



TAPROOT
READER

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INTRODUCTION

As you may well know from firsthand experience, men are particularly adept at avoiding the Church...and all things related. This often means that men in our culture want to avoid the church's husband, Jesus Himself. Our culture raises homies, not hubbies; baby-daddies, not loving fathers. Our city in particular is deprived of a large community of loving fathers who worship Jesus as God, respect their wives as submissive equals, love their children into the Gospel, and cultivate the city. Taproot is meant to address these areas not by direct addressing, but rather by building up men who are solid in who God is...and what it means for us practically.

Since the inception of Harmony Church, our very goal has been to make Jesus famous by the creation of a new culture. This culture is based upon and rooted in Scripture. As we see clearly from the Word of God, men have a vital role as leader in the redeemed, God-glorifying culture. We at Harmony Church want to cultivate ourselves into the types of leaders that God requires in order to build a culture that makes His name great in our city. These leaders are to love Jesus, know and believe the Gospel, and live it out in a day-in, day-out fashion. We as God-honoring men are to lead our wives, our children, our friends, our workplaces, and our church to worship Jesus in every avenue of life.

Hopefully, this reader and our discussions about it will spark something in you, spurring you on toward perseverance in the Gospel of grace from our Lord, Jesus Christ.

May you look to Him, the Savior King who is sovereign over all, as the root of your very being.



PURE THEOLOGY



CONVERSION: THE CREATION OF A CHRISTIAN HEDONIST

CHAPTER TWO FROM DESIRING GOD BY JOHN PIPER

"The Gate Is Narrow"

If everyone were bound to enter the kingdom of heaven we might not have to speak of conversion. But everyone is not bound to enter. "For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matthew 7:14).

Chapter one ended with the discovery that God's pursuit of praise from us and our pursuit of pleasure in him are one and the same pursuit. God's quest to be glorified and our quest to be satisfied reach their goal in this one experience: our delight in God which overflows in praise. For God, praise is the sweet echo of his own excellence in the hearts of his people. For us, praise is the summit of satisfaction that comes from living in fellowship with God.

With the very zeal that God has for his own glory
he pursues us with goodness and mercy.

But who is "us"?

"Those who love him
and are called according to his purpose."

To belong to this group
one must be converted.

Which is the creation of a Christian Hedonist.

The stunning implication of this discovery is that all the omnipotent energy that drives the heart of God to pursue his own glory, also drives him to satisfy the hearts of those who seek their joy in him. The good news of the Bible is that God is not at all disinclined to satisfy the hearts of those who hope in him. Just the opposite: The very thing that can make us most happy is what God delights in with all his heart and with all his soul. "I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them.... I will rejoice in doing them good . . . with all my heart and



all my soul" (Jeremiah 32:40-41).

With all his heart and with all his soul God joins us in the pursuit of our everlasting joy, because the consummation of that joy in him redounds to the glory of his own infinite worth. All who cast themselves on God find that they are carried into endless joy by God's omnipotent commitment to his own glory:

For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another! (Isaiah 48:11)

Yes, Omnipotent Joy pursues the good of all who cast themselves on God! "The Lord takes pleasure in those who . . . hope in him" (Psalm 147:11). But this is not everyone.

"All things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28)-but not for everyone. There are sheep and there are goats (Matthew 25:32). There are wise and there are foolish (Matthew 25:2). There are those who are being saved and those who are perishing (1 Corinthians 1:18). And the difference is that one group has been converted and the other hasn't.

The aim of this chapter is to show the necessity of conversion and to argue that it is nothing less than the creation of a Christian Hedonist.

Why Not Just Say "Believe"?

Someone may ask, "If your aim is conversion, why don't you just use the straightforward, biblical command, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved'? Why bring in this new terminology of Christian Hedonism?"

My answer has two parts. First, we are surrounded by unconverted people who think they do believe in Jesus. Drunks on the street say they believe. Unmarried couples sleeping together say they believe. Elderly people who haven't sought worship or fellowship for forty years say they believe. All kinds of lukewarm, world-loving church attenders say they believe. The world abounds with millions of unconverted people who say they believe in Jesus.

It does no good to tell these people to believe in the Lord Jesus. The phrase is empty. My responsibility as a preacher of the gospel and a teacher in the church is not to preserve and repeat cherished biblical sentences, but to pierce the heart with biblical truth.



This leads to the second part of my answer. There are other straightforward biblical commands besides "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." The reason for introducing the idea of Christian Hedonism is to force these commands to our attention.

Could it be that today the most straightforward biblical command for conversion is not, "Believe in the Lord," but, "Delight yourself in the LORD"? And might not many slumbering hearts be stabbed broad awake by the words, "Unless a man be born again into a Christian Hedonist he cannot see the Kingdom of God"?

Six crucial truths to summarize our need and God's provision

Why is conversion so crucial? What is there about God and man that makes it necessary? And what has God done to meet our desperate need? And what must we do to enjoy the benefits of his provision? These are huge questions. I attempt a summary answer with the following six truths from Scripture.

How Have We Failed?

_____ 1. *God created us for his glory.* _____

_____ "Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is _____ called by my name, whom I created for my glory. (Isaiah 43:6-7)

The proper understanding of everything in life begins with God. No one will ever understand the necessity of conversion who does not know why God created us. He created us "in his image" so that we would image forth his glory in the world. We were made to be prisms refracting the light of God's glory into all of life. Why God should want to give us a share in shining with his glory is a great mystery. Call it grace or mercy or love-it is an unspeakable wonder. Once we were not. Then we existed -- for the glory of God!

_____ 2. *Therefore it is the duty of every person to live for the glory of God.* _____

_____ So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 _____
Corinthians 10:31)



If God made us for his glory, it is clear that we should live for his glory. Our duty comes from God's design.

What does it mean to glorify God?

It does not mean to make him more glorious. It means to acknowledge his glory, and to value it above all things, and to make it known. It implies heartfelt gratitude: "He who brings thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me" (Psalm 50:23). It also implies trust: Abraham "grew strong in his faith, giving glory to God" (Romans 4:20).

Glorifying God is the duty not only of those who have heard the preaching of the gospel, but also of peoples who have only the witness of nature and their own conscience:

Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not glorify him and thank him as God. (Romans 1:20-21)

God will not judge anyone for failing to perform a duty if the person had no access to the knowledge of that duty. But even without the Bible all people have access to the knowledge that we are created by God and therefore depend on him for everything, thus owing him the gratitude and trust of our hearts. Deep within us we all know that it is our duty to glorify our Maker by thanking him for all we have, trusting him for all we need, and obeying all his revealed will.

How Desperate Is Our Condition?

3. *Yet all of us have failed to glorify God as we ought.*

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

What does it mean to "fall short" of the glory of God? It does not mean we were supposed to be as glorious as God is and have fallen short. We ought to fall short in that sense! The best explanation of Romans 3:23 is Romans 1:23 . It says that those who did not glorify or thank God "became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images." This is the way we "fall short" of the glory of God: we exchange it for something of lesser value. All sin comes from not putting supreme



value on the glory of God-this is the very essence of sin.

And we have all sinned. "None is righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3 :10) . None of us has trusted God the way we should. None of us has felt the depth and consistency of gratitude we owe him. None of us has obeyed him according to his wisdom and right. We have exchanged and dishonored his glory again and again. We have trusted ourselves. We have taken credit for his gifts. We have turned away from the path of his commandments because we thought we knew better.

In all this we have held the glory of the Lord in contempt. The exceeding evil of sin is not the harm it does to us or to others (though that is great!) . The wickedness of sin is owing to the implicit disdain for God. When David committed adultery with Bathsheba and even had her husband killed, what did God say to him through the prophet Nathan? He did not remind the king that marriage is inviolable or that human life is sacred. He said, "You have despised *me*. . . . You have utterly scorned *the Lord*" (2 Samuel 12: 10,14).

But this is not the whole account of our condition. We not only choose to sin, we are sinful. The Bible describes our heart as blind (2 Corinthians 4:4) and hard (Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26) and dead (Ephesians 2: 1,5) and unable to submit to the law of God (Romans 8:7-8). By nature we are "children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3).

4. *Therefore, all of us are subject to eternal condemnation by God.*

The wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23)

They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might. (2 Thessalonians 1:9)

Having held the glory of God in contempt through ingratitude and distrust and disobedience, we are sentenced to be excluded from the enjoyment of that glory forever and ever in the eternal misery of hell.

The word "hell" (*gehenna*) occurs in the New Testament twelve times-eleven on the lips of Jesus. It's is not a myth created by dismal and angry preachers. It is the solemn warning of the Son of God who died to deliver sinners from its curse. We ignore it at great risk.

Hell is a place of torment. It is not merely the absence of pleasure. It is not annihilation. Jesus repeatedly describes it as an experience of fire. "Whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of



fire" (Matthew 5:22). "It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire" (Matthew 18 :9) . "It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:47-48) . He warned often that there would be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30).

Not only is it a place of torment, it is also everlasting. Hell is not remedial, contrary to what many popular writers are saying these days. `Jesus closes the parable of the last judgment with these words: "'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' ... And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:41,46). The "punishment" is eternal the same way the "life" is eternal.

Another evidence that hell is everlasting is the teaching of Jesus that there is sin which will not be forgiven in the age to come. "Whoever says a word against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come" (Matthew 12:32). If hell is remedial and will some day be emptied of all sinners, then they would have to be forgiven. But Jesus says there is sin that will never be forgiven.

John sums up the terrible realities of torment and endlessness in Revelation 14:11-"And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever: and they have no rest, day or night." Therefore hell is just. Some have objected that an everlasting punishment is out of proportion to the seriousness of the sin committed. But this is not true, because the seriousness of our sin is infinite. Consider the explanation of Jonathan Edwards:

The crime of one being despising and casting contempt on another, is proportionably more or less heinous, as he was under greater or less obligations to obey him. And therefore if there be any being that we are under infinite obligations to love, and honor, and obey, the contrary towards him must be infinitely faulty.

Our obligation to love, honor, and obey any being is in proportion to his loveliness, honorableness, and authority.... But God is a being infinitely lovely, because he hath infinite excellency and beauty....

So sin against God, being a violation of infinite obligations, must be a crime infinitely heinous, and so deserving infinite punishment.... The eternity of the punishment of ungodly men renders it infinite . . . and therefore renders no more than proportionable to the heinousness of what they are guilty of.



When every human being stands before God on the day of judgment, God would not have to use one sentence of Scripture to show us our guilt and the appropriateness of our condemnation. He would need only to ask three questions: 1) Was it not plain in nature that everything you had was a gift, and that you were dependent on your Maker for life and breath and everything? 2) Did not the judicial sentiment in your own heart always hold other people guilty when they lacked the gratitude they should have had in response to a kindness you performed? 3) Has your life been filled with gratitude and trust toward me in proportion to my generosity and authority? Case closed.

What Has God Done To Save Us From His Wrath?

5 . Nevertheless, in his great mercy, God sent forth his Son, Jesus Christ, to save sinners by dying in their place on the cross.

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (1 Timothy 1: 15)

Over against the terrifying news that we have fallen under the condemnation of our Creator and that he is bound by his own righteous character to preserve the worth of his glory by pouring out eternal wrath on our sin, there is the wonderful news of the gospel. This is a truth no one can ever learn from nature. It has to be told to neighbors and preached in churches and carried by missionaries.

The good news is that God himself has decreed a way to satisfy the demands of his justice without condemning the whole human race. Hell is one way to settle accounts with sinners and uphold his justice. But there is another way. The wisdom of God has ordained a way for the love of God to deliver us from the wrath of God without compromising the justice of God.

And what is this wisdom?

The death of the Son of God for sinners! "We preach *Christ crucified*, a stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the *wisdom of God*" (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).

The death of Christ is the wisdom of God by which the love of God saves sinners from the wrath of



God, and all the while upholds and demonstrates the righteousness of God. Romans 3:25-26 may be the most important verses in the Bible:

— God put Christ forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to prove at the present time that he himself is just and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus. —

Not either/or! Both! God is wholly just! And he justifies the ungodly! He acquits the guilty, but is not guilty in doing so. This is the greatest news in the world!

— God made Christ to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21) —

— Sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh. (Romans 8:3) —

— Christ bore our sins in his body on the tree. (1 Peter 2:24) —

— He died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God. (1 Peter 3:18) —

If the most terrifying news in the world is that we have fallen under the condemnation of our Creator and that he is bound by his own righteous character to preserve the worth of his glory by pouring out his wrath on our sin, then the best news in all the world (the gospel!) is that God has decreed a way of salvation which also upholds the worth of his glory. He has given his Son to die for sinners.

What Must We Do To Be Saved?

— 6. *The benefits purchased by the death of Christ belong to those who repent and trust in him.* —

— Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. (Acts 3:19) —

— Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. (Acts 16:31) —



Not everybody is saved from God's wrath just because Christ died for sinners. There is a condition we must meet in order to be saved. I want to try to show that the condition, summed up here as repentance and faith, is *conversion* and that conversion is nothing less than the creation of a Christian Hedonist.

What Is Conversion?

"Conversion" is used in the Authorized Version of the Bible only once, in Acts 15 :3. Paul and Barnabas "passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. "This conversion involved repentance and faith, as the other reports in Acts show.

For example, in Acts 11:18 the apostles respond to Peter's testimony about Gentile conversions like this: "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life." And in Acts 14:27 Paul and Barnabas report the conversion of the Gentiles by saying that "God . . . had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles."

Conversion, then, is repentance (turning from sin and unbelief) and faith (trusting in Christ alone for salvation). They are really two sides of the same coin. One side is tails-turn tail on the fruits of unbelief. The other side is heads-head straight for Jesus and trust his promises. You can't have the one without the other any more than you can face two ways at once, or serve two masters.

This means that saving faith in Christ always involves a profound change of heart. It is not merely agreement with the truth of a doctrine. Satan agrees with true doctrine (James 2: 19). Saving faith is far deeper and more pervasive than that.

Conversion Is a Gift of God

— The native hardness of our hearts makes us —
— unwilling and unable to —
— turn from sin and trust the Savior. —

— Therefore conversion involves a miracle of new birth. —



— Thus new birth precedes and enables faith and repentance. —

— Nevertheless, faith and repentance are *our* acts. —

— We are accountable to do them. —

— By the miracle of new birth, —

— by pure grace, —

— God grants us the inclination we need. —

We get an inkling of something awesome behind repentance and faith when we see hints in the book of Acts that conversion is the gift of God. "God has granted repentance unto life" (11:18). "God exalted Christ at his right hand . . . to give repentance to Israel" (5:31). "God opened a door of faith to the Gentiles" (14:27). "The Lord opened [Lydia's] heart to give heed to what was said by Paul" (16: 14).

We will never fully appreciate what a deep and awesome thing conversion is until we own up to the fact that it is a miracle. It is a gift of God. Recall again the point that we not only sin, but we also are sinful. The Bible describes our heart as blind (2 Corinthians 4:4) and hard (Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26) and dead (Ephesians 2:1,5) and unable to submit to the law of God (Romans 8:7-8). By nature we are "children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). And so when we hear the gospel we will never respond positively unless God performs the miracle of regeneration.

Faith Is Our Act, But Is Possible Because Of God's Act

Repentance and faith are our work. But we will not repent and believe unless God does his work to overcome our hard and rebellious hearts. This divine work is called regeneration. Our work is called conversion.

Conversion does indeed include an act of will by which we renounce sin and submit ourselves to the authority of Christ and put our hope and trust in him. We are responsible to do this, and will be condemned if we don't. But just as clearly the Bible teaches that, owing to our hard heart and willful



blindness and spiritual insensitivity, we cannot do this.

We must first experience the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures promised long ago that God would devote himself to this work in order to create for himself a faithful people:

— And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. (Deuteronomy 30:6) —

— I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart. (Jeremiah 24:7) —

— And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. (Ezekiel 11:19-20) —

— A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. (Ezekiel 36:26-27) —

These great promises from the Old Testament describe a work of God that changes a heart of stone into a heart of flesh and causes people to "know" and "love" and "obey" God. Without this spiritual heart transplant, people will not know and love and obey God. This prior work of God is what we mean by regeneration.

We Are "Called" The Way Jesus Called Lazarus: Death To Life

In the New Testament God is clearly active, creating a people for himself by calling them out of darkness and enabling them to believe the gospel and walk in the light. John teaches most clearly that regeneration precedes and enables faith.

— Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God. (1 John 5:1) —

The verb tenses make John's intention unmistakable: "Everyone who goes on believing [present,



continuous action] that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God [perfect, completed action with abiding effects]." Faith is the evidence of new birth, not the cause of it. This is consistent with John's whole book (cf. 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:2-3; 4:7).

Since faith and repentance are possible only because of the regenerating work of God, both are called the gift of God:

Even when we were dead through our trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).... By grace are you saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:5,8)

The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may, perhaps, grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

Conversion Is a Condition of Salvation and a Miracle of God

New birth is *not* conditional.
No act of ours brings it about.
It is supernatural.

Final salvation from future judgment *is* conditional.
It will not happen apart from our persevering faith.

The supernatural act of God in new birth
and the utterly crucial human act of persevering faith
show how momentous is the change
which we need in order to be saved.

This meditation on the nature and origin of conversion clarifies two things. One is the sense in which conversion is a condition for salvation. Continuous confusion is caused at this point by failing to define salvation precisely.



If "salvation" refers to new birth, conversion is not a condition of it. New birth comes first and enables the repentance and faith of conversion. Before new birth we are dead, and dead men don't meet conditions. Regeneration is totally unconditional. It is owing solely to the free grace of God. "It does not depend on the one who wills or runs, but on God who has mercy" (Romans 9:16). We get no credit. He gets all the glory.

But if "salvation" refers to our future deliverance from the wrath of God at the judgment and entrance into eternal life, then yes, conversion is a condition of salvation. When we cry, "What must I do to be saved?" we are asking how to be forgiven for sin, and have fellowship with God and escape from the wrath to come. The answer is always, Meet the condition: Be converted!

Which brings us to the second thing that has become clear from our discussion. Conversion is no mere human decision. It is a human decision. But oh, so much more! Repentant faith (or believing repentance) is based on an awesome miracle performed by the sovereign God. It is the breath of a new creature in Christ.

Saving faith is no simple thing. It has many dimensions. "Believe on the Lord Jesus" is a massive command. It contains a hundred other things. Unless we see this, the array of conditions for salvation in the New Testament will be utterly perplexing. Consider the following partial list.

What must I do to be saved?

The answer in Acts 16:31 is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."

The answer in John 1:12 is that we must receive Christ: "To all who receive him . . . he gave power to become children of God."

The answer in Acts 3: 19 is, "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out."

The answer in Hebrews 5:9 is obedience to Christ. Christ "became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him." So also in John 3:36, "He who does not obey the Son shall not see life."

Jesus himself answered the question in a variety of ways. For example, he said in Matthew 18:3 that childlikeness is the condition for salvation: "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never see the kingdom of heaven."

In Mark 8:34-35 the condition is self-denial: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself



and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it."

In Matthew 10:37 Jesus lays down the condition of loving him more than anyone else: "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." The same thing is expressed in 1 Corinthians 16:22-"If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed."

And in Luke 14:33 the condition for salvation is that we be free from the love of our possessions: "Whoever does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."

These are just some of the conditions that the New Testament says we must meet in order to inherit final salvation. We must believe on Jesus and receive him and turn from our sin and obey him and humble ourselves like little children and love him more than we love our family, our possessions or our own life. This is what it means to be converted to Christ. This alone is the way of life everlasting.

But what is it that holds all these conditions together and gives them unity? And what keeps them from becoming a way of earning salvation by works? One answer is the awesome reality of saving faith-trusting in the pardon of God, the promises of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, not ourselves.

Yes, but what is it about saving faith that unites and changes so much of our lives?

The Creation of a Christian Hedonist

Conversion is what happens to the heart
when Christ becomes for us
a Treasure Chest of holy joy.

Saving faith is the heartfelt conviction that
Christ is both
solidly reliable
and supremely desirable.

The newness of a Christian convert



is a new spiritual taste for the glory of Christ.

Jesus pointed to the answer in the little parable of Matthew 13:44.

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in [literally, from] his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

This parable describes how someone is converted and brought into the kingdom of heaven. A person discovers a treasure and is impelled by joy to sell all he has in order to have this treasure. The kingdom of heaven is the abode of the King. The longing to be there is not the longing for heavenly real estate, but for camaraderie with the King. The treasure in the field is the fellowship of God in Christ.

I conclude from this parable that we must be deeply converted in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, and we are converted when Christ becomes for us a Treasure Chest of holy joy.

The Creation Of A New Taste

How then does this arrival of joy relate to saving faith? The usual answer is that joy is the fruit of faith. And in one sense it is. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Romans 15: 13). It is "in believing" that we are filled with joy. Confidence in the promises of God overcomes anxiety and fills us with peace and joy. Paul even calls it the "joy of faith" (Philippians 1 :25).

But there is a different way of looking at the relationship of joy and faith. In Hebrews 11:6 the writer says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God. For whoever would draw near to God



must believe that he exists and that he is the rewarder of those who seek him." In other words, the faith which pleases God is a confidence that God will reward us when we come to him. But surely this does not mean that we are to be motivated by material things. Surely the reward we long for is the glory of God himself and the perfected companionship of Christ (Hebrews 2: 10, 3:6, 10:34, 11:26, 12:22-24, 13:5). We will sell everything to have the treasure of Christ himself.

So the faith which pleases God is the assurance that when we turn to him we will find the All-satisfying Treasure. We will find our heart's eternal delight. But do you see what this implies? It implies that something has happened in our hearts before the act of faith. It implies that beneath and behind the act of faith which pleases God, a new taste has been created. A taste for the glory of God and the beauty of Christ. Behold, a joy has been born!

Once we had no delight in God, and Christ was just a vague historical figure. What we enjoyed was food and friendships and productivity and investments and vacations and hobbies and games and reading and shopping and sex and sports and art and TV and travel . . . but not God. He was an idea-even a good one-and a topic for discussion; but he was not a treasure of delight.

Then something miraculous happened. It was like the opening of the eyes of the blind during the golden dawn. First the stunned silence before the unspeakable beauty of holiness. Then a shock and terror that we had actually loved the darkness. Then the settling stillness of joy that this is the soul's end. The quest is over. We would give anything if we might be granted to live in the presence of this glory forever and ever.

And then, faith-the confidence that Christ has made a way for me, a sinner, to live in his glorious fellowship forever, the confidence that if I come to God through Christ, he will give me the desire of my heart to share his holiness and behold his glory.

But before the confidence comes the craving. Before decision comes delight. Before trust comes the discovery of treasure.

We Come To Christ When We Love The Light

Is not this the teaching of John 3: 18-20?

He who believes in [the Son of God] is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather



than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

The reason people do not come to the light is because they do not love it. Love for the light is not caused by coming to the light. We come because we love it. Otherwise our coming is no honor to the light. Could there be any holy motivation to believe in Christ where there is no taste for the beauty of Christ? To be sure we could be motivated by the desire to escape hell, or the desire to have material riches, or the desire to rejoin a departed loved one. But how does it honor the light when the only reason we come to the light is to find those things that we loved in the dark?

Is this saving faith?

Christ Died To Give Us Our Heart's Desire: God

Saving faith is the cry of a new creature in Christ. And the newness of the new creature is that it has a new taste. What was once distasteful or bland is now craved. Christ himself has become a Treasure Chest of holy joy. The tree of faith grows only in the heart that craves the supreme gift that Christ died to give: not health, not wealth, not prestige, but God!

"Christ died for sins once for all . . . that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). "Through him we have access in one Spirit to the Father" (Ephesians 2: 18). "Through him we have obtained access to grace . . . and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God . . . we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:2,11).

A New Passion for the Pleasure of God's Presence

The awakening of an irresistible thirst for Christ
is the creation of a Christian Hedonist.

The pursuit of joy in God is
not only innocent,
it is essential.

The birth of that pursuit is the birth of Christian life.



The pursuit of joy in God is not optional. It is not an "extra" that a person might grow into after he comes to faith. Until your heart has hit upon this pursuit your "faith" cannot please God. It is not saving faith.

Saving faith is the confidence that if you sell all you have, and forsake all sinful pleasures, the hidden treasure of holy joy will satisfy your deepest desires. Saving faith is the heartfelt conviction not only that Christ is reliable, but also that he is desirable. It is the confidence that he will come through with his promises and that what he promises is more to be desired than all the world.

We may speak of the "joy of faith" at three levels. First, there is the new spiritual taste created by the Spirit of God for the glory of God. This new taste is the seed and root of joy. Thus it is the "joy of faith" in embryo, as it were. Second, there is the shoot, the stem, of faith itself reaching out actively for all that God is for us in Christ. The pith of this stem is joy in God. It is not possible for vital, genuine faith in the Fountain Joy not to partake of that joy. Joyless embracing of the God of hope, for who he really is, is impossible. Third, there is the fruit of daily gladness that Paul speaks of in Romans 15:13, "May the God of hope fill you with *joy* and peace *in believing*. Here joy and peace flow out *from* faith into the whole of life.

In conversion we find the hidden Treasure of the kingdom of God. We venture all on it. And year after year in the struggles of life we prove the value of the treasure again and again, and we discover new depths of riches we had never known. And so the joy of faith grows. When Christ calls us to a new act of obedience that will cost us some temporal pleasure, we call to mind the surpassing value of following him, and by faith in his proven worth we forsake the worldly pleasure. The result? More joy! More faith! Deeper than before. And so we go on from joy to joy, and faith to faith.

Behind the repentance that turns away from sin and behind the faith that embraces Christ is the birth of a new taste, a new longing, a new passion for the pleasure of God's presence. This is the root of conversion. This is the creation of a Christian Hedonist.



THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

The Westminster Shorter Catechism was written in the 1640s by English and Scottish preachers. The assembly also produced the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Larger Catechism, both of which Harmony Church also affirms. The three documents are considered by many Protestants to be the grandest doctrinal statements to come out of the English Reformation, and one of the important documents of the Reformation. Completed in 1647, it was presented to parliament on 14 April 1648.

The catechism is composed of 107 questions and answers. The first 12 questions concern God as Creator. Questions 13-20 deal with original sin and the fallen state of man's nature. Questions 21-38 concern Christ the Redeemer and the benefits that flow from redemption. The next set of questions, 39-84, discuss the ten commandments. Questions 85-97 teach concerning the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. The final set of questions 98-107 teach and explain the Lord's Prayer.

Q. 1. *What is the chief end of man?*

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

Q. 2. *What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

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

Q. 3. *What do the scriptures principally teach?*

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

Q. 4. *What is God?*

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

Q. 5. *Are there more Gods than one?*

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

Q. 6. *How many persons are there in the godhead?*

A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.



Q. 7. *What are the decrees of God?*

A. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Q. 8. *How doth God execute his decrees?*

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Q. 9. *What is the work of creation?*

A. The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

Q. 10. *How did God create man?*

A. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

Q. 11. *What are God's works of providence?*

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

Q. 12. *What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created?*

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

Q. 13. *Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?*

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

Q. 14. *What is sin?*

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Q. 15. *What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?*

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created was their eating the forbidden fruit.

Q. 16. *Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?*

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind,



descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

Q. 17. *Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?*

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Q. 18. *Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?*

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

Q. 19. *What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?*

A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

Q. 20. *Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?*

A. God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a redeemer.

Q. 21. *Who is the redeemer of God's elect?*

A. The only redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.

Q. 22. *How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?*

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Q. 23. *What offices doth Christ execute as our redeemer?*

A. Christ, as our redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

Q. 24. *How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.



Q. 25. *How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God; and in making continual intercession for us.

Q. 26. *How doth Christ execute the office of a king?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Q. 27. *Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?*

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

Q. 28. *Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?*

A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

Q. 29. *How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?*

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

Q. 30. *How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?*

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

Q. 31. *What is effectual calling?*

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

Q. 32. *What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?*

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.



Q. 33. *What is justification?*

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Q. 34. *What is adoption?*

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of, the sons of God.

Q. 35. *What is sanctification?*

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Q. 36. *What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification?*

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

Q. 37. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?*

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

Q. 38. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

A. At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

Q. 39. *What is the duty which God requireth of man?*

A. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

Q. 40. *What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?*

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral law.

Q. 41. *Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?*

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.



Q. 42. *What is the sum of the ten commandments?*

A. The sum of the ten commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.

Q. 43. *What is the preface to the ten commandments?*

A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Q. 44. *What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?*

A. The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us that because God is the Lord, and our God, and redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

Q. 45. *Which is the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Q. 46. *What is required in the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

Q. 47. *What is forbidden in the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshiping and glorifying the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.

Q. 48. *What are we specially taught by these words before me in the first commandment?*

A. These words before me in the first commandment teach us that God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other god.

Q. 49. *Which is the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.



Q. 50. *What is required in the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.

Q. 51. *What is forbidden in the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.

Q. 52. *What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.

Q. 53. *Which is the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Q. 54. *What is required in the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word and works.

Q. 55. *What is forbidden in the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God maketh himself known.

Q. 56. *What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?*

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

Q. 57. *Which is the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment is, Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.



Q. 58. *What is required in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy sabbath to himself.

Q. 59. *Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly sabbath?*

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian sabbath.

Q. 60. *How is the sabbath to be sanctified?*

A. The sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

Q. 61. *What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.

Q. 62. *What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the sabbath day.

Q. 63. *Which is the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Q. 64. *What is required in the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors or equals.

Q. 65. *What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations.



Q. 66. *What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?*

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.

Q. 67. *Which is the sixth commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.

Q. 68. *What is required in the sixth commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

Q. 69. *What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.

Q. 70. *Which is the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Q. 71. *What is required in the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech and behavior.

Q. 72. *What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words and actions.

Q. 73. *Which is the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.

Q. 74. *What is required in the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

Q. 75. *What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbor's wealth or outward estate.



Q. 76. *Which is the ninth commandment?*

A. The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Q. 77. *What is required in the ninth commandment?*

A. The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness-bearing.

Q. 78. *What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?*

A. The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbor's good name.

Q. 79. *Which is the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

Q. 80. *What is required in the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.

Q. 81. *What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

Q. 82. *Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?*

A. No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word and deed.

Q. 83. *Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?*

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

Q. 84. *What doth every sin deserve?*

A. Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.

Q. 85. *What doth God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?*

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ,



repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

Q. 86. *What is faith in Jesus Christ?*

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

Q. 87. *What is repentance unto life?*

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

Q. 88. *What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?*

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

Q. 89. *How is the word made effectual to salvation?*

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching, of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

Q. 90. *How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?*

A. That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation and prayer; receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.

Q. 91. *How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?*

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.

Q. 92. *What is a sacrament?*

A. A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.



Q. 93. *Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?*

A. The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. 94. *What is baptism?*

A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Q. 95. *To whom is baptism to be administered?*

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.

Q. 96. *What is the Lord's supper?*

A. The Lord's supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

Q. 97. *What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's supper?*

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Q. 98. *What is prayer?*

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Q. 99. *What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?*

A. The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's prayer.

Q. 100. *What doth the preface of the Lord's prayer teach us?*

A. The preface of the Lord's prayer, which is, Our Father which art in heaven, teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.



Q. 101. *What do we pray for in the first petition?*

A. In the first petition, which is, Hallowed be thy name, we pray that God would enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

Q. 102. *What do we pray for in the second petition?*

A. In the second petition, which is, Thy kingdom come, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed; and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it; and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

Q. 103. *What do we pray for in the third petition?*

A. In the third petition, which is, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven, we pray that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

Q. 104. *What do we pray for in the fourth petition?*

A. In the fourth petition, which is, Give us this day our daily bread, we pray that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

Q. 105. *What do we pray for in the fifth petition?*

A. In the fifth petition, which is, And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, we pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

Q. 106. *What do we pray for in the sixth petition?*

A. In the sixth petition, which is, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

Q. 107. *What doth the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?*

A. The conclusion of the Lord's prayer, which is, For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen, teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power and glory to him. And in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.



GOD GLORIFIED IN MAN'S DEPENDENCE

SERMON PREACHED BY JONATHAN EDWARDS

Main Text

1 Corinthians 1:29, 30, 31 -- *That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

THOSE Christians to whom the apostle directed this epistle, dwelt in a part of the world where human wisdom was in great repute; as the apostle observes in the 22nd verse of this chapter, "The Greeks seek after wisdom." Corinth was not far from Athens, that had been for many ages the most famous seat of philosophy and learning in the world. The apostle therefore observes to them, how God by the gospel destroyed, and brought to nought, their wisdom. The learned Grecians, and their great philosophers, by all their wisdom did not know God, they were not able to find out the truth in divine things. But, after they had done their utmost to no effect, it pleased God at length to reveal himself by the gospel, which they accounted foolishness. He " chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and the base things of the world, and things that are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are." And the apostle informs them in the text why he thus did, *That no flesh should glory in his presence*, etc.- In which words may be observed,

1. What God aims at in the disposition of things in the affair of redemption, viz. that man should not glory in himself, but alone in God; *That no flesh should glory in his presence, --that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

2. How this end is attained in the work of redemption, viz. by that absolute and immediate dependence which men have upon God in that work, for all their good. Inasmuch as,

First, All the good that they have is in and through Christ; He *is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. All the good of the fallen and redeemed creature is concerned in these four things, and cannot be better distributed than into them; but Christ is each of them to us, and we have none of them any otherwise than in him. *He is made of God unto us wisdom*: in him are all the proper good and true excellency of the understanding. Wisdom was a thing that the Greeks admired; but Christ is the true light of the world; it is through him alone that true wisdom is imparted to the mind. It is in and by Christ that we have *righteousness*: it is by being in him that we



are justified, have our sins pardoned, and are received as righteous into God's favour. It is by Christ that we have *sanctification*: we have in him true excellency of heart as well as of understanding; and he is made unto us inherent as well as imputed righteousness. It is by Christ that we have *redemption*, or the actual deliverance from all misery, and the bestowment of all happiness and glory. Thus we have all our good by Christ, who is God.

Secondly, Another instance wherein our dependence on God for all our good appears, is this, That it is God that has given us Christ, that we might have these benefits through him; he *of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, etc.*

Thirdly, It is of him that we are in Christ Jesus, and come to have an interest in him, and so do receive those blessings which he is made unto us. It is God that gives us faith whereby we close with Christ.

So that in this verse is shown our dependence on each person in the Trinity for all our good. We are dependent on Christ the Son of God, as he is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We are dependent on the Father, who has given us Christ, and made him to be these things to us. We are dependent on the Holy Ghost, for it is *of him that we are in Christ Jesus*; it is the Spirit of God that gives faith in him, whereby we receive him, and close with him.

DOCTRINE.

"God is glorified in the work of redemption in this, that there appears in it so absolute and universal a dependence of the redeemed on him." -- Here I propose to show, *1st*, That there is an absolute and universal dependence of the redeemed on God for all their good. And, *2dly*, That God hereby is exalted and glorified in the work of redemption.

I. There is an absolute and universal dependence of the redeemed on God. The nature and contrivance of our redemption is such, that the redeemed are in every thing directly, immediately, and entirely dependent on God: they are dependent on him for all, and are dependent on him every way.

The several ways wherein the dependence of one being may be upon another for its good, and wherein the redeemed of Jesus Christ depend on God for all their good, are these, *viz.* That they have all their good of him, and that they have all through him, and that they have all in him: That he is the cause and original whence all their good comes, therein it is *of him*; and that he is the *medium* by which it is obtained and conveyed, therein they have it *through* him; and that he is the



good itself given and conveyed, therein it is *in* him. Now those that are redeemed by Jesus Christ do, in all these respects, very directly and entirely depend on God for their all.

First, The redeemed have all their good *of* God. God is the great *author* of it. He is the *first* cause of it; and not only so, but he is the *only* proper cause. It is of God that we have our Redeemer. It is God that has provided a Saviour for us. Jesus Christ is not only of God in his person, as he is the only-begotten Son of God, but he is from God, as we are concerned in him, and in his office of Mediator. He is the gift of God to us: God chose and anointed him, appointed him his work, and sent him into the world. And as it is God that *gives*, so it is God that *accepts* the Saviour. He gives the purchaser, and he affords the thing purchased.

It is of God that Christ becomes ours, that we are brought to him, and are united to him. It is of God that we receive faith to close with him, that we may have an interest in him. Eph. 2:8. "For by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." It is of God that we actually receive all the benefits that Christ has purchased. It is God that pardons and justifies, and delivers from going down to hell; and into his favour the redeemed are received, when they are justified. So it is God that delivers from the dominion of sin, cleanses us from our filthiness, and changes us from our deformity. It is of God that the redeemed receive all their true excellency, wisdom, and holiness; and that two ways, viz. as the Holy Ghost by whom these things are immediately wrought is from God, proceeds from him, and is sent by him; and also as the Holy Ghost himself is God, by whose operation and indwelling the knowledge of God and divine things, a holy disposition and all grace, are conferred and upheld. And though means are made use of in conferring grace on men's souls, yet it is of God that we have these means of grace, and it is he that makes them effectual. It is of God that we have the Holy Scriptures; they are his word. It is of God that we have ordinances, and their efficacy depends on the immediate influence of his Spirit. The ministers of the gospel are sent of God, and all their sufficiency is of him.-- 2 Cor. 4:7. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Their success depends entirely and absolutely on the immediate blessing and influence of God.

1. The redeemed have all from the *grace* of God. It was of mere grace that God gave us his only-begotten Son. The grace is great in proportion to the excellency of what is given. The gift was infinitely precious, because it was of a person infinitely worthy, a person of infinite glory; and also because it was of a person infinitely near and dear to God. The grace is great in proportion to the benefit we have given us in him. The benefit is doubly infinite, in that in him we have deliverance from an infinite, because an eternal, misery, and do also receive eternal joy and glory. The grace in bestowing this gift is great in proportion to our unworthiness to whom it is given; instead of deserving such a gift, we merited infinitely ill of God's hands. The grace is great according to the



manner of giving, or in proportion to the humiliation and expense of the method and means by which a way is made for our having the gift. He gave him to dwell amongst us; he gave him to us incarnate, or in our nature; and in the like though sinless infirmities. He gave him to us in a low and afflicted state; and not only so, but as slain, that he might be a feast for our souls.

The grace of God in bestowing this gift is most free. It was what God was under no obligation to bestow. He might have rejected fallen man, as he did the fallen angels. It was what we never did any thing to merit; it was given while we were yet enemies, and before we had so much as repented. It was from the love of God who saw no excellency in us to attract it; and it was without expectation of ever being requited for it. And it is from mere grace that the benefits of Christ are applied to such and such particular persons. Those that are called and sanctified are to attribute it alone to the good pleasure of God's goodness, by which they are distinguished. He is sovereign, and hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.

Man hath now a greater dependence on the grace of God than he had before the fall. He depends on the free goodness of God for much more than he did then. Then he depended on God's goodness for conferring the reward of perfect obedience; for God was not obliged to promise and bestow that reward. But now we are dependent on the grace of God for much more; we stand in need of grace, not only to bestow glory upon us, but to deliver us from hell and eternal wrath. Under the first covenant we depended on God's goodness to give us the reward of righteousness; and so we do now; but we stand in need of God's free and sovereign grace to give us that righteousness; to pardon our sin, and release us from the guilt and infinite demerit of it.

And as we are dependent on the goodness of God for more now than under the first covenant, so we are dependent on a much greater, more free and wonderful goodness. We are now more dependent on God's arbitrary and sovereign good pleasure. We were in our first estate dependent on God for holiness. We had our original righteousness from him; but then holiness was not bestowed in such a way of sovereign good pleasure as it is now. Man was created holy, for it became God to create holy all his reasonable creatures. It would have been a disparagement to the holiness of God's nature, if he had made an intelligent creature unholy. But now when fallen man is made holy, it is from mere and arbitrary grace; God may for ever deny holiness to the fallen creature if he pleases, without any disparagement to any of his perfections.

And we are not only indeed more dependent on the grace of God, but our dependence is much more conspicuous, because our own insufficiency and helplessness in ourselves is much more apparent in our fallen and undone state, than it was before we were either sinful or miserable. We are more apparently dependent on God for holiness, because we are first sinful, and utterly polluted, and



afterward holy. So the production of the effect is sensible, and its derivation from God more obvious. If man was ever holy and always was so, it would not be so apparent, that he had not holiness necessarily, as an inseparable qualification of human nature. So we are more apparently dependent on free grace for the favour of God, for we are first justly the objects of his displeasure, and afterwards are received into favour. We are more apparently dependent on God for happiness, being first miserable, and afterwards happy. It is more apparently free and without merit in us, because we are actually without any kind of excellency to merit, if there could be any such thing as merit in creature excellency. And we are not only without any true excellency, but are full of, and wholly defiled with, that which is infinitely odious. All our good is more apparently from God, because we are first naked and wholly without any good, and afterwards enriched with all good.

2. We receive all from the *power* of God. Man's redemption is often spoken of as a work of wonderful power as well as grace. The great power of God appears in bringing a sinner from his low state, from the depths of sin and misery, to such an exalted state of holiness and happiness. Eph. 1:19. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."----

We are dependent on God's power through every step of our redemption. We are dependent on the power of God to convert us, and give faith in Jesus Christ, and the new nature. It is a work of creation: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. 5:17. "We are created in Christ Jesus," Eph. 2:10. The fallen creature cannot attain to true holiness, but by being created again. Eph. 4:24. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." It is a raising from the dead. Colos. 2:12-13. "Wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Yea, it is a more glorious work of power than mere creation, or raising a dead body to life, in that the effect attained is greater and more excellent. That holy and happy being, and spiritual life, which is produced in the work of conversion, is a far greater and more glorious effect, than mere being and life. And the state from whence the change is made -- a death in sin, a total corruption of nature, and depth of misery -- is far more remote from the state attained, than mere death or non-entity.

It is by God's power also that we are preserved in a state of grace. 1 Pet. 1:5. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." As grace is at first from God, so it is continually from him, and is maintained by him, as much as light in the atmosphere is all day long from the sun, as well as at first dawning, or sun-rising. -- Men are dependent on the power of God for every exercise of grace, and for carrying on that work in the heart, for subduing sin and corruption, increasing holy principles, and enabling to bring forth fruit in good works. Man is dependent on divine power in bringing grace to its perfection, in making the soul completely amiable in Christ's glorious likeness,



and filling of it with a satisfying joy and blessedness; and for the raising of the body to life, and to such a perfect state, that it shall be suitable for a habitation and organ for a soul so perfected and blessed. These are the most glorious effects of the power of God, that are seen in the series of God's acts with respect to the creatures.

Man was dependent on the power of God in his first estate, but he is more dependent on his power now; he needs God's power to do more things for him, and depends on a more wonderful exercise of his power. It was an effect of the power of God to make man holy at the first: but more remarkably so now, because there is a great deal of opposition and difficulty in the way. It is a more glorious effect of power to make that holy that was so depraved, and under the dominion of sin, than to confer holiness on that which before had nothing of the contrary. It is a more glorious work of power to rescue a soul out of the hands of the devil, and from the powers of darkness, and to bring it into a state of salvation, than to confer holiness where there was no prepossession or opposition. Luke 11:21-22. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour, wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." So it is a more glorious work of power to uphold a soul in a state of grace and holiness, and to carry it on till it is brought to glory, when there is so much sin remaining in the heart resisting, and Satan with all his might opposing, than it would have been to have kept man from falling at first, when Satan had nothing in man.-- Thus we have shown how the redeemed are dependent on God for all their good, as they have all of him.

Secondly, They are also dependent on God for all, as they have all *through* him. God is the medium of it, as well as the author and fountain of it. All we have, wisdom, the pardon of sin, deliverance from hell, acceptance into God's favour, grace and holiness, true comfort and happiness, eternal life and glory, is from God by a Mediator; and this Mediator is God; which Mediator we have an absolute dependence upon, as he through whom we receive all. So that here is another way wherein we have our dependence on God for all good. God not only gives us the Mediator, and accepts his mediation, and of his power and grace bestows the things purchased by the Mediator; but he the Mediator is God.

Our blessings are what we have by purchase; and the purchase is made of God, the blessings are purchased of him, and God gives the purchaser; and not only so, but God is the purchaser. Yea God is both the purchaser and the price; for Christ, who is God, purchased these blessings for us, by offering up himself as the price of our salvation. He purchased eternal life by the sacrifice of himself. Heb. 7:27. "He offered up himself." And 9:26. "He hath appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Indeed it was the human nature that was offered; but it was the same person with the divine, and therefore was an infinite price.



As we thus have our good through God, we have a dependence on him in a respect that man in his first estate had not. Man was to have eternal life then through his own righteousness; so that he had partly a dependence upon what was in himself; for we have a dependence upon that through which we have our good, as well as that from which we have it; and though man's righteousness that he then depended on was indeed from God, yet it was his own, it was inherent in himself; so that his dependence was not so *immediately* on God. But now the righteousness that we are dependent on is not in ourselves, but in God. We are saved through the righteousness of Christ: He *is made unto us righteousness*; and therefore is prophesied of, Jer. 23:6, under that name, "the Lord our righteousness." In that the righteousness we are justified by is the righteousness of Christ, it is the righteousness of God. 2 Cor. 5:21. "That we might be made the righteousness of God in him." -- Thus in redemption we have not only all things of God, but by and through him, 1 Cor. 8:6. "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

Thirdly, The redeemed have all their good *in God*. We not only have it of him, and through him, but it consists in him; he is all our good.-- The good of the redeemed is either objective or inherent. By their objective good, I mean that extrinsic object, in the possession and enjoyment of which they are happy. Their inherent good is that excellency or pleasure which is in the soul itself. With respect to both of which the redeemed have all their good in God, or which is the same thing, God himself is all their good.

1. The redeemed have all their *objective* good in God. God himself is the great good which they are brought to the possession and enjoyment of by redemption. He is the highest good, and the sum of all that good which Christ purchased. God is the inheritance of the saints; he is the portion of their souls. God is their wealth and treasure, their food, their Life, their dwelling- place, their ornament and diadem, and their everlasting honour and glory. They have none in heaven but God; he is the great good which the redeemed are received to at death, and which they are to rise to at the end of the world. The Lord God is the light of the heavenly Jerusalem; and is the "river of the water of life " that runs, and "the tree of life that grows, in the midst of the paradise of God." The glorious excellencies and beauty of God will be what will for ever entertain the minds of the saints, and the love of God will be their everlasting feast. The redeemed will indeed enjoy other things; they will enjoy the angels, and will enjoy one another; but that which they shall enjoy in the angels, or each other, or in any thing else whatsoever that will yield them delight and happiness, will be what shall be seen of God in them.

2. The redeemed have all their *inherent* good in God. Inherent good is twofold; it is either excellency or pleasure. These the redeemed not only derive from God, as caused by him, but have them in him.



They have spiritual excellency and joy by a kind of participation of God. They are made excellent by a communication of God's excellency. God puts his own beauty, *i.e.* his beautiful likeness, upon their souls. They are made partakers of the divine nature, or moral image of God, 2 Pet. 1:4. They are holy by being made partakers of God's holiness. Heb. 12:10. The saints are beautiful and blessed by a communication of God's holiness and joy, as the moon and planets are bright by the sun's light. The saint hath spiritual joy and pleasure by a kind of effusion of God on the soul. In these things the redeemed have communion with God; that is, they partake with him and of him.

The saints have both their spiritual excellency and blessedness by the gift of the Holy Ghost, and his dwelling in them. They are not only caused by the Holy Ghost, but are in him as their principle. The Holy Spirit becoming an inhabitant, is a vital principle in the soul. He, acting in, upon, and with the soul, becomes a fountain of true holiness and joy, as a spring is of water, by the exertion and diffusion of itself. John 4:14. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Compared with chap. 7:38-39. "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." The sum of what Christ has purchased for us, is that spring of water spoken of in the former of those places, and those rivers of living water spoken of in the latter. And the sum of the blessings, which the redeemed shall receive in heaven, is that river of water of life that proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, Rev. 22:1. Which doubtless signifies the same with those rivers of living water, explained, John 7:38-39, which is elsewhere called the "river of God's pleasures." Herein consists the fulness of good, which the saints receive of Christ. It is by partaking of the Holy Spirit, that they have communion with Christ in his fulness. God hath given the Spirit, not by measure unto him; and they do receive of his fulness, and grace for grace. This is the sum of the saints' inheritance; and therefore that little of the Holy Ghost which believers have in this world, is said to be the earnest of their inheritance, 2 Cor. 1:22. "Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." And chap. 5:5. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." And Eph. 1:13-14. "Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession."

The Holy Spirit and good things are spoken of in Scripture as the same; as if the Spirit of God communicated to the soul, comprised all good things, Matt. 7:11. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him?" In Luke it is, chap. 11:13. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" This is the sum of the blessings that Christ died to procure, and the subject of gospel-promises. Gal. 3:13-14. "He was made a curse for us, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The Spirit of



God is the great promise of the Father, Luke 24:49. "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you." The Spirit of God therefore is called "the Spirit of promise," Eph. 1:33. This promised thing Christ received, and had given into his hand, as soon as he had finished the work of our redemption, to bestow on all that he had redeemed; Acts 2:13. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye both see and hear." So that all the holiness and happiness of the redeemed is in God. It is in the communications, indwelling, and acting of the Spirit of God. Holiness and happiness is in the fruit, here and hereafter, because God dwells in them, and they in God.

Thus God has given us the Redeemer, and it is by him that our good is purchased. So God is the Redeemer and the price; and he also is the good purchased. So that all that we have is of God, and through him, and in him. Rom. 11:36. "For of him, and through him, and to him, or in him, are all things." The same in the Greek that is here rendered *to him*, is rendered *in him*, 1 Cor. 8:6.

II. God is glorified in the work of redemption by this means, viz. By there being so great and universal a dependence of the redeemed on him.

1. Man hath so much the greater occasion and obligation to notice and acknowledge God's perfections and all-sufficiency. The greater the creature's dependence is on God's perfections, and the greater concern he has with them, so much the greater occasion has he to take notice of them. So much the greater concern any one has with and dependence upon the power and grace of God, so much the greater occasion has he to take notice of that power and grace. So much the greater and more immediate dependence there is on the divine holiness, so much the greater occasion to take notice of and acknowledge that. So much the greater and more absolute dependence we have on the divine perfections, as belonging to the several persons of the Trinity, so much the greater occasion have we to observe and own the divine glory of each of them. That which we are most concerned with, is surely most in the way of our observation and notice; and this kind of concern with any thing, viz. dependence, does especially tend to command and oblige the attention and observation. Those things that we are not much dependent upon, it is easy to neglect; but we can scarce do any other than mind that which we have a great dependence on. By reason of our so great dependence on God, and his perfections, and in so many respects, he and his glory are the more directly set in our view, which way soever we turn our eyes.

We have the greater occasion to take notice of God's all-sufficiency, when all our sufficiency is thus every way of him. We have the more occasion to contemplate him as an infinite good, and as the fountain of all good. Such a dependence on God demonstrates his all-sufficiency. So much as the dependence of the creature is on God, so much the greater does the creature's emptiness in himself



appear; and so much the greater the creature's emptiness, so much the greater must the fulness of the Being be who supplies him. Our having all *of* God, shows the fulness of his power and grace; our having all *through* him, shows the fulness of his merit and worthiness; and our having all *in* him, demonstrates his fulness of beauty, love, and happiness. And the redeemed, by reason of the greatness of their dependence on God, have not only so much the greater occasion, but obligation to contemplate and acknowledge the glory and fulness of God. How unreasonable and ungrateful should we be, if we did not acknowledge that sufficiency and glory which we absolutely, immediately, and universally depend upon!

2. Hereby is demonstrated how great God's glory is considered comparatively, or as compared with the creature's. By the creature being thus wholly and universally dependent on God, it appears that the creature is nothing, and that God is all. Hereby it appears that God is infinitely above us; that God's strength, and wisdom, and holiness, are infinitely greater than ours. However great and glorious the creature apprehends God to be, yet if he be not sensible of the difference between God and him, so as to see that God's glory is great, compared with his own, he will not be disposed to give God the glory due to his name. If the creature in any respects sets himself upon a level with God, or exalts himself to any competition with him, however he may apprehend that great honour and profound respect may belong to God from those that are at a greater distance, he will not be so sensible of its being due from him. So much the more men exalt themselves, so much the less will they surely be disposed to exalt God. It is certainly what God aims at in the disposition of things in redemption, (if we allow the Scriptures to be a revelation of God's mind,) that God should appear full, and man in himself empty, that God should appear all, and man nothing. It is God's declared design that others should not "glory in his presence;" which implies that it is his design to advance his own comparative glory. So much the more man "glories in God's presence," so much the less glory is ascribed to God.

3. By its being thus ordered, that the creature should have so absolute and universal a dependence on God, provision is made that God should have our whole souls, and should be the object of our undivided respect. If we had our dependence partly on God, and partly on something else, man's respect would be divided to those different things on which he had dependence. Thus it would be if we depended on God only for a part of our good, and on ourselves, or some other being, for another part: or if we had our good only from God, and through another that was not God, and in something else distinct from both, our hearts would be divided between the good itself, and him from whom, and him through whom, we received it. But now there is no occasion for this, God being not only he from or of whom we have all good, but also through whom, and is that good itself, that we have from him and through him. So that whatsoever there is to attract our respect, the tendency is still directly towards God; all unites in him as the centre.



USE.

1. We may here observe the marvellous wisdom of God, in the work of redemption. God hath made man's emptiness and misery, his low, lost, and ruined state, into which he sunk by the fall, an occasion of the greater advancement of his own glory, as in other ways, so particularly in this, that there is now much more universal and apparent dependence of man on God. Though God be pleased to lift man out of that dismal abyss of sin and woe into which he was fallen, and exceedingly to exalt him in excellency and honour, and to a high pitch of glory and blessedness, yet the creature hath nothing in any respect to glory of; all the glory evidently belongs to God, all is in a mere, and most absolute, and divine dependence on the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And each person of the Trinity is equally glorified in this work: there is an absolute dependence of the creature on every one for all: all is of the Father, all through the Son, and all in the Holy Ghost. Thus God appears in the work of redemption as all in all. It is fit that he who is, and there is none else, should be the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the all and the only, in this work.

2. Hence those doctrines and schemes of divinity that are in any respect opposite to such an absolute and universal dependence on God, derogate from his glory, and thwart the design of our redemption. And such are those schemes that put the creature in God's stead, in any of the mentioned respects, that exalt man into the place of either Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, in any thing pertaining to our redemption. However they may allow of a dependence of the redeemed on God, yet they deny a dependence that is so absolute and universal. They own an entire dependence of God for some things, but not for others; they own that we depend on God for the gift and acceptance of a Redeemer, but deny so absolute a dependence on him for the obtaining of an *interest* in the Redeemer. They own an absolute dependence on the Father for giving his Son, and on the Son for working out redemption, but not so entire a dependence on the Holy Ghost for *conversion*, and a being in Christ, and so coming to a title to his benefits. They own a dependence on God for means of grace, but not absolutely for the benefit and success of those means; a partial dependence on the power of God, for obtaining and exercising holiness, but not a mere dependence on the arbitrary and sovereign grace of God. They own a dependence on the free grace of God for a reception into his favour, so far that it is without any proper merit, but not as it is without being attracted, or moved with any excellency. They own a partial dependence on Christ, as he through whom we have life, as having purchased new terms of life, but still hold that the righteousness through which we have life is inherent in ourselves, as it was under the first covenant. Now whatever scheme is inconsistent with our *entire* dependence on God for all, and of having all of him, through him, and in him, it is repugnant to the design and tenor of the gospel, and robs it of that which God accounts its lustre and glory.



3. Hence we may learn a reason why faith is that by which we come to have an interest in this redemption; for there is included in the nature of faith, a sensible acknowledgment of *absolute dependence* on God in this affair. It is very fit that it should be required of all, in order to their having the benefit of this redemption, that they should be sensible of, and acknowledge, their dependence on God for it. It is by this means that God hath contrived to glorify himself in redemption; and it is fit that he should at least have this glory of those that are the subjects of this redemption, and have the benefit of it.-- Faith is a sensibleness of what is real in the work of redemption; and the soul that believes doth entirely depend on God for all salvation, in its own sense and act. Faith abases men, and exalts God; it gives all the glory of redemption to him alone. It is necessary in order to saving faith, that man should be emptied of himself, be sensible that he is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Humility is a great ingredient of true faith: he that truly receives redemption, receives it as a little child, Mark 10:15. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, he shall not enter therein." It is the delight of a believing soul to abase itself and exalt God alone: that is the language of it, Psalm 115:1. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory."

4. Let us be exhorted to exalt God alone, and ascribe to him all the glory of redemption. Let us endeavour to obtain, and increase in, a sensibleness of our great dependence on God, to have our eye to him alone, to mortify a self-dependent and self-righteous disposition. Man is naturally exceeding prone to exalt himself, and depend on his own power or goodness; as though from himself he must expect happiness. He is prone to have respect to enjoyments alien from God and his Spirit, as those in which happiness is to be found.-- But this doctrine should teach us to exalt God *alone*; as by trust and reliance, so by praise. *Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord.* Hath any man ope that he is converted, and sanctified, and that his mind is endowed with true excellency and spiritual beauty? that his sins are forgiven, and he received into God's favour, and exalted to the honour and blessedness of being his child, and an heir of eternal life? let him give God all the glory; who alone makes him to differ from the worst of men in this world, or the most miserable of the damned in hell. Hath any man much comfort and strong hope of eternal life, let not his hope lift him up, but dispose him the more to abase himself, to reflect on his own exceeding unworthiness of such a favour, and to exalt God alone. Is any man eminent in holiness, and abundant in good works, let him take nothing of the glory of it to himself, but ascribe it to him whose "workmanship we are, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."



APPLIED THEOLOGY



RESOLUTIONS BY JONATHAN EDWARDS

Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat him by his grace to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to his will, for Christ's sake.

Remember to read over these Resolutions once a week.

1. Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory, and my own good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriad's of ages hence. Resolved to do whatever I think to be my duty and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. Resolved to do this, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many and how great soever.
2. Resolved, to be continually endeavoring to find out some new invention and contrivance to promote the aforementioned things.
3. Resolved, if ever I shall fall and grow dull, so as to neglect to keep any part of these Resolutions, to repent of all I can remember, when I come to myself again.
4. Resolved, never to do any manner of thing, whether in soul or body, less or more, but what tends to the glory of God; nor be, nor suffer it, if I can avoid it.
5. Resolved, never to lose one moment of time; but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can.
6. Resolved, to live with all my might, while I do live.
7. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.
8. Resolved, to act, in all respects, both speaking and doing, as if nobody had been so vile as I, and as if I had committed the same sins, or had the same infirmities or failings as others; and that I will let the knowledge of their failings promote nothing but shame in myself, and prove only an occasion of my confessing my own sins and misery to God.



9. Resolved, to think much on all occasions of my own dying, and of the common circumstances which attend death.
10. Resolved, when I feel pain, to think of the pains of martyrdom, and of hell.
11. Resolved, when I think of any theorem in divinity to be solved, immediately to do what I can towards solving it, if circumstances don't hinder.
12. Resolved, if I take delight in it as a gratification of pride, or vanity, or on any such account, immediately to throw it by.
13. Resolved, to be endeavoring to find out fit objects of charity and liberality.
14. Resolved, never to do anything out of revenge.
15. Resolved, never to suffer the least motions of anger to irrational beings.
16. Resolved, never to speak evil of anyone, so that it shall tend to his dishonor, more or less, upon no account except for some real good.
17. Resolved, that I will live so as I shall wish I had done when I come to die.
18. Resolved, to live so at all times, as I think is best in my devout frames, and when I have clearest notions of things of the gospel, and another world.
19. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if I expected it would not be above an hour, before I should hear the last trump.
20. Resolved, to maintain the strictest temperance in eating and drinking.
21. Resolved, never to do anything, which if I should see in another, I should count a just occasion to despise him for, or to think any way the more meanly of him.
22. Resolved, to endeavor to obtain for myself as much happiness, in the other world, as I possibly can, with all the power; might, vigor, and vehemence, yea violence, I am capable of, or can bring myself to exert, in any way that can be thought of.



23. Resolved, frequently to take some deliberate action, which seems most unlikely to be done, for the glory of God, and trace it back to the original intention, designs and ends of it; and if I find it not to be for God's glory, to repute it as a breach of the 4th Resolution.
24. Resolved, whenever I do any conspicuously evil action, to trace it back, till I come to the original cause; and then both carefully endeavor to do so no more, and to fight and pray with all my might against the original of it.
25. Resolved, to examine carefully, and constantly, what that one thing in me is, which causes me in the least to doubt of the love of God; and to direct all my forces against it.
26. Resolved, to cast away such things, as I find do abate my assurance.
27. Resolved, never willfully to omit anything, except the omission be for the glory of God; and frequently to examine my omissions.
28. Resolved, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.
29. Resolved, never to count that a prayer, nor to let that pass as a prayer, nor that as a petition of a prayer, which is so made, that I cannot hope that God will answer it; nor that as a confession, which I cannot hope God will accept.
30. Resolved, to strive to my utmost every week to be brought higher in religion, and to a higher exercise of grace, than I was the week before.
31. Resolved, never to say anything at all against anybody, but when it is perfectly agreeable to the highest degree of Christian honor, and of love to mankind, agreeable to the lowest humility, and sense of my own faults and failings, and agreeable to the golden rule; often, when I have said anything against anyone, to bring it to, and try it strictly by the test of this Resolution.
32. Resolved, to be strictly and firmly faithful to my trust, that that in Prov. 20:6, "A faithful man who can find?" may not be partly fulfilled in me.
33. Resolved, always to do what I can towards making, maintaining, establishing and preserving peace, when it can be without over-balancing detriment in other respects. *Dec.26, 1722.*



34. Resolved, in narration's never to speak anything but the pure and simple verity.
35. Resolved, whenever I so much question whether I have done my duty, as that my quiet and calm is thereby disturbed, to set it down, and also how the question was resolved. *Dec. 18, 1722.*
36. Resolved, never to speak evil of any, except I have some particular good call for it. *Dec. 19, 1722.*
37. Resolved, to inquire every night, as I am going to bed, wherein I have been negligent, what sin I have committed, and wherein I have denied myself: also at the end of every week, month and year. *Dec.22 and 26, 1722.*
38. Resolved, never to speak anything that is ridiculous, sportive, or matter of laughter on the Lord's day. *Sabbath evening, Dec. 23, 1722.*
39. Resolved, never to do anything that I so much question the lawfulness of, as that I intend, at the same time, to consider and examine afterwards, whether it be lawful or no; except I as much question the lawfulness of the omission.
40. Resolved, to inquire every night, before I go to bed, whether I have acted in the best way I possibly could, with respect to eating and drinking. *Jan. 7, 1723.*
41. Resolved, to ask myself at the end of every day, week, month and year, wherein I could possibly in any respect have done better. *Jan. 11, 1723.*
42. Resolved, frequently to renew the dedication of myself to God, which was made at my baptism; which I solemnly renewed, when I was received into the communion of the church; and which I have solemnly re-made this twelfth day of January, 1722-23.
43. Resolved, never henceforward, till I die, to act as if I were any way my own, but entirely and altogether God's, agreeable to what is to be found in *Saturday, January 12. Jan.12, 1723.*
- 44- Resolved, that no other end but religion, shall have any influence at all on any of my actions; and that no action shall be, in the least circumstance, any otherwise than the religious end will carry it. *Jan.12, 1723.*
45. Resolved, never to allow any pleasure or grief, joy or sorrow, nor any affection at all, nor any degree of affection, nor any circumstance relating to it, but what helps religion. *Jan.12 and 13.1723.*



46. Resolved, never to allow the least measure of any fretting uneasiness at my father or mother. Resolved to suffer no effects of it, so much as in the least alteration of speech, or motion of my eye: and to be especially careful of it, with respect to any of our family.

47. Resolved, to endeavor to my utmost to deny whatever is not most agreeable to a good, and universally sweet and benevolent, quiet, peaceable, contented, easy, compassionate, generous, humble, meek, modest, submissive, obliging, diligent and industrious, charitable, even, patient, moderate, forgiving, sincere temper; and to do at all times what such a temper would lead me to. Examine strictly every week, whether I have done so. *Sabbath morning. May 5, 1723.*

48. Resolved, constantly, with the utmost niceness and diligence, and the strictest scrutiny, to be looking into the state of my soul, that I may know whether I have truly an interest in Christ or no; that when I come to die, I may not have any negligence respecting this to repent of. *May 26, 1723.*

49. Resolved, that this never shall be, if I can help it.

50. Resolved, I will act so as I think I shall judge would have been best, and most prudent, when I come into the future world. *July 5, 1723.*

51. Resolved, that I will act so, in every respect, as I think I shall wish I had done, if I should at last be damned. *July 8, 1723.*

52. I frequently hear persons in old age say how they would live, if they were to live their lives over again: Resolved, that I will live just so as I can think I shall wish I had done, supposing I live to old age. *July 8, 1723.*

53. Resolved, to improve every opportunity, when I am in the best and happiest frame of mind, to cast and venture my soul on the Lord Jesus Christ, to trust and confide in him, and consecrate myself wholly to him; that from this I may have assurance of my safety, knowing that I confide in my Redeemer. *July 8, 1723.*

54. Whenever I hear anything spoken in conversation of any person, if I think it would be praiseworthy in me, Resolved to endeavor to imitate it. *July 8, 1723.*

55. Resolved, to endeavor to my utmost to act as I can think I should do, if I had already seen the happiness of heaven, and hell torments. *July 8, 1723.*



56. Resolved, never to give over, nor in the least to slacken my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be.

57. Resolved, when I fear misfortunes and adversities, to examine whether ~ have done my duty, and resolve to do it; and let it be just as providence orders it, I will as far as I can, be concerned about nothing but my duty and my sin. *June 9, and July 13 1723.*

58. Resolved, not only to refrain from an air of dislike, fretfulness, and anger in conversation, but to exhibit an air of love, cheerfulness and benignity. *May 27, and July 13, 1723.*

59. Resolved, when I am most conscious of provocations to ill nature and anger, that I will strive most to feel and act good-naturedly; yea, at such times, to manifest good nature, though I think that in other respects it would be disadvantageous, and so as would be imprudent at other times. *May 12, July ii, and July 13.*

60. Resolved, whenever my feelings begin to appear in the least out of order, when I am conscious of the least uneasiness within, or the least irregularity without, I will then subject myself to the strictest examination. *July 4, and 13, 1723.*

61. Resolved, that I will not give way to that listlessness which I find unbends and relaxes my mind from being fully and fixedly set on religion, whatever excuse I may have for it-that what my listlessness inclines me to do, is best to be done, etc. *May 21, and July 13, 1723.*

62. Resolved, never to do anything but duty; and then according to Eph. 6:6-8, do it willingly and cheerfully as unto the Lord, and not to man; "knowing that whatever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord." *June 25 and July 13, 1723.*

63. On the supposition, that there never was to be but one individual in the world, at any one time, who was properly a complete Christian, in all respects of a right stamp, having Christianity always shining in its true luster, and appearing excellent and lovely, from whatever part and under whatever character viewed: Resolved, to act just as I would do, if I strove with all my might to be that one, who should live in my time. *Jan. 14' and July '3' 1723.*

64. Resolved, when I find those "groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26), of which the Apostle speaks, and those "breakings of soul for the longing it hath," of which the Psalmist speaks, Psalm 119:20, that I will promote them to the utmost of my power, and that I will not be wear', of



earnestly endeavoring to vent my desires, nor of the repetitions of such earnestness. *July 23*, and *August 10, 1723*.

65. Resolved, very much to exercise myself in this all my life long, viz. with the greatest openness I am capable of, to declare my ways to God, and lay open my soul to him: all my sins, temptations, difficulties, sorrows, fears, hopes, desires, and every thing, and every circumstance; according to Dr. Manton's 27th Sermon on Psalm 119. *July 26*, and *Aug. 10 1723*.

66. Resolved, that I will endeavor always to keep a benign aspect, and air of acting and speaking in all places, and in all companies, except it should so happen that duty requires otherwise.

67. Resolved, after afflictions, to inquire, what I am the better for them, what good I have got by them, and what I might have got by them.

68. Resolved, to confess frankly to myself all that which I find in myself, either infirmity or sin; and, if it be what concerns religion, also to confess the whole case to God, and implore needed help. *July 23*, and *August 10, 1723*.

69. Resolved, always to do that, which I shall wish I had done when I see others do it. *Aug. 11, 1723*.

70. Let there be something of benevolence, in all that I speak.



MYSTIC UNION BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE SAINTS FROM THE GODLY MAN'S PICTURE BY THOMAS WATSON

"My beloved is mine, and I am his." (Song 2:16)

In this Song of Songs we see the love of Christ and his church running towards each other in a full torrent.

The text contains three general parts:

1. A symbol of affection: "My beloved."
2. A term of appropriation: "is mine."
3. A holy resignation: "I am his."

Doctrine: That there is a conjugal union between Christ and believers. The apostle, having treated at large of marriage, winds up the whole chapter thus: "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:32). What is closer than union? What sweeter? There is a twofold union with Christ:

1. *A natural union.* This all men have, Christ having taken their nature on him and not that of the angels (Heb. 2:16). But if there is no more than this natural union, it will give little comfort. Thousands are damned though Christ is united to their nature.

2. *A sacred union.* By this we are mystically united to Christ. The union with Christ is not personal. If Christ's essence were transfused into the person of a believer, then it would follow that all that a believer does should be meritorious.

But the union between Christ and a saint is:

(a) Federal: "My beloved is mine." God the Father gives the bride; God the Son receives the bride; God the Holy Ghost ties the knot in marriage - he knits our wills to Christ and Christ's love to us.

(b) Effectual. Christ unites himself to his spouse by his graces and influences: "of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16). Christ makes himself one with the spouse by conveying his image and stamping the impress of his own holiness upon her.



This union with Christ may well be called mystic. It is hard to describe the manner of it. It is hard to show how the soul is united to the body, and how Christ is united to the soul. But though this union is spiritual, it is real. Things in nature often work insensibly, yet really (Eccles. 11:5). We do not see the hand move on the dial, yet it moves. The sun exhales and draws up the vapours of the earth insensibly yet really. So the union between Christ and the soul, though it is imperceptible to the eye of reason, is still real (I Cor. 6:17).

Before this union with Christ there must be a separation. The heart must be separated from all other lovers, as in marriage there is a leaving of father and mother: "Forget your own people, and your father's house." (Psa. 45:10). So there must be a leaving of our former sins, a breaking off the old league with hell before we can be united to Christ. "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" (Hos. 14:8), or as it is in the Hebrew, "with sorrows." Those sins which were looked on before as lovers, are now sorrows. There must be a divorce before a union.

The purpose of our conjugal union with Christ is twofold:

1. *Co-habitation.* This is one purpose of marriage, to live together: "that Christ may dwell in your hearts" (Eph. 2:17). It is not enough to pay Christ a few complimentary visits in his ordinances - hypocrites may do so - but there must be a mutual associating. We must dwell upon the thoughts of Christ: "he that abides in God" (cf. I John 3:24). Married persons should not live apart.

2. *Fruit bearing.* "That you may be married to another; to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God." (Rom. 7:4). The spouse bears the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness (Gal. 5:22). Barrenness is a shame in Christ's spouse.

This marriage union with Christ is the most noble and excellent union:

(a) Christ unites himself to many. In other marriages only one person is taken, but here millions are taken. Otherwise, poor souls might cry out, "Alas! Christ has married So-and-so, but what is that to me? I am left out." No, Christ marries thousands. It is a holy and chaste polygamy. Multitudes of people do not defile this marriage bed. Any poor sinner who brings a humble, believing heart may be married to Christ.

(b) There is a closer union in this holy marriage than there can be in any other. In other marriages, two make one flesh, but Christ and the believer make one spirit: "But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him." (I Cor. 6:17). Now as the soul is more excellent than the body, and admits of far greater joy, so this spiritual union brings in more astonishing delights and ravishments than any



other marriage relationship is capable of. The joy that flows from the mystic union is unspeakable and full of glory (I Peter 1:8).

(c) This union with Christ never ceases. "Thrice happy they whom an unbroken bond unites" (Horace). Other marriages are soon at an end. Death cuts asunder the marriage knot, but this conjugal union is eternal. You who are once Christ's spouse shall never again be a widow: "I will betroth you to me forever" (Hosea 2:19). To speak properly, our marriage with Christ begins where other marriages end, at death.

In this life there is only the contract. The Jews had a time set between their engagement and marriage, sometimes a year or more. In this life there is only the engagement and contract; promises are made on both sides, and love passes secretly between Christ and the soul. He gives some smiles of his face, and the soul sends up her sighs and drops tears of love. But all this is only a preliminary work, and something leading up to the marriage. The glorious completing and solemnizing of the marriage is reserved for heaven. There is the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9) and the bed of glory perfumed with love where the souls of the elect shall be perpetually consoling themselves. "Then shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:17). So death merely begins our marriage with Christ.

Application 1: If Christ is the head of the mystic body (Eph. 1:22), then this doctrine beheads the Pope, that man of sin who usurps this prerogative of being the head of the church, and so would defile Christ's marriage bed. What blasphemy this is! Two heads are monstrous. Christ is Head, as he is Husband. There is no vice-husband, no deputy in his place. The Pope is the beast in Revelation (Rev. 13:11). To make him head of the church, what would this be but to set the head of a beast upon the body of a man?

Application 2: If there is such a conjugal union, let us test whether we are united to Christ:

1. Have we chosen Christ to set our love upon, and is this choice founded on knowledge?
2. Have we consented to the match? It is not enough that Christ is willing to have us, but are we willing to have him? God does not so force salvation upon us that we shall have Christ whether we want to or not. We must consent to have him. Many approve of Christ, but do not give their consent. And this consent must be:

(a) Pure and genuine. We consent to have him for his own worth and excellence: "You are fairer than the sons of men" (Psa. 45:2).



(b) A present consent: "now is the acceptable time" (2 Cor. 6:2). If we put Christ off with delays and excuses, perhaps he will stop coming. He will leave off wooing. "His spirit shall no longer strive," and then, poor sinner, what will you do? When God's wooing ends, your woes begin.

3. Have we taken Christ? Faith is the bond of the union. Christ is joined to us by his Spirit, and we are joined to him by faith. Faith ties the marriage knot.

4. Have we given ourselves up to Christ? Thus the spouse in the text says, "I am his," as if she had said, "All I have is for the use and service of Christ." Have we made a surrender? Have we given up our name and will to Christ? When the devil solicits by a temptation, do we say, "We are not our own, we are Christ's; our tongues are his, we must not defile them with oaths; our bodies are his temple, we must not pollute them with sin?" If it is so, it is a sign that the Holy Ghost has produced this blessed union between Christ and us.

Application 3: Is there this mystic union? Then from that we may draw many inferences:

1. *See the dignity of all true believers.* They are joined in marriage with Christ. There is not only assimilation but union; they are not only like Christ but one with Christ. All the saints have this honour. When a king marries a beggar, by virtue of the union she is ennobled and made of the blood royal. As wicked men are united to the prince of darkness, and he settles hell upon them as their inheritance, so the godly are divinely united to Christ, who is King of kings, and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16). By virtue of this sacred union the saints are dignified above the angels. Christ is the Lord of the angels, but not their husband.

2. *See how happily all the saints are married.* They are united to Christ, who is the best Husband, "the Chiefest among ten thousand" (Song 5:10). Christ is a Husband that cannot be paralleled:

(a) For tender care. The spouse cannot be as considerate of her own soul and credit as Christ is considerate of her: "He cares for you" (I Pet. 5:7). Christ has a debate with himself, consulting and projecting how to carry on the work of our salvation. He transacts all our affairs, he attends to our business as his own. Indeed, he himself is concerned in it. He brings fresh supplies to his spouse. If she wanders out of the way, he guides her. If she stumbles, he holds her by the hand. If she falls, he raises her. If she is dull, he quickens her by his Spirit. If she is perverse, he draws her with cords of love. If she is sad, he comforts her with promises.

(b) For ardent affection. No husband loves like Christ. The Lord says to the people, "I have loved you," and they say, "In what way have you loved us?" (Mal. 1:2). But we cannot say to Christ, "In



what way have you loved us?" Christ has given real demonstrations of his love to his spouse. He has sent her his Word, which is a love-letter, and he has given her his Spirit, which is a love-token. Christ loves more than any other husband:

- Christ puts a richer robe on his bride: "For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." (Isa. 61:10). In this robe, God looks on us as if we had not sinned. This robe is as truly ours to justify us, as it is Christ's to bestow on us. This robe not only covers but adorns. Having on this robe, we are reputed righteous, not only as righteous as angels, but as righteous as Christ: "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).
- Christ gives his bride not only his golden garments but his image. He loves her into his own likeness. A husband may have a dear affection for his wife, but he cannot stamp his own image on her. If she is deformed, he may give her a veil to hide it, but he cannot put his beauty on her. But Christ imparts "the beauty of holiness" to his spouse: "Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," (Ezek. 16:14). When Christ marries a soul, he makes it fair: "You are all fair, my love" (Song 4:7). Christ never thinks he has loved his spouse enough till he can see his own face in her.
- Christ discharges those debts which no other husband can. Our sins are the worst debts we owe. If all the angels should contribute money, they could not pay one of these debts, but Christ frees us from these. He is both a Husband and a Surety. He says to justice what Paul said concerning Onesimus, "But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account." (Philem. 1:18).
- Christ has suffered more for his spouse than ever any husband did for a wife. He suffered poverty and ignominy. He who crowned the heavens with stars was himself crowned with thorns. He was called a companion of sinners, so that we might be made companions of angels. He was regardless of his life; he leaped into the sea of his Father's wrath to save his spouse from drowning.
- Christ's love does not end with his life. He loves his spouse for ever: "I will betroth you to me forever" (Hos. 2:19). Well may the apostle call it "a love which passes knowledge" (Eph. 3:19).

3. *See how rich believers are.* They have married into the crown of heaven, and by virtue of the conjugal union all Christ's riches go to believers: "communion is founded in union." Christ communicates his graces (John 1:16). As long as Christ has them, believers shall not be in want. And he communicates his privileges - justification, glorification. He settles a kingdom on his spouse



as her inheritance (Heb. 12:28). This is a key to the apostle's riddle, "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6:10). By virtue of the marriage union, the saints have an interest in all Christ's riches.

4. *See how fearful a sin it is to abuse the saints.* It is an injury done to Christ, for believers are mystically one with him: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4). When the body was wounded, the Head, being in heaven, cried out. In this sense, men crucify Christ afresh (Heb. 6:6), because what is done to his members is done to him. If Gideon was avenged upon those who slew his brethren, will not Christ much more be avenged on those that wrong his spouse (Judges 8:21)? Will a king tolerate having his treasure rifled, his crown thrown in the dust, his queen beheaded? Will Christ bear with the affronts and injuries done to his bride? The saints are the apple of Christ's eye (Zech. 2:8), and let those who strike at his eye answer for it. Isa 49:26 "I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine" (Isa. 49:26).

5. *See the reason why the saints so rejoice in the Word and sacrament,* because here they meet with their Husband, Christ. The wife desires to be in the presence of her husband. The ordinances are the chariot in which Christ rides, the lattice through which he looks forth and shows his smiling face. Here Christ displays the banner of love (Song 2:4). The Lord's Supper is nothing other than a pledge and earnest of that eternal communion which the saints shall have with Christ in heaven. Then he will take the spouse into his bosom. If Christ is so sweet in an ordinance, when we have only short glances and dark glimpses of him by faith, oh then, how delightful and ravishing will his presence be in heaven when we see him face to face and are for ever in his loving embraces!

Application 4: This mystic union affords much comfort to believers in several cases:

1. *In the case of the disrespect and unkindness of the world:* "in wrath they hate me" (Psa. 55:3). But though we live in an unkind world, we have a kind Husband: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you" (John 15:9). What angel can tell how God the Father loves Christ? Yet the Father's love to Christ is made the copy and pattern of Christ's love to his spouse. This love of Christ as far exceeds all created love as the sun outshines the light of a torch. And is not this a matter of comfort? Though the world hates me, Christ still loves me.

2. *In the case of weakness of grace.* The believer cannot lay hold on Christ, except with a trembling hand. There is a "spirit of infirmity" on him, but oh, weak Christian, here is strong consolation: there is a conjugal union. You are the spouse of Christ, and he will bear with you as the weaker vessel. Will a husband divorce his wife because she is weak and sickly? No, he will be the more



tender with her. Christ hates treachery, but he will pity infirmity. When the spouse is faint and ready to be discouraged, Christ puts his left hand under her head (Song 2:6). This is the spouse's comfort when she is weak. Her Husband can infuse strength into her: "My God shall be my strength" (Isa. 49:5).

3. *In the case of death.* When believers die, they go to their Husband. Who would not be willing to cross the gulf of death that they might meet with their Husband, Christ? "I desire to loosen anchor" (Phil. 1:23), and be with Christ. What though the way is dirty? We are going to our friend. When a woman is engaged, she longs for the day of marriage. After the saints' funeral, their marriage begins. The body is a prison to the soul. Who would not desire to exchange a prison for a marriage bed? How glad Joseph was to go out of prison to the king's court! God is wise; he lets us meet with changes and troubles here, so that he may wean us from the world and make us long for death. When the soul is divorced from the body, it is married to Christ.

4. *In the case of passing sentence at the day of judgment.* There is a marriage union and, oh Christian, your Husband shall be your judge. A wife would not fear appearing at the bar if her husband was sitting as judge. What though the devil should bring in many indictments against you? Christ will expunge your sins in his blood. Could he possibly say, "I shall condemn my spouse?" Oh, what a comfort this is! The Husband is judge. Christ cannot pass sentence against his spouse without passing it against himself. For Christ and believers are one.

5. *In the case of the saints' suffering.* The church of God is exposed in this life to many injuries, but she has a Husband in heaven who is mindful of her and will "turn water into wine" for her. Now it is a time of mourning with the spouse because the Bridegroom is absent (Matt. 9:15). But shortly she shall put off her mourning. Christ will wipe the tears of blood off the cheeks of his spouse: "He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces" (Isa. 25:8). Christ will comfort his spouse for as much time as she has been afflicted. He will solace her with his love; he will take away the cup of trembling and give her the cup of consolation. And now she shall forget all her sorrows, being called into the banqueting house of heaven and having the banner of Christ's love displayed over her.

Application 5: Let me press several duties upon those who have this marriage union with Christ:

1. *Make use of this relationship in two cases:*

(a) When the law brings in its indictments against you. The law says, "Here there are so many debts to be paid," and it demands satisfaction. Acknowledge the debt, but turn it all over to your



Husband, Christ. It is a maxim in law that the suit must not go against the wife, as long as the husband is living. Tell Satan when he accuses you, "It is true that the debt is mine, but go to my Husband, Christ; he will discharge it." If we took this course, we might relieve ourselves of much trouble. By faith we turn over the debt to our Husband. Believers are not in a state of widowhood but of marriage. Satan will never go to Christ - he knows that justice is satisfied and the debt book cancelled - but he comes to us for the debt so that he may perplex us. We should send him to Christ and then all lawsuits would cease. This is a believer's triumph. When he is guilty in himself, he is worthy in Christ. When he is spotted in himself, he is pure in his Head.

(b) In the case of desertion. Christ may (for reasons best known to himself) step aside for a time: "my beloved had withdrawn himself" (Song 5:6). Do not say, therefore, that Christ has gone for good. It is a fruit of jealousy in a wife, when her husband has left her a while, to think that he has gone from her for good. Every time Christ removes himself out of sight, it is wrong for us to say (like Zion), "The Lord has forsaken me" (Isa. 49:14). This is jealousy, and it is a wrong done to the love of Christ and the sweetness of this marriage relationship. Christ may forsake his spouse in regard of comfort, but he will not forsake her in regard of union. A husband may be a thousand miles distant from his wife, but he is still a husband. Christ may leave his spouse, but the marriage knot still holds.

2. *Rejoice in your Husband, Christ.* Has Christ honoured you by taking you into the marriage relationship and making you one with himself? This calls for joy. By virtue of the union, believers are sharers with Christ in his riches. It was a custom among the Romans, when the wife was brought home, for her to receive the keys of her husband's house, intimating that the treasure and custody of the house was now committed to her. When Christ brings his bride home to those glorious mansions which he has gone ahead to prepare for her (John 14:2), he will hand over the keys of his treasure to her, and she shall be as rich as heaven can make her. And shall not the spouse rejoice and sing aloud upon her bed (Psa. 149:5)? Christians, let the times be ever so sad, you may rejoice in your spiritual espousals (Hab. 3:17,18). Let me tell you, it is a sin not to rejoice. You disparage your Husband, Christ. When a wife is always sighing and weeping, what will others say? "This woman has a bad husband." Is this the fruit of Christ's love to you, to reflect dishonour upon him? A melancholy spouse saddens Christ's heart. I do not deny that Christians should grieve for sins of daily occurrence, but to be always weeping (as if they mourned without hope) is dishonourable to the marriage relationship. "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. 4:4). Rejoicing brings credit to your husband. Christ loves a cheerful bride, and indeed the very purpose of God's making us sad is to make us rejoice. We sow in tears, so that we may reap in joy. The excessive sadness and contrition of the godly will make others afraid to embrace Christ. They will begin to question whether there is that satisfactory joy in religion which is claimed. Oh, you saints of God, do not forget consolation; let others see that you do not repent of your choice. It is joy that puts liveliness and activity into a



Christian: "the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:10). The soul is swiftest in duty when it is carried on the wings of joy.

3. *Adorn this marriage relationship*, so that you may be a crown to your husband.

(a) Wear a veil. We read of the spouse's veil (Song 5:7). This veil is humility.

(b) Put on your jewels. These are the graces which for their lustre are compared to rows of pearl and chains of gold (Song 1:10). These precious jewels distinguish Christ's bride from strangers.

(c) Behave as becomes Christ's spouse:

- In chastity. Be chaste in your judgments; do not defile yourselves with error. Error adulterates the mind (1 Tim. 6:5). It is one of Satan's artifices first to defile the judgment, then the conscience.
- In sanctity. It is not for Christ's spouse to behave like harlots. A naked breast and a wanton tongue do not become a saint. Christ's bride must shine forth in gospel purity, so that she may make her husband fall in love with her. A woman was asked what dowry she brought her husband. She answered that she had no dowry, but she promised to keep herself chaste. So though we can bring Christ no dowry, yet he expects us to keep ourselves pure, not spotting the breasts of our virginity by contagious and scandalous sins.

4. *Love your Husband, Christ* (Song 2:5). Love him though he is reproached and persecuted. A wife loves her husband when in prison. To inflame your love towards Christ, consider:

(a) Nothing else is fit for you to love. If Christ is your Husband, it is not fit to have other lovers who would make Christ grow jealous.

(b) He is worthy of your love. He is of unparalleled beauty: "altogether lovely" (Song 5:16).

(c) How fervent is Christ's love towards you! He loves you in your worst condition, he loves you in affliction. The goldsmith loves his gold in the furnace. He loves you notwithstanding your fears and blemishes. The saints' infirmities cannot wholly remove Christ's love from them (Jer. 3:1). Oh then, how the spouse should be endeared in her love to Christ! This will be the excellence of heaven. Our love will then be like the sun in its full strength.



EXPOUNDING THE NATURE OF GODLINESS FROM THE GODLY MAN'S PICTURE BY THOMAS WATSON

'EVERY ONE THAT IS GODLY'

It will first be enquired, 'What is godliness?' I answer in general, 'Godliness is the sacred impression and workmanship of God in a man, whereby from being carnal he is made spiritual.' When godliness is wrought in a person, he does not receive a new soul, but he has 'another spirit' (*Numb. 14:24*). The faculties are not new, but the qualities are; the strings are the same, but the tune is corrected. Concerning godliness, I shall lay down these seven maxims or propositions:

1. Godliness is a real thing

It is not a fantasy but a fact. Godliness is not the feverish conceit of a sick brain; a Christian is no enthusiast whose religion is all made up of fancy. Godliness has truth for its foundation; it is called 'the way of truth' (*Psa. 119:30*). Godliness is a ray and beam that shines from God. If God is true, then godliness is true.

2. Godliness is an intrinsic thing

It lies chiefly in the heart: 'circumcision is that of the heart' (*Rom. 2:29*). The dew lies on the leaf, the sap is the root. The moralist's religion is all in the leaf; it consists only in externals, but godliness is a holy sap which is rooted in the soul: 'in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom' (*Psa. 51:6*). The Chaldean expounds it, 'in the close place of the heart'.

3. Godliness is a supernatural thing

By nature we inherit nothing but evil. 'When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins did work in our members' (*Rom. 7:5*). We sucked in sin as naturally as our mother's milk, but godliness is the 'wisdom from above' (*Jas. 3:17*). It is breathed in from heaven. God must light up the lamp of grace in the heart. Weeds grow of themselves; flowers are planted. Godliness is a celestial plant that comes from the New Jerusalem. Therefore it is called a 'fruit of the Spirit' (*Gal. 5:22*). A man has no more power to change himself than to create himself

4. Godliness is an extensive thing



It is a sacred leaven that spreads itself into the whole soul: 'the very God of peace sanctify you wholly' (*I Thess. 5:23*). There is light in the understanding, order in the affections, pliability in the will, exemplariness in the life. We do not call a black man white because he has white teeth. He who is good only in some part is not godly. Grace is called 'the new man' (*Col. 3:10*), not a new eye, or tongue, but a new man. He who is godly is good all over; though he is regenerate only in part, yet it is in every part.

5. *Godliness is an intense thing*

It does not lie in a dead formality and indifference, but is vigorous and flaming: 'fervent in spirit' (*Rom. 12:11*). We call water hot when it is so in the third or fourth degree. He whose devotion is inflamed is godly and his heart boils over in holy affections.

6. *Godliness is a glorious thing*

As the jewel to the ring, so is piety to the soul, bespancling it in God's eyes. Reason makes us men; godliness makes us earthly angels; by it we 'partake of the divine nature' (*2 Pet. 1:4*). Godliness is near akin to glory; 'glory and virtue' (*2 Pet. 1:3*). Godliness is glory in the seed, and glory is godliness in the flower.

7. *Godliness is a permanent thing*

Aristotle says, 'Names are given from the habit'. We do not call the one who blushes sanguine, but the one who is of a ruddy complexion (*I Sam. 17:42*). A blush of godliness is not enough to distinguish a Christian, but godliness must be the temper and complexion of the soul. Godliness is a fixed thing. There is a great deal of difference between a stake in the hedge and a tree in the garden. A stake rots and moulders, but a tree, having life in it, abides and flourishes. When godliness has taken root in the soul, it abides to eternity: 'his seed remaineth in him' (*I John 3:9*). Godliness being engraved in the heart by the Holy Ghost, as with the point of a diamond, can never be erased.

D. THE EXCELLENCE OF GODLINESS

'What is better than gold? Jasper. And what is better than jasper? Virtue.'

The excellence of godliness appears in several ways:

1. *Godliness is our spiritual beauty*



'The beauties of holiness' (*Psa. 110:3*). Godliness is to the soul what the light is to the world: to illustrate and adorn it. It is not greatness which sets us off in God's eye but goodness. What is the beauty of the angels but their sanctity? Godliness is the intricate embroidery and workmanship of the Holy Ghost. A soul furnished with godliness is damasked with beauty, it is enamelled with purity. This is the clothing of wrought gold which makes the King of heaven fall in love with us. Were there no excellence in holiness, the hypocrite would never try to paint it. Godliness sheds a glory and lustre on the saints. What are the graces but the golden feathers in which Christ's dove shines (*Psa. 68:13*)?

2. Godliness is our defence

Grace is called 'the armour of light' (*Rom. 13:12*). It is light for beauty and armour for defence. A Christian has armour of God's making which cannot be shot through. He has the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breastplate of righteousness. This is proof armour, which defends against the assaults of temptation and the terror of hell.

3. *Godliness breeds solid peace*

'Great peace have they which love thy law' (*Psa. 119:165*). Godliness composes the heart, making it quiet and calm like the upper region, where there are no winds and tempests. How can that heart be unquiet where the Prince of Peace dwells? 'Christ in you' (*Col. 1:27*). A holy heart may be compared to the doors of Solomon's temple, which were made of olive tree, carved with open flowers (*1 Kings 6:32*). The olive of peace and the open flowers of joy are in that heart. Godliness does not destroy a Christian's mirth, but refines it. His rose is without prickles, his wine without froth. He who is a favourite of heaven must of necessity be full of joy and peace. He may truly sing a requiem to his soul and say, 'Soul, take thine ease' (*Luke 12:19*). King Ptolemy asked someone how he might be at rest when he dreamed. He replied, 'Let piety be the scope of all your actions.' If anyone should ask me how he should be at rest when he is awake, I would return a similar answer: 'Let his soul be inlaid with godliness.'

4. *Godliness is the best trade we can engage in: it brings profit* Wicked men say, 'It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it?' (*Mal. 3:14*). To be sure, there is no profit in sin:

'Treasures of wickedness profit nothing' (*Prov. 10:2*). But godliness is profitable (*1 Tim. 4:8*). It is like digging in a gold mine, where there is gain as well as toil. Godliness makes God himself our portion: 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance' (*Psa. 16:5*). If God is our portion, all our estate lies in jewels. Where God gives himself, he gives everything else. Whoever has the manor has



all the royalties belonging to it. God is a portion that can be neither spent nor lost (*Psa. 73:26*). Thus we see that godliness is a thriving trade.

And as godliness brings profit with it, so it is profitable 'for all things' (*1 Tim. 4:8*). What else is, besides godliness? Food will not give a man wisdom; gold will not give him health; honour will not give him beauty. But godliness is useful for all things: it fences off all troubles; it supplies all wants; it makes soul and body completely happy.

5. Godliness is an enduring substance; it knows no fall of the leaf

All worldly delights have a death's-head set on them. They are only shadows and they are fleeting. Earthly comforts are like Paul's friends, who took him to the ship and left him

there (*Acts 20:38*). So these will bring a man to his grave and then take their farewell. But godliness is a possession cannot be robbed of. It runs parallel with eternity. For cannot weaken it; age cannot wither it. It outbraves sufferings; it outlives death (*Prov. 10:2*). Death may pluck the stalk of the body but the flower of grace is not hurt.

6. Godliness is so excellent that the worst men would like have it when they are going hence

Though at present godliness is despised and under a cloud yet at death all would like to be godly. A philosopher asked a young man whether he would like to be rich Croesus virtuous Socrates. He answered that he would like to live with Croesus and die with Socrates. So men would like live with the wicked in pleasure but die with the godly: 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!' (*Numb. 23:10*). If, then, godliness is so at desirable death, why should we not pursue it now? Godliness is needful now and would be more feasible.

E. THERE ARE ONLY A FEW GODLY

They are like the gleanings after vintage. Most receive the mark of the beast (*Rev. 13:17*). The devil keeps open house for all comers, and he is never without guests. This may prevail with us to be godly. If the number of the saints is so small, how we should strive to be found among these pearls! 'But a remnant shall be saved' (*Rom. 9:27*). It is better to go to heaven with a few than to hell in the crowd.

F. CONSIDER HOW VAIN AND CONTEMPTIBLE OTHER THINGS ARE, ABOUT WHICH PERSONS VOID OF GODLINESS BUSY THEMSELVES



Men are taken up with the things of this life, and 'what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?' (*Eccles. 5:16*). Can the wind fill? What is gold but dust (*Amos 2:7*), which will sooner choke than satisfy? Pull off the mask of the most beautiful thing under the sun and look what is inside. There is care and vexation. And the greatest care is still to come - and that is to give account to God. The things of the world are just like a bubble in the water or a meteor in the air.

But godliness has real worth in it. If you speak of true honour, it is to be born of God; if of true valour, it is to fight the good fight of faith; if of true delight, it is to have joy in the Holy Ghost. Oh, then, espouse godliness! Here reality is to be had. Of other things we may say, 'They comfort in vain' (*Zech. 10:2*).



A GODLY MAN IS A HUMBLE MAN FROM THE GODLY MAN'S PICTURE BY THOMAS WATSON

He is like the sun in the zenith, which when it is at the highest, shows lowest. St Augustine calls humility the mother of the grace. But before I show you who the humble man is, I shall lay down three distinctions:

1. I distinguish between being humbled and humble

A man may be humbled and not humble. A sinner may be humbled by affliction. His condition is low but not his disposition. A godly man is not only humbled but humble. His heart is as low as his condition.

2. I distinguish between outward and inward humility

There is a great deal of difference between humble behaviour and a humble spirit.

(i) A person may behave humbly towards others, yet be proud. Who more humble than Absalom in his outward behaviour? 'When any man came near to do him obeisance, Absalom took him by the hand and kissed him' (2 Sam. 15:5). But though he acted humbly, he aspired to the crown: 'As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron' (v. 10). Here was pride dressed in humility's mantle.

(ii) A person may behave humbly towards God yet be proud. 'Ahab put on sackcloth and fasted and went softly' (I Kings 21:27), but his heart was not humble. A man may bow his head like a bullrush, yet lift up the ensigns of pride in his heart.

3. I distinguish between humility and policy

Many make a show of humility to achieve their own ends. The Papists seem to be the most humble, mortified saints but it is rather subtlety than humility. For by this means, they get the revenues of the earth into their possession. All this they may do and yet have no godliness.

Question: How may a Christian know that he is humble and consequently godly?

Answer 1: A humble soul is emptied of all swelling thoughts of himself. Bernard calls humility a self-annihilation. 'Thou wilt save the humble' (Job 22:29). In the Hebrew it is 'him that is of low eyes'. A humble man has lower thoughts of himself than others can have of him. David, though a king, still looked upon himself as a worm: 'I am a worm, and no man' (Psa. 22:6). Bradford, a martyr, still subscribes himself a sinner. 'If I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head' (Job 10:15) – like the



violet which is a sweet flower, but hangs down the head.

Answer 2: A humble soul thinks better of others than of himself: 'let each esteem other better than themselves' (Phil. 2:3). A humble man values others at a higher rate than himself, and the reason is because he can see his own heart better than he can another's. He sees his own corruption and thinks surely it is not so with others; their graces are not so weak as his; their corruptions are not so strong. 'Surely', he thinks, 'they have better hearts than I.' A humble Christian studies his own infirmities and another's excellences and that makes him put a higher value upon others than himself. 'Surely I am more brutish than any man' (Prov. 30:2). And Paul, though he was the chief of the apostles, still calls himself 'less than the least of all saints' (Eph. 3:8).

Answer 3: A humble soul has a low esteem of his duties. Pride is apt to breed in our holy things as the worm breeds in the sweetest fruit and froth comes from the most generous wine. A humble person bemoans not only his sins but also his duties. When he has prayed and wept, 'Alas,' he says, 'how little I have done! God might damn me for all this.' He says, like good Nehemiah, 'Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me' (Neh. 13:22). 'Remember, Lord, how I have poured out my soul, but spare me and pardon me.' He sees that his best duties weigh many grains too light; therefore he desires that Christ's merits may be put into the scales. The humble saint blushes when he looks at his copy. He sees he cannot write evenly, nor without blotting. This humbles him to think that his best duties run to seed. He drops poison upon his sacrifice. 'Oh,' he says, 'I dare not say I have prayed or wept; those which I write down as duties, God might write down as sins.'

Answer 4: A humble man is always preferring bills of indictment against himself. He complains, not of his condition, but of his heart. 'Oh, this evil heart of unbelief!'

'Lord,' says Hooper, 'I am hell, but thou art heaven.' A hypocrite is for ever telling how good he is. A humble soul is for ever saying how bad he is. Paul, that highflown saint, was caught up into the third heaven, but how this bird of paradise bemoans his corruptions! 'O wretched man that I am! . . . ' (Rom. 7:24). Holy Bradford sub-scribes himself, 'the hardhearted sinner'. The more knowledge a humble Christian has, the more he complains of ignorance; the more faith, the more he bewails his unbelief.

Answer 5: A humble man will justify God in an afflicted condition: 'Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us' (Neh. 9:33). If men oppress and calumniate, the humble soul acknowledges God's righteousness in the midst of severity: 'Lo, I have sinned' (2 Sam. 24:17). 'Lord, my pride, my barrenness, my sermon surfeiting have been the procuring cause of all these judgments.' When



clouds are round about God, yet `righteousness is the habitation of his throne' (Psa. 97:2).

Answer 6: A humble soul is a Christ-magnifier (Phil. 1:20). He gives the glory of all his actions to Christ and free grace. King Canute took the crown off his own head and set it upon a crucifix. So a humble saint takes the crown of honour from his own head and sets it upon Christ's. And the reason is the love that he bears to Christ. Love can part with anything to the object loved. Isaac loved Rebekah and he gave away his jewels to her (Gen. 24:53). The humble saint loves Christ entirely, therefore can part with anything to him. He gives away to Christ the honour and praise of all he does. Let Christ wear those jewels.

Answer 7: A humble soul is willing to take a reproof for sin. A wicked man is too high to stoop to a reproof. The prophet Micaiah used to tell King Ahab of his sin, and the King said, `I hate him' (I Kings 22:8). Reproof to a proud man is like pouring water on lime, which grows the hotter. A gracious soul loves the one who reproveth: `rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee' (Prov. 9:8). The humble-spirited Christian can bear the reproach of an enemy and the reproof of a friend.

Answer 8: A humble man is willing to have his name and gifts eclipsed, so that God's glory may be increased. He is content to be outshone by others in gifts and esteem, so that the crown of Christ may shine the brighter. This is the humble man's motto: `Let me decrease; let Christ increase.' It is his desire that Christ should be exalted, and if this is effected, whoever is the instrument, he rejoices. `Some preach Christ of envy' (Phil. 1:15). They preached to take away some of Paul's hearers. `Well,' says he, `Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice' (v.18). A humble Christian is content to be laid aside if God has any other tools to work with which may bring him more glory.

Answer 9: A humble saint likes that condition which God sees best for him. A proud man complains that he has no more; a humble man wonders that he has so much: `I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies' (Gen. 32:10). When the heart lies low, it can stoop to a low condition. A Christian looking at his sins wonders that it is no worse with him; he does not say his mercies are small, but his sins are great. He knows that the worst piece God carves him is better than he deserves; therefore he takes it thankfully upon his knees.

Answer 10: A humble Christian will stoop to the meanest person and the lowest office; he will visit the poorest member of Christ. Lazarus' sores are more precious to him than Dives' purple. He does not say, `Stand by, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou' (Isa. 65:5), but `condescends to men of low estate' (Rom. 12:16).

Use 1: If humility is the inseparable character of a godly man, let us test our hearts by this



touchstone. Are we humble? Alas, where does their godliness appear who are swollen with pride and ready to burst? But though men are proud, they will not confess it. This bastard of pride is born but none are willing to father it. Therefore let me ask a few questions and let conscience answer:

1. Are not those who are given to boasting proud? 'Your glorying is not good' (1 Cor. 5:6). (i) Those who glory in their riches; their hearts swell with their estates. St Bernard calls pride the rich man's cousin. 'Thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches' (Ezek. 28:5). (ii) Those who glory in their apparel. Many dress themselves in such fashions as to make the devil fall in love with them. Black spots, gaudy attire, naked breasts, what are these but the flags and banners which pride displays? (iii) Those who glory in their beauty. The body is but dust and blood kneaded together. Solomon says, 'Beauty is vain' (Prov. 31:30). Yet some are so vain as to be proud of vanity. (iv) Those who glory in their gifts. These trappings and ornaments do not set them off in God's eyes. An angel is a knowledgeable creature, but take away humility from an angel, and he is a devil.

2. Are not those who have a high opinion of their own excellences proud? Those who look at themselves in the magnifying mirror of self-love appear in their own eyes better than they are. Simon Magus gave out that he was some great one (Acts 8:9). Alexander felt the need to be the son of Jupiter and of the race of the gods. Sapor, King of Persia, styles himself 'Brother of the Sun and Moon'. 'He tosses aside his paintpots and his words one-and-a-half feet rig' (Horace). I have read of a pope who trod upon the ck of Frederick the Emperor and as a cloak for his pride :ed that text, 'Thou shalt tread upon the lion, and the agon shalt thou trample under feet' (Psa. 91:13). There is r idol like self; the proud man bows down to this idol.

3. Are not those who despise others proud? 'The Pharisees trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others' (Luke 18:9). The Chinese people say that Europe has one eye and they have two, and all the rest of the world is blind. A proud man looks upon others with such an eye of scorn as Goliath did upon David: 'when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him' (1 Sam. 17:42). They who stand upon the pinnacle of pride look on other men as no bigger than crows.

4. Are not those who trumpet their own praise proud? 'Before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody' (Acts 5:36). A proud man is the herald of his own good deeds; he blazes his own fame, and therein lies his vice, to paint his own virtue.

5. Are not those who take the glory due to God to themselves proud? 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?' (Dan. 4:30). So says the proud man, 'Are not these the prayers I've made? Are not these the works of charity I have done?' When Herod had made an oration and the people cried him up



for a god (Acts 12:22), he was well content to have that honour done to him. Pride is the greatest sacrilege; it robs God of his glory.

6. Are not those who are never pleased with their condition proud? They speak harshly of God, taxing his care and wisdom, as if he had not dealt well with them. A proud man God himself cannot please but, like Momus, he is for ever finding fault, and flying in the face of heaven.

Oh, let us search if there is none of this leaven of pride in us. Man is naturally a proud piece of flesh; this sin runs in the blood. Our first parents fell by their pride. They aspired to deity. There are the seeds of this in the best, but the godly do not allow themselves in it. They strive to kill this weed by mortification. But certainly where this sin reigns and prevails, it cannot stand with grace. You may as well call him who lacks discretion a prudent man, as him who lacks humility a godly man.

Use 2: Strive for this characteristic: be humble. It is an apostolic exhortation, 'be clothed with humility' (1 Pet. 5:5). Put it on as an embroidered robe. It is better to lack anything rather than humility. It is better to lack gifts rather than humility. No, it is better to lack 'the comforts of the Spirit' rather than lack humility. 'What doth the Lord require of thee, but to walk humbly with thy God?' (Mic. 6:8).

1. The more value any man has, the more humble he is. Feathers fly up, but gold descends. The golden saint descends in humility. Some of the ancients have compared humility to the Celidonian stone, which is little for substance, but of rare virtue.

2. God loves a humble soul. It is not our high birth, but our low hearts that God delights in. A humble spirit is in God's view: 'to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit' (Isa. 66:2). A humble heart is God's palace: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit' (Isa. 57:15). Great personages, besides their houses of state, have lesser houses which upon occasion they retreat to. Besides God's house of state in heaven, he has the humble soul for his retiring house, where he takes up his rest, and solaces himself. Let Italy boast that it is, for pleasure, the garden of the world. A humble heart glories in this, that it is the presence chamber of the great King.

3. The times we live in are humbling. The Lord seems to say to us now, as he did to Israel, 'Put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee' (Exod. 33:5). 'My displeasure is breaking forth, I have eclipsed the light of the sanctuary, I have stained the waters with blood, I have shot the arrow of pestilence, therefore lay down your pride, put off your ornaments.' Woe to them that lift themselves up, when God is casting them down. When should people be humble if not



under the rod? 'Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God' (1 Pet. 5:6). When God afflicts his people, and cuts them short in their privileges, it is time then to 'sow sackcloth on their skin and defile their horn (or honour) in the dust' (Job 16:15).

4. *What a horrid sin pride is!* St Chrysostom calls it 'the mother of hell'. Pride is a complicated evil, as Aristotle said. Justice comprehends all virtue in itself; so pride comprehends all vice. It is a spiritual drunkenness; it flies up like wine into the brain and intoxicates it. It is idolatry; a proud man is a self-worshipper. It is revenge; Haman plotted Mordecai's death because he would not bow the knee.

How odious this sin is to God (1 Pet. 5:5)! 'Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord' (Prov. 16:5).

5. *The mischief of pride.* It is the breakneck of souls: 'Surely Moab shall be as Sodom . . . This shall they have for their pride' (Zeph. 2:9,10). 'The doves', says Pliny, 'take a pride in their feathers, and in their flying high; at last they fly so high that they are a prey to the hawk.' Men fly so high in pride that at last they are a prey to the devil, the prince of the air.

6. *Humility raises one's esteem in the eyes of others.* All give respect to the humble: 'Before honour is humility' (Prov. 15:33).

Question: What means may we use to be humble?

Answer 1: Let us set before us the golden pattern of Christ. He commenced doctor in humility: 'But made himself of no reputation, and was made in the likeness of men' (Phil. 2:7). O what abasement it was for the Son of God to take our flesh! No, that Christ should take our nature when it was in disgrace, being stained with sin — this was the wonder of humility. Look at a humble Saviour, and let the plumes of pride fall.

Answer 2: Study God's immensity and purity; a sight of glory humbles. Elijah wrapped his face in a mantle when God's glory passed before him (I Kings 19:13). The stars vanish when the sun appears.

Answer 3: Let us study ourselves. First, our dark side. By looking at our faces in the mirror of the Word, we see our spots. What a world of sin swarms in us! We may say with Bernard, 'Lord, I am nothing but sin or sterility, either sinfulness or barrenness.'

Secondly, our light side. Is there any good in us?



1. *How disproportionate it is to the means of grace we have enjoyed!* There is still something lacking in our faith (1 Thess. 3:10). O Christian, do not be proud of what you have, but be humble for what you lack.

2. *The grace we have is not of our own growth.* We are beholden to Christ and free grace for it. As he said of that axe which fell in the water, 'Alas, master, for it was borrowed' (2 Kings 6:5), so I may say of all the good and excellence in us, 'It is borrowed'. Would it not be folly to be proud of a ring that is loaned? 'For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?' (1 Cor. 4:7). The moon has no cause to be proud of her light when she borrows it from the sun.

3. *How far short we come of others!* Perhaps other Christians are giants in grace; they are in Christ not only before us, but above us. We are but like the foot in Christ's body; they are like the eye.

4. *Our beauty is spotted.* The church is said to be 'fair as the moon' (Song 6:10), which when it shines brightest has a dark spot in it. Faith is mixed with infidelity. A Christian has that in his very grace which may humble him.

5. *If we would be humble, let us contemplate our mortality.* Shall dust exalt itself? The thoughts of the grave should bury our pride. They say that when there is a swelling in the body, the hand of a dead man stroking that part cures the swelling. The serious meditation of death is enough to cure the swelling of pride.



MEN AT HARMONY CHURCH



A COMMUNITY OF CHALLENGED MEN

So what does it look like for us to be Gospel-centered and resolved men? It means we are to love Jesus with a fervent passion because He has saved us. It means we love others like we love ourselves...because we are all in need of the saving grace of Jesus. It means we love our wives as Christ loved the Church. It means we raise our kids like the Father has raised us. It means we work hard that some may be saved...and we pray hard that all may be saved.

At Harmony Church, we want a community of dissatisfied men: men who are dissatisfied with the way things have been and the way things are. Men who are dissatisfied with the Enemy's constant advances. Men who are dissatisfied with the "old boys" produced by our culture. Men who are dissatisfied with the way that women are treated as objects in our world. Men who are dissatisfied with the way children are cast aside as bills to pay rather than people to love. Men who are dissatisfied with the Church who is emasculating men in record numbers.

We want men who are challenged to lead in a way that has never been seen before. Husbands, fathers, Christ-followers. We want to raise up a number of pastors to shepherd the coming harvest in Greenville. It starts with having men who have been challenged by Christ and His Scriptures to hold themselves to a higher standard: the standard of Jesus.

These are Harmony Church men. Are you in?



ARE YOU A POTENTIAL ELDER?

First Timothy 3 and Titus 1 give qualifications for the office of Elder. They seem a little strict. For good measure. There are standards at Harmony Church that we hold all of *our* men to. But there are standards even beyond those that Scripture puts into place for the role of pastor/elder. Harmony Church seeks to raise these kind of men in order to have pastors in place to further the mission in Greenville...and beyond. We want to plant other churches...which requires other pastors.

Think you're interested? Starting this Fall, we will begin the Eldership process at Harmony Church. It will be 20 times as intense as Taproot...because the responsibilities and requirements are *at least* 20 times as intense. Study those two passages (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1)...see if you measure up...and if you're game when the process opens for candidates...offer your name for candidacy.

The mission needs men capable of leading a Church to be more like Jesus. Hopefully, we'll have a church full of them...



A CLOSING LETTER FROM PASTOR DEREK

I'm stoked that you have gone through Taproot over the last 8 weeks. I'm excited to see the types of men that we are raising at Harmony Church: men resolved to be Gospel-centered, and to have Jesus alone at the root of their heart.

I encourage you to pray over the material we've discussed...and to encourage one another to adhere to the resolutions we've drawn up. Pray for one another continually. I encourage you to get together away from our Square Gatherings; get a bite to eat with one another or grab a cup of coffee before work. Bond with one another in such a way that the city takes notice.

We are needed in Harmony Church...and in Greenville. Christ wants to use passionate, fervent men for the Gospel to move the mission forward...and to make His name great.

With fire in my bones and passion behind my words,

Derek Brown

