glory which is ascribed to God, or which his creatures labour to bring to him. I Chron xvi 29. 'Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.' And, I Cor vi 20. 'Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit.' The glory we give God is nothing else but our lifting up his name in the world, and magnifying him in the eyes of others. Phil i 20. 'Christ shall be magnified in my body.'

What is it to glorify God?

Glorifying God consists in four things: 1. Appreciation, 2. Adoration, 3. Affection, 4. Subjection. This is the yearly rent we pay to the crown of heaven.

[1] Appreciation. To glorify God is to set God highest in our thoughts, and to have a venerable esteem of him. Psa xcxi 8. 'Thou, Lord, art most high for evermore.' Psa xcvii 9. 'Thou art exalted far above all gods.' There is in God all that may draw forth both wonder and delight; there is a constellation of all beauties; he is *prima causa*, the original and spring head of being, who sheds a glory upon the creature. We glorify God, when we are God-admirers; admire his attributes, which are the glistening beams by which the divine nature shines forth; his promises which are the charter of free grace, and the spiritual cabinet where the pearl of price is hid; the noble effects of his power and wisdom in making the world, which is called 'the work of his fingers.' Psa viii 3. To glorify God is to have God-admiring thoughts; to esteem him most excellent, and search for diamonds in this rock only.

[2] Glorifying God consists in adoration, or worship. Psa xxix 2. 'Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.' There is a twofold worship: (1.) A civil reverence which we give to persons of honour. Gen xxiii 7. 'Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the children of Heth.' Piety is no enemy to courtesy. (2.) A divine worship which we give to God as his royal prerogative. Neh viii 6. 'They bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces towards the ground.' This divine worship God is very jealous of; it is the apple of his eye, the pearl of his crown; which he guards, as he did the tree of life, with cherubims and a flaming sword, that no man may come near it to violate it. Divine worship must be such as God himself has appointed, else it is offering strange fire. Lev x 1. The Lord would have Moses make the tabernacle, 'according to the pattern in the mount.' Exod xxv 40. He must not leave out anything in the pattern, nor add to it. If God was so exact and curious

about the place of worship, how exact will he be about the matter of his worship! Surely here everything must be according to the pattern prescribed in his word.

[3] Affection. This is part of the glory we give to God, who counts himself glorified when he is loved. Deut vi 5. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.' There is a twofold love: (1.) *Amor concupiscentiae*, a love of concupiscence, which is self-love; as when we love another, because he does us a good turn. A wicked man may be said to love God, because he has given him a good harvest, or filled his cup with wine. This is rather to love God's blessing than to love God. (2.) *Amor amicitue*, a love of delight, as a man takes delight in a friend. This is to love God indeed; the heart is set upon God, as a man's heart is set upon his treasure. This love is exuberant, not a few drops, but a stream. It is superlative; we give God the best of our love, the cream of it. Cant viii 2. 'I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.' If the spouse had a cup more juicy and spiced, Christ must drink of it. It is intense and ardent. True saints are seraphims, burning in holy love to God. The spouse was *amore percussa*, in fainting fits, 'sick of love.' Cant ii 5. Thus to love God is to glorify him. He who is the chief of our happiness has the chief of our affections.

[4] Subjection. This is when we dedicate ourselves to God, and stand ready dressed for his service. Thus the angels in heaven glorify him; they wait on his throne, and are ready to take a commission from him; therefore they are represented by the cherubims with wings displayed, to show how swift they are in their obedience. We glorify God when we are devoted to his service; our head studies for him, our tongue pleads for him, and our hands relieve his members. The wise men that came to Christ did not only bow the knee to him, but presented him with gold and myrrh. Matt ii 11. So we must not only bow the knee, give God worship, but bring presents of golden obedience. We glorify God when we stick at no service, when we fight under the banner of his gospel against an enemy, and say to him as David to King Saul, 'Thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.' I Sam xvii 32.

A good Christian is like the sun, which not only sends forth heat, but goes its circuit round the world. Thus, he who glorifies God, has not only his affections heated with love to God, but he goes his circuit too; he moves vigorously in the sphere of obedience.

Why must we glorify God?

[1] Because he gives us our being. Psa c 3. 'It is he that made us.' We think it a great kindness in a man to spare our life, but what kindness is it in God to give us our life! We draw our breath from him; and as life; so all the comforts of life are from him. He gives us health, which is the sauce to sweeten our life; and

food, which is the oil that nourishes the lamp of life. If all we receive is from his bounty, is it not reasonable we should glorify him? Should we not live to him, seeing we live by him? Rom xi 36. 'For of him, and through him, are all things.' All we have is of his fulness, all we have is through his free grace; and therefore to him should be all. It follows, therefore, 'To him be glory for ever.' God is not our benefactor only, but our founder, as rivers that come from the sea empty their silver streams into the sea again.

[2] Because God has made all things for his own glory. Prov xvi 4. 'The Lord hath made all things for himself:' that is, 'for his glory.' As a king has excise out of commodities, so God will have glory out of everything. He will have glory out of the wicked. If they will not give him glory, he will get glory upon them. Exod xiv 17. 'I will get me honour upon Pharaoh.' But especially has he made the godly for his glory; they are the lively organs of his praise. Isa xlili 21. 'This people have I formed for myself, and they shall shew forth my praise.' It is true, they cannot add to his glory, but they may exalt it; they cannot raise him in heaven, but they may raise him in the esteem of others here. God has adopted the saints into his family, and made them a royal priesthood, that they should show forth the praise of him who hath called them. I Pet ii 9.

[3] Because the glory of God has intrinsic value and excellence; it transcends the thoughts of men, and the tongues of angels. His glory is his treasure, all his riches lie here; as Micah said. Judges xvii 24. 'What have I more? So, what has God more? God's glory is more worth than heaven, and more worth than the salvation of all men's souls. Better kingdoms be thrown down, better men and angels be annihilated, than God should lose one jewel of his crown, one beam of his glory.

[4] Creatures below us, and above us, bring glory to God; and do we think to sit rent free? Shall everything glorify God but man? It is a pity then that man was ever made. (1.) Creatures below us glorify God, the inanimate creatures and the heavens glorify God. 'The heavens declare the glory of God.' Psa xix i. The curious workmanship of heaven sets forth the glory of its Maker; the firmament is beautified and pencilled out in blue and azure colours, where the power and wisdom of God may be clearly seen. 'The heavens declare his glory:' we may see the glory of God blazing in the sun, and twinkling in the stars. Look into the air, the birds, with their chirping music, sing hymns of praise to God. Every beast in its kind glorifies God. Isa xlili 20. 'The beast of the field shall honour me.' (2.) Creatures above us glorify God: 'the angels are ministering spirits.' Heb i 14. They are still waiting on God's throne, and bring some revenues of glory into the exchequer of heaven. Surely man should be much more studious of God's glory than the angels; for God has honoured him more than the angels, in that Christ took man's nature upon him, and not the angels'. Though, in regard of creation, God made man 'a little lower than the angels,' Heb ii 7, yet in regard of

redemption, God has set him higher than the angels. He has married mankind to himself; the angels are Christ's friends, not his spouse. He has covered us with the purple robe of righteousness, which is a better righteousness than the angels have. 2 Cor v 21. If then the angels bring glory to God, much more should we, being dignified with honour above angelic spirits.

[5] We must bring glory to God, because all our hopes hang upon him. Psa xxxix 7. 'My hope is in thee.' And Psa lxii 5. 'My expectation is from him;' I expect a kingdom from him. A child that is good-natured will honour his parent, by expecting all he needs from him. Psa lxxxvii 7. 'All my springs are in thee.' The silver springs of grace, and the golden springs of glory are in him.

From *A Body of Divinity*. Available from by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

THE SCRIPTURES

Q-II: WHAT RULE HAS GOD GIVEN TO DIRECT US HOW WE MAY GLORIFY AND ENJOY HIM?

A: The Word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

2 Tim 3: 16. 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,' &c. By Scripture is understood the sacred Book of God. It is given by divine inspiration; that is, the Scripture is not the contrivance of man's brain, but is divine in its origin. The image of Diana was had in veneration by the Ephesians, because they supposed it fell from Jupiter. Acts 19: 35. The holy Scripture is to be highly revered and esteemed, because we are sure it came from heaven. 2 Pet 1: 21. The two Testaments are the two lips by which God has spoken to us.

How does it appear that the Scriptures have a Jus Divinum, a divine authority stamped upon them?

Because the Old and New Testament are the foundation of all religion. If their divinity cannot be proved, the foundation on which we build our faith is gone. I shall therefore endeavour to prove this great truth, that the Scriptures are the very word of God. I wonder whence the Scriptures should come, if not from God. Bad men could not be the authors of it. Would their minds be employed in inditing such holy lines? Would they declare so fiercely against sin? Good men could not be the authors of it. Could they write in such a strain? or could it stand with their grace to counterfeit God's name, and put, Thus saith the Lord, to a

book of their own devising? Nor could any angel in heaven be the author of it, because the angels pry and search into the abyss of gospel mysteries, I Pet 1: 12, which implies their nescience of some parts of Scripture; and sure they cannot be the authors of that book which they themselves do not fully understand. Besides, what angel in heaven durst be so arrogant as to personate God and, say, 'I create,' Isa 65: 17, and, 'I the Lord have said it,' Numb 14: 35. So that it is evident, the pedigree of Scripture is sacred, and it could come from none but God himself.

Not to speak of the harmonious consent of all the parts of Scripture, there are seven cogent arguments which may evince it to be the Word of God.

[1] Its antiquity. It is of ancient standing. The grey hairs of Scripture make it venerable. No human histories extant reach further than Noah's flood: but the holy Scripture relates matters of fact that have been from the beginning of the world; it writes of things before time. That is a sure rule of Tertullian, 'That which is of the greatest antiquity, id verum quod primum, is to be received as most sacred and authentic.'

[2] We may know the Scripture to be the Word of God by its miraculous preservation in all ages. The holy Scriptures are the richest jewel that Christ has left us; and the church of God has so kept these public records of heaven, that they have not been lost. The Word of God has never wanted enemies to oppose, and, if possible, to extirpate it. They have given out a law concerning Scripture, as Pharaoh did the midwives, concerning the Hebrew women's children, to strangle it in the birth; but God has preserved this blessed Book inviolable to this day. The devil and his agents have been blowing at Scripture light, but could never blow it out; a clear sign that it was lighted from heaven. Nor has the church of God, in all revolutions and changes, kept the Scripture that it should not be lost only, but that it should not be depraved. The letter of Scripture has been preserved, without any corruption, in the original tongue. The Scriptures were not corrupted before Christ's time, for then Christ would not have sent the Jews to them. He said, 'Search the Scriptures.' He knew these sacred springs were not muddied with human fancies.

[3] The Scripture appears to be the Word of God, by the matter contained in it. The mystery of Scripture is so abstruse and profound that no man or angel could have known it, had it not been divinely revealed. That eternity should be born; that he who thunders in the heavens should cry in the cradle; that he who rules the stars should suck the breasts; that the Prince of Life should die; that the Lord of Glory should be put to shame; that sin should be punished to the full, yet pardoned to the full; who could ever have conceived of such a mystery, had not the Scripture revealed it to us? So, for the doctrine of the resurrection; that the same body which is crumbled into a thousand pieces, should rise idem numero,

the same individual body, else it were a creation, not a resurrection. How could such a sacred riddle, above all human disquisition, be known, had not the Scripture made a discovery of it? As the matter of Scripture is so full of goodness, justice and sanctity, that it could be breathed from none but God; so the holiness of it shows it to be of God. Scripture is compared to silver refined seven times. Psa 12: 6. The Book of God has no errata in it; it is a beam of the Sun of Righteousness, a crystal stream flowing from the fountain of life. All laws and edicts of men have had their corruptions, but the Word of God has not the least tincture, it is of meridian splendour. Psa 119: 140. 'Thy word is very pure,' like wine that comes from the grape, which is not mixed nor adulterated. It is so pure that it purifies everything else. John 17: 17. 'Sanctify them through thy truth.' The Scripture presses holiness, so as no other book ever did: it bids us live 'soberly, righteously, and godly;' Titus 2: 12; soberly, in acts of temperance; righteously, in acts of justice; godly, in acts of zeal and devotion. It commends to us, whatever is 'just, lovely, and of good report.' Phil 4: 8. This sword of the Spirit cuts down vice. Eph 6: 17. Out of this tower of Scripture is thrown a millstone upon the head of sin. The Scripture is the royal law which commands not only the actions, but affections; it binds the heart to good behaviour. Where is there such holiness to be found, as is digged out of this sacred mine? Who could be the author of such a book but God himself?

[4] That the Scripture is the Word of God is evident by its predictions. It prophesies of things to come, which shows the voice of God speaking in it. It was foretold by the prophet, 'A virgin shall conceive,' Isa 7: 14, and, the 'Messiah shall be cut off.' Dan 9: 26. The Scripture foretells things that would fall out many ages and centuries after; as how long Israel should serve in the iron furnace, and the very day of their deliverance. Exod 12: 41. 'At the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day, it came to pass that the host of the Lord went out of Egypt.' This prediction of future things, merely contingent, and not depending upon natural causes, is a clear demonstration of its divine origin.

[5] The impartiality of those men of God who wrote the Scriptures, who do not spare to set down their own failings. What man that writes a history would black his own face, by recording those things of himself that might stain his reputation? Moses records his own impatience when he struck the rock, and tells us, he could not on that account enter into the land of promise. David relates his own adultery and bloodshed, which stands as a blot in his escutcheon to succeeding ages. Peter relates his own pusillanimity in denying Christ. Jonah sets down his own passions, 'I do well to be angry to the death.' Surely had their pen not been guided by God's own hand, they would never have written that which reflects dishonour upon themselves. Men usually rather hide their blemishes than publish them to the world; but the penmen of holy Scripture eclipse their own name; they take away all glory from themselves, and give the glory to God.

[6] The mighty power and efficacy that the Word has had upon the souls and consciences of men. It has changed their hearts. Some by reading Scripture have been turned into other men; they have been made holy and gracious. By reading other books the heart may be warmed, but by reading this book it is transformed. 2 Cor 3: 3. 'Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.' The Word was copied out into their hearts, and they were become Christ's epistle, so that others might read Christ in them. If you should set a seal upon marble, and it should make an impression upon the marble, and leave a print behind, there would be a strange virtue in that seal; so when the seal of the Word leaves a heavenly print of grace upon the heart, there must needs be a power going along with that Word no less than divine. It has comforted their hearts. When Christians have sat by the rivers weeping, the Word has dropped as honey, and sweetly revived them. A Christian's chief comfort is drawn out of these wells of salvation. Rom 15: 4. 'That we through comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.' When a poor soul has been ready to faint, it has had nothing to comfort it but a Scripture cordial. When it has been sick, the Word has revived it. 2 Cor 4: 17. 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' When it has been deserted, the Word has dropped in the golden oil of joy. Lam 3: 31. 'The Lord will not cast off for ever.' He may change his providence, not his purpose; he may have the look of an enemy, but he has the heart of a father. Thus the Word has a power in it to comfort the heart. Psa 119: 50. 'This is my comfort in mine affliction; for thy word has quickened me.' As the spirits are conveyed through the arteries of the body, so divine comforts are conveyed through the promises of the Word. Now, the Scriptures having such an exhilarating, heart-comforting power in them, shows clearly that they are of God, and it is he that has put the milk of consolation into these breasts.

[7] The miracles by which Scripture is confirmed. Miracles were used by Moses, Elijah, and Christ, and were continued, many years after, by the apostles, to confirm the verity of the holy Scriptures. As props are set under weak vines, so these miracles were set under the weak faith of men, that if they would not believe the writings of the Word, they might believe the miracles. We read of God's dividing the waters, making a pathway in the sea for his people to go over, the iron swimming, the oil increasing by pouring out, Christ's making wine of water, his curing the blind, and raising the dead. Thus God has set a seal to the truth and divinity of the Scriptures by miracles.

The Papists cannot deny that the Scripture is divine and sacred; but they affirm quoad nos, with respect to us, it receives its divine authority from the church; and in proof of it they bring that Scripture, I Tim 3: 15, where the church is said to be the ground and pillar of truth.

It is true, the church is the pillar of truth; but it does not therefore follow that the Scripture has its authority from the church. The king's proclamation is fixed on the pillar, the pillar holds it out, that all may read, but the proclamation does not receive its authority from the pillar, but from the king; so the church holds forth the Scriptures, but they do not receive their authority from the church, but from God. If the Word of God be divine, merely because the church holds it forth, then it will follow, that our faith is to be built upon the church, and not upon the Word, contrary to Eph 2: 20. 'Built upon the foundation (that is the doctrine) of the apostles and prophets.'

Are all the books in the Bible of the same divine authority?

Those which we call canonical.

Why are the Scriptures called canonical?

Because the Word is a rule of faith, a canon to direct our lives. The Word is the judge of controversies, the rock of infallibility. That only is to be received for truth which agrees with Scripture, as the transcript with the original. All maxims in divinity are to be brought to the touchstone of Scripture, as all measures are brought to the standard.

Are the Scriptures a complete rule?

The Scripture is a full and perfect canon, containing in it all things necessary to salvation. 2 Tim 3: 15. 'From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.' It shows the Credenda, what we are to believe; and the Agenda, what we are to practise. It gives us an exact model of religion, and perfectly instincts us in the deep things of God. The Papists, therefore, make themselves guilty, who eke out Scripture with their traditions, which they consider equal to it. The Council of Trent says, that the traditions of the church of Rome are to be received *pari pietatis affectu*, with the same devotion that Scripture is to be received; so bringing themselves under the curse. Rev 22: 18. 'If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.'

What is the main scope and end of Scripture?

To reveal a way of salvation. It makes a clear discovery of Christ. John 20: 31: 'These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing ye might have life through his name.' The design of the Word is to be a test whereby our grace is to be tried; a sea-mark to show us what rocks are to be avoided. The Word is to sublimate and quicken our affections; it is to be our directory and consolatory; it is to waft us over to the land of promise.

Who should have the power of interpreting Scripture?

The Papists assert that it is in the power of the church. If you ask whom they mean by the church, they say, The Pope, who is head of it, and he is infallible; so Bellarmine. But that assertion is false, because many of the Popes have been ignorant and vicious, as Platina affirms, who writes the lives of Popes. Pope Liberius was an Arian, and Pope John XII denied the immortality of the soul; therefore Popes are not fit interpreters of Scripture; who then?

The Scripture is to be its own interpreter, or rather the Spirit speaking in it. Nothing can cut the diamond but the diamond; nothing can interpret Scripture but Scripture. The sun best discovers itself by its own beams; the Scripture interprets itself to the understanding. But the question is concerning hard places of Scripture, where the weak Christian is ready to wade beyond his depth; who shall interpret here?

The church of God has appointed some to expound and interpret Scripture; therefore he has given gifts to men. The several pastors of churches, like bright constellations, give light to dark Scriptures. Mal 2: 7. 'The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth.'

But this is to pin our faith upon men.

We are to receive nothing for truth but what is agreeable to the Word. As God has given to his ministers gifts for interpreting obscure places, so he has given to his people so much of the spirit of discerning, that they can tell (at least in things necessary to salvation) what is consonant to Scripture, and what is not. I Cor 12: 10. 'To one is given a spirit of prophecy, to another discerning of spirits.' God has endued his people with such a measure of wisdom and discretion, that they can discern between truth and error, and judge what is sound and what is spurious. Acts 17: 2: 'The Bereans searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.' They weighed the doctrine they heard, whether it was agreeable to Scripture, though Paul and Silas were their teachers. 2 Tim 3: 16.

Use one: See the wonderful goodness of God, who, besides the light of nature, has committed to us the sacred Scriptures, The heathen are enveloped in ignorance. Psa 147: 20. 'As for his judgements they have not known them.' They have the oracles of the Sibyls, but not the writings of Moses and the apostles. How many live in the region of death, where this bright star of Scripture never appeared! We have this blessed Book of God to resolve all our doubts, to point out a way of life to us. John 14: 22. 'Lord, how is it thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?'

God having given us his written Word to be our directory takes away all excuses from men. No man can say, I went wrong for want of light; God has given thee his Word as a lamp to thy feet; therefore if thou goest wrong, thou cost it wilfully. No man can say, If I had known the will of God, I would have obeyed it; thou art inexcusable, O man, for God has given thee a rule to go by, he has written his law with his own finger; therefore, if thou obeyest not, thou hast no apology left. If a master leave his mind in writing with his servant, and tells him what work he will have done, and the servant neglects the work, that servant is left without excuse, John 15: 22. 'Now you have no cloak for your sins.'

Use two: Is all Scripture of divine inspiration? Then it reproveth, (I.) The Papists, who take away part of Scripture, and so clip the King of heaven's coin. They expunge the second commandment out of their catechisms, because it makes against images; and it is usual with them, if they meet with anything in Scripture which they dislike, either to put a false gloss upon it, or, if that will not do, to pretend it is corrupted. They are like Ananias, who kept back part of the money. Acts 5: 2. They keep back part of the Scripture from the people. It is a high affront to God to deface and obliterate any part of his Word, and brings us under that premunire, Rev 22: 19, 'If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.' Is all Scripture of divine inspiration? (2.) It condemns the Antinomians, who lay aside the Old Testament as useless, and out of date; and call those who adhere to them Old Testament Christians. God has stamped a divine majesty upon both Testaments; and till they can show me where God has repealed the Old, it stands in force. The two Testaments are the two wells of salvation; the Antinomians would stop up one of these wells, they would dry up one of the breasts of Scripture. There is much gospel in the Old Testament. The comforts of the gospel in the New Testament have their rise from the Old. The great promise of the Messiah is in the Old Testament, 'A virgin shall conceive and bear a son.' Nay, I say more. The moral law, in some parts of it, speaks gospel - 'I am the Lord thy God;' here is the pure wine of the gospel. The saints' great charter, where God promises to 'sprinkle clean water upon them, and put his Spirit within them,' is to be found primarily in the Old Testament. Ezek 36: 25, 26. So that they who take away the Old Testament, as Samson pulled down the pillars, would take away the pillars of a Christian's comfort. (3.) It condemns the Enthusiasts, who, pretending to have the Spirit, lay aside the whole Bible, and say the Scripture is a dead letter, and they live above it. What impudence is this! Till we are above sin, we shall not be above Scripture. Let not men so talk of a revelation from the Spirit, but suspect it to be an imposture. The Spirit of God acts regularly, it works in and by the Word; and he that pretends to a new light, which is either above the Word, or contrary to it, abuses both himself and the Spirit: his light is borrowed from him who transforms himself into an angel of light. (4.) It condemns the slights of Scripture; such as those who can go whole weeks and months and never read the Word. They lay it aside as rusty

armour; they prefer a play or romance before Scripture. The magnalia legis are to them minutula [The weighty matters of the law are to them insignificant]. Oh how many can be looking at their faces in a glass all the morning, but their eyes begin to be sore when they look upon a Bible! Heathens die for want of Scripture, and these in contempt of it. They surely must needs go wrong who slight their guide. Such as lay the reins upon the neck of their lusts, and never use the curbing bit of Scripture to check them, are carried to hell, and never stop. (5.) It condemns the abusers of Scripture. Those who mud and poison this pure crystal fountain with their corrupt glosses, and who wrest Scripture. 2 Pet 3: 16. The Greek word is, they set it upon the rack; they give wrong interpretations of it, not comparing Scripture with Scripture; as the Antinomians pervert that Scripture, Numb 23: 21, 'He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob;' from which they infer that God's people may take liberty in sin, because God sees no sin in them. It is true, God sees no sin in his people with an eye of revenge, but he sees it with an eye of observation. He sees not sin in them, so as to damn them; but he sees it, so as to be angry, and severely to punish them. Did not David find it so, when he cried out of his broken bones? In like manner the Arminians wrest the Scripture in John 5: 40, 'Ye will not come to me;' where they bring in free will. This text shows how willing God is that we should have life; and that sinners may do more than they do, they may improve the talents God has given them; but it does not prove the power of free will, for it is contrary to that Scripture, John 6: 44, 'No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him.' These, therefore, wring the text so hard, that they make the blood come out; they do not compare Scripture with Scripture. Some jest with Scripture. When they are sad, they take the Scripture as their lute or minstrel to play upon, and so drive away the sad spirit; as a drunkard I have read of, who, having drunk off his cups, called to some of his fellows, 'Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.' In the fear of God, take heed of this. Eusebius tells us of one, who took a piece of Scripture to make a jest of, but was presently struck with a frenzy and ran mad. It is a saying of Luther, Quos Deus vult perdere, &c.' 'Whom God intends to destroy, he gives them leave to play with Scripture.'

Use three: If the Scripture be of divine inspiration, then be exhorted, (1.) To study the Scripture. It is a copy of God's will. Be Scripture-men, Bible-Christians. 'I adore the fulness of Scripture,' says Tertullian. In the Book of God are scattered many truths as so many pearls. John 5: 39. 'Search the Scriptures.' Search as for a vein of silver. This blessed Book will fill your head with knowledge, and your heart with grace. God wrote the two tables with his own fingers; and if he took pains to write, well may we take pains to read. Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures. Acts 18: 24. The Word is our Magna Charta for Heaven; shall we be ignorant of our charter? Col 3: 16. 'Let the word of God dwell in you richly.' The memory must be a tablebook where the Word is written. There is majesty sparkling in every line of Scripture; take but one instance, Isa

63: I: 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.' Here is a lofty, magnificent style. What angel could speak after this manner? Junius was converted by reading one verse of John; he beheld a majesty in it beyond all human rhetoric. There is a melody in Scripture. This is that blessed harp which drives away sadness of spirit. Hear the sounding of this harp a little. I Tim 1: 15. 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;' he took not only our flesh upon him but our sins. And Matt 11: '8. 'Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' How sweetly does this harp of Scripture sound, what heavenly music does it make in the ears of a distressed sinner, especially when the finger of God's Spirit touches this instrument! There is divinity in Scripture. It contains the marrow and quintessence of religion. It is a rock of diamonds, a mystery of piety. The lips of Scripture have grace poured into them. The Scripture speaks of faith, self-denial, and all the graces which, as a chain of pearls, adorns a Christian. It excites to holiness; it treats of another world, it gives a prospect of eternity! Oh, then, search the Scripture! make the Word familiar to you. Had I the tongue of angels, I could not sufficiently set forth the excellency of Scripture. It is a spiritual optic-glass, in which we behold God's glory; it is the tree of life, the oracle of wisdom, the rule of manners, the heavenly seed of which the new creature is formed. James 1: 18. 'The two Testaments,' says Austin, 'are the two breasts which every Christian must suck, that he may get spiritual nourishment.' The leaves of the tree of life were for healing. Rev 22: 2. So these holy leaves of Scripture are for the healing of our souls. The Scripture is profitable for all things. If we are deserted, here is spiced wine that cheers the heavy heart; if we are pursued by Satan, here is the sword of the Spirit to resist him; if we are diseased with sin's leprosy, here are the waters of the sanctuary, both to cleanse and cure. Oh, then, search the Scriptures! There is no danger in tasting this tree of knowledge. There was a penalty laid at first, that we might not taste of the tree of knowledge. Gen 2: 17. 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' There is no danger in plucking from this tree of holy Scripture; if we do not eat of this tree of knowledge, we shall surely die. Oh, then, read the Scriptures! Time may come when the Scriptures may be kept from us.

Read the Bible with reverence. Think in every line you read that God is speaking to you. The ark wherein the law was put was overlaid with pure gold, and was carried on bars, that the Levites might not touch it. Exod 25: 14. Why was this, but to give reverence to the law? Read with seriousness. It is matter of life and death; by this Word you must be tried; conscience and Scripture are the jury God will proceed by, in judging you. Read the Word with affection. Get your hearts quickened with the Word; go to it to fetch fire. Luke 24: 32. 'Did not our hearts burn within us?' Labour that the Word may not only be a lamp to direct, but a fire to warm. Read the Scripture, not only as a history, but as a love letter

sent you from God, which may affect your hearts. Pray that the same Spirit that wrote the Word may assist you in reading it; that God's Spirit would show you the wonderful things of his law. 'Go near,' saith God to Philip, 'join thyself to this chariot.' Acts 8: 29. So, when God's Spirit joins himself with the chariot of his Word, it becomes effectual.

(2.) Be exhorted to prize the written Word. Job 23: 12. David valued the Word more than gold. What would the martyrs have given for a leaf of the Bible! The Word is the field where Christ the pearl of price is hid. In this sacred mine we dig, not for a wedge of gold, but for a weight of glory. The Scripture is a sacred collyrium, or eye-salve to illuminate us. Prov 6: 23. 'The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light.' The Scripture is the chart and compass by which we sail to the new Jerusalem. It is a sovereign cordial in all distresses. What are the promises but the water of life to renew fainting spirits? Is it sin that troubles? Here is a Scripture cordial. Psa 65: 3. 'Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away;' or, as it is in the Hebrew, 'thou shalt cover them.' Do outward afflictions disquiet thee? Here is a Scripture cordial. Psa 91: 15. 'I will be with him in trouble,' not only to behold, but to uphold. Thus, as in the ark manna was laid up, so promises are laid up in the ark of Scripture. The Scripture will make us wise. Wisdom is above rubies. Psa 119: 104. 'By thy precepts I get understanding.' What made Eve desire the tree of knowledge? Gen 3: 6. 'It was a tree to make one wise.' The Scriptures teach a man to know himself. They discover Satan's snares and stratagems. 2 Cor 2: 2: 'They make one wise to salvation.' 2 Tim 3: 15. Oh, then, highly prize the Scriptures. I have read of Queen Elizabeth, that at her coronation, she received the Bible presented to her, with both her hands, and kissing it, laid it to her breast, saying, that that book had ever been her chief delight.

(3.) If the Scripture is of divine inspiration, believe it. The Romans, that they might gain credit to their laws, reported they were inspired by the gods of Rome. Oh give credence to the Word! It is breathed from God's own mouth. Hence arises the profaneness of men, that they do not believe the Scripture. Isa 53: 1: 'Who has believed our report?' Did you believe the glorious rewards the Scripture speaks of, would you not give diligence to make your election sure? Did you believe the infernal torments the Scripture speaks of, would it not put you into a cold sweat, and cause a trembling at heart for sin? But people are in part atheists, they give but little credit to the Word, therefore they are so impious, and draw such dark shadows in their lives. Learn to realise Scripture, get your hearts wrought to a firm belief of it. Some think, if God should send an angel from heaven, and declare his mind, they would believe him; or, if he should send one from the damned, and preach the torments of hell all in flames, they would believe. But, 'If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one arose from the dead.' Luke 16: 31. God is wise, and he thinks the fittest way to make his mind known to us is by writing; and such as

shall not be convinced by the Word, shall be judged by the Word. The belief of Scripture is of high importance. It will enable us to resist temptation. I John 2: 14. 'The Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' It conduceth much to our sanctification; therefore sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, are put together. 2 Thess 2: 13. If the word written be not believed, it is like writing on water, which makes no impression.

(4.) Love the Word written. Psa 119: 97. 'Oh how love I thy law!' 'Lord,' said Augustine, 'let the holy Scriptures be my chaste delight.' Chrysostom compares the Scripture to a garden, every truth is a fragrant flower, which we should wear, not on our bosom, but in our heart. David counted the Word 'sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.' Psa 19: 10. There is that in Scripture which may breed delight. It shows us the way to riches: Deut 28: 5, Prov 3: 10; to long life, Psa 34: 12; to a kingdom, Heb 12: 28. Well then may we count those the sweetest hours which are spent in reading the holy Scriptures; well may we say with the prophet, Jer 15: 16, 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart.'

(5.) Conform to Scripture. Let us lead Scripture lives. Oh that the Bible might be seen printed in our lives! Do what the Word commands. Obedience is an excellent way of commenting upon the Bible. Psa 86: 2: 'I will walk in thy truth.' Let the Word be the sun-dial by which you set your life. What are we the better for having the Scripture, if we do not direct all our speeches and actions according to it? What is a carpenter the better for his rule about him, if he sticks it at his back, and never makes use of it for measuring and squaring his work? So, what are we the better for the rule of the Word, if we do not make use of it, and regulate our lives by it? How many swerve and deviate from the rule! The Word teaches to be sober and temperate, but they are drunk; to be chaste and holy, but they are profane; they go quite from the rule! What a dishonour is it to religion, for men to live in contradiction to Scripture! The Word is called a 'light to our feet.' Psa 119: 105. It is not only a light to our eyes to mend our sight, but to our feet to mend our walk. Oh let us lead Bible conversations!

(6.) Contend for Scripture. Though we should not be of contentious spirits, yet we ought to contend for the Word of God. This jewel is too precious to be parted with. Prov 4: 13. 'Keep her, for she is thy life.' The Scripture is beset with enemies; heretics fight against it, we must therefore 'contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.' Jude 3. The Scripture is our book of evidences for heaven; shall we part with our evidences? The saints of old were both advocates and martyrs for truth; they would hold fast Scripture, though it were with the loss of their lives.

(7.) Be thankful to God for the Scriptures. What a mercy is it that God has not only acquainted us what his will is, but that he has made it known by writing! In

the old times God revealed his mind by visions, but the Word written is a surer way of knowing God's mind. 2 Pet 1: 18. 'This voice which came from heaven we heard, we have also a more sure word of prophecy.' The devil is God's ape, and he can transform himself into an angel of light; he can deceive with false revelations; as I have heard of one who had, as he thought, a revelation from God to sacrifice his child, as Abraham had; whereupon, following this impulse of the devil, he killed his child. Thus Satan deceives people with delusion, instead of divine revelations; therefore we are to be thankful to God for revealing his mind to us by writing. We are not left in doubtful suspense that we should not know what to believe, but we have an infallible rule to go by. The Scripture is our pole-star to direct us to heaven, it shows us every step we are to take; when we go wrong, it instructs us; when we go right, it comforts us; and it is matter of thankfulness, that the Scriptures are made intelligible, by being translated.

(8.) Adore God's distinguishing grace, if you have felt the power and authority of the Word upon your conscience; if you can say as David, Psa 119: 50, 'Thy word has quickened me.' Christian, bless God that he has not only given thee his Word to be a rule of holiness, but his grace to be a principle of holiness. Bless God that he has not only written his Word, but sealed it upon thy heart, and made it effectual. Canst thou say it is of divine inspiration, because thou hast felt it to be of lively operation? Oh free grace! that God should send out his Word, and heal thee; that he should heal thee, and not others! That the same Scripture which to them is a dead letter, should be to thee a savour of life!

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

The Being Of God

Q-III: WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES PRINCIPALLY TEACH?

A: The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Q-IV: WHAT IS GOD?

A: God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Here is, 1: Something implied. That there is a God. 2: Expressed. That he is a Spirit. 3: What kind of Spirit?

I. Implied. That there is a God. The question, What is God? takes for granted that there is a God. The belief of God's essence is the foundation of all religious worship. Heb 11: 6. 'He that comes to God must believe that he is.' There must

be a first cause, which gives being to all things besides. We know that there is a God.

[1] By the book of nature. The notion of a Deity is engraven on man's heart; it is demonstrable by the light of nature. I think it hard for a man to be a natural atheist; he may wish there were no God, he may dispute against a Deity, but he cannot in his judgement believe there is no God, unless by accumulated sin his conscience be seared, and he has such a lethargy upon him, that he has sinned away his very sense and reason.

[2] We know that there is a God by his works, and this is so evident a demonstration of a Godhead, that the most atheistical spirits, when they have considered these works, have been forced to acknowledge some wise and supreme maker of these things; as is reported of Galen and others. We will begin with the creation of the glorious fabric of heaven and earth. Sure there must be some architect or first cause. The world could not make itself. Who could hang the earth on nothing but the great God? Who could provide such rich furniture for the heavens, the glorious constellations, the firmament bespangled with such glittering lights? We see God's glory blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. Who could give the earth its clothing, cover it with grass and corn, adorn it with flowers, enrich it with gold? God only. Job 38: 4. Who but God could make the sweet music in the heavens, cause the angels to join in concert, and sound forth the praises of their Maker? Job 38: 7. 'The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.' If a man should go into a far country, and see stately edifices there, he would never imagine that these built themselves, but that some greater power had built them. To imagine that the work of the creation was not framed by God, is as if we should conceive a curious landscape to be drawn by a pencil without the hand of an artist. Acts 17: 24. 'God that made the world, and all things therein.' To create is proper to the Deity. The wise government of all things evinces there is a God. God is the great superintendent of the world, he holds the golden reins of government in his hand, guiding all things most regularly and harmoniously to their proper end. Who that eyes Providence but must be forced to acknowledge there is a God? Providence is the queen and governess of the world, it is the hand that turns the wheel of the whole creation; it sets the sun its race, the sea its bounds. If God did not guide the world, things would run into disorder and confusion. When one looks on a clock, and sees the motion of the wheels, the striking of the hammer, the hanging of the plummets, he would say, some artificer made it; so, when we see the excellent order and harmony in the universe, the sun, that great luminary, dispensing its light and heat to the world, without which the world were but a grave or a prison; the rivers sending forth their silver streams to refresh the bodies of men, and prevent a drought; and every creature acting within its sphere, and keeping its due bounds; we must needs acknowledge there is a God, who wisely orders and governs all these things. Who could set

this great army of the creatures in their several ranks and squadrons, and keep them in their constant march, but HE, whose name is THE LORD OF HOSTS? And as God does wisely dispose all things in the whole regiment of the creatures, so, by his power, he supports them. Did God suspend and withdraw his influence ever so little, the wheels of the creation would unpin, and the axletree break asunder. All motion, the philosophers say, is from something that is unmoveable. As for example, the elements are moved by the influence and motion of the heavenly bodies; the sun and moon, and these planets, are moved by the highest orb, called Primum Mobile; now, if one should ask, Who moves that highest orb, or is the first mover of the planets? It can be no other than God himself.

Man is a microcosm or lesser world. The excellent contexture and frame of his body is wrought curiously as with needlework. Psa 139: 15. 'I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.' This body is endowed with a noble soul. Who but God could make such a union of different substances as flesh and spirit? In him we live, and move, and have our being. The quick motion of every part of the body shows there is a God. We may see something of him in the sparkling of the eye; and if the cabinet of the body be so curiously wrought, what is the jewel? The soul has a celestial brightness in it; as Damascene says, 'It is a diamond set in a ring of clay.' What noble faculties is the soul endowed with! Understanding, Will, Affections are a glass of the Trinity, as Plato speaks. The matter of the soul is spiritual, it is a divine spark lighted from heaven; and being spiritual, is immortal, as Scaliger notes; *anima non senescit*; 'the soul does not wax old,' it lives for ever. Who could create a soul ennobled with such rare angelic properties but God? We must needs say as the Psalmist, 'It is he that has made us, and not we ourselves.' Psa 100: 3.

[3] We may prove a Deity by our conscience. Conscience is God's deputy or vicegerent. Conscience is a witness of a Deity. If there were no Bible to tell us there is a God, yet conscience might. Conscience, as the apostle says, 'either accuseth' or 'excuseth.' Rom 2: 15. It acts in order to a higher judicatory. Natural conscience, being kept free from gross sin, excuses. When a man does virtuous actions, lives soberly and righteously, observes the golden maxim, doing to others as he would have them do to him, then conscience approves, and says, Well done. Like a bee it gives honey. Natural conscience in the wicked accuses. When men go against its light they feel the worm of conscience. Eheu! quis intus scorpio? [Alas! What scorpion lurks within?] Seneca. Conscience, being sinned against, spits fire in men's faces, fills them with shame and horror. When the sinner sees a handwriting on the wall of conscience, his countenance is changed. Many have hanged themselves to quiet their conscience. Tiberius the emperor, a bloody man, felt the lashes of his conscience; he was so haunted with that fury, that he told the senate, he suffered death daily. What could put a man's conscience into such an agony but the impression of a Deity, and the thoughts of

coming before his tribunal? Those who are above human laws are subject to the checks of their own conscience. And it is observable, the nearer the wicked approach to death, the more they are terrified. Whence is this but from the apprehension of judgement approaching? The soul, being sensible of its immortal nature, trembles at him who never ceases to live, and therefore will never cease to punish.

[4] That there is a God, appears by the consent of nations, by the universal vote and suffrage of all men. *Nulla gens tam barbara cui non insideat haec persuasio Deum esse.* Tully. 'No nation so barbarous,' says Tully, 'as not to believe there is a God.' Though the heathen did not worship the true God, yet they worshipped a god. They set up an altar, 'To the unknown God.' Acts 17: 23. They knew a God should be worshipped, though they knew not the God whom they ought to worship. Some worshipped Jupiter, some Neptune, some Mars. Rather than not worship something, they would worship anything.

[5] That there is a God, appears by his prediction of future things. He who can foretell things which shall surely come to pass is the true God. God foretold, that a virgin should conceive; he prefixed the time when the Messiah should be cut off. Dan 9: 26. He foretold the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and who should be their deliverer. Isa 45: 1: God himself uses this argument to prove he is the true God, and that all the gods of the heathens are fictions and nullities. Isa 41: 23. *Testimonium divinitatis est veritas divinationis.* Tertullian. To foretell things contingent, which depend upon no natural causes, is peculiar to Deity.

[6] That there is a God, appears by his unlimited power and sovereignty. He who can work, and none can hinder, is the true God; but God can do so. Isa 43: 13. 'I will work, and who shall let it?' Nothing can hinder action but some superior power; but there is no power above God: all power that is, is by him, therefore all power is under him; he has a 'mighty arm.' Psa 89: 13. He sees the designs men drive at against him, and plucks off their chariot wheels; he makes the diviners mad. Isa 44: 25. He cutteth off the spirit of princes; he bridleth the sea, gives check to the leviathan, binds the devil in chains; he acts according to his pleasure, he doth what he will. 'I will work, and who shall let it?'

[7] There are devils, therefore there is a God. Atheists cannot deny but there are devils, and then they must grant there is a God. We read of many possessed of the devil. The devils are called in Scripture 'hairy ones', because they often appeared in the form of goats or satyrs. Gerson, in his book *De probatione spirituum*, tells us how Satan on a time appeared to a holy man in a most glorious manner, professing himself to be Christ: the old man answered, 'I desire not to see my Saviour here in this desert it shall suffice me to see him in heaven.' Now, if there be a devil, there is a God. Socrates, a heathen, when

accused at his death, confessed, that, as he thought there was a malus genius, an evil spirit, so he thought there was a good spirit.

Use one: Seeing there is a God, it reproves such atheistical fools as deny it. Epicurus denied there was a Providence, saying that all things fell out by chance. He that says there is no God is the wickedest creature that is; he is worse than a thief, for he takes away our goods, but the atheist would take away our God from us. John 20: 13. 'They have taken away my Lord.' So we may say of atheists, they would take away our God from us, in whom all our hope and comfort is laid up. Psa 14: 1. 'The fool has said in his heart, There is no God.' He durst not speak it with his tongue, but says it in his heart: he wishes it. Sure none can be speculative atheists. 'The devils believe and tremble.' James 2: 19. I have read of one Arthur, a professed atheist, who, when he came to die, cried out he was damned. Though there are few found who say, There is no God, yet many deny him in their practices. Tit 1: 16. 'In works they deny him.' Cicero said of Epicurus, Verbis reliquit Deos resustulit [In his words he both denies the existence of the gods, and permits them to remain]. The world is full of practical atheism; most people live as if they did not believe there was a God. Durst they lie, defraud, be unclean, if they believed there were a God who would call them to account? If an Indian who never heard of a God should come among us, and have no other means to convince him of a Deity, but the lives of men in our age, surely he would question whether there were a God; utrum Dii sint non ausim affirmare [I would not venture to assert that gods exist].

Use two: Seeing there is a God, he will deal righteously, and give just rewards to men. Things seem to be carried in the world very unequally; the wicked flourish. Psa 73: 3. They who tempt God are delivered. Mal 3: 15. The ripe cluster of grapes are squeezed into their cup, and, in the meanwhile, the godly, who wept for sin, and served God, are afflicted. Psa 102: 9. 'I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.' Evil men enjoy all the good, and good men endure all the evil. But seeing there is a God, he will deal righteously with men. Gen 18: 25. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' Offenders must come to punishment. The sinner's death-day, and dooms-day is coming. Psa 37: 13. 'The Lord seeth that his day is coming.' While there is a hell, the wicked shall be scourged enough; and while there is eternity, they shall lie there long enough; and God will abundantly compensate the faithful service of his people. They shall have their white robes and crowns. Psa 58: 1 1: 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.' Because God is God, he will give glorious rewards to his people.

Use three: Seeing there is a God, woe to all such as have this God against them. He lives for ever to be avenged upon them. Ezek 22: 14. 'Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee?' Such as pollute God's Sabbath, oppose his saints, trampling these jewels in the dust.

Such as live in contradiction to God's Word engage the Infinite Majesty of heaven against them; and how dismal will their case be! Deut 32: 4I. 'If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold of judgement, I will render vengeance to mine enemies; I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,' &c. If it be so terrible to hear the lion roar, what must it be when he begins to tear his prey? Psa 122. 'Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces.' Oh that men would think of this, who go on in sin! Shall we engage the great God against us? God strikes slow but heavy. Job 40: 9. 'Hast thou an arm like God?' Canst thou strike such a blow? God is the best friend, but the worst enemy. If he can look men into their grave, how far can he throw them? 'Who knows the power of his wrath?' Psa 90: 11. What fools are they, who, for a drop of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath! Paracelsus speaks of a frenzy some have, which will make them die dancing; so sinners go dancing to hell.

Use four: Seeing there is a God, let us firmly believe this great article of our Creed. What religion can there be in men, if they do not believe a Deity? 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is.' To worship God, and pray to him, and not believe there is a God, is to put a high scorn and contempt upon him. Believe that God is the only true God: such a God as he has revealed himself in his Word, 'A lover of righteousness, and hater of wickedness.' Psa 45: 7. The real belief of a Deity gives life to all religious worship; the more we believe the truth and infiniteness of God the more holy and angelic we are in our lives. Whether we are alone, or in company, God sees us; he is the heart-searcher; the belief of this would make us live always under God's eye. Psa 16: 10: 'I have set the Lord always before me.' The belief of a Deity would be a bridle to sin, and a spur to duty; it would add wings to prayer, and oil to the lamp of our devotion. The belief of a Deity would cause dependence upon God in all our straits and exigencies. Gen 17: 1: 'I am God all-sufficient;' a God that can supply all your wants, scatter all your fears, resolve all your doubts, conquer all your temptations; the arm of God's power can never be shrunk; he can create mercy for us, and therefore can help, and not be beholden to the creature. Did we believe there is a God, we should so depend on his providence as not to use any indirect means; we should not run ourselves into sin to rid ourselves out of trouble. 2 Kings 1: 3. 'Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-Zebub the god of Ekron?' When men run to sinful shifts, is it not because they do not believe there is a God, or that he is all-sufficient?

Use five: Seeing there is a God, let us labour to get an interest in him. Psa 48: 14. 'This God is our God.' Since the fall we have lost likeness to God, and communion with God; let us labour to recover this lost interest, and pronounce this Shibboleth, 'My God.' Psa 43: 5. It is little comfort to know there is a God, unless he be ours. God offers himself to be our God. Jer 31: 33. 'I will be their God.' And faith catches hold of the offer, it appropriates God, and makes all that is in him over to us to be ours; his wisdom to be ours, to teach us; his holiness

ours, to sanctify us; his Spirit ours, to comfort us; his mercy ours, to save us. To be able to say, God is mine, is more than to have all mines of gold and silver.

Use six: Seeing there is a God, let us serve and worship him as God. It was an indictment brought against some in Rom 1: 2I. 'They glorified him not as God.' Let us pray to him as to God. Pray with fervency. James 5: I6. 'An effectual fervent prayer availeth much.' This is both the fire and the incense; without fervency it is no prayer. Let us love him as God. Deut 6: 5. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' To love him with all the heart, is to give him precedence in our love, to let him have the cream of our affections; to love him not only appreciatively, but intensively, as much as we can. As the sunbeams united in a burning glass burn the hotter, so all our affections should be united, that our love to God may be more ardent. Let us obey him as God. All creatures obey him, the stars fight his battles, the wind and sea obey him. Mark 4: 4I. Much more should man, whom God has endued with a principle of reason. He is God, and has a sovereignty over us; therefore, as we received life from him, so we must receive a law from him, and submit to his will in all things. This is to kiss him with a kiss of loyalty, and it is to glorify him as God.

II. The thing expressed. John 4: 24. 'God is a Spirit.' God is *essentia spiritualissima*. Zanchius.

What do you mean when you say, God is a Spirit?

By a spirit I mean, God is an immaterial substance, of a pure, subtile, unmixed essence, not compounded of body and soul, without all extension of parts. The body is a dreggish thing. The more spiritual God's essence, the more noble and excellent it is. The spirits are the more refined part of the wine.

Wherein does God differ from other spirits?

[I] The angels are spirits. We must distinguish spirits. The angels are created, God is a Spirit uncreated. The angels are finite, and capable of being annihilated; the same power which made them is able to reduce them to their first nothing; but God is an infinite Spirit. The angels are confined spirits, they cannot be *duobus locis simul*, but are confined to a place; but God is an immense Spirit, and in all places at once. The angels, though spirits, are but ministering spirits. Heb 1: I4. Though they are spirits, they are servants. God is a super-excellent Spirit, the Father of spirits. Heb 12: 9.

[2] The soul is a spirit. Eccles 12: 7. 'The spirit shall return to God that gave it.'

How does God, being a Spirit, differ from the soul?

Servetus and Osiander thought, that the soul being infused, conveyed into man the very spirit and substance of God. This is an absurd opinion, for the essence of God is incommunicable.

When it is said the soul is a spirit, it means that God has made it intelligible, and stamped upon it his likeness, not his essence.

But is it not said, that we are made partakers of the divine nature?

By divine nature there, is meant divine qualities. 2 Pet 1: 4. We are made partakers of the divine nature, not by identity or union with the divine essence, but by a transformation into the divine likeness. Thus you see how God differs from other spirits, angels and souls of men. He is a Spirit of transcendent excellence, the 'Father of spirits.'

Against this Vorstius and the Anthropomorphites object, that, in Scripture, a human shape and figure is given to God; he is said to have eyes and hands.

It is contrary to the nature of a spirit to have a corporeal substance. Luke 24: 39. 'Handle me, and see me: for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.' Bodily members are ascribed to God, not properly, but metaphorically, and in a borrowed sense. By the right hand of the Lord is meant his power; by the eyes of the Lord is meant his wisdom. Now that God is a Spirit, and is not capable of bodily shape or substance, is clear, for a body is visible, but God is invisible; therefore he is a Spirit. I Tim 6: 16. 'Whom no man has seen, nor can see;' not by an eye of sense. A body is terminated, can be but in one place at once, but God is everywhere, in all places at once; therefore he is a Spirit. Psa 139: 7, 8. God's centre is everywhere, and his circumference is nowhere. A body being compounded of integral parts may be dissolved; quicquid divisibile est corruptibile: but the Godhead is not capable of dissolution, he can have no end from whom all things have their beginning. So that it clearly appears that God is a Spirit, which adds to the perfection of his nature.

Use one: If God be a Spirit, then he is impassible; he is not capable of being hurt. Wicked men set up their banners, and bend their forces against God; they are said to fight against God. Acts 5: 39. But what will this fighting avail? What hurt can they do to the Deity? God is a Spirit, and therefore cannot receive any hurtful impression. Wicked men may imagine evil against the Lord. Nahum 1: 9. 'What do ye imagine against the Lord?' But God being a Spirit is impenetrable. The wicked may eclipse his glory, but cannot touch his essence. God can hurt his enemies, but they cannot hurt him. Julian might throw up his dagger into the air against Heaven, but could not touch the Deity. God is a Spirit, invisible. How can the wicked with all their forces hurt him, when they cannot see him? Hence all the attempts of the wicked against God are foolish, and prove abortive. Psa 2: 2,

4. 'The kings of the earth set themselves against the Lord and against his anointed. He that sits in the heavens shall laugh.' He is a Spirit, he can wound them, but they cannot touch him.

Use two: If God be a Spirit, it shows the folly of the Papists, who worship him by pictures and images. As a spirit, we cannot make any image to represent him. Deut 4: 12. 'The Lord spake to you out of the midst of the fire, ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude.'

God being a Spirit is imperceptible, cannot be discerned; how then can there be any resemblance made of him? Isa 40: 18. 'To whom then will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto him?' How can you paint the Deity? Can we make an image of that which we never saw? Ye saw no similitude. God is a Spirit. It were folly to endeavour to make a picture of the soul, because it is a spiritual thing, or to paint the angels, because they are spirits.

Are not angels in Scripture represented by the cherubim?

There is *Imago personae et officii*; 'there is the image of the person, and the image that represents the office.' The cherubims did not represent the persons of the angels, but their office. The cherubims were made with wings, to show the swiftness of the angels in discharge of their office; and if we cannot picture the souls nor the persons of angels, because they are spirits, much less can we make an image or picture of God, who is infinite and the Father of spirits.

God is also an omnipresent Spirit; he is present in all places. Jer 23: 24. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.' Therefore, being everywhere present, it is absurd to worship him by an image. Were it not a foolish thing to bow down to the king's picture, when the king is present? So it is to worship God's image, when God himself is present.

How then shall we conceive of God as a Spirit, if we may make no image or resemblance of him?

We must conceive of him spiritually. In his attributes; his holiness, justice, and goodness, which are the beams by which his divine nature shines forth. We must conceive of him as he is in Christ. 'Christ is the image of the invisible God.' Col 1: 15. Set the eyes of your faith on Christ as God-man. In Christ we see some sparklings of the divine glory; in him there is the exact resemblance of all his Father's excellencies. The wisdom, love, and holiness of God the Father, shine forth in Christ. John 14: 9. 'He that has seen me has seen the Father.'

Use three: If God be a Spirit, it shows us, that the more spiritual we grow, the more we grow like to God. How do earth and spirit agree? Phil 3: 19. Earthly ones may give for their crest, the mole or tortoise that live in the earth. What

resemblance is there between an earthly heart, and him who is a Spirit? The more spiritual any one is, the more like God.

What is it to be spiritual?

To be refined and sublimated, to have the heart still in heaven, to be thinking of God and glory, and to be carried up in a fiery chariot of love to God. Psa 73: 25. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' which Beza paraphrases thus, *Apate terra, utinam tecum in coelo essem!* 'Begone earth! Oh that I were in heaven with thee!' A Christian, who is taken off from these earthly things, as the spirits are taken off from the lees, has a noble spiritual soul, and most resembles him who is a Spirit.

Use four: It shows that the worship which God requires of us, and is most acceptable to him, is spiritual worship. John 4: 24. 'They which worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.' Spiritual worship is virgin worship. Though God will have the service of our bodies, our eyes and hands lifted up, to testify to others that reverence we have of his glory and majesty, yet he will have the worship of the soul chiefly. I Cor 6: 20. 'Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit.' Spirit-worship God prizes, because it comes near to his own nature, which is a Spirit.

What is it to worship God in spirit 7

(I.) To worship him without ceremonies. The ceremonies of the law, which God himself ordained, are now abrogated, and out of date. Christ the substance being come, the shadows fly away; and therefore the apostle calls the legal ceremonies carnal rites. Heb 9: 10. If we may not use those Jewish ceremonies which God once appointed, then not those which he never appointed.

(2.) To worship God in spirit, is to worship him with faith in the blood of the Messiah. Heb 10: 19. To worship him with the utmost zeal and intenseness of soul. Acts 26: 7. 'Our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night,' with intenseness of spirit; not only constantly, but instantly. This is to worship God in spirit. The more spiritual any service is, the nearer it comes to God, who is a Spirit, and the more excellent it is; the spiritual part of duty is the fat of the sacrifice: it is the soul and quintessence of religion. The richest cordials are made of spirits, and the best duties are such as are of a spiritual nature. God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit; it is not pomp of worship, but purity, which God accepts. Repentance is not in the outward severities used to the body, as penance, fasting, and chastising the body, but it consists in the sacrifice of a broken heart. Thanksgiving does not stand in church-music, the melody of an organ, but rather in making melody in the heart to the Lord. Eph 5: 19. Prayer is not the tuning the voice into a heartless confession, or telling over a few beads,

but it consists in sighs and groans. Rom 8: 26. When the fire of fervency is put to the incense of prayer, than it ascends as a sweet odour. The true holy water is not that which the pope sprinkles, but is distilled from the penitent eye. Spirit-worship best pleases that God who is a Spirit. John 4: 23. 'The Father seeketh such to worship him;' to show the great acceptance of such, and how God is delighted with spiritual worship. This is the savoury meat that God loves. How few mind this! They give him more dregs than spirits; they think it enough to bring their duties, but not their hearts; which makes God disclaim the very services he himself appointed. Isa 1: 12. Ezek 33: 31. Let us then give God spirit-worship, which best suits his nature. A sovereign elixir full of virtue may be given in a few drops; so a little prayer, if it be with the heart and spirit, may have much virtue and efficacy in it. The publican made but a short prayer, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' Luke 18: 13, but it was full of life and spirit; it came from the heart, therefore it was accepted.

Use five: Let us pray to God, that as he is a Spirit, so he will give us of his Spirit. The essence of God is incommunicable; but not the motions, the presence and influences of his Spirit. When the sun shines in a room, not the body of the sun is there, but the light, heat, and influence of the sun. God has made a promise of his Spirit. Ezek 36: 27. 'I will put my Spirit within you.' Turn promises into prayers. 'O Lord, thou who art a Spirit, give me of thy Spirit; I, flesh, beg thy Spirit, thy enlightening, sanctifying, quickening, Spirit.' Melancthon prayed, 'Lord, inflame my soul with thy Holy Spirit.' How needful is his Spirit! We cannot do any duty without it, in a lively manner. When this wind blows upon our sails, we move swiftly towards heaven. Let us pray, therefore, that God would give us of the residue of his Spirit, Mal 2: 15, that we may move more vigorously in the sphere of religion.

Use six: As God is a Spirit, so the rewards that he gives are spiritual. As the chief blessings he gives us in this life are spiritual blessings, Eph 1: 3, not gold and silver; as he gives Christ, his love; he fills us with grace; so the main rewards he gives us after this life are spiritual, 'a crown of glory that fadeth not away.' I Pet 5: 4. Earthly crowns fade, but the believer's crown being spiritual is immortal, a never-fading crown. 'It is impossible,' says Joseph Scaliger, 'for that which is spiritual to be subject to change or corruption.' This may comfort a Christian in all his labours and sufferings; he lays out himself for God, and has little or no reward here; but remember, God, who is a Spirit, will give spiritual rewards, a sight of his face in heaven, white robes, a weight of glory. Be not then weary of God's service; think of the spiritual reward, a crown of glory which fadeth not away.

III. What kind of Spirit is God?

He is infinite. All created beings are finite. Though infinite may be applied to all God's attributes - he is infinitely merciful, infinitely wise, infinitely holy - yet, if we take infinity it implies,

God's omnipresence. The Greek word for 'infinite' signifies 'without bounds or limits.' God is not confined to any place, he is infinite, and so is present in all places at once. His centre is everywhere, *Divina essentia nusquam inclusa aut exclusa* [In no place is God's Being either confined or excluded]. Augustine. I Kings 8: 27. 'Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.' The Turks build their temples open at the top, to show that God cannot be confined to them, but is in all places by his presence. God's essence is not limited either to the regions above, or to the terrestrial globe, but is everywhere. As philosophers say of the soul, it is, *Tota in tota, et tota in qualibet parte*: 'the soul is in every part of the body,' in the eye, heart, foot; so we may say of God, he is ubiquitous, his essence is everywhere; his circuit is in heaven, and in earth, and sea, and he is in all places of his circuit at once. 'This is to be infinite.' God, who bounds everything else, is himself without bounds. He sets bounds to the sea; *Huc usque*; 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further;' he sets bounds to the angels; they, like the cherubims, move and stand at his appointment, Ezek 10: 16, but he is infinite, without bounds. He who can span the heavens, and weigh the earth in scales, must needs be infinite. Isa 40: 22.

Vorstius maintains that God is in all places at once, but not in regard of his essence; but *Virtute et potentia*, by his virtue and influence: as the body of the sun is in heaven, it only sends forth its beams and influences to the earth; or as a king, who is in all places of his kingdom authoritatively, by his power and authority, but he is personally on his throne.

God, who is infinite, is in all places at once, not only by his influence, but by his essence; for, if his essence fills all places, then he must needs be there in person. Jer 23: 24. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?'

But does not God say heaven is his throne? Isa 66: 1.

It is also said, that a humble heart is his throne. Isa 57: 15. The humble heart is his throne, in regard to his gracious presence; and heaven is his throne, in regard to his glorious presence; and yet neither of these thrones will hold him, for the heaven of heavens cannot contain him.

But if God be infinite in all places, he is in impure places, and mingles with impurity.

Though God be in all places, in the heart of a sinner by his inspection, and in hell by his justice, yet he does not mingle with the impurity, or receive the least

tincture of evil. Divina natura non est immista rebus aut sordibus inquinata [The divine nature does not intermix with created matter, nor is contaminated by its impurities]. Augustine. No more than the sun shining on a dunghill is defiled, or its beauty spotted; or than Christ going among sinners was defiled, whose Godhead was a sufficient antidote against infection.

God must needs be infinite in all places at once, not only in regard to the simplicity and purity of his nature, but in regard to his power, which being so glorious, who can set him bounds, or prescribe him a circuit to walk in? It is as if the drop should limit the ocean, or a star set bounds to the sun.

Use one: It condemns the Papists, who would make more things infinite than the Godhead. They hold that Christ's body is in many places at once, that it is in heaven, and in the bread and wine in the sacrament. Though Christ as he is God is infinite, and in all places at once, yet as man he is not. When he was on earth, his manhood was not in heaven, though his Godhead was; and now he is in heaven, his manhood is not on earth, though his Godhead be. Heb 10: 5, is spoken of Christ; 'A body thou hast prepared me.' This body cannot be in all places at once; for then it is no more a body, but a spirit. Christ's body in heaven, though glorified, is not deified; it is not infinite, as it must be, if it be both in heaven, and in the bread and wine by transubstantiation.

Use two: If God be infinite, present in all places at once, then it is certain he governs all things in his own person, and needs no proxies or deputies to help him to carry on his government. He is in all places in an instant, and manages all affairs both in the earth and heaven. A king cannot be in all places of his kingdom in his own person, therefore he is fain to govern by deputies and vicegerents, and they often pervert justice; but God, being infinite, needs no deputies, he is present in all places, he sees all with his own eyes, and hears all with his own ears; he is everywhere in his own person, therefore is fit to be the judge of the world; he will do every one right.

Use three: If God be infinite by his omnipresence, then see the greatness and immenseness of the divine majesty! What a great God do we serve! I Chron 29: 11. 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the glory, and the majesty, and thou art exalted as head above all.' Well may the Scripture display the greatness of his glory, who is infinite in all places. He transcends our weak conceptions; how can our finite understanding comprehend him who is infinite? He is infinitely above all our praises. Neh 9: 5. 'Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.' Oh what a poor nothing is man, when we think of God's infiniteness! As the stars disappear at the rising of the sun, oh, how does a man shrink into nothing when infinite majesty shines forth in its glory! Isa 40: 15. 'The nations are as a drop of the bucket, or the small dust of the balance!' On what a little of that drop are we! The heathens thought they had sufficiently praised

Jupiter when they called him great Jupiter. Of what immense majesty is God, who fills all places at once! Psa 150: 2.

Use four: If God be infinite, filling heaven and earth, see what a full portion the saints have; they have him for their portion who is infinite. His fulness is an infinite fulness; and he is infinitely sweet, as well as infinitely full. If a conduit be filled with wine, there is a sweet fulness, but still it is finite; but God is a sweet fulness, and it is infinite. He is infinitely full of beauty and of love. His riches are called unsearchable, because they are infinite. Eph 3: 8. Stretch your thoughts as much as you can, there is that in God which exceeds; it is an infinite fulness. He is said to do abundantly for us, above all that we can ask. Eph 3: 20. What can an ambitious spirit ask? He can ask crowns and kingdoms, millions of worlds; but God can give more than we can ask, nay, or think, because he is infinite. We can think, what if all the dust were turned to silver, if every flower were a ruby, every sand in the sea a diamond; yet God can give more than we can think, because he is infinite. Oh how rich are they who have the infinite God for their portion! Well might David say, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage.' Psa 16: 5, 6. We may go with the bee from flower to flower, but we shall never have full satisfaction till we come to the infinite God. Jacob said: 'I have enough;' in the Hebrew, 'I have all,' because he had the infinite God for his portion. Gen 33: 11. God being an infinite fulness, there is no fear of want for any of the heirs of heaven; though there be millions of saints and angels, which have a share in God's riches, yet he has enough for them all, because he is infinite. Though a thousand men behold the sun, there is light enough for them all: put never so many buckets into the sea, there is water enough to fill them. Though an innumerable company of saints and angels are to be filled out of God's fulness, yet God, being infinite, has enough to satisfy them. God has land enough to give to all his heirs. There can be no want in that which is infinite.

Use five: If God be infinite, he fills all places, is everywhere present. This is sad to the wicked, God is their enemy, and they cannot escape him, nor flee from him, for he is everywhere present; they are never out of his eye nor out of his reach. Psa 21: 8. 'Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies.' What caves or thickets can men hide in, that God cannot find them; go where they will, he is present. Psa 139: 7. 'Whither shall I flee from thy presence?' If a man owes a debt to another he may make his escape, and flee into another land, where the creditor cannot find him. 'But whither shall I flee from thy presence?' God is infinite, he is in all places; so that he will find out his enemies and punish them.

But is it not said, Cain went out from the presence of the Lord? Gen 4: 16.

The meaning is, he went out from the church of God, where were the visible signs of God's presence, and where God in a special manner manifested his

sweet presence to his people; but Cain could not go out of God's sight; for God being infinite is everywhere present. Sinners can neither go from an accusing conscience, nor from a revenging God.

Use six: If God be everywhere present, then for a Christian to walk with God is not impossible. God is not only in heaven, but he is in earth too. Isa 66: 1: Heaven is his throne, there he sits; the earth is his footstool, there he stands. He is everywhere present, therefore we may come to walk with God. 'Enoch walked with God.' Gen 5: 22. If God was confined to heaven, a trembling soul might think, How can I converse with God, how can I walk with him who lives in excelsis; above the upper region? but God is not confined to heaven; he is omnipresent; he is above us, yet he is about us, he is near to us. Acts 17: 27. Though he be not far from the assembly of the saints, 'He stands in the congregation of the mighty.' Psa 82: 1. He is present with us, God is in every one of us; so that here on earth we may walk with God. In heaven the saints rest with him, on earth they walk with him. To walk with God is to walk by faith. We are said to draw nigh to God, Heb 10: 22, and to see him. Heb 11: 27. 'As seeing him who is invisible;', and to have fellowship with him. I John 1: 3. 'Our fellowship is with the Father.' Thus we may take a turn with him every day by faith. It is slighting God not to walk with him. If a king be in presence, it is slighting him to neglect him, and walk with the page. There is no walk in the world so sweet as to walk with God. Psa 89: 15. 'They shall walk in the light of thy countenance.' Psa 138: 5. 'Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord.' It is like walking among beds of spices, which send forth a fragrant perfume.

Use seven: If God be infinite in his glorious essence, learn to admire where you cannot fathom. The angels wear a veil, they cover their faces, as adoring this infinite majesty. Isa 6: 2. Elias wrapped himself in a mantle when God's glory passed by. Admire where you cannot fathom. Job 11: 7. 'Canst thou by searching find out God?' Here we see some beams of his glory, we see him in the glass of the creation; we see him in his picture, his image shines in the saints; but who can search out all his essential glory? What angel can measure these pyramids? 'Canst thou by searching find out God?' He is infinite. We can no more search out his infinite perfections, than a man upon the top of the highest mountain can reach the firmament, or take a star in his hand. Oh, have God-admiring thoughts! Adore where you cannot fathom. There are many mysteries in nature which we cannot fathom; why the sea should be higher than the earth, yet not drown it; why the Nile should overflow in summer, when, by the course of nature, the waters are lowest; how the bones grow in the womb. Eccl 11: 5. If these things pose us, how may the infinite mystery of the Deity transcend our most raised intellectuals! Ask the geometrician, if he can, with a pair of compasses, measure the breadth of the earth. So unable are we to measure the infinite perfections of God. In heaven we shall see God clearly, but not fully, for he is infinite; he will communicate himself to us, according to the bigness of our

vessel, but not the immenseness of his nature. Adore then where you cannot fathom.

If God be infinite in all places, let us not limit him. Psa lxxviii 4I. 'They limited the Holy One of Israel.' It is limiting God to confine him within the narrow compass of our reason. Reason thinks God must go such a way to work, or the business will never be effected. This is to limit God to our reason; whereas he is infinite, and his ways are past finding out. Rom 11: 33. In the deliverance of the church, it is limiting God, either to set him a time, or prescribe him a method for deliverance. God will deliver Sion, but he will be left to his own liberty; he will not be tied to a place, to a time, or to an instrument, which were to limit him, and then he should not be infinite. God will go his own way, he will pose and nonplus reason, he will work by improbabilities, he will save in such a way as we think would destroy. Now he acts like himself, like an infinite wonder-working God.

From *A Body of Divinity*. Published by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

The Knowledge Of God

'The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.' I Sam 2: 3. Glorious things are spoken of God; he transcends our thoughts, and the praises of angels. God's glory lies chiefly in his attributes, which are the several beams by which the divine nature shines forth. Among other of his orient excellencies, this is not the least, The Lord is a God of knowledge; or as the Hebrew word is, 'A God of knowledges.' Through the bright mirror of his own essence, he has a full idea and cognisance of all things; the world is to him a transparent body. He makes a heartanatomy. Rev 2: 23. 'I am he which searcheth the reins and the heart.' The clouds are no canopy, the night is no curtain to draw between us and his sight. Psa 139: 12. 'The darkness hideth not from thee.' There is not a word we whisper but God hears it. Psa 139: 4. 'There is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.' There is not the most subtle thought that comes into our mind, but God perceives it. Isa 66: 18. 'I know their thoughts.' Thoughts speak as loud in God's ears as words do in ours. All our actions, though never so subtly contrived, and secretly conveyed, are visible to the eye of Omniscience. Isa 66: 18. 'I know their works.' Achan hid the Babylonish garment in the earth, but God brought it to light. Josh 7: 21. Minerva was drawn in such curious colours, and so lively pencilled, that which way soever one turned, Minerva's eyes were upon him; so, which way soever we turn ourselves God's eye is upon us. Job 37: 16. 'Dost thou know the balancing of the clouds; the wondrous works of him that is perfect in knowledge?' God knows whatever is knowable; he knows future contingencies. He foretold Israel's coming out of

Babylon, and the virgin's conceiving. By this the Lord proves the truth of his Godhead against idol gods. Isa 41: 23. 'Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know ye are gods.' The perfection of God's knowledge is primary. He is the original, the pattern, and prototype of all knowledge; others borrow their knowledge of him; the angels light their lamps at this glorious sun. God's knowledge is pure. It is not contaminated with the object. Though God knows sin, yet it is to hate and punish it. No evil can mix or incorporate with his knowledge, any more than the sun can be defiled with the vapours which arise from the earth. God's knowledge is facile; it is without any difficulty. We study and search for knowledge. Prov 2: 4. 'If thou seekest for her as for silver.' The lamp of God's knowledge is so infinitely bright, that all things are intelligible to him.

God's knowledge is infallible; there is no mistake in his knowledge. Human knowledge is subject to error. A physician may mistake the cause of a disease; but God's knowledge is unerring; he can neither deceive, nor be deceived; he cannot deceive, because he is truth, nor be deceived, because he is wisdom. God's knowledge is instantaneous. Our knowledge is successive, one thing after another. We argue from the effect to the cause. God knows things past, present, and to come, *uno intuitu*, at once; they are all before him in one entire prospect.

God's knowledge is retentive; he never loses any of his knowledge; he has *reminiscentia*, as well as *intelligentia*; he remembers as well as understands. Many things elapse out of our minds, but God's knowledge is eternized. Things transacted a thousand years ago, are as fresh to him as if they were done but the last minute. Thus he is perfect in knowledge.

But is it not said, Gen 18: 21, I will go down and see whether they have done according to the cry which is come up unto me, and I will know?

It could not be that God was ignorant; because there is mention made of a cry; but the Lord speaks there after the manner of a judge, who will first examine the cause before he passes the sentence. When he is upon a work of justice he is not in a riot, as if he did not care where he hits; but he goes straight against offenders. 'He lays judgement to the line, and righteousness to the plummet.' Isa 28: 17.

Hos 13: 12. The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up, his sin is hid.

Not that his sin is hid from God, but his sin is hid; that is, it is recorded, it is laid up against a day of reckoning. That this is the meaning, is clear by the foregoing words, his iniquity is bound up. As the clerk of the assizes binds up the indictments of malefactors in a bundle, and at the assizes brings out the indictments and reads them in court; so God binds up men's sins in a bundle,

and, at the day of judgement, this bundle shall be opened, and all their sins brought to light before men and angels. God is infinite in knowledge. He cannot but be so; for he who gives being to things must needs have a clear inspection of them. Psa 94: 9. 'He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?' He who makes a watch or engine knows all the workmanship in it. God, that made the heart, knows all its movements. He is full of eyes, like Ezekiel's wheels, and, as Austin says, *Totus oculus*, 'All eye.' It ought to be so; for he is to be 'Judge of all the world.' Gen 18: 25. There are so many causes to be brought before him, and so many persons to be tried, that he must have a perfect knowledge, or he could not do justice. An ordinary judge cannot proceed without a jury, the jury must search the cause, and give in the verdict; but God can judge without a jury. He knows all things in and of himself, and needs no witnesses to inform him. A judge judges only matters of fact, but God judges the heart. He not only judges wicked actions, but wicked designs. He sees the treason of the heart and punishes it.

Use one: Is God infinite in knowledge? Is he light, and in him is there no darkness? Then how unlike are they to God who are darkness, and in whom is no light, who are destitute of knowledge, such as the Indians who never heard of God! And are there not many among us, who are no better than baptized heathens? who need to seek the first principles of the oracles of God. It is sad, that after the sun of the gospel has shined so long in our horizon, to this day the veil should be upon their heart. Such as are enveloped in ignorance cannot give God a reasonable service. Rom 12: 1. Ignorance is the nurse of impiety. The schoolmen say, *Omne peccatum fundatur in ignorantia* [Every sin is founded upon ignorance]. Jer 9: 3. 'They proceed from evil to evil, and know not me, saith the Lord.' Where ignorance reigns in the understanding, lust rages in the affections. Prov 19: 2. 'That the mind be without knowledge, it is not good;' such have neither faith nor fear: no faith; for knowledge carries the torch before faith. Psa 9: 10. 'They that know thy name shall put their trust in thee.' A man can no more believe without knowledge than the eye can see without light. He can have no fear of God; for how can they fear him whom they do not know? The covering of Haman's face was a sad presage of death. When people's minds are covered with ignorance, it is a covering of the face that is a fatal forerunner of destruction.

Use two: If God be a God of knowledge, then see the folly of hypocrisy. Hypocrites do not *virtute miacere*, but *fingerere* [Hypocrites do not actually do good, they merely make a show of it]. Melanchthon. They carry it fair with men, but care not how bad their hearts are; they live in secret sin. Psa 73: 11. 'They say, How doth God know?' Psa 10: 2: 'God has forgotten, he hideth his face, he will never see it.' But, Psa 147: 5, 'His understanding is infinite:' He has a window to look into men's breasts; he has a key for the heart; he beholds all the sinful workings of men's spirits, as in a glass-hive we can see the bees working

in their combs. Matt 6: 4. He sees in secret. As a merchant enters debts in his book, so God has his day-book, in which he enters every sin. Jeroboam's wife disguised herself that the prophet should not know her; but he discerned her. I Kings 14: 6. 'Why feignest thou thyself to be another?' The hypocrite thinks to prevaricate and juggle with God, but God will unmask him. Eccles 12: 14. 'God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing.' Jer 29: 23. 'They have committed villany in Israel, even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord.' Ay, but the hypocrite hopes he shall colour over his sin, and make it look very specious. Absalom masks over his treason with the pretence of a religious vow. Judas dissembles his envy at Christ, and his covetousness, with the pretence of 'charity to the poor.' John 12: 5. Jehu makes religion a stirrup to his ambitious design. 2 Kings 10: 16. But God sees through these fig-leaves. You may see a jade under his guilt trappings. Jer 16: 17. 'Their iniquities are not hid from mine eyes.' He that has an eye to see will find a hand to punish.

Use three: Is God so infinite in knowledge? Then we should always feel as under his omniscient eye. Sic vivendum est tanquam in conspectu [Hence we ought to live as if always in full view]. Seneca. Let us set David's prospect before our eye. Psa 16: 8. 'I have set the Lord always before me.' Seneca counselled Lucilius, that whatever he was doing, he should imagine some of the Roman worthies stood before him, and then he would do nothing dishonourable. The consideration of God's omniscience would be preventive of much sin. The eye of man will restrain from sin; and will not God's eyes much more? Esther 7: 8. 'Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me?' Will we sin when our judge looks on? Would men speak so vainly, if they considered God overheard them? Latimer took heed to every word in his examination, when he heard the pen go behind the hangings: so, what care would persons have of their words, if they remembered God heard, and the pen is going on in heaven? Would men go after strange flesh if they believed God was a spectator of their wickedness, and would make them do penance in hell for it? Would they defraud in their dealings, and use false weights, if they thought God saw them, and for making their weights lighter would make their damnation heavier. Viewing ourselves as under the eye of God's omniscience, would cause reverence in the worship of God. God sees the frame and carriage of our hearts when we come before him. How would this call in our straggling thoughts? How would it animate and spirit duty? It would make us put fire to the incense. Acts 26: 7. 'The tribes instantly served God day and night,' omnibus viribus, with the utmost zeal and intenseness of spirit. To think God is in this place would add wings to prayer, and oil to the flame of our devotion.

Use four: Is God's knowledge infinite? Study sincerity, be what you seem. I Sam 16: 7. 'The Lord looketh upon the heart.' Men judge the heart by the actions, God judges the actions by the heart; if the heart be sincere, God will see the faith and bear with the failing. Asa had his blemishes, but his heart was right

with God. 2 Chron 15: 17. God saw his sincerity, and pardoned his infirmity. Sincerity in a Christian is like chastity in a wife, which excuses many failings. Sincerity makes our duties acceptable, like musk among linen, that perfumes it. As Jehu said to Jehonadab, 2 Kings 10: 15. 'Is thy heart right with me? And he said, It is. If it be, said he, give me thy hand; and he took him up into the chariot:' so, if God sees our heart is right, that we love him, and design his glory, now, says he, give me your prayers and tears; now you shall come up with me into the chariot of glory. Sincerity makes our services to be golden, and God will not cast away the gold though it may want some weight. Is God omniscient, and his eye chiefly upon the heart? Wear the girdle of truth about you, and never leave it off.

Use five: Is God a God of infinite knowledge? Then there is comfort, (1.) To the saints in particular. (2.) To the church in general.

(1.) To saints in particular. In case of private devotion. Christian, thou settest hours apart for God, thy thoughts run upon him as thy treasure; God takes notice of every good thought. Mal 3: 16. 'He had a book of remembrance written for them that thought upon his name.' Thou enterest into thy closet, and prayest to thy Father in secret; he hears every sigh and groan. Psa 38: 9. 'My groaning is not hid from thee.' Thou waterest the seed of thy prayer with tears, God bottles every tear. Psa 56: 8. 'Put thou my tears into thy bottle.' When the secrets of all hearts shall be opened, God will make an honourable mention of the zeal and devotion of his people, and he himself will be the herald of their praises. 1 Cor 4: 5. 'Then shall every man have praise of God.'

The infiniteness of God's knowledge is a comfort, in case the saints have not a clear knowledge of themselves. They find so much corruption, that they judge they have no grace. Gen 25: 22. 'If it be so, why am I thus?' If I have grace, why is my heart in so dead and earthly a frame? oh remember, God is of infinite knowledge, he can spy grace where thou canst not; he can see grace hid under corruption, as the stars may be hid under a cloud. God can see that holiness in thee which thou canst not discern in thyself; he can spy the flower of grace in thee, though overtopped with weeds. I Kings 14: 13. 'Because there is in him some good thing.' God sees some good thing in his people, when they can see no good in themselves; and though they judge themselves, he will give them an absolution.

It is comfort in respect of personal injuries. It is the saints' lot to suffer. The head being crowned with thorns, the feet must not tread upon roses. If saints find a real purgatory, it is in this life; but this is their comfort, that God sees what wrong is done to them; the apple of his eye is touched, and is he not sensible of it? Paul was scourged by cruel hands. 2 Cor 11: 25. 'Thrice was I beaten with rods;' as if you should see a scullion whip the king's son. God beholds it. Exod 3:

7. 'I know their sorrows.' The wicked make wounds in the backs of the saints, and then pour in vinegar; but God writes down their cruelty. Believers are a part of Christ's mystical body; and for every drop of a saint's blood spilt God puts a drop of wrath in his vial.

(2.) Comfort to the church of God in general. If God be a God of knowledge, he sees all the plots of the enemies against Zion, and can make them prove abortive. The wicked are subtle, having borrowed their skill from the old serpent; they dig deep, to hide their counsels from God, but he sees them, and can easily counterwork them. The dragon is described with seven heads in Rev 12: 3, to show how he plots against the church; but God is described with seven eyes in Zech 3: 9, to show that he sees all the plots and stratagems of the enemies; and when they deal proudly, he can be above them. Come, says Pharaoh, 'let us deal wisely;' Exod 1: 10; but he never played the fool more than when he thought to deal wisely. Exod 14: 24. 'In the morning watch the Lord looked to the host of the Egyptians by the pillar of fire, and troubled the host.' How may this, like sap in the vine, comfort the church of God in her militant state! The Lord has an eye in all the councils and combinations of the enemy; he sees them in their train, and can blow them up in their own mine.

From *A Body of Divinity*. Published by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson The Holiness of God

The next attribute is God's holiness. Exod xv ii. 'Glorious in holiness.' Holiness is the most sparkling jewel of his crown; it is the name by which God is known. Psa cxi 9. 'Holy and reverend is his name.' He is 'the holy One.' Job vi 10. Seraphims cry, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.' Isa vi 3. His power makes him mighty, his holiness makes him glorious. God's holiness consists in his perfect love of righteousness, and abhorrence of evil, and cannot look on iniquity.' Hab I 13.

I. God is holy intrinsically. He is holy in his nature; his very being is made up of holiness, as light is of the essence of the sun. He is holy in his Word. The Word bears a stamp of his holiness upon it, as the wax bears an impression of the seal. 'Thy Word is very pure.' Psa cxix 140. It is compared to silver refined seven times. Psa xii 6. Every line in the Word breathes sanctity, it encourages nothing but holiness. God is holy in his operations. All he does is holy; he cannot act but like himself; he can no more do an unrighteous action than the sun can darken. 'The Lord is holy in all his works,' Psa cxlv 17.

II. God is holy primarily. He is the original and pattern of holiness. Holiness began with him who is the Ancient of Days.

III. God is holy efficiently. He is the cause of all that is holiness in others. 'Every good and perfect gift comes from above.' James i 17. He made the angels holy. He infused all holiness into Christ's human nature. All the holiness we have is but a crystal stream from this fountain. We borrow all our holiness from God. As the lights of the sanctuary were lighted from the middle lamp, so all the holiness of others is a lamp lighted from heaven. 'I am the Lord which sanctify you.' Lev xx 8. God is not only a pattern of holiness, but he is a principle of holiness: his spring feeds all our cisterns, he drops his holy oil of grace upon us.

IV. God is holy transcendently. 'There is none holy as the Lord.' I Sam ii 2. No angel in heaven can take the just dimensions of God's holiness. The highest seraphim is too low of stature to measure these pyramids; holiness in God is far above holiness in saints or angels.

[1] It is above holiness in saints. It is a pure holiness. The saints' holiness is like gold in the ore, imperfect; their humility is stained with pride; he that has most faith needs pray, 'Lord, help my unbelief:' but the holiness of God is pure, like wine from the grape; it has not the least dash or tincture of impurity mixed with it. It is a more unchangeable holiness. Though the saints cannot lose the habit of holiness (for the seed of God remains), yet they may lose some degrees of their holiness. 'Thou hast left thy first love.' Rev ii 4. Grace cannot die, yet the flame of it may go out. Holiness in the saints is subject to ebbing, but holiness in God is unchangeable; he never lost a drop of his holiness; as he cannot have more holiness, because he is perfectly holy; so he cannot have less holiness, because he is unchangeably holy.

[2] The holiness of God is above the holiness of angels. Holiness in the angels is only a quality, which may be lost, as we see in the fallen angels; but holiness in God is his essence, he is all over holy, and he can as well lose his Godhead as his holiness.

But is he not privy to all the sins of men? how can he behold their impurities, and not be defiled?

God sees all the sins of men, but is no more defiled with them than the sun is defiled with the vapours that rise from the earth. God sees sin, not as a patron to approve it, but as a judge to punish it.

Use one: Is God so infinitely holy? Then see how unlike to God sin is. Sin is an unclean thing, it is hyperbolically evil. Rom i 23. It is called an abomination. Deut vii 25. God has no mixture of evil in him; sin has no mixture of good, it is the spirit and quintessence of evil; it turns good into evil; it has deflowered the virgin soul, made it red with guilt, and black with filth; it is called the accursed thing. Josh vii 11. No wonder, therefore, that God hates sin, being so unlike to him,

may. so contrary to him: it strikes at his holiness; it does all it can to spite God; if sin could help it, God should be God no longer.

Use two: Is God the Holy One, and is holiness his glory? How impious are they that are haters of holiness! As the vulture hates perfumes, so they hate the sweet perfume of holiness in the saints; their hearts rise against holiness; as a man's stomach at a dish he has an antipathy against. There is not a greater sign of a person devoted to hell, than to hate one for the thing wherein he is most like God. Others are despisers of holiness. They despise the glory of the Godhead. 'Glorious in holiness.' The despising holiness is seen in deriding it; and is it not sad that men should deride that which should save them? Sure that patient will die who derides the physic. Deriding the grace of the Spirit comes near to despising the Spirit of grace. Scoffing Ishmael was cast out of Abraham's house. Gen xxi 9. Such as scoff at holiness shall be cast out of heaven.

Use three: Is God so infinitely holy? Then let us endeavour to imitate God in holiness. 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.' 1 Pet i 6. There is a twofold holiness; a holiness of equality, and a holiness of similitude. A holiness of equality no man or angel can reach to. Who can be equally holy with God? Who can parallel him in sanctity? But there is a holiness of similitude, and that we must aspire after, to have some analogy and resemblance of God's holiness in us, to be as like him in holiness as we can. Though a taper does not give so much light as the sun, yet it resembles it. We must imitate God in holiness.

If we must be like God in holiness, wherein does our holiness consist?

In two things. In our suitableness to God's nature, and in our subjection to his will.

Our holiness consists in our suitableness to the nature of God. Hence the saints are said to partake of the divine nature, which is not partaking of his essence, but his image. 2 Pet i 4. Herein is the saints' holiness, when they are the lively pictures of God. They bear the image of God's meekness, mercifulness, heavenliness; they are of the same judgment with God, of the same disposition; they love what he loves, and hate what he hates.

Our holiness consists also in our subjection to the will of God. As God's nature is the pattern of holiness, so his will is the rule of holiness. It is our holiness when we do his will, Acts xiii 22; when we bear his will, Micah vii 9; when what he inflicts wisely we suffer willingly. Our great care should be, to be like God in holiness. Our holiness should be qualified as God's; as his is a real holiness, ours should be. 'Righteousness and true holiness.' Eph iv 24. It should not be the paint of holiness, but the life; it should not be like the Egyptian temples. beautified without merely. but like Solomon's temple, gold within, Psa xlv 13.

'The king's daughter is all glorious within.' That I may press you to resemble God in holiness consider,

How illustrious every holy person is. He is a fair glass in which some of the beams of God's holiness shine forth. We read that Aaron put on his garments for glory and beauty. Exod xxviii 2. when we wear the embroidered garment of holiness, it is for glory and beauty. A good Christian is ruddy, being sprinkled with Christ's blood; and white, being adorned with holiness. As the diamond to a ring, so is holiness to the soul; that, as Chrysostom says, they that oppose it cannot but admire it.

(2.) It is the great design God carries on in the world, to make a people like himself in holiness. What are all the showers of ordinances for, but to rain down righteousness upon us, and make us holy? What are the promises for, but to encourage holiness? What is the sending of the Spirit into the world for, but to anoint us with the holy unction? I John ii 20. What are all afflictions for, but to make us partakers of God's holiness? Heb xii 10. What are mercies for, but loadstones to draw us to holiness? What is the end of Christ's dying, but that his blood might wash away our unholiness? 'Who gave himself for us, to purify unto himself a peculiar people.' Titus ii 14. So that if we are not holy, we cross God's great design in the world.

(3.) Our holiness draws God's heart to us. Holiness is God's image; and God cannot choose but love his image where he sees it. A king loves to see his effigies upon a piece of coin. 'Thou lovest righteousness. Psa xlv 7. And where does righteousness grow, but in a holy heart? Isa lxii 4. 'Thou shalt be called *Hephzibah*, for the Lord delighteth in thee.' It was her holiness that drew God's love to her. 'They shall call them the holy people.' Verse 12. God values not any by their high birth, but their holiness.

(4.) Holiness is the only thing that distinguishes us from the reprobate part of the world. God's people have his seal upon them. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And let all that name the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' 2 Tim ii 19. The people of God are sealed with a double seal. Election, 'The Lord knows who are his:' and Sanctification, 'Let every one depart from iniquity.' As a nobleman is distinguished from another by his silver star; as a virtuous woman is distinguished from a harlot by her chastity; so holiness distinguishes between the two seeds. All that are of God have Christ for their captain, and holiness is the white colour they wear. Heb ii 10.

(5.) Holiness is our honour. Holiness and honour are put together. I Thess iv 4. Dignity goes along with sanctification. 'He hath washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings unto God.' Rev i s. When we are washed and

made holy, then we are kings and priests to God. The saints are called vessels of honour; they are called jewels, for the sparkling of their holiness, because filled with wine of the Spirit. This makes them earthly angels.

(6.) Holiness gives us boldness with God. 'Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.' Job xxii 23, 26. Lifting up the face is an emblem of boldness. Nothing can make us so ashamed to go to God as sin. A wicked man in prayer may lift up his hands, but he cannot lift up his face. When Adam had lost his holiness, he lost his confidence; he hid himself. But the holy person goes to God a child to its father; his conscience does not upbraid him with allowing any sin, therefore he can go boldly to the throne of grace, and have mercy to help in time of need. Heb iv i6.

(7.) Holiness gives peace. Sin raises a storm in the conscience; *ubi peccatum ibi procella* [where there is sin, there is tumult]. 'There is no peace to the wicked.' Isa lvii 21. Righteousness and peace are put together. Holiness is the root which bears this sweet fruit of peace; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

(8.) Holiness leads to heaven. It is the King of heaven's highway. 'An highway shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness.' Isa xxxv 8. At Rome there were temples of virtue and honour, all were to go through the temple of virtue to the temple of honour; so we must go through the temple of holiness to the temple of heaven. Glory begins in virtue. 'Who hath called us to glory and virtue.' 2 Pet I 3. Happiness is nothing else but the quintessence of holiness; holiness is glory militant, and happiness holiness triumphant.

What shalt we do to resemble God in holiness?

Have recourse to Christ's blood by faith. This is the *lavacrum animae* [the washing of the soul]. Legal purifications were types and emblems of it. 1 John i 7. The Word is a glass to show us our spots, and Christ's blood is a fountain to wash them away.

(2.) Pray for a holy heart. 'Create in me a clean heart of God.' Psa li 10. Lay thy heart before the Lord, and say, Lord my heart is full of leprosy; it defiles all it touches; Lord, I am not fit to live with such a heart for I cannot honour thee; nor die with such heart; for I cannot see thee. Oh create in me a clean heart; send thy Spirit into me, to refine and purify me, that I may be a temple fit for thee the holy God to inhabit.

(3.) Walk with them that are holy. 'He that walketh with the wise shall be wise.' Prov xiii 20. Be among the spices and you will smell of them. Association begets assimilation. Nothing has a greater power and energy to effect holiness than the communion of the saints.

From *A Body of Divinity*. Published by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

The Mercy Of God

The next attribute is God's goodness or mercy. Mercy is the result and effect of God's goodness. Psa 33: 5. So then this is the next attribute, God's goodness or mercy. The most learned of the heathens thought they gave their god Jupiter two golden characters when they styled him good and great. Both these meet in God, goodness and greatness, majesty and mercy. God is essentially good in himself and relatively good to us. They are both put together in Psa 119: 68. 'Thou art good, and doest good.' This relative goodness is nothing else but his mercy, which is an innate propenseness in God to pity and succour such as are in misery.

1. Concerning God's mercy I shall lay down these twelve positions.

[1] It is the great design of the Scripture to represent God as merciful. This is a loadstone to draw sinners to him. 'The Lord, merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness,' &c. Exod 34: 6. Here are six expressions to set forth God's mercy, and but one to set forth his justice: 'who will by no means clear the guilty.' Psa 57: 10. 'God's mercy is far above the heavens.' Psa 108: 4. God is represented as a king, with a rainbow about his throne. Rev 4: 3. The rainbow was an emblem of mercy. The Scripture represents God in white robes of mercy more often than with garments rolled in blood; with his golden sceptre more often than his iron rod.

[2] God is more inclinable to mercy than wrath. Mercy is his darling attribute, which he most delights in. Mic 7: 18. Mercy pleases him. It is delightful to the mother, says Chrysostom, to have her breasts drawn; so it is to God to have the breasts of his mercy drawn. 'Fury is not in me,' Isa 27: 4; that is, I do not delight in it. Acts of severity are rather forced from God; he does not afflict willingly. Lam 3: 33. The bee naturally gives honey, it stings only when it is provoked; so God does not punish till he can bear no longer. 'So that the Lord could bear no longer, because of the evil of your doings.' Jer 44: 22. Mercy is God's right hand that he is most used to; inflicting punishment is called his strange work. Isa 28: 21. He is not used to it. When the Lord would shave off the pride of a nation, he is said to hire a razor, as if he had none of his own. 'He shall shave with a razor that is hired.' Isa 7: 20. 'He is slow to anger,' Psa 103: 8, but 'ready to forgive.' Psa 86: 5.

[3] There is no condition, but we may spy mercy in it. When the church was in captivity, she cried out, 'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.' Lam 3: 22. Geographers write of Syracuse in Sicily, that it is so situated that the sun is never out of sight. In all afflictions we may see some sunshine of mercy. That outward and inward troubles do not come together is mercy.

[4] Mercy sweetens all God's other attributes. God's holiness without mercy, and his justice without mercy were terrible. When the water was bitter, and Israel could not drink, Moses cast a tree into the waters, and then they were made sweet. How bitter and dreadful were the other attributes of God, did not mercy sweeten them! Mercy sets God's power on work to help us; it makes his justice become our friend; it shall avenge our quarrels.

[5] God's mercy is one of the most orient pearls of his crown; it makes his Godhead appear amiable and lovely. When Moses said to God, 'I beseech thee shew me thy glory;' the Lord answered him, 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will shew thee mercy.' Exod 33: 19. God's mercy is his glory. His holiness makes him illustrious; his mercy makes him propitious.

[6] Even the worst taste God's mercy; such as fight against God's mercy, taste of it; the wicked have some crumbs from mercy's table. 'The Lord is good to all.' Psa 145: 9. Sweet dewdrops are on the thistle, as well as on the rose. The diocese where mercy visits is very large. Pharaoh's head was crowned though his heart was hardened.

[7] Mercy coming to us in a covenant is sweetest. It was mercy that God would give Israel rain, and bread to the full, and peace, and victory over their enemies, Lev 26: 4 - 6, but it was a greater mercy that God would be their God, verse 12. To have health is a mercy, but to have Christ and salvation is a greater mercy; it is like the diamond in the ring, which casts a more sparkling lustre.

[8] One act of mercy engages God to another. Men argue thus, I have shown you kindness already, therefore trouble me no more; but, because God has shown mercy, he is more ready still to show mercy; his mercy in election makes him justify, adopt, glorify; one act of mercy engages God to more. A parent's love to his child makes him always giving.

[9] All the mercy in the creature is derived from God, and is but a drop of this ocean. The mercy and pity a mother has to her child is from God; he that puts the milk in her breast puts the compassion in her heart. God is called, 'The Father of mercies,' because he begets all the mercies in the world. 2 Cor 1: 3. If God has put any kindness into the creature, how much kindness is in him who is the Father of mercy!

[10] As God's mercy makes the saints happy, so it should make them humble. Mercy is not the fruit of our goodness, but the fruit of God's goodness. Mercy is an alms that God bestows. They have no cause to be proud that live upon the alms of God's mercy. 'If I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head,' Job 10: 15: all my righteousness is the effect of God's mercy, therefore I will be humble and will not lift up my head.

[II] Mercy stays the speedy execution of God's justice. Sinners continually provoke God, and make 'the fury come up in his face.' Ezek 38: 18. Whence is it God does not presently arrest and condemn them? It is not that God cannot do it, for he is armed with omnipotence, but it is from his mercy. Mercy gets a reprieve for the sinner, and stops the speedy process of justice. God would, by his goodness, lead sinners to repentance.

[I2] It is dreadful to have mercy as a witness against any one. It was sad with Haman when the queen herself accused him. Esth 7: 6. So will it be when this queen of mercy shall stand up against a person and accuse him. It is only mercy that saves a sinner; how sad then to have mercy become an enemy! If mercy be an accuser, who shall be our advocate? The sinner never escapes hell when mercy draws up the indictment.

I might show you several species or kinds of mercy; as preventing mercy, sparing mercy, supplying mercy, guiding mercy, accepting mercy, healing mercy, quickening mercy, supporting mercy, forgiving mercy, correcting mercy, comforting mercy, delivering mercy, crowning mercy but I shall speak of,

II. The qualifications or properties of God's mercy.

[I] God's mercy is free. To set up merit is to destroy mercy. Nothing can deserve mercy, because we are polluted in our blood; nor force it. We may force God to punish us, but not to love us. 'I will love them freely.' Hos 14: 4. Every link in the chain of salvation is wrought and interwoven with free grace. Election is free. 'He has chosen us in him, according to the good pleasure of his will.' Eph 1: 4. Justification is free. 'Being justified freely by his grace.' Rom 3: 24. Salvation is free. 'According to his mercy he saved us.' Titus 3: 5. Say not then, I am unworthy; for mercy is free. If God should show mercy to such only as are worthy, he would show none at all.

[2] God's mercy is an overflowing mercy; it is infinite. 'Plenteous in mercy.' Psa 86: 5. 'Rich in mercy.' Eph 2: 4. 'Multitude of mercies.' Psa 51: 1: The vial of wrath drops, but the fountain of mercy runs. The sun is not so full of light as God is of mercy. God has morning mercies. 'His mercies are new every morning.' Lam 3: 23. He has night mercies. 'In the night his song shall be with me.' Psa

13: 8. God has mercies under heaven, which we taste; and in heaven, which we hope for.

[3] God's mercy is eternal. 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.' Psa 103: 17. 'His mercy endureth for ever,' is repeated twenty-six times in one psalm. Psa 136. The souls of the blessed shall be ever bathing themselves in this sweet and pleasant ocean of God's mercy. God's anger to his children lasts but a while, 'but his mercy lasts for ever.' Psa 103: 9. As long as he is God he will be showing mercy. As his mercy is overflowing, so it is everflowing.

Use one: We are to look upon God in prayer, not in his judgement robes, but clothed with a rainbow full of mercy and clemency. Add wings to prayer. When Jesus Christ ascended up to heaven, that which made him go up thither with joy was, 'I go to my Father;' so that which should make our hearts ascend with joy in prayer, is, 'We are going to the Father of mercy, who sits upon the throne of grace.' Go with confidence in this mercy; as when one goes to a fire, not doubtingly, saying, perhaps it will warm me, perhaps not.

Use two: Believe in his mercy. 'I will trust in the mercy of God for ever.' Psa 52: 8. God's mercy is a fountain opened. Let down the bucket of faith and you may drink of this fountain of salvation. What greater encouragement to believe than God's mercy? God counts it his glory to be scattering pardons; he is desirous that sinners should touch the golden sceptre of his mercy and live. This willingness to show mercy appears two ways: -

(I.) By entreating sinners to come and lay hold on his mercy. 'Whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely.' Rev 22: 17. Mercy woos sinners, it even kneels down to them. It were strange for a prince to entreat a condemned man to accept of pardon. God says, Poor sinner, suffer me to love thee, be willing to let me save thee.

(2.) By his joyfulness when sinners lay hold on his mercy. What is God the better whether we receive his mercy or not? What is the fountain profited that others drink of it? Yet such is God's goodness, that he rejoices at the salvation of sinners, and is glad when his mercy is accepted. When the prodigal son came home the father was glad, and made a feast to express his joy; so, God rejoices when a poor sinner comes in, and lays hold of his mercy. What an encouragement is here to believe in God! He is a God of pardons. Neh 9: 17. Mercy pleases him. Mic 7: 18. Nothing prejudices us but unbelief. Unbelief stops the current of God's mercy from running. It shuts up God's bowels, closes the orifice of Christ's wounds, so that no healing virtue will come out.' He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief, Matt 13: 58. Why dost thou not believe in God's mercy? Do thy sins discourage thee? God's mercy can pardon great sins, nay, because they are great. Psa 25: 11. The sea covers the

rocks as well as the sands. Some that had a hand in crucifying Christ found mercy. As far as the heavens are above the earth, so far is God's mercy above our sins. Isa 55: 9. What will tempt us to believe, if not the mercy of God?

Use three: Take heed of abusing the mercy of God. Suck not poison out of the sweet flower of God's mercy. Think not that because God is merciful, you may go on in sin; this is to make mercy your enemy. None might touch the ark but the priests, who by their office were more holy; so none may touch the ark of God's mercy but such as are resolved to be holy. To sin because mercy abounds is the devil's logic. He that sins because of mercy, is like one that wounds his head because he has a plaster. He that sins because of God's mercy, shall have judgement without mercy. Mercy abused turns to fury. 'If he bless himself, saying, I shall have peace though I walk after the imaginations of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man.' Deut 29: 19, 20. Nothing is sweeter than mercy, when it is improved; nothing fiercer, when it is abused; as nothing is colder than lead when taken out of the mine, and nothing more scalding when it is heated. Nothing is blunter than iron, yet nothing is sharper when it is whetted. 'The mercy of the Lord is upon them that fear him.' Psa 103: 17. Mercy is not for them that sin and fear not, but for them that fear and sin not. God's mercy is a holy mercy; where it pardons it heals.

What shall we do to be interested in God's mercy?

(I.) Be sensible of your wants. See how much you stand in need of pardoning, saving mercy. See yourselves orphans. 'In thee the fatherless find mercy.' Hos 14: 3. God bestows the alms of mercy only on such as are indigent. Be emptied of all opinion of self-worthiness. God pours the golden oil of mercy into empty vessels.

(2.) Go to God for mercy. 'Have mercy upon me, O God!' Psa 51: 1. Put me not off with common mercy that reprobates may have; give me not only acorns but pearls; give me not only mercy to feed and clothe me, but mercy to save me; give me the cream of thy mercies; Lord! let me have mercy and lovingkindness. 'Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.' Psa 103: 4. Give me such mercy as speaks thy electing love to my soul. Oh pray for mercy! God has treasures of mercy; prayer is the key that opens these treasures; and in prayer, be sure to carry Christ in your arms, for all the mercy comes through Christ. 'Samuel took a sucking lamb,; I Sam 7: 9; carry the lamb Christ in your arms, go in his name, present his merits; say, Lord! here is Christ's blood, which is the price of my pardon; Lord! show me mercy, because Christ has purchased it. Though God may refuse us when we come for mercy in our own name, yet he will not when we come in Christ's name. Plead Christ's satisfaction, and this is an argument that God cannot deny.

Use four: Such as have found mercy are exhorted to three things. (1.) To be upon Gerizim, the mount of blessing and praising. They have not only heard the King of heaven is merciful, but they have found it so; the honeycomb of God's mercy has dropped upon them; when in wants, mercy supplied them; when they were nigh unto death, mercy raised them from the sick-bed; when covered with guilt, mercy pardoned them. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.' Psa 103: 1. Oh how should the vessels of mercy run over with praise! 'Who was before a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy.' I Tim 1: 13. I was bemiracled with mercy; as the sea overflows and breaks down the banks, so the mercy of God broke down the banks of my sin, and mercy sweetly flowed into my soul. You that have been monuments of God's mercy, should be trumpets of praise; you that have tasted the Lord is gracious, tell others what experiences you have had of God's mercy, that you may encourage them to seek to him for mercy. 'I will tell you what God has done for my soul;' Psa 66: 16; that when I found my heart dead, God's Spirit came upon me mightily, and the blowing of that wind made the withering flowers of my grace revive. Oh tell others of God's goodness, that you may set others blessing him, and that you may make God's praises live when you are dead.

(2.) To love God. Mercy should be the attraction of love. 'I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.' Psa 18: 1. The Hebrew word for love signifies love out of the inward bowels. God's justice may make us fear him, his mercy makes us love him. If mercy will not produce love, what will? We are to love God for giving us our food, much more for giving us grace; for sparing mercy, much more for saving mercy. Sure that heart is made of marble, which the mercy of God will not dissolve in love. 'I would hate my own soul,' says Augustine, 'if I did not find it loving God.'

(3.) To imitate God in showing mercy. As God is the Father of mercy, show yourselves to be his children, by being like him. Ambrose says, 'The sum and definition of religion is, Be rich in works of mercy, be helpful to the bodies and souls of others. Scatter your golden seeds; let the lamp of your profession be filled with the oil of charity. Be merciful in giving and forgiving. "Be ye merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful".'

Available in *A Body of Divinity*. Published by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

The Trinity

Q-6. HOW MANY PERSONS ARE THERE IN THE GODHEAD?

A: Three persons, yet but one God.

'There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.' I John 5: 7.

God is but one, yet are there three distinct persons subsisting in one Godhead. This is a sacred mystery, which the light within man could never have discovered. As the two natures in Christ, yet but one person, is a wonder; so three persons, yet but one Godhead. Here is a great deep, the Father God, the Son God, the Holy Ghost God; yet not three Gods, but one God. The three persons in the blessed Trinity are distinguished, but not divided; three substances, but one essence. This is a divine riddle where one makes three, and three make one. Our narrow thoughts can no more comprehend the Trinity in Unity, than a nut-shell will hold all the water in the sea. Let me shadow it out by a similitude. In the body of the sun, there are the substance of the sun, the beams, and the heat; the beams are begotten of the sun, the heat proceeds both from the sun and the beams; but these three, though different, are not divided; they all three make but one sun: so in the blessed Trinity, the Son is begotten of the Father, the Holy Ghost proceeds from both; yet though they are three distinct persons, they are but one God. First, let me speak of the Unity in Trinity; then of the Trinity in Unity.

I. Of the Unity in Trinity. The Unity of the persons in the Godhead consists of two things.

[1] The identity of essence. In the Trinity there is a oneness in essence. The three persons are of the same divine nature and substance; so that in Deo nonest magis et minus, 'there are no degrees in the Godhead'; one person is not God more than another.

[2] The Unity of the persons in the Godhead consists in the mutual inbeing of them, or their being in one together. The three persons are so united that one person is in another, and with another. 'Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.' John 17: 21.

II. Let me speak of the Trinity in Unity.

[1] The first person in the Trinity is God the Father. He is called the first person, in respect of order, not dignity: for God the Father has no essential perfection which the other persons have not; he is not more wise, more holy, more powerful than the other persons are. There is a priority, not a superiority.

[2] The second person in the Trinity is Jesus Christ, who is begotten of the Father before all time. 'I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled,

before the hills, was I brought forth.' Prov 8: 23 - 25. This Scripture declares the eternal generation of the Son of God. This second person in the Trinity, who is Jehovah, is become our Jesus. The Scripture calls him the branch of David, Jer 23: 5, and I may call him the flower of our nature. 'By him all that believe are justified.' Acts 13: 39.

[3] The third person in the Trinity is the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, whose work is to illuminate the mind, and enkindle sacred motions. The essence of the Spirit is in heaven, and everywhere; but the influence of it is in the hearts of believers. This is that blessed Spirit who gives us the holy unction. 1 John 2: 20. Though Christ merits grace for us, it is the Holy Ghost that works it in us. Though Christ makes the purchase, it is the Holy Ghost that makes the assurance, and seals us to the day of redemption. Thus I have spoken of all the three persons. The Trinity of persons may be proved out of Matt 3: 16. 'Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son.' Here are three names given to the three persons. He who spake with a voice from heaven was God the Father; he who was baptized in Jordan was God the Son; he who descended in the likeness of a dove was God the Holy Ghost. Thus I have shown you the Unity of essence, and the Trinity of persons.

Use one: For confutation. (I.) This confutes the Jews and Turks, who believe only the first person in the Godhead. Take away the distinction of the persons in the Trinity, and you overthrow man's redemption; for God the Father being offended with man for sin, how shall he be pacified without a mediator? This mediator is Christ, who makes our peace. Christ having died, and shed his blood, how shall this blood be applied but by the Holy Ghost? Therefore, if there be not three persons in the Godhead, man's salvation cannot be wrought out; if there be no second person in the Trinity, there is no redeemer; if no third person, there is no comforter. Thus the plank is taken away by which we get to heaven.

(2.) It confutes the execrable opinion of the Socinians, who deny the Divinity of the Lord Jesus, and make him to be a creature only, but of a higher rank. As the Papists blot out the second commandment, so the Socinians do the second person in the Trinity. If to oppose Christ's members be a sin, what is it to oppose Christ himself? Jesus Christ is co-equal with God the Father. He thought it no robbery to be equal with God. Phil 2: 6. He is co-eternal with God the Father: 'I was from the beginning,' Prov 8: 23: if not, there was a time when God was without a Son, and so he would be no Father; nay, there was a time when God was without his glory, for Christ is 'the brightness of his Father's glory.' Heb 1: 3. He is co-essential with God the Father. The Godhead subsists in Christ. 'In whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' Col 2: 9. It is said, not only that Christ was with God before the beginning, but that he was God. John 1: 1, and 1

Tim 3: 16. 'God manifest in the flesh.' The title of Lord, so often given to Christ, in the New Testament, answers to the title of Jehovah in the Old. Deut 6: 4; Matt 22: 37. Christ has a co-eternity, and co-substantiality with his Father. 'I and my Father are one.' John 10: 30. It were blasphemy for an angel to speak thus. Yet further to prove Christ's Godhead, consider (i) The glorious incommunicable attributes belonging to God the Father are ascribed to Christ. Is God the Father omnipotent? So is Jesus Christ. He is the almighty, Rev 1: 8, and he creates, Col 1: 16. Is God the Father infinitely immense, filling all places? Jer 23: 24. So is Jesus Christ. While Christ was on the earth by his bodily presence, he was at the same time in the bosom of the Father by his divine presence. John 3: 13. (ii) The same jura regalia, or prerogatives royal, which belong to God the Father, belong also to Christ. Does God the Father seal pardons? This is a flower of Christ's crown. 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' Matt 9: 2. Nor does Christ remit sin organice only, as ministers do, by virtue of a power delegated to them from God; but he does it by his own power and authority. Is God the Father the adequate object of faith? Is he to be believed in? So is his Son. John 14: 1. Does adoration belong to God the Father? So it does to the Son. 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' Heb 1: 6. How sacrilegious therefore is the Socinian, who would rob Christ of his Godhead, the best flower of his crown. They that deny Christ to be God, must greatly wrest, or else deny the Scripture to be the Word of God.

(3.) It confutes the Arians, who deny the Holy Ghost to be God. The eternal Godhead subsists in the Holy Ghost. 'He shall guide you into all truth.' John 16: 13. Christ speaks not there of an attribute, but of a person. That the Godhead subsists in the person of the Holy Ghost appears in this; that the Spirit, who gives diversity of gifts, is said to be the same Lord, and the same God. I Cor 12: 5, 6. The black and unpardonable sin is said, in a special manner, to be committed against the Godhead subsisting in the Holy Ghost. Matt 12: 32. The mighty power of God is made manifest by the Holy Ghost; for he changes the hearts of men. The devil would have Christ prove himself to be God, by turning stones into bread; but the Holy Ghost shows his Godhead by turning stones into flesh. 'I will take away the stony heart; and give you a heart of flesh.' Ezek 36: 26. Yet further, the power and Godhead of the Holy Ghost appeared in effecting the glorious conception of our Lord Jesus Christ. The very shadow of the Holy Ghost made a virgin conceive. Luke 1: 35. The Holy Ghost works miracles, which transcend the sphere of nature; as raising the dead. Rom 8: 11. To him belongs divine worship; our souls and bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, I Cor 6: 19, in which temples he is to be worshipped, verse 20. We are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost; therefore we must believe his Godhead, or renounce our baptism in his name. Methinks it were better for such men not to have so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost, Acts 19: 2, than to deny his Deity. They who would wittingly and willingly blot out the third person, shall have their names blotted out of the book of life.

Use two: For exhortation. (I.) Believe this doctrine of the Trinity of persons in the unity of essence. The Trinity is purely an object of faith; the plumbline of reason is too short to fathom this mystery; but where reason cannot wade, there faith may swim. There are some truths in religion that may be demonstrated by reason; as that there is a God: but the Trinity of persons in the Unity of essence is wholly supernatural, and must be believed by faith. This sacred doctrine is not against reason, but above it. Those illuminated philosophers, that could find out the causes of things, and discourse of the magnitude and influence of the stars, the nature of minerals, could never, by their deepest search, find out the mystery of the Trinity. This is of divine revelation, and must be adored with humble believing. We can be no good Christians, without the firm belief of the Trinity. How can we pray to God the Father but in the name of Christ, and through the help of the Spirit? How believe the glorious Trinity? How are the Quakers to be abhorred, who go under the name of Christians, and yet undervalue and renounce Jesus Christ! I have read of some Quakers who speak thus: 'We deny the person of him whom you call Christ, and affirm, That they who expect to be saved by that Christ without works, will be damned in that faith!' Could the devil himself speak worse blasphemy? They would pull up all religion by the roots, and take away that corner stone, on which the hope of our salvation is built.

(2.) If there be one God subsisting in three persons, then let us give equal reverence to all the persons in the Trinity. There is not more or less in the Trinity; the Father is not more God than the Son and Holy Ghost. There is an order in the Godhead, but no degrees; one person has not a majority or supereminence above another, therefore we must give equal worship to all the persons. 'That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.' John 5: 23. Adore Unity in Trinity.

(3.) Obey all the persons in the blessed Trinity; for all of them are God. Obey God the Father. Christ himself, as man, obeyed God the Father, John 4: 34, much more must we. Deut 27: 10.

Obey God the Son. 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry.' Psa 2: 12. Kiss him with a kiss of obedience. Christ's commands are not grievous. I John 5: 3. Whatever he commands is for our interest and benefit. Oh then kiss the Son! Why do the elders throw down their crowns at the feet of Christ, and fall down before the Lamb? Rev 4: 10, 11. To testify their subjection, and to profess their readiness to serve and obey him.

Obey God the Holy Ghost. Our souls are breathed into us by the glorious Spirit. 'The Spirit of God has made me.' Job 33: 4. Our souls are adorned by the blessed Spirit. Every grace is a divine spark lighted in the soul by the Holy Ghost. Nay, more, the Spirit of God sanctified Christ's human nature; he united it with

the divine, and fitted the man Christ to be our Mediator. Well then does this third person in the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, deserve to be obeyed; for he is God, and this tribute of homage and obedience is due to him from us.

From *A Body of Divinity*. Published by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

QXI: WHAT ARE GOD'S WORKS OF PROVIDENCE?

A: God's works of providence are the acts of his most holy, wise, and powerful government of his creatures, and of their actions.

Of the work of God's providence Christ says, 'My Father worketh hitherto and I work.' John v 17. God has rested from the works of creation, he does not create any new species of things. 'He rested from all his works;' Gen ii 2; and therefore it must needs be meant of his works of providence: 'My Father worketh and I work.' 'His kingdom ruleth over all;' Psa ciii 19; i.e., his providential kingdom. Now, for the clearing of this point, I shall?

I. Show you that there is a providence. II. What that providence is; and III. Lay down some maxims or propositions concerning the providence of God.

I. That there is a providence. There is no such thing as blind fate, but there is a providence that guides and governs the world. 'The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.' Prov xvi 33.

II. What this providence is. I answer, Providence is God's ordering all issues and events of things, after the counsel of his will, to his own glory.

[1] I call providence God's ordering things, to distinguish it from his decrees. God's decree ordains things that shall fall out, God's providence orders them.

[2] I call providence the ordering of things after the counsel of God's will.

[3] God orders all events of things, after the counsel of his will, to his own glory, his glory being the ultimate end of all his actings, and the where all the lines of providence meet. The providence of God is *Regina mundi*, 'the queen and governess of the world': it is the eye that sees, and the hand that turns all the wheels in the universe. God is not like an artificer that builds a house, and then leaves it, but like a pilot he steers the ship of the whole creation.

III. Propositions about God's providence.

[I] God's providence reaches to all places, persons, and occurrences. (1.) To all places. 'Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off?' Jer xxiii 23. The diocese where Providence visits is very large; it reaches to heaven, earth, and sea. 'They that go down to the sea, see the wonders of God in the deep.' Psa cvii 23, 24. Now, that the sea, which is higher than the earth, should not drown the earth, is a wonder of Providence. The prophet Jonah saw the wonders of God in the deep, when the very fish which devoured him and swallowed him brought him safe to shore. (2.) God's providence reaches to all persons, especially the persons of the godly, who in a special manner are taken notice of. God takes care of every saint in particular, as if he had none else to care for. 'He careth for you,' I Pet v 7, i.e., the elect in a special manner. 'The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; to preserve them from death, and to keep them alive in famine.' Psa xxxiii 18, 19. God by his providential care shields off dangers from his people, and sets a life-guard of angels about them. Psa xxxiv 7. God's providence keeps the very bones of the saints. Psa xxxiv 20. It bottles their tears. Psa lvi 8. It strengthens the saints iii their weakness. Heb xi 34. It supplies all their wants out of its alms basket. Psa xxiii 5. Thus Providence wonderfully supplies the wants of the elect. When the Protestants in Rochelle were besieged by the French king, God by his providence sent a great number of small fishes to feed them, such as were never seen before in that haven. So the raven, that unnatural creature (that will hardly feed its own young), providentially brought sustenance to the prophet Elijah. I Kings xvii 6. The Virgin Mary, through bearing and bringing forth the Messiah, helped to make the world rich, yet she herself was very poor; and now, being warned of the angel to go into Egypt, Matt ii 13, she had scarce enough to bear her charges thither; but see how God provides for her beforehand. By his providence he sends wise men from the east, who bring costly gifts, gold, myrrh, and frankincense, and present them to Christ; and now she has enough to defray her charges into Egypt. God's children sometimes scarce know how they are fed, except that providence feeds them. 'Verily thou shalt be fed.' Psa xxxvii 3. If God will give his people a kingdom when they die, he will not deny them daily bread while they live. (3.) God's providence reaches to all affairs and occurrences in the world. There is nothing that stirs in the world but God has, by his providence, the over-ruling of it. Is it the raising of a man to honour? Psa lxxv 7. He puts down one, and raises up another. Success and victory in battle is the result of providence. Saul had the victory, but God wrought the salvation. I Sam xi 13. That among all virgins brought before the king, Esther should find favour in the eyes of the king, was not without God's special providence; for, by this means, the Lord saved the Jews alive that were destined to destruction. Providence reaches to the least of things, to birds and ants. Providence feeds the young raven, when the dam forsakes it, and will give it no food. Psa cxlvii 9. Providence reaches to the very hairs of our head. 'The hairs of your head are all numbered.' Matt x 30. Surely if providence reaches to our hairs, much more to our souls. Thus you have seen that God's providence reaches to all places, to all

persons, to all occurrences and affairs. Now there are two objections against this doctrine.

Some say, There are many things done in the world which are very disorderly and irregular; and surely God's providence is not in these things.

Yes, the things that seem to us irregular, God makes use of to his own glory. Suppose you were in a smith's shop, and should see there several sorts of tools, some crooked, some bowed, others hooked, would you condemn all these things, because they do not look handsome? The smith makes use of them all for doing his work. Thus it is with the providences of God; they seem to us to be very crooked and strange, yet they all carry on God's work. I shall make this clear to you in two particular cases.

God's people are sometimes low. It seems to be out of order that they who are best should be in the lowest condition; but there is much wisdom in this providence, as appears thus: 1. Perhaps the hearts of the godly were lifted up with riches, or with success; now God comes with a humbling providence to afflict them and fleece them. Better is the loss that makes them humble than the success that makes them proud. Again. 2. If the godly were not sometimes afflicted, and suffered an eclipse in their outward comforts, how could their graces be seen, especially their faith and patience? If it were always sunshine we should see no stars; so if we should have always prosperity, it would be hard to see the acting of men's faith. Thus you see God's providences are wise and regular, though to us they seem very strange and crooked.

Here is another case. The wicked flourish. This seems to be very much out of order; but God, in his providence, sees good sometimes that the worst of men should be exalted; that they may do some work for God, though it be against their will. Isa x 7. God will be in no man's debt.

He makes use of the wicked sometimes to protect and shield his church; and sometimes to refine and purify it. 'Thou hast ordained them for correction.' Hab i 12. As if the prophet had said, Thou hast ordained the wicked to correct thy children. Indeed, as Augustine says well, 'We are beholden to wicked men, who against their wills do us good,' As the corn is beholden to the flail to thresh off its husks, or as the iron is beholden to the file to brighten it, so the godly are beholden to the wicked, though it be against their will, to brighten and refine their graces. Now, then, if the wicked do God's own work, though against their will, he will not let them be losers by it; he will raise them in the world, and give them a full cup of earthly comforts. Thus you see those providences are wise and regular, which to us seem strange and crooked.

But, some may say, if God has a hand in ordering all things that fall out, he has a hand in the sins of men.

I answer, No, by no mans, he has no hand in any man's sin. God cannot go contrary to his own nature, he cannot do any unholy action, any more than the sun can be said to be darkened. Here you must take heed of two things; as you must take heed of making God ignorant of men's sins, so you must take heed of making God to have a hand in men's sins. Is it likely that God is the author of sin, and the avenger of it? Is it a likely thing that God should make a law against sin, and then have a hand in breaking his own law? God in his providence permits men's sins. 'He suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.' Acts xiv 16. God permitted their sin, which he never would, if he could not bring good out of it. Had not sin been permitted, God's justice in punishing sin, and his mercy in pardoning sin, had not been so well known. The Lord is pleased to permit it, but he has no hand in sin.

But is it not said that God hardened Pharaoh's heart? Here is more than barely permitting sin.

God does not infuse evil into men, he withdraws the influence of his graces, and then the heart hardens of itself; even as the light being withdrawn, darkness presently follows in the air; but it were absurd to say, that therefore the light darkens the air; and therefore you will observe, that Pharaoh is said to harden his own heart. Exod viii 15. God is the cause of no man's sin. It is true God has a hand in the action where sin is, but no hand in the sin of the action. A man may play upon a jarring instrument, but the jarring is from itself; so here, the actions of men, so far as they are natural, are from God; but so far as they are sinful, they are from men themselves, and God has no hand at all in them. So for the first position, that God's providence reaches to all places, to all persons, and to all occurrences.

[2] A second proposition is, that providences, which are casual and accidental to us, are pre-determined by the Lord. The falling of a tile upon one's head, the breaking out of a fire, is casual to us, but it is ordered by a providence of God. You have a clear instance of this in I Kings xxii 34. 'A certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness.' This accident was casual as to the man that drew the bow; but it was divinely ordered by the providence of God. God's providence directed the arrow to hit the mark. Things that seem to fall out casual, and by chance, are the issues of God's decrees, and the interpretation of his will.

[3] God's providence is greatly to be observed, but we are not to make it the rule of our actions. 'Whoso is wise will observe these things.' Psa cvii 43. It is good to observe providence, but we must not make it our rule to walk by. Providence is a

Christian's diary, but not his Bible. Sometimes a bad cause prevails and gets ground; but it is not to be liked because it prevails. We must not think the better of what is sinful, because it is successful. This is no rule for our actions to be directed by.

[4] Divine providence is irresistible. There is no standing in the way of God's providence to hinder it. When God's time was come for Joseph's release, the prison could hold him no longer. 'The king sent and loosed him.' Psa cv 20. When God would indulge the Jews with liberty in their religion, Cyrus, by a providence, puts forth a proclamation to encourage the Jews to go and build their temple at Jerusalem, and worship God. Ezra i 2, 3. If God will shield and protect Jeremiah's person in captivity, the very king of Babylon shall nurse up the prophet, and give charge concerning him that he wants nothing. Jer xxxix ii, 12.

[5] God is to be trusted when his providences seem to run contrary to his promises. God promised to give David the crown, to make him king; but providence ran contrary to his promise. David was pursued by Saul, and was in danger of his life, but all this while it was David's duty to trust God. Pray observe, that the Lord by cross providences often brings to pass his promise. God promised Paul the lives of all that were with him in the ship; but the providence of God seemed to run quite contrary to his promise, for the winds blew, the ship split and broke in pieces. Thus God fulfilled his promise; upon the broken pieces of the ship they all came safe to shore. Trust God when providences seem to run quite contrary to promises.

[6] The providences of God are chequer-work, they are intermingled. In the life to come there shall be no more mixture; in hell there will be nothing but bitter; in heaven nothing but sweet; but in this life the providences of God are mixed, there is something of the sweet in them, and something of the bitter. Providences are just like Israel's pillar of cloud, that conducted them in their march, which was dark on one side and light on the other. In the ark were laid up the rod and manna, so are God's providences to his children; there is something of the rod and something of the manna; so that we may say with David, 'I will sing of mercy and judgment.' When Joseph was in prison there was the dark side of the cloud; but God was with Joseph, there was the light side of the cloud. Asher's shoes were of brass, but his feet were dipped in oil. Deut xxxiii 24. So affliction is the shoe of brass that pinches; but there is mercy mingled with the affliction, for there is the foot dipped in oil.

[7] The same action, as it comes from God's providence, may be good, and as it comes from men may be evil. For instance, Joseph being sold into Egypt by his brethren was evil, very wicked, for it was the fruit of their envy; but as it was an act of God's providence it was good; for by this means Jacob and all his family

were preserved alive in Egypt. Another instance is in Shimei's cursing David. Shimei cursed David, it was wicked and sinful, for it was the fruit of his malice; but as his cursing was ordered by God's providence, it was an act of God's justice to punish David, and to humble him for his adultery and murder. As the crucifying of Christ came from the Jews, it was an act of hatred and malice to Christ; and Judas's betraying him was an act of covetousness; but as each was an act of God's providence, so there was good in it; for it was an act of God's love in giving Christ to die for the world. Thus I have made clear to you the doctrine of God's providence in these several positions. Let me now speak something by way of application.

Use one: By way of exhortation in these particulars. (1.) Admire God's providence. The providence of God keeps the whole creation upon the wheels, or else it would soon be dissolved, and the very axletree would break in pieces. If God's providence should be withdrawn but for a while, creatures would be dissolved, and run into their first nothing. Without this wise providence of God there would be anxiety and confusion in the whole world, just like an army when it is routed and scattered. The providence of God infuses comfort and virtue into everything we enjoy. Our clothes would not warm us, our food would not nourish us, without the special providence of God. And does not all this deserve your admiration of providence?

(2.) Learn quietly to submit to divine providence. Do not murmur at things that are ordered by divine wisdom. We may no more find fault with the works of providence than we may with the works of creation. It is a sin as much to quarrel with God's providence as to deny his providence. If men do not act as we would have them, they shall act as God would have them. His providence is his master-wheel that turns these lesser wheels, and God will bring his glory out of all at last. 'I was dumb and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.' Psa xxxix 9. It may be, we think sometimes we could order things better if we had the government of the world in our hands; but alas! should we be left to our own choice we should choose those things that are hurtful for us. David earnestly desired the life of his child, which was the fruit of his sin, but had the child lived it would have been a perpetual monument of his shame. Let us be content that God should rule the world; learn to acquiesce in his will, and submit to his providence. Does any affliction befall you? Remember God sees it is that which is fit for you, or it would not come. Your clothes cannot be so fit for you as your crosses. God's providence may sometimes be secret, but it is always wise; and though we may not be silent under God's dishonour, yet we should learn to be silent under his displeasure.

(3.) You that are Christians, believe that all God's providence shall conspire for your good at last. The providences of God are sometimes dark, and our eyes dim, and we can hardly tell what to make of them; but when we cannot unriddle

providence, let us believe that it will work together for the good of the elect. Rom viii 28. The wheels in a clock seem to move contrary one to the other, but they help forward the motion of the clock, and make the larum strike: so the providences of God seem to be cross wheels; but for all that, they shall carry on the good of the elect. The pricking of a vein is in itself evil and hurtful; but as it prevents a fever, and tends to the health of the patient, it is good; so affliction in itself is not joyous, but grievous; but the Lord turns it to the good of his saints. Poverty shall starve their sins, and afflictions shall prepare them for a kingdom. Therefore, Christians, believe that God loves you, and that he will make the most cross providences to promote his glory and your good.

(4.) Let it be an antidote against immoderate fear, that nothing comes to pass but what is ordained by God's decree, and ordered by his providence. We sometimes fear what the issue of things will be, when men grow high in their actings; but let us not make things worse by our fear. Men are limited in their power, and cannot go one hair's breadth further than God's providence permits. He might let Sennacherib's army march towards Jerusalem, but he shall not shoot one arrow against it. 'Then the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand.' Isa xxxvii 36. When Israel was encompassed between Pharaoh and the Red Sea, no question, some of their hearts began to tremble, and they looked upon themselves as dead men; but Providence so ordered it, that the sea was a safe passage to Israel, and a sepulchre to Pharaoh and all his host.

(5.) Let the merciful providence of God cause thankfulness. We are kept alive by a wonderful-working Providence. Providence makes our clothes to warm us, and our meat to nourish us. We are fed every day out of the alms-basket of God's providence. That we are in health, that we have an estate, is not our diligence, but God's providence. 'Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for he it is that gives thee power to get wealth.' Deut viii 18. Especially if we go a step higher, we may see cause for thankfulness, that we were born and bred in a gospel land, and that we live in such a place where the Sun of Righteousness shines, which is a signal providence. Why might we not have been born in such places where Paganism prevails? That Christ should make himself known to us, and touch our hearts with his Spirit, when he passes by others; whence is this but from the miraculous providence of God, which is the effect of his free grace?

Use two: Comfort in respect of the church of God. God's providence reaches in a more special manner to his church. 'Sing ye unto her, vineyard of red wine.' Isa xxvii 2. God waters this vineyard with his blessings, and watches over it by his providence. 'I the Lord keep it nigh and day.' Such as think totally to ruin the church, must do it in a time when it is neither day nor night, for the Lord keeps it by his providence night and day. What a miraculous conduct of Providence had Israel! God led them by a pillar of fire, gave them manna from heaven, and

water from the rock. God by his providence preserves his church in the midst of enemies; a spark kept alive in the ocean, or a flock of sheep among wolves. God saves his church strangely. (1.) By giving unexpected mercies to his church, when she looked for nothing but ruin. 'When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.' Psa cxxvi 1. How strangely did God raise up Queen Esther to preserve alive the Jews, when Haman had got a bloody warrant signed for their execution! (2.) Strangely, by saving in that very way in which we think he will destroy. God works sometimes by contraries. He raises his church by bringing it low. The blood of the martyrs has watered the church, and made it more fruitful. Exod i 12. 'The more they afflicted them the more they multiplied.' The church is like that plant which Gregory Nazianzen speaks of, it lives by dying, and grows by cutting. (3.) Strangely, in that he makes the enemy to do his work. When the people of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir came against Judah, God set the enemy one against another. 'The children of Ammon and Moab stood up against them of Mount Seir to slay them; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.' 2 Chron xx 23. In the powder treason he made the traitors to be their own betrayers. God can do his work by the enemy's hand. God made the Egyptians send away the people of Israel laden with jewels. Exod xii 36. The church is the apple of God's eye, and the eyelid of his providence daily covers and defends it.

Use three: See here, that which may make us long for the time when the great mystery of God's providence shall be fully unfolded to us. Now we scarce know what to make of God's providence, and are ready to censure what we do not understand; but in heaven we shall see how all his providences (sickness, losses, sufferings) contributed to our salvation. Here we see but some dark pieces of God's providence, and it is impossible to judge of his works by pieces; but when we come to heaven, and see the full body and portrait of his providence drawn out into its lively colours, it will be glorious to behold. Then we shall see how all God's providences helped to fulfil his promises. There is no providence but we shall see a wonder or a merry in it.

From *A Body of Divinity*. Published by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

ORIGINAL SIN

Q-16: DID ALL MANKIND FALL IN ADAM'S FIRST TRANSGRESSION?

A: The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him, by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.

'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin,' &c. Rom 5: 12.

Adam being a representative person, while he stood, we stood; when he fell, we fell, We sinned in Adam; so it is in the text, 'In whom all have sinned.'

Adam was the head of mankind, and being guilty, we are guilty, as the children of a traitor have their blood stained. Omnes unus ille Adam fuerunt. 'All of us,' says Augustine, 'sinned in Adam, because we were part of Adam.'

If when Adam fell, all mankind fell with him; why, when one angel fell, did not all fall?

The case is not the same. The angels had no relation to one another. They are called morning-stars; the stars have no dependence one upon another; but it was otherwise with us, we were in Adam's loins; as a child is a branch of the parent, we were part of Adam; therefore when he sinned, we sinned.

How is Adam's sin made ours?

(1.) By imputation. The Pelagians of old held, that Adam's transgression is hurtful to posterity by imitation only, not by imputation. But the text, 'In whom all have sinned,' confutes that.

(2.) Adam's sin is ours by propagation. Not only is the guilt of Adam's sin imputed to us, but the depravity and corruption of his nature is transmitted to us, as poison is carried from the fountain to the cistern. This is that which we call original sin. 'In sin did my mother conceive me.' Psa 51: 5. Adam's leprosy cleaves to us, as Naaman's leprosy did to Gehazi. 2 Kings 5: 27. This original concupiscence is called,

(I.) The 'old man.' Eph 4: 22. It is said to be the old man, not that it is weak, as old men are, but for its long standing, and for its deformity. In old age the fair blossoms of beauty fall; so original sin is the old man, because it has withered our beauty, and made us deformed in God's eye.

(2.) Original concupiscence is called the law of sin. Rom 7: 25 Original sin has vim coactivam, the power of a law which binds the subject to allegiance. Men must needs do what sin will have them, when they have both the love of sin to draw them, and the law of sin to force them.

I. In original sin there is something privative, and something positive.

[1] Something privative. *Carentia Justitiae debitae* [The lack of that righteousness which should be ours]. We have lost that excellent quintessential frame of soul which once we had. Sin has cut the lock of original purity, where our strength lay.

[2] Something positive. Original sin has contaminated and defiled our virgin nature. It was death among the Romans to poison the springs. Original sin has poisoned the spring of our nature, it has turned beauty into leprosy; it has turned the azure brightness of our souls into midnight darkness.

Original sin has become co-natural to us. A man by nature cannot but sin; though there were no devil to tempt, no bad examples to imitate, yet there is such an innate principle in him that he cannot forbear sinning. 2 Pet 2: 14. *A peccato cessare nesciunt*, who cannot cease to sin, as a horse that is lame cannot go without halting. In original sin there is,

(I.) An aversion from good. Man has a desire to be happy, yet opposes that which should promote his happiness. He has a disgust of holiness, he hates to be reformed. Since we fell from God, we have no mind to return to him.

(2.) A propensity to evil. If, as the Pelagians say, there is so much goodness in us since the fall, why is there not as much natural proneness to good as there is to evil? Our experience tells us, that the natural bias of the soul is to that which is bad. The very heathens by the light of nature saw this. Hierocles the philosopher said, 'it is grafted in us by nature to sin.' Men roll sin as honey under their tongue. 'They drink iniquity as water,' Job 15: 16. Like a hydropsical person, that thirsts for drink, and is not satisfied; they have a kind of drought on them, they thirst for sin. Though they are tired out in committing sin, yet they sin. Eph 4: 19. 'They weary themselves to commit iniquity'; as a man that follows his game while he is weary, yet delights in it, and cannot leave it off. Jer 9: 5. Though God has set so many flaming swords in the way to stop men in their sin, yet they go on in it; which all shows what a strong appetite they have to the forbidden fruit.

II. That we may further see the nature of original sin, consider,

[1] The universality of it. It has, as poison, diffused itself into all the parts and powers of the soul. 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.' Isa 1: 5. Like a sick patient, that has no part sound, his liver is swelled, his feet are gangrened, his lungs are perished; such infected, gangrened souls have we, till Christ, who has made a medicine of his blood, cures us.

(I.) Original sin has depraved the intellectual part. As in the creation 'darkness was upon the face of the deep,' Gen 1: 2, so it is with the understanding;

darkness is upon the face of this deep. As there is salt in every drop of the sea, bitterness in every branch of wormwood, so there is sin in every faculty. The mind is darkened, we know little of God. Ever since Adam did eat of the tree of knowledge, and his eyes were opened, we lost our eye-sight. Besides ignorance in the mind, there is error and mistake; we do not judge rightly of things, we put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Isa 5: 20. Besides this, there is much pride, superciliousness and prejudice, and many fleshly reasonings. 'How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?' Jer 4: 14.

(2.) Original sin has defiled the heart. The heart is deadly wicked. Jer 17: 9. It is a lesser hell. In the heart are legions of lusts, obdurateness, infidelity, hypocrisy, sinful estimations; it boils as the sea with passion and revenge. 'Madness is in their heart while they live.' Eccl 9: 3. The heart is, *Officina diaboli*, 'the devil's shop or workhouse,' where all mischief is framed.

(3.) The will. Contumacy is the seat of rebellion. The sinner crosses God's will, to fulfil his own. 'We will burn incense to the queen of heaven.' Jer 44: 17. There is a rooted enmity in the will against holiness; it is like an iron sinew, it refuses to bend to God. Where is then the freedom of the will, when it is so full not only of indisposition, but opposition to what is spiritual?

(4.) The affections. These, as the strings of a viol, are out of tune. They are the lesser wheels, which are strongly carried by the will, the masterwheel. Our affections are set on wrong objects. Our love is set on sin, our joy on the creature. Our affections are naturally as a sick man's appetite, who desires things which are noxious and hurtful to him; he calls for wine in a fever. So we have impure lustings instead of holy longings.

[2] The adhesion of original sin. It cleaves to us, as blackness to the skin of the Ethiopian, so that we cannot get rid of it. Paul shook off the viper on his hand, but we cannot shake off this inbred corruption. It may be compared to a wild fig-tree growing on a wall, the roots of which are pulled up, and yet there are some fibres of it in the joints of the stonework, which will not be eradicated, but will sprout forth till the wall be pulled in pieces. Original concupiscence comes not, as a lodger, for a night, but as an indweller. 'Sin which dwelleth in me.' Rom 7: 17.

It is a *malus genius*, 'an evil spirit' that haunts us wheresoever we go. 'The Canaanite would dwell in that land.' Josh 17: 12.

[3] Original sin retards and hinders us in the exercise of God's worship. Whence is 'all that dullness and deadness in religion? It is the fruit of original sin. This it is that rocks us asleep in duty. 'The good that I would, I do not.' Rom 7: 19. Sin is compared to a weight. Heb 12: 1. A man that has weights tied to his legs

cannot run fast. It is like that fish Pliny speaks of, a sea lamprey, that cleaves to the keel of the ship, and hinders its progress when it is under sail.

[4] Original sin, though latent in the soul, and as a spring which runs under ground, often breaks forth unexpectedly. Christian, thou canst not believe that evil which is in thy heart, and which will break forth suddenly, if God should leave thee. 'Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?' 2 Kings 8: 13. Hazeel could not believe he had such a root of bitterness in his heart, that he should rip up the women with child. Is thy servant a dog? Yes, and worse than a dog, when that original corruption within is stirred up. If one had come to Peter and said, Peter, within a few hours thou wilt deny Christ, he would have said, 'Is thy servant a dog?' But alas! Peter did not know his own heart, nor how far that corruption within would prevail upon him. The sea may be calm, and look clear; but when the wind blows how it rages and foams! so though now thy heart seems good, yet, when temptation blows, how may original sin discover itself, making thee foam with lust and passion. Who would have thought to have found adultery in David, and drunkenness in Noah, and cursing in Job? If God leave a man to himself, how suddenly and scandalously may original sin break forth in the holiest men on the earth!

[5] Original sin mixes and incorporates itself with our duties and graces. (I,) With our duties. As the hand which is paralytic or palsied cannot move without shaking, as wanting some inward strength; so we cannot do any holy action without sinning, as wanting a principle of original righteousness. As whatever the leper touched became unclean; such a leprosy is original sin; it defiles our prayers and tears. We cannot write without blotting. Though I do not say that the holy duties and good works of the regenerate are sins, for that were to reproach the Spirit of Christ, by which they are wrought; yet this I say, that the best works of the godly have sin cleaving to them. Christ's blood alone makes atonement for our holy things.

(2.) With our graces. There is some unbelief mixed with faith, lukewarmness with zeal, pride with humility. As bad lungs cause an asthma or shortness of breath, so original corruption has infected our hearts, so that our graces breathe very faintly.

[6] Original sin is a vigorous active principle within us. It does not lie still, but is ever exciting and stirring us up to evil; it is an inmate very unquiet. 'What I hate, that do I,' Rom 7: 15. How came Paul to do so? Original sin irritated and stirred him up to it. Original sin is like quicksilver, always in motion. When we are asleep, sin is awake in the fancy. Original sin sets the head plotting evil, and the hands working it. It has in it principium motus, not quietis [a principle of restlessness, not of tranquillity]; it is like the pulse, ever beating.

[7] Original sin is the cause of all actual sin. It is fomes peccati [the kindlingwood of sin], it is the womb in which all actual sins are conceived. Hence come murders, adulteries, rapines. Though actual sins may be more scandalous, yet original sin is more heinous; the cause is more than the effect.

[8] It is not perfectly cured in this life. Though grace does subdue sin, yet it does not wholly remove it. Though we are like Christ, having the first fruits of the Spirit, yet we are unlike him, having the remainders of the flesh. There are two nations in the womb. Original sin is like that tree, in Dan 4: 23, though the branches of it were hewn down, and the main body of it, yet the stumps and root of the tree were left. Though the Spirit be still weakening and hewing down sin in the godly, yet the stump of original sin is left. It is a sea that will not, in this life, be dried up.

But why does God leave original corruption in us after regeneration? He could free us from it if he pleased.

(1.) He does it to show the power of his grace in the weakest believer. Grace shall prevail against a torrent of corruption. Whence is this? The corruption is ours, but the grace is God's.

(2.) God leaves original corruption to make us long after heaven, where there shall be no sin to defile, no devil to tempt. When Elias was taken up to heaven his mantle dropped off; so, when the angels shall carry us up to heaven, this mantle of sin shall drop off. We shall never more complain of an aching head, or an unbelieving heart.

Use one: If original sin be propagated to us, and will be inherent in us while we live here, it confutes the Libertines and Quakers, who say they are without sin. They hold perfection; they show much pride and ignorance; but we see the seeds of original sin remain in the best. 'There is not a just man lives and sins not.' Eccl 7: 20. And Paul complained of a 'body of death.' Rom 7: 24. Though grace purifies nature, it does not perfect it.

But does not the apostle say of believers, that their 'old man is crucified;' Rom 6: 6, and they are 'dead to sin?' Rom 6: 11.

They are dead. (I.) Spiritually. They are dead as to the reatus, the guilt of it; and as to the regnum, the power of it; the love of sin is crucified.

(2.) They are dead to sin legally. As a man that is sentenced to death is dead in law, so they are legally dead to sin. There is a sentence of death gone out against sin. It shall die, and drop into the grave; but at the present, sin has its life lengthened out. Nothing but the death of the body can quite free us from the body of this death.

Use two: Let us lay to heart original sin, and be deeply humbled for it. It cleaves to us as a disease, it is an active principle in us, stirring us up to evil. Original sin is worse than all actual sin; the fountain is more than the stream. Some think, as long as they are civil, they are well enough; ay, but the nature is poisoned. A river may have fair streams, but vermin at the bottom. Thou carriest a hell about thee, thou canst do nothing but thou defilest it; thy heart, like muddy ground, defiles the purest water that runs through it. Nay, though thou art regenerate, there is much of the old man in the new man. Oh how should original sin humble us!

This is one reason God has left original sin in us, because he would have it as a thorn in our side to humble us. As the bishop of Alexandria, after the people had embraced Christianity, destroyed all their idols but one, that the sight of that idol might make them loathe themselves for their former idolatry; so God leaves original sin to pull down the plumes of pride. Under our silver wings of grace are black feet.

Use three: Let the sense of this make us daily look up to heaven for help. Beg Christ's blood to wash away the guilt of sin, and his Spirit to mortify the power of it; beg further degrees of grace; gratiam Christi eo olonoxiam ambiamus. Though grace cannot make sin not to be, yet it makes it not to reign; though grace cannot expel sin, it can repel it. And for our comfort, where grace makes a combat with sin, death shall make a conquest.

Use four: Let original sin make us walk with continual jealousy and watchfulness over our hearts. The sin of our nature is like a sleeping lion, the least thing that awakens it makes it rage. Though the sin of our nature seems quiet, and lies as fire hid under the embers, yet if it be a little stirred and blown up by a temptation, how quickly may it flame forth into scandalous evils! therefore we need always to walk watchfully. 'I say to you all, Watch.' Mark 13: 37. A wandering heart needs a watchful eye.

From *A Body of Divinity*. Published by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

The Covenant Of Grace

Q-20: DID GOD LEAVE ALL MANKIND TO PERISH 1N THE ESTATE OF SIN AND MISERY?

A: No! He entered into a covenant of grace to deliver the elect out of that state, and to bring them into a state of grace by a Redeemer.

'I will make an everlasting covenant with you.' Isa 55: 3. Man being by his fall plunged into a labyrinth of misery, and having no way left to recover himself, God was pleased to enter into a new covenant with him, and to restore him to life by a Redeemer.

The great proposition I shall go upon is, that there is a new covenant ratified between God and the elect.

What is the new covenant?

It is a solemn compact and agreement made between God and fallen man, wherein the Lord undertakes to be our God, and to make us his people.

What names are given to the covenant?

(I.) It is called the covenant of peace in Ezek 37: 26, because it seals up reconciliation between God and humble sinners. Before this covenant there was nothing but enmity. God did not love us, for a creature that offends cannot be loved by a holy God; and we did not love him, since a God that condemns cannot be loved by a guilty creature; so that there was war on both sides. But God has found out a way in the new covenant to reconcile differing parties, so that it is fitly called the covenant of peace.

(2.) It is called a covenant of grace, and well it may; for, (1) It was of grace, that, when we had forfeited the first covenant, God should enter into a new one, after we had cast away ourselves. The covenant of grace is *tabula post naufragium*, 'as a plank after shipwreck.' Oh the free grace of God, that he should parley with sinners, and set his wisdom and mercy to work to bring rebels into the bond of the covenant!

(2) It is a covenant of grace, because it is a royal charter, all made up of terms of grace; that 'God will cast our sins behind his back;' that 'he will love us freely;' Hos 14: 4; that he will give us a will to accept of the mercy of the covenant, and strength to perform the conditions of the covenant. Ezek 36: 27. All this is pure grace.

Why should God make a covenant with us?

It is out of indulgence, favour, and regard to us. A tyrant will not enter into a covenant with slaves, he will not show them such respect. God's entering into a covenant with us, to be our God, is a dignity he puts upon us. A covenant is *insigne honouris*, a note of distinction between God's people and heathens. 'I will establish my covenant with thee.' Ezek 16: 60. When the Lord told Abraham that he would enter into a covenant with him, Abraham fell upon his face, as being amazed that the God of glory should bestow such a favour upon him. Gen 17: 2.

God makes a covenant with us, to tie us fast to him; as it is called in Ezekiel, the 'bond of the covenant.' God knows we have slippery hearts, therefore he will have a covenant to bind us. It is horrid impiety to go away from God after covenant. If one of the vestal nuns, who had vowed herself to religion, was deflowered, the Romans caused her to be burnt alive. It is perjury to depart from God after solemn covenant.

How does the covenant of grace differ from the first covenant made with Adam?

(I.) The terms of the first covenant were more strict and severe. For, (1) The least failing would have made the covenant with Adam null and void, but many failings do not annul the covenant of grace. I grant, the least sin is a trespass upon the covenant, but it does not make it null and void. There may be many failings in the conjugal relation, but every failing does not break the marriage bond. It would be sad, if, as oft as we break covenant with God he should break covenant with us; but God will not take advantage of every failing, but in 'anger remember mercy.'

(2) The first covenant being broken, allowed the sinner no remedy, all doors of hope were shut; but the new covenant allows the sinner a remedy: it leaves room for repentance, and provides a mediator. 'Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.' Heb 12: 24.

(2.) The first covenant ran all upon 'working,' the second is upon 'believing.' Rom 4: 5.

But are not works required in the covenant of grace?

Yes. 'This is a faithful saying, that they which believe in God, be careful to maintain good works.' Tit 3: 8. But the covenant of grace does not require works in the same manner as the covenant of works did. In the first covenant, works were required as the condition of life; in the second, they are required only as the signs of life. In the first covenant, works were required as grounds of salvation; in the new covenant, they are required as evidences of our love to God. In the first, they were required to the justification of our persons; in the new, to the manifestation of our grace.

What is the condition of the covenant of grace?

The main condition is faith.

Why is faith more the condition of the new covenant than any other grace?

To exclude all glorying in the creature. Faith is a humble grace. If repentance or works were the condition of the covenant, a man would say, It is my

righteousness that has saved me; but if it be of faith, where is boasting? Faith fetches all from Christ, and gives all the glory to Christ; it is a most humble grace. Hence it is that God has singled out this grace to be the condition of the covenant.

If faith be the condition of the covenant of grace, it excludes desperate presumptuous sinners from the covenant. They say there is a covenant of grace, and they shall be saved: but did you ever know a bond without a condition? The condition of the covenant is faith, and if thou hast no faith, thou hast no more to do with the covenant, than a foreigner or a country farmer with the city charter.

Use one: Of information. See the amazing goodness of God, to enter into covenant with us. He never entered into covenant with angels when they fell. It was much condescension in God to enter into covenant with us in a state of innocence, but more so when we were in a state of enmity. In this covenant of grace, we may see the cream of God's love, and the working of his bowels to sinners. This is a marriage covenant. "I am married to you, saith the Lord." Jer 3: 14. In the new covenant, God makes himself over to us, and what can he give more? He makes over his promises to us, and what better bonds can we have?

Use two: Of trial. Whether we are in covenant with God. There are three characters.

(1.) God's covenant-people are a humble people. "Be ye clothed with humility;" I Pet 5: 5. God's people esteem others better than themselves; they shrink into nothing in their own thoughts. Phil 2: 3. David cries out, "I am a worm, and no man:" though a saint, though a king, yet a worm. Ps. 22: 6. When Moses' face shined, he covered it with a veil. When God's people shine most in grace, they are covered with the veil of humility. Pride excludes from the covenant, for "God resisteth the proud," I Pet 5: 5, and sure such are not in covenant with God whom he resists.

(2.) A people in covenant with God are a willing people; though they cannot serve God perfectly, they serve him willingly. They do not grudge God a little time spent in his worship; they do not hesitate or murmur at sufferings; they will go through a sea and a wilderness, if God call. "Thy people shall be a willing people:" Ps 110: 3: 'a people of willingness.' Heb. This spontaneity and willingness is from the attractive power of God's Spirit: the Spirit does not impellere, force, but trahere, sweetly draws the will; and this willingness in religion makes all our services accepted. God does sometimes accept of willingness without the work, but never the work without willingness.

(3.) God's covenant people are a consecrated people, they have holiness to the Lord written upon them. 'Thou art a holy people to the Lord thy God.' Deut 7: 6.

God's covenant people are separated from the world, and sanctified by the Spirit. The priests under the law were not only to wash in the great laver, but were arrayed with glorious apparel. Exod 28: 2. This was typical, to show God's people are not only washed from gross sins, but adorned with holiness of heart: they bear not only God's name, but image. Tamerlane refused a pot of gold, when he saw it had not his father's stamp upon it, but the Roman stamp. Holiness is God's stamp; if he does not see this stamp upon us, he will not own us for his covenant people.

Use three: Of exhortation. To such as are out of covenant, labour to get into covenant, and have God for your God. How glad would the old world have been of an ark! How industrious should we be to get within the ark of the covenant! Consider, (I.) The misery of such as live and die out of covenant with God. Such have none to go to in an hour of distress. When conscience accuses, when sickness approaches (which is but a harbinger to bespeak a lodging for death), then what will you do? Whither will you flee? Will you look to Christ for help? He is a mediator only for such as are in covenant. Oh, how will you be filled with horror and despair! and be as Saul, when he said, 'The Philistines make war against me, and the Lord is departed.' I Sam 28: 15. Till you are in covenant with God, there is no mercy. The mercy-seat was placed upon the ark, and the mercy-seat was no larger than the ark; to show, that the mercy of God reaches no further than the covenant.

(2.) The excellency of the covenant of grace. It is a better covenant than the covenant made with Adam, first because it is more friendly and propitious. Those services which would have been rejected in the first covenant are accepted in the second. Here God accepts of the will for the deed, 2 Cor 8: 12; here sincerity is crowned in the covenant of grace; wherein we are weak, God will give strength; and wherein we come short, God will accept of a surety. Secondly it is a better covenant, because it is surer. 'Thou hast made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.' 2 Sam 23: 5. The first covenant was not sure, it stood upon a tottering foundation of works. Adam had no sooner a stock of righteousness to trade with, but he broke; but the covenant of grace is sure; it is confirmed with God's decree, and it rests upon two mighty pillars, the oath of God, and the blood of God. Thirdly it has better privileges. The covenant of grace brings preferment. Our nature now is more ennobled, we are raised to higher glory than in innocence, we are advanced to sit upon Christ's throne. Rev 3: 21. We are, by virtue of the covenant of grace, nearer to Christ than the angels: they are his friends, we his spouse. God is willing to be in covenant with you. Why does God woo and beseech you by his ambassadors to be reconciled, if he were not willing to be in covenant?

I would fain be in covenant with God, but I have been a great sinner, and I fear God will not admit me into covenant.

If thou seest thy sins, and loatest thyself for them, God will take thee into covenant. 'Thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities; I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.' Isa 43: 24, 25. As the sea covers great rocks, so God's covenant mercy covers great sins. Some of the Jews that crucified Christ had their sins washed away in his blood.

But I am not worthy that God should admit me into covenant.

It never came into God's thoughts to make a new covenant upon terms of worthiness. If God should show mercy to none but such as are worthy, then must he show mercy to none. But it is God's design in the new covenant to advance the riches of grace, to love us freely; and when we have no worthiness of our own, to accept us through Christ's worthiness. Therefore let not unworthiness discourage you; it is not unworthiness that excludes any from the covenant, but unwillingness.

What shall we do that we may be in covenant with God?

(1.) Seek to God by prayer. Exige a Domino misericordiam [Demand compassion from the Lord]. Augustine. 'Lord, be my God in covenant.' The Lord has made an express promise, that, upon our prayer to him, the covenant should be ratified, he will be our God, and we shall be his people. 'They shall call upon my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.' Zech 13: 9. Only it must be an importunate prayer; come as earnest suitors, resolve to take no denial.

(2.) If you would be in covenant with God, break off the covenant with sin. Before the marriage-covenant there must be a divorce. 'If ye return to the Lord with all your hearts, put away the strange gods; and they put away Ashtaroth,' I Sam 7: 3, viz. their female gods. Will any king enter into covenant with that man who is in league with his enemies?

(3.) If you would enter into the bond of the covenant, get faith in the blood of the covenant. Christ's blood is the blood of atonement; believe in this blood, and you are safely arked in God's mercy. 'Ye are made nigh by the blood of Christ.' Eph 2: 13.

Use four: Of comfort to such as can make out their covenant interest in God. (1.) You that are in covenant with God, all your sins are pardoned. Pardon is the crowning mercy. 'Who forgiveth thy iniquity, who crowneth thee,' &c. Psa 103: 3. This is a branch of the covenant. 'I will be their God, and I will forgive their iniquity,' Jer 31: 33, 34. Sin being pardoned, all wrath ceases. How terrible is it when but a spark of God's wrath flies into a man's conscience! But sin being

forgiven, there is no more wrath. God does not appear now in the fire or earthquake, but covered with a rainbow full of mercy.

(2.) All your temporal mercies are fruits of the covenant. Wicked men have mercies by Providence, not by virtue of a covenant; with God's leave, not with his love. But such as are in covenant have their mercies sweetened with God's love, and they swim to them in the blood of Christ. As Naaman said to Gehazi, 'Take two talents,' 2 Kings 5: 23, so says God to such as are in covenant, take two talents, take health, and take Christ with it; take riches, and take my love with them; take the venison, and take the blessing with it: take two talents.

(3.) You may upon all occasions plead the covenant. If you are haunted with temptations, plead the covenant. Lord, thou hast promised to bruise Satan under my feet shortly; wilt thou suffer thy child to be thus worried? Take off the roaring lion. If in want, plead the covenant: Lord, thou hast said, 'I shall want no good thing;' wilt thou save me from hell, and not from want? wilt thou give me a kingdom, and deny me daily bread?

(4.) If in covenant with God all things shall co-operate for your good. Etiam mala cidunt in bonum. Psa 25: 10. Not only golden paths, but his bloody paths are for good. Every wind of Providence shall blow them nearer heaven. Affliction shall humble and purify. Heb 12: 10. Out of the bitterest drug God distils your salvation. Afflictions add to the saints, glory. The more the diamond is cut, the more it sparkles; the heavier the saints' cross is, the heavier shall be their crown.

(5.) If thou art in covenant once, then for ever in covenant. The text calls it an 'everlasting covenant.' Such as are in covenant are elected; and God's electing love is unchangeable. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them; but I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me.' Jer 32: 40. God will so love the saints that he will not forsake them; and the saints shall so fear God that they shall not forsake him. It is a covenant of eternity. It must be so; for whom is this covenant made with? Is it not with believers? and have not they coalition and union with Christ? Christ is the head, they are the body. Eph 1: 22, 23. This is a near union, much like that union between God the Father and Christ. 'As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.' John 17: 21. Now, the union between Christ and the saints being so inseparable, it can never be dissolved, or the covenant made void; so that you may die with comfort.

(6.) Thou art in covenant with God, and thou art going to thy God. Behold a death-bed cordial; death breaks the union between the body and the soul, but perfects the union between Christ and the soul. This has made the saints desire death as the bride the wedding-day. Phil 1: 23. Cupio dissolvi, 'Lead me, Lord, to that glory,' said one, 'a glimpse whereof I have seen, as in a glass darkly.'

Use five: Of direction. To show you how you should walk who have tasted of covenant-mercy, live as a people in covenant with God. As you differ from others in respect of dignity, so you must in point of carriage.

(1.) You must love this God. God's love to you calls for love. It is Amor gratiatus, a free love. Why should God pass by others, and take you into a league of friendship with himself? In the law, God passed by the lion and eagle, and chose the dove; so he passes by the noble and mighty. It is Amor plenus, a full love. When God takes you into covenant, you are his Hephzihah; Isa 62: 4; his delight is in you; he gives you the key of all his treasure, he heaps pearls upon you, he settles heaven and earth upon you; he gives you a bunch of grapes by the way, and says, 'Son, all I have is thine.' And does not all this call for love? Who can tread upon these hot coals, and his heart not burn in love to God?

(2.) Walk holily. The covenant has made you a royal nation, therefore be a holy people. Shine as lights in the world; live as earthly angels. God has taken you into covenant, that you and he may have communion together; and what is it that keeps up your communion with God but holiness?

(3.) Walk thankfully. Psa 103: 1. God is your God in covenant; he has done more for you than if he had made you ride upon the high places of the earth, and given you crowns and sceptres. Oh take the cup of salvation, and bless the Lord! Eternity will be little enough to praise him. Musicians love to play on their music where there is the loudest sound, and God loves to bestow his mercies where he may have the loudest praises. You that have angels, reward, do angels, work. Begin that work of praise here, which you hope to be always doing in heaven.

From A Body of Divinity, published by The Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

Christ's Humiliation In His Incarnation

'Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.' I Tim 3: 16.

Q-xxvii: WHEREIN DID CHRIST'S HUMILIATION CONSIST?

A: In his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross.

Christ's humiliation consisted in his incarnation, his taking flesh, and being born. It was real flesh that Christ took; not the image of a body (as the Manichees erroneously held), but a true body; therefore he is said to be 'made of a woman.' Gal 4: 4. As bread is made of wheat, and wine is made of the grape; so Christ is

made of a woman: his body was part of the flesh and substance of the virgin. This is a glorious mystery, 'God manifest in the flesh.' In the creation, man was made in God's image; in the incarnation God was made in man's image.

How came Christ to be made flesh?

It was by his Father's special designation. 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.' Gal 4: 4. God the Father in a special manner appointed Christ to be incarnate; which shows how needful a call is to any business of weight and importance: to act without a call, is to act without a blessing. Christ would not be incarnate, and take upon him the work of a mediator till he had a call. 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.'

But was there no other way for the restoring of fallen man but that God should take flesh?

We must not ask a reason of God's will; it is dangerous to pry into God's ark; we are not to dispute but adore. The wise God saw it to be the best way for our redemption, that Christ should be incarnate. It was not fit for any to satisfy God's justice but man; none could do it but God; therefore, Christ being both God and man, is the fittest to undertake this work of redemption.

Why was Christ born of a woman?

(I.) That God might fulfill that promise in Gen 3: 15, 'The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head.' (2.) Christ was born of a woman, that he might roll away that reproach from the woman, which she had contracted by being seduced by the serpent. Christ, in taking his flesh from the woman, has honoured her sex; that as, at the first, the woman had made man a sinner; so now, to make him amends, she should bring him a saviour.

Why was Christ born of a virgin?

(1.) For decency. It became not God to have any mother but a maid, and it became not a maid to have any other son but a God.

(2.) For necessity. Christ was to be a high priest, most pure and holy. Had he been born after the ordinary course of nature he had been defiled, since all that spring out of Adam's loins have a tincture of sin, but, that 'Christ's substance might remain pure and immaculate,' he was born of a virgin.

(3.) To answer the type. Melchisedec was a type of Christ, who is said to be 'without father and without mother.' Christ being born of a virgin, answered the type; he was without father and without mother; without mother as he was God, without father as he was man.

How could Christ be made of the flesh and blood of a virgin, and yet be without sin? The purest virgin is stained with original sin.

This knot the Scripture unties. 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.' Luke 1: 35. 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,' that is, the Holy Ghost did consecrate and purify that part of the virgin's flesh whereof Christ was made. As the alchemist extracts and draws away the dross from the gold, so the Holy Ghost refines and clarifies that part of the virgin's flesh, separating it from sin. Though the Virgin Mary herself had sin, yet that part of her flesh, whereof Christ was made, was without sin; otherwise it must have been an impure conception.

What is meant by the power of the Holy Ghost overshadowing the virgin?

Basil says, 'It was the Holy Ghost's blessing that flesh of the virgin whereof Christ was formed.' But there is a further mystery in it; the Holy Ghost having framed Christ in the virgin's womb, did, in a wonderful manner, unite Christ's human nature to his divine, and so of both made one person. This is a mystery, which the angels pry into with adoration.

When was Christ incarnate?

In the fulness of time. 'When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.' Gal 4: 4. By the fulness of time we must understand, *tempus a patre praefinitum*; so Ambrose, Luther, Cornelius a Lapide - the determinate time that God had set. More particularly, this fulness of time was when all the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah were accomplished; and all legal shadows and figures, whereby he was typified, were abrogated. This may comfort us, in regard to the church of God, that though at present we do not see that peace and purity in the church which we could desire, yet in the fulness of time, when God's time is come and mercy is ripe, then shall deliverance spring up, and God will come riding upon the chariots of salvation.

Why was Jesus Christ made flesh?

(I.) The *causa prima*, and impulsive cause, was free grace. It was love in God the Father to send Christ, and love in Christ that he came to be incarnate. Love was the intrinsic motive. Christ is God-man, because he is a lover of man. Christ came out of pity and indulgence to us: *non merita nostra, sed misera nostra*. Augustine. 'Not our deserts, but our misery, made Christ take flesh. Christ's taking flesh was a plot of free grace, and a pure design of love. God himself, though Almighty, was overcome with love. Christ incarnate is nothing but love

covered with flesh. As Christ's assuming our human nature was a master-piece of wisdom, so it was a monument of free grace.

(2.) Christ took our flesh upon him, that he might take our sins upon him. He was, says Luther, *maximus peccator*, the greatest sinner, having the weight of the sins of the whole world lying upon him. He took our flesh that he might take our sins, and so appease God's wrath.

(3.) Christ took our flesh that he might make the human nature appear lovely to God, and the divine nature appear lovely to man.

(1:) That he might make the human nature lovely to God. Upon our fall from God, our nature became odious to him; no vermin is so odious to us as the human nature was to God. When once our virgin nature was become sinful, it was like flesh imposthumated, or running into sores, loathsome to behold. It was so odious to God that he could not endure to look upon us. Christ taking our flesh, makes this human nature appear lovely to God. As when the sun shines on the glass it casts a bright lustre, so Christ being clad with our flesh makes the human nature shine, and appear amiable in God's eyes.

(2:) As Christ being clothed with our flesh makes the human nature appear lovely to God, so he makes the divine nature appear lovely to man. The pure Godhead is terrible to behold, we could not see it and live; but Christ clothing himself with our flesh, makes the divine nature more amiable and delightful to us. We need not be afraid to look upon God through Christ's human nature. It was a custom of old among shepherds to clothe themselves with sheepskins, to be more pleasing to the sheep; so Christ clothed himself with our flesh, that the divine nature may be more pleasing to us. The human nature is a glass, through which we may see the love and wisdom and glory of God clearly represented to us. Through the lantern of Christ's humanity we may behold the light of the Deity. Christ being incarnate makes the sight of the Deity not formidable, but delightful to us.

(4.) Jesus Christ united himself to man, 'that man might be drawn nearer to God.' God before was an enemy to us by reason of sin; but Christ having taken our flesh, mediates for us, and brings us into favour with God. As when a king is angry with a subject, the king's son marries his daughter, and so mediates for the subject, and brings him into favour with the king again; so when God the Father was angry with us, Christ married himself to our nature, and now mediates for us with his Father, and brings us to be friends again, and God looks upon us with a favourable aspect. As Joab pleaded for Absalom, and brought him to King David, and David kissed him; so Jesus Christ ingratiates us into the love and favour of God. Therefore he may well be called a peacemaker, having taken our flesh upon him, and so made peace between us and his Father.

Use one: Of instruction. (I.) See here, as in a glass, the infinite love of God the Father; that when we had lost ourselves by sin, God, in the riches of his grace, sent forth his Son, made of a woman, to redeem us. And behold the infinite love of Christ, in that he was willing thus to condescend to take our flesh. Surely the angels would have disdained to have taken our flesh; it would have been a disparagement to them. What king would be willing to wear sackcloth over his cloth of gold? but Christ did not disdain to take our flesh. Oh the love of Christ! Had not Christ been made flesh, we had been made a curse; had he not been incarnate, we had been incarcerated, and had been for ever in prison. Well might an angel be the herald to proclaim this joyful news of Christ's incarnation: 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' The love of Christ, in being incarcerated, will the more appear if we consider

(1:) Whence Christ came. He came from heaven, and from the richest place in heaven, his Father's bosom, that hive of sweetness.

(2:) To whom Christ came. Was it to his friends? No; he came to sinful man. Man that had defaced his image, and abused his love; man who was turned rebel; yet he came to man, resolving to conquer obstinacy with kindness. If he would come to any, why not to the angels that fell? 'He took not on him the nature of angels.' Heb 2: 16. The angels are of a more noble origin, more intelligent creatures, more able for service; ay, but behold the love of Christ, he came not to the fallen angels, but to mankind. Among the several wonders of the loadstone it is not the least, that it will not draw gold or pearl, but despising these, it draws the iron to it, one of the most inferior metals: thus Christ leaves angels, those noble spirits, the gold and the pearl, and comes to poor sinful man, and draws him into his embraces.

(3:) In what manner he came. He came not in the majesty of a king, attended with his life-guard, but he came poor; not like the heir of heaven, but like one of an inferior descent. The place he was born in was poor; not the royal city Jerusalem, but Bethlehem, a poor obscure place. He was born in an inn, and a manger was his cradle, the cobwebs his curtains, the beasts his companions; he descended of poor parents. One would have thought, if Christ would have come into the world, he would have made choice of some queen or personage of honour to have descended from; but he comes of mean obscure parents, for that they were poor appears by their offering. 'A pair of turtledoves,' Luke 2: 24, which was the usual offering of the poor. Lev 12: 8. Christ was so poor, that when he wanted money he was fain to work a miracle for it. Matt 17: 27. When he died he made no will. He came into the world poor.

(4:) Why he came. That he might take our flesh, and redeem us; that he might instate us into a kingdom. He was poor, that he might make us rich. 2 Cor 8: 9.

He was born of a virgin, that we might be born of God. He took our flesh, that he might give us his Spirit. He lay in the manger that we might lie in paradise. He came down from heaven, that he might bring us to heaven. And what was all this but love? If our hearts be not rocks, this love of Christ should affect us. Behold love that passeth knowledge! Eph 3: 19.

(2.) See here the wonderful humility of Christ. Christ was made flesh. O sancta humilitas, tu filium Dei descendere fecisti in uterum, Mariae Virginis [O holy humility, you made the Son of God descend into the womb of the Virgin Mary]. Augustine. That Christ should clothe himself with our flesh, a piece of that earth which we tread upon; oh infinite humility! Christ's taking our flesh was one of the lowest steps of his humiliation. He humbled himself more in lying in the virgin's womb than in hanging upon the cross. It was not so much for man to die, but for God to become man was the wonder of humility. 'He was made in the likeness of men.' Phil 2: 7. For Christ to be made flesh was more humility than for the angels to be made worms. Christ's flesh is called a veil in Heb 10: 20. 'Through the veil,' that is, his flesh. Christ's wearing our flesh veiled his glory. For him to be made flesh, who was equal with God, oh what humility! 'Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' Phil 2: 6. He stood upon even ground with God, he was co-essential and con-substantial with his Father, as Augustine and Cyril, and the Council of Nice express it; yet for all that he takes flesh. He stripped himself of the robes of his glory, and covered himself with the rags of our humanity. If Solomon wondered that God should dwell in the temple which was enriched and hung with gold, how may we wonder that God should dwell in man's weak and frail nature! Nay, which is yet more humility, Christ not only took our flesh, but took it when it was at the worst, under disgrace; as if a servant should wear a nobleman's livery when he is impeached of high treason. Besides all this he took all the infirmities of our flesh. There are two sorts of infirmities; such as are sinful without pain, and such as are painful without sin. The first of these infirmities Christ did not take upon him; as sinful infirmities, to be covetous or ambitious. But he took upon him painful infirmities as (1:) Hunger. He came to the fig-tree and would have eaten. Matt 21: 18, 19. (2:) Weariness, as when he sat on Jacob's well to rest him. John 4: 6. (3:) Sorrow. 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.' Matt 26: 38. It was a sorrow guided with reason not disturbed with passion. (4:) Fear. 'He was heard in that he feared.' Heb 5: 7. A further degree of Christ's humility was, that he not only was made flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh. 'He knew no sin, yet he was made sin.' 2 Cor 5: 21. He was like a sinner; he had all sin laid upon him, but no sin lived in him. 'He was numbered among transgressors.' Isa 53: 12. He who was numbered among the persons of the Trinity is said 'to bear the sins of many.' Heb 9: 28. Now, this was the lowest degree of Christ's humiliation; for Christ to be reputed as a sinner was the greatest pattern of humility. That Christ, who would not endure sin in the angels, should himself endure to have sin imputed to him is the most amazing humility that ever was.

From all this learn to be humble. Dost thou see Christ humbling himself, and art thou proud? It is the humble saint that is Christ's picture. Christians, be not proud of fine feathers. Hast thou an estate? Be not proud. The earth thou treadest on is richer than thou. It has mines of gold and silver in its bowels. Hast thou beauty? Be not proud. It is but air and dust mingled. Hast thou skill and parts? Be humble. Lucifer has more knowledge than thou. Hast thou grace? Be humble. Thou hast it not of thy own growth; it is borrowed. Were it not folly to be proud of a ring that is lent? I Cor 4: 7. Thou hast more sin than grace, more spots than beauty. Oh look on Christ, this rare pattern, and be humbled! It is an unseemly sight to see God humbling himself and man exalting himself; to see a humble Saviour and a proud sinner. God hates the very semblance of pride. He would have no honey in the sacrifice. Lev 2: 11. Indeed, leaven is sour; but why no honey? Because, when honey is mingled with meal or flour, it makes the meal to rise and swell; therefore no honey. God hates the resemblance of the sin of pride; better want parts, and the comfort of the Spirit, than humility. Si Deus superbientibus angelis non pepercit. 'If God,' says Augustine, 'spared not the angels, when they grew proud, will he spare thee, who art but dust and rottenness?'

(3.) Behold here a sacred riddle or paradox - 'God manifest in the flesh.' That man should be made in God's image was a wonder, but that God should be made in man's image is a greater wonder. That the Ancient of Days should be born, that he who thunders in the heavens should cry in the cradle; Qui tonitruat in caelis, clamat in cunabulis; qui regit sidera, sugit ubera; that he who rules the stars should suck the breast; that a virgin should conceive; that Christ should be made of a woman, and of that woman which himself made; that the branch should bear the vine; that the mother should be younger than the child she bare, and the child in the womb bigger than the mother; that the human nature should not be God, yet one with God; this was not only mirum but miraculum. Christ taking flesh is a mystery we shall never fully understand till we come to heaven, when our light shall be clear, as well as our love perfect.

(4.) From hence, 'God manifest in the flesh,' Christ born of a virgin, a thing not only strange in nature, but impossible, learn, That there are no impossibilities with God. God can bring about things which are not within the sphere of nature to produce; as that iron should swim, that the rock should gush out water, and that the fire should lick up the water in the trenches. I Kings 18: 38. It is natural for water to quench fire, but for fire to consume water is impossible in the course of nature; but God can bring about all this. 'There is nothing too hard for thee.' Jer 32: 27. 'If it be marvellous in your eyes, should it be marvellous in my eyes? saith the Lord.' Zech 8: 6. How should God be united to our flesh? It is impossible to us, but not with God; he can do what transcends reason, and exceeds faith. He would not be our God if he could not do more than we can think. Eph 3: 20. He can reconcile contraries. How apt are we to be discouraged

with seeming impossibilities! How do our hearts die within us when things go cross to sense and reason! We are apt to say as that prince in 2 Kings 7: 1, 2, 'If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be!' It was a time of famine, and now that a measure of wheat, which was a good part of a bushel, should be sold for a shekel, half an ounce of silver, how can this be? So, when things are cross, or strange, God's own people are apt to question, how they should be brought about with success? Moses, who was a man of God, and one of the brightest stars that ever shone in the firmament of God's church, was apt to be discouraged with seeming impossibilities. 'And Moses said, The people among whom I am are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?' Num. 11: 21, 22. As if he had said, in plain language, he did not see how the people of Israel, being so numerous, could be fed for a month. 'And the Lord said, Is the Lord's hand waxed short?' Verse 23. That God who brought Isaac out of a dead womb, and the Messiah out of a virgin's womb, what cannot he do? Oh let us rest upon the arm of God's power, and believe in him, in the midst of seeming impossibilities! Remember, 'there are no impossibilities with God.' He can subdue a proud heart. He can raise a dying church. Christ born of a virgin! The wonder-working God that wrought this can bring to pass the greatest seeming impossibility.

Use two: Of exhortation. (I.) Seeing Christ took our flesh, and was born of a virgin, let us labour that he may be spiritually born in our hearts. What will it profit us, that Christ was born into the world, unless he be born in our hearts, that he was united to our persons? Marvel not that I say unto you, Christ must be born in your hearts. 'Till Christ be formed in you.' Gal 4: 19. Now, then, try if Christ be born in your hearts.

How shall we know that?

Are there pangs before the birth? So before Christ is born in the heart, there are spiritual pangs; pangs of conscience, and deep convictions. 'They were pricked at their heart.' Acts 2: 37. I grant in the new birth - *recipere magis et minus* [Some receive more, some less] - all have not the same pangs of sorrow and humiliation, yet all have pangs. If Christ be born in thy heart, thou hast been deeply afflicted for sin. Christ is never born in the heart without pangs. Many thank God they never had any trouble of spirit, they were always quiet; a sign Christ is not yet formed in them.

When Christ was born into the world, he was made flesh; so, if he be born in thy heart, he makes thy heart a heart of flesh. Ezek 36: 26. Is thy heart flesh? Before, it was a rocky heart, and would not yield to God, or take the impressions of the word; *durum est quod non credit tactui* [It is hard substances that do not

yield to the touch]; now it is fleshy and tender like melted wax, to take any stamp of the Spirit. It is a sign Christ is born in our hearts, when they are hearts of flesh, when they melt in tears and in love. What is it the better that Christ was made flesh, unless he has given thee a heart of flesh?

As Christ was conceived in the womb of a virgin; so, if he be born in thee, thy heart is a virgin-heart, in respect of sincerity and sanctity. Art thou purified from the love of sin? If Christ be born in thy heart, it is a Sanctum Sanctorum, a holy of holiest. If thy heart be polluted with the predominant love of sin, never think Christ is born there, Christ will never lie any more in a stable. If he be born in thy heart, it is consecrated by the Holy Ghost.

If Christ be born in thy heart, then it is with thee as in a birth. There is life. Faith is principum vivens, it is the vital organ of the soul. 'The life that I live in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God.' Gal 2: 20. There is appetite. 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word.' I Peter 2: 2. The word is like breast-milk, pure, sweet, nourishing; and the soul in which Christ is formed desires this breast-milk. Bernard, in one of his soliloquies, comforts himself with this, that he surely had the new birth in him, because he found in his heart such strong breathings and thirstings after God. After Christ is born in the heart, there is a violent motion: there is a striving to enter in at the strait gate, and offering violence to the kingdom of heaven. Matt 11: 12. By this we may know Christ is formed in us. This is the only comfort, that as Christ was born into the world, so he is born in our hearts; as he was united to our flesh, so he is united to our person.

(2.) As Christ was made in our image, let us labour to be made in his image. Christ being incarnate was made like us, let us labour to be made like him. There are five things in which we should labour to be like Christ. (1:) In disposition. He was of a most sweet disposition, *deliciae humani generis* [the delight of human kind]. Titus Vespasian. He invites sinners to come to him. He has bowels to pity us, breasts to feed us, wings to cover us. He would not break our heart but with mercy. Was Christ made in our likeness? Let us be like him in sweetness of disposition; be not of a morose spirit. It was said of Nabal, 'he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.' I Sam 25: 17. Some are so barbarous, as if they were akin to the ostrich, they are fired with rage, and breathe forth nothing but revenge, or like those two men in the gospel, 'possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce.' Matt 8: 28. Let us be like Christ in mildness and sweetness. Let us pray for our enemies, and conquer them by love. David's kindness melted Saul's heart. I Sam 24: 16. A frozen heart will be thawed with the fire of love.

(2:) Be like Christ in grace. He was like us in having our flesh, let us be like him in having his grace. We should labour to be like Christ, in humility. 'He humbled

himself, Phil 2: 8. He left the bright robes of his glory to be clothed with the rags of our humanity: a wonder to humility! Let us be like Christ in this grace. Humility, says Bernard, is *contemptus propriae extellentiae*, 'a contempt of self-excellence,' a kind of a self-annihilation. This is the glory of a Christian. We are never so comely in God's eyes as when we are black in our own. In this let us be like Christ. True religion is to imitate Christ. And indeed, what cause have we to be humble, if we look within us, below us, above us!

If we look *intra nos*, within us, here we see our sins represented to us in the glass of conscience; lust, envy, passion. Our sins are like vermin crawling in our souls. 'How many are my iniquities?' Job 13: 23. Our sins are as the sands of the sea for number, as the rocks of the sea for weight. Augustine cries out, *Vae mihi faecibus peccatorum polluitur templum Domini*. 'My heart, which is God's temple, is polluted with sin.'

If we look *juxta nos*, about us, there is that may humble us. We may see other Christians outshining us in gifts and graces, as the sun outshines the lesser planets. Others are laden with fruit, perhaps we have but here and there an olive-berry growing, to show that we are of the right kind. Isa 17: 6.

If we look *infra nos*, below us; there is that may humble us. We may see the mother earth, out of which we came. The earth is the most ignoble element: 'They were viler than the earth.' Job 30: 8. Thou that dost set up thy escutcheon, and blaze thy coat of arms, behold thy pedigree; thou art but *pulvis animalus*, walking ashes: and wilt thou be proud? What is Adam? The son of dust. And what is dust? The son of nothing.

If we look *supra nos*, above us; there is that may humble us. If we look up to heaven, there we may see God resisting the proud. *Superbos sequitur ultor a tergo Deus*. [God pursues the proud in vengeance.] The proud man is the mark which God shoots at, and he never misses the mark. He threw proud Lucifer out of heaven; he thrust proud Nebuchadnezzar out of his throne, and turned him to eat grass. Dan 4: 25. Oh then be like Christ in humility!

(3:) Did Christ take our flesh? Was he made like to us? Let us be made like him in zeal. 'The zeal of thy house has eaten me up.' John 2: 17. He was zealous when his Father was dishonoured. In this let us be like Christ, zealous for God's truth and glory, which are the two orient pearls of the crown of heaven. Zeal is as needful for a Christian as salt for the sacrifice, or fire on the altar. Zeal without prudence is rashness; prudence without zeal is cowardliness. Without zeal, our duties are not acceptable to God. Zeal is like rosin to the bow-strings, without which the lute makes no music.

(4:) Be like Christ, in the contempt of the world. When Christ took our flesh, he came not in the pride of flesh, he did not descend immediately from kings and nobles, but was of mean parentage. Christ was not ambitious of titles or of honour. He declined worldly dignity and greatness as much as others seek it. When they would have made him a king, he refused it; he chose rather to ride upon the foal of an ass, than be drawn in a chariot; and to hang upon a wooden cross, than to wear a golden crown. He scorned the pomp and glory of the world. He waived secular affairs. 'Who made me a judge?' Luke 12: 14. His work was not to arbitrate matters of law; he came not into the world to be a magistrate, but a Redeemer. He was like a star in a higher orb, he minded nothing but heaven. Was Christ made like us? Let us be made like him, in heavenliness and contempt of the world. Let us not be ambitious of the honours and preferments of the world. Let us not purchase the world with the loss of a good conscience. What wise man would damn himself to grow rich? or pull down his soul, to build up an estate? Be like Christ in a holy contempt of the world.

(5:) Be like Christ in conversation. Was Christ incarnate? Was he made like us? Let us be made like him in holiness of life. No temptation could fasten upon him. 'The prince of this world cometh, and has nothing in me.' John 14: 30. Temptation to Christ was like a spark of fire upon a marble pillar, which glides off. Christ's life, says Chrysostom, was brighter than the sunbeams. Let us be like him in this. 'Be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' I Pet 1: 15. We are not, says Augustine, to be like Christ in working miracles, but in a holy life. A Christian should be both a loadstone and a diamond; a loadstone, in drawing others to Christ; a diamond, in casting a sparkling lustre of holiness in his life. Oh let us be so just in our dealings, so true in our promises, so devout in our worship, so unblameable in our lives, that we may be the walking pictures of Christ. Thus as Christ was made in our likeness, let us labour to be made in his.

(3.) If Jesus Christ was so abased for us; took our flesh, which was a disparagement to him, mingling dust with gold; if he abased himself so for us, let us be willing to be abased for him. If the world reproach us for Christ's sake, and cast dust on our name, let us bear it with patience. The apostles departed from the council, 'rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's name,' Acts 5: 41: that they were graced to be disgraced for Christ. That is a good saying of Augustine, *Quid sui detrahit famae, addet mercedi sua*; 'they who take away from a saint's name, shall add to his reward'; and while they make his credit weigh lighter, will make his crown weigh heavier. Oh, was Christ content to be humbled and abased for us, to take our flesh, and to take it when it was in disgrace? Let us not think much to be abased for Christ. Say as David, 'If this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile.' 2 Sam 6: 22. If to serve my Lord Christ, if to keep my conscience pure, if this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile.

Use three: Of comfort. Jesus Christ, having taken our flesh, has ennobled our nature, naturam nostram nobilitavit. Our nature is now invested with greater royalties and privileges than in time of innocence. Before, in innocence, we were made in the image of God; but now, Christ having assumed our nature, we are made one with God; our nature is ennobled above the angelic nature. Christ taking our flesh, has made us nearer to himself than the angels. The angels are his friends, believers are flesh of his flesh, his members. Eph 5: 30 and chap 1: 23. The same glory which is put upon Christ's human nature, shall be put upon believers.

From *A Body of Divinity*. Available from by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

Christ The Redeemer

Q-xxx: HOW DOES THE SPIRIT APPLY TO US THE REDEMPTION PURCHASED BY CHRIST?

A: The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

In this answer there are two things. It is implied that Christ is the glorious purchaser of our redemption, in the words, 'The redemption purchased by Christ,' and it is declared that the Spirit applies to us this purchased redemption, by working in us faith, &c.

The thing implied is, that Jesus Christ is the glorious purchaser of our redemption. The doctrine of redemption by Jesus Christ is a glorious doctrine; it is the marrow and quintessence of the gospel, in which all a Christian's comfort lies. Great was the work of creation, but greater the work of redemption; it cost more to redeem us than to make us; in the one there was but the speaking of a word, in the other the shedding of blood. The creation was but the work of God's fingers. Psa 8: 3. Redemption is the work of his arm. Luke 1: 51. 'Having obtained eternal redemption for us.' Heb 9: 12. Christ's purchasing redemption for us implies that our sins mortgaged and sold us. Had there not been some kind of mortgaging there had been no need of redemption: redimere rursus emere. Jerome. When we were thus mortgaged, and sold by sin, Christ purchased our redemption. He had the best right to redeem us, for he is our kinsman. The Hebrew word for Redeemer, Goel, signifies a kinsman, one that is near in blood. In the old law the nearest kinsman was to redeem his brother's

land. Ruth 4: 4. Thus Christ being near akin to us, 'Flesh of our flesh.' is the fittest to redeem us.

How does Christ redeem us?

By his own precious blood. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood.' Eph 1: 7. Among the Romans, he was said to redeem another who laid down a price equivalent for the ransom of the prisoner. In this sense Christ is a Redeemer; he has paid a price. Never was such a price paid to ransom prisoners. 'Ye are pretio empti, bought with a price; and this price was his own blood.' I Cor 6: 20. So, in the text, 'by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' This blood being the blood of that person who was God as well as man is a price sufficient for the ransom of millions.

From what does Christ redeem us?

From sin. To be redeemed from Turkish slavery is a great mercy, but it is infinitely more to be redeemed from sin. There is nothing that can hurt the soul but sin; it is not affliction that hurts it, it often makes it better, as the furnace makes gold the purer; but it is sin that damnifies. Now, Christ redeems us from sin. 'Now, once in the end of the world has he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.' Heb 9: 26.

But how are we redeemed from sin? Do we not see corruption stirring in the regenerate; much pride and unmortified passion?

Redemption is either inchoata or plena; i.e. begun redemption or perfect redemption. Sin cannot stand with a perfect redemption; but here it is begun only, and sin may stand with an imperfect redemption. There may be some darkness in the air at the sun's first rising, but not when the sun is at the full meridian. While our redemption is but begun, there may be sin; but not when it is perfect in glory.

In what sense has Christ redeemed justified persons from sin?

(1.) A reatu, from the guilt of sin, though not the stain. Guilt is the binding a person over to punishment. Now, Christ has redeemed a justified person from the guilt of sin; he has discharged his debts. Christ says to God's justice, as Paul to Philemon, 'If he has wronged thee anything, or owes thee ought, put that on my account.' Verse 18.

(2.) A justified person is redeemed a dominio, from the power and regency of sin, though not from the presence. Sin may furere, but not regnare; it may rage in a child of God, but not reign. Lust raged in David, and fear in Peter, but it did

not reign; they recovered themselves by repentance. 'Sin shall not have dominion over you.' Rom 6: 14. Sin lives in a child of God, but is deposed from the throne; it lives not as a king, but a captive.

(3.) A believer is redeemed a malediction, from the curse due to sin. 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' Gal 3: 13. Christ said to his Father, as Rebecca to Jacob, 'Upon me, upon me be the curse; let the blessing be upon them, but upon me be the curse.' And now, there is no condemnation to believers. Rom 8: 1. An unbeliever has a double condemnation; one from the law which he has transgressed, and the other from the gospel which he has despised. But Christ has redeemed the believer from this malediction, he has set him out of the power of hell and damnation.

To what has Christ redeemed us?

He has redeemed us to a glorious inheritance. 'To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.' I Pet 1: 4.

(1.) To an inheritance. Christ has not only redeemed us out of prison, but he has redeemed us to a state of happiness, to an inheritance; heaven is not a lease which soon expires, but an inheritance; and a glorious inheritance; called an inheritance in light. Col 1: 12. Lumen producit colores; light adorns and gilds the world. What were the world without light but a prison? The heavenly inheritance is irradiated with light. Christ, as a continual sun, enlightens it with his beams. Rev 21: 23.

(2.) To an inheritance incorruptible. It does not moulder away or suffer dissolution. Earthly comforts are shadowed out by the tabernacle which was transient; but heaven is set out by the temple, which was fixed and permanent, built with stone, overlaid with gold. This is the glory of the celestial inheritance; it is incorruptible. Eternity is written upon the frontispiece of it.

(3.) Undefiled. The Greek word for undefiled alludes to a precious stone called Amiantus, which cannot be blemished. Such a place is heaven, undefiled, nothing can stain it; there is no sin there to eclipse its purity. For holiness and undefiledness it is compared to pure gold, and to the sapphire and emerald. Rev 21: 19. 'The sapphire has a virtue,' says Pliny, 'to preserve chasteness, the emerald to expel poison.' These are the lively emblems of heaven, to show the sanctity of it; no fever of lust; no venom of malice; none but pure virgin spirits inhabit it.

(4.) It fadeth not away. The Greek word is the name of a flower, Amaranthus, which keeps a long time fresh and green, as Clement of Alexandria writes. Such is the heavenly inheritance, it does not lose its orient colour, but keeps its

freshness and greenness to eternity; the beauty of it fadeth not away. To this glorious inheritance has Christ redeemed the saints; an inheritance which cannot be fully described or set forth by all the lights of heaven, though every star were a sun. And that which is the diamond in the ring, the glory of this inheritance, is the eternal sight and fruition of the blessed God. The sight of God will be a most alluring, heart-ravishing object; the king's presence makes the court. 'We shall see him as he is.' I John 3: 2. It is comfortable to see God showing himself through the lattice of an ordinance, to see him in the Word and sacrament. The martyrs thought it comfortable to see him in a prison. Oh then, what will it be to see him in glory, shining ten thousand times brighter than the sun! and not only see him, but enjoy him for ever! Praemium quodfide non attingitur. Augustine. Faith itself is not able fully to comprehend this reward. All this blessedness has Christ purchased through the redemption of his blood.

Use one: Of instruction. (I.) See into what a wretched deplorable condition we had brought ourselves by sin; we had sinned ourselves into slavery, so that we needed Christ to purchase our redemption. *Nihil durius servitute*, says Cicero, 'Slavery is the worst condition.' Such as are now prisoners in Algiers think it so. But by sin we are in a worse slavery, slaves to Satan, a merciless tyrant, who sports in the damnation of souls. In this condition we were when Christ came to redeem us.

(2.) See in this, as in a transparent glass, the love of Christ to the elect. He came to redeem them; and died intentionally for them. Were it not great love for a king's son to pay a great sum of money to redeem a captive? But that he should be content to be a prisoner in his stead, and die for his ransom; this were matter of wonder. Jesus Christ has done all this, he has written his love in characters of blood. It had been much for Christ to speak a good word to his Father for us, but he knew that was not enough to redeem us. Though a word speaking made a world, yet it would not redeem a sinner. 'Without shedding of blood there is no remission.' Heb 9: 22.

Use two: Of trial. If Christ came to purchase our redemption, then let us try whether we are the persons whom Christ has redeemed from the guilt and curse due to sin. This is a needful trial; for let me tell you, there is but a certain number whom Christ has redeemed. Oh, say sinners, Christ is a redeemer, and we shall be saved by him! Beloved, Christ came not to redeem all, for that would overthrow the decrees of God. Redemption is not as large as creation. I grant there is a sufficiency of merit in Christ's blood to save all; but there is a difference between sufficiency and efficiency. Christ's blood is a sufficient price for all, but it is effectual only to them that believe. A plaster may have a sovereign virtue in it to heal any wound, but it does not heal unless applied to the wound. And if it be so, that all have not the benefit of Christ's redemption,

but some only, then it is a necessary question to ask our own souls, Are we in the number of those that are redeemed by Christ or not?

How shall we know that?

(I.) Such as are redeemed are reconciled to God. The enmity is taken away. Their judgements approve, their wills incline ad bonum. Col 1: 2I. Are they redeemed that are unreconciled to God, who hate God and his people (as the vine and laurel have an antipathy), who do all they can to disparage holiness? Are they redeemed who are unreconciled? Christ has purchased a reprieve for these; but a sinner may have a reprieve, and yet go to hell. John 5: 6.

(2.) Such as are redeemed by Christ are redeemed from the world. 'Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver (or redeem) us from this present evil world.' Gal 1: 4. Such as are redeemed by Christ are risen with Christ, Col 3: 1: As birds that light upon the ground to pick up a little seed, immediately fly up to heaven again; so the redeemed of the Lord use the world, and take the lawful comforts of it, but their hearts are presently off these things, and they ascend to heaven. They live here, and trade above. Such as Christ has died for are 'dead to the world;' to its honours, profits, and preferments. What shall we think of those who say they are redeemed of the Lord, and yet are lovers of the world? They are like the tribes who desired to have their portion on this side Canaan. 'Who mind earthly things.' Phil 3: 19. They pull down their souls to build up an estate. They are not redeemed by Christ, who are not redeemed from the world.

Use three: Of comfort to such as are redeemed. You are happy, the lot of free grace has fallen upon you; you were once in the devil's prison, but have broken from that prison; you were once bound in the chains of sin, but God has begun to beat off your chains, and has freed you from the power of sin, and the curse due to it. What a comfort is this! Is there any consolation in Christ? It is shine. Is there any sweet fruit growing upon the promise? Thou mayest gather it. Are there any glorious privileges in the gospel? They are thy jointure, justification, adoption, coronation. Is there any glory in heaven? Thou shalt shortly drink of that river of pleasure. Hast thou any temporal comforts? These are but a pledge and earnest of more. Thy meal in the barrel is but a meal by the way, and an earnest of that angels, food which God has prepared for thee. How mayest thou be comforted in all worldly afflictions, though the fig-tree flourish not! Nay, in case of death, it has lost its sting. Mors abiit morte Christi [Death takes its leave, through the death of Christ]. Death shall carry thee to thy Redeemer: fear not dying since you cannot be perfectly happy but by dying.

Use four: Of exhortation. Long for the time when you shall have a full and perfect redemption in heaven, an eternal jubilee; when you shall be freed not only from the power but from the presence of sin. Here a believer is as a

prisoner that has broken prison, but walks with a fetter on his leg. When the banner of glory shall be displayed over you, you shall be as the angels of God, you shall never have a sinful thought more; no pain or grief, no aching head or unbelieving heart. You shall see Christ's face, and lie for ever in his arms; you shall be as Joseph. Gen 41: 14. They brought him hastily out of the dungeon, and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. Long for that time, when you shall put off your prison garments, and change your raiment, and put on the embroidered garment of glory. Oh long for it! Yet be content to wait for this full and glorious redemption, when you shall be more happy than you can desire, when you shall have 'that which eye has not seen. nor ear heard. nor can it enter into man's heart to conceive.'

From *A Body of Divinity*. Published by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

3. JUSTIFICATION

'Being justified freely by his grace.' ROM iii 24.

QXXXIII: WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

A: It is an act of God's free grace, whereby he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Justification is the very hinge and pillar of Christianity. An error about justification is dangerous, like a defect in a foundation. Justification by Christ is a spring of the water of life. To have the poison of corrupt doctrine cast into this spring is damnable. It was a saying of Luther, 'that after his death the doctrine of justification would be corrupted.' In these latter times, the Arminians and Socinians have cast a dead fly into this box of precious ointment.

I shall endeavour to follow the star of Scripture to light me through this mysterious point.

I What is meant by justification?

It is *verbum forense*, a word borrowed from law-courts, wherein a person arraigned is pronounced righteous, and is openly absolved. God, in justifying a person, pronounces him to be righteous, and looks upon him as if he had not sinned.

What is the source of justification?

The *causa*, the inward impellant motive or ground of justification, is the free grace of God: 'being justified freely by his grace.' Ambrose expounds this, as 'not of the grace wrought within us, but the free grace of God.' The first wheel that sets all the rest running is the love and favour of God; as a king freely pardons a delinquent. Justification is a merry spun out of the bowels of free grace. God does not justify us because we are worthy, but by justifying us makes us worthy.

What is the ground, or that by which a sinner is justified?

The ground of our justification is Christ's satisfaction made to his Father. If it be asked, how can it stand with God's justice and holiness to pronounce us innocent when we are guilty- the answer is, that Christ having made satisfaction for our fault, God may, in equity and justice, pronounce us righteous. It is a just thing for a creditor to discharge a debtor of the debt, when a satisfaction is made by the surety.

But how was Christ's satisfaction meritorious, and so sufficient to justify?

In respect of the divine nature. As he was man he suffered, as God he satisfied. By Christ's death and merits, God's justice is more abundantly satisfied than if we had suffered the pains of hell for ever.

Wherein lies the method of our justification?

In the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. 'This is the name whereby he shall be called,' *Jehovah Tzidkennu*, 'THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.' Jer xxiii 6. 'He is made to us righteousness.' I Cor i 30. This righteousness of Christ, which justifies us, is a better righteousness than the angels'; for theirs is the righteousness of creatures, this of God.

What is the means or instrument of our justification?

Faith. 'Being justified by faith.' Rom v i. The dignity is not in faith as a grace, but relatively, as it lays hold on Christ's merits.

What is the efficient cause of our justification?

The whole Trinity. All the persons in the blessed Trinity have a hand in the justification of a sinner: *opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*. God the Father is said to justify. 'It is God that justifieth.' Rom viii 33. God the Son is said to justify. 'By him all that believe are justified.' Acts xiii 39. God the Holy Ghost is said to justify. 'But ye are justified by the Spirit of our God.' I Cor vi ii. God the Father justifies, as he pronounces us righteous; God the Son justifies, as he imputes his righteousness to us; and God the Holy Ghost justifies, as he clears up our justification, and seals us up to the day of redemption.

What is the end of our justification?

The end is, (1.) That God may inherit praise. 'To the praise of the glory of his grace.' Eph i 6. Hereby God raises the everlasting trophies of his own honour. How will the justified sinner proclaim the love of God, and make heaven ring with his praises!

(2.) That the justified person may inherit glory. 'Whom he justified, them he also glorified.' Rom viii 30. God in justifying, not only absolves a soul from guilt, but advances him to dignity: as Joseph was not only loosed from prison, but made lord of the kingdom. Justification is crowned with glorification.

Are we justified from eternity?

No: for, (1.) By nature we are under a sentence of condemnation. John iii 18. We could never have been condemned, if we were justified from eternity.

(2.) The Scripture confines justification to those who believe and repent. 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out.' Acts iii 19. Therefore their sins were uncanceled, and their persons unjustified, till they did repent. Though God does not justify us for our repentance, yet not without it. The Antinomians erroneously hold, that we are justified from eternity. This doctrine is a key which opens the door to all licentiousness; for what sins do they care not to commit, so long as they hold they are ab aeterno justified whether they repent or not?

II. Before I come to the uses, *I shall lay down four maxims or positions about justification.*

[1] That justification confers a real benefit upon the person justified. The acquitting and discharging of the debtor, by virtue of the satisfaction made by the surety, is a real benefit to the debtor. A robe of righteousness, and a crown of righteousness, are real benefits.

[2] All believers are alike justified: *justificatio non recipit magis et minus.* [Justification does not apply to some more than to others.] Though there are degrees in grace, yet not in justification; one is not justified more than another; the weakest believer is as perfectly justified as the strongest; Mary Magdalene is as much justified as the Virgin Mary. This may be a cordial to a weak believer. Though thou hast but a drachm of faith, thou art as truly justified as he who is of the highest stature in Christ.

[3] Whomsoever God justifies, he sanctifies. 'But ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.' I Cor vi ii. The Papists calumniate Protestants; they report them to hold that men continuing in sin are justified; whereas all our Protestant writers affirm, that righteousness imputed, for justification, and righteousness inherent, for

sanctification, must be inseparably united. Holiness indeed is not the cause of our justification, but it is the attendant; as the heat in the sun is not the cause of its light, but it is the attendant. It is absurd to imagine that God should justify a people, and they should still go on in sin. If God should justify a people and not sanctify them, he would justify a people whom he could not glorify. A holy God cannot lay a sinner in his bosom. The metal is first refined, before the king's stamp is put upon it; so the soul is first refined with holiness, before God puts the royal stamp of justification upon it.

[4] Justification is *inamissibilis*, it is a fixed permanent thing, it can never be lost. The Arminians hold an apostasy from justification; today justified, tomorrow unjustified; today a Peter, tomorrow a Judas; today a member of Christ, tomorrow a limb of Satan. This is a most uncomfortable doctrine. Justified persons may fall from degrees of grace, they may leave their first love, they may lose God's favour for a time, but not lose their justification. If they are justified they are elected; and they can no more fall from their justification than from their election. If they are justified they have union with Christ; and can a member of Christ be broken off? If one justified person may fall away from Christ, all may; and so Christ would be a head without a body.

Use one: See from hence, that there is nothing within us that could justify, but something without us; not any righteousness inherent, but imputed. We may as well look for a star in the earth as for justification in our own righteousness. The Papists say we are justified by works; but the apostle confutes it, for he says, 'not of works, lest any man should boast.' Eph ii 9. The Papists say, 'the works done by an unregenerate man indeed cannot justify him, but works done by a regenerate man may justify.' This is most false, as may be proved both by example and reason.

(1.) By example. Abraham was a regenerate man; but Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith. Abraham 'believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.' Rom iv 3. (2.) By reason. How can Justification those works justify us which defile us? 'Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' Isa lxiv 6. *Bona opera non precedunt justificationem, sed sequuntur justificatum:* good works are not an usher to go before justification, but a handmaid to follow it.

But does not the apostle James say that Abraham was justified by works?

The answer is easy. Works declare us to be righteous before men; but they do not make us righteous before God. Works are evidences of our justification, not causes. The only name graven upon the golden plate of Christ our High Priest must be, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Use two: Of exhortation. (1.) Adore the infinite wisdom and goodness of God that found out a way to justify us by 'rich grace and precious blood.' We were all involved in guilt; none of us could plead *not guilty*, and being guilty, we lay under a sentence of death. Now that the judge himself should find out a way to justify us, and the creditor himself contrive a way to have the debt paid, and not distress the debtor, should fill us with wonder and love. The angels admire the mystery of free grace in this new way of justifying and saving lost man, 1 Pet i 12, and should not we, who are nearly concerned in it, and on whom the benefit is devolved, cry out with the apostle, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!'

(2.) Labour for this high privilege of justification. There is balm in Gilead; Christ has laid down his blood as the price of our justification; and he offers himself and all his merits to us, to justify; he invites us to come to him; he has promised to give his Spirit, to enable us to do what is required. Why then, sinners, will ye not look after this great privilege of justification? Why starve in the midst of plenty? Why perish when there is a remedy to save you? Would not he be thought to be distracted, who having a pardon offered him, only upon the acknowledgment of his fault, and promising amendment, should bid the prince keep his pardon to himself; for his part, he was in love with his chains and fetters, and would die? Thou who neglectest justification offered thee freely by Christ in the gospel art this infatuated person. Is the love of Christ to be slighted? Is thy soul, is heaven worth nothing? Oh then look after justification through Christ's blood!

Consider (i) The necessity of being justified. If we are not justified, we cannot be glorified. 'Whom he justified, them he also glorified.' Rom viii 30. He who is outlawed, and all his goods confiscated, must be brought into favour with his prince before he can be restored to his former rights and liberties; so, we must have our sins forgiven, and be brought into God's favour by justification, before we can be restored to the liberty of the sons of God, and have a right to that happiness we forfeited in Adam.

(ii) The utility and benefit. By justification we enjoy peace in our conscience; a richer jewel than any prince wears in his crown. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' Rom v 1. Peace can sweeten all our afflictions, it turns our water into wine. How happy is a justified person who has the power of God to guard him, and the peace of God to comfort him! Peace flowing from justification is an antidote against the fear of death and hell. 'It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? Rom viii 33, 34. Therefore labour for this justification by Christ. This privilege is obtained by believing in Christ. 'By him all that believe are justified.' Acts xiii 39. 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' Rom iii 25. Faith unites us to Christ; and having union with his person we partake of his merits, and the glorious salvation which comes by him.

Use three: Comfort to the justified. (1.) It is comfort in case of failings. Alas! how defective are the godly! they come short in every duty; but though believers should be humbled under their defects, they should not despond. They are not to be justified by their duties or graces, but by the righteousness of Christ. Their duties are mixed with sin, but that righteousness which justifies them is a perfect righteousness.

(2.) Comfort in case of hard censures. The world censures the people of God as proud and hypocritical, and the troublers of Israel; but though men censure and condemn the godly, yet God has justified them, and as he has now justified them, so at the day of judgment he will openly justify them, and pronounce them righteous before men and angels. God is so just and holy a judge, that having once justified his people he will never condemn them. Pilate justified Christ, saying, 'I find no fault in him;' yet after this he condemned him; but God having publicly justified his saints, he will never condemn them; for 'whom he justified, them he also glorified.'

From *A Body of Divinity*. Published by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

SANCTIFICATION

'For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.' I Thess iv 3.

The word sanctification signifies to consecrate and set apart to a holy use: thus they are sanctified persons who are separated from the world, and set apart for God's service. Sanctification has a privative and a positive part.

I. *A privative part, which lies in the purging out of sin.* Sin is compared to leaven, which sours; and to leprosy, which defiles. Sanctification purges out 'the old leaven.' I Cor v 7. Though it takes not away the life, yet it takes away the love of sin.

II. *A positive part, which is the spiritual refining of the soul;* which in Scripture is called a 'renewing of our mind,' Rom xii 2, and a 'partaking of the divine nature.' 2 Pet i 4. The priests in the law were not only washed in the great laver, but adorned with glorious apparel. Exod xxviii 2; so sanctification not only washes from sin, but adorns with purity.

What is sanctification?

It is a principle of grace savingly wrought, whereby the heart becomes holy, and is made *after* God's own heart. A sanctified person bears not only God's name,

but his image. In opening the nature of sanctification, I shall lay down these seven positions:-

(1.) Sanctification is a supernatural thing; it is divinely infused. We are naturally polluted, and to cleanse, God takes to be his prerogative. 'I am the Lord which sanctify you.' Lev xxi 8. Weeds grow of themselves. Flowers are planted. Sanctification is a flower of the Spirit's planting. therefore it is called, 'The sanctification of the Spirit.' I Pet i 2.

(2.) Sanctification is an intrinsic thing; it lies chiefly in the heart. It is called 'the adorning the hidden man of the heart.' I Pet iii 4. The dew wets the leaf, the sap is hid in the root; so the religion of some consists only in externals, but sanctification is deeply rooted in the soul. 'In the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.' Psalm li 6.

(3.) Sanctification is an extensive thing: it spreads into the whole man. 'The God of peace sanctify you wholly.' I Thess v 23. As original corruption has depraved all the faculties - 'the whole head is sick, the whole heart faint,' no part sound, as if the whole mass of blood were corrupted -so sanctification goes over the whole soul. After the fall, there was ignorance in the mind; but in sanctification, we are 'light in the Lord' Eph v 8. After the fall, the will was depraved; there was not only impotence to good, but obstinacy. In sanctification, there is a blessed pliability in the will; it symbolizes and comports with the will of God. After the fall, the affections were misplaced on wrong objects; in sanctification, they are turned into a sweet order and harmony, the grief placed on sin, the love on God, the joy on heaven. Thus sanctification spreads itself as far as original corruption; it goes over the whole soul: 'the God of peace sanctify you wholly.' He is not a sanctified person who is good only in some part, but who is all over sanctified; therefore, in Scripture, grace is called a 'new man,' not a new eye or a new tongue, but a 'new man. Col iii 10. A good Christian, though he be sanctified but in part, yet in every part.

(4.) Sanctification is an intense and ardent thing. *Qualitates sicut in subjecto intensive* [Its properties burn within the believer]. 'Fervent in spirit.' Rom xii 11. Sanctification is not a dead form, but it is inflamed into zeal. We call water hot, when it is so in the third or fourth degree; so he is holy whose religion is heated to some degree, and his heart boils over in love to God.

(5.) Sanctification is a beautiful thing. It makes God and angels fall in love with us. 'The beauties of holiness.' Psa cx 3. As the sun is to the world, so is sanctification to the soul, beautifying and bespangling it in God's eyes. That which makes God glorious must needs make us so. Holiness is the most sparkling jewel in the Godhead. 'Glorious in holiness.' Exod xv 11. Sanctification is the first fruit of the Spirit; it is heaven begun in the soul. Sanctification and glory differ

only in degree: sanctification is glory in the seed, and glory is sanctification in the flower. Holiness is the quintessence of happiness.

(6.) Sanctification is an abiding thing. 'His seed remaineth in him.' I John iii 9. He who is truly sanctified, cannot fall from that state. Indeed, seeming holiness may be lost, colours may wash off; sanctification may suffer an eclipse. 'Thou hast left thy first love.' Rev ii 4. True sanctification is a blossom of eternity. 'The anointing which ye have received abideth in you.' I John ii 27. He who is truly sanctified can no more fall away than the angels which are fixed in their heavenly orbs.

(7.) Sanctification is a progressive thing. It is growing; it is compared to seed which grows: first the blade springs up, then the ear, then the ripe corn in the ear; such as are already sanctified may be more sanctified. 2 Cor vii 1. Justification does not admit of degrees; a believer cannot be more elected or justified than he is, but he may be more sanctified than he is. Sanctification is still increasing, like the morning sun, which grows brighter to the full meridian. Knowledge is said to increase, and faith to increase. Col i 10; 2 Cor x 15. A Christian is continually adding a cubit to his spiritual stature. It is not with us as it was with Christ, who received the Spirit without measure; for Christ could not be more holy than he was. We have the Spirit only in measure, and may be still augmenting our grace; as Apelles, when he had drawn a picture, would be still mending it with his pencil. The image of God is drawn but imperfectly in us, therefore we must be still mending it, and drawing it in more lively colours. Sanctification is progressive; if it does not grow, it is because it does not live. Thus you see the nature of sanctification.

What are the counterfeits of sanctification?

There are things which look like sanctification, but are not.

(1.) The first counterfeit of sanctification is moral virtue. To be just, be temperate, to be of a fair deportment, not to have one's escutcheon blotted with ignominious scandal is good, but not enough; it is not sanctification. A field-flower differs from a garden-flower. Heathens have attained to morality; as Cato, Socrates, and Aristides. Civility is but nature refined; there is nothing of Christ there, and the heart may be foul and impure. Under these fair leaves of civility the worm of unbelief may be hid. A moral person has a secret antipathy against grace; he hates vice, and he hates grace as much as vice. The snake has a fine colour, but a sting. A person adorned and cultivated with moral virtue, has a secret spleen against sanctity. The Stoics who were the chief of the moralized heathens, were the bitterest enemies Paul had. Acts xvii 18.

(2.) The second counterfeit of sanctification is superstitious devotion. This abounds in Popery; adorations, images, altars, vestments, and holy water, which I look upon as a religious frenzy, and is far from sanctification. It does not put any intrinsic goodness into a man, it does not make a man better. If the legal purifications and washings, which were of God's own appointing, did not make those who used them more holy; and the priests, who wore holy garments, and had holy oil poured on them, were not more holy without the anointing of the Spirit; then surely those superstitious innovations in religion, which God never appointed, cannot contribute any holiness to men. A superstitious holiness costs no great labour; there is nothing of the heart in it. If to tell over a few beads, or bow to an image, or sprinkle themselves with holy water were sanctification, and all that is required of them that should be saved, then hell would be empty, none would come there.

(3.) The third counterfeit of sanctification is hypocrisy; when men make a pretence of that holiness which they have not. As a comet may shine like a star, a lustre may shine from their profession that dazzles the eyes of the beholders. 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power.' 2 Tim iii 5. These are lamps without oil; whited sepulchres, like the Egyptian temples, which had fair outsides, but within spiders and apes. The apostle speaks of true holiness. Eph iv 24, implying that there is holiness which is spurious and feigned. 'Thou hast a name to live, but art dead;' Rev iii 1; like pictures and Statues which are destitute of a vital principle. 'Clouds without water.' Jude 12. They pretend to be full of the Spirit, but are empty clouds. This show of sanctification is a self-delusion. He who takes copper instead of gold, wrongs himself; the most counterfeit saint deceives others while he lives, but deceives himself when he dies. To pretend to holiness when there is none is a vain thing. What were the foolish virgins better for their blazing lamps, when they wanted oil? What is the lamp of profession without the oil of saving grace? What comfort will a show of holiness yield at last? Will painted gold enrich? painted wine refresh him that is thirsty? or painted holiness be a cordial at the hour of death? A pretence of sanctification is not to be rested in. Many ships, that have had the name of the Hope, the Safeguard, the Triumph, have been east away upon rocks; so, many who have had the name of saints, have been east into hell.

(4.) The fourth counterfeit of sanctification is restraining grace, when men forbear vice, though they do not hate it. This may be the sinner's motto, 'Fain I would, but I dare not.' The dog has a mind to the bone, but is afraid of the cudgel; so men have a mind to lust, but conscience stands as the angel, with a flaming sword, and affrights: they have a mind to revenge, but the fear of hell is a curb-bit to check them. There is no change of heart; sin is curbed, but not cured. A lion may be in chains, but is a lion still.

(5.) The fifth counterfeit of sanctification is common grace, which is a slight, transient work of the Spirit, but does not amount to conversion. There is some light in the judgment, but it is not humbling; some cheeks in the conscience, but they are not awakening. This looks like sanctification, but is not. Men have convictions wrought in them, but they break loose from them again, like the deer, which, being shot, shakes out the arrow. After conviction, men go into the house of mirth, take the harp to drive away the spirit of sadness, and so all dies and comes to nothing.

Wherein appears the necessity of sanctification?

In six things: (1.) God has called us to it. 'Who hath called us to glory and virtue; 2 Pet i 3; to virtue, as well as glory. 'God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness.' I Thess iv 7. We have no call to sin, we may have a temptation, but no call; no call to be proud, or unclean; but we have a call to be holy.

(2.) Without sanctification there is no evidencing our justification. Justification and sanctification go together. 'But ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.' I Cor vi 11. 'Pardoning iniquity,' Mic vii 18; there is justification. 'He will subdue our iniquities, v 19; there is sanctification. 'Out of Christ's side came blood and water,' John xix 34; blood for justification; water for sanctification. Such as have not the water out of Christ's side to cleanse them, shall never have the blood out of his side to save them.

(3.) Without sanctification we have no title to the new covenant. The covenant of grace is our charter for heaven. The tenure of the covenant is, That God will be our God. But who are interested in the covenant, and may plead the benefit of it? Sanctified persons only. 'A new heart will I give you, and I will put my Spirit within you, and I will be your God.'

Ezek xxxvi 26. If a man makes a will, none but such persons as are named in the will can lay claim to the will; so God makes a will and testament, but it is restrained and limited to such as are sanctified; and it is high presumption for any one else to lay claim to the will.

(4.) There is no going to heaven without sanctification. 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' Heb xii 14. God is a holy God, and he will suffer no unholy creature to come near him. A king will not suffer a man with plague-sores to approach into his presence. Heaven is not like Noah's ark, where the clean beasts and the unclean entered. No unclean beasts come into the heavenly ark; for though God suffer the wicked to live awhile on the earth, he will never suffer heaven to be pestered with such vermin. Are they fit to see God who wallow in wickedness? Will God ever lay such vipers in his bosom? 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' It must be a clear eye that sees a bright object: only a

holy heart can see God in his glory. Sinners may see God as an enemy, but not as a friend; may have an affrighting vision of him, but not a beatific vision; they may see the flaming sword, but not the mercy-seat. Oh then, what need is there of sanctification!

(5.) Without sanctification all our holy things are defiled. 'Unto them that are defiled is nothing pure.' Tit i 15. Under the law, if a man who was unclean by a dead body carried a piece of holy flesh in his skirt, the holy flesh would not cleanse him, but it would be polluted by him. Hag ii 12, 13. This is an emblem of a sinner's polluting his holy offering. A foul stomach turns the best food into ill humours; so an unsanctified heart pollutes prayers, alms, sacraments. This evinces the necessity of sanctification. Sanctification makes our holy things accepted. A holy heart is the altar which sanctifies the offering; if not to satisfaction, to acceptance.

(6.) Without sanctification we can show no sign of our election. 2 Thess ii 13. Election is the cause of our salvation, sanctification is our evidence. Sanctification is the earmark of Christ's elect sheep.

What are the signs of sanctification?

First, such as are sanctified can remember a time when they were unsanctified. Tit iii 3. We were in our blood, and then God washed us with water, and anointed us with oil. Ezek xvi 9. Those trees of righteousness that blossom and bear almonds, can remember when they were like Aaron's dry rod, not one blossom of holiness growing. A sanctified soul can remember when it was estranged from God through ignorance and vanity, and when free grace planted this flower of holiness in it.

A second sign of sanctification is the indwelling of the Spirit. 'The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.' 2 Tim i 14. As the unclean spirit dwells in the wicked and carries them to pride, lust, revenge the devil enters into these swine, Acts v 3 - so the Spirit of God dwells in the elect, as their guide and comforter. The Spirit possesses the saints. God's Spirit sanctifies the fancy, causing it to mint holy thoughts; and sanctifies the will by putting a new bias upon it, whereby it is inclined to good. He who is sanctified has the influence of the Spirit, though not the essence.

A third sign of sanctification is an antipathy against sin. Psa cxix 104. A hypocrite may leave sin, yet love it; as a serpent casts its coat, but keeps its sting; but a sanctified person can say he not only leaves sin, but loathes it. As there are antipathies in nature between the vine and laurel, so in a sanctified soul there is a holy antipathy against sin; and antipathies can never be reconciled. Because a

man has an antipathy against sin, he cannot but oppose it, and seek the destruction of it.

A fourth sign of sanctification is the spiritual performance of duties, with the heart, and from a principle of love. The sanctified soul prays out of a love to prayer, and 'calls the Sabbath a delight.' Isa lviii 13. A man may have gifts to admiration; he may speak as an angel dropped out of heaven, yet he may be carnal in spiritual things; his services may not come from a renewed principle, nor be carried upon the wings of delight in duty. A sanctified soul worships God in the Spirit. I Pet ii 5. God judges not of our duties by their length, but by the love from which they spring.

A fifth sign is a well-ordered life. 'Be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' I Pet i 15. Where the heart is sanctified the life will be so too. The temple had gold without as well as within. As in a piece of coin there is not only the king's image within the ring, but his superscription without; so where there is sanctification, there is not only God's image in the heart, but a superscription of holiness written in the life. Some say they have good hearts, but their lives are vicious. 'There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.' Prov XXX 12. If the water be foul in the bucket, it cannot be clean in the well. 'The king's daughter is all glorious within.' Psa xlv 13, There is holiness of heart. 'Her clothing is of wrought gold.' There is holiness of life. Grace is most beautiful when its light so shines that others may see it; this adorns religion, and makes proselytes to the faith

A sixth sign is steadfast resolution. He is resolved never to part with his holiness. Let others reproach it, he loves it the more. Let water be sprinkled on the fire, it burns the more. He says, as David, when Michal reproached him for dancing before the ark, 'If this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile.' 2 Sam vi 22. Let others persecute him for his holiness, he says as Paul, 'None of these things move me.' Acts XX 24. He prefers sanctity before safety, and had rather keep his conscience pure than his skin whole. He says as Job, 'My integrity I will hold fast, and not let it go,' xxvii 6. He will rather part with his life than his conscience.

Use one: The main thing a Christian should look after is sanctification. This is the *unuin necessarium*, 'the one thing needful.' Sanctification is our purest complexion, it makes us as the heaven, bespangled with stars; it is our nobility, by it we are born of God, and partake of the divine nature; it is our riches, therefore compared to rows of jewels, and chains of gold. Cant i 10. It is our best certificate for heaven. What evidence have we else to show? Have we knowledge? So has the devil. Do we profess religion? Satan often appears in Samuel's mantle, and transforms himself into an angel of light. But our certificate for heaven is sanctification. Sanctification is the firstfruits of the Spirit; the only coin that will pass current in the other world. Sanctification is the evidence of

God's love. We cannot know God's love by giving us health, riches, success; but by drawing his image of sanctification on us by the pencil of the Holy Ghost it is known.

Oh the misery of such as are destitute of a principle of sanctification They are spiritually dead. Eph ii 1. Though they breathe, yet they do not live. The greatest part of the world remains unsanctified. 'The world lies in wickedness.' I John v 19. That is, the major part of the world. Many call themselves Christians, but blot out the word saints. You may as well call him a man who wants reason, as him a Christian who wants grace. Nay, which is worse, some are buoyed up to such a height of wickedness, that they hate and deride sanctification. They hate it. It is bad to want it, it is worse to hate it. They embrace the form of religion, but hate the power. The vulture hates sweet smells, so do they the perfumes of holiness. They say in derision, These are your holy ones! To deride sanctification argues a high degree of atheism, and is a black brand of reprobation. Scoffing Ishmael was cast out of Abraham's family, Gen xxi 9; and such as scoff at holiness shall be cast out of heaven.

Use two: Above all things pursue after sanctification. Seek grace more than gold. 'Keep her, for she is thy life.' Prov iv 13.

What are the chief inducements to sanctification?

(1.) It is the will of God that we should be holy, as saith the text, 'This is the will of God, your sanctification.' As God's word must be the rule, so his will, the reason of our actions. This is the will of God, our sanctification. Perhaps it is not the will of God we should be rich, but it is his will that we should be holy. God's will is our warrant.

(2.) Jesus Christ has died for our sanctification. Christ shed his blood to wash off our impurity. The cross was both an altar and a laver. 'Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity.' Tit ii 14. If we could be saved without holiness, Christ needed not have died. Christ died, not only to save us from wrath, but from sin.

(3.) Sanctification makes us resemble God. It was Adam's sin that he aspired to be like God in omniscience, but we must endeavour to be like him in sanctity. It is a clear glass in which we can see a face; it is a holy heart in which something of God can be seen. Nothing of God can be seen in an unsanctified man, but you may see Satan's picture in him. Envy is the devil's eye, hypocrisy his cloven foot; but nothing of God's Image can be seen in him.

(4.) Sanctification is that which God bears a great love to. Not any outward ornaments, high blood, or worldly grandeur, draws God's love, but a heart

embellished with holiness does. Christ never admired anything but the beauty of holiness: he slighted the glorious buildings of the temple, but admired the woman's faith, and said, 'O woman, great is thy faith.' *Amor fundatur similitudine*. As a king delights to see his image upon a piece of coin, so where God sees his likeness he gives his love. The Lord has two heavens to dwell in, and the holy heart is one of them.

(5.) Sanctification is the only thing that makes us differ from the wicked. God's people have his seal upon them. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' 2 Tim ii 19. The godly are sealed with a double seal, a seal of election, 'The Lord knoweth who are his,' and a seal of sanctification, 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' This is the name by which God's people are known, 'The people of thy holiness.' Isa lxii 18. As chastity distinguishes a virtuous woman from a harlot, so sanctification distinguishes God's people from others. 'Ye have received an unction from the Holy One.' I John ii 20.

(6.) It is as great a shame to have the name of a Christian, yet want sanctity, as to have the name of a steward and want fidelity; or the name of a virgin, and want chastity. It exposes religion to reproach, to be baptized into the name of Christ while unholy, and to have eyes full of tears on a sabbath, and on a week-day eyes full of adultery: 2 Pet ii 14; to be so devout at the Lord's table, as if men were stepping into heaven, and so profane the week after, as if they came out of hell; to have the name of Christians while unholy is a scandal to religion, and makes the ways of God evil spoken of.

(7.) Sanctification fits for heaven: 'Who hath called us to glory and virtue.' 2 Pet i 3. Glory is the throne, and sanctification is the step by which we ascend to it. As you first cleanse the vessel, and then pour in the wine; so God first cleanses us by sanctification, and then pours in the wine of glory. Solomon was first anointed with oil, and then was a king. I Kings i 39. First God anoints us with the holy oil of his Spirit, and then sets the crown of happiness Upon our head. Pureness of heart and seeing God are linked together. Matt v 8.

How may sanctification be attained?

(1.) Be conversant in the word of God. 'Sanctify them through thy truth.' John xvii 17. The word is both a glass to show us the spots of our soul, and a laver to wash them away. The word has a transforming virtue in it; it irradiates the mind, and consecrates the heart.

(2.) Get faith in Christ's blood. 'Having purified their hearts by faith.' Acts xv 9. She in the gospel who touched the hem of Christ's garment was healed. A touch

of faith purifies. Nothing can have a greater force upon the heart, to sanctify it, than faith. If I believe Christ and his merits are mine, how can I sin against him? Justifying faith does that in a spiritual sense which miraculous faith does, it removes mountains, the mountains of pride, lust, envy. Faith and the love of sin are inconsistent.

(3.) Breathe after the Spirit. It is called 'the sanctification of the Spirit.' 2 Thess ii 13. The Spirit sanctifies the heart, as lightning purifies the air, and as fire refines metals. *Omne agens generat sibi simile* [The Spirit at work generates its own likeness everywhere.] The Spirit stamps the impression of its own sanctity upon the heart, as the seal prints its likeness upon the wax. The Spirit of God in a man perfumes him with holiness, and makes his heart a map of heaven.

(4.) Associate with sanctified persons. They may, by their counsel, prayers, and holy example, be a means to make you holy. As the communion of saints is in our creed, so it should be in our company. 'He that walketh with the wise shall be wise.' Prov xiii 20. Association begets assimilation.

(5.) Pray for sanctification. Job propounds a question. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' Job xiv 4. God can do it. Out of an unholy heart he can produce grace. Oh! make David's prayer your own', Create in me a clean heart, O God.' Psa li 10. Lay thy heart before the Lord, and say, Lord, my unsanctified heart pollutes all it touches. I am not fit to live with such a heart, for I cannot honour thee; nor die with such a heart, for I cannot see thee. Oh create in me a new heart! Lord, consecrate my heart, and make it thy temple, and thy praises shall be sung there for ever.

Use three: Has God brought a clean thing out of an unclean? has he sanctified you? Wear this jewel of sanctification with thankfulness. 'Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance,' &c Col i 12. Christian, thou couldst defile thyself, but not sanctify thyself; but God has done it, he has not only chained up sin, but changed thy nature, and made thee as a king's daughter, all glorious within. He has put upon thee the breastplate of holiness, which, though it may be shot at, can never be shot through. Are there any here that are sanctified? God has done more for you than millions, who may be illumined, but are not sanctified. He has done more for you than if he had made you the sons of princes, and caused you to ride upon the high places of the earth. Are you sanctified? Heaven is begun in you; for happiness is nothing but the quintessence of holiness. Oh, how thankful should you be to God! Do as that blind man in the gospel did after he had received his sight, who 'followed Christ, glorifying God.' Luke xviii 43. Make heaven ring with God's praises.

From *A Body of Divinity*, published by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

Peace

Grace unto you and peace be multiplied. I Pet 1: 2.

Having spoken of the first fruit of sanctification, assurance, I proceed to the second, viz., Peace, 'Peace be multiplied.'

What are the several species or kinds of Peace?

Peace, in Scripture, is compared to a river which parts itself into two silver streams. Isa 66: 12.

I. There is an external peace, and that is, (I.) (Economical, or peace in a family. (2.) Political, or peace in the state. Peace is the nurse of plenty. 'He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.' Psa 147: 14. How pleasant it is when the waters of blood begin to assuage, and we can see the windows of our ark open, and the dove returning with an olive branch of peace! (3.) Ecclesiastical, or peace in the church. As unity in Trinity is the greatest mystery in heaven, unity in verity is the greatest mercy on earth. Peace ecclesiastical stands in opposition to schism and persecution.

II. A spiritual peace, which is twofold; peace above us, or peace with God; and peace within us, or peace with conscience, which is superlative: other peace may be lasting, but this is everlasting.

Whence comes this Peace?

It has the whole Trinity for its author. God the Father is 'the God of peace.' I Thess 5: 23. God the Son is the 'Prince of peace.' Isa 9: 6. Peace is said to be the 'fruit of the Spirit.' Gal 5: 22.

(I.) God the Father is the God of peace. As he is the God of order, so he is the God of peace. I Cor 14: 33, and Phil 4: 9. This was the form of the priest's blessing upon the people. 'The Lord give thee peace.' Numb 6: 26.

(2.) God the Son is the purchaser of peace. He made peace by his blood. 'Having made peace by the blood of his cross.' Col 1: 20. The atonement Aaron made for the people, when he entered into the holy of holies, with blood, was a type of Christ our high priest, who by his sacrifice pacified his angry Father, and made

atonement for us. Christ purchased our peace upon hard terms; for his soul was in an agony, while he was travailing to bring forth peace to the world.

(3.) Peace is a fruit of the Spirit. He seals up peace to the conscience. The Spirit clears up the work of grace in the heart, from whence arises peace. There was a well of water near Hagar, but she did not see it, therefore she wept. A Christian has grace, but does not see it, therefore he weeps. Now the Spirit discovers this well of water, it enables conscience to witness to a man that has the real work of grace, and so peace flows into the soul. Thus you see whence this peace comes - the Father decrees it, the Son purchases it, the Holy Ghost applies it.

Whether such as are destitute of grace may have peace?

No! Peace flows from sanctification, but they being unregenerate, have nothing to do with peace. 'There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked.' Isa 57: 2I. They may have a truce, but no peace. God may forbear the wicked a while, and stop the roaring of his cannon; but though there be a truce, yet there is no peace. The wicked may have something which looks like peace, but it is not. They may be fearless and stupid; but there is a great difference between a stupified conscience, and a pacified conscience. 'When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.' Luke 11: 2I. This is the devil's peace; he rocks men in the cradle of security; he cries, Peace, peace, when men are on the precipice of hell. The seeming peace a sinner has, is not from the knowledge of his happiness, but the ignorance of his danger.

What are the signs of a false peace?

(I.) A false peace has much confidence in it, but this confidence is conceit. The sinner does not doubt of God's mercy; and from this presumptuous confidence arises some kind of quiet in the mind. The same word in the Hebrew, *cassal*, signifies both confidence and folly. Indeed a sinner's confidence is folly. How confident were the foolish virgins!

(2.) False peace separates those things which God has joined together. God joins holiness and peace, but he who has a false peace, separates the two. He lays claim to peace, but banishes holiness. 'I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.' Deut 29: 19. The wicked are loose and vain, and yet thank God that they have peace, what a delusion! You may as well suck health out of poison, as peace out of sin.

(3.) False peace is not willing to be tried. It is a sign they are bad wares which will not endure the light; a sign a man has stolen goods, when he will not have his house searched. A false peace cannot endure to be tried by the word. The word speaks of a humbling and refining work upon the soul before peace; but

false peace cannot endure to hear of this. The least trouble will shake this peace; it will end in despair. In a false peace, conscience is asleep; but when this lion of conscience shall be awakened at death, it will roar upon a man; he will be a terror to himself, and be ready to lay violent hands upon himself.

How shall we know that ours is a true peace?

(1.) True peace flows from union with Christ. *Communio fundatur in unione*. The graft or scion must first be inoculated into the tree before it can receive sap or nourishment from it; so we must first be ingrafted into Christ, before we can receive peace from him. Have we faith? By holiness we are made like Christ; by believing we are made one with Christ, and being in Christ we have peace. John 16: 33.

(2.) True peace flows from subjection to Christ. Where Christ gives peace, there he sets up his government in the heart. 'Of his government and peace there shall be no end.' Isa 9: 7. Christ is called 'a priest upon his throne.' Zech 6: 13. Christ as a priest makes peace; but he will be a priest upon his throne - he brings the heart in subjection to him. If Christ be our peace, he is our prince. Isa 9: 6. Whenever Christ pacifies the conscience, he subdues the lust.

(3.) True peace is after trouble. First, God lets loose a spirit of bondage, he convinces and humbles the soul; then he speaks peace. Many say they have peace, but is this peace before a storm, or after it? True peace is after trouble. First there was the earthquake, and then the fire, and then the still small voice. I Kings 19: 12. Thou who never hadst any legal bruising, mayest suspect thy peace. God pours the golden oil of peace into broken hearts.

Have all sanctified persons this peace?

They have a title to it; they have the ground of it; grace is the seed of peace, and it will in time turn to peace; as the blossoms of a tree to fruit, milk to cream. They have a promise of it. 'The Lord will bless his people with peace.' Psalm 29: 11. They may have peace with God, though not peace in their own conscience; they have the initials and beginnings of peace. There is a secret peace which the heart has in serving God; such meltings and enlargements in duty as revive the soul, and bear it up from sinking.

But why have not all believers the full enjoyment and possession of peace? Why is not this flower of peacefully ripe and blown?

Some of the godly may not have so full a degree of peace. (I.) Through the fury of temptation, though the devil cannot destroy us, he will disturb us. He disputes against our adoption; he would make us question the work of grace in our hearts, and so disturb the waters of our peace. He is like a subtle cheater, who,

if he cannot make a man's title to his land void, yet will put him to many troublesome suits in law. If Satan cannot make us ungodly, he will make us unquiet. Violent winds make the sea rough and stormy; so the winds of temptation blowing, disturb peace of spirit, and put the soul into a commotion.

(2.) The godly may not enjoy peace, through mistake and misapprehension about sin. They find so much corruption, that they think sure, if there were grace, there would not be such strong working of corruption; whereas this should be so far from discouraging Christians, and hindering their peace, that it is an argument for them. Let me ask, Whence is it that you feel sin? No man can feel sin, but by grace. A wicked man is insensible. Lay a hundredweight upon a dead man, he does not complain; but being sensible of corruption, argues a gracious principle. Rom 7: 21. Again, Whence is it that there is a combat with sin, but from the life of grace? Gal 5: 17. Dead things cannot combat. Whence is it that the saints weep for sin? What are these tears but seeds of faith? The not understanding of this hinders a Christian's peace.

(3.) The godly may not enjoy peace, through remissness in duty: they may leave their first love. When Christians abate their fervency, God abates their peace. If you slacken the strings of a viol, the music is spoiled; so, if Christians slack in duty, they spoil the sweet music of peace in their souls. As the fire decays, the cold increases; so, as fervency in duty abates, our peace cools.

Use one: Labour for this blessed peace - peace with God and conscience. Peace with neighbour-nations is sweet. Pax una triumphis innumeris melior [One peace is better than innumerable triumphs]. The Hebrew word shalom, peace, comprehends all blessings; it is the glory of a kingdom. A prince's crown is more beautiful, when it is hung with the white lily of peace, than when it is set with the red roses of a bloody war. Oh, then, how sweet is peace of conscience! It is a bulwark against the enemy. Phil 4: 7. It shall keep you as in a garrison; you may throw down the gauntlet, and bid defiance to enemies. It is the golden pot and the manna. It is the first fruits of paradise. It is still music, for want of which a Christian is in continual fear, and does not take comfort in ordinances. Hannah went up to the feast at Jerusalem, but she wept and did not eat. I Sam 1: 7; so, a poor dejected soul goes to an ordinance, but does not eat of the feast; he weeps and does not eat. He cannot take comfort in worldly blessings, health, estate, relations; he wants that inward peace, which should be a sauce to sweeten his comforts. Oh, therefore, labour for this blessed peace. Consider its noble and excellent effects. (I.) It gives boldness at the throne of grace. Guilt of conscience clips the wings of prayer, it makes the face blush, and the heart faint; but when a Christian has some lively apprehensions of God's love, and the Spirit whispers peace, he goes to God with boldness, as a child to his father. 'Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.' Psa 25: 1: Time was when David's soul was bowed down. 'I am bowed down greatly.' Psa 38: 6. Now the case is altered he

will lift up his soul to God in a way of triumph. Whence was this? God has spoken peace to his soul. 'Thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes.' Psa 26: 3. (2.) This divine peace fires the heart with love to Christ. Peace is the result of pardon. He who has a pardon sealed, cannot choose but love his prince. How endeared is Christ to the soul! Now Christ is precious indeed. 'Oh,' says the soul, 'how sweet is this rose of Sharon! Has Christ waded through a sea of blood and wrath, to purchase my peace? Has he not only made peace, but spoken peace to me? How should my heart ascend in a fiery chariot of love! How willing should I be to do and suffer for Christ!' (3.) This peace quiets the heart in trouble. 'This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces.' Mic 5: s. The enemy may invade our palaces, but not our peace: this man Christ shall be the peace. When the head aches, the heart may be well; and when worldly troubles assault a Christian, his mind may be in peace and quiet. 'I will lay me down in peace, and sleep.' Psa 4: 8. It was a sad time with David, he was fleeing for his life from Absalom; it was no small affliction to think that his own son should seek to take away his father's life and crown. David wept and covered his head. 2 Sam 15: 30. Yet at this time he says, 'I will lay me down in peace, and sleep.' He had trouble from his son, but peace from his conscience. David could sleep upon the soft pillow of a good conscience. This is a peace worth getting.

What shall we do to attain this blessed peace?

(I.) Let us ask it of God. He is the God of peace; he beats back the roaring lion; he stills the raging of conscience: if we could call all the angels out of heaven, they could not speak peace without God. The stars cannot make day without the sun; none can make day in a dark deserted soul, but the Sun of Righteousness. As the wilderness cannot water itself, but remains dry and parched till the clouds drop their moisture, so our hearts cannot have peace till he infuse it, and drop it upon us by his Spirit. Therefore pray, 'Lord, thou who art the God of peace, create peace; thou who art the Prince of peace, command it. Give me that peace which may sweeten trouble, yea, even the bitter cup of death.'

(2.) If you would have peace, make war with sin. Sin is the Achan that troubles us, the Trojan horse. 'When Joram saw Jehu, he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?' 2 Kings 9: 22. What peace, so long as sin remains unmortified? If you would have peace with God, break the league with sin; give battle to sin, for it is a most just war. God has proclaimed it: nay, he has promised us victory. 'Sin shall not have dominion.' Rom 6: 14. No way to peace, but by maintaining a war with sin. Pax nostra bellum contra daemonem [Our peace is a war against the Devil]. Tertullian. When Samson had slain the lion, there came honey out of the lion; so by slaying sin, we get the honey of peace.

(3.) Go to Christ's blood for peace. Some go to fetch their peace from their own righteousness, not Christ's: they go for peace to their holy life, not Christ's death. If conscience be troubled, they strive to quiet it with their duties. This is not the right way to peace. Duties must not be neglected, nor yet idolized. Look to the blood of sprinkling. Heb 12: 24. That blood of Christ which pacified God, must pacify conscience. Christ's blood being sucked in by faith, gives peace. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' Rom 5: 1: No balm to cure a wounded conscience, but the blood of Christ.

(4.) Walk closely with God. Peace flows from purity. 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them.' Gal 6: 16. In the text, grace and peace are put together; grace is the root, and peace is the flower. As balmwater drops in distillation, so divine peace comes out of a gracious heart. Walk very holily. God's Spirit is a refiner before a comforter.

Use two: You who have this peace, peace above, peace within, labour to keep it: it is a precious jewel, do not lose it. It is sad to have the league of national peace broken, but it is worse to have the peace of conscience broken. Oh, preserve this peace! First, take heed of relapses. Has God spoken peace? Do not turn again to folly. Psa 85: 8. Besides ingratitude, there is folly in relapses. It was long ere God was reconciled and the breach made up, and will you again eclipse and forfeit your peace? Has God healed the wound of conscience, and will you tear it open again? Will you break another vein? Will you cut a new artery? This is returning indeed to folly. What madness is it to meddle again with that sin, which will breed the worm of conscience! Secondly, make up your spiritual accounts daily; see how matters stand between God and your souls. 'I commune with my own heart.' Psa 77: 6. Often reckonings keep God and conscience friends. Do with your hearts as you do with your watches, wind them up every morning by prayer, and at night examine whether your hearts have gone true all that day, whether the wheels of your affections have moved swiftly towards heaven. Oh, call yourselves often to account! Keep your reckonings even, for that is the way to keep your peace.

From *A Body of Divinity*, published by Banner of Truth Trust.

A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson

A Believer's Privilege At Death

'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' Phil 1: 21.

Hope is a Christian's anchor, which he casts within the veil. 'Rejoicing in hope.' Rom 12: 12. A Christian's hope is not in this life, but he 'hash hope in his death.' Prov 14: 32. The best of a saint's comfort begins when his life ends; but the wicked have all their heaven here. 'Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.' Luke 6: 24. You may make your acquittance, and write 'Received in full payment.' 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' Luke 16: 25. But a saint's happiness is in reversion. 'The righteous has hope in his death.' God keeps the best wine till last. If Cato, the heathen, said, 'To me to die is gain:' he saw mortality to be a mercy: what, then, may a believer say! 'The day of death is better than the day of one's birth.' Eccl 7: 1: A queen of this land said she preferred her coffin before her cradle.

What benefits do believers receive at death?

I. The saints, at death, have great immunities and freedoms. An apprentice, when out of his time, is made free: so, when the saints are out of their time of living, they are made free! they are not made free till death. [I] At death they are freed from a body of sin. There are in the best reliquiae peccati [the remnants of sin], some remainders and relics of corruption. 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' Rom 7: 24. By the body of death is meant the congeries, the mass and lump of sin. It may well be called a body for its weightiness, and a body of death for its noisomeness. (I.) It weighs us down. Sin hinders us from doing good. A Christian - like a bird that would be flying up, but has a string tied to its legs to hinder it - would be flying up to heaven with the wings of desire, but sin hinders him. 'The good that I would, I do not.' Rom 7: 19. He is like a ship under sail, and at anchor! grace would sail forward, but sin is the anchor that holds it back. (2.) Sin is more active in its sphere than grace. How stirring was lust in David, when his grace lay dormant! (3.) Sin sometimes gets the mastery, and leads a saint captive. 'The evil that I would not, that I do.' Rom 7: 19. Paul was like a man carried down the stream, and could not bear up against it. How often is a child of God overpowered with pride and passion! Therefore Paul calls sin a law in his members. Rom 7: 23. It binds as a law; it has a kind of jurisdiction over the soul, as Caesar had over the senate. (4.) Sin defiles the soul; like a stain to beauty, it turns the soul's azure brightness into sable. (5.) Sin debilitates us, disarms us of our strength. 'I am this day weak, though anointed king.' 2 Sam 3: 39. Though a saint be crowned with grace, and anointed a spiritual king, he is weak. (6.) Sin is ever restless. 'The flesh lusts against the spirit.' Gal 5: 17. It is an inmate that is always quarrelling; like Marcellus, that Roman captain, of whom Hannibal said, whether he beat or was beaten, he would never be quiet. (7.) Sin adheres to us, we cannot get rid of it. It may be compared to a wild fig-tree growing on a wall, the roots of which are pulled up, but some fibres of it are left in the joints of the stone-work, which cannot be got out. (8.) Sin mingles with our duties and graces. It makes a child of God weary of his life, and makes him water his couch

with his tears, to think that sin is so strong a party, and he often offends the God he loves. This made Paul cry out, Miser ego homo! 'O wretched man that I am!' He did not cry out for his affliction, or his prison-chain, but for the body of sin. Now a believer at death is freed from sin, he is not taken away in, but from his sins; he shall never have a vain, proud thought more; he shall never grieve the Spirit of God any more. Sin brought death into the world, and death shall carry sin out of the world. The Persians had a certain day in the year in which they killed all serpents and venomous creatures; such a day will the day of death be to a believer; it will destroy all his sins, which, like so many serpents, have stung him. Death smites a believer as the angel did Peter, and made his chains fall off. Acts 12: 7. Believers at death are made perfect in holiness. 'The spirits of just men made perfect.' Heb 12: 23. At death the souls of believers recover their virgin purity. Oh! what a blessed privilege is this, to be sine macula et ruga, without spot or wrinkle; to be purer than the sunbeams; to be as free from sin as the angels! Eph 5: 27. This makes a believer desirous to have his passport and to be gone; he would fain live in that pure air where no black vapours of sin arise.

[2] At death the saints shall be freed from all the troubles and incumbrances to which this life is subject. 'Sin is the seed sown, and trouble is the harvest reaped.' Euripides. Life and trouble are married together. There is more in life to wean us than to tempt us. Parents divide a portion of sorrow to their children, and yet leave enough for themselves. 'Man is born to trouble;' he is heir to it, it is his birth-right; you may as well separate weight from lead, as trouble from the life of man. Job 5: 7. King Henry's emblem was a crown hung in a bush of thorns. There is a far greater proportion of bitterness than pleasure in this life. 'I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.' Prov 7: 17. For one sweet ingredient there were two bitter; for the cinnamon, there were myrrh and aloes. A man's grace will not exempt him from troubles. 'Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.' Gen 47: 9. Thus said a godly patriarch, though he had met with God. He named 'the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face:' Gen 32: 30; and yet he had his troubles. There are many things to imbitter life and cause trouble, but death frees us from all. (I.) Care. The mind is full of perplexed thoughts, how to bring about such a design; how to prevent such an evil. The Greek word for care comes from a primitive in the Greek, that signifies, To cut the heart in pieces. Care excruciates the mind; wastes the spirits. No such bitter bread as the bread of carefulness. Ezek 12: 19. Care is a spiritual canker, which eats out the comfort of life: death | is its only cure. (2.) Fear. Fear is the ague of the soul, which sets it shaking. 'There is torment in fear.' I John 4: 18. Fear is like Prometheus's vulture gnawing the heart. There is a mistrustful fear, a fear of want; and a distracting fear, a fear of danger; and a discouraging fear, a fear God does not love us. These fears leave sad impressions upon the mind. At death a believer is freed from these torturing fears; he is as far from fear as the damned are from hope. The grave buries a

Christian's fear. (3.) Labour. 'All things are full of labour.' Eccl 1: 8. Some labour in the mine, others among the Muses. God has made a law, 'In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread;' but death gives a believer a quietus; it takes him off from his day-labour. 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord: they rest from their labours.' Rev 14: 13. What needs working, when they have their reward? What needs fighting, when the crown is set on their head? 'They rest from their labours.' (4.) Suffering. Believers are as a lily among thorns; as the dove among birds of prey. The wicked have an antipathy against them; and secret hatred will break forth into open violence. 'He that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit.' Gal 4: 29. The dragon is described with seven heads and ten horns. Rev 12: 3. He plotteth with the one, and pusheth with the other. But at death the godly shall be freed from the molestations of the wicked, they shall never more be pestered with these vermin. 'There (viz. in the grave) the wicked cease from troubling.' Job 3: 17. Death does to a believer, as Joseph of Arimathaea did to Christ, it takes him down from the cross, and gives him a writ of ease. The eagle that flies high, cannot be stung with the serpent. Death gives the soul the wings of an eagle, to fly above all the venomous serpents here below. (5.) Temptation. Though Satan be a conquered enemy, yet he is a restless enemy. I Pet 5: 8. He walketh about; he is always going about his diocese; he has his snares and his darts; one he tempts with riches, another with beauty. It is no small trouble to be continually followed with temptations; it is as bad as for a virgin to have her chastity daily assaulted; but death will free a child of God from temptation, so that he shall never be vexed more with the old serpent. After death has shot its dart, the devil will have done shooting his. Grace puts a believer out of the devil's possession, but death only frees him from the devil's temptation. (6.) Sorrow. A cloud of sorrow often gathers in the heart, and drops into tears. 'My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing.' Psa 31: 10. It was part of the curse, 'In sorrow thou shalt bring forth.' Gen 3: 16. Many things occasion sorrow: sickness, law-suits, treachery of friends, disappointment of hopes, and loss of estate. 'Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: I went out full, and the Lord has brought me home again empty.' Ruth 1: 20, 21. Sorrow is the evil spirit that haunts us. The world is a Bochim. Judges 2: 4. Rachel wept for her children: some grieve that they have no children, and others grieve that their children are undutiful. Thus we spend our years with sighing: it is a valley of tears; but death is the funeral of all our sorrows. 'And God shall wipe away all tears.' Rev 7: 17. Then Christ's spouse puts off her mourning; for how can the children of the bridechamber mourn, when the bridegroom is with them? Matt 9: 15. Thus death gives a believer his quietus; it frees him from sin and trouble. Though the apostle calls death the last enemy, I Cor 15: 26, yet it is the best friend. 'To me to die is gain.'

See here that which may make a true saint willing to die. Death will set him out of gunshot, and free him from sin and trouble. There is no cause for weeping to leave a valley of tears - a stage on which sin and misery are acted. Believers are

here in a strange country, why then should they not be willing to go out of it? Death beats off their fetters of sin, and sets them free. Who goes weeping from a gaol? Besides our own sins, there are the sins of others. The world is a place where Satan's seat is; a place where we see God daily dishonoured. Lot, who was a bright star in a dark night, felt his righteous soul vexed with the unclean conversation of the wicked. 2 Pet 2: 7. To see God's Sabbaths broken, his truths adulterated, his glory eclipsed, wounds a godly heart. It made David cry out, 'Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar.' Psa 120: 5. Kedar was Arabia, where were Ishmael's posterity. It was a cut to David's heart to dwell there. O then be willing to depart out of the tents of Kedar.

II. The bodies of believers are united to Christ in the grave, and shall rest there till the resurrection. They are said to sleep in Jesus. I Thess 4: 14. The dust of believers is part of Christ's mystic body. The grave is a dormitory or place of rest to the saints, where their bodies quietly sleep in Christ, till they are awakened out of their sleep by the trumpet of the archangel.

How shall we know that at death we shall be freed from sin and trouble, and have our bodies united to Christ in the grave?

'To me,' says Paul, 'to die is gain;' to me, quatenus a believer [insofar as I am a believer]. Are we such? Have we this blessed faith? Faith, wherever it is, is operative. Lapidaries say there is no precious stone but has virtutem insitam, some hidden virtue in it: so I may say of faith, it has some secret virtue in it; it anchors the soul on Christ; it has both a justifying and sanctifying virtue; it fetches blood out of Christ's side to pardon, and water out of his side to purge; it works by love; it constrains to duty; it makes the head study for Christ, the tongue confess him, and the hands work for him. I have read of a father who had three sons, and left in his will all his estate to that son who could find his ring with the jewel which had a healing virtue. The case was brought before the judges; the two elder sons counterfeited a ring, but the younger son brought the true ring, which was proved by the virtue of it, whereupon his father's estate went to him. To this ring I may compare faith. There is a counterfeit faith in the world: but if we can find this ring of faith which has the healing virtue in it to purify the heart, it is the true faith which gives us an interest in Christ, and entitles us to all these privileges at death, to be freed from sin and sorrow, and to have our bodies united to Christ, while they are in the grave.

III. At death the souls of believers pass into glory. Death brings malorum omnium ademptionem; omnium adeptionem [Death brings the removal of all evils, and the attainment of all things]; it is the daybreak of eternal brightness. Here I shall lead you to the top of Mount Pisgah and give you a glimpse of the Holy Land.

What is comprehended in glory?

Glory is status omnium bonorum aggregatione perfectus [a state made perfect by the gathering together of everything good]. Boethius. It is a perfect state of bliss, which consists in the accumulation and heaping together all the good things of which immortal souls are capable. And truly here I am at a loss; for all I can say falls short of the celestial glory. Appelles' pencil cannot delineate it; angels' tongues cannot express it. We shall never understand glory fully till we are in heaven. Let me give you some dark views only, and some imperfect lineaments of that state of glory at which saints shall arrive after death.

[1] The first and most sublime part of the glory of heaven is the full and sweet fruition of God. Ipse Deus sufficit adpraemium. Augustine. We are apt to think the happiness of heaven is in being free from pain and misery; but the very essence of happiness is the enjoyment and fruition of God. God is an infinite inexhaustible fountain of joy; and to have him, is to have all. The enjoyment of God implies three things.

The enjoyment of God implies our seeing him. 'We shall see him as he is.' I John 3: 2. Here we see him as he is not; mutable, mortal: there as he is.

How shall we see God?

(1.) We shall see him intellectually, with the eyes of the mind. This divines call the beatific vision. We shall have a full knowledge of God, though not know him fully. If there were not such an intellectual sight of God, how could the spirits of just men made perfect see God? This sight of God will be very glorious; as when a king, on his coronation-day, shows himself in all his royalty and magnificence.

(2.) We shall corporally behold the glorified body of Jesus Christ. And if it be a pleasant thing to behold the sun, how blessed a sight will it be to behold the Sun of Righteousness! to see Christ clothed in our human nature, sitting in glory above the angels! Solomon says, 'The eye is not satisfied with seeing.' Eccl 1: 8. But surely the eyes of saints will be satisfied with seeing that orient brightness which shall shine from the beautiful body of Christ! It must needs be satisfying, because through Christ's flesh some rays and beams of the Godhead will gloriously display themselves. God's excellent majesty would overwhelm us; but through the veil of Christ's flesh we shall behold the divine glory.

(3.) Our seeing God will be transforming. We shall so see him, as to be in some measure assimilated and changed into his image. 'We shall be like him.' I John 3: 2. If, when Moses was with God on the Mount, and had but some imperfect sight of his glory, 'Moses' face shined,' Exod 34: 35, how shall the saints glorified shine, being always in God's presence, and having some beams of his glory put

upon them! 'We shall be like him.' One that is deformed may look on beauty, and not be made beautiful; but the saints shall so see God, as that sight shall transform them into his likeness. 'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.' Psa 17: 15. Not that the saints shall partake of God's essence; for as the iron in the fire is made fiery, yet remains iron still, so the saints, by beholding God's majesty, shall be made glorious creatures, but are creatures still.

(4.) Our seeing God in heaven will be without weariness. Let a man see the rarest sight that is, he will soon be cloyed; as when he comes into a garden, and sees delicious walks, fair arbours, pleasant flowers, within a little while he grows weary; but it is not so in heaven; there is no surfeit there; *ibi nec fames nec fastidium*. Bernard. The saints will never be weary of seeing God; for, God being infinite, there shall be every moment new and fresh delight springing from him into their souls.

The second thing implied in enjoying God, is loving him. It is a saint's grief that his heart is like the frozen ocean, and he can melt no more in love to God; but in heaven he shall be like the seraphims, burning with divine love. Love is a pleasant affection; 'fear has torment.' I John 4: 18. Love has joy in it. To love beauty is delightful. God's amazing beauty will attract the saints, love, and it will be their heaven to love him.

The third thing implied in enjoying God is God's loving us. Were there glory in God, yet, if there were not love, it would much eclipse the joys of heaven; but 'God is love.' I John 4: 16. The saints glorified cannot love so much as they are loved. What is their love to God's? What is their star to this Sun? God loves his people on earth, when they are black as well as comely. If now they have their imperfections, oh, how entirely will he love them when they are 'without spot or wrinkle!' Eph 5: 27.

This is the felicity of heaven, to be in the sweet embraces of God's love; to be the Hephzibah, the delight of the King of Glory; to be sunning ourselves in the light of God's countenance. Then the saints shall know that love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Eph 3: 19. From this glorious manifestation of God's love will flow infinite joy into the souls of the blessed; therefore heaven is called 'entering into the joy of our Lord,' Matt 25: 21. The seeing God, loving God, and being beloved of God will cause a jubilation of spirit, and create such holy raptures of joy in the saints, that are unspeakable and full of glory. I Pet 1: 8. *In Deo quodam dulcedine delectatur anima, imo rapitur* [There is a certain sweetness about God's person which delights, nay, rather, ravishes the soul]. Augustine. Now the saints spend their years with sighing; they weep over their sins and afflictions: then their water shall be turned into wine - the vessels of mercy shall be filled and run over with joy; they shall have their palmbranches and harps in their hand, in token of their triumphs and rejoicing. Rev 14: 2.

[2] The second thing comprehended in glory is the good society there. There are the angels. Every star adds to the light. Those blessed cherubims will welcome us to paradise. If the angels rejoiced at the conversion of the elect, how will they rejoice at their coronation! There is the company of the saints. 'The spirits of just men made perfect.' Heb 12: 23.

Will the saints in glory know each other?

Certainly they shall; for our knowledge in heaven shall not be diminished, but increased. We shall not only know our friends and godly relations, but those glorified saints whom we never saw before. It must be so; for society without acquaintance is not comfortable. Of this opinion were Augustine, Anselm, and Luther. Indeed, the Scripture seems to hint as much to us; for, if Peter in the transfiguration knew Moses and Elias, whom he never saw before, Matt 17: 3, then surely in heaven the saints shall know one another, and be infinitely delighted in each other's company.

[3] The third thing comprehended in glory is perfection in holiness. Holiness is the beauty of God and angels; it makes heaven. What is happiness but the essence of holiness? Here a Christian's grace is imperfect. At death believers shall arrive at perfection of grace. Then this sun shall be in its meridian splendour; then shall they not need to pray for increase of grace, for they shall be as the angels; their light shall be clear, and their joy shall be full.

[4] The fourth thing in glory is dignity and honour. They shall reign as kings. Therefore glorified saints are said to have their insignia regalia, their ensigns of royalty, their white robes and their crown. Rev 7: 9. Caesar, after his victories, in token of honour, had a chair of ivory set for him in the senate, and a throne in the theatre; so the saints, having obtained their victories over sin and Satan, will be enthroned with Christ in the empyrean heaven. To sit with Christ denotes safety; to sit on the throne; dignity. 'This honour have all the saints.' Psa 149: 9.

[5] The fifth thing in glory is the harmony and union among the heavenly inhabitants. The devil cannot get his cloven foot into heaven; he cannot conjure up any storms of contention there. There shall be perfect union; there Calvin and Luther are agreed; there is no jarring string in the heavenly music; there is nothing to make any difference - no pride or envy there. Though one star may differ from another, one may have a greater degree of glory, yet every vessel shall be full. There shall the saints and angels sit as olive-plants round about their Father's table in love and unity. Then shall they join together in concert, then shall the loud anthems of praise be sung in the heavenly choir.

[6] The sixth thing in glory is a blessed rest. 'There remains a rest.' Heb 4: 9. Felix transitus a labore ad requiem [A happy transition from toil to rest]. Here we

can have no rest, tossed and turned as a ball on racket. 'We are troubled on every side.' 2 Cor 4: 8. How can a ship rest in a storm? But after death the saints get into their haven. Everything is quiet in the centre. God is centrum quietativum animae, as the schoolmen say, 'the centre where the soul cloth sweetly acquiesce.' A Christian, after his weary marches and battles, shall put off his bloody armour, and rest himself upon the bosom of Jesus, that bed of perfume. When death has given the saints the wings of a dove, then they shall fly away to paradise and be at rest.

[7] The seventh thing in glory is eternity. 'An eternal weight of glory.' 2 Cor 4: 17. Glory is a weight. The Hebrew word for glory is a weight. God must make us able to bear it. An eternal weight. Glory is such a manna as does not breed worms. If the saints, glory in heaven were but for a time, and they were in fear of losing it, it would eclipse and embitter the joys of heaven; but eternity is written upon their joys. The garland made of flowers of paradise fades not. I Pet 5: 4. I have read of a river called the Day-river, at which time it runs with a full torrent, but at night is dried up. Such are all earthly comforts; they run with a full stream all the daytime of life, but at the night of death they are dried up. The glorified saints shall drink of the rivers of pleasure for evermore. Psa 16: 2: Eternity is the heaven of heavens; infine gaudium erit sine fine [At the last our joy shall be never-ending]. Bernard. The joys of heaven are overflowing and everlasting.

When do believers enter upon possession of glory?

They pass immediately after death into glory. Some hold, with the Platonists and Lucianists, that the soul dies; but many of the sober heathens believed the soul's immortality. The Romans, when their great men died, caused an eagle to be let loose, and fly about in the air, signifying hereby that the soul was immortal, and did not die with the body. Christ tells us the soul is not capable of being killed, therefore not of dying. Matt 10: 28. And as the soul does not die, so neither does it sleep in the body for a time. If the soul at death be absent from the body, it cannot sleep in the body. 2 Cor 5: 8. There is an immediate passage from death to glory; it is but the twinkling of an eye, and we shall see God. 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' Luke 23: 43. By paradise is meant heaven: the third heaven, into which Paul was taken. 2 Cor 12: 4. Christ said to the thief on the cross, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' His body could not be there, for it was laid in the grave; but it was spoken of his soul, that it should be, immediately after death, in heaven. Let none be so vain as to talk of purgatory: a soul purged by Christ's blood needs no fire of purgatory, but goes immediately from a deathbed into a glorified state.

Use one: See what little cause believers have to fear death, when it brings such glorious benefits. Why should the saints fear their preferment? Is it not a blessed

thing to see God, to love God, and to lie for ever in the bosom of divine love? Is it not a blessed thing to meet our godly relations in heaven? Why should the saints be afraid of their blessings? Is a virgin afraid to be matched unto the crown? Now is but the contract: at death is the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Rev 19: 9. What hurt does death, but take us from among fiery serpents, and place us among angels? What hurt does it do, but to clothe us with a robe of immortality? Has he any wrong done him that has his sackcloth pulled off, and has cloth of gold put upon him? Fear not dying, ye who cannot live but by dying.

Use two: You who are real saints, whose hearts are purified by faith, spend much time in musing upon those glorious benefits which you shall have by Christ at death. Thus might you, by a contemplative life, begin the life of angels here, and be in heaven before your time. Eudoxius was so affected with the glory of the sun, that he thought he was born only to behold it. What should we contemplate but celestial glory, when we shall see God face to face! David was got above the ordinary sort of men; he was in the altitudes when he said, 'I am ever with thee.' Psalm 139: 18. A true saint every day takes a turn in heaven; his thoughts and desires are, like cherubims, flying up to paradise. Can men of the world delight in looking upon their bags of gold, and fields of corn, and shall not the heirs of heaven take more delight in contemplating their glory in reversion? Could we send forth faith as a spy, and every day view the glory of the Jerusalem above, how would it rejoice us, as it does the heir to think of the inheritance which is to come into his hand shortly?

Use three: This may comfort the saints in two cases.

(I.) Under their wants. They abound only in wants: the meal is almost spent in the barrel; but be patient till death, and you shall have a supply of all your wants; you shall have a kingdom, and be as rich as heaven can make you. He who has the promise of an estate, after a few years have expired, though at present he has nothing to help himself, comforts himself with this, that shortly he shall have an estate come into his hand. 'It cloth not yet appear what we shall be;' but we shall be enamelled with glory, and be as rich as the angels. I John 3: 2.

(2.) A true saint is, as Luther says, Haeres crucis [an heir of the Cross]. It may make us go cheerfully through our sufferings, that there are great things laid up in store; there is glory coming, which eye has not seen; we shall drink of the fruit of the vine in the kingdom of heaven. Though now we drink in a wormwood cup, yet there is sugar to sweeten it. We shall taste of those joys of paradise, which exceed our faith, and may be better felt than they can be expressed.

