

SERMON I

CHRIST THE ONLY WAY

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." {Jn.14:6}

In the 33rd verse of the former chapter, you shall find Christ breaking the sad and doleful business, which he knew well would go near to the hearts of his disciples; namely, his departure from them; "Little children, yet a little while ye shall seek me, but shall not find me." Peter, upon this, asks him whither he goes? He tells him, whither he cannot follow him now, but afterwards he shall. Now, knowing how sadly this went to the hearts of his disciples, Christ labored to raise them up, and to establish them against the drooping that these sad tidings might occasion; and that is the beginning of this chapter, "Let not your hearts be troubled;" and therein doth endeavor to stir up their spirits first, by telling them the expediency of that departure of his. It was the purpose of God, that as all things should be wrought effectually by Christ, so the communication of all these things to our spirits, should be by the Spirit of Christ. Now Christ tells them expressly, "That except he goes away, the Comforter cannot come to them;" he, that must have the dispensing of those things to their spirits, namely, the Comforter, cannot come unto them. But, secondly, he stays not here; he encourageth them with another argument; "I go to prepare a place;" and he tells them the place where; "In my Father's house are many mansions." And lest they should suspect, he tells them, "If it were not so, I would have told you." And because he would not speak in a cloud of these things, he tells them, "You know whither I go, and the way ye know." Now Thomas comes in with an objection; "We know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Christ answers him, in the words of the text, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me."

I will not spin out the tune about the coherence and analysis of this text; the main point is briefly this; Christ is our way, so that there is no coming to the Father but by Him.

In the handling of which truth, let me tell you, that I know this doctrine is generally received, as it is generally delivered; but, I fear, in the particularizing those things that make up the full truth of the doctrine, every spirit will not, nor can receive it. That you may, at least, see the clear truth in the bowels of this general doctrine; {for, beloved, you must know there is hidden manna, in this very pot} I say, that you may both see it, and taste the sweetness of it, let us consider; First, in what regard Christ is said to be "the way to the Father." Secondly, what kind of way he is. Thirdly, from whence he doth become this way. Fourthly, what use we may make of it.

I. In what sense Christ is said to be our way, that there is "no coming to the Father but by him." You all know beloved, that every way highway, or pathway, necessarily imports two terms, from whence and whereunto; when a man enters into a way, he leaves the place where he was, and goes to the place where he was not. Christ being our way, the phrase imports thus much to us, that by Christ we pass from a state and condition wherein we were to a state and condition wherein we were not; the last term is expressed in the text, "He is the way to the Father;" the first term must be implied. To come to him, ye must leave some condition where we were before. Bear a while with the expression, till I open the thing to you.

The state, from which Christ is our way to the Father, is twofold; first, a state of sin; and secondly, a state of wrath. The state whereunto Christ is the way, is, indeed, expressed here to be to the Father; the meaning is, to the grace of the Father, and to the glory of the Father. The sum is this; Christ is our way, from a state of sin and wrath, to a state of grace and glory, that there is no coming from the one to the other, but by Christ. But we must descend to particulars, that we may know the

fatness and marrow of this truth; which indeed hath an inebriating virtue in it, to lay a soul asleep, with the admirable sweetness and excellency thereof; for no music can tickle the ears as this truth may, when it is truly and thoroughly dived into; no, nor tickle the heart neither. Beloved, I must tell you, when your souls once find this real truth, they cannot choose but say, we have found a ransom.

First of all, Christ is a way from a state of sinfulness. Now what mystery is there in this, more than ordinary, will you say? Beloved, it is certainly true, there is nothing of Christ, there is nothing comes from Christ, but it is in a mystery; the gospel seems to be clear, and so it is, to those whose eyes Christ opens, but certainly it is hid to some persons that shall perish. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes; even so, O Father, because it pleased thee." But what hiddenness is in this? There is a two-fold consideration of sinfulness, from which Christ is our way in a special manner. There is first that which commonly we call the guilt of sin, which indeed is the fault, or a person's being faulty, as he is a transgressor. There is, secondly, the power or dominion of sin. Christ is the way from both these. First of all, Christ is the way from the guilt of sin; for a man to be rid of the guilt of sin is no more but this, namely, upon trial to be acquitted from the charge of sin that is laid to him, and to be freed from it; or for a person, in judgment, to be pronounced actually an innocent and a just person, as having no sin to be charged upon him; this is to be free from the guilt of sin. A man is not free from a fault, as long as the fault is laid to his charge; he is then free from the fault, when it is not charged upon him. All the powers of the world united are not able to pronounce a person faultless and an innocent person, but only the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is the way by which a poor sinner, even in this world, may be pronounced an innocent person; even in this world, I say; and be acquitted and discharged from the fault and guilt of his sin. It is impossible the law should do it; the apostle speaks of it expressly, "the law of the spirit of life in Christ hath freed me from the law of sin and death." {Rom.8:2} Here it is put upon Christ, to free from the guilt of sin. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh," for sin condemned sin in the flesh. The law, saith the text, could not do it; not that the law could not pronounce innocence where innocency was; not that the law could not condemn sin, where it is condemnable by its authority; the law can do this, if it can find subjects whereupon to do it. But the law runs upon these terms, as it finds a person himself without fault; so it pronounceth sentence upon him; if it finds a fault in his person, then it chargeth this fault upon the person alone, as thus; "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." Till then thou canst not be absolutely freed from the acting of a thing in its nature that is faulty; thou canst not hear it speak any otherwise but of faultiness, which it chargeth upon thee.

Much less can the heart of man acquit him as an innocent person, or do away from him that sinfulness, namely, the guilt of his own sin. "If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts." "If a man say he hath no sin, he is a liar," with St. John, "and the truth is not in him." If the heart should say to any man he is an innocent person, it doth but lie.

If angels should spend their strength, and should be annihilated, to procure the innocency of a poor sinner; alas, their very being is too poor a price, or too mean a value, to take away the sins of the world.

Beloved, to go a little further in it, it is not man's righteousness that he does, though assisted by the Spirit of God in the acting of it, that can pronounce him an innocent person, that can be a way to him from his fault and guiltiness. This you know, that the payment of the last half year's rent is no payment for the first half year's rent, nor is it amends for the non-payment of that which was due before; if that had been paid before, for this likewise must be paid now. Suppose a man could perform a righteous action without blame, what satisfaction is this for former transgressions? Nay, beloved, let me tell you, there is nothing but menstruousness, as the prophet Isaiah speaks, in the best of man's righteousness, for all our righteousness is a menstruous cloth; {Is.64:6;} but as for Christ, that blessed Saviour, he is able to "save to the uttermost them that come to God by him;" not only to save them in respect of glory hereafter, but also to save them in respect of sinfulness here; to snatch them as a fire-brand out of the fire of their own sin, to deliver them from their own transgression. Christ, I

say, is the way, and the absolute and complete way, to rid every soul that comes to God by him, from all filthiness; so that the person to whom Christ is the way, stands in the sight of God as having no fault at all in him. Beloved, these two are contradictions, for a person to be reckoned a faulty person, and yet that person to be reckoned a just or an innocent person; if he be faulty, he is not innocent; if he be innocent, he is not faulty. Now it is the main stream of the whole gospel, that Christ justifies the ungodly. If he himself justifies him, there is no fault to be cast upon him; mark it well, as that wherein consists the life of your soul and the joy of your spirits. I say, it holds forth the Lord Christ as freely tendering himself to people, as considering them only as ungodly persons receiving him; you have no sooner received him, but you are instantly justified by him, and, in this justification, you are discharged from all the faults that may be laid to your charge. There is not one sin you commit, after you receive Christ, that God can charge upon your person.¹

A man would think, that there needs not much time to be spent to clear such a truth as this is, being so currently carried along by the whole stream of the gospel. But beloved, because I know tender hearts stumble much at it, give me leave to clear it unto you by manifest scriptures, such as are written in such great letters, as he that runs may read them. Observe that in Psalm 51. "Wash me," saith David; what then? "I shall be whiter than snow." Snow, you know, hath no spot at all, no fault, no blemish. David shall be less blameable, have less faultiness, have less spottedness in him, than is in the very snow itself. In Canticles 4:7, you shall find Christ speaking strange language to his church; admirable language indeed; "Thou art fair my love," saith Christ, "thou hast no spot in thee at all." I do but cite the very words of the text; therefore let none cavil least they be found fighters against God; "she hath no spot in her." In Isaiah 53, where he speaks admirably concerning the effectualness of Christ's death, he tells us, "That the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all;" thy iniquities, my iniquities; as our forefathers' iniquities, so our posterity's iniquities; the iniquities of us all the Lord hath laid upon Christ; they cannot lie upon Christ, and us too. If they be reckoned to the charge of Christ, they are not reckoned to the charge of the person that doth receive this Christ; but "the Lord hath laid them upon him," saith the text; and what iniquity? Doth he lay upon him some iniquity, and leave some iniquity to us? Look into Ezek.36:25, and you shall see the extent of iniquities that God hath laid upon Christ; that he takes away from the sinner, I mean the sinner justified by Christ that received him; there you have the covenant largely repeated, the new covenant; not according to the covenant God made with our fathers; and the first words of the covenant are these; "I will sprinkle you with Clean water, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." from all your filthiness; small sins, as some will call them; great sins, turbulent sins, scandalous sins, any sins, any filthiness; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols. Look into Ezek.16:6, a notable chapter indeed, setting open the unsearchable riches of the love of Christ to men; I "saw thee polluted in thine own blood," saith he; such blood "that no eye could pity thee, or do any good to thee." Well, no creature doth pity him; was it so with God? No. "When I saw thee polluted in thy blood, I said unto thee, live; yea, when I saw thee polluted in thy blood, I said unto thee live; when I passed by thee, thy time was the time of love," saith God, "I spread my skirt over thee and covered thy nakedness." Mark it, I pray you; not a scanty skirt to cover some of this blood and filth, but a broad skirt, a large skirt, a white raiment, as Christ calls it himself in the Revelation; "I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment, that thy nakedness may not appear." It seems there is such a covering of Christ that he casts upon a person, while he is considered in his blood, that covers his nakedness, that none of it doth appear; and yet, a little further in Ezekiel 16, then was she dyed in deep water, after she was in covenant; "yea I thoroughly washed away thy blood;" and this was added, that no man might cavil. It is true, God casts a covering over our sinfulness, but it is our sinfulness still; it is but covered; nay, with the Lord, I have washed it away; "then washed I thee with water." But some will say these are obscure texts and mystical; a man cannot build upon these, that faultiness is not reckoned to believers, being taken off by Christ. To

¹ {Note: That is, to condemnation; because all have been charged on Christ, and he has made satisfaction for them; and besides, in this manifestative justification the Doctor is speaking of, there is an open and full discharge from all sin. Gill.}

come, therefore, to a clearer manifestation of the gospel, mark what the apostle saith in Eph.5:27, Christ "purges and sanctifies his church that he might present it to himself not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it may be holy, and without blame." The words run in the present tense; not that in glory only we shall be without spot, but now, even now, we shall be without blemish, we shall be without spot and wrinkle; and that he might now present us to himself. So in II Cor.5:21, you shall see the truth spoken more emphatically, the Apostle runs in a mighty strain in this business; "He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Both terms are expressed in the abstract; he was made sin for us; here you see plainly, our sins are to be translated to Christ; that God reckons Christ the very sinner; nay, God reckons all our sins to be his, and makes him to be sin for us; and what is the fruit of this?² We are thereby made the righteousness of God in him. If we be righteousness, where is our sinfulness to be charged upon us? He tells us expressly, in I John 1:7, "That the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin;" the blood of Christ doth cleanse us; he doth not say, the blood of Christ shall cleanse us from all sin; but he saith, for the present time, the blood of Christ doth cleanse us from all sin. John the Baptist hath this expression, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." He takes them away. How doth he take them away, and yet leave them behind, and yet charge them upon the person that doth believe? The person must be discharged, or else how can they be taken away. This is the main thing imported in that notable sacrifice of the scape-goat. {Lev.16:21} The high-priest must lay his hand upon the head of the goat to be carried away into the wilderness; the text saith, "it was the laying the sins of the people, and that when they were laid upon him, he goes into the wilderness." He goes into the wilderness and leaves their sins behind him; then the end of this service were frustrated; for he was to carry them away upon him; so Christ, as the scape-goat, hath our sins laid upon his back, and he carries them away; and, therefore, in Psalm 103:12, it is said, "that God removes our sins from us, as far as the East is from the West; he casts our sins into the bottom of the sea." Besides all these texts of scripture, I might produce multitudes more, if need were, for this purpose; but, I think, there can be nothing in the world more clear than this truth, that Christ is such a way to a poor believing soul that he hath received, that he might take and carry away all the sins of such a person; that he is no longer reckoned as having sins upon him.

But some will object, do not those that receive Christ actually commit sin? I answer, yea, they do commit sin, and the truth is, they can do nothing but commit sin. If a person that is a believer hath anything in the world, he hath received this, that if he doth anything that is good, it is the Spirit of God that doth it, not he; therefore, he himself doth nothing but sin, his soul is a mint of sin. But then, you will say, if he doth sin, must not God charge it where it is? Must not he be reckoned to be a sinner, while he doth sin? I answer, no; though he doth sin, yet he is not to be reckoned a sinner, but his sins are reckoned to be taken away from him.³ A man borrows a hundred pounds; some man will say, doth he not owe this hundred pounds, seeing he borrowed it? I say, no, in case another hath paid the hundred pounds for him. A man doth sin against God, God reckons not his sin to be his, he reckons it Christ's; therefore he cannot reckon it his. If the Lord did lay the iniquity of men upon Christ {as I said before,} then how can he lay it upon their persons? Thou hast sinned, Christ takes it off; supposing, I say, thou hast received Christ. And as God doth reckon sin to Christ, and charges sin upon him, so, if thou be of the same mind with God, thou must also reckon this sin of thine upon Christ; his back hath borne it, he hath carried it away.

² {Note: That is, by imputation; not as the author and committer of sin; and, in the same way, God reckons our sins to be Christ's; not as committed by him, but are imputed to him. Gill.}

³ {Note: Not that the believer who has received Christ, ceases to be a sinner in himself; for the Doctor affirms, in this same paragraph, that he commits sin, and does nothing but sin; and much less that he ceased to be a sinner before he was a believer or from the death of Christ, as D. W. in his "Gospel Truth, &c." falsely ascribes to him, on account of this passage; but the sense is that a believer having received Christ is not reckoned as a sinner in the sight of God, and in the eye of justice, and as considered in Christ, all his sins being charged to him, and expiated and atoned for by his sacrifice; as also, seeing such a one has received, with Christ, a discharge from all his sins into his own conscience, he should reckon himself, and his sins, as God does, who reckons them to Christ, and not to him. Gill.}

For my part, I cannot see what every person will object; I will endeavor to make this truth clear as the day to you. Do but consider with yourselves what Christ came into the world for, if not to take away the sins of the world? He need never to have died, but to take away the sins of the world. Did he come to take them away, and did he leave them behind him? Then he lost his labour. Did he not leave them behind him? Then his person is discharged of them from whom he hath taken them; but if the person be not discharged of them, he is not a justified person in himself; neither can you account his person justified as long as you account his sin upon him. It is a contradiction to say, that a man is innocent, yet guilty. Beloved, then here is a point of strange ravishing usefulness to souls, that can but draw towards it and receive it. All the difficulty lies, whether it be my portion, and thy portion; whether I may say, Christ is my way, thus from this guilt, that there can be none of this charged upon me. I say, if thou dost receive Christ, if thou dost but set footing into this way, Christ; as soon as ever thou art stept into this way, thou art stept out of the condition thou wast in. Men's receiving of Christ! What is that? You will say; to receive him, is to come to him; "he that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." Mark; many think there is such a kind of sinfulness that is a bar to them; that though they would have Christ, yet there is not a way open for them to take him. Beloved, there is no way of sinfulness to bar thee from coming to Christ; if thou hast a heart to come to him, and, against all objections to venture thyself with joy into the bosom of Christ, for the discharge of all thy sinfulness; Christ himself {which I tremble to express; though it be with indignation} he should be a liar, if thou comest to him, and he casts thee off. "Every one that will," saith he, "let him come and drink of the water of life freely." You shall find, beloved, the great complaint of Christ, thus, "he came to his own, and his own received him not;" and to the Scribes and Pharisees, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." The truth is, men dote upon the establishing of a righteousness of their own to bring them to Christ; and it is but presumptuous or licentious doctrine, that Christ may be their Christ, and they receive him, and be considered simply ungodly, as enemies; but they are abominably injurious to the faith of Jesus Christ, to the exceeding bounty of that grace of his, who saves from sin, without respect of anything in the creature, that he himself might have the praise of the glory of his grace. The covenant, concerning the blotting out of transgressions, is a free covenant; "not for thy sake do I this, be it known unto thee," saith the Lord, "for thou art a stubborn and stiff necked people; but for my own sake do I this." All this grace to acquit thy soul, here and hereafter, comes out of the bowels of God himself; and he hath no other motive in the world, but simply, and only, his own bowels, that put him upon the deliverance of a poor wretch from iniquity, and discharge of sin, from that load which otherwise would grind and crush him to powder; I say, his own bowels are the motive. God neither looks to anything in the creature to win him to show kindness, nor yet anything in the creature to debar him; neither righteousness in men that persuades God to pardon sin; nor unrighteousness in men that hinders him from giving this pardon, and acquitting them from their transgressions; it is only and simply for his own sake he doth it unto men.

Thus you have seen the first particular that I have endeavored to clear from all cavils and objections that may be laid upon it.

In one word, beloved, mistake me not, I am far from imagining any believer is freed from acts of sin; he is freed only from the charge of sin; that is, from being a subject to be charged with sin; all his sins are charged upon Christ, he being made sin for him; yet Christ is not an actual sinner; but Christ is all the sinners in the world by imputation; and through this imputation all our sins are so done away from us, that we stand as Christ's own person did stand, and doth stand in the sight of God.⁴ Now, had not Christ made a full satisfaction to the Father, he himself must have perished under

⁴ {Note: This shows what is the Doctor's true sense in a former passage, where he says Christ is "the very sinner;" that is, by imputation, as here explained, and not an actual sinner. One would be tempted to think, at first reading this clause, that the Doctor was for universal redemption, when he says, that Christ is "all the sinners in the world" by imputation; and, perhaps, such expressions as these with some others that will be observed hereafter, made the learned Hoornbeck conclude, that he held the doctrine of universal redemption; but his sense is not, that Christ personated all the sinners in the world, or had all the sins of every individual person laid on him; but that he was all those sinners in the world, or represented them, whose sins were imputed to him; and these, as he often says in his sermons on Isaiah 53:6, were the iniquities of the Lord's people, of the church, and of the elect. Gill.}

those sins that he did bear; but in that he went through the thing, and paid the full price, as he carried them away from us, so he laid them down from himself. So that now Christ is freed from sin, and we are freed from sin in him; he was freed from sin imputed unto him and laid upon him, when he suffered; we were freed from sin as he takes it off from our shoulders, and hath carried it away. "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden." That is, with sin. And what follows? "And I will give you rest." As long as the burden is upon the shoulders, so long there is no rest. Therefore this doth necessarily import, that Christ must take away the burden, that we may have rest. Secondly, Christ is not only the way from the fault of sin, but he is the way from the power of sin. There is a threefold power of sin; there is first, a reigning power; and secondly, a tyrannizing power; and thirdly, a bustling or ruffing power of sin; and they are all three of them distinct. Christ is a way from all these in believers; from the reigning power of it; so the Apostle speaks expressly, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace." {Rom.6:14} Grace there is Christ himself. "His servants ye are, to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death," or of righteousness unto life; but, thanks be to God, "ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." The meaning is this; while we are under the law, and have no better help, sin reigns in us, the law cannot bridle it in; but when we come under grace by Christ, the dominion of the law, or rather the dominion of sin, which the law cannot restrain, is captivated and subjected by Christ; "I will subdue your iniquities," as it is spoken by the prophet Micah. We are discharged from the fault and guilt of sin, that is, absolutely at once; {Acts 13:39;} but the discharge from the reigning power of sin, that is done by degrees; the faultiness of sin is left behind the back of the believer, but the power and resistency of sin lie all along in the way; but still Christ breaks through, and makes way, I Cor.10:13, where you have this admirable expression, "No temptation hath happened unto you, but such as is common to men; God is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation make a way that you may be able to bear it."

There is a tyrannizing power of sin; that is, not when sin is chosen of the soul, as that under which the soul both affects and will live; but when sin hath gotten a present over-mastery of the soul, and in spite of all the spirit can do, will keep it under. This, I say, is the tyranny of sin; and this was the case of the apostle Paul, Romans, chapter 7, "when I would do good, evil is present with me;" I find "a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, bringing me into captivity to the law of sin;" so that "the good I would do, I do not; and the evil that I would not, that do I." In regard of which he makes a bitter complaint; but mark the end of all, "but thanks be to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Here you see that though sin hath a tyranny over the spirit of a person, yet through the Lord Jesus Christ this tyranny is abated.

Yet thirdly, it is abated by degrees; for the bustling power of sin, namely, though it cannot be entertained, yet it will be troublesome to the soul. Now Christ is the way, by degrees, also, from this trouble of sin; for by degrees he crucifies the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof, and brings down the power of it by treading down Satan, that is the egger on of sin, to make it so troublesome; by overcoming the world, that administers occasion of this troublesomeness. "Fear not," saith Christ, "I have overcome the world." But still, I say, he doth this by degrees, and so he doth it by degrees, that sometimes he lets the work be at a stand; and sometimes the tyranny shall be over the spirit, and the spirit shall be under that tyranny a good while; sometimes the spirit shall be under the troublesomeness of sin, and be constantly exercised with it. But you must know that it is neither the tyranny, nor the troublesomeness of sin in a believer, that doth eclipse the beauty of Christ, or the favor of God to the soul. Our standing is not founded upon the subduing of our sins, but upon that foundation that never fails, and that is Christ himself; upon his faithfulness and truth. Men think they are consumed, when they are troubled with sin; why? Because of their transgression. But mark what the Lord saith; "I, the Lord, change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." It is not, you change not, therefore ye are not consumed; but I change not; I have loved you freely, I will love you freely, I cannot alter; "whom he loves, he loves unto the end;" and this is in respect of his unchangeableness.

Though there be ebbings and flowings of the outward man; nay, of the inward man, in the business of sanctification; yet this is certainly true, that believers are kept by the mighty "power of God, through faith, unto salvation." They are kept in holiness, sincerity, simplicity of heart; but all this hath nothing to do with the peace of his soul, and the salvation and justification thereof.⁵ Christ is he that justifies the ungodly; Christ is he that is the Peacemaker; and as Christ is the peacemaker, so all this peace depends upon Christ alone. Beloved, if you will fetch your peace from anything in the world but Christ, you will fetch it from where it is not. "This people," saith the prophet Jeremiah, "hath committed two evils." What are they? "They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." {Jer.2:13}

What is that fountain of living waters? Christ is the fountain of peace and life; and men forsake that peace that is to be had in Christ, when they would have peace out of righteousness of their own, out of their great enlargements, out of humiliations. These are broken cisterns, and what peace is there in them? Is there not sinfulness in them? Who can say, I have washed my hands? If there be sinfulness in them, where then is their peace? Sin speaks nothing but war to the soul. Let me tell you, beloved, you that look after peace from the subduing of your sins; what peace can it afford you, in case there be any defects of subduing of your sins? There can be no peace!

Suppose God had nothing in the world to charge upon you; but only that sinfulness in the very subduing of your corruptions; what peace could you have? What could but God find in us? Suppose your eyes were enlightened to see yourselves, how much filthiness there is in all your wrestlings; I say, how much defects and infirmities might you see? Could you choose but fall foul upon your own spirits, for these infirmities and defects of your best performances, seeing the wages of sin is death? What can you run to then? None but Christ, none but Christ. While your acts, in respect of filthiness, proclaim nothing but war, Christ alone, and his blood, proclaim nothing but peace. Therefore I give this hint by the way, when I speak of the power of Christ subduing sin; because, from the power of it in men, they are apt to think their peace depends upon this subduing of sin. If their sins be subdued, then they may have peace; and if they cannot be subdued, then no peace. Fetch peace where it is to be had; let subduing of sin alone for peace; let Christ have that which is his due; for it is he alone that speaks peace.⁶ It remains, we should speak further, that as Christ is a way from sin, both in respect of fault and power, so he is a way from wrath; and he is a way to the grace and glory of the Father, and what kind of way he is. But the searching into every corner of this truth, for the sitting of it, hath brought me exceedingly back beyond my expectation. I shall have further occasion in the afternoon to speak of it.

⁵ {Note: That is, to make peace with God for his soul, since Christ is the Peace-maker, Saviour, and Justifier; otherwise to be kept in these things contributes to spiritual peace of mind, under the influence of divine grace and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. Gill}

⁶ {Note: Let it be observed, that the Doctor is speaking not of subduing sin, as it is an act of God's grace, and owing to the power of Christ, who has made an end of it, and so made peace; on this subduing of sin peace depends, {Mic.7:18, Deut.9:24} but of men's subduing sin, by their own power and strength, and in order to make peace with God; whereas subduing sin, or mortifying the deeds of the body, believers are concerned for, is not of themselves, and done in their own strength, but through the Spirit, Power and Grace of God; and not to make peace with him, but to show their dislike of sin, their gratitude to God, and that they are debtors to him, to live after the spirit, {Rom.8:12,13,} wherefore subduing of sin is to be let alone for the end mentioned, in order to peace with God, that Christ might have his due and glory, who has both made and speaks peace; otherwise subduing of sin, or the weakening the power of it, by the Spirit and Grace of God, is the concern of every believer, and is wished for by him, and makes for the tranquility of his mind. Gill.}