

ISRAEL'S HOPE ENCOURAGED

BY

JOHN BUNYAN

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*'Auspicious hope! in thy sweet garden grow
Wreaths for each toil, a charm for every woe.'*

Christian hope is a firm expectation of all promised good, but especially of eternal salvation and happiness in heaven, where we shall be like the Son of God. This hope is founded on the grace, blood, righteousness, and intercession of Christ - the earnest of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and the unchangeable truths and enlightening power of God. ^[1] 'Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as God is pure' (1 John 3:3). Blessed hope! (Titus 2:13). Well might the apostle pray for the believing Romans, 'That ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost' (Romans 15:13). 'Which is Christ in you the hope of glory' (Colossians 1:27). This is the sacred, the solemn, the all-important subject which Bunyan in his ripe age makes the theme of his meditations and of his deeply impressive exhortations.

When drawing near the end of his pilgrimage - while in the fullest fruition of his mental powers - he gives the result of his long and hallowed experience to comfort and cherish his fellow pilgrims in their dangerous heaven-ward journey. One of his last labours was to prepare this treatise for the press, from which it issued three years after his decease, under the care of his pious friend Charles Doe.

Here, as drawn from the holy oracles of God, we contemplate Hope, the helmet of salvation, without which our mental powers are exposed to be led captive into despair at the will of Satan. Our venerable author pictures most vividly the Christian's weakness and the power of his enemies; 'Should you see a man that could not go from door to door but he must be clad in a coat of mail, a helmet of brass upon his head, and for his lifeguard a thousand men, would you not say, surely this man has store of enemies at hand?' This is the case, enemies lie in wait for Israel in every hole, he can neither eat, drink, wake, sleep, work, sit still, talk, be silent - worship his God in public or private, but he is in danger. Poor, lame, infirm, helpless man, can not live without tender - great - rich - manifold - abounding mercies. 'No faith, no hope,' 'to hope without faith is to see without eyes, or expect without reason.' Faith is the anchor which enters within the vail; Christ in us the hope of glory is the mighty cable which keeps us fast to that anchor. 'Faith lays hold of that end of the promise that is nearest to us, to wit, in the Bible - Hope lays hold of that end that is fastened to the mercy-seat.' Thus the soul is kept by the mighty power of God. They who have no hope, enter Doubting Castle of their own free will - they place themselves under the tyranny of Giant Despair - that he may put out their eyes, and send them to stumble among the tombs, and leave their bones in his castle-yard, a trophy to his victories, and a terror to any poor pilgrim caught by him trespassing on Bye-path Meadow. ^[2] Hope is as a guardian angel - it enables us to come boldly to a throne of grace 'in a goodly sort.' The subject is full of consolation. Are we profanely apt to judge of God harshly, as of one that would gather where he had not strawn? Hope leads us to form a holy and just conception of the God of love. 'Kind brings forth its kind, know the tree by his fruit, and God BY HIS MERCY IN CHRIST. What has God been doing for and to his church from the beginning of the world, but extending to and exercising loving-kindness and mercy for them? Therefore he laid a foundation for this in mercy from everlasting.' 'There is no *single flowers* in God's gospel garden, they are all double

and treble; there is a wheel within a wheel, a blessing within a blessing in all the mercies of God; they are manifold, a man can not receive one but he receives many, many folded up one within another.' Bless the Lord, O my soul!!

Reader, my deep anxiety is that you should receive from this treatise the benefits which its glorified author intended it to produce. It is accurately printed from the first edition. My notes are intended to explain obsolete words or customs or to commend the author's sentiments. May the Divine blessing abundantly replenish our earthen vessels with this heavenly hope.

GEORGE OFFOR

FOOTNOTES

[1] Cruden.

[2] *Pilgrim's Progress*.

ISRAEL'S HOPE ENCOURAGED

(or, What Hope is, and How Distinguished From
Faith: With Encouragements for a Hoping People)

'LET ISRAEL HOPE IN THE LORD: FOR WITH THE LORD *THERE IS*
MERCY, AND WITH HIM *IS* PLENTEOUS REDEMPTION.' - Psalm 130:7

This Psalm is said to be one of 'the Psalm of Degrees,' which some say, if I be not mistaken, the priests and Levites used to sing when they went up the steps into the temple. ^[1] But to let that pass, it is a psalm that gives us a relation of the penman's praying frame, and of an exhortation to Israel to hope in God.

Verse 1. 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord'; that is, out of deep or great afflictions, and said, 'Lord, hear my voice, let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.' The latter words explain the former; as who should say, By voice I mean the meaning and spirit of my prayer. There are words in prayer, and spirit in prayer, and by the spirit that is in prayer, is discerned whether the words be dead, lifeless, feigned, or warm, fervent, earnest; and God who searcheth the heart, knoweth the meaning of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:27). Verse 3. 'If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?' Here he confesseth, that all men by the law must fall before God for ever; for that they have broken it, but can not make amends for the transgression thereof. But, he quickly bethinking himself of the mercy of God in Christ, he saith, verse 4, 'But *there is* forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.' Then he returns, saying, verse 5, 'I wait for the Lord,' that is, in all his appointments; yea, he doubleth it, saying, 'My soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.' By which repetition he insinuates, that many are content to give their bodily presence to God in his appointments, while their hearts were roving to the ends of the earth; but for his part he did not so. Verse 6. 'My soul *waiteth* for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning, *I say, more than* they that watch for the morning.' As who should say, even as it is with those that are tired with the night, either by reason of dark or wearisome journeys, or because of tedious sickness, to whom the night is most doleful and uncomfortable, waiting for spring of day; so wait I for the Lord, that his presence might be with my soul. So and more too I say, '*More than* they that wait for the morning.' Then he comes to the words which I have chosen for my text, saying, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord *there is* mercy, and with him *is* plenteous redemption.'

In which words we have, FIRST, AN EXHORTATION; SECOND, A REASON OF THAT EXHORTATION; and THIRD, AN AMPLIFICATION OF THAT REASON. 'Let Israel hope in the Lord'; there is the exhortation; 'For with the Lord *there is* mercy'; there is the reason of it; 'And with him *is* plenteous redemption'; there is the amplification of that reason.

[FIRST - AN EXHORTATION.]

In the exhortation there are three things to be inquired into. FIRST, The matter contained in it; SECOND, The manner by which it is expressed; THIRD, The

inferences that do naturally flow therefrom.

[FIRST. *The matter contained in the exhortation.*]

We will speak first to the matter contained in the text, and that presenteth itself unto us under three heads. *First*, A duty. *Second*, A direction for the well management of that duty. *Third*, The persons that are so to manage it.

First, Then, to speak to *the duty*, and that is HOPE; 'Let Israel HOPE.' By which word there is something pre-admitted, and something of great concern insinuated.

That which is pre-admitted is faith; for when we speak properly of hope, and put others distinctly to the duty of hoping, we conclude that such have faith already; for no faith, no hope. To hope without faith, is to see without eyes, or to expect without a ground: for 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for,' as well with respect to the grace, as to the doctrine of faith (Hebrews 11:1). Doth such a one believe? No. Doth he hope? Yes. If the first is true, the second is a lie; he that never believed, did never hope in the Lord. Wherefore, when he saith, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord,' he presupposeth faith, and signifieth that he speaketh to believers.

That which is of great concern insinuated, is, that hope has in it an excellent quality to support Israel in all its troubles. Faith has its excellency in this, hope in that, and love in another thing. Faith will do that which hope can not do. Hope can do that which faith doth not do, and love can do things distinct from both their doings. Faith goes in the van, hope in the body, and love brings up the rear: and thus 'now abideth faith, hope,' and 'charity' (1 Corinthians 13:13). Faith is the mother-grace, for hope is born of her, but charity floweth from them both.

But a little, now we are upon faith and hope distinctly, to let you see a little. 1. Faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17), hope by experience (Romans 5:3-4). 2. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, hope by the credit that faith hath given to it (Romans 4:18). 3. Faith believeth the truth of the Word, hope waits for the fulfilling of it. 4. Faith lays hold of that end of the promise that is next to us, to wit, as it is in the Bible; hope lays hold of that end of the promise that is fastened to the mercy-seat; for the promise is like a mighty cable, that is fastened by one end to a ship, and by the other to the anchor: the soul is the ship where faith is, and to which the hither ^[2] end of this cable is fastened; but hope is the anchor that is at the other end of this cable, and which entereth into that within the veil. Thus faith and hope getting hold of both ends of the promise, they carry it safely all away. 5. Faith looketh to Christ, as dead, buried, and ascended; and hope to his second coming (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Faith looks to him for justification, hope for glory (Romans 4:1-8). 6. Faith fights for doctrine, hope for a reward (Acts 26:6-7). Faith for what is in the bible, hope for what is in heaven (Colossians 1:3-5). 7. Faith purifies the heart from bad principles (1 John 5:4-5). Hope from bad manners (2 Peter 3:11, 14; Ephesians 5:8; 1 John 3:3). 8. Faith sets hope on work, hope sets patience on work (Acts 28:20; 9:9). Faith says to hope, look for what is promised; hope says to faith, So I do, and will wait for it too. 9. Faith looks through the word to God in Christ; hope looks through faith beyond the world to glory (Galatians 5:5).

Thus faith saves, and thus hope saves. Faith saves by laying hold of God by Christ (1 Peter 1:5). Hope saves by prevailing with the soul to suffer all troubles, afflictions, and adversities that it meets with betwixt this and the world to come, for the sake thereof (Romans 8:24). Take the matter in this plain similitude. There was a king that adopted such a one to be his child, and clothed him with the attire of the children of the king, and promised him, that if he would fight his father's battles, and walk in his father's ways, he should at last share in his father's kingdoms. He has received the adoption, and the king's robe, but not yet his part in the kingdom; but now, hope of a share in that will make him fight the king's battles, and also tread the king's paths. Yea, and though he should meet with many things that have a tendency to deter him from so doing, yet thoughts of the interest promised in the kingdom, and hopes to enjoy it, will make him out his way through those difficulties, and so save him from the ruin that those destructions would bring upon him, and will, in conclusion, usher him into a personal possession and enjoyment of that inheritance. Hope has a thick skin, and will endure many a blow; it will put on patience as a vestment, it will wade through a sea of blood, it will endure all things, if it be of the right kind, for the joy that is set before it. Hence patience is called, 'Patience of hope,' because it is hope that makes the soul exercise patience and long-suffering under the cross, until the time comes to enjoy the crown (1 Thessalonians 1:3). The Psalmist, therefore, by this exhortation, persuadeth them that have believed the truth, to wait for the accomplishment of it, as by his own example he did himself - 'I wait for the Lord,' 'my soul waiteth,' 'and in his word do I hope.' It is for want of hope that so many brisk professors that have so boasted and made brags of their faith, have not been able to endure the drum^[3] in the day of alarm and affliction. Their hope in Christ has been such as has extended itself no further than to this life, and therefore they are of all men the most miserable.

The Psalmist therefore, by exhorting us unto this duty, doth put us in mind of four things. I. That the best things are yet behind, and in reversion for the saints. II. That those that have believed, will yet meet with difficulties before they come at them. III. The grace of hope well exercised, is the only way to overcome these difficulties. IV. They therefore that have hope, and do exercise it as they should, shall assuredly at last enjoy that hope that is laid up for them in heaven.

I. For the first of these, *that the best things are yet behind, and in reversion for believers*; this is manifest by the natural exercise of this grace. For 'hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for it' (Romans 8:24-25). Hope lives not by sight, as faith doth; but hope trusteth faith, as faith trusts the Word, and so bears up the soul in a patient expectation at last to enjoy what God has promised. But I say, the very natural work of this grace proveth, that the believer's best things are behind in reversion.

You may ask me, what those things are? and I may tell you, first, in general, they are heavenly things, they are eternal things, they are the things that are where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God (John 3:12; 2 Corinthians 4:18; Colossians 3:1). Do you know them now? They are things that 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor that have entered into the heart of man to conceive of' (Isaiah 64:4; 1 Corinthians 2:9). Do you know them now? They are things that are referred to the next world, for the saints when they come into the next world; talked of they may be now, the real being of them

may be believed now, and by hope we may, and it will be our wisdom to wait for them now; but to know what they are in the nature of them, or in the enjoyment of them, otherwise than by faith, he is deceived that saith it. They are things too big as yet to enter into our hearts, and things too big, if they were there to come out, or to be expressed by our mouths.

There is heaven itself, the imperial heaven; does any body know what that is? There is the mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the innumerable company of angels; doth any body know what all they are? There is immortality and eternal life: and who knows what they are? There are rewards for services, and labour of love showed to God's name here; and who knows what they will be? There are mansion-houses, beds of glory, and places to walk in among the angels; and who knows what they are? There will be badges of honour, harps to make merry with, and heavenly songs of triumph; doth any here know what they are? There will be then a knowing, an enjoying and a solacing of ourselves with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and all saints; but in what glorious manner we all are ignorant of. There we shall see and know, and be with for ever, all our relations, as wife, husband, child, father, mother, brother, or sister that have died in the faith; but how gloriously they will look when we shall see them, and how gloriously we shall love when we are with them, it is not for us in this world to know (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). There are thoughts, and words, and ways for us, which we never dreamed on in this world. The law was but the shadow, the gospel the image; but what will be the substance that comes to us next, or that rather we shall go unto, who can understand? (Hebrews 10:1). If we never saw God nor Christ as glorified, nor the Spirit of the Lord, nor the bottom of the Bible, nor yet so much as one of the days of eternity,, and yet all these things we shall see and have them, how can it be that the things laid up for us, that should be the object of our hope, should by us be understood in this world? Yet there are intimations given us of the goodness and greatness of them.^[4]

1. Of their goodness, and that, a. In that the Holy Ghost scorns that things that are here should once be compared with them; hence all things here are called vanities, nothings, less than nothings (Isaiah 40:15-17). Now, if the things, all the things that are here, are so contemptuously considered, when compared with the things that are to be hereafter, and yet these things so great in the carnal man's esteem, as that he is willing to venture life and soul, and all to have them, what are the things that God has prepared for them that wait, that is, that hope for him? b. Their goodness also appears in this, that whoever has had that understanding of them, as is revealed in the Word, whether king or beggar, wise mean or fool, he has willingly cast this world behind him in contempt and scorn, for the hope of that (Psalm 73:25; Hebrews 11:24-26, 37-40). c. The goodness of them has even testimony in the very consciences of them that hate them. Take the vilest man in the country, the man who is so wedded to his lusts, that he will rather run the hazard of a thousand hells than leave them; and ask this man his judgment of the things of the next world, and he will shake his head, and say, They are good, they are best of all. d. But the saints have the best apprehension of their goodness, for that the Lord doth sometimes drop some of the juice of them out of the Word, into their hungry souls.

2. But as they are good, so they are great: 'O how great *is* thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, *which* thou hast wrought for them that trust,' that

hope, ‘in thee before the sons of men!’ (Psalm 31:19). a. Their greatness appears, in that they go beyond the Word; yea, beyond the word of the Holy Ghost; it doth not yet appear to us by the Word of God to the full, the greatness of what is prepared for God’s people. ‘Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be’ (1 John 3:2). It doth not appear in the Word; there is a greatness in the things that we are to hope for, that could never be expressed: they are beyond word, beyond thought, beyond conceiving of! Paul, when he was come down again from out of paradise, into which he was caught up, could not speak a word about the words he heard, and the things that there he saw. They were things and words which he saw and heard, ‘which it is not possible^[5] for a man to utter.’ b. Their greatness is intimated by the word Eternal; he that knows the bottom of that word, shall know what things they are. ‘The things which are not seen *are* eternal’ (2 Corinthians 4:18). They are ‘incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away,’ reserved in heaven for us (1 Peter 1:4). c. Their greatness is showed in that one right thought of them will fill the heart so full, that both it and the eyes will run over together; yea, so full, that the creature shall not be able to stand up under the weight of glory that by it is laid upon the soul. Alas! all the things in this world will not fill one heart; and yet one thought that is right, of the things that God has prepared, and laid up in heaven for us, will, yea, and over fill it too. d. The greatness of the things of the next world appears, in that when one of the least of them are showed to us, we are not able, without support from thence, to abide the sight thereof. I count that the angels are of those things that are least in that world; and yet the sight of one of them, when the sight of them was in use, what work would it make in the hearts and minds of mortal men, the scripture plainly enough declares (John 13:22).^[6] e. Their greatness is intimated, in that we must be as it were new made again, before we can be capable of enjoying them, as we must enjoy them with comfort (Luke 20:36). And herein will be a great part of our happiness, that we shall not only see them, but be made like unto them, like unto their King. For ‘when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is’ (1 John 3:2). We shall see him, and therefore must be like him, for else the sight of him would overcome us and destroy us; but because we are to see him with comfort and everlasting joy, therefore we must be like him in body and mind (Revelation 1:17; Philippians 3:20,21).

II. But to come to the second thing, namely, *That those that have believed, there are such things as these, will meet with difficulties before they come at them.* This is so grand a truth, that nothing can be said against it. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; and we must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of heaven (Acts 14:22). The cause from whence these afflictions arise is known to be,

1. From ourselves; for sin having got such hold in our flesh, makes that opposition against our soul and the welfare of that, that puts us continually to trouble. Fleshly lusts work against the soul, and so do worldly lusts too (1 Peter 2:11); yea, they quench our graces, and make them that would live, ‘ready to die’ (Revelation 3:2). Yea, by reason of these, such darkness, such guilt, such fear, such mistrust, ariseth in us, that it is common for us, if we live any while, to make a thousand conclusions, twice told, that we shall never arrive with comfort at the gates of the kingdom of heaven. The natural tendency of every struggle of the least lust against grace is, if we judge according to carnal reason, to make us question the truth of a work of grace in us, and our right to the world to come. This it was that made Paul cry out, ‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me!’ (Romans 7:24). Only he had more

wisdom than to follow the natural conclusions that carnal reason was apt to make thereupon, and so hoisted up his soul to hope.

2. Sin, by its working in us, doth not only bring darkness, guilt, fear, mistrust, and the like; but it doth often-times as it were hamstringing us, and disable us from going to God by faith and prayer for pardon. It makes the heart hard, senseless, careless, lifeless, spiritless as to feeling, in all Christian duty; and this is a grievous thing to a gracious soul. The other things will create a doubt, and drive it up to the head into the soul; but these will go on the other side and clench it.^[7] Now all these things make hoping difficult.

3. For by these things the judgment is not only clouded, and the understanding greatly darkened, but all the powers of the soul made to fight against itself, conceiving, imagining, apprehending, and concluding things that have a direct tendency to extirpate and extinguish, if possible, the graces of God that are planted in the soul; yea, to the making of it cry out, 'I am cut off from before thine eyes!' (Psalm 31:22).

4. Add to these, the hidings of the face of God from the soul; a thing to it more bitter than death; yet nothing more common among them that hope in the Lord. He 'hideth his face from the house of Jacob!' (Isaiah 8:17). Nor is this done only in fatherly displeasure, but by this means some graces are kept alive; faith is kept alive by the word, patience by hope, and hope by faith; but oft-times a spirit of prayer, by the rod, chastisement, and the hiding of God's face (Hosea 5:14-15; Isaiah 26:16; Song of Solomon 5:6). But I say, this hiding of this sweet face is bitter to the soul, and oft-times puts both faith and hope to a sad and most fearful plunge. For at such a day, it is with the soul as with the ship at sea, that is benighted and without light; to wit, like a man bewildered upon the land; only the text saith, for the help and succour of such, 'Who *is* among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh *in* darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God' (Isaiah 50:10). Yet as it is with children, so it is with saints; we are a great deal more subject to fears in the night than in the day. That, therefore, that tendeth to the help of some graces, if there be not great care taken, will prove an hindrance to others.

5. Nor is the ruler of the darkness of this world wanting to apply himself and his engines, so as, if possible, to make use of all these things for the overthrowing of faith, and for the removing of our hope from the Lord, as a tree is removed from rooting in the ground (Job 19:10). Behold! he can expound all things, so as that they shall fall directly in the way of our believing. As thus, we have sin, therefore we have no grace; sin struggleth in us, therefore we fear not God; something in us sideth with sin, therefore we are wholly unregenerate; sin is in our best performances, therefore wherefore should I hope? Thus I say, he can afflict us in our pilgrimage, and make hope difficult to us. Besides the hiding of God's face, he can make not only a cause of sorrow, for that indeed it should, but a ground of despair, and as desperately concluding he will never come again. How many good souls has he driven to these conclusions, who afterwards have been made to unsay all again?

6. And though spiritual desertions, darkness of soul, and guilt of sin, are the burdens most intolerable, yet they are not all; for there is to be added to all these, that common

evil of persecution, another device invented to make void our hope. In this, I say, we are sure to be concerned; that is, if we be godly. For though the apostle doth not say, 'All that will live in Christ,' that is, in the common profession of him, shall suffer persecution; yet he saith, 'All that will live godly in him shall' (2 Timothy 3:12). Now this in itself is a terror to flesh and blood, and hath a direct tendency in it to make hope difficult (1 Peter 3:6, 14). Hence men of a persecuting spirit, because of their greatness, and of their teeth (the laws), are said to be a terror, and to carry amazement in their doings; and God's people are apt to be afraid of them though they should die, and to forget God their Maker; and this makes hoping hard work (Isaiah 51:12-13).^[8]

7. For besides that grimness that appears in the face of persecutors, Satan can tell how to lessen, and make to dwindle in our apprehensions, those truths unto which our hearts have joined themselves afore, and to which Christ our Lord has commanded us to stand. So that they shall now appear but little, small, inconsiderable things; things not worth engaging for; things not worth running those hazards for, that in the hour of trial may lie staring us in the face. Moreover, we shall not want false friends in every hole, such as will continually be boring our ears with that saying, Master, do good to thyself. At such times also, 'stars' do use to 'fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken'; and so every thing tends to weaken, or at least to lay stumbling-blocks in their way, who are commanded to hope in the Lord (Matthew 24).

8. Again, as Satan can make use of his subtlety, thus to afflict and weaken the hands and hearts of those that hope in God, so he can add to these the dismalness of a suffering state. He can make the loss of goods, in our imagination, ten times bigger than it is in itself; he can make an informer a frightful creature, and a jail look like hell itself; he can make banishment and death utterly intolerable, and things that must be shunned with the hazard of our salvation. Thus he can greaten and lessen, lessen and greaten, for the troubling of our hearts, for the hindering of our hope.^[9]

9. Add to all these, that the things that we suffer for were never seen by us, but are quite beyond our sight: things that indeed are said to be great and good; but we have only the word and the Bible for it. And be sure if he that laboureth night and day to devour us, can help it, our faith shall be molested and perplexed at such a time, that it may, if possible, be hard to do the commandment that here the text enjoins us to the practice of; that is, to hope in the Lord. And this brings me to the third particular.

III. *That the grace of hope well exercised, is the only way to overcome those difficulties.* - Abraham had never laughed for joy, had he not hoped when the angel brought him tidings of a son; yea, had he not hoped against all things that could have been said to discourage (Genesis 17:17). Hence it is said, that 'against hope' he 'believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be' (Romans 4:18). There is hope against hope; hope grounded on faith, against hope grounded on reason. Hope grounded on reason, would have made Abraham expect that the promise should surely have been ineffectual, because of the deadness of Abraham's body, and of the barrenness of Sarah's womb. But he hoped against the difficulty, by hope that sprang from faith, which confided in the promise and power of God, and so overcame the difficulty, and indeed obtained the promise. Hope, therefore, well exercised, is the only way to overcome. Hence Peter bids those that are in a suffering condition, 'Be sober, and

hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ' (1 Peter 1:13). And therefore it is, as you heard before, that we are said to be 'saved by hope' (Romans 8:24).

Hope is excellent, 1. Against those discouragements that arise up out of our bowels. 2. It is excellent to embolden a man in the cause of God. 3. It is excellent at helping one over the difficulties that men, by frights and terrors may lay in our way.

1. It is excellent to help us against those discouragements that arise out of our own bowels (Romans 4). This is clear in the instance last mentioned about Abraham, who had nothing but discouragements arising from himself; but he had hope, and as well he exercised it; wherefore, after a little patient enduring, he overcame the difficulty, and obtained the promise (Hebrews 6:13-18). The reason is, for that it is the nature of true hope to turn away its ear from opposing difficulties, to the word and mouth of faith; and perceiving that faith has got hold of the promise, hope, notwithstanding difficulties that do or may attempt to intercept, will expect, and so wait for the accomplishment thereof.

2. Hope is excellent at emboldening a man in the cause of God. Hence the apostle saith, 'Hope maketh not ashamed'; for not to be ashamed there, is to be emboldened (Romans 5:5). So again, when Paul speaks of the troubles he met with for the profession of the gospel, he saith, that they should turn to his salvation. 'According,' saith he, 'to my earnest expectation, and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life or by death' (Philippians 1:19-20). See here, a man at the foot of the ladder, now ready in will and mind, to die for his profession; but how will he carry it now? Why, with all brave and innocent boldness! But how will he do that? O! By the hope of the gospel that is in him; for by that he is fully persuaded that the cause he suffereth for will bear him up in the day of God, and that he shall then be well rewarded for it.^[10]

3. It is also excellent at helping one over those difficulties that men, by frights and terrors, may lay in our way. Hence when David was almost killed with the reproach and oppression of his enemies, and his soul full sorely bowed down to the ground therewith; that he might revive and get up again, he calls to his soul to put in exercise the grace of hope, saying, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God' (Psalm 42:11). So again saith he in the next Psalm after, as afore he had complained of the oppression of the enemy, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance and my God' (Psalm 43:5). Hope, therefore, is a soul-encouraging grace, a soul-emboldening grace, and a soul-preserving grace. Hence it is called our helmet or head-piece, the helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:8). This is one piece of the armour with which the Son of God was clothed, when he came into the world; and it is that against which nothing can prevail (Isaiah 49:17). For as long as I can hope for salvation, what can hurt me! This word spoken in the blessed exercise of grace, I HOPE FOR SALVATION, drives down all before it. The truth of God is that man's 'shield and buckler' that hath made the Lord his hope (Psalm 91:4).

[*Encouragements to exercise this grace.*]

And now to encourage thee, good man, to the exercise of this blessed grace of hope as the text bids, let me present thee with that which followeth. 1. God, to show how well he takes hoping in him at our hands, has called himself 'the God of hope' (Romans 15:13), that is, not only the author of hope, but the God that takes pleasure in them that exercise it, 'The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy' (Psalm 147:11). 2. He will be a shield, a defence to them that hope in him. 'Thou *art* my hiding-place and my shield,' saith David, 'I hope in thy word'; that is, he knew he would be so; for he hoped in his word (Psalm 119:114). 3. He has promised us the life we hope for, to encourage us still to hope, and to endure all things to enjoy it (Titus 1:2). 'That he that ploweth should plow in hope, and that he that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope' (1 Corinthians 9:10).

Question. But you may say, What is it to exercise this grace aright?

Answer. 1. You must look well to your faith, that that may prosper, for as your faith is, such your hope will be. Hope is never ill when faith is well; nor strong if faith be weak. Wherefore Paul prays that the Romans might be filled 'with all joy and peace in believing,' that they might 'abound in hope' (Romans 15:13). When a man by faith believes to joy and peace, then hope grows strong, and with an assurance looketh for a share in the world to come. Wherefore look to your faith, and pray heartily that the God of hope will fill you with all joy and peace in believing. 2. Learn of Abraham not to faint, stumble, or doubt, at the sight of your own weakness; for if you do, hope will stay below, and creak in the wheels as it goes, because it will want the oil of faith. But say to thy soul, when thou beginnest to faint and sink at the sight of these, as David did to his, in the places made mention of before. 3. Be much in calling to mind what God has done for thee in former times. Keep thy experience as a choice thing (Romans 5:4). 'Remember all the way the Lord led thee these forty years in the wilderness' (Deuteronomy 8:2). 'O my God,' saith David, 'my soul is cast down within me, therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites from the hill Mizar' (Psalm 42:6). 4. Be much in looking at the end of things, or rather to the end of this, and to the beginning of the next world. What we enjoy of God in this world, may be an earnest of hope, or a token that the thing hoped for is to be ours at last; but the object of hope is in general the next world (Hebrews 11:1). We must therefore put a difference betwixt the mother of hope, Faith; the means of hope, the Word; the earnest of hope, Christ in us; and the proper object of hope, to wit, the world to come, and the goodness thereof (Psalm 119:49; Colossians 1:27).

If Christians have not much here, their hope, as I may so say, lies idle, and as a grace out of its exercise. For as faith can not feed upon patience, but upon Christ, and as the grace of hungering and thirsting can not live upon self-fullness, but upon the riches of the promise; so hope can not make what is enjoyed its object: 'for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?' (Romans 8:24). But the proper object of hope is, that we see not. Let faith then be exercised upon Christ crucified for my justification, and hope upon the next world for my glorification; and let love show the truth of faith in Christ, by acts of kindness to Christ and his people; and patience, the truth of hope, by a quiet bearing and enduring that which may now be laid upon me for my sincere profession's sake, until the hope that is laid up for us in heaven shall come to us, or we be gathered

to that, and then hope is in some measure in good order, and exercised well. But,

IV. We now come to the last thing propounded to be spoken to, which is, *they that have hope and exercise it well, shall assuredly at last enjoy that hope that is laid up for them in heaven*; that is, they that do regularly exercise the grace of hope shall at last enjoy the object of it, or the thing hoped for. This must of necessity be concluded, else we overthrow the whole truth of God at once, and the expectation of the best of men; yea, if this be not concluded, what follows, but that Atheism, unbelief, and irreligion, are the most right, and profane and debauched persons are in the rights way?

1. But to proceed, this must be, as is evident; for that the things hoped for are put under the very name of the grace that lives in the expectation of them. They are called HOPE; 'looking for that blessed hope'; 'for the hope that is laid up for them in heaven' (Titus 2:13; Colossians 1:5). God has set that character upon them, to signify that they belong to hope, and shall be the reward of hope. God doth in this, as your great traders do with the goods that their chapmen have either bought or spoke for; to wit, he sets their name or mark upon them, and then saith, This belongs to this grace, and this belongs to that; but the kingdom of heaven belongs to HOPE, for his name is set upon it. This therefore is one thing, to prove that the thing hoped for shall be thine; God has marked it for thee: nor can it be given to those that do not hope. That is, to the same purpose that you read of, 'That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer' (2 Thessalonians 1:5). Suffering flows from hope; he that hopes not for an house in heaven, will not for it choose to suffer the loss of the pleasures and friendships of this world. But they that suffer for it, and that all do, one way or other, in whom is placed this grace of hope, they God counteth worthy of it, and therefore, hath marked it with their mark, HOPE; for that it belongs to hope, and shall be given to those that hope. That is the first.

2. They that do, as afore is said, exercise this grace of hope, shall assuredly enjoy the hope that is laid up for them in heaven, as is evident also from this; because, as God has marked and set it apart for them, so what he has done to and with our Lord and Head, since his death, he hath done it to this very end; that is, to beget and maintain our hope in him as touching this thing. He 'hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' (1 Peter 1:3). The meaning is, Christ is our undertaker, and suffered death for us, that we might enjoy happiness and glory: and God, to show how wiling he was that we should have this glory, raised up Christ again, and delivered him from their sorrows of death. Wherefore, considering this, Paul said, 'He rejoiced in hope of the glory of God'; to wit, of that glory, that sin, had he not had Jesus for his undertaker, would have caused that he should certainly have come short of (Romans 3:23; 5:2). But, again, God 'raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory,' too, and that to this very end, 'that your faith and hope might be in God' (1 Peter 1:21). I say, he did it to this very end, that he might beget in you this good opinion of him, as to hope in him, that he would give you that good thing hoped for - to wit, eternal life. He 'gave him glory,' and put it into his hand for you who is your head and Saviour, that you might see how willing God is to give you the hope you look for, 'that your faith and hope might be in God.'

3. That we that have hope and rightly exercise it, might assuredly enjoy that hope that is laid up for us in heaven: God has promised it, and that to our Saviour for us. Had he

promised it to us, we might yet have feared, for that with our faults we give a cause of continual provocation to him. But since he hath promised it to Christ, it must assuredly come to us by him, because Christ, to whom it is promised, never gave occasion of provocation to him to take it back. And that it was promised to Christ, it is evident, because it was promised before the world began: 'In hope of eternal life,' saith Paul, 'which God, that can not lie, promised before the world began' (Titus 1:2). And this is, that we might hope. Men that use to hope to enjoy that money or estate, that by those that are faithful is promised to them, and put into the hands of trusty persons for them; why this is the case, God that can not lie, has promised it to the hoppers, and has put it into the hand of the trusty Jesus for us, therefore let us hope that in his times we shall both see and enjoy the same we hope for.

4. Yea, that all ground of doubt and scruple as to this might be removed out of the way, when Christ, who as to what was last said, is our hope (1 Timothy 1:1), shall come, he shall bring that grace and mercy with him that shall even from before his judgment-seat remove all those things that might have any tendency in them to deprive us of our hope, or of the thing hoped for by us. Hence Peter bids us, 'Be sober and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ' (1 Peter 1:13). Also as to this, Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, joins with him, saying, 'Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life' (Jude 21). Here then you see that there is grace and mercy still for us in reversion; grace and mercy to be brought unto us at the revelation, or second coming of Jesus Christ. How then can we be hindered of our hope? For transporting mercy will then be busy for them that indeed have here the hope of eternal life. 'And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him' (Malachi 3:17). None knows the mystery of God's will in all things revealed in his Word. Therefore many texts are looked over, or laid by, as those whose key doth go too hard; nor will I boast of any singular knowledge in any particular thing.^[11] Yet methinks since grace and mercy was not only brought by Christ when he came into the world, but shall be brought again with him when he comes in his Father's glory, it signifies, that as the first brought the beginning of eternal life to us while we were enemies, this second will bring the full enjoyment of it to us while we are saints, attended with many imperfections. And that as by the first grace of all unworthiness was pardoned and passed by; so by this second grace, the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, all shortness in duties, and failings in performances, shall be spared also; and we made possessors by virtue of this grace and mercy of the blessings hoped for, to wit, the blessings of eternal life. But thus much for the duty contained in the exhortation, to wit, of hoping.

[Second. A direction to the well managing of the duty of hope.]

I shall therefore come, in the next place, to treat of the well managing of this duty with reference to this primary object, which is the Lord himself. 'Let Israel hope in the Lord.' There is a general object of hope, and there is a particular object; there is a common object, and there is a special one. Of the general and common object, to wit, of heaven and happiness, I have said something already; wherefore it remains that now we come and treat of this particular and special object of our hope: 'Let Israel hope in the Lord.' The Lord, therefore, is to be the particular and special object of our hope:

‘Let Israel hope in the Lord.’ Now in that there is not only a duty here exhorted to, but a direction for the better management of that duty, to the particular and special object upon which this duty should be exercised, it suggesteth, how apt good men are, especially in times of trouble, the case of Israel now, to fix their hopes in other things than on the Lord. We have seen a great deal of this in our days; our days indeed have been days of trouble, especially since the discovery of the Popish plot, for then we began to fear cutting of throats, of being burned in our beds, and of seeing our children dashed in pieces before our faces. But looking about us, we found we had a gracious king, brave parliaments, a stout city, good lord-mayors, honest sheriffs, substantial laws against them, and these we made the object of our hope, quite forgetting the direction in this exhortation, ‘Let Israel hope in the Lord.’ For indeed the Lord ought to be our hope in temporals, as well as in spirituals and eternals. Wherefore Israel of old were checked, under a supposition of placing their hope for temporals in men; ‘*It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes*’ (Psalm 118:8-9). And again, ‘Put not your trust in princes, *nor* in the son of man, in whom *there is no help*’ (Psalm 146:3). This implieth that there is in us an incidence to forget God our hope, and to put confidence in something else. And to be sure we shall find it the more difficult to make the Lord our hope only, when things that are here, though deceitfully, proffer us their help.^[12] But my design is not to treat of the object of hope but with reference to the next world. And as to that we must take heed that we set our hope in God, in God in the first place, and in nothing below or besides himself. To this end it is that he has given us his word, and appointed a law to Israel.

I. Because of his own grace he is become the special object of hope, designating *himself* in the most special sense to be the portion of his people (Psalm 78:5-7) - ‘The Lord *is* my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him’ (Lamentations 2:24). Wherefore this we must look well to, and take heed that we miss not of this object (Psalm 146:5). This is the special object, the ultimate object, the object that we can not be without; and that, short of which, we can not be happy as, God willing, shall be showed more anon (Jeremiah 50:7). God is not only happiness in himself, but the life of the soul, and he that puts goodness into every thing in the next world, in which goodness shall be found (Jeremiah 17:13). And this our Lord Jesus Christ himself affirmeth, when he saith, ‘I am the way,’ to wit, the way to life and happiness. And yet he saith, ‘I am the way to the Father,’ for that it is HE that is the fountain and ocean of happiness and bliss.

So then, that we might in the next world be heirs of the highest good, God has made us heirs of his own good self; ‘Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ’; heirs of God through Christ (Romans 18:17; Galatians 4:7). This God, this eternal God, therefore, is of necessity to be the object of our hope, because he is, of grace, become our hope. The church in heaven, called the body and temple of God, is to be an habitation for himself, when it is finished, to dwell in for ever and ever. This then we hope for, to wit, to be possessed at that day with eternal life; eternal glory (1 Timothy 6:12, 19). Now this eternal life and eternal glory is through God the hope of his people (1 Peter 5:10; 1 John 5:20). And for this end, and to this bliss, are we called and regenerate in this world, ‘That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life’ (Titus 3:7). Nor can it be, that heaven and happiness should ever be the portion of them that make not God their hope, any more than such a lady should

hope to enjoy the estate of such a lord, who first makes not the lord himself her husband. ^[13] Heaven, heaven is the talk of the ignorant, while the God of heaven they can not abide. But shall such ever come to glory? But,

II. God must be the special object of our hope, and him in special that must be enjoyed by us in the next world, or nothing can make us happy. We will suppose now, for the illustrating of this matter, that which is not to be supposed. As:

1. Suppose a man, when he dieth, should go to heaven, that golden place, what good would this do him, if he was not possessed of the God of it? It would be, as to sweetness, but a thing unsavoury; as to durableness, but a thing uncertain; as to society, as a thing forlorn; and as to life, but a place of death. All this is made to appear by the angels that fell; for when fallen, what was heaven to them? Suppose they staid but one quarter of an hour there after their fall, before they were cast out, what sweetness found they there, but guilt? What stay, but a continual fall of heart and mind? What society, but to be abandoned of all? And what life, but death in its perfection? Yea, if it be true that some think, that for the promoting of grace, they are admitted yet to enter that place to accuse the saints on earth, yet what do they find there but what is grievous to them? It is the presence of God that makes heaven Heaven in all its beauteousness. Hence David, when he speaks of heaven, says, 'Whom have I in heaven *but thee*?' (Psalm 73:25). As who should say, What would heaven yield to me for delights, if I was there without my God? It is the presence of God that will make heaven sweet to those who are his. And as it is that that makes the place, so it is interest in him that makes the company, and the deeds that are done there, pleasant to the soul. What solace can he that is without God, though he were in heaven, have with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the prophets and angels? How could he join in their thanks, and praises, and blessings of him for ever and ever, in whose favour, mercy, and grace, they are not concerned?

2. Suppose a man, when he dieth, should be made to live for ever, but without the enjoyment of God, what good would his life do him? Why, it would be filled full of horror, darkness, desolation, sorrow, and all things that would tend to make it bitter to the soul. Witness they that live in hell; if it be proper to say they live in hell? It is no more possible for a man to live happily, were he possessed of all that heaven and life could afford him, suppose him to be without interest in God, than it is for a man that hath all the enjoyments of this world, if the sun was taken from him out of the firmament. As all things, whether it be heaven, angels, heavenly pleasures and delights, have had their being of him, so their being is continued by him, and made sweet of him.

Now, for the well managing of our hope, with reference to this special object of it, there are these things to be considered. And now I speak to all. We must know him right, we must come to him right. a. We must know him right. It is essential to happiness, and so to the making of the God of heaven our hope, to know him rightly (John 17:1-3). It is not every fancy, or every imagination of God, that thou mayst have, that will prove that therefore thou knowest God aright. In him there 'is no variableness, neither shadow of turning' (James 1:17). He only is what he is, what imaginations soever we have of him. We may set up idols and images of him, as much in our minds as some do in their houses and in their temples, and be as great, though not so gross idolaters as they. ^[14] Now if thou wouldst know him, thou must diligently

feel for him in his works, in his Word, and in his ways, if perhaps thou mayst find the knowledge of him (Proverbs 2:1-5; Acts 17:27). b. Beware, when thou hast found him, that thou go to him by his Son, whom he has sanctified and sent into the world, to be the way for sinners to go to God; and see that thou keepest in this path always, for out of him he is found intolerable, and a consuming-fire. c. Busy thyself with all thy might to make an interest in his Son, and he will willingly be thy Saviour, for he must become thine before his Father can be the object of thy hope (John 3:36). He that hath the Son, hath the Father, but contrariwise, he that hath not him has neither (2 John 9). d. Stay not in some transient comforts, but abide restless till thou seest an union betwixt thee and this Blessed One; to wit, that he is a root, and thou a branch; that he is head, and thou a member. And then shalt thou know that the case is so between thee and him, when grace and his Spirit has made thee to lay the whole stress of thy justification upon him and has subdued thy heart and mind to be ‘one spirit’ with him (Romans 4:4-5; 1 Corinthians 6:17). e. This done, hope thou in God, for he is become thy hope, that is, the object of it. And for thy encouragement so to do, consider that he is able to bear up thy heart, and has said he will do it, as to this very thing, to all those that thus hope in him. ‘Be of good courage and he shall strengthen thine heart,’ all ye that hope in the Lord (Psalm 31:24). It is manifest, as was said before, that many difficulties lie in the way of hoping; but God will make those difficulties easy, by strengthening the heart of him that hopeth, to hope. He has a way to do that, which no creature can hinder, by the blessed work of his Holy Spirit. He can show us he loves us, that he may encourage our hope. And as he can work in us for our encouragement, so he can and will, as was said before, himself, in his time, answer our hope, by becoming our hope himself. ‘The Lord *shall be* the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel’ (Joel 3:16).

His faithfulness also is a great encouragement to his, to hope for the accomplishment of all that he hath promised unto his people. ‘Hath he said it, and shall he not make it good?’ When he promised to bring Israel into the land of Canaan, he accomplished it to a tittle. ‘There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass’ (Joshua 21:45; 23:14). Also what he with his mouth had promised to David, with his hand he fulfilled to Solomon in the view of all the thousands of Israel (1 Kings 8:22-24; 2 Chronicles 6:7-10).

[*Third. The persons who are concerned
in the management of this duty of hope.*]

I will omit making mention again of the encouragements spoken of before, and shall now come to the third thing specified in this part of the text, to wit, to show more distinctly, who, and what particular persons they are, who are concerned in this exhortation to hope.

They are put, as you see, under this general term Israel; ‘Let Israel hope in the Lord.’ And, ‘He shall save Israel from all his troubles.’ Israel is to be taken three ways, in the Scripture. 1. For such that are Israel after the flesh. 2. For such as are such neither after the flesh nor the Spirit; but in their own fancies and carnal imaginations only. 3. For such as are Israel after God, or the Spirit.

1. Israel is to be taken for those that are such after the flesh; that is, for those that

sprang from the loins of Jacob, and are called, 'Israel after the flesh, the children of the flesh.' Now these, as such, are not the persons interested in this exhortation, for by the flesh comes no true spiritual and eternal grace (Romans 9:6-8; 2 Corinthians 1:10-18). Men are not within the bounds of the promise of eternal life, as they are the children of the flesh, either in the more gross or more refined sense (Philippians 3:4-6). Jacob was as spiritual a father as any HE, I suppose that now professeth the gospel; but his spiritualness could not convey down to this children, that were such only after the flesh, that spirit and grace that causeth sound conversion, and salvation by Jesus Christ. Hence Paul counts it a carnal thing to glory in this; and tells us plainly, If he had heretofore known Christ thus, that is, to have been his brother or kinsman, according to the flesh, or after that, he would henceforth know him, that is, so, 'no more' (2 Corinthians 5:16-18). For though the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet not that multitude, but the remnant that the Lord hath chosen and shall call, shall be saved (Romans 9:27; Joel 2:32). This, therefore, is as an arrow against the face of that false doctrine that the Jews leaned upon, to wit, that they were in the state of grace, and everlasting favour of God, because the children and offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But,

2. Israel may be taken for such as are neither so after the flesh, nor the Spirit, but in their own fancy and imagination only. And such I take to be all those that you read of in Revelation 2:9 which said 'they were Jews, and were not,' 'but did lie' (Revelation 3:9).

These I take to be those carnal gospellers, ^[15] that from among the Gentiles pretended themselves to be Jews inwardly, whose circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, when they were such only in their own fancies and conceits, and made their profession out as a lie (Romans 2:28-29). Abundance of these there are at this day in the world; men who know neither the Father, nor the Son, nor anything of the way of the Spirit, in the work of regeneration; and yet presume to say, 'They are Jews'; that is, truly and spiritually the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 'For' now, 'he *is* not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither *is that* circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he *is* a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision *is that* of the heart in the spirit - whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.' And although it may please some now to say, as they of old said to them of the captivity, 'We seek your God as ye *do*' (Ezra 4:2); yet at last it will be found, that as they, such have 'no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem' (Nehemiah 2:20). And I would from hence caution all to take heed of presuming to count themselves Jews, unless they have a substantial ground so to do. For to do this without a good bottom, makes all our profession a lie; and not only so, but it hindereth us of a sight of a want of an interest in Jesus Christ, without which we can not be saved; yea, such an one is the great self-deceiver, and so the worst deceiver of all: for he that deceives his own self, his own heart, is a deceiver in the worst sense; nor can any disappointment be like unto that which casts away soul and body at once (James 1:22, 26). O slender thread! that a man should think, that because he fancieth himself 'an Israelite indeed,' that therefore he shall go for such an one in the day of judgment; or that he shall be able to cheat God with a pitiful say-so!

3. But the Israel under consideration in the text, is Israel after God, or the Spirit; hence they are called 'the Israel of God,' because they are made so of him, not by generation, nor by fancy, but by Divine power (Song of Solomon 6:16). And thus was the first of

this name made so, 'Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel' (Genesis 32:28). This then is the man concerned in the text, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord'; to wit, Israel that is so of God's making, and of God's allowance: for men are not debarred from calling themselves after this most godly name, provided they are so indeed; all that is dangerous is, when men shall think this privilege comes by carnal generation, or that their fancying of themselves to be such will bear them out in the day of judgment. Otherwise, if men become the true servants of God by Christ, they have, as I said, an allowance so to subscribe themselves. 'One shall say, I *am* the Lord's and another shall call *himself* by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe *with* his hand unto the Lord, and surname *himself* by the name of Israel' (Isaiah 44:5). But then, for the further describing of such, they must be men of circumcised and tender hearts; they must be such 'which worship God in the spirit, and that rejoice in Christ Jesus, and that have no confidence in the flesh' (Philippians 3:3), for these are the Nathaniels, the Israelites indeed in whom there is no guile (John 1:47), and these are they that are intended in the exhortation, when he saith, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord.'

For these are formed for that very end, that they might hope in the Lord; yea, the word and testament are given to them for this purpose (Psalm 78:5-7). These are prisoners of hope all the time they are in the state of nature, even as the whole creation is subjected under hope, all the time of its bondage, by the sin and villainy of man; and unto them it shall be said, in the dispensation of the fullness of time, 'Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope' (Zechariah 9:12); as certainly as that which is called the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Romans 8:18-21). Only here, as I said before, let all men have a care in this thing: this is the pinnacle, the point; he that is right here, is right in all that is necessary to salvation; but he that misses here, can by no means be right anywhere to his soul's advantage in the other world.

[*Improvement.*]

If I should a little improve the text where this title is first given to man, and show the posture he was in when it was said to him, 'Thy name shall be called Israel'; and should also debate upon the cause or ground of that, 'An Israelite indeed,' thou mightest not repent it who shall read it; and therefore a few words to each.

1. When Jacob received the name of Israel, he was found wrestling with the angel; yea, and so resolved a wrestler was he, that he purposed, now he had begun, not to give out without a blessing, 'I will not let thee go,' said he, 'except thou bless me' (Genesis 32:26). Discouragements he had while he wrestled with him, to have left off, before he obtained his desire; for the angel bid him leave off; 'let me go,' said he. He had wrestled all night, and had not prevailed; and now the day brake upon him, and consequently his discouragement was like to be the greater, for that now the majesty and terribleness of him with whom he wrestled would be seen more apparently; but this did not discourage him: besides, he lost the use of a limb as he wrestled with him; yet all would not put this Israel out. Pray he did, and pray he would, and nothing should make him leave off prayer, until he had obtained, and therefore he was called 'Israel.' 'For as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed' (Genesis 32:28, 30). A wrestling spirit of prayer is a demonstration of an Israel of God; this Jacob had, this he made use of, and by this he obtained the name of 'Israel.' A

wrestling spirit of prayer in straits, difficulties, and distresses; a wrestling spirit of prayer when alone in private, in the night, when none eye seeth but God's then to be at it, then to lay hold of God, then to wrestle, to hold fast, and not to give over until the blessing is obtained, is a sign of one that is an Israel of God.

2. 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile' (John 1:47). This was the testimony of the Lord Jesus concerning Nathaniel (verse 46). Nathaniel was persuaded by Philip to come to Jesus, and as he was coming, Jesus saith to the rest of the disciples concerning him, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.' Then said Nathaniel to Jesus, 'Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee' (verse 15). Nathaniel, as Jacob, was at prayer, at prayer alone under the fig-tree, wrestling in prayer, for what no man can certainly tell, but probably for the Messiahs, or for the revelation of him: for the seeing Jews were convinced that the time of the promise was out; and all men were in expectation concerning John, whether he might not be he (Luke 3:15). But Nathaniel was under the fig-tree, alone with God, to inquire of him, and that with great earnestness and sincerity; else the Lord Jesus would not thus have excused him of hypocrisy, and justified his action as he did, concluding from what he did there that he was a true son of Jacob; and ought, as he, to have his name changed from what his parents gave him, to this given him of Christ, 'An Israelite indeed.' Wherefore, from both these places, it is apparent, that a wrestling spirit of prayer, in private, is one of the best signs that this or that man or woman is of Israel; and, consequently, such who are within the compass of the exhortation here, saying, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord.' I say, it is this wrestling spirit of prayer with God alone; for as for that of public prayer, though I will not condemn it, it gives not ground for this character, notwithstanding all the flourishes and excellencies that may therein appear. I am not insensible what pride, what hypocrisy, what pretences, what self-seekings of commendations and applause, may be countenanced by those concerned in, or that make public prayers; and how little thought or savour of God may be in all so said; but this closet, night, or alone prayer, is of another stamp, and attended, at least so I judge, with that sense, those desires, that simplicity, and those strugglings, wherewith that in public is not.^[16] Nay, I think verily a man can not addict himself to these most solemn retirements, without some of Jacob's and Nathaniel's sense and sincerity, wrestlings and restlessness for mercy; wherefore, laying aside all other, I shall abide by this, That the man that is as I have here described, is not an Israelite of the flesh, nor one so only in his fancy or imagination, but one made so of God; one that is called a child of promise, and one to whom this exhortation doth belong: 'Let Israel hope in the Lord'; to wit, they that serve God by prayer day and night (Luke 2:37; Acts 26:5-7). These, I say, are Israel, the Israel of God, and let these hope in the Lord, from now, 'henceforth, and for ever' (Psalm 131:3).

[SECOND. *The manner by which the exhortation is expressed.*]

Having thus briefly touched upon those three things that are contained in the matter of the exhortation, I now come to speak a word to the manner of praises by which the exhortation is presented to us, 'Let Israel hope'; he doth not say, Israel hath hoped; Israel did hope; or Israel can hope, but 'let Israel hope in the Lord.' 'Let' is a word very copious, and sometimes signifies this, and sometimes that, even according as the nature or reason of the thing under debate, or to be expressed, will with truth and

advantage bear. Let him hope,

First. Sometimes 'let' is equivalent to a command; 'Let every soul be subject to the higher powers,' this is a command. 'Let all things be done decently and in order,' this also is a command. So here, 'Let Israel hope,' this also is a command; and so enjoins a duty upon Israel; for why, since they seek for mercy, should they not have it; now a command lays a very strong obligation upon a man to do this or another duty. 'He commandeth all men every where to repent'; but Israel only to hope in his mercy. Now take the exhortation and convert it into a commandment, and it showeth us, a. in what good earnest God offers his mercy to his Israel; he commands them to hope in him, as he is and will be so to them. b. It supposes an impediment in Israel, as to the faculty of receiving or hoping in God for mercy; we that would have God be merciful, we that cry and pray to him to show us mercy, have yet that weakness and impediment in our faith, which greatly hindereth us from a steadfast hoping in the Lord for mercy. c. It suggesteth also, that Israel SINS, if he hopeth not in God, God would not that all should attempt to hope, because they have no faith; for he is for having of them first believe, knowing that it is in vain to think of hoping, until they have believed; but Israel has believed, and therefore God has commanded them to hope, and they sin if they obey him not in this, as in all other duties. He commands thee, I say, since thou hast believed in his Son, to hope, that is, to expect to see his face in the next world with joy and comfort; this is hoping, this is thy duty, this God commands thee.

Second. As this word 'let' is sometimes equivalent to a command, so it is expressed sometimes also to show a grant, leave, or license, to do a thing: such are these that follow, 'Let us come boldly to the throne of grace' (Hebrews 4:6). 'Let us draw near with a true heart' (chapter 10). 'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering' (verses 22-23). Here also this manner of expressing the thing may be taken in the same sense, to wit, to show that Israel has a grant, a leave, a license, to trust in the Lord. And O! what a privilege is this, but who believes it? And yet as truly as God has granted to Jacob, to Israel, repentance unto life, and by that means has made him fly for refuge, to lay hold of Christ set before him as a justifier; so has he granted him leave and license to trust in him for ever, and to hope for his favour in the next world.

And if you take the word in this sense, to wit, for a grant, leave, or license, to hope in God; then a. This shows how liberal God is of himself, and things, to Israel. Let Israel hope in me, trust to me, expect good things at my hand; I give him leave and license to do it. Let him live in a full expectation of being with me, and with my Son in glory; I give him leave to do so; he has license from me to do so. b. Understand the word thus, and it shows us with what boldness and confidence God would have us hope in him. They that have leave and license to do a thing, may do it with confidence and boldness, without misgivings and reluctance of mind; this is our privilege; we may live in a full assurance of hope unto the end, we may hope perfectly to the end, we have leave, license, and a grant to do it. c. Understand the word thus, and it also shows you how muddy, how dark those of Israel are, and how little they are acquainted with the goodness of their God, who stand shrinking at his door like beggars, and dare not in a godly sort be bold, with his mercy. Wherefore standest thou thus with thy Ifs and thy O-buts, O thou poor benighted Israelite. Wherefore putteth thou thy hand in thy bosom, as being afraid to touch the hem of the garment of the Lord? Thou hast a leave, a grant, a license, to hope for good to come, thy Lord himself has given it to thee,

saying, 'LET Israel hope in the Lord.'

Third. This word 'let' is also sometimes used by way of rebuke and snub; 'Let her alone, for her soul *is* vexed' (2 Kings 4:27). 'Let her alone, why trouble ye her?' (Mark 14:6). 'Refrain from these men, and let them alone' (Acts 5:38). And it may also so be taken here. But if so, then it implies, that God in this exhortation rebuketh those evil instruments, those fallen angels, with all others that attempt to hinder us in the exercise of this duty. As Boaz said to his servants, when Ruth was to glean in his field, 'let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not' (Ruth 2:15-16). We have indeed those that continually endeavour to hinder us of living in the full assurance of hope, as to being with God and with Christ in glory: but here is a rebuke for such, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord.' And it shows us, 1. That what suggestions come from Satan to make us that are Israelites to doubt, come not for that end, by virtue of any commission that he hath from God. God has rebuked him in the text, and you may see it also elsewhere. These temptations, therefore, are rather forged of malice, and of despite to our faith and hope; and so should be accounted by us (Zechariah 1:1-3). 2. This shows us also that we should take heed of crediting of that which comes unto us to hinder our hope in the Lord; lest we take part with Satan, while God rebuketh him, and countenanceth that which fights against the grace of God in us. 3. It shows us also that as faith, so hope, can not be maintained with great difficulty, and that we should endeavour to maintain it, and hope through every difficulty.

Fourth. This word 'LET' is sometimes used by way of request or intreaty. 'I pray thee, LET Tamar my sister come' (2 Samuel 13:6). 'LET it be granted to the Jews to do,' etc. (Esther 9:13). And if it be so to be taken here, or if in the best sense this interpretation of it may here be admitted, the consideration thereof is amazing; for then it is all one as if God by the mouth of his servant, the penman of this psalm, did intreat us to hope in him. And why this may not be implied here, as well as expressed elsewhere, I know not. 'God did beseech *you* by us; we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God' (2 Corinthians 5:20). Why should God beseech us to reconcile to him, but that we might hope in him? and if it be thus taken here, it shows, 1. The great condescension of God, in that he doth not only hold out to us the advantages of hoping in God, but desires that we should hope, that we might indeed be partakers of those advantages. 2. It teaches us also humility, and that always in the acts of faith and hope we should mix blushing, and shame, with our joy and rejoicing. Kiss the ground, sinner; put 'thy mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope' (Lamentations 3:29).

Fifth. And lastly, This word is used sometimes by way of caution. 'Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall' (1 Corinthians 10:12). 'Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it' (Hebrews 4:1), and if it should be so taken here, then, 1. This shows us the evil of despair, and that we at times are incident to it; our daily weaknesses, our fresh guilt, our often decays, our aptness to forget the goodness of God, are direct tendencies unto this evil, of which we should be aware; for it robs God of his glory, and us of our comfort, and gratifies none but the devil and unbelief. 2. It showeth us that despair is a fall, a falling down from our liberty; our liberty is to hope; it is our portion from God; for he hath said that himself will be the hope of his people. To do the contrary, is therefore a falling from God, a departing from God through an evil heart of unbelief. It is the greatest folly in the world for an Israelite to despair; 'Why

sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel. My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not? *There is* no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might, he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon,' that is, hope in, 'the Lord, shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, *and* they shall walk and not faint' (Isaiah 40:27-31).

[THIRD. *Inferences from the exhortation.*]

Now we come to those inferences that do naturally flow from this exhortation, and they are in number four.

First. That hope and the exercise of it, is as necessary in its place, as faith, and the exercise of it. All will grant that there is need of a daily exercise of faith; and we are bid to hope unto the end, because hope is the grace that relieveth the soul when dark and weary. Hope is as the bottle to the faint and sinking spirit. Hope calls upon the soul not to forget how far it is arrived in its progress towards heaven. Hope will point and show it the gate afar off; and therefore it is called the hope of salvation. Hope exerciseth itself upon God.

1. By those mistakes that the soul hath formerly been guilty of, with reference to the judgment that it hath made of God, and of his dealings with it. And this is an excellent virtue. 'I said,' once says the church, that 'my hope is perished from the Lord,' but I was deceived; 'this I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope'; that is, why, if I give way to such distrusting thoughts, may I not be wrong again? (Lamentations 3:18-21). Therefore will I hope! This virtue is that which belongs to this grace only; for this and this only is it that can turn unbelief and doubts to advantage. 'I said in my haste,' said David, 'I am cut off from before thine eyes'; nevertheless I was mistaken; 'thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee' (Psalm 31:22). And what use doth he make of this? Why, an exhortation to all good men to hope, and to take advantage to hope from the same mistakes. I think I am cast off from God, says the soul; so thou thoughtest afore, says memory, but thou wast mistaken then, and why not the like again? and therefore will I hope. When I had concluded that God would never come near me more, yet after that he came to me again, and as I was then, so I am now; therefore will I hope.

2. True hope, in the right exercise of it upon God, makes no stick at weakness or darkness; but rather worketh up the soul to some stay, by these. Thus Abraham's hope wrought by his weakness (Romans 4). And so Paul, when I am weak, then I am strong; I will most gladly therefore rejoice in mine infirmities (2 Corinthians 12). But this can not be done where there is no hope, nor but by hope: for it is hope, and the exercise of it, that can say, Now I expect that God should bring good out of all this. And as for the dark, it is its element to act in that: 'But hope that is seen is not hope' (Romans 8:24). But we must hope for that we see not. So David, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? hope thou in God.' Christians have no reason to mistrust the goodness of God, because of their weakness, etc. '*I had fainted* unless I had believed to see' (Psalm 27:13). By believing there, he means hoping to see, as the exhortation drawn from

thence doth import.

3. Hope will make use of our calling, to support the soul, and to help it, by that, to exercise itself in a way of expectation of good from God. Hence the apostle prays for the Ephesians, that they may be made to see what is ‘the hope of their calling’; that is, what good that is which by their calling they have ground to hope is laid up in heaven, and to be brought unto them at the appearance of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:17-18). For thus the soul by this grace of hope will reason about this matter: God has called me; surely it is to a feast. God has called me to the fellowship of his Son, surely it is that I may be with him in the next world. God has given me the spirit of faith and prayer; surely it is that I might hope for what I believe is, and wait for what I pray for. God has given me some tastes already; surely it is to encourage me to hope that he purposeth to bring me into the rich fruition of the whole.

4. Hope will exercise itself upon God by those breakings wherewith he breaketh his people for their sins. ‘The valley of Achor’ must be given ‘for a door of hope’ (Hosea 2:15). The valley of Achor; what is that? Why, the place where Achan was stoned for his wickedness, and the place where all Israel was afflicted for the same (Joshua 7). I say, hope can gather by this, that God has a love to the soul; for when God hateth a man he chastiseth him not for his trespasses.^[17] ‘If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons’ (Hebrews 12:8). Hence Moses tells Israel, that when the hand of God was upon them for their sins, they should consider in their heart, ‘that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee’ (Deuteronomy 8:5). And why thus consider, but that a door might be opened for hope to exercise itself upon God by this? This is that also that is intended in Paul to the Corinthians, ‘When we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world’ (1 Corinthians 11:32). Is not here a door of hope? And why a door of hope, but that by it, God’s people, when afflicted, should go out by it from despair by hope?

[*Second.*] But it is to be inferred, secondly, That the exercise of hope upon God is very delightful to him: else he would not have commanded and granted us a liberty to hope, and have snibbed those that would hinder. ‘Behold, the eye of the Lord *is* upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine’ (Psalm 33:18,19). That God is much delighted in the exercise of this grace, is evident, because of the preparation that he has made for this grace, wherewith to exercise itself. ‘For whatsoever things were writ a-foretime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope’ (Romans 15:4). Mark, the whole history of the Bible, with the relation of the wonderful works of God with his people from the beginning of the world, are written for this very purpose, that we, by considering and comparing, by patience and comfort of them, might have hope. The Bible is the scaffold or stage that God has builded for hope to play his part upon in this world. It is therefore a thing very delightful to God to see hope rightly given its colour before him; hence he is said, ‘to laugh at the trial of the innocent’ (Job 9:23). Why at his trial? Because his trial puts him upon the exercise of hope: for then indeed there is work for hope, when trials are sharp upon us. But why is God so delighted in the exercise of this grace of hope?

1. Because hope is a head-grace and governing. There are several lusts in the soul that

can not be mastered, if hope be not in exercise; especially if the soul be in great and sore trials. There is peevishness and impatience, there is fear and despair, there is doubting and misconstruing of God's present hand; and all these become masters, if hope be not stirring; nor can any grace besides put a stop to their tumultuous raging in the soul. But now hope in God makes them all hush, takes away the occasion of their working, and lays the soul at the foot of God. 'Surely,' saith the Psalmist, 'I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother, my soul *is* even as a weaned child.' But how came he to bring his soul into so good a temper? Why, that is gathered by the exhortation following, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever' (Psalm 131:2-3). It was by hoping in the Lord that he quieted his soul, and all its unruly sinful passions.

2. As hope quasheth and quieteth sinful passions, so it putteth into order some graces that can not be put into order without it: as patience, meekness, silence, and long-suffering, and the like. These are all in a day of trial out of place, order, and exercise, where hope forbearth to work. I never saw a distrusting man, a patient man, a quiet man, a silent man, and a meek man, under the hand of God, except he was 'dead in sin' at the time. But we are not now talking of such. But now let a man hope in the Lord, and he presently concludes this affliction is for my good, a sign God loves me, and that which will work out for me a far more and exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and so it puts the graces of the soul into order (Luke 21:19). Wherefore patience, by which a man is bid to possess or keep his soul under the cross, is called 'the patience of hope' (1 Thessalonians 1:3). So in another place, when he would have the church patient in tribulation, and continue instant in prayer, he bids them 'rejoice in hope,' knowing that the other could not be done without it (Romans 12:12).

3. God takes much delight in the exercise of hope, because it construeth all God's dispensations, at present, towards it, for the best: 'When he hath tried me I shall come forth like gold' (Job 23:10). This is the language of hope. God, saith the soul, is doing of me good, making of me better, refining of my inward man. Take a professor that is without hope, and either he suffereth affliction of pride and ostentation, or else he picks a quarrel with God and throws up all. For he thinks that God is about to undo him; but hope construeth all to the best, and admits no such unruly passions to carry the man away.

4. Therefore hope makes the man, be the trials what they will, to keep still close to the way and path of God. 'My foot,' said hoping Job, 'hath held his steps, his way have I kept and not declined, neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips' (Job 23:11-12). And again, 'Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way: though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death' (Psalm 44:18-19). But how came they thus patiently to endure? Why, they by hope put patience and prayer into exercise. They knew that their God was as it were but asleep, and that in his time he would arise for their help; and when he did arise he would certainly deliver. Thus is this psalm applied by Paul (Romans 8).

[*Third.*] There is also inferred from this exhortation, that the hope of those that are not Israelites is not esteemed of God. 'Let Israel hope.' The words are exclusive, shutting out the rest. He doth not say, Let Amalek hope, let Babylon, or the Babylonians hope;

but even in and by this exhortation shutteth out both the rest and their hope from his acceptance. This being concluded, it follows, that some may hope and not be the better for their hope. 'The hypocrite's hope shall perish' (Job 8:13); their hope *shall be as* the giving up of the ghost (Job 11:20). 'For what *is* the hope of the hypocrite?' (Job 27:8). Again, 'The hope of unjust *men* perisheth' (Proverbs 11:7). There is a hope that perisheth, both it and he that hoped with it together. The reasons are,

1. Because it floweth not from faith and experience, but rather from conceit and presumption. Hope, as I have told you, if it be right, cometh of faith, and is brought forth by experience: but the hope now under consideration is alone, and has no right original, and therefore not regarded. It is not the hope of God, but the hope of man; that is, it is not the hope of God's working, but the hope that standeth in natural abilities. 'Thou wastest away the things which grow *out* of the dust of the earth, and thou destroyest the hope of man' (Job 14:19). Whatsoever in religious matters is but of a carnal and earthly existence, must be washed away, when the overflowing scourge shall at the end pass over the world (Isaiah 28:17-19).

2. Because the Lord's mercy is not the object of it. The worldly man makes gold, or an arm of flesh his hope; that is, the object of it, and so he despiseth God (Job 31:24; Jeremiah 3:23). Or if he be a religious hypocrite, his hope terminates in his own doings: he trusteth, or hopeth, in himself, that he is righteous (Luke 18:9). All these things are abhorred of God, nor can he, with honour to his name, or in a compliance with his own eternal designs, give any countenance to such a hope as this.

3. This hope has no good effect on the heart and mind of him that hath it. It purifieth not the soul, it only holds fast a lie, and keeps a man in a circuit, at an infinite distance from waiting upon God.

4. This hope busieth all the powers of the soul about things that are of the world, or about those false objects on which it is pitched; even as the spider diligently worketh in her web - unto which also this hope is compared - in vain. This hope will bring that man that has it, and exercises it, to heaven, when leviathan is pulled out of the sea with a hook; or when his jaw is bored through with a thorn: but as he that thinks to do this, hopeth in vain; so, even so, will the hope of the other be as unsuccessful; 'So *are* the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrite's hope shall perish; whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust *shall be* a spider's web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure' (Job 8:13-15; 41:1-9). This is the hope that is not esteemed of God, nor the persons that have it, preferred by him a whit before their own dung (Job 20:4-8).

[*Fourth.*] There is also inferred from these words, That Israel himself is subject to swerve in his soul about the object of hope. For this text is to him as a command and grant, so an instruction by which he is to be informed, how and upon whom to set his hope. That Israel is apt to swerve as to the object of his hope, is evident, for that so much ado is made by the prophets to keep him upon his God; in that so many laws and statutes are made to direct him to set his hope in God: and also by his own confession (Psalm 78:7; Jeremiah 3:23-25; Lamentations 4:17). The fears also and the murmurings and the faintings that attend the godly in this life, do put the truth of this inference out of doubt. It is true, the apostle said, that he had the sentence of death in himself, that

he might not trust or hope in himself, but in God that raiseth the dead. But this was an high pitch; Israel is not always here; there are many things that hinder.

1. The imperfection of our graces. There is no grace perfected in the godly. Now it is incident to things defective, to be wanting in their course. Faith is not perfect; and hence the sensible Christian feels what follows: love is not perfect, and we see what follows; and so of hope and every other grace; their imperfection makes them stagger.

2. Israel is not yet beyond temptations. There is a deal to attend him with temptations, and he has a soul so disabled by sin, that at all times he can not fix on God that made him, but is apt to be turned aside to lying vanities: the very thing that Jonah was ensnared with (Jonah 2:8).

3. The promising helps that seem to be in other things, are great hindrances to a steady fixing, by hope, on God; there are good frames of heart, enlargements in duties, with other the like, that have through the darkness, and the legality of our spirits been great hindrances to Israel. Not that their natural tendency is to turn us aside; but our corrupt reason getting the upper hand, and bearing the stroke in judgment, converts our minds and consciences to the making of wrong conclusions upon them. 4. Besides, as the mind and conscience, by reason, is oft deluded to draw these wrong conclusions upon our good frames of heart, to the removing of our hope from the right object unto them; so by like reason, are we turned by unwholesome doctrines, and a carnal understanding of the Word, to the very same thing: ‘cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water,’ Israel, even God’s people, are apt to make unto themselves to the forsaking of their God (Jeremiah 2:11-13).

Thus have I gone through the first part of the text, which consists of an exhortation to hope in the Lord. And have showed you, 1. The matter contained therein. 2. Something of the reason of the manner of the phrase. 3. And have drawn, as you see, some inferences from it.

[SECOND. THE REASON URGED TO ENFORCE THE EXHORTATION.]

I now come to the second part of the text, which *is a reason urged to enforce the exhortation*, ‘Let Israel hope in the Lord.’ Why? ‘For with the Lord *there is* mercy.’ There is the reason, let him hope, for there is mercy; let him hope in the Lord, for with him there is mercy. The reason is full and suitable. For what is the ground of despair, but a conceit that sin has shut the soul out of all interest in happiness? and what is the reason of that, but a persuasion that there is no help for him in God? Besides, could God do all but show mercy, yet the belief of that ability would not be a reason sufficient to encourage the soul to hope in God. For the block SIN, which can not be removed but by mercy, still lies in the way. The reason therefore is full and suitable, having naturally an enforcement in it, to the exhortation. And,

First. To touch upon the reason in a way *general*, and then [*Second*] to come to it more *particularly*. ‘Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord *there is* mercy,’ mercy to be bestowed, mercy designed to be bestowed.

1. Mercy to be bestowed. This must be the meaning. What if a man has never so much gold or silver, or food, or raiment: yet if he has none to communicate, what is the distressed, or those in want, the better? What if there be mercy with God, yet if he has none to bestow, what force is there in the exhortation, or what shall Israel, if he hopeth, be the better. But God has mercy to bestow, to give. 'He saith on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David' (Acts 13:34). And again, 'The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus' (2 Timothy 1:16). Now then, here lies the encouragement. The Lord has mercy to give; he has not given away ALL his mercy; his mercy is not clean gone for ever (Psalm 77:8). He has mercy yet to give away, yet to bestow upon his Israel. 'Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord *there is* mercy.'

2. As there is with God mercy to be bestowed, so there is mercy designed to be bestowed or given to Israel. Some men lay by what they mean to give away, and put that in a bag by itself, saying, This I design to give away, this I purpose to bestow upon the poor. Thus God; he designeth mercy for his people (Daniel 9:4). Hence the mercy that God's Israel are said to be partakers of, is a mercy kept for them. And 'thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor,' and laid up for them (Psalm 68:10). This is excellent and is true, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord, for *there is* with him mercy,' kept, prepared, and laid up for them! (Psalm 61:7). When God designs the bestowing of mercy, we may well hope to be partakers (Psalm 31:19). The poor will go merrily to weddings and funerals, and hope for an alms all the way they go, when they come to understand that there is so much kept, prepared, and laid up for them by the bridegroom, etc.^[18] But 'He keepeth mercy for thousands!' (Exodus 34:7).

3. As God has mercies to bestow, and as he has designed to bestow them, so those mercies are no fragments or the leavings of others: but mercies that are full and complete to do for thee, what thou wantest, wouldst have, or canst desire. As I may so say, God has his bags that were never yet untied, never yet broken up, but laid by him through a thousand generations, for those that he commands to hope in his mercy. As Samuel kept the shoulder for Saul, and as God brake up that decreed place for the sea, so hath he set apart, and will break up his mercy for his people: mercy and grace that he gave us before we had a being, is the mercy designed for Israel (2 Timothy 1:9). Whole mercies are allotted to us; however, mercy sufficient (1 Samuel 9:23-24; Job 38:10). But to be a little more distinct.

[*Second, particularly.*] I find that the goodness of God to his people is diversely expressed in his word: sometimes by the word grace; sometimes by the word love; and sometimes by the word mercy; even as our badness against him is called iniquity, transgression, and sin. When it is expressed by that word 'grace,' then it is to show that what he doth is of his princely will, his royal bounty, and sovereign pleasure. When it is expressed by that word 'love,' then it is to show us that his affection was and is in what he doth, and that he doth what he doth for us, with complacency and delight. But when it is set forth to us under the notion of 'mercy,' then it bespeaks us to be in a state both wretched and miserable, and that his bowels and compassions yearn over us in this our fearful plight. Now, the Holy Ghost chooseth - as it should seem - in this place, to present us with that goodness that is in God's heart towards us, rather under the term of mercy; for that, as I said before, it so presenteth us with our misery, and his pity and compassion; and because it best pleaseth us when we

apprehend God in Christ as one that has the love of compassion and pity for us. Hence we are often presented with God's goodness to us to cause us to hope, under the name of pity and compassion. 'In his pity he redeemed them,' and 'like as a father pitieth *his* children, *so* the Lord pitieth them that fear him' (Isaiah 63:9; Psalm 103:13). 'The Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy,' he also is gracious and 'full of compassion' (James 5:11; Psalm 78:38). 'Thou, O Lord, *art* a God full of compassion,' and thy 'compassions fail not' (Psalm 86:15; 111:4; Lamentations 3:22).

The words being thus briefly touched upon, I shall come to treat of two things. FIRST, more distinctly, I shall show you what kind of mercy is with the Lord, as a reason to encourage Israel to hope. SECONDLY, And then shall show what is to be inferred from this reason, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord *there* is mercy.'

[FIRST, *The kind of mercy that Israel is to hope for.*]

First, 'With him *there* is TENDER MERCY, and therefore let Israel hope' (Psalm 25:6; 103:4; 119:156). Tender mercy is mercy in mercy, and that which Israel of old had in high estimation, cried much for, and chose that God would deal with their souls by that. 'Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me,' said David, and 'according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions' (Psalm 40:11; 51:1). And again, 'Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live' (Psalm 119:77). Now of this sort of mercies God has a great many, a multitude to bestow upon his people. And they are thus mentioned by the word, to cause us to hope in him. And is not this alluring, is not this enticing to the Israel of God to hope, when the object of their hope is a God 'very pitiful, and of tender mercy?' Yea, a God whose tender mercies are great and many. There are two things that this word tender mercy importeth. 1. The first is, that sin will put a believer, if he giveth way thereto, into a very miserable condition. 2. That God would have them hope, that though sin may have brought any of them into this condition, the Lord will restore them with much pity and compassion. 'Let Israel hope in the Lord,' for with the Lord *there* is mercy, tender mercy.

1. For the first of these, That sin will put a believer, if he gives way thereto, into a very miserable condition, and that upon a double account. a. For that it will bring him into fears of damnation. b. In that it will make his soul to be much pained under those fears.

We will wave the first, and come to the second of these. The pains that guilt will make, when it wounds the conscience, none knows but those to whom sin is applied by the Spirit of God, in the law. Yet all may read of it in the experience of the godly; where this pain is compared to a wound in the flesh, to fire in the bones, to the putting of bones out of joint, and the breaking of them asunder (Psalm 38:3, 5, 7-8; 102:3; 22:14; Lamentations 1:13; 3:4). He that knows what wounds and broken bones are, knows them to be painful things. And he that knows what misery sin will bring the soul into with its guilt, will conclude the one comes no whit short of the other. But now he that hath these wounds, and also these broken bones, the very thoughts of a man that can cure, and of a bonesetter, will make him afraid, yea, quake for fear; especially if he knows that though he has skill, he has a hard heart, and fingers that are like iron. He that handleth a wound, had need have fingers like feathers or down; to be sure the patient wisheth they were! Tenderness is a thing of great worth to such; and such men

are much inquired after by such; yea, their tenderness is an invitation to such to seek after them. And the thing is true in spirituals (Isaiah 42:3). Wherefore David cried, as I said before, 'Have mercy upon me, O God! according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions' (Psalm 51:1). O handle me tenderly, Lord, handle me tenderly, cried David. O cure me, I beseech thee, and do it with thy tender mercy.

Now, answerable to this, the Lord is set forth to Israel, as one with whom is mercy, consequently tender mercy. Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord *there is* tender mercy. God therefore would have the wounded and bruised, and those whose pains may be compared to the pains and pangs of broken bones, to hope that he will restore them with much pity and compassion, or as you have it before, in pity and tender mercy. See how he promiseth to do it by the prophet. 'A bruised reed shall he not break; and the smoking flax shall he not quench' (Isaiah 42:3). See how tender he is in the action. 'When he saw him, he had compassion *on him*, and went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him' (Luke 10:33-35). Every circumstance is full of tenderness and compassion. See also how angry he maketh himself with those of his servants that handle the wounded or diseased without this tenderness; and how he catcheth them out of their hand, with a purpose to deal more gently with them himself. 'The diseased,' saith he, 'have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick; neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken; neither have ye brought again that which was driven away; neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them; therefore, ye shepherds, hear the words of the Lord: I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up *that which was* broken, and will strengthen that which was sick' (Ezekiel 34:4, 7, 15-16). Here is encouragement to hope, even according to the reason urged: 'Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord *there is* mercy,' tender mercy.

Second. As with him is mercy tender, *so there is with him mercy that is GREAT*, for with him is great mercy. 'The Lord *is* long-suffering, and of great mercy' (Numbers 14:18). When tenderness accompanies want of skill, the defect is great; but when tenderness and great skill meet together, such a surgeon is a brave accomplished man. Besides, some are more plagued with the sense of the greatness of their sins than others are; the devil having placed or fixed the great sting there. These are driven by the greatness of sin into despairing thoughts, hotter than fire: these have the greatness of their sin betwixt God and them, like a great mountain; yea, they are like a cloud that darkeneth the sun and air.^[19] This man stands under Cain's gibbet, and has the halter of Judas, to his own thinking, fastened about his neck.

And now, cries, he, 'GREAT mercy or NO mercy; for little mercy will do me no good'; such a poor creature thus expostulateth the case with God, 'Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise *and* praise thee?' (Psalm 88:10). Lord, I have destroyed myself, can I live? My sins are more than the sands, can I live? Lord, every one of them are sins of the first rate, of the biggest size, of the blackest line, can I live? I never read that expression but once in all the whole Bible; 'For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it *is* great' (Psalm 25:11). Not that there was but one man in Israel that had committed great iniquities, but because men that have so done, have rather inclined to despair, than to an argument so against the wind. If he

had said, Pardon, for they are little, his reason had carried reason in it; but when he saith, Pardon, for they are great, he seems to stand like a man alone. This is the common language, 'if our transgressions be upon us, and we pine away in them, How should we then live?' (Ezekiel 33:10). Or thus, 'Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, and we are cut off for our parts' (Ezekiel 37:11). Wherefore to such as these, good wishes, tender fingers, and compassion, without GREAT mercy, can do nothing. But behold, O thou man of Israel, thou talkest of great sins; answerable to this, the Scripture speaks of great mercy; and thy great sins are but the sins of a man, but these great mercies are the mercies of a God; yea, and thou art exhorted, even because there is mercy with him, therefore to trust thy soul with him, 'let Israel trust in the Lord; for with the Lord *there is* mercy,' great mercy. This therefore is a truth of singular consolation, that mercy is with the Lord, that tender mercy is with him, that great mercy is with him, both TENDER and GREAT. What would man have more? But,

Third. As great mercy is with the Lord to encourage us to hope, so this mercy that is great, *is* RICH. 'God is rich in mercy' (Ephesians 2:4). There is riches of goodness and riches of grace with him (Romans 2:4; Ephesians 1:7). Things may be great in quantity, and little of value; but the mercy of God is not so. We use to prize small things when great worth is in them; even a diamond as little as a pea, is preferred before a pebble, though as big as a camel. Why, here is rich mercy, sinner; here is mercy that is rich and full of virtue! a drop of it will cure a kingdom. 'Ah! but how much is there of it?' says the sinner. O, abundance, abundance! for so saith the text - 'Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for his' rich 'mercies *are* great' (2 Samuel 24:14). Some things are so rich, and of such virtue, that if they do but touch a man, if they do but come nigh a man, if a man doth but look upon them, they have a present operation upon him; but the very mentioning of mercy, yea, a very thought of it, has sometimes had that virtue in it as to cure a sin-sick soul. Here is virtuous mercy!

Indeed mercy, the best of mercies, are little worth to a self-righteous man, or a sinner fast asleep; we must not, therefore, make our esteems of mercy according to the judgment of the secure and heedless man, but according to the verdict of the Word; nay, though the awakened sinner, he that roareth for mercy all day long, by reason of the disquietness of his heart is the likeliest among sinful flesh, or as likely as another, to set a suitable estimate upon mercy; yet his verdict is not always to pass in this matter. None can know the riches of mercy to the full, but he that perfectly knoweth the evil of sin, the justice of God, all the errors of man, the torments of hell, and the sorrows that the Lord Jesus underwent, when mercy made him a reconciler of sinners to God. But this can be known by none but the God whose mercy it is. This is the pearl of great price.

The richness of mercy is seen in several things. It can save from sin, from great sin, from all sin (Titus 3:5; Matthew 15:22, 28). It can save a soul from the devil, from all devils (Matthew 17:15, 18). It can save a soul from hell, from all hells (Psalm 116:3, 5-6). It can hold us up in the midst of all weaknesses (Psalm 94:18). It can deliver from eternal judgment (Romans 9:23). Yea, what is it that we have, or shall need, that this virtuous mercy can not do for us: 'Let Israel hope in the Lord: for which the Lord is RICH mercy,' mercy full of virtue, and that can do great things.

Fourth. As the mercies that are with the Lord are tender, great, and rich, *so there is a*

MULTITUDE *of them*, and they are called ‘manifold,’ there is a multitude of these rich and virtuous mercies (Psalm 69:13; Revelation 9:19). By multitude, I understand mercies of every sort or kind; mercies for this, and mercies for the other malady; mercies for every sickness, a salve for every sore. Some things that are rich and very full of virtue, have yet their excellency extending itself but to one, or two, or three things for help; and this is their leanness in the midst of their excellencies. But it is not thus with the mercy of God. Some things that are rich and virtuous, are yet so only but at certain seasons; for there are times in which they can do nothing. But it is not so with this tender, great, and rich mercy of God. There are some things, though rich, that are sparingly made use of. But it is not so with this mercy of God. There is a multitude of them; so if one will not another will. There is a multitude of them; so one or other of them is always in their season. There is a multitude of them; and therefore it must not be supposed that God is niggardly as to the communicating of them.

As they are called *a multitude*, so they are called *mercies manifold*. There is no single flower in God’s gospel-garden, they are all double and treble; there is a wheel within a wheel, a blessing within a blessing, in all the mercies of God. Manifold; a man can not receive one, but he receives many, many folded up, one within another. For instance,

1. If a man receiveth Christ, who is called God’s tender mercy; why, he shall find in him all the promises, pardons, justifications, righteousness’s, and redemptions, that are requisite to make him stand clear before the justice of the law, in the sight of God, from sin (Luke 1:76-79; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 4:32; 2 Corinthians 1:20).

2. If a man receive the Spirit, he shall have as folded up in that, for this is the first unfolding itself, many, very many mercies (Ezra 1:4). He shall have the graces, the teachings, the sanctifications, the comforts, and the supports of the Spirit: When he saith in one place, ‘He will give the Spirit,’ he calleth that in another place, ‘the good things’ of God (Luke 11:13; Matthew 7:11).

3. If a man receive the mercy of the resurrection of the body, and God’s people shall assuredly receive that in its time, what a bundle of mercies will be received, as wrapt up in that? He will receive perfection, immortality, heaven, and glory; and what is folded up in these things, who can tell?

I name but these three, for many more might be added, to show you the plenteousness, as well as the virtuousness of the tender, great, and rich mercy of God. A multitude! There is converting mercy, there is preserving mercy, there is glorifying mercy: and how many mercies are folded up in every one of these mercies, none but God can tell. A multitude! There are mercies for the faithful followers of Christ, for those of his that backslide from him, and also for those that suffer for him; and what mercies will by these be found folded up in their mercies, they will better know when they come to heaven. A multitude of preventing mercies in afflictions, in disappointments, in cross providences, there are with God: and what mercies are folded up in these afflicting mercies, in these disappointing mercies, and in these merciful cross providences, must rest in the bosom of him to be revealed, who only is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. A multitude of common mercies; of every day’s mercies, of every night’s mercies, of mercies in relations, of mercies in food and raiment, and of mercies in what of these things there is; and who can number them? David said, He daily was

loaded with God's benefits. And I believe, if, as we are bound, we should at all times return God thanks for all particular mercies, particularly, it would be a burden intolerable, and would kill us out of hand! (Psalm 68:19). And all this is written, that Israel might hope in the Lord: 'Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord *there is* mercy.'

Fifth. As the mercies that are with the Lord are tender, great, rich, a multitude, and manifold; so *they are mercies that DIMINISH NOT in the using*, but that rather increase in the exercising of them. Hence it is said, grace aboundeth, and hath abounded unto many; and that God is able to make all grace abound towards us (Romans 5:15; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Ephesians 1:7-8). The grace of forgiveness I mean, wherein he hath abounded towards us. Now, to abound, is to flow, to multiply, to increase, to greaten, to be more and more; and of this nature is the mercy that is with the Lord; mercy that will abound and increase in the using. Hence he is said to pardon abundantly, to pardon and multiply to pardon: and, again, to exercise loving-kindness; to exercise it, that is, to draw it out to the length; to make the best advantage and improvement of every grain and quality of it (Isaiah 55:7; Jeremiah 9:24). 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth' (Exodus 34:6).

Mercy to a man under guilt, and fear of hell-fire, seems as a little, shrunk-up, or shrivelled thing; there appears no quantity in it. There is mercy, said Cain, but there is not enough; and he died under that conceit (Genesis 4:13). Nor is it as to judgment and thought many times much better with the Israel of God. But behold when God sets mercy to work, it is like the cloud that at first was but like a man's hand, it increaseth until it hath covered the face of heaven. Many have found it thus, yea they have found it thus in their distress (1 Kings 18:41-44). Paul has this expression, 'The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant,' that is, increased towards me exceedingly (1 Timothy 1:13-15). And this is the cause of that change of thoughts that is wrought at last in the hearts of the tempted; at first they doubt, at last they hope; at first they despair, at last they rejoice; at first they quake, while they imagine how great their sins are, and how little the grace of God is; but at last they see such a greatness, such a largeness, such an abundance of increase, in this multiplying mercy of God, that with gladness of heart, for their first thoughts, they call themselves fools, and venture their souls, the next world, and their interest in it, upon this mercy of God.

I tell you, Sirs, you must not trust your own apprehensions nor judgments with the mercy of God; you do not know how he can cause it to abound; that which seems to be short and shrunk up to you, he can draw out, and cause to abound exceedingly. There is a breadth, and length, and depth, and height therein, when God will please to open it; that for the infiniteness can swallow up not only all thy sins, but all thy thoughts and imaginations, and that can also drown thee at last. 'Now unto him that is able,' 'as to mercy,' 'to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen!' (Ephesians 3:20-21). This, therefore, is a wonderful thing, and shall be wondered at to all eternity; that that river of mercy, that at first did seem to be but ankle deep, should so rise, and rise, and rise, that at last it became 'waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over!' (Ezekiel 47:3-5). Now all this is written, that Israel might hope. 'Let Israel hope in the

Lord; for with the Lord *there is* mercy.’

Sixth. As there are with God mercies, tender, great, rich, a multitude, and mercy that abounds; so to encourage us to trust in him, *there is mercy to COMPASS US ROUND ABOUT.* ‘Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked, but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about’ (Psalm 32:10). This is, therefore, the lot of the Israel of God, that they shall, they trusting in their God, be compassed with mercy round about. This is mercy to do for us in this world, that we may arrive safely in that world which is to come. Another text saith, ‘For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as *with* a shield’ (Psalm 5:12). As with a shield. This compassing of them, therefore, is, to the end they may be defended and guarded from them that seek their hurt. When Elisha was in danger, by reason of the army of the Syrians, ‘behold the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire, round about him,’ to deliver him (2 Kings 6:15-17). Round about on every side; or as David hath it, ‘Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side’ (Psalm 71:21). ‘I will encamp about mine house,’ saith God, ‘because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and him that returneth’ (Zechariah 9:1).

This, therefore, is the reason why, notwithstanding all our weaknesses, and also the rage of Satan, we are kept and preserved in a wicked world; we are compassed round about. Hence, when God asked Satan concerning holy Job, he answered, ‘Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?’ (Job 1:10). I can not come at him; thou compassest him, and keepest me out. By this, then, is that scripture opened, ‘Thou *art* my hiding-place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance’ (Psalm 32:7). And, indeed, it would be comely, if we, instead of doubting and despairing, did sing in the ways of the Lord: have we not cause thus to do, when the Lord is round about us with sword and shield, watching for us against the enemy, that he may deliver us from their hand? (Jeremiah 31:12).

This also is the reason why nothing can come at us, but that it may do us good. If the mercy of God is round about us, about us on every side; then no evil thing can by any means come at us, but it must come through this mercy, and so must be seasoned with it, and must have its deadly poison, by it, taken away. Hence Paul, understanding this, saith, ‘And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God’ (Romans 8:28). But how can that be, did they not come to us through the very sides of mercy? and how could they come to us so, since Satan pryeth to wound us deadly in every, or in some private place, if mercy did not compass us round about, round about as with a shield? He went round about Job, to see by what hog-hole he might get at him, that he might smite him under the fifth rib.^[20] But, behold, he found he was hedged out round about; wherefore he could not come at him but through the sides of mercy; and, therefore, what he did to him must be for good. Even thus also shall it be in conclusion with all the wrath of our enemies, when they have done what they can; by the mercy of God, we shall be made to stand. ‘Why boasteth thou thyself in mischief,’ said David, ‘O mighty man? the goodness of God *endureth* continually’ (Psalm 52:1). And that will sanctify to me whatever thou doest against me! This, therefore, is another singular encouragement to Israel to hope in the Lord; for that there is with him mercy to compass us round about.

Here is, I say, room for hope, and for the exercise thereof; when we feel ourselves after the worst manner assaulted. 'Wherefore should I fear,' said David, 'in the day of evil, *when* the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?' (Psalm 49:5). Wherefore? Why now there is all the reason in the world to fear the day of evil is come upon thee, and the iniquity of thy heels doth compass thee about. The hand of God is upon thee, and thy sins, which are the cause, stand round about thee, to give in evidence against thee; and therefore thou must fear. No, saith David, that is not a sufficient reason; he that trusteth in the Lord, Mercy shall compass him about. Here is ground also to pray in faith, as David, saying, 'Keep me as the apple of the eye, hid me under the shadow of thy wings, from the wicked that oppress me, *from* my deadly enemies, *who* compass me about' (Psalm 17:8-9).

Seventh. As all this tender, great, rich, much abounding mercy, compasseth us about; *so that we may hope in the God of our mercy, it is said this mercy IS TO FOLLOW US.* 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever' (Psalm 23:6). It shall follow me, go with me, and be near me, in all the way that I go (Psalm 32:8). There are these six things to be gathered out of this text, for the further support of our hope.

1. It shall follow us to guide us in the way. I will guide thee with mine eye, says God, that is, in the way that thou shalt go. The way of man to the next world, is like the way from Egypt to Canaan, a way not to be wound out but by the pillar of a cloud by day, and a flame of fire by night; that is, with the Word and Spirit. 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me *to* glory' (Psalm 73:24). Thou shalt guide me from the first step to the last that I shall take in this my pilgrimage: Goodness and mercy shall follow me.

2. As God in mercy will guide, so by the same he will uphold our goings in his paths. We are weak, wherefore though the path we go in were never so plain, yet we are apt to stumble and fall. But 'when I said my foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up' (Psalm 94:18). Wherefore we should always turn our hope into prayer, and say, Lord, 'hold up my goings in thy paths, *that* my footsteps slip not' (Psalm 17:5). Be not moved; let mercy follow me.

3. As the God of our mercy has mercy to guide us, and uphold us; so by the same will he instruct us when we are at a loss, at a stand. 'I led Israel about,' says God, 'I instructed him, and kept him as the apple of mine eye' (Deuteronomy 32:10). I say we are often at a loss; David said, after all his brave sayings, in Psalm 119, 'I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant' (verse 176). Indeed a Christian is not so often out of the way, as he is at a stand therein, and knows not what to do. But here also is his mercy as to that. 'Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This *is* the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left' (Isaiah 30:21). Mercy follows for this.

4. Mercy shall follow to carry thee when thou art faint. We have many fainting and sinking fits as we go. 'He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom,' or upon eagles' wings (Isaiah 40:11). He made Israel to ride on the high places of the earth, and made him to suck honey out of the rock (Deuteronomy 32:13).

5. Mercy shall follow us, to take us up when we are fallen, and to heal us of those wounds that we have caught by our falls. ‘The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all *those that be* bowed down’ (Psalm 145:14). And again: ‘The Lord openeth *the yes of* the blind; the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down; the Lord loveth the righteous’ (Psalm 146:8). Or, as we have it in another place, ‘The steps of a *good man* are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth *him with* his hand’ (Psalm 37:23-24). Here is mercy for a hoping Israelite; and yet this is not all.

6. Mercy shall follow us to pardon our sins as they are committed. For though by the act of justification, we are for ever secured from a state of condemnation; yet as we are children, we need forgiveness daily, and have need to pray, ‘Our Father, forgive us our trespasses.’ Now, that we may have daily forgiveness for our daily sins and trespasses, mercy and goodness must follow us; or as Moses has it, ‘And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord! let my Lord, I pray thee, go amongst us, for it *is* a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance’ (Exodus 34:9). Join to this that prayer of his, which you find in Numbers: ‘Now I beseech thee let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord *is* long-suffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation*. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now,’ or hitherto (Numbers 14:17-19). How many times, think you, did Israel stand in need of pardon, from Egypt, until they came to Canaan? Even so many times wilt thou need pardon from the day of thy conversion to the day of death; to the which God will follow Israel, that he may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Eighth. As all this tender, great, rich, abounding, compassing mercy, shall follow Israel to do him good; *so shall it do him* EVERY GOOD TURN, in delivering of him from every judgment that by sin he hath laid himself obnoxious to, with rejoicing. For ‘mercy rejoiceth against judgment’ (James 2:13). That is, applying it to the mercy of God towards his, it rejoiceth in delivering us from the judgments that we have deserved; yea, it delivereth us from all our woes with rejoicing. In the margin it is ‘glorieth’; it glorieth in doing this great thing for us. I have thought, considering how often I have procured judgments and destructions to myself, that God would be weary of pardoning, or else that he would pardon with grudging. But the Word said, ‘He fainteth not nor is weary’ (Isaiah 40:28). ‘I will rejoice over them to do them good - with my whole heart, and with my whole soul’ (Jeremiah 32:41). This doing of us good with rejoicing, this saving of us from deserved judgments with rejoicing, this getting the victory over our destructions for us, with rejoicing; O! it is a marvellous thing! ‘O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory’; the victory for us (Psalm 98:1). And as Paul said, ‘We are more than conquerors through him’ (Romans 8:37); and this he did with triumph and rejoicing (Colossians 2:15). The heart is seen oft-times, more in the manner than in the act that is acted; more in the manner of doing than in doing of the thing. The wickedness of the heart of Moab was more seen in the manner of action than in the words that he spake against Israel. ‘For since thou spakest [of] against him thou skippedst for joy’ (Jeremiah 48:27). So Edom rejoiced at the calamity of his

brother; he looked on it and rejoiced: and in his rejoicing appeared the badness of his heart, and the great spite that he had against his brother Jacob (Obadiah 10:14).

Now, my brethren, I beseech you consider, that God hath not only showed you mercy, but hath done it with rejoicing. Mercy doth not only follow you, but it follows you with rejoicing: yea, it doth not only prevent your ruin, by our repeated transgressions procured, but it doth it with rejoicing. Here is the very heart of mercy seen, in that it rejoiceth against judgment. Like unto this is that in Zephaniah: 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee *is* mighty: he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing' (Zephaniah 3:17-18).

There are many things that show with what an heart mercy is of God extended, as is afore described, to Israel for his salvation; but this, that it acteth with rejoicing, that it saveth with rejoicing, and gets the victory over judgment with rejoicing! is a wonderful one, and one that should be taken notice of by Israel, for his encouragement to hope. 'Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with him *there is* mercy,' tender, great, rich, multiplying mercy, mercy that compasseth us about, that goeth with us all the way, and mercy that rejoiceth to overcome every judgment that seeketh our destruction, as we go toward our Father's house and kingdom!

It is said in the Word, God delighteth in mercy. 'Who *is* a God like unto thee that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy' (Micah 7:18). Here then is a reason of the rejoicing of mercy against judgment. Why, mercy is God's delight; or, as another hath it, 'Mercy pleaseth thee.' What a man delights in, that he will set on foot, and that he will seek to manage, that he will promote, and that he will glory in the success and prosperity of. Why, the text saith, God delighteth in mercy: nor do I believe, how odious soever the comparison may seem to be, that ever man delighteth more in sin, than God hath delighted in showing mercy. Has man given himself for sin? God has given his Son for us, that he might show us mercy (John 3:16). Has man lain at wait for opportunities for sin? God has waited to be gracious, that he might have mercy upon us (Isaiah 30:10). Has man, that he might enjoy his sin, brought himself to a morsel of bread? Why Christ, Lord of all, that he might make room for mercy, made himself the poorest man (Luke 9:58; 2 Corinthians 8:9). Has man, when he has found his sin, pursued it with all his heart? Why God, when he sets a showing mercy, shows it with rejoicing, for he delighteth in mercy.

Here also you may see the reason why all God's paths are mercy and truth to his (Psalm 25:10). I have observed that what a man loveth he will accustom himself unto, whether it be fishing, hunting, or the like. These are his ways, his course, the paths wherein he spends his life, and therefore he is seldom found out of one or another of them. 'Now,' saith David, 'all the paths of the Lord *are* mercy' (Psalm 25:10). He is never out of them: for wherever he is, still he is coming towards his Israel in one or other of these paths, stepping steps of mercy. Hence again it is that you find that at the end of every judgment there is mercy; and that God in the midst of this remembers that (Habakkuk 2:3). Yea, judgment is in mercy; and were it not for that, judgment should never overtake his people (1 Corinthians 11:32). Wherefore let Israel hope in the Lord, seeing with him is all this mercy.

Ninth. Besides all this, the mercy that is with God, and that is an encouragement to Israel to hope in him, IS EVERLASTING: 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him' (Psalm 103:17). From everlasting to everlasting; that is more, more than I said. Well,

1. Then from everlasting; that is, from before the world began; so then, things that are, and are to be hereafter, are to be managed according to those measures that God in mercy took for his people then. Hence it is said, that he has blessed us according as he chose us in Christ, before the world began; that is, according to those measures and grants that were by mercy allotted to us then (Ephesians 1:4). According to that other saying, 'according to his mercy he saved us,' that is, according as mercy had allotted for us before the world began (Titus 3:5). 'According to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began' (2 Timothy 1:9). This is mercy from everlasting, and is the ground and bottom of all dispensations that have been, are, or are to come to his people. And now, though it would be too great a step to a side, to treat of all those mercies that of necessity will be found to stand upon that which is called mercy from everlasting, yet it will be to our purpose, and agreeable to our method, to conclude that mercy to everlasting stands upon that; even as vocation, justification, preservation, and glorification, standeth upon our being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Romans 8:29-30). Here then is the mercy that is with God and that should encourage Israel to hope. The mercy that has concerned itself with them, is mercy from everlasting. Nor may it be thought that a few quarrels of some brain-sick fellows will put God upon taking new measures for his people; what foundation has been laid for his, before he laid the foundation of the world, shall stand; for that it was laid in Christ by virtue of mercy: that is, from everlasting (Romans 9:11). The old laws, which are the Magna Carta, the sole basis of the government of a kingdom, may not be cast away for the pet that is taken by every little gentleman against them.^[21] We have indeed some professors that take a great pet against that foundation of salvation, that the mercy that is from everlasting has laid; but since the kingdom, government, and glory of Christ is wrapped up in it, and since the calling, justification, perseverance, and glorification of his elect, which are called his body and fullness, is wrapt up therein, it may not be laid aside nor despised, nor quarrelled against by any, without danger of damnation.

Here then is the mercy with which Israel is concerned, and which is with God as an encouragement to them that should hope, to hope in him. It is mercy from everlasting; it is mercy of an ancient date; it is mercy in the root of the thing. For it is from this mercy in the root of the thing. For it is from this mercy, this mercy from everlasting, that all, and all those sorts of mercies, of which we have discoursed before, do flow. It is from this that Christ the Saviour flows; this is it, from which that tender mercy, that great mercy, that rich mercy that aboundeth towards us, doth flow; and so of all the rest. Kind brings forth its kind; know the tree by his fruit; and God by his mercy in Christ; yea, and know what God was doing before he made the world, by what he has been doing ever since. And what has God been doing for and to his church from the beginning of the world, but extending to, and exercising loving-kindness and mercy for them? therefore he laid a foundation for this in mercy from everlasting.

2. But mercy from everlasting is but the beginning, and we have discoursed of those mercies that we have found in the bowels of this already, wherefore a word of that

which is to everlasting also. 'From everlasting to everlasting.' Nothing can go beyond to everlasting; wherefore this, to everlasting, will see an end of all. The devil will tempt us, sin will assault us, men will persecute; but can they do it to everlasting? If not, then there is mercy to come to God's people at last; even when all evils have done to us what they can. After the prophet had spoken of the inconceivable blessedness that God hath prepared for them that wait for him, he drops to present wrath, and the sin of God's people in this life. This done, he mounts up again to the first, and saith, 'in those is continuance'; that is, the things laid up for us are everlasting, and therefore 'we shall be saved' (Isaiah 64:4-5). How many things since the beginning have assaulted the world to destroy it, as wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, etc., and yet to this day it abideth. But what is the reason of that? Why, God liveth, upon whose word, and by whose decree it abideth. 'He hath established the earth, and it abideth'; it standeth fast, and 'can not be moved' (Psalm 119:90; 93:1; 96:10). Why, my brethren, mercy liveth, mercy is everlasting; 'His mercy endureth for ever!' (Psalm 136). And therefore the church of God liveth; and when all her enemies have done their all, this is the song that the church shall sing over them: 'They are brought down and fallen, but we are risen, and stand upright!' (Psalm 20:8). Everlasting mercy, with everlasting arms, are underneath (Deuteronomy 33:27).

And as this shows the cause of the life of the church, notwithstanding her ghostly and bodily enemies, so it showeth the cause of her deliverance from her repeated sins. As God said of leviathan 'I will not conceal his parts,' etc. (Job 41:12). So it is very unbecoming of God's people to conceal their sins and miscarriages, for it diminisheth this mercy of God. Let therefore sin be acknowledged, confessed, and not be hid nor dissembled; it is to the glory of mercy that we confess to God and one another what we are; still remembering this, but mercy is everlasting!

As this shows the reason of our life, and the continuance of that, notwithstanding our repeated sins, so it shows the cause of the receiving [or renewing] of our graces, from so many decays and sickness. For this mercy will live, last, and outlast, all things that are corruptible and hurtful unto Israel. Wherefore 'let Israel hope in the Lord,' for this reason, 'for with the Lord *there is* mercy.' 1. Tender mercy for us. 2. Great mercy for us. 3. Rich mercy. 4. Manifold mercy. 5. Abounding mercy towards us. 6. Compassing mercy wherewith we are surrounded. 7. Mercy to follow us wherever we go. 8. Mercy that rejoiceth against judgment. And, 9. Mercy that is from everlasting to everlasting. All these mercies are with God, to allure, to encourage, and uphold Israel in hope.

[SECOND. *What is to be inferred from this reason.*]

I come now to the second thing, which is to show what is to be inferred from this reason. And,

First. This, to be sure, is to be inferred, That Israel, as the child of God, is a pitiful thing of himself; one that is full of weaknesses, infirmities, and defects, should we speak nothing of his transgressions. He that is to be attended with so many mercies, absolutely necessary mercies, for there is not in these mercies one that can be spared, must needs be in himself a poor indigent creature. Should you see a child attended with so many engines to make him go, as the child of God is attended with mercies to make him stand, you would say, What an infirm, decrepit, helpless thing is this! ^[22] Alas! I

have here counted up mercies in number nine. If I had counted up nine hundred and ninety-nine, all had been the same, for the child of God would not have one to spare. The text saith, 'The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy,' and all little enough to preserve his Israel (Psalm 119:64). Indeed, those that I have presented the reader with are the chief heads of mercies; or the head-mercies from which many others flow. But, however, were they but single mercies, they show with great evidence our deficiency; but being double, they show it much more.

Should it be said there is such a lord has a son, a poor decrepit thing; he is forced to wear things to strengthen his ankles, things to strengthen his knees, things to strengthen his loins, things to keep up his bowels, things to strengthen his shoulders, his neck, his hands, fingers; yea, he can not speak but by the help of an engine, nor chew his food but by the help of an engine. What would you say? What would you think? Would you not say such a one is not worth the keeping, and that his father can not look for any thing from him, but that he should live upon high charge and expense, as long as he liveth; besides all the trouble such an one is like to be of to others. Why this is the case: Israel is such an one, nay, a worse. He can not live without tender mercy, without great mercy, without rich mercy, without manifold mercy and unless mercy abounds towards him. He can not stand if mercy doth not compass him round about, nor go unless mercy follows him. Yea, if mercy that rejoiceth against judgment doth not continually flutter over him, the very moth will eat him up, and the canker will consume him (Job 4:19). Wherefore it is necessary to the making of Israel live and flourish, that everlasting mercy should be over his head, and everlasting mercy under his feet, with all the afore-mentioned mercies, and more in the bowels of it. But I say doth not this sufficiently show, had we but eyes to see it, what a sad and deplorable creature the child of God of himself is? O! this is not believed nor considered as it should. Vain man would be wise; sinful man would be holy; and poor, lame, infirm, helpless man, would be strong, and fain persuade others that he hath a sufficiency of himself. But I say, if it be so, what need all this mercy? If thou canst go lustily, what mean thy crutches? No, no, Israel, God's Israel, when awake, stands astonished at his being surrounded with mercies, and cries out, 'I am not worthy of the least [I am less than the least] of all thy mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant' (Genesis 32:10).

Second. This also showeth how sorely the enemies of Israel are bent to seek his destruction. The devil is, by way of eminence, called the enemy of God's people: 'the devil, your adversary' (1 Peter 5:8). And this, that there are so many mercies employed about us, and all to bring us to the place which God hath appointed for us, doth demonstrate it. Should you see a man that was not to go from door to door, but he must be clad in a coat of mail, must have a helmet of brass upon his head, and for his life-guard not so few as a thousand men to wait upon him; would you not say, Surely this man has store of enemies at hand, surely this man goes continually in danger of his life? Why, this is the case, enemies lie in wait for poor Israel in every hole; he can neither eat, drink, wake, sleep, work, sit still, talk, be silent; worship his God in public or in private, but he is in danger of being stabbed, or being destroyed. Hence, as was said before, he is compassed about with mercy as with a shield (Micah 7:20). And again it is said concerning these, 'God's truth,' his mercy, '*shall be thy shield and buckler*' (Psalm 91:4). And again, '*He is a buckler to all them that trust in him*' (2 Samuel 22:31). Yea, David being a man sensible of his own weakness, and of the rage

and power of his enemies, cries out to his God to take hold of shield and buckler, and to stand up for his help (Psalm 35:2). But what need these things be asserted, promised, or prayed for? if Israel had no enemies, or none but such, he could, as we say, make his party good with all. Alas, their cries, their tears, sighs, watchings, and outcries, at sundry times, make this, beyond all show of doubt, a truth.

If Solomon used to have about his bed no less than threescore of the valiantest of Israel, holding swords, and being expert in war, every one with his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night - and yet these fears were only concerning men - what guard and safe-guard doth God's poor people need, who are continually, both night and day, roared upon by the unmerciful fallen angels of hell! (Song of Solomon 3:7-8). I will add, if it be but duly considered, all this guard and safeguard by mercy notwithstanding, how hardly this people do escape being destroyed for ever, yea, how with hearts broken, and loins broken, many of them with much difficulty get to the gates of heaven! it will be easily concluded, that her enemies are swifter than eagles, stronger than lions; and that they often overtake her between the straits.

To say nothing of the many thousands that dare not so much as once think of true religion, because of the power of the enemy which they behold, when alas! they see nobody but the very scarecrows which the devil hath set up for I count the persecutor of God's people but the devil's scarecrow, the old one himself lies quiet - yet, I say, how are they frightened! how are they amazed! What a many of the enemies of religion have these folks seen today! ^[23] yea, and they will as soon venture to run the hazard of hell-fire, as to be engaged by these enemies in this way. Why, God's people are fain to go through them all, and yet no more able than the other to do it of themselves. They therefore are girded, compassed, and defended by this mercy, which is the true cause indeed of their godly perseverance.

Third. A third thing that I infer from these words is, What a loving God has Israel! 'Truly God is good to Israel. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.' A loving God, that should take this care of him, and bestow so many mercies upon him. Mercies of all sorts, for all cases, for all manner of relief and help against all manner of perils. What is man that God should so unweariedly attend upon him, and visit him every moment? Is he a second God? Is he God's fellow? Is he of the highest order of the angels? or what is he? O! he is a flea, a worm, a dead dog, sinful dust and ashes; he comes up like a flower and is cut down, and what a thing is it that God should so much as open his eyes upon such a one! (1 Samuel 26:20; Job 25:6; 45:2-3). But then, what a thing is it that God should magnify him, and that he should set his heart upon him! (Job 7:17). Yea, that he should take him into acquaintance with him, give his angels to be all ministering spirits for him! Yea, engage his mercy for him, his tender, great, manifold, and everlasting mercy for him, to compass him round withal, as with a shield, that nothing might work his ruin for ever and ever!

It may well be said, 'God is love'! (1 John 4:16). Man may well say so, 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for *he is* good, for his mercy *endureth* for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say *so*, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy' (Psalm 107:1-3). If it be love for a fellow-creature to give a bit of bread, a coat, a cup of cold water, what shall we call this? when God, the great God, the former of all things, shall not only give an alms, an alms to an enemy, but shall rise up, take shield and buckler, and be a guard,

a protection, a deliverer from all evil, until we come into his heavenly kingdom? This love is such as is not found on earth, nor to be paralleled among the creatures. None hopes this but one that is good. Nor does any believe as they should, that God doth love as these things declare he does. Our heart staggereth at the greatness of the thing, and who is it that has any reason left in him, and knows anything of what a wretched thing sin hath made him, that can without starting so much as hear of all this mercy! But,

Fourth. Another thing that I infer from these words is this, What ground is here to Israel to hope in the Lord! The Lord is not that broken reed of Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it. God's word is steadfast for ever, even the word by which we are here exhorted to hope. Nor shall we have cause to doubt of the cause of the exhortation to such a soul-quieting duty; for mercy is with the Lord: 'Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their king' (Psalm 149:2). For with the Lord there is mercy, wherewith to beautify the meek with salvation. What sayest thou, child of God? Has sin wounded, bruised thy soul, and broken thy bones? Why, with the Lord there is tender mercy. Art thou a sinner of the first rate, of the biggest size? Why, with the Lord there is great mercy for thee? Have thy sins corrupted thy wounds, and made them putrefy and stink? Why, with the Lord there is rich, that is, virtuous ^[24] mercy for thee. Art thy sins of diverse sorts? Why, here is a multitude of manifold mercies for thee. Dost thou see thyself surrounded with enemies? Why, with the Lord there is mercy to compass thee about withal. Is the way dangerous in which thou art to go? Surely goodness and mercy shall follow thee all the days of thy life. Doth iniquity prevail against thee? The mercy of this Lord aboundeth towards thee. Doth judgments for thy miscarriages overtake thee; There is with thy Lord mercy that rejoiceth to deliver thee from those judgments. What shall I say? There is mercy from everlasting to everlasting upon thee. What wouldst thou have? There is mercy underneath, mercy above, and mercy for thee on every side; therefore 'let Israel hope in the Lord!' I will add, it is the greatest unkindness thou canst return to the Lord to doubt this mercy notwithstanding. Why, what wilt thou make of God? Is there no truth nor trust to be put in him, notwithstanding all that he hath said? O the depravedness of man's nature! Because he speaketh the truth, therefore we believe him not! (John 8:45). The odiousness of unbelief is manifest by this, yea, also the unreasonableness thereof. God is true, his Word is true; and to help us to hope in him, how many times has he fulfilled it to others, and that before our eyes? Hope then; it is good that a man should hope. Hope then; it pleases God that thou shouldst hope. Hope then to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto thee will surely come, with Christ thy Saviour.

Men that have given up themselves to their sins, hope to enjoy some benefit by them, though the curse of God, and his wrath, is revealed from heaven against them for it (Romans 1:18). And yet thou that hast given thyself to God by Christ, art afraid to hope in his mercy! For shame, hope, and do not thus dishonour thy God, would thine own soul, and set so bad an example to others. I know thou hast thy objections in a readiness to cast in my way, and were they made against doctrine, reason would that some notice should be taken of them; but since they are made against duty, duty urged from, and grounded upon, a word which is steadfast for ever, thou deservest to be blamed, and to be told, that of all sins that ever thou didst commit, thou now art managing the vilest, while thou art giving way to, and fortifying of, unbelief and

mistrust, against this exhortation to hope, and against the reason for encouragement to the duty.

**[THIRD. THE AMPLIFICATION OF THE
REASON 'TO HOPE IN THE LORD.']**

But I shall pass from this to the third thing found in the text, and that is the AMPLIFICATION of the reason. I told you that there were in the text these three things, I. An exhortation to the children of God to hope in the Lord: 'Let Israel hope in the Lord.' II. A reason to enforce that exhortation, 'For with the Lord *there is* mercy.' III. An amplification of that reason, '*And with him is plenteous redemption.*' I have gone through the two first, and shall now come to this last.

In these last words, which I call the Amplification of the reason, we have two things. FIRST. A more particular account of the nature *of the* mercy propounded for an encouragement to Israel to hope. SECOND. An account of the sufficiency of it. The nature of the mercy propounded, is expressed by that word 'redemption.' The sufficiency of it is expressed by that word 'plenteous.' 'Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord *there is* mercy, and with him *is* plenteous redemption.'

[FIRST. *The nature of the mercy propounded.*]

Redemption may be diversely taken, as shall be further showed anon; but forasmuch as the term here is made mention of indefinitely, without nominating of this or that part of redemption particularly, I shall speak to it in the general, with respect at least to the main heads thereof.

To redeem is to fetch back, by sufficient and suitable means, those at present in an enthralled, captivated, or an imprisoned condition; and there are two sorts of this redemption. *First*, Redemption by purchase. *Second*, Redemption by power. Redemption by purchase is from the cause of captivities. Redemption by power is from the effects.

First, If we speak of *redemption by purchase*, then three things present themselves to our consideration - I. The person redeeming. II. The nature of the price paid to redeem withal. III. The thing or state from which this redeemer with this price redeemeth.

[I. The Person redeeming.] The subject of this redemption, or person redeemed, is Israel, of him we have spoken before. For the person redeeming, it is Jesus of Nazareth; Jesus that was born at Bethlehem, at the time, and as the Scriptures relate (Matthew 1; Luke 2). Now, with reference to his person, we have two things to inquire after. What this person was. How he addressed himself to this work.

1. What this person was. This Jesus was and is the natural and eternal Son of God Almighty, without beginning or end, from everlasting; the Creator and Upholder of the world (Proverbs 8; John 1; Hebrews 1).

2. How he addressed himself to the work of redeeming, take as follows. He became true man: for he was conceived through the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of a

maid, and in the fullness of time brought forth of her, true, real, natural man; I say, though not in the worst, yet in the best sense (Luke 2:31-35). Being thus brought forth without spot or blemish, he began to address himself to the work. a. By works preparatory, and then, b. By the act itself.

a. The works preparatory were as follow. He prepares himself a priestly robe, which was his own obedient righteousness; for without these holy garments he might not adventure to come into the presence of God to offer his gift (Romans 5:19; Exodus 28:40; 40:13). Before he offered his gift for the people, he was to be himself sanctified to his office: and that - by blood - by prayers and tears (1 Peter 1:19). (1) By blood; for before Aaron was to offer his sacrifice for the people, he must himself be sprinkled with blood (Exodus 29:19-22). And because Jesus could not be sprinkled with the blood of beasts, therefore was he sprinkled with that of his own: not as Aaron was, upon the tip of his ear, and upon the tip of his toe; but from top to toe, from head to foot, his sweat was blood (Luke 22:44). So that from his agony in the garden to the place where he was to lay down the price of our redemption, he went as consecrated in his own blood. (2) He offered also his sacrifice of strong crying and tears, as his drink-offering to God, as a sacrifice preparatory, not propitiatory, in pursuit of his office; not to purge his person (Hebrews 5:5-8). This is the person redeeming, and this was his preparation to the work.

b. The act itself. Now the redemption is often ascribed particularly to his blood; yet in general, the act of his redeeming of us must either more remotely or more nearly be reckoned from his whole suffering for us in the flesh; which suffering I take to begin at his agony, and was finished when he was raised again from the dead. By his flesh I understand his whole man, as distinguished from his Divine nature; and so that word doth comprehend his soul as well as his body, as by the 53rd of Isaiah appears. His soul after that manner which was proper to it; and his body after that manner which was proper to it.

[II. The nature of the price paid to redeem.] His sufferings began in his soul, some time before his body was touched, by virtue of which was his bloody sweat in his body. The sorrows of his soul began at the apprehension of what was coming from God, for our sakes, upon him; but the bloody sweat of his body was from that union it had with such a soul. His sufferings were from the hand of God, not of man; not by constraint, but of his own will (Leviticus 1:3; John 10:18); and they differ from ours in these six things. 1. His sufferings were by the rigour of the law; ours according to the tenor of the gospel (Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 12:10). 2. His sufferings were from God's hand immediately; ours by and through a Mediator (Isaiah 53:6; Hebrews 9:22). 3. God delighted himself in every stroke he gave him; he doth not willingly grieve nor afflict his people (Isaiah 53; Psalm 103; Lamentations 3:33). 4. He suffereth as a common or public person; we for our own private offences (1 Corinthians 15:3; Lamentations 3:39). 5. He suffered to make amends to justice for the breach of a holy law; we to receive some small correction, and to be taught to amend our lives (Hebrews 9:26; Romans 10:3-4; Deuteronomy 8:5; 2 Chronicles 6:27). 6. He was delivered from the nature of suffering by the merit of his person and sufferings; we from ours by the mercy of God through Christ (Acts 2:24; Ephesians 4:32; 5:2). Redemption, then, by a price, was this; the blood of Christ, which he willingly suffered to be spilt on the cross, before the face of God.

[III. The state from which this price redeemeth.] The cause of this price was our sins; by which we were justly delivered up to the curse, the devil, death, and hell; and should everlastingly have so continued, but that this price of redemption was for us paid. Hence it is said, Christ died for us. Christ died for our sins. Christ gave himself for our sins. We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. And that we are bought with this price. Now, in all this Christ respected the holiness of the law, and the worth of our souls; giving full satisfaction to the one, for the love that he bare to the other. And this has redeemed his people from sin and the curse, the cause of our captivity.

Second, But besides this, there is *redemption by power*, and that respecteth that, or those things, unto which we become not legally indebted by our transgression. There was that unto which we became legally indebted, and that was the justice and holiness of the law (Genesis 2:17). Now from this, because God had said it, for his Word made it so, there could be no deliverance, but by a reverend and due respect to its command and demand, and an answer to every whit of what it would require; for not one tittle, not one jot or tittle of the law could fail (Matthew 5:18). Jesus Christ, therefore, with respect to the law, that he might redeem us, paid a full and sufficient price of redemption; but as for these things that hold us captive, not for any injury we have done to them, but of power, tyranny, or the like; from them he redeemed us by power (Ephesians 4). Hence, when he had made satisfaction or amends for us to the law, he is said to 'lead captivity captive, to spoil principalities and powers, and to make a show of them openly' (Colossians 2). But to take captive, and to spoil, must be understood of what he did, not to the law, but to those others of our enemies from which we were to be redeemed, not by price but by power. And this second part of redemption is to be considered under a twofold head. 1. That these were overcome personally, in and by himself, for us. 2. That they shall be overcome also, in and by his church, through the power of his Spirit.

1. For the first, these were overcome personally, in and by himself for us; to wit, at his resurrection from the dead. For as by his death he made amends for our breach of the law, so by his resurrection he spoiled those other enemies, to wit, death, the devil, and the grave, etc., unto which we were subjected, not for any offence we had committed against them, but for our sin against the law; and men when they have answered to the justice of the law, are by law and power delivered from the prison. Christ therefore, by power, by his glorious power, did overcome the devil, hell, sin, and death, then when he arose and revived from his grave, and so got the victory over them, in and by himself, for us. For he engaging as a common or public person for us, did on our behalf what he did, both in his death and resurrection. So then, as he died for us, he rose for us; and as by his death he redeemed us from some, so by his resurrection from other, of our enemies. Only it must be considered, that this redemption, as to the fullness of it as yet, resides in his own person only, and is set out to his church as she has need thereof, and that orderly too. First, that part thereof which respecteth our redemption from the law; and then that part of it which respecteth our redemption from those other things. And although we are made partakers of redemption from the curse of the law in this life, so far forth as to be justified therefrom; and also as to the receiving of an earnest while here, of being wholly possessed of the glory of the next world hereafter; yet we neither are, nor shall be redeemed from all those things, which yet our head has, as head, got a complete and eternal victory over, until just before he shall deliver up the

kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all; for ‘the last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death’ (1 Corinthians 15:26). Death, as it has hold upon us, for death as it had hold on our head, was destroyed, when he rose from the dead, but death, as we are subject to it, shall not be destroyed until we all and every one of us shall attain to the resurrection from the dead; a pledge of which we have by our spiritual resurrection, from a state of nature to a state of grace (Colossians 3:1-4). A promise of which we have in the word of the truth of the gospel; and an assurance of it we have by the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Ephesians 4:30; Luke 20:35; Acts 17:30-31). Wherefore let us hope!

Now, as to redemption from the law, and from those other things from which we are, and are to be redeemed with power; do but consider the different language which the Holy Ghost useth, with reference to our redemption from each.

When it speaketh of our redemption from the just curse of the law, which we have sufficiently deserved, it is said to be done, not by destroying, but by fulfilling the law. ‘Think not,’ says Christ, ‘that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled’ (Matthew 5:17-18). For it became him, as our Redeemer, to fulfil all, and all manner of righteousness, by doing and suffering what justly should have been done or borne of us (Romans 8:3-5; Galatians 3:13-14).

But now when our redemption from those other things is made mention of, the dialect is changed; for then we read, to the end we might be delivered from them, Christ was to destroy and abolish them (2 Timothy 1:10); ‘that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,’ and so deliver (Hebrews 2:14). And again, ‘O death, I will be thy plagues! O grace, I will be thy destruction!’ (Hosea 13:14). And again, ‘that the body of sin might be destroyed’ (Romans 6:6); and I have the keys of hell and of death (Revelation 1:18). Having thereby sufficiently declared that the power of it is destroyed as to Israel, who are the people concerned in this redemption.

2. They shall be overcome by his church through the power of his Spirit. Now, as was hinted before, the redemption is already obtained, and that completely, by the person of Christ for us (Hebrews 9:24), as it is written, ‘Having obtained eternal redemption *for us*’; yet these enemies, sin, death, the devil, hell, and the grave, are not so under the feet of his [saints] as he will put them, and as they shall be in conclusion under the feet of Christ (Hebrews 2:8-9). I say they are not; wherefore, as the text also concludeth, this redemption is with the Lord, and under our feet they shall be by the power of God towards us (2 Corinthians 13:4). And for this let Israel hope. The sum then is, God’s people have with the Lord redemption, and redemption in reversion; redemption, and redemption to come; all which is in the hand of the Lord for us, and of all we shall be possessed in his time. This is that called plenteous redemption. ‘For with him is plenteous redemption.’ A little therefore to touch upon the redemption that we have in reversion, or of the redemption yet to come.

a. There is yet much sin and many imperfections that cleave to our persons and to our performances, from which, though we be not yet in the most full sense delivered, yet

this redemption is with our Lord, and we shall have it in his time; and in the meantime it is said, It shall not have dominion over us. 'Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace' (Romans 6:14). We are, by what Christ has done, taken from under the law, the curse; and must, by what Christ will do, be delivered from the very being of sin. 'He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity'; that he might present us to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that we should be without blemish (Titus 2:13-14; Ephesians 5:25, 27). That we are already without the being of sin, none but fools and madmen will assert; and that we shall never be delivered from it, none but such men will affirm neither. It remains then, that there is a redemption for Israel in reversion, and that from the being of sin. And of this it is that the text also discourseth, and for which let the godly hope.

b. We are not yet quite free from Satan's assaulting of us, though our Head by himself, and that for us, has got a complete conquest over him; but the time is coming, and himself knows that it is but a little while to it, in which he shall forever be bruised under our feet. Be wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil, and the God of peace shall bruise, tread down Satan under your feet shortly (Romans 16:20). Some may think that this text will have a fulfilling in the ruin and downfall of Antichrist; and so it may; but yet it will never be wholly fulfilled, as long as Satan shall have any thing to do with one of the children of God. There is therefore a redemption in reversion for the children of God from Satan, which they are to hope for, because this redemption is with the Lord their Head, and that to manage and bring about for them. For he shall bruise him under their feet in his time.

c. There is yet belonging to the church of God a redemption from what remains of Antichrist, although as yet he is stronger than we, which I also call a redemption in reversion, for that it is yet to come, nor shall it be accomplished till the time appointed. In this redemption, not only saints, but truths will have a share; yea, and many also of the men that belong not to the kingdom of Christ and of God. This redemption God's people are also to hope for, for it is with their Lord, and he has promised it to them, as the Scripture doth plentifully declare.

d. There is yet a redemption to come, which is called the redemption of our body (Romans 8:23). Of this redemption we have both the earnest and the seal, to wit, the Spirit of God (Ephesians 1:14; 4:30). And because the time to it is long, therefore we are to wait for it; and because it will be that upon which all our blessedness will be let out to us, and we also let in to it, therefore we should be comforted at all the signs of the near approach thereof; 'then,' saith Christ, 'look up and lift up your heads' (Luke 21:28). The bodies of saints are called the purchased possession; possession, because the whole of all that shall be saved shall be for a temple or house for God to dwell in, in the heavens. A purchased possession, because the body, as well as the soul, is bought with the price of blood (1 Corinthians 6:14-20). But what then doth he mean by the redemption of this purchased possession? I answer, he meaneth the raising it up from the dead; 'I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death' (Hosea 13:14). And then shall be brought to pass that saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory'; that saying, that is this, and that in Isaiah, for they speak both the selfsame thing (1 Corinthians 15; Isaiah 25:8).

And this was signified by Moses, where he speaks of the year of jubilee, and of the redemption of the house that was sold in Israel, how of that year it should return to the owner (Leviticus 25). Our bodies of right are God's, but sin still dwells in them; we have also sold and forfeited them to death and the grave, and so they will abide; but at the judgment day, that blessed jubilee, God will take our body, which originally is his, and will deliver it from the bondage of corruption, unto which, by our souls, through sin, it has been subjected; he will take it, I say, because it is his, both by creation and redemption, and will bring it to that perfect freedom that is only to be found in immortality and eternal life. And for this should Israel hope! From what hath been said to this first thing, it appears that the mercy that is with God for his people, as it is in general what has been described before, so it is redeeming mercy, or mercy that has with it the virtue of redemption; of the advantageousness of this mercy, we will further discourse by and by, but now we will look into the second thing, that from this amplification of the reason was propounded to be spoken to, to wit,

[SECOND. *The sufficiency of this redemption.*.]

An account of the sufficiency of this redemption. 'Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord *there* is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.' The sufficiency or plenteousness of it may be spoken to, as it respecteth the many difficulties and dangers that by sin we have brought ourselves into; or as it respecteth the superabundant worth that is found therein, let the dangers attending us be what they will, though we should not be acquainted with the half or the hundredth part thereof.

To speak to it as it respecteth those particular difficulties and dangers that by sin we have brought ourselves unto; and that, *First*. By showing the suitableness of it. *Second*. By showing the sufficiency of the suitableness thereof.

First. The *suitableness of it* lieth in the fit application thereof to all the parts of thralldom and bondage. Have we sinned? Christ had our sins laid upon his back; yea, of God was made, that is, reputed, sin for us (Isaiah 53; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Were we under the curse of the law by reason of sin? Christ was made under the law, and bare the curse thereof to redeem (Galatians 4:4; 3:13; Romans 3:24). Had sin set us at an indefinite distance from God? Christ has become, by the price of his redeeming blood, a reconciler of man to God again (Colossians 1:20). Were we by sin subject to death? Christ died the death to set us free there-from (Romans 6:23). Had our sins betrayed us into and under Satan's slavery? Christ has spoiled and destroyed this work, and made us free citizens of heaven (Acts 26:18; 2 Timothy 2:26; Hebrews 2:14; Ephesians 2:19). Thus was our Redeemer made, as to those things, a suitable recoverer, taking all and missing nothing that stood in the way of our happiness; according to that a little below the text, 'And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities,' that is, from them, together with their evil fruits.

Second. Now as to *the sufficiency that was in this suitableness*, that is declared by his resurrection, by his ascension, by his exaltation to the right hand of God; that is also declared by God's putting all things under his feet, and by giving of him to be head over all things for his redeemed's sake. It is also further declared in that God now threateneth none but those that refuse to take Jesus for their Saviour, and for that he is resolved to make his foes his footstool. What are more natural consequences flowing

from anything, than that by these things is the sufficiency of the suitableness of redemption by Christ proved? For all these things followed Christ, for, or because he humbled himself to the death of the cross, that he might become a Redeemer; therefore God raised him up, took him to his throne, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God by him (Philippians 2).

But alas! what need we stand to prove the sun is light, the fire hot, the water wet? What was done by him was done by God, for he was true God; and what comparison can there be betwixt God and the creature, betwixt the worth of God's acts, and the merit of the sin of poor man! And can death, or sin, or the grave hold us, when God saith, 'Give up?' Yea, where is that, or he, that shall call into question the superabounding sufficiency that is in the merit of Christ, when God continueth to discharge, day by day, yea, hourly, and every moment, sinners from their sin, and death, and hell, for the sake of the redemption that is obtained for us by Christ?

God be thanked here is plenty; but no want of anything! Enough and to spare! It will be with the merit of Christ, even at the end of the world, as it was with the five loaves and two fishes, after the five thousand men, besides women and children, had sufficiently eaten thereof. There was, to the view of all at last, more than showed itself at fist. At first there was but five loaves and two fishes, which a lad carried. At last there were twelve baskets full, the weight of which, I suppose, not the strongest man could bear away. Nay, I am persuaded, that at the end of the world, when the damned shall see what a sufficiency there is left of merit in Christ, besides what was bestowed upon them that were saved by him, they will run mad for anguish of heart to think what fools they were not to come to him, and trust in him that they might be saved, as their fellow-sinners did. But this is revealed that Israel, that the godly may hope and expect. Let Israel therefore hope in the Lord, for with him is plenteous redemption.

[*Amplifying reasons as a conclusion of the whole.*]

Now as this last clause, as I termed it, is the amplification of the reason going before; so itself yieldeth amplifying reasons as a conclusion of the whole. For:

First. Add redemption unto mercy, and then things still are heightened and made greater. And it must, because the text adds it, and because both the nature of God, the holiness of his law, and the present state of the sinner that is to be saved, requireth that it should be so. God is justice as well as mercy; the law is holy and just; that man that is to be saved is not only a sinner, but polluted. Now, then, that mercy and justice may meet and kiss in the salvation of the sinner, there must be a redemption; that the sinner may be saved, and the law retain its sanction and authority, there must be a redemption; that the sinner may be purged as well as pardoned, there must be a redemption. And, I say, as there must, so there is: 'For with the Lord *there is* mercy, and with him *is* plenteous redemption.' Mercy is the original, the cause, and the manager of our redemption. Redemption is the manifestation, and the completing of that mercy. If there had been no mercy, there had been no redemption. Mercy had been defective as to us, or must have offered violence to the law and justice of God, and have saved us contrary to that word, 'In the day thou eatest thou shalt die,' and 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.' But now, redemption coming in by mercy, the sin is done away, and the

sinner saved, in a way of righteousness.

Second. By law as well as grace; that is, in a way of justice as well as in a way of mercy. Hence it saith we are 'justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' (Romans 3:24). Through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, and so to show the world the equity of his proceeding with sinners in the saving of their souls. As if God should say to all those who stumble at the salvation of sinners by grace, Behold, I act according to law and justice. For of grace I save them through a redemption, and therefore am faithful and just to my law, as well as free and liberal of my mercy. Wherefore thus I declare I am righteous, faithful, and just in passing over or remitting of sin. Nay, the matter so standeth now betwixt me and the sinful world, that I could not be just if I did not justify him that hath faith in the blood of Jesus, since by that blood my justice is appeased for all that this or that sinner has done against my law!

This is a way that God, nor any child of his, need be ashamed of before any that shall call in question the legality and justice of this procedure. For why may not God be merciful, and why may not God be just? And since he can be both merciful and just in the salvation of sinners, why may he not also save them from death and hell? Christ is God's salvation, and to show that he is not ashamed of him, he hath presented him, and the way of redemption by him, before the face of all people (Luke 2:30-32). Nor is the Son, who is become, with respect to the act of redemption, the author of eternal salvation, ashamed of this his doings. 'I gave my back to the smiters,' saith he, 'and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and smiting' (Isaiah 50:6). This he speaks to show what were some of his sufferings when he engaged in the work of our redemption, and how heartily he did bear and go through them. 'For,' says he, 'the Lord God will help me,' that is, justify me in it, 'therefore shall I not be confounded, therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed' (verse 7). And if God, and his Son Jesus Christ, are neither of them ashamed to own this way of salvation, why should the sinners concerned thereabout be afraid thereupon to venture their soul? I know, saith he, 'I shall not be ashamed'; I shall not, that is, when all things come to light, and everything shall appear above board; when the heart and soul of this undertaking of mine shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops, I know I shall not be ashamed.

It was also upon this account that Paul said he was not ashamed of the gospel (Romans 1). For he knew that it was a declaration of the highest act of wisdom that ever God did spread before the face of the sons of men. And of what wisdom is the gospel a declaration but of that of forgiveness of sins by grace, through the redemption that is by the blood of Jesus Christ? 'In whom we have redemption through his blood,' even 'the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence' (Ephesians 1:7-8).

And as Paul speaketh here as a minister, so he speaketh after the same manner also as he is a believer, saying, 'I am not ashamed' of this gospel, 'for I know whom I have believed,' or trusted with my soul, 'and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day' (2 Timothy 1:11-12). Wherefore seeing that mercy is not presented to us alone, or singly, but as accompanying and concurring with redemption; it is manifest enough that mercy standeth not above, and

consequently that it saveth none but in, by, and through a Redeemer. He that believeth not in Christ shall be damned. But what needs that, if mercy could save the soul without the redemption that is by him? If any say, Christ is the mercy of God to us. True, if you count him a Redeemer, a worker out of a redemption for us by his death and blood upon the cross. But otherwise he is none; I mean, if you make him a lawgiver, and a Saviour, only as he has set an example to us to get to heaven by doing commandments, or by treading in his steps. Yea, though you say his commandment is that we believe in him: for, take the work of redemption by his blood from the curse, out of his hand, and then what concerning him is left from me to believe, but, as was said before, that he is a lawgiver, and as such, at best, but a pattern to us to get to heaven, as here? And whoso counteth him as such, is so far off from counting of Christ the mercy of God to us, that they make him a contradictor of mercy, both in the fountain and all the streams of it. For to propound life eternal to us, through the observation of laws, is to set before us that which contradicteth grace and mercy, let the work be what it will; nor will it help at all to say, that they that do the law of Christ, or that take him for their law and example, shall be sure of mercy to pass by their shortness of attaining to the perfection of what is set before them. For all this might have been done, and not one drop of blood spilt for the redemption of man. Besides, this makes Christ's death, as a Redeemer, as an act unadvisedly undertaken; for what need he have died, if his doctrine and example had been sufficient, through that which they call mercy, to have brought the soul to glory? 'If righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain' (Galatians 2:21). I will add, put man's righteousness, God's mercy, and Christ's redemption, all together, and they will not save a man; though the last two alone will sufficiently do it: but this third is a piece when put to that, does, instead of mending, make the rent worse. Besides, since man's righteousness can not be joined in justification with God's mercy and Christ's redemption, but through a disbelief of the sufficiency of them, should it be admitted as a cause, though but the least cause thereof, what would follow, but to make that cursed sin of unbelief a good inventor, and a necessary worker in the manner of the justification of a sinner? For, I say, unbelief is the cause of this hodge-podge in any; and the effects of it are showed in the 9th chapter of the epistle of Paul to the Romans, at the latter end thereof (verses 31-35).

And there are three things that follow upon that opinion that denieth the absolute necessity of the shedding of the blood of Christ for the redemption of man, that mercy might be let out to him.

1. It followeth from thence, that there is no such attribute as absolute justice in God; justice to stand to his word, and to vindicate every tittle of his law. For let but this be granted, and the death of Christ must be brought in, or by justice the floodgate of mercy still be shut against sinful man; or that God must have mercy upon man, with the breach of his Word.

2. It also followeth from the premises, that Christ's death was of pleasure only, and not of necessity also; contrary to the Scripture, that makes his death the effect of both; of pleasure, to show how willing God the Father was that Christ should die for man: of necessity, to show that man could not be saved without it; of pleasure, to show how justice did deal with him for our sin; of necessity, to show that mercy could not be communicated to us without it (Isaiah 53:10; Matthew 26:39; Acts 17:3).

3. There also followeth therefrom, that by the blood of Christ we have not redemption from law, and justice, as to the condemning part of both, but that rather this title is given to it for honour and glory, to dignify it; as the name of God is also given to him: for they that affirm the one, are bold to affirm the other. For as by them is concluded, that there is no necessity why the blood of Christ should be counted the absolutely necessary price of our redemption from the curse of the law and severity of justice; so by them it is concluded, that it is not necessary to hold that Christ the Redeemer is naturally and co-eternally God, as the Father. But 'let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord *there is* mercy, and with him *is* plenteous redemption.'

Third. Must there be redemption by blood added to mercy, if the soul be saved? This shows us what an horrible thing the sin of man is. Sin, as to the nature of it, is little known in the world. O! it sticks so fast to us, as not to be severed from us by all the mercy of God: do but exclude redemption by the blood of Christ. I will say it over again. All the mercy of God can not save a sinner, without respect to redemption from the curse of the law, by the death and blood of Christ. 'Without shedding of blood is no remission' (Hebrews 9:22). No remission, no pardon, or passing by of the least transgression, without it. Tears! Christ's tears will not do it. Prayers! Christ's prayers will not do it. An holy life! the holy life that Christ lived, will not do it, as severed from his death and blood. The word redemption, therefore, must be well understood, and close stuck to, and must not be allowed, as properly spoken, when we talk of deliverance from sin, the law, and God's curse, unless it be applied particularly to the death and blood of Christ (Ephesians 1:7). We have redemption through his blood (Revelation 1:5). 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree' (Galatians 3:13). He has redeemed us to God by his blood. 'For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood' (Revelation 5:9). This is the redemption that is joined with mercy, yea, that is the fruit thereof; and it is that without which sin can not be removed out of the sight of God. Moses, that was a better preacher of the law, and the sufficiency of the righteousness thereof, than any now can pretend to be, yet he full well declared by all his bloody sacrifices, that the blood and death of Jesus Christ is of absolute necessity for the redemption of the soul. Besides, he tells us that the man that should flee to the city of refuge, from the avenger of blood, should not be at liberty from the law, unless he kept himself close in that city until the death of the high-priest. Mark the words, 'Ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the high 'priest'' (Numbers 35:32). Wherefore, Christian man, know thou thy sin in the nature of it and persuade thyself, that the removing of it from before the face of God is by no less means than the death and blood of Christ. But it is a poor shift that the enemies of the truth are put to, when, to defend their errors, they are forced to diminish sin, and to enlarge the borders of their fig-leaf garments, and to deny or cast away, as much as in them lies, one of the attributes, the justice of God. Indeed they will say they abhor to do thus, and all erroneous persons will put the best face they can upon their bad matters; but the natural consequences of things amount to it; nor can they, when men stick close to their sides, avoid the charge.

Fourth. Then here you see the reason of that free course that mercy hath among the sons of men, and why it doth, as has been showed before what it doth. Why justice is content. Blood hath answered the demand of justice. The law hath nothing to object

against his salvation that believeth in Jesus Christ. Blood has set the door open for us with boldness to go to God for mercy, and for God to come with his abundant grace to us. We have 'boldness, brethren, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh' (Hebrews 10:19-20). This is the way that Moses desired to find, when God so largely spake to him of his mercy. 'Thou hast said,' says Moses to God, 'I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way that I may know thee,' etc. (Exodus 33:12-13). What if it should be applied thus? thou now talkest of mercy, but in thy words to us from the Mount, thou spakest fire and justice; and since thou hast delivered us to holy a law, and are resolved that the least tittle thereof shall by no means fall to the ground; by what means is it that mercy should come unto us? Well, saith God, I will show thee my way, I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, which was a figure of Christ, for Christ says, 'I am the way' (Exodus 34; John 14:6). This done, he proclaimed his name, and showed him how he could be gracious, and gave him the sign of his being merciful, a promise that his presence should go with him. The breaking then of the body of Jesus was, the renting of the veil, that out of which came blood, that the way to God might be living; and not death, or sword, or flame, to the poor children of men. Out hence therefore bubbleth continually the tender mercy, the great mercy, the rich mercy, the abundant mercy, the multiplying mercy, and every other mercy of God to us for our present and everlasting good.

Not that God was sparing of his mercy, and would not part with it unless paid for it; for this way of redemption by blood was his contrivance, the fruit of his wisdom (Ephesians 1:8). So then, God was big with mercy for a sinful world; but to be continually extending of mercy, since sin and justice, because of the sanction of the law, lay in the way as a turning flaming sword, there did lie the work (Genesis 3:24); so it was concluded, that mercy might, in a way of justice, be let out to sinners; Christ, the Son of God, should die for the sin of man. By which means the outcries of the law and justice against us for our sins did cease, and mercy flowed from heaven like the waters of Noah, until it became a sea (Micah 7:18-19).

By redemption by blood, therefore, is this great mystery - That a just God can save that man that has broken that law, that God has said he will inflict the penalty for the breach thereof upon, and do his justice no wrong - expounded; not by a relaxation of the punishment, as the doltish wisdom of this world imagines; but by an inflicting of the exactest justice upon that nature that has offended. If the question be asked, How a just God can save that man from death, that by sin has put himself under the sentence of it? any fool can answer, 'By a pardon.' And if it be asked, But what will become of the threatening wherewith he threatened the offender? He that knows no mysteries can say, Why, man must repent of his sin, and God of his threatening. But if it be asked, How God can execute his threatening to the utmost, and yet deliver the sinner by his mercy from it; the sinner that has deserved it, and yet be just to his law, faithful to his law, and one that will stand by every tittle of his law? this, to expound, is to high for a fool; therefore these men are for despising of mysteries, and for counting of mysteries in the gospel, follies.

But this key of heaven is no where but in the Word of the Spirit; it is not seen in the law, nor in the reason or righteousness of the world. To punish 'the just for the unjust,'

and to make him 'to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,' seems unreasonable; so cross to the wisdom of man are the wards of this lock (1 Peter 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Wherefore usually, when they come at this doctrine, they belch out their frumps, their taunts, their scoffs, and their scorns against it; and in opposition thereto, comment, exalt, cry up, and set on high, Socinianism, Mahometanism, man's ragged righteousness, or anything. But we will pass these things.

Fifth. The knowledge of redemption, and the faith of redemption, is the only means of settling, composing, and upholding the soul of the thoroughly awakened, in the hope of enjoying a portion in mercy for ever. What senseless, secure, besotted, and deluded men, conclude of themselves, and of the means of future happiness, is one thing; and what the thoroughly awakened soul concludes upon, is another. And I say, one thoroughly awakened about the nature of God, the nature of sin, and the worth of the soul, will find but little ease of mind, notwithstanding notions of mercy, until he comes and sees that he must be saved by mercy and justice both; and that to be sure he shall never do, until he is taught that by the blood of Christ the law is, as to the curse that is in it against the sinner, taken out of the way (Colossians 2).

These things, sin and justice, are too great to be played with by him that shall see them in the light of the law, and that shall feel them in their terror upon a trembling conscience. But when the soul shall see that a propitiation is made to justice by blood, then, and not till then, it sees sin taken away: and when it sees, by this means, sin taken away, then it can behold to hope in the mercy of God. Yea, and it will be as hard to wring off him that is settled here, from this belief to another, as it would be to persuade him that stands upon sound ground to venture his life upon a shaking bottomless quag. O! It is a pleasant thing for the wounded conscience to taste the sweetness of redeeming blood! (John 6:51-56). This is like the best wine that goes down sweetly; this carries with the last of it the very tang ^[25] of eternal life! (Hebrews 9:14). And know that dead works, or works of death, will abide in the conscience, notwithstanding all talk and notions of mercy, until that be purged with blood applied thereto, by the Spirit and faith. This is one of the three that abide to witness on earth, that 'God hath given us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son'; because he died for us, and rose again (1 John 5:8-11).

This, therefore, is that that will establish a man with that peace that shall not be shaken, because by this such an one seeth the justice of God is quieted. For peace is made by the blood of the cross; peace with God for sinners (Colossians 1:20). Yea, God himself, by the blood of the cross, has made it, that by him, Christ, he might reconcile to himself all things, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven. Nor will a man that is truly spiritually wise, rest till he comes where God towards man doth rest; but that can be only there, where such means are offered for the taking away of sin, that are of a sweet-smelling savour to God. Now this is the offering that Christ offered, to wit, himself; for Christ loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour (Ephesians 5:2). Therefore it is by it, the body of his flesh, through death, that we are presented holy, unblamable, and unprovable in his sight (Colossians 1:21). Wherefore it must be true which was said before, to wit, That the knowledge of redemption, and the faith of redemption, is the only means of settling, composing, and upholding of the soul of the thoroughly

awakened, in the hope of enjoying a portion in mercy for ever. He that hath the Son of God, hath the Father, hath life; because with him is the means of peace with the Father, and so of eternal life (1 John 2:23). But then, to have the Son, is to believe on him, and on the Father through him (1 John 5:10-12). On him, that he is the Saviour by his blood; and on the Father through him, as believing that he, for his Son's sufferings, is pacified with us, and of his grace hath forgiven us, through him, all trespasses (2 John 9; Ephesians 4:32).

Sixth. The knowledge and faith of this redemption fortifieth the Christian against temptations. We that do believe, know what it is to be assaulted by the devil, and to have knotty objections cast into our minds by him. We also know what advantage the vile sin of unbelief will get upon us, if our knowledge and faith in this redemption be in the least, below the common faith of saints, defective. If we talk of mercy, he can talk of justice; if we talk of grace, he can talk of the law. And all his words, when God will suffer it, we shall find as sharp, and subject to stick in our minds, as bearded arrows are to stick in flesh. Besides, he can and doth, and that often, work in our fancies and imaginations such apprehensions of God, that he shall seem to be to us one that can not abide us, one that hates us, and that lieth in wait to destroy us. And now, if any body speaks to us of mercy, we think we might hope in that, had we nothing to trouble us but the guilt of actual sins. But we see our nature as full of the filth of sin, as the egg is of meat, or the toad of poison: which filth vilely recoileth against the commandments, flieth in the face of God, and continueth all his judgments.^[26] This is felt, this is seen by the sinner, who can not help it; nor can he be brought to that consideration as to say, 'It is no more I' (Romans 7). Now, what shall this man do? Shall he look to the commandment? There is death? Shall he look to God? There is justice! Shall he look to himself? There is sin out of measure! Let him look, then, to one as dying, to the 'lamb as it had been slain,' and there let him see himself by this Lamb, as cursed, and a dying of a cursed death for this sin that doth so fright and so distress the soul (Revelation 5:6). Then let him turn again, and behold this Lamb alive and well, and highly exalted by this God, that but just before laid the curse of the law upon him; but let him be sure to reckon that he has died for his sins by the person of Christ, and it will follow that this man is now acquitted, because Christ is still alive. Say I these things as a man? Saith not the gospel the very same? 1. As to Christ's dying for us; as also that we are dead to the law by the body of Christ (Romans 6:6; 7). 2. And that we should so reckon as to this matter, because that God has transferred our sin from us to him.

1. Did not Christ die for us; and dying for us, are we not become dead to the law by the death of his body? or will the law slay both him and us, and that for the same transgression? (Romans 7:1-2). If this be concluded in the affirmative, what follows but that Christ, though he undertook, came short in doing for us? But he was raised up from the dead, and believing marrieth us to him as risen, and that stops the mouth of all. I am crucified with Christ, our old man was crucified with him, and we are become dead to the law by the body of Christ (Romans 5:3-4). What then?

2. Why, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ. Ay, but says the soul, 'How can I reckon thus, when sin is yet strong in me?' Answer. Read the words again, He saith not, Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, in yourselves; but dead unto it through Jesus Christ. Not alive unto

God in yourselves, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ. For Christ in his death and resurrection representeth me. As I died by him, I arose again by him, and live through the faith of the gospel in the presence of God by him. This must in the first place be allowed and believed, or no true peace can come near the soul, nor the soul be prepared to assoil the assaults of the adversary. Let therefore thy faith, if thou wouldst be a warrior, O thou faint-hearted Christian, be well instructed in this! Then will thy faith do thee a twofold kindness. 1. It will conform thee to the death and resurrection of Christ. And, 2. It will give thee advantage, when thou seest sin strong in thyself, yet to conclude that by Christ thou art dead thereto, and by him alive therefrom. Nor can there but two objections be made against this. The first is to question whether any are said to die and rise, by the death and resurrection of Christ? or if it so may be said; yet whether thou art one of them? To the first the scripture is full. To the second, thy faith must be strong: for let go faith here, and all falls flat to the ground, I mean as to comfort and consolation. Christ died for us, or in our stead; therefore, by the Word of God, I am allowed so to reckon. Christ rose and revived, though he died for me; therefore I rose and revived by Christ: unless any does hold, that though he died in a common, yet he arose as considered but in a single capacity. Now, then, if Satan comes and tells me of my sins, I answer, 'Christ has taken them upon himself.' If he comes and tells me of the death that is due to me for sin, by the curse of the holy law, I answer, I have already undergone that by Christ. If he asks me, How I know that the law will not lay hold of me also? I answer, Because Christ is risen from the dead. If he asks me, By what authority I take upon me thus to reason? I tell him, By the authority and allowance of the holy and most blessed gospel, which saith, He 'was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification' (Romans 4). And to encourage thee thus to believe, and thus to hold, when thou art in an hour of temptation, this is the way to see mercy stand and smile upon thee; for mercy will smile upon him that shall thus believe (2 Corinthians 3:16-18). This is the way to put faith and hope both to work against the devil; and to do this is very pleasing to God. This the way to make that hell-bound retreat and leave off to assault (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9). And this is the way to find an answer to many scriptures, with which else thou wilt not know what to do, as with many of the types and shadows; yea, and with the moral law itself.

Besides, thus believing setteth thy soul against the fear of death, and judgment to come; for if Christ be raised from the dead who died for our sins; and if Christ who died for our sins is entered into glory: I say again, if Christ who died for our sins has purchased us to himself, and is purposed that the fruit of this his purchase shall be, that we may behold his face in glory; then, cast off slavish fear of death and judgment: for Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him!

Seventh. The knowledge and faith of this redemption prepareth man to a holy life. By a holy life, I mean a life according to the moral law, flowing from a spirit of thankfulness to God for giving of his Son to be my Redeemer. This I call a holy life, because it is according to the rule of holiness, the law, and this I call a holy life, because it floweth from such a principle as giveth to God the heart, and life, for the gift bestowed on us. What pretences soever there are to holiness, if it floweth not from thankfulness for mercy received, it floweth from a wrong principle, and so can not be good. Hence, men were required of old, to serve the Lord with joyfulness, 'for the abundance of all things'; and threatened, if they did not, that 'they should serve their enemies in hunger

and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in the want of all *things*' (Deuteronomy 28:47,48). But then, though there are many mercies that lay an obligation upon men to be holy, yet he that shall want the obligation that is begotten by the faith of redeeming mercy, wanteth the main principle of true holiness: nor will any other be found sufficiently to sanctify the heart to the causing of it to produce such a life; nor can such holiness be accepted, because it comes not forth in the name of Christ. That that obliged David was forgiving and redeeming mercy; and that that obliged Paul was the love that Christ showed to him, in dying for his sins, and in rising from the dead (Psalm 103:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15). Paul also beseecheth the Romans, by the redeeming, justifying, preserving, and electing mercy of God, that they present their body 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; *which is,*' saith he, 'your reasonable service' (Romans 12:1). For we must be holy and without blame before him in love (Ephesians 4:1).

Hence, all along, they that are exhorted to holiness in the New Testament, are exhorted to it upon the supposition of the benefit of redemption which they have received by Jesus Christ. 'Walk in love as Christ also hath loved us' (Ephesians 5:2). 'If *there be* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love,' etc. (Philippians 2:1-2). 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth,' etc. (Colossians 3:1-5). 'Wherefore laying aside all malice and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speakings, as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious' (1 Peter 2:1-3). I will conclude this with that of Peter, to those to whom he wrote concerning this very thing. Be 'obedient children,' saith he, 'not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy, And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot' (1 Peter 1:14-19).

From all which it appears, that mercy by Christ, or from the benefit of redemption by the precious blood of Christ, I say, from the faith of that, flows that which is holiness indeed. And I believe that those very men that are pleased to taunt at this kind of inference, would condemn a man was he laid under these obligations concerning things of this life, and yet did carry it as one not touched thereby. We will make an instance: Suppose a Socinian should, through his contracting a great debt, be forced to rot in prison, unless redeemed by silver and gold: and suppose a man, unto whom this Socinian was an enemy, should lay down the whole debt to the creditor, that this Socinian might be at liberty, might trade, and live comfortably in this world; and if, after this, this Socinian should taunt at them that should tell him he is engaged to this redeemer, ought to love and respect this redeemer; what would they say but that this Socinian that was a debtor is an inconsiderate and stupefied rascal? Why, this is the case; Paul was a debtor to the law and justice of God; Jesus Christ his Son, that Paul

might not perish for ever, paid for him a price of redemption, to wit, his most precious blood. But what! Shall Paul now, though redeemed from perpetual imprisonment in hell, be as one that never was beholden to Jesus Christ; or if others say he was, taunt at them for their so saying? No, he scorns it. Though the love of Christ, in dying to pay a price of redemption, will not engage a Socinian, yet it will engage a true Christian to think and believe that he ought to live to Jesus, that died for him and rose again.

I know it will be objected that the Satisfactionists, as the quaking Penn is pleased to call them, show but little of this to the world; for their pride, covetousness, false dealing, and the like, since they profess as I have said, shows them as little concerned to the full as to the Socinian under consideration. I answer, it must be that the name of Christ should be scandalised through some that profess him; and they must answer it at the tribunal of the great Judge; yet what I have said stands fast as a rock that can not be moved.

Eighth. The knowledge and faith of redemption is a very great encouragement to prayer. It is great encouragement for the poor to go even to a prince for what he wanteth, when he considereth that what he goeth to him for is the price of redemption. All things that we want, we must ask the Father for, in the name of Christ: we must ask it of him for the sake of his redeeming blood, for the sake of the merit of his passion (John 15:16). Thus David means, when he says, 'For thy name's sake' do it (Psalm 25:11); and Daniel when he saith here, 'For the Lord's sake' (Daniel 9:17). For Jesus Christ is God's great name; and to do for his sake is to do for what worthiness is in him.

Unworthiness! The consideration of unworthiness is a great stumbling-block to the tempted when he goes to seek the Lord. But now, remembering the worthiness of Christ, and that he is now on the right hand of God, on purpose to plead that on the behalf of the petitioner, this is great encouragement. The Jews, by God's ordinance, when they went morning and evening by their priest to speak with God, were to offer a lamb for a burnt-offering, and it must be thus continually (Exodus 29:38-46). Now this lamb was a figure of the sacrificing of the body of Christ which was to be offered for them in time to come; and, in that it was to be continually, morning and evening, so repeated, what doth it signify, but that we should remember to go, when we went to God, in the name and faith of the merits of Jesus Christ for what we stood in need of? This will support, and this will encourage, for now we see that the thing desired - it being according to his will - is obtained for us by the sacrificing of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.

When Israel begged of Samuel that he would not cease to cry to the Lord their God for them, it is said he took a sucking lamb and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord; and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him (1 Samuel 7:8-9). But why did he take a sucking lamb, and why did he offer it, and that wholly unto the Lord, as he cried, but to show to Israel that he was not heard for his own, or for his righteousness sake, but for the sake of Christ, whose merits were prefigured by Samuel's burning of the lamb?

Also when David spake for himself to Saul, he put himself upon this, 'If,' saith he, 'the Lord hath stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering, a smell, a sweet-

smelling sacrifice; a figure of the satisfactoriness of the sufferings of Jesus Christ' (1 Samuel 26:19). What is the meaning of all these passages, if not to show that when we go to pray to God, we should turn away our face from every thing of ours, and look to God, only by the price of redemption paid for us by Jesus Christ, and plead that alone with him as the great prevailing argument, and that by and for the sake of which he giveth pardon and grace to help in time of need? Wherefore, wouldst thou be a praying man, a man that would pray and prevail? why, pray to God in the faith of the merits of Christ, AND SPEED.^[27]

Ninth. For this is the very cause why this is added in the text, to wit, the plenteousness of redemption, it is, I say, that men should hope to partake by it, of the goodness and mercy of God. 'Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord *there is* mercy, and with him *is* plenteous redemption.' Mercy and redemption, mercy through a Redeemer, therefore 'let Israel hope'! It must also be noted, that this word redemption is, as it were, the explicate part of the text, for the helping of Israel to hope. As who should say, as there is with God mercy, so there is with him a way to his mercy, and that way is redemption, or a price paid for your sins; and that you should not be discouraged through the greatness of your sins, I tell you there is with God plenty of this redemption, or a price paid to the full; to an over and above. It also is as if he had said, Forget not this, for this is the key of all the rest, and the great support to the saints in prayer, or while they wait upon God in any of his appointments to encourage them to hope.

Tenth. And lastly, This also should teach the saints, when they sin or praise the Lord, they should not sing of mercy only, but of mercy and judgment too; 'I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing' (Psalm 101:1). Of mercy and judgment, or justice in the manifestation of it, as smiling upon our forgiveness. When Hannah sang of, and rejoiced in God's salvation, she sang aloud of holiness, saying, '*There is none holy as the Lord*' (1 Samuel 2:1-2). Holy in keeping his word, though it cost the blood of his Son. This also is that that is called a helping of his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy, and the performing of the mercy promised; even the oath that he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies - by a Redeemer - might serve him without fear, etc. (Luke 1:49, 54). When you praise, therefore, remember Christ and his blood, and how justice and judgment took hold on him, that they might not take hold on thee; yea, how they by taking hold on him, left a way to thee to escape. Isaac should have been sacrificed, had not the Lord provided a ram; and thou thyself shouldst have been damned, had not the Lord provided a lamb (Genesis 22; Revelation 5). Hence Christ is called the 'Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,' that taketh them away by the sacrifice of himself. Sing therefore in your praises unto God, and to the Lamb!

[THE APPLICATION OR USE OF THE WHOLE.]

I would come now to speak one short word of use to the whole. And:

First. This still shows more and more, what a sad state God's people have brought themselves into by sin. I told you before that the revelation of so much mercy as is presented unto us by the first part of the text, sufficiently declared our state to be

miserable by sin. But what shall we say, when there must be added to that the heart blood of the Son of God, and all to make our salvation complete? For albeit mercy is essential to our salvation, and that without which there can be no salvation; yet it is the blood that maketh the atonement for the soul, THAT propitiates, and so makes capable of enjoying of it. It was mercy and love, as I said afore, that sent one to shed his blood for us; and it is the blood of him that was sent, that puts us into the enjoyment of mercy. O! I have thought sometimes, what bloody creatures hath sin made us! ^[28] The beasts of the field must be slain by thousands before Christ came, to signify to us we should have a Saviour; and after that, he must come himself, and die a worse death than died those beasts, before the work of saving could be finished. O redemption, redemption by blood, is the heart-endearing consideration! This is that which will make the water stand in our eyes, that will break a heart of flint, and that will make one do as they do, that are 'in bitterness for their first-born' (Zechariah 12:10).

Sinner, wouldst thou have mercy? wouldst thou be saved? Go thou then to the blood of the cross, as set forth in the word of the truth of the gospel, and there thou shalt find that mercy that thou hast need of first; for there is a mercy that may be called a FIRST mercy, and that is the mercy that gives admittance into, and an interest in all the rest. Now the mercy that doth this, is that which reconcileth us to God; but that other things can not do, if we stand off from the blood of the cross. Wherefore we are said to be reconciled to God, by the death of his Son. 'For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life' (Romans 5:10). According to that other saying, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' (Romans 8:32). In both these places the Son of God, and our Redeemer, is set forth to us in the first place, as the only one that reconcileth to God the sinner by the blood of his cross; wherefore to this Christ, as crucified, the sinner must come first; because nothing else can reconcile to God; and if thou be not reconciled to God, what art thou but an enemy to him, partake of what mercy thou canst? (Colossians 1:20). Go to him, did I say? receive him into the arms of thy faith; hold him fast, for he is a Saviour; yea, carry him as set forth by the gospel, dying for thee, and pray God for his sake to bestow upon thee all those mercies that will compass thee about as with a shield, and follow thee all thy days, till thou enterest in at the doors of eternity; and this is the way to speed! For he that hath the Son hath life, in the beginning of it; and he that holds fast the Son, shall have life in the consummation of it. I do the oftener touch upon this matter, because this Christ is the door, in at which whosoever entereth shall be saved; but he that climbs up any other way, shall be judged as a thief and a robber (John 10:1). ^[29] But,

Second. Is Christ, as crucified, the way and door to all spiritual and eternal mercy? And doth God come to the sinner, and the sinner again go to God in a saving way by him, and by him only? And is there no other way to the Father but by his blood, and through the veil, that is to say, his flesh? (Hebrews 10:19-20). Then this shows the danger, upon what pretence soever, of casting off the daily sacrifice, and setting up in its place the abomination that maketh desolate. I mean, of casting away a crucified Christ, and the setting up the vanity of moral obedience as the more substantial and most acceptable thing with God. I call not a crucified Christ the daily sacrifice, as if I thought he often suffered for sin, since the foundation of the world; but because the virtue of that one offering is that, and only that, by the which we daily draw nigh unto

God; and because the virtuousness of that one sacrifice will for ever abide beneficial to them that come to God, to the world's end by him.

But I say, into what a miserable plight have such people put themselves, that have cast off coming to God by Christ, as he is the propitiation for their sins, and that seek to come another way? Such are lapsed again to Gentilism, to Paganism, to Heathenism; nor will it help at all to say they rely on the mercy and goodness of God, for there is no such thing as spiritual and eternal mercy can come from God to him, that comes not to him by Christ. The Turks, if I be not mistaken, have this for the beginning of every chapter of their Alcoran, 'The Lord, God, gracious and merciful,'^[30] yet are counted unbelievers, and are verily so, for they have not received the faith of Christ. The Lord God, gracious and merciful, will not save them, no not by grace and mercy, unless repenting of their presuming upon mercy, without a bloody sacrifice, they come to him by his Son (Acts 4:12). Men therefore that have laid aside the necessity of reconciliation to God by the precious blood of Christ, are in a damned state; nor will it help at all to say they do indeed believe in him. I am not so void of reason as to think that they that have cast away Christ, as he is a propitiatory sacrifice with God for sin, should also cast away his name out of their mouth; no, his name is too honourable, and the profession of it too glorious for them to do such a thing. But retaining his name, and the notion of him as a Saviour, they yet cast him off, and that in those very things wherein the essential part of his sacrifice, the merit of it, and his everlasting priesthood, consists; and in this lies the mystery of their iniquity.

They will have him to be a Saviour, but it must not be by fulfilling of the law for us; but it must not be by the putting of his glorious righteousness, that which he performed by subjecting himself to the law, on our behalf, upon us; but it must not be by washing of us from our sins in his own blood; but it must be by his kingly and prophetic offices. When, as for his kingly and prophetic offices, he puts those people under the government of them that he has afore made to stand justified before God, from the curse of the law by his priesthood. Nor dare they altogether deny that Christ doth save his people as a priest, but then their art is to confound these offices, by pleading that they are in effect but one and the self-same thing; and then with a noise of morality and government, they jostle the merit of his blood, and the perfection of his justifying righteousness, out of doors; and so retaining the name of Christ in their mouths, they cast those things of Christ, that they like not, under feet; which things, they who have not the faith of, must not, can not see the kingdom of God.

The term of mercy is but a general sound, and is as an arrow shot at rovers, unless the blood and death of the Son of God be set before us, as the mark or mean by which our spirits are to be directed to it. What profit shall a man have, and what shelter or succour shall he find, in hearing of the most exact relation of the strength of the most impregnable castle in the world, unless he knows the door, and entereth in by that, into that place of strength, in the time when the enemy shall pursue him? Why, this is the case: We hear a noise of mercy, and of being at peace with God; what a good God, God is, and what a blessed thing it is to be a child of God; how many privileges the children of God have, and what will be their exaltation and glory in the next world! And all the while they that tell us these things conceal from us the way thereto, which is Christ, not in the naming of him, but in the right administration of his gospel to us.

Christ, and faith in him as a Saviour, not in the name only, but in the true sense thereof, is the mark, as I have said, from which if any swerve, they err from the saving way, and so come nothing near that mercy that can save them. Hence Christ is called a standard, an ensign (Isaiah 5:26). 'And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious' (Isaiah 11:10). And again, 'Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles; and set up my standard to the people' (Isaiah 49:22). 'Go through, go through the gates, prepare ye the way of the people - gather out the stones, lift up a standard for the people. Behold the Lord hath proclaimed to the end of the world; say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold thy salvation cometh. Behold his reward *is* with him, and his work before him' (Isaiah 62:10-11). Hence again he is called the captain, the chieftain, of our salvation, and him without whom there neither is nor can be any.

But now the men of this confederacy, rather than they will submit themselves to the righteousness of God, will lay odiums and scandals upon them that preach they should (Romans 10:2, 4). Not forsooth, if you will believe them, but that they are highly for the righteousness of God, let it be that which they count so; but then to be sure it shall never be the personal performances of Christ, by which they that believe in him are justified from all things; but that which they call 'first principles,' 'dictates of human nature,' 'obedience to a moral precept,' followed and done as they have Christ for an example; not understanding that Christ, in his own doings, is the end of all these things to every one that believeth. But if it be urged that Gentiles and Pagans are possessed with those very principles, only they have not got the art, as our men have, to cover them with the name of Christ and principles of Christianity, then they fall to commending the heathens and their philosophers, and the natural motives and principles by which they were actuated; preferring of them much before what by others are called the graces of the Spirit, and principles upon what the doctrine of the free grace and mercy of God by Christ are grounded. But, as I said, all the good that such preachers can do as to the next world, is, to draw the people away from their ensign and their standard, and so lead them among the Gentiles and infidels, to seek by their rules the way to this unspeakable mercy of God. Wherefore their state being thus deplorable, and their spirits thus incorrigible, they must be pitied, and left, and fled from, if we would live.

Third. Is Christ Jesus the redemption; and, as such, the very door and inlet into all God's mercies? Christian man, look well to thyself, that thou goest no whither, and dost nothing, I mean in any part of religious worship, etc., but as thou art in him (2 Corinthians 12:18-19).^[31] Walk in him, speak in him, grow in him, for he is THE ALL (Colossians 2:6-7). And though others regard not to 'hold the head, from which all the body by joints and bands have nourishment ministered,' yet have thou a care! (Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 2:19). This is he that is thy life, and the length of thy days, and without whom no true happiness can be had. Many there be that count this but a low thing; they desire to soar aloft, to fly into new notions, and to be broaching of new opinions, not counting themselves happy, except they can throw some new-found fangle, to be applauded for, among their novel-hearers. But fly thou to Christ for life; and that thou mayest so do, remember well thy sins, and the judgment and wrath of God; and know also that he is merciful, but at mercy none can come, but through the cursed death Christ underwent. And although some of the wanton professors of our

age may blame thee for poring so much upon thy sins, and the pollution of thy nature, yet know that there is an advantage in it. There be some alive in the world, who, though they count the nature and commission of sin the very evil of evils, yet can say that the remembrance of how vile they are, and of what evils they have committed, has been to them a soul-humbling, a Christ-advancing, and a creature-emptying consideration. Though sin made death bitter to Christ, yet sin makes Christ sweet to his. And though none should sin, that grace might abound, yet where sin has abounded, grace doth much more abound, not only as an act of God, but also in the eye of faith.

A sight of the filth, and a sense of the guilt of sin, makes a pardon to such a soul more than empty notion; and makes the mean through which the pardon comes more to be desired than is either life or limb. This is it that makes the sensible soul prize the Lord Jesus, while the self-justiciary^[32] laugheth him to scorn. This is it which makes the awakened sinner cast away his own righteousness, while the self-conceited one makes it his advocate with the Father.

Some, indeed, count their own doings the only darling of their soul, while others cast it to the dogs. And why should a man cumber himself with what is his, when the good of all that is in Christ is laid, and to be laid out for him? Not that a believer casts off to do good, for he knows that what good thing is done in faith and love, is acceptable to God, and profitable to his neighbour. But this is it, he setteth not his good deed against the judgment of God; he cometh not in his own good. When he comes to God for forgiveness of sins, then he sees nothing, knows nothing, mentions nothing as righteousness, but that which Christ wrought out in the days of his flesh, and that only. But how then is what he doth accepted of God? Verily as the duty of a son, and as the work of one that is justified. We must therefore conclude that there is acceptation, and acceptation: acceptation of the person, and acceptation of his performance. Acceptation of the person may be considered with respect to justification from the curse, and so acceptation there can be none, but through the one offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Also the acceptation of a duty done by such a person is, by virtue of the self-same offering, the person being considered as standing just through Christ before God. And the reason why a justified person must have his duties accepted the same way, as is his person, is because justifying righteousness sets not the person free from sin, save only in the sight of God and conscience; he remaineth still infirm in himself, and standeth still in need of the fresh and continual application of the merits of the Lord Jesus, which also the soul receiveth by virtue of Christ's intercession. I speak now of acceptation with reference to the justice of the law, and the judgment of God upon person or work, according to the self-same law. For so they both must be accepted through the self-same Mediator, or they can not be accepted at all. Nor is it a thing to be *wondered* at, that a man should stand just in the sight of God, when polluted and defiled in his own sight. He stands just before God in the justice of his Son, upon whom God looks, and for whose sake he accepts him. May not a scabbed, mangy man, a man all over-run with blains and blotches, be yet made beautiful to the view of a beholder, through the silken, silver, golden garment that may be put upon him, and may cover all his flesh? Why, the righteousness of Christ is not only unto but upon all them that believe (Romans 3:22). And whoso considers the parable of the wretched infant, shall find, that before it was washed with water it was wrapped up or covered, as it was found, in its blood, in and with the skirt of his garment that found it in its filth. And then he washed it with water, and then he

sanctified it by the anointing oil of the Spirit of God (Ezekiel 16:8-9). I speak thus to thee, Christian reader, partly because in the faith of these things is thy life; and because I would yet enforce the exhortation upon thee with the reason and the amplification thereof, to wit, to put thee upon trusting in the Lord through the encouragement that thou hast in redeeming mercy so to do.

Some may say, Will God see that which is not? and will he judge a man just that is a sinner? But I will answer, The man that had the rainbow about his head, was to look on, or be looked upon, while he shone like a jasper and a sardix-stone (Revelation 4:3). The blood of the paschal lamb was to be looked upon by him that came to destroy the land of Egypt in their firstborn (Exodus 12:13). I add, The rainbow that God gave to Noah for a token that he would no more destroy the earth with the waters of the flood, was to be *looked upon*, that God might remember to show mercy to his people (Genesis 9:8-17). Now all these meet in the man Christ Jesus, who is the only one, for the sake of whom the sinner that believeth in him stands acquitted in the sight of God. His is the blood, he is the prince, that is more than the token of the covenant: nor do all the colours in the rainbow appear so beautiful in the eyes of man, as does the garment of Christ; which is from his loins, even upward, and from his loins, even downward, in the eyes of the God of heaven (Ezekiel 1:27-28). And wilt thou say these are things that are not? Also, he can legally judge a man just, that is a sinner. Do but admit of a diverse consideration, and God will so consider of that sinner which he justifieth, in despite of all the teeth in thy proud mouth! 'He justifieth the ungodly' (Romans 4:5). Not that were, but that are such now, in the judgment and verdict of the law, might deal with them in their own persons as men (Romans 5:5-10). He will then consider them in his Son; in, and under the skirt of his Son. He will consider them as washed in the blood of his Son, and will also consider 'that in him is no sin,' and so he will deal with them. 'We know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin' (1 John 3:5).

What though I have broke a thousand pound in my creditor's debt - yet if another will discharge the whole freely, what has the law to do with me as to that? Or what if I can not but live upon the spend all my days, yet if my friend will always supply my need, and, through his bounty, keep me from writ, bailiff, or jail, is it not well for me? Yea, what if what I can get shall be laid up for me for hereafter, and that my friend, so long as there is death or danger in the way, will himself secure me, and bear my charges to the world's end; may I not accept thereof, and be thankful? Blessed be God for Jesus Christ! I believe he is more than all this to me. 'In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory' (Isaiah 45:25). I know similitudes will not hold in all things; but we that believe are set free from the curse of the law by another man's obedience. For 'by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous' (Romans 5:19). Let then the believer, as was said, study and pray, and read God's Word continually, for the sake of the glory of this truth, that it may be made more his own, and that his conscience may be more and more settled in the power and glory thereof.^[33]

Fourth. As the Christian should most labour to get into the power and glory of this doctrine, so let him see that he holds it fast. This doctrine is foreign to flesh and blood; it is not earthly, but from heaven (Matthew 16:17). It is with many that begin with this doctrine, as it is with boys that go to the Latin school; they learn till they have learned the grounds of their grammar, and then go home and forget all. How have many, that

as to the grounds of Christian religion, one would think, had been well taught, yet not taking such heed thereto as they should, they have let slip all, and their hearts have been filled with the world again, or else have drunk in some opinion that has been diametrically opposite to what they professed of the truth before (Hebrews 2:1-4). Wherefore hast thou anything of the truth of Christ in thy heart? 'Hold that fast, that no man take thy crown' (Revelation 3:11). Yea 'grow *in* grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 3:18).

He that will retain and hold fast the doctrine of redemption, and so by that have, through faith, an inlet into all the abounding mercy of God, must not deal in God's matters with a slack hand. It is not enough for them that would do so, to be content with sermons, family duties, and other public assemblies for worship, but there must be a continual exercise of the mind about these matters, and a labour of the soul to retain them in their glory and sweetness; else they will, first as to their excellency, then as to the very notion of them, slip from the heart and be gone (Hebrews 2:1-3). Not that there is treachery or deceit therein, but the deceit lies in the heart about them. He that will keep water in a sieve, must use more than ordinary diligence. Our heart is the leaking vessel; and 'therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should *let them* slip.'

That this doctrine may remain with us, we must also mortify our carnal reason: for that makes head against the truth thereof, and what can foolishness do else? And the wisdom of this world, which is carnal reason in its improvements, is foolishness with God (1 Corinthians 1:20-25). It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be. It judges this doctrine that we have been speaking of, foolishness; wherefore it must be avoided, opposed and mortified, and the word of faith the more carefully submitted to. 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding' (Romans 3:5). See here, that trusting in the Lord, and leaning to our own understanding, are opposites; wherefore they must either be reconciled, or one quite adhered unto, in a way of mortification of the other. Now, it is safest in this matter to keep a continual guard upon our carnal powers; and to give up ourselves to the conduct of our God, and in all our ways acknowledge him, that he, not ourselves, may direct our paths (verse 6). It is a great thing for a man, when the Word and his reason clashes, then to adhere to the Word, and let his reason fall to the ground. And this indeed is Christianity in the practical part thereof. The Spirit of Christ in the Word is to be hearkened unto, above all things (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

There must also be a continual war maintained upon all the lusts of the flesh, that they may not draw away the heart from the study and delight, the love and faith, of the things that are hid in Christ (Isaiah 28:9). This, I say, must be done, else the heart can not be at liberty to wait upon the Lord without distraction, for the further communications of himself in his Son, according to his blessed gospel to us. Many Christians are lean in their faith and too barren in their lives, and all for want of being diligent here. Wherefore having faith in this blessed Lord Jesus Christ, as has been afore discoursed; in the next place, 'giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they *make you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord' and Saviour 'Jesus Christ' (2

Peter 1:5-8). There is a method that the Holy Ghost has prescribed in the Word, for them that hath faith to observe, and without the observation thereof, though they indeed may be of the number of them that shall be saved, yet they shall not have much, nor do much, for Christ and his name, in this world. Now the unskilful, that are so in the word of righteousness, finding this method, and not discerning to whom it belongs, forthwith apply it to all; and forgetting that faith must go before, they press them as duties preparatory to faith, or else so call that which is not so; and so the blind leading of the blind, both fall into the ditch, and are smothered. But do thou, O child of God, distinguish, and keep faith and duty for justification of thy person in the sight of God far asunder; also be sure to let faith go before, and be always with thy Saviour, but add unto thy faith, virtue, etc., not as though thy faith could not lay hold of Christ, unless accompanied with these, but to show that thy faith is of the right kind, as also for the emboldening of thee to an holy endeavour yet to press further into his everlasting kingdom and his word; for he that lacketh these things is blind, and can not see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Fifth. That thou mayest keep steadfast to this doctrine take heed of being offended, or of stumbling at the Word, because of the offensive lives and conversations of some that are professors of the same. There will be offences, and it is needful there should; yea, scandals and heresies also, that they that are approved of God 'may be made manifest among you' (1 Corinthians 11:19). There are many causes of the offensive lives of them that profess this faith, some of which I will give a touch upon here.

1. Many that adhere to, and profess this gospel, are short of the power and glory of the things which they profess: now the word, the word only, will not bring those that profess it into a conformity to it; into a conformity in heart and life (1 Corinthians 4:18-20). Wherefore they that know it only in word, live scandalous lives, to the reproach of the faith, the emboldening of its enemies, the stumbling of the ignorant, and grief of the godly, that are so indeed, and such must bear their judgment in the next world.

2. This also flows from the wisdom of hell: the devil knows that the faith of the gospel rightly professed, is, not only saving to those in whom it is, but alluring unto beholders: wherefore that he may prevent the beauteous lustre thereof, he sows his tares among God's wheat, and goes his way, that is, to the end those that stumble may not see what he hath done, or whose are the tares indeed. Now by these the sunshine of the faith of the true professors of the blessed gospel is clouded; yea, and the world made believe, that such as the worst are, such are the best; but there is never a barrel better herring,^[34] but that the whole lump of them are, in truth, a pack of knaves. Now has the devil got the point aimed at, and has caused many to fall; but behold ye now the good reward these tares shall have at the day of reward for their doings. 'As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth' (Matthew 13:37-42).

3. It also happeneth, sometimes, through the anger and judgment of God against sinners, that some of them truly gracious do fall, as David, Peter, etc., the which is a great trial to the godly, a wound to the persons fallen, and a judgment of God to the

world. For since these last would not be converted, nor made turn to God by the convincing glory that has attended their faith in a holy and unblamable life annexed, God has suffered them to fall, that they also might stumble and fall, and be dashed in pieces by their vices. But thou, Christian man, be not thou offended at any of these things; do thou look unto Jesus, do thou look unto his Word, do thou live by faith, and think much of thy latter end; do thou be base in thine own eyes, be humble and tender, and pray to God always; do thou add to thy faith virtue, and to virtue what else is mentioned; and ‘give diligence to make thy calling and election sure; for if thou doest these things thou shalt never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ’ (2 Peter 1:10-11).

Sixth. If it be so, that there is so much mercy in the heart of God for his people, and that Jesus his Son has by his blood made so living a way for us that we might enjoy it, and the benefit of it for ever, ‘then let Israel hope’: for to that end is this goodness revealed: ‘Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord *there is* mercy, and with him *is* plenteous redemption.’ Hope! Who would not hope to enjoy life eternal, that has an inheritance in the God of Israel? ‘Happy *art* thou, O Israel, who *is* like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who *is* the sword of thy excellency?’ (Deuteronomy 33:29). Did but the people of God see to what they are born, and how true the God of truth will be to what by his Word they look for at his hands, they would be above alway; they would be weary of life, of estates, of relations; they would groan earnestly under all their enjoyments to be with him, who is their life, their portion, and their glory for ever. But we profess, and yet care not for dying; we profess, and yet long not for the coming of the day of God; we profess the faith, and yet by our whole life show to them that can see how little a measure of it we have in our hearts. The Lord lead us more into the power of things; then shall the virtues of him that has saved us, and called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, and the savour of his good knowledge, be made known to others far otherwise than it is. Amen.

Seventh. And lastly, Sinner, doth not all this discourse make thy heart twitter after the mercy that is with God, and after the way that is made by this plenteous redemption thereto? Methinks it should; yea, thou couldst not do otherwise, didst thou but see thy condition: look behind thee, take a view of the path thou hast trodden these many years. Dost thou think that the way that thou art in will lead thee to the strait gate, sinner? Ponder the path of thy feet with the greatest seriousness, thy life lies upon it; what thinkest thou? But make no answer till in the night, till thou art in the night-watches. ‘Commune with your own heart upon your bed’ (Psalm 4:4), and then say what thou thinkest of, whether thou art going?

O that thou wert serious! Is not it a thing to be lamented, that madness and folly should be in thy heart while thou livest, and after that to go to the dead, when so much life stands before thee, and light to see the way to it? (Ecclesiastes 9:3). Surely, men void of grace, and possessed of carnal minds, must either think that sin is nothing, that hell is easy, and that eternity is short; or else that whatever God has said about the punishing of sinners, he will never do as he has said; or that there is no sin, no God, no heaven, no hell, and so no good or bad hereafter; or else they could not live as they do. But perhaps thou presumest upon it, and sayest, I shall have peace, though I live so

sinful a life. Sinner, if this wicked thought be in thy heart, tell me again, dost thou thus think in earnest? Canst thou imagine thou shalt at the day of account out-face God, or make him believe thou wast what thou wast not? or that when the gate of mercy is shut up in wrath, he will at thy pleasure, and to the reversing of his own counsel, open it again to thee? Why shall thy deceived heart turn thee aside, that thou canst not deliver thy soul, 'nor say, *Is there* not a lie in my right hand?' (Isaiah 44:20).

FOOTNOTES

[1] The titles to the Psalm have puzzled all the commentators. Bunyan follows Luther; who adds, that the title to the Psalm of Degrees does not pertain to any doctrine, but only to the ceremony of the singers. Ainsworth applies it to the place or tone of voice of the singers, or to a special excellency of the Psalm. Calmet and Bishop Horsley consider that the title refers to the progress of the soul towards eternal felicity, ascending by degrees. Watford imagines that these Psalm were written or selected to be sung on the ascent of the Jews from the captivity in Babylon. Luther wisely concludes that the Christian has only to do with the brief and very notable doctrine contained in these fifteen steps or degrees. - Ed.

[2] 'The hither,' or nearest end; now obsolete. - Ed.

[3] When Diabolus, in the *Holy War*, marched against Mansoul, his infernal drum affrighted the backsliding Mansoul with its roaring. 'This, to speak truth, was amazingly hideous to hear; it frighted all men seven miles round.' This drum was beat every night, and 'when the drum did go, behold darkness and sorrow over Mansoul; the light was darkened in the heaven thereof, no noise was ever heard upon earth more terrible; Mansoul trembled, and looked to be swallowed up.' This awful alarm - this terrible drum - is a want of a good hope through faith, which purifieth the heart. - Ed.

[4] How comforting is that declaration of the Holy Spirit, 'For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face'! however we may have had a glimpse of glory to strengthen us in the way. This revelation was through one who had been 'caught up into paradise,' and who had 'abundance of revelations,' so great that it was needful for him to have 'a thorn in the flesh,' to keep him humble. Blessed is Israel's 'Hope' of happiness, inconceivable and eternal. - Ed.

[5] See the marginal reading to this text. - Ed.

[6] Ecclesiastical writers, previous to Bunyan's time, made an hierarchy of nine orders of celestial spirits, viz., seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, virtues, powers, principalities, archangels, and angels; agreeing with Bunyan as to the angels being the lowest order in these celestial hierarchies. The angels are ministering spirits. May not the glorified saints become angels? Who was that angel who said to John, 'I and thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets' (Revelation 22:9). - Ed.

[7] This is a *striking* illustration. Fear 'makes us question our right to the world to come,' and nails us to the earth; but it is sin which clenches the nail, and makes us cry, O wretched man that I am! who can deliver me? Poor Bunyan, in his *Grace Abounding*, mournfully illustrates this fact. - Ed.

[8] In Bunyan's days, persecution for conscience sake was more extensive under the Protestant Church of England than it was even in the fiery days of Mary. Tens of thousands fled to seek an asylum among savages in America, who were not permitted to live among men worse than savages in England. Thousands were immured in prisons, where many hundreds perished, and with those who suffered a violent death received the crown of martyrdom. Even now they that will live godly in Christ Jesus,

must submit to taunts, jeers, and reproaches. May we forget not the Saviour's comforting declaration, 'Blessed are you when persecuted, reviled, and spoken against falsely for my sake.' - Ed.

[9] This is the language of an eye-witness, and not a theory. Our author had associated with every man *in jail*, whose bitter suffering, and that of their families, tried the faith and patience of the saints, and winnowed the church of formal professors. - Ed.

[10] Often have God's saints rejoiced in tribulation, and, like Stephen, when put to death with excruciating torments, have prayed for their enemies. Bunyan's fear was, when threatened to be hung for preaching Christ, that he should make but 'a scrabbling shift to clamber up the ladder.' He was, however, comforted with the hope that his dying speech might be blessed to some of the spectators. - *Grace Abounding*, Nos. 334, 335. - Ed.

[11] How forcibly does this remind us of the escape of the poor doubting pilgrims from the castle of Giant Despair. The outer gate, like that of the prison in which Peter was confined, was of *iron* (Acts 12:10). But Peter had a heavenly messenger as his guide, and faith was in lively exercise, so that 'the gate opened to them of his own accord.' 'God cut the gates of iron in sunder' (Psalm 107:16). The pilgrims lay for four days under dreadful sufferings, bordering on black despair. He had overlooked or laid by the 'key that doth go too hard'; prayer brought it to his recollection, and he cried out, 'What a fool am I thus to be in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty.' He recollected the 'key called promise,' which will open ALL the gates in Doubting Castle; and although the lock of that *iron* gate went *damnable* hard, yet the key did open it, and the prisoners escaped; see *Grace Abounding*, Nos 261-263. Fellow-pilgrims 'look not over,' nor 'lay by,' those keys that 'go too hard,' the prayerful use of which may save us much bitter dejection and gloomy doubts. - Ed.

[12] The murder of Sir E. Godfrey, and the fears of a Popish plot, greatly alarmed the country at this time. The recollection of the frightful atrocities committed by the Papists upon the unoffending and unarmed Protestants in Ireland, led to the fears which are here so forcibly, but naturally, expressed. Although we re here directed to the sole ground of hope in the spiritual warfare, yet doubtless, in temporal things, Bunyan felt the necessity of human agency. Had he lived to witness the punishment inflicted on these murderers by William III, he would have owned with gratitude the services rendered to the nation by that warlike king and his brave parliament. - Ed.

[13] How infinite is the condescension of Jehovah to enter into such a relationship with every member of his mystical body, the church. 'Thy Maker *is* thy husband, the Lord of Hosts *is* his name' (Isaiah 14:5). Surely it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive the riches of that endowment, the magnificence of that estate. - Ed.

[14] Beware lest an evil heart, and Satan's devices, lead us to idolatry. All our ideas of God must be formed and governed by his revelation of himself in his Word. - Ed.

[15] Gospellers was the nick-name for those who loved the gospel at the Reformation, as Puritan or Methodist in a later age. - Ed.

[16] These are solemn and bitter truths. While the public assembly is at times the gate of heaven to the soul, sincerity is better evidenced by heart-wrestling with God in private. No duty draws down such blessings from heaven, nor has greater opposition from Satan, than earnest closet prayer. While it humbles the soul before God, it excites our zeal in good works and a heavenly conduct towards man. - Ed.

[17] 'For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth' (Hebrews 12:6-7). - Ed.

[18] In Popish times, the poor wretchedly and lazily depended upon the alms of the rich, which were especially bestowed at a funeral, to buy their *prayers* for the repose of the soul; and at wedding, for a blessing on the newly-married couple. Happily for them they are now taught, by gospel light, to depend, under God, upon their honest exertions to produce the means of existence and enjoyment, as the most valuable class of society. - Ed.

[19] Bunyan had felt all this. 'Alas!' says he, 'I could neither hear Christ, nor see him, nor feel him, nor savour any of his things; I was driven with a tempest, my heart would be unclean, the Canaanites would come into the land.' - *Grace Abounding*, No. 78. - Ed.

[20] See 2 Samuel 2:23; 3:27. To smite under the fifth rib is to give a mortal blow. - Ed.

[21] Human laws we must obey, unless they infringe upon the prerogative of God and upon conscience; to such we must refuse obedience, and count it an honour to suffer as Daniel and the Hebrew youths. These laws we may strive to get repealed or amended; but the laws of God are immutable and eternal - they must be obeyed, or we perish. - Ed.

[22] How striking an exemplification is this of our utter helplessness and the unbounded love of God. O my soul, it is impossible to number or recollect all his mercies, but take heed lest thou forget them all. - Ed.

[23] The reader will easily understand this passage if he considers 'these folks' to mean those who were deterred from making a public profession of faith, by the fear of 'the enemies,' or persecutors, properly called the devil's scarecrows. 'Today,' refers to the time in which this encouraging treatise was written. Then persecutors and informers were let loose upon the churches, like a swarm of locusts. Many folks were terrified, and much defection prevailed. But for such a time God prepared Bunyan, Baxter, Owen, Howe, and many others of equal piety. Thus, when the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. - Ed.

[24] The word 'virtuous' is now very rarely used in this sense; it means, 'efficacious by inherent qualities,' or having great or powerful properties, as, 'By *virtue* of our Lord's intercession'; see *Imperial Dictionary*. - Ed.

[25] 'Tang'; a strong sense, flavour, or relish. - Ed.

[26] 'O the unthought of imaginations, frights, fears, and terrors that are affected by a thorough application of guilt, yielded to desperation! This is the man that hath his dwelling among the tombs.' - Bunyan's experience in *Grace Abounding*, No. 185. - Ed.

[27] This is not merely an exhortation to diligence in the Christian calling, but it is meant to convey to all the certain fact, that the prayer of faith in the merits of the Redeemer *will* and *must* be followed by renewed speed in running the race that is set before us. - Ed.

[28] There is something about the word *blood* at which the mind recoils, as if intended to impress upon us the evils of sin and its awful punishment - the death, spiritual and eternal, of the sinner. 'Without shedding of blood is no remission.' Blessed are those who were in Christ when his precious blood was shed as an atoning sacrifice. - Ed.

[29] See the character of Ignorance in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. - Ed.

[30] The words are, 'In the name of God, gracious and merciful,' before each of the 114 chapters of which Alcoran consists. - Ed.

[31] No service on the part of those who are out of Christ, can be accepted (Proverbs 15:8). We are accepted IN the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6). - Ed.

[32] One who justifies himself; the self-righteous. The word is only used by religious writers, and never now. - Ed.

[33] What is this to me, O law, that thou accusest me, and sayest that I have committed many sins? Indeed, I grant that I have committed many sins, yea, and still do commit sins daily without number. This toucheth me nothing. Thou talkest to me in vain. I am dead unto thee. - *Luther*. In the person of his Surety, the believer has died, and paid the penalty of the law. It can have no claim on him. - Ed.

[34] A proverbial saying, which means that all are alike, 'there is no one barrel better than another, the whole cargo is bad.' - Ed.