

SERMON X

A ZEAL OF GOD PROVES NOT A MAN A CHILD OF GOD

Tobias Crisp

"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." {Rom.10:2-4}

The Apostle, in the former chapter, more plainly and fully lays down the absolute freeness of the grace of God alone to peace, life, and salvation, than anywhere else; clearly showing, that merely and only for his own good pleasure-sake, he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; especially in that instance of Jacob and Esau, he tells us plainly, that God hath no regard in the world unto good and evil, that might be done by either of them, but before ever they could do any such thing, it is expressly written of them, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated."

And the reason, why God takes nothing into his consideration, either good or evil done by the creature as a motive to his love, the Apostle gives there, is this, "that the purpose of God might stand, according to election; not of works, but of grace;" that is, that all the world may see that the first thoughts of God, in his election, had no eye in the world unto anything that the creature might do, which should have any prevalance with him, to sway him this way, or that way; it was not the consideration of Esau, as one that would be resolute and peremptory in a way of sinfulness, that was a motive with God to reject him; nor was it the consideration of any propensity in the spirit of Jacob to yield unto calling, or of any inclination in Jacob to glorify him being called; I say, none of these considerations entered into the thoughts of God, when he established his love, even in election itself, upon Jacob; his thoughts were merely upon his own good pleasure within himself; as if he should see a whole heap of creatures together, and, as it were, {if I may so speak,} blindfold of any good the creature could have to move him; he picked out this and that, and the other, without respect of any difference between them.

Then he comes into the closure of chapter 9, to show how desperately his own brethren, after the flesh, the Jews did reject this revealed will and pleasure of God, concerning good to men; they would have something considerable in the creature, as of prevalance to move God to do good to such, rather than such a one; this very conceit, the Apostle calls a stumbling-block, at which they fell.

Now, least he should seem to speak all this out of spite, or prejudice, or through the injuries they had done to him; therefore, that he might not thus be understood, at the beginning of this chapter he confesses, "that his heart's desire, and prayer, was that they might be saved;" he had no ill-will in the world to them; nay, he saith, "that he would be contented to be even cut off for his brethren's sake." And, after he had acquitted himself from sinister respects, he begins to declare the truth as it is in Jesus; and first he comes to tax them, and show where their error lay, and grants it lay not in any defect of zeal of, or after God; "for {saith he} I bear them record, they have a zeal of God;" if this would have served their turns, to be zealous for God himself, there was no defect in that; the Apostle will testify for them, that they were exceeding cordial and not in respect of themselves, but in respect of God himself; they had not a zeal simply for their own base ends, but had an eye to God himself; it was a zeal of God, whether you consider it as wrought by God, or as tending unto him; either way, their zeal was a zeal of God, a zeal after God. I know, that there may be a zeal wrought by

God in respect of common mercy, or in respect of peculiar mercy; this was a zeal of the common mercy of God.

Thus much in effect, I have spoken heretofore upon this text; upon which I made several enquiries; as, first, what righteousness of their own this was, which they went about to establish. Secondly, what is it to establish a man's own righteousness? Which likewise I have handled in my former discourse upon this text. Notwithstanding, I shall, at this time, speak something more largely concerning the second, and so, if the time will permit, proceed unto the rest of my enquiry; but, by the way, I shall speak something concerning the zeal here mentioned by the Apostle.

Therefore, before I quit these words, give me leave to tell you that it is possible a person may have a zeal of God, and yet be far from being a believer; let that be the first observation; I ground it thus; of the Jews of whom Paul speaks, he himself "bears record, they had a zeal of God;" but, in the next words he says, "they established their own righteousness, and did not submit to the righteousness of God." A zeal of God is not ground or evidence enough that a person is a believer or that he hath received or submitted himself to Christ. First, Beloved, because this may seem to be harsh, I beseech you to consider seriously, how undeniable and clear the position I have laid down is founded in the text itself; I say, there may be a zeal of God in an unbeliever; so the Apostle bears record of these Jews; there was "a zeal of God, yet not according to knowledge;" even when they had it, "they established their own righteousness; they did not submit to the righteousness of God." I will not dwell upon this point; all that I shall say on it, is only that I may undeceive many that are very subject to deceive themselves; and that I may take them off from a sandy foundation; and so, if it be possible, reduce them to a rock, who are apt to build upon the sand.

I know, beloved, it is cried up much in the hearts of many poor wretches; I say, cried up much, that if they have but a zeal of God in their hearts, it is enough to serve them forever; they are believers, members of Christ; and it is injurious unto the people of God, as they think, to tell them, that those that have a zeal of God in their hearts, yet, for all that, may "not submit to the righteousness of God;" but stumble at the stumbling-stone, and fall forever.

All the difficulty, I know, lies in this, what it is for persons to have a zeal of God? Or whether there be not a zeal of God in those that are believers, which is palpably discerned, from that in those that do not submit to the righteousness of God? I grant, there is a difference; but as this zeal of God hath reference to our righteousness or unto an obedience to the Law, you will hardly find a difference. A zeal of God to set up God in Christ, to give Christ the pre-eminence in all, that nothing is to be done with him, but only by Jesus Christ; to throw down everything in the world that offers to come in with Christ, to deal with the Father; I say, a zeal of God, in this kind, is not common to any person, that submits not to the righteousness of God; but to be zealous, that is to say, to be cordial, hearty, real, and that with fervency, and earnestness of spirit, towards obedience to the commandments of God, and to have an eye, in such obedience, to God himself, to seek him in it; this, I say, is a zeal of God that is common unto such as do not submit to the righteousness of God, as well as to those that do submit to it; therefore, as there is a community in this zeal, so this is not possibly able sufficiently to clear up to persons, that because they are thus zealous, therefore they are the children of God, and have the righteousness of Christ.

These Jews, the Apostle here speaks of, {mark it well, beloved,} were exceeding vehement, even in setting up and promoting obedience to the commandments of God. I say, with an earnestness of spirit; as when they offered to stone Christ himself, {the Pharisees I mean,} it was merely out of the extremity of their zeal, and fervency of spirit, because they conceived he was a great blasphemer, and breaker of God's will, for making himself equal with God; how could they contain themselves, so long as Christ would, as they thought, usurp and presume so far as to take the incommunicable privileges and immunities of God himself? The Apostle saith of himself, and of the rest of the Jews, "if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;" and, {saith he,} though I persecuted the church of God, yet "I did it ignorantly in unbelief." {I Tim.1:13} All this results to thus much, that the mere encroaching upon God, as they understood, was that which put them on so hot, eager, and violent a revenge of God's quarrel; so that, I say, the eye may be upon God, and, for his

sake, men may be exceeding zealous, earnest, and fervent for the vindication of him, for the doing of his will revealed in the Law; and yet, for all this, there may not be a submitting to the righteousness that is in God.

I apply it thus, there are many people in the world, to whom the mind of God, in the Law, is made known; we must not commit adultery, &c., simply because God commands this thing, they refrain from the evil; they go through all the commandments of God zealously; they look upon it as the will of God revealed to them, and do it for God's sake, thus imparting his own mind; they abstain and refrain from the evil they do, and perform the good, because God requires it of them; yet all this is no argument of a person's being a real member of Christ; for all this, he may not submit to the righteousness of Christ.

Now I will add something, according as I proposed, to which hath been heretofore said unto the second enquiry, namely, how, and wherein our righteousness is established instead of the righteousness of God. First, then, observe, that these Pharisees "went about to establish their own righteousness," saith the Apostle; this righteousness they went about to establish, what was it? A righteousness according to the Law of God; "Christ is the end of the Law to everyone that believes;" as if he had said, you, in the zeal of your spirits, think to come to the end of the Law yourselves, but mistake not, if you have in your eye the expectation of comfort and peace, and rest in your spirits, from the largeness of your spirits in the performance of those duties this is enough to make you miscarry, though it be for the Lord's sake you do it. Let me tell you, that the Lord hath so established Christ, for the rest and life of men, that if they could yield angelic obedience, be perfect throughout in obedience to the whole Law of God, and not fail in one point of it; if, I say, from such perfection of obedience they would gather up their own comfort, or conclude their own salvation; these persons should be damned, as well as those that sin ever so much; for God hath established Christ, and only his righteousness to be the salvation of man; I say, only the righteousness of Christ; that if a man were ever so perfect, and in respect of that perfection, would leave the righteousness of Christ, and lean to the perfection of his own, for his peace, and salvation; that man would miscarry, and be damned.

Beloved, all I aim at is this, that you build not upon foundations that will fail you, when you come to the trial; there is {as you shall hear by and by, if time and strength permit} absolutely perfection enough in the righteousness of Christ alone, for your rest and security, that you shall not need to trust to anything you do for peace or life; this is that which God calls you to, to go forth from your own righteousness, to rest solely and only upon the righteousness of Christ, if ever you mean to have comfort in this world, and in the world to come.

You will say peradventure, this is the way to destroy all righteousness and obedience whatsoever; what, a man never jot the better, though he be ever so zealous for God, although his eye and aim be after God in his zeal; to what purpose serves all this then, will you say?

I answer, the world is grown to a miserable pass, that obedience, zeal, and seeking after God, must be of no use at all, except a man himself be a gainer by his obedience; it is now, as it was in the time of the Psalmist, {Psalm 4,} everyone will be ready to cry out; "who will show us any good?" This is the common out-cry in the world; if anything in the world be proposed to men to be done, they answer, but what shall I get by it? That is the next word presently; am I put upon such, and such an employment, saith one; but what shall I gain by it? As in those offices of employment that carry about with them a great deal of labour and expense of time, and bring no profit in to the person in the office; every man will be ready to shun such an office, nay ready to buy out such employment; this is the case of the world, in things appertaining unto God; what doth the Law call me out unto such duties and employments, such zeal and fervency, to be hot in these services and duties, and to have mine eye upon God in the performance of them, and all this do me no good? I had as good sit still and do nothing. But there are some good common-wealth's-men indeed, who you know have in respect of others prosperity, put themselves to trouble and charge, and be so far from getting, that they shall be losers by their office; and yet for the common-wealth's good, they will willingly put themselves on, when they are called out to such employments; and I must tell you, except you mind chiefly, that all

the duties you perform, are for other ends and purposes than your own preferment, and to benefit yourself thereby; namely, the setting forth the praise of the glory of God's free-grace, and the serving your generation in which you live, and the study of good works because they are profitable to men; I say, except you will fall upon the performance of duties, for the common good and benefit, without having any such conceits as what shall accrue to you thereby; you are not persons yet come to have that common spirit, and dead to the old spirit, as becomes Christians.

I must tell you and that freely, there is not any duty you perform, when you have attained the highest pitch that hath any prevalency and availableness to produce any, though the least good to themselves. I say it again, there is nothing you can do, from whence you ought to expect any gain unto yourselves by doing; you ought not to seek to find in what you do, nor to think to bring Christ to yourselves by doing. "You are not your own," saith the Apostle, "you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and spirits." Christ hath redeemed us, "that we should not henceforth live to ourselves, but to him that died for us."¹

The Scripture is marvelous plentiful in this, that no believer for whom Christ died, should have the least thought in his heart of promoting or advancing himself, or any end of his own by doing what he doth; and though, as people may think, here is a marvelous discouragement to persons, to do what God calls them to do, when they shall have nothing for it; I answer, when there is a spirit of ingenuity {as you know there is even in the world} they shall be industrious to glorify God, and do good to men, as if they did it for themselves; they shall do as much for good already bestowed, as if they were to procure it by their own doing.

Secondly, I answer, there can be no discouragement at all unto the performance of anything God calls for at your hands, though you get nothing in the world by what you do; I say, there is no discouragement, because you cannot propose or intend to yourselves any possible gain by duty; but that, whatever it is, that is a spur and encouragement unto it, is already freely and graciously provided for you to your hand; that all your industry could not compass and bring in, either so certainly or so plentifully as the very grace of God, before the performance of any duty, hath provided and established that good for you.

When you fall upon humiliation, fasting, prayer, weeping, and self-denial, what do you look for? In the diversity of judgment, saith one, I get this by it, prevention of many great evils hanging over my head; another saith, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, assurance of the pardon of sin, and of reconciliation with God; these things would I get by attending upon ordinances, by serving God day and night, in that way he calls me out unto; I tell you plainly, there is none of all these things that you do that conduce a jot towards the obtaining of any of these ends you propose to yourselves; all you do gets not a jot; nay, doth not concur in it.

You will say then, we had as good sit still, as good never whit as never the better; he that works all day, and gets nothing more than he had in the morning, had as good sit still, and do nothing. I answer, let me tell you, the prevention of evil, if there be reality of evil in it, and the obtaining of good, if there be a reality of good, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, pardon of sin, infallibility of miscarriage, the light of the countenance of God; all these, I say, which you aim at

¹ {Note: The Doctor's meaning is not, that no good is enjoyed in a way of duty; for, in the former discourse on this text, he not only observes, that our righteousness is useful, to manifest our thankfulness to God, and by it we serve our generation; but it is the ordinance of God, wherein he hath appointed us to meet with him, and wherein he will make good the things he has before promised; and accordingly he pours out himself in grace and love, according to his promise; but the sense is, that there is no virtue and efficacy in any duty performed to procure any good things for us or to entitle us to it; nor should we do any with this view, or expect any on such an account; but should perform duty without mercenary or selfish views, purely from a spirit of ingenuity, from a principle of love and gratitude; knowing that all good things, for time and eternity, are already provided in Christ, and are or will be bestowed on us, through him, and for his sake; and not on account of any duty of ours, which ought not to be put in the room of Christ, and made an idol of; which is the Doctor's view, in these and other expressions of the like nature. See Chauncy's "Neonomianism Unmasked," part 2, pgs. 256, 290, 291, &c., a book worthy to be read by both the friends and foes of Dr. Crisp; being a vindication of these discourses of his throughout, from the falsehood, misrepresentations, calumnies, and objections of D. W. in his Gospel Truth Stated, &c. Gill.}

when you are encouraged to duty, are provided abundantly for you, and established firmly upon you, by the mere grace of God in before ever you perform anything whatsoever. To what purpose do men propose ends to themselves, which ends are accomplished before their proposition? Hath God settled all things pertaining to life and godliness in his Son Jesus Christ upon you for his own sake, and settled them everlastingly and unchangeably upon you; that heaven and earth shall pass away, before a tittle of the grant of God, made freely for his own sake, shall pass? I say, hath he settled all things, so that there can come nothing to make them more secure, than the grant of God himself hath made them? To what purpose then do we propose to ourselves, the gaining of that to ourselves by our labour and industry which is already become our own before we labour a jot? There are some children in the world, I know, that are very vigilant and very observing of their parents; and their end and aim is, that by such compliance their fathers may settle a good inheritance upon them; but suppose a child hath manifested to it, that his father had already passed over all his goods and land to him; and hath made a firm deed of conveyance, and cannot call it back or in; he hath passed over so much, and so firmly, he is not able to add to that, that is passed over before-hand; will such a child propose to himself, in his obedience and observance, the obtaining of that good his father hath already passed? He knows that it is passed already, and cannot be by anything he doth firmer and stronger; he serves not now to get his father's lands, but he serves to honour his father that so freely hath settled his land upon him. So I say of believers, that have the temper of Christ's true bred children indeed; they, in the gospel of Christ, find all things that appertain to life and godliness; they find them all so passed over by God's goodness and free-grace to them, that the lions shall want, and suffer hunger, before they shall lack any thing that is good; must they now labour to gain these things as if they were in agitation, and as if they were yet referred to their good or evil walking; that as they shall walk, so they shall speed? This is to argue that God is yet to determine within himself, how to dispose of the good things that he will bestow upon his people, and that he gives good things according to their good or evil carriage; and so the goodness of God to his people must depend upon their goodness to him; and that as men's works will prevail with God, so God will pour out his bounty unto them. {Ez.36:32}

But, without respect to good or evil, as I said before, the Lord hath everlastingly established all that ever he meant to do; and no more will he do to the end of the world to any people he hath chosen in his Son. The Lord in Christ from everlasting hath set down peremptorily what he will do for you; and there are no intervening acts and carriages of yours that make any alteration in him at all to cross out what he hath written, and to put in what he had left out; he doth nothing to his people upon conditions in them, as if he referred himself still to those conditions, and suspended what he meant to do to them, till he perceived how they would carry themselves to him. "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past." {Eccl.3:14,15} "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." {James 1:17}

All that I aim at is this, to let people know that it is not a vain thing to yield due obedience to anything that God requires; though the Lord intend not, that by our obedience, we shall gain something, which in case of our failing, we shall miscarry of; I say, the Lord hath firmly established upon his own people every thing that concerns their peace, comfort, and good, simply and merely for his sake, without respect or regard to anything they perform; all that they are to do, they are not to do it with any eye to their own advantage, that being already perfectly completed to their hands before they do anything; but simply with an eye to glorify God, and serve their generation, and therein to serve the Lord, and set forth the praise of the glory of his grace that hath done so abundantly for them. Oh; that men were but so far enlightened, to behold how graciously the Lord hath provided for them; that he doth not now leave himself in a kind of suspense to deal well or ill with them, as they should carry themselves well or ill to him. "But he is in one mind, and who can turn him; and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth." {Job 23:13} "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." {Mal.3:6}

I know that the contrary to this rises in the hearts of men that have not yet received the light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ; having this conceit, as if all the carriages of God to men were according to their carriage to him; but here is no such thing, this is but the establishing of man's own righteousness to expect the dealings of God to him, as he himself deals with God, and that, therefore, he will be righteous, that he may be happy. Oh! I beseech you, enter seriously into your own thoughts, and consider, whether or not this be not to bring back again the covenant of works, even to believers; namely, that it shall fare well or ill with them, as they obey, or disobey the Lord God. The Apostle, in this chapter, {vs.5,} doth expressly tell us what the covenant of works was. "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them." I pray mark it well, this is the righteousness of the Law that he himself, in the next verse, opposes to the righteousness of God, that he calls the righteousness of faith. "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them; but the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven; that is, to bring Christ down from above; or, who shall descend into the deep; that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach." I say that the covenant of works stands upon these terms, so much doing, so much life; on the other side "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Law to do them." {Gal.3:10} Here is the other branch of the covenant of works, so far as I fail in doing, so far must I be under the curse. Now you can look for no better than wrath and vengeance from heaven, so long as you run on in these principles, and make them the foundation of your good; so far you make yourselves liable to the covenant of works; no more good, comfort, peace, or rest, but as you can do this, and that. What is this else, but, "do this and live?"

I beseech you to enter into your own hearts concerning this particular. When you yield obedience to God, you come to church, go to prayer, and fall to fasting, weeping, mourning, self-denial, keeping the Sabbath and dealing righteously, honestly, and justly with men; what is it you aim at in all this? That God may do you good, that he may be gracious and loving to you, that he may speak peace to your spirits; then, it necessarily follows, that life is that in your eye that puts you upon that which you do, and so you do, that you may live; this is the righteousness of the Law, that righteousness which is opposed to the righteousness of faith. Now know, that there is no submitting to the righteousness of God, while there is an establishing of the righteousness of the Law of Moses; namely, to do righteousness that you may live; to refrain from evil, to the end you may not be cursed; he that proposeth cursing or life, cursing if he do not do, or life if he do the will of God; he that proposeth this, is "under the Law, and not under grace."

Christ, as you hear in the next verse; "is the end of the Law for righteousness, to everyone that believes." What is that? He is the end of the curse of the Law; he is the end of the life of the Law; there is no curse to be pronounced on a believer, when he breaks the Law; there is no life to be expected by the believer upon his obedience to the Law. Christ is the end of the life and curse of the Law. Christ himself being made a curse for us, as it is written, "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." {Gal.3:13} Secondly, "our life is hid with God in Christ;" he is the life, no life but in the Son; "he that hath the Son, hath life; he that hath not the Son, hath not life," saith the Apostle. {I Jn.5:12} All this argues plainly, that all that life that is to be expected, whether it be life itself, or the conducting of things that appertain unto the comforts of it; all this is to be expected from the Son of God, and not from any obedience to the Law. If thou, at any time, read a curse to thyself, upon any transgression of the Law, and darest receive it against thyself, in respect of that transgression, Christ is not the end of the Law to thee; namely, thy soul takes not Christ as the full curse of the Law, taking it all away, that otherwise the Law would pronounce and execute upon thy person.

Beloved, I need not apologize; you know what the Apostle speaks, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation;" upon which {saith the Apostle} "we are ambassadors for Christ, as

though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." {II Cor.5:19,20} I think I need not make an apology; he that is a minister of the Gospel ought to declare and proclaim this reconciliation to you, by God's own Son Jesus Christ; peace through him, peace and atonement through his blood alone. Either we are the ministers and messengers of Christ, or the ministers of Moses; we are either the ministers of the covenant of works, or the messengers of the covenant of grace; so far as we urge upon you, as you do, you shall live, and as you do evil, you shall be accursed; so far we are the ministers of the covenant of works. But, when we come and say, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" that is, if we say that Christ bare the curse, and that you need not fear it, though you fall into sin; you may be sure that God hath reconciled you so in his Son, that your falls {being believers} shall not break peace between God and you; this peace is everlasting; it is unchangeable; God is not a friend today with his people, and falls out with them tomorrow; "whom he loves, he loves to the end;" now this is our business to draw people unto Christ. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." {Jn.13:1}

And we may do some good to let you see what advantage there is in Christ for you; for thereby you may be induced not to establish your own righteousness against him, and his. We shall sin every day; in many things we sin all; but the business we are to do, is this, to let you know, that though there be sins committed, yet there is no peace broken; because the breach of peace is satisfied in Christ; there is a reparation of the damage before the sin itself be committed. Christ had in his eye, and so had the Father too, all the damages that should fall out to the end of the world, by his own people; and he did not pay a price for some that were present only, but he paid the damages of all that should come after, from the time of his suffering, to the end of the world; he paid the uttermost farthing for everyone at once; though, it may be, one sin is committed today, another is committed tomorrow, and the other the third day; God hath reconciled himself to you in Christ, for this sin committed today, and that which will be tomorrow, and so for all the rest to the end of your lives, they are paid for already; this is that which will make up the peace of a believer. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." {Rom.15:13} That is worth observation, beloved, the joy of a person can never be full, the peace of a man can never be complete, as long as there is suspicion; there will be quarrelling again. What saith the soul? I sin now and shall tomorrow; and when I sin, God will fall out with me, be angry with me, and turn away from me; I say, as long as there is such suspicion, there will never be fulness of peace and joy. Hence it is, that persons, till they came to receive the Gospel of Christ, were, through fear of death and wrath, subject to bondage all their life long; but, when they come to have this peace that Christ hath purchased, he having made an atonement, and given rest, in that he hath paid all the old scores at once; then they may perceive, though there be sin committed; yet, notwithstanding, God will not now fall out again with them; for he had an eye upon all these sins, when Christ suffered, and took full satisfaction of his Son for this very sin; now though I sin today, God took full satisfaction of his Son for the sins of this day; nay more, he hath acknowledged satisfaction for them all; for the LORD beheld "the travail of his soul," and was satisfied; for that which is to come, as well as that which is past; God, in Christ, hath given a full discharge.

Look upon the account, and you shall find that Christ paid and reckoned not only for sins past and present, but for sins committed to the end of days. Therefore, in Daniel 9:24, you shall find this excellent prophecy, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." Here by seventy weeks he prophesies of the distance between the time in which he spake, and the time wherein Christ should suffer; and what should he suffer for? For the finishing transgression, and for the putting an end to sin; and for the making reconciliation, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. Mark, when these seventy weeks are ended, Christ is come, then there is a finishing of transgression; there is a great deal of weight in the very word, the "finishing of transgression;" for when is a thing finished? When all is done, and nothing more needs to be done or added to it. This church was finished, when the lead was laid, and the windows glazed, and no workman had anything more to do.

Now the time of Christ's suffering was the time of finishing transgression; as much as to say, Christ made an end of sin; that is, God had no more in the world to reckon with persons for sins, after Christ in that suffering of his, had paid the full price of every transgression. Beloved, if God come to reckon now with believers for sin, either he must ask something of them, or not; if not, why are they troubled? Why must they come under the rod, as it were, to make up that which is not yet paid? How doth Christ then perfect for ever them that are sanctified? {Heb.10:14} And how are they saved to the uttermost that come to God by him? {Heb.7:25} When men are saved to the utmost, there needs no more to be done; if so, you must know, that God cannot bring a new reckoning. There is not such dishonesty in any honest man in the world; he that hath taken all the debt of a surety, and given acquittance under his hand, will not come upon the principal again, a poor beggar, and tell him, "I must have something of you;" the poor man will answer him, "Sir, you have received sufficient satisfaction already of my surety;" he is not an honest man that will ask more. Christ is the Surety of a better covenant. God took Christ's bond, and he paid it; and, as he took his pay, when he received it, he acknowledged that he had received satisfaction. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." {Is.53:11} The travail of Christ gave the Father such satisfaction, that he acknowledged that he was satisfied in it; why, therefore, should he come upon you again? And if God will not come upon you again, what need you fear? It is true, as sin is contrary to the nature of God, so we ought with all reverence to make use of the help of the Spirit to oppose all sin whatsoever; but for any hurt; which such sins shall do us, it is not possible; for Christ hath made satisfaction.² "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him." Did God wound Christ for sin? If he did, it was to some purpose, or to none; if it were to purpose, then it pleased the Father to wound him, that those that were to be wounded might not be wounded; and hath Christ saved his people from wounding, then what need we fear that we shall be wounded for our transgressions?

But if we commit sin, God will punish us. I answer, this is to make the sufferings of Christ of none effect; for, if he had not suffered, you could but be wounded; but if he was wounded for you, why do you disparage his sufferings, by this false jealousy and suspicion of yours? And besides, you will never rest in peace all the days of your life, till you go out of yourselves to the Lord Christ, and see fulness in him, and such fulness and perfection in him, that there needs no addition to what he hath done. "In him, {saith the Apostle,} dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and "we are complete in him;" and is it so? There is no fear, then, that God should look upon you as abominable, loathsome things any longer; there is inconsistency between a lovely person, and an ugly loathsome one; you are complete in Christ; now, being complete in him, you are lovely in the sight of the Father. In Ezekiel, chapter 16, the prophet tells us, for thy beauty became "perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD." {vs.14} Here is a person in blood, in a loathsome condition; but, for all this, as loathsome as he is in himself, and in his own nature; yet here is perfection of beauty, and that through the comeliness of Christ; now can the Lord abhor that which hath perfection of comeliness in it? Whosoever is in Christ hath all the comeliness of Christ upon him. Now as you look out of yourselves, and your filthiness, and look upon yourselves as you are in him; so you shall have not only rest and peace; but joy, and joy unspeakable and glorious, as in Isaiah 35:10, an excellent place; "and the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Some interpret these words of the glory in heaven; but it is returning to Zion, and not returning to heaven; Zion is the church of God upon earth; they return to Zion; that is, they return to Christ in his church upon earth; they shall return with songs, and everlasting joy; and they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

This is not impossible, you will say; but you know many of the people of the Lord Jesus, that walk sadly and disconsolately, not having this joy and gladness. I answer, there is nothing that

² {Note: By hurt is meant the hurt of punishment, penal evil, which Christ has bore and took away from his people; so that they shall never be affected with it, he having fully satisfied for their sins. Gill.}

hinders the joy of God's people, but their sins; these, as they conceive, stand as a separation between God and them. Oh; they stand as a cooling card in all their joys and mirth; but when they return to Zion, they shall rejoice in that they shall see, that the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God hath cleansed them from all sin; in that the Lamb of God hath taken away all their sins; the scapegoat having carried them away into the land of forgetfulness; in that all their transgressions are blotted out as a cloud, and God will remember their sins no more; in that they are all fair, having no spot before the Lord in them; when they shall come, by the sight of the glory of the Gospel, and the light thereof, to behold this estate that Christ hath brought them into; then all matter of sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and the bitterness of it shall be taken away; and then that which was the occasion of bitterness shall vanish too.

I do not say, that he is no believer that hath not this perfectly; far be it from me to say so; there are that are believers that are weak; and there are believers that are strong in faith. The more the light and glory of the Gospel shines in the true intention of God to his people; the more shall they return to their rest, the more shall they have joy and gladness.

Why then, may not a believer say as David did, "the Lord hath been very bountiful to me, that I may return to my rest." God hath done everything in Christ, and taken away all things that can disturb my peace and comfort.