



The Doctrine of Saints' Perseverance



Part Three

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5. Its Springs

We now turn to contemplate the most important and blessed aspect of our subject, yea, the very heart and crux thereof. The believer's perseverance in faith and holiness is no detached and isolated thing, but an effect of an all-sufficient cause. It must not be viewed as a separate phenomenon but as the fruit of Divine operations. The believer's continuance in the paths of righteousness is a miracle, and miracle necessarily requires the immediate agency of God. Our present concern then is to trace this stream back to its source and to show the springs from which this marvel issues; to admire the impregnable foundations on which it rests. Only as those springs and foundations are clearly revealed shall we ascribe the glory unto Him to whom alone it is due, only so shall we be able to apprehend the absolute security of the saints, only so shall we perceive the vanity and uselessness of all the Enemy's attacks upon this cardinal truth. The perseverance of the saints is assured by so many infallible guarantees that it is difficult to know which to bring before the reader and which to omit.

The doctrine for which we are here contending follows as a logical consequence from the Divine perfections: whatever is agreeable to them, and they make necessary, must perforce be true; contrariwise whatever is contrary to them and reflects dishonour upon them must be false. Now the doctrine of the saints' final perseverance is agreeable to the Divine perfections, yea is made entirely necessary by them, and therefore must be true; and the contrary doctrine of the falling away of real saints so as to perish everlastingly is repugnant to them and reflects great dishonour upon them, and therefore must be false. That which we have here briefly affirmed will be illustrated in detail and demonstrated at length in all that follows in this and the

succeeding section. Summarizing what we propose to set before the reader it will be found that the eternal security of the Christian rests upon the good will of the Father, the mediation of the Son, and the office and operations of the Holy Spirit, and therein we have a “threefold cord” which cannot possibly be broken.

1. The unchanging love of God. This argument however is one which can have little weight with those who have imbibed Arminianism and accepted their false interpretation of John 3:16; but they who perceive the Divine love to be a discriminating and particular and not an indefinite and general one will find here that which is sweeter than the honey or the honeycomb. If it were true that God loves the whole human race then, seeing a large part thereof is already in Hell, I could draw no assurance therefrom that I shall never perish. But when I discover that God’s love is restricted to those whom He chose in Christ and that He loves them with an “everlasting love,” then I unhesitatingly conclude that “many waters” cannot quench that love (Song of Solomon 8:7). It would lead too far afield, for us to show wherein so many err concerning the meaning of John 3:16 or to evidence at length the discriminating character of God’s love: suffice it here to point out that “*For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth*” (Heb. 12:6) would be meaningless did He love everybody—the next clause “*and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth*” at once defines the objects of His affection. “*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*” (Rom. 9:13): therefore Jacob is now in Heaven, but his brother has received the due reward of his iniquities.

“*We love Him because He first loved us*” (1 John 4:19). God does not love His people because they love Him. No, we read of “*His great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins*” (Eph. 2:4, 5): when we had no desire to be loved by Him, yea when we were provoking Him to His face and displaying the fierce enmity of our unrenewed hearts. God loved His people before they had a historical existence, for while they were yet sinners Christ died for them (Rom. 5:8). Why, He declares “*I have loved thee with an everlasting love*” (Jer. 31:3). That love then derives not its strength or its streams from anything in us, but flows spontaneously from the heart of God, finding its deep

wellspring within His own bosom. Since God is love He can no more cease to love than He can cease to be, and since God changes not there can be no variation and fluctuation in His love.

The object of God's love is His Church, which is His special delight. From all eternity He loved His elect, and loved them as His elect, as having peculiar propriety in them. He loved them in Christ, chose them in Christ, and blessed them with all spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3). He loved them so as to predestinate them unto the adoption of children (Eph. 1:5). He loved their persons in Christ with the same love wherewith He loves Christ their Head (John 17:23). He loved them so as to make them "*accepted in the Beloved*" (Eph. 1:6). It is a love which can never decay, for it is founded on the good pleasure of His will towards them. God's love to Christ knows no change nor can it to the members of His body: "*and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me*" (John 17:23), declares the Saviour, and He is speaking there as the Head of His Church. We are loved in Christ and according to the relation we stand in to Him, that is, as members to an Head—loved as freely and immutably.

Though the effects of God's love vary in their manifestations, yet there is no diminution of His affection and none in its perpetuity. Men often love those who prove otherwise than they expected, and come to repent of the affection lavished upon them. But it is not so with God, for He foreknew all that ever we would be and do—our sins, unworthiness, rebellions; yet set His heart upon us notwithstanding—so that He can never say we turned out other than He thought we would. Had God's love been set upon us because of some good or excellency in us, then when that goodness declined, His love would diminish too. "God foresaw all the sins you would ever have: it was all present to His sacred mind, and yet He loved you, and loves you still" (C. H. Spurgeon). The child of God may for a season depart from the paths of righteousness, and then will his Father visit his transgression with the rod and his iniquity with stripes, "*nevertheless My lovingkindness will I not make void from him nor suffer My faithfulness to fail*" (Psa. 89:32, 33) is His own declaration.

Because God's love is uncreated it is unchanging. God does not

love by fits and starts, but forever. Because it is founded upon nothing in its object, no change in that object can forfeit it. In every state and condition into which the elect can come, God's love unto them is invariable and unalterable, constant and permanent. We may repent of the love which we bestowed on some of our fellows because we were unable to make them good: the more we loved them, the more they took advantage of it. Not so with God: whom He loves He makes holy. This is one of the effects of His love: to shed abroad His love in the hearts of its objects, to stamp His own image upon them, to cause them to walk in His fear. His love to the elect is perpetual because it is in Christ; they are joined to Christ by an union which cannot be dissolved. God must cease to love Christ their Head before He can cease to love any member of His Body. Then what madness, what blasphemy, to think of any of them perishing!

Over this blessed attribute of Divine love is written in letters of light "*Semper idem,*" always the same. Those who are once the objects of God's love are so always. If God has ever loved you, my reader, He does so today: loves you with the same love as when He gave His Son to die for you; loves you with the same love as when He sent His Holy Spirit into your heart crying "Abba Father;" loves you with the same love as He will in Heaven throughout the endless ages. And nothing can or shall separate you from that love (see Rom. 8:38, 39). A preacher once called upon a farmer. As he approached his residence he saw over the barn a weathervane and on the top of it in large letters the text "God is love." When the farmer appeared the preacher pointed to that vane and said in tones of rebuke "Do you imagine God's love is as variable as the weather?" No, said the farmer, I put that text there to remind me that no matter what the direction of the wind. God is love!

***"His love no end or measure knows,
No change can turn its course,
Immutably the same it flows
From one eternal source."***

2. The immutability of God. The guarantee for the perpetuity of

God's love unto His people is found in the immutability of His nature. From everlasting Jehovah is God: underived, independent, self-sufficient, nothing can in anywise affect Him or produce any change in Him. Says the Psalmist "*Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt Thou change them and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same and Thy years shall have no end*" (102:25-27). This is one of the excellencies of the Creator which distinguishes Him from all creatures. God is perpetually the same: subject to no change in His being, attributes, or determinations. All that He is today He ever has been and ever will be. He cannot change for the better for He is already perfect, and being perfect He cannot change for the worse. He only can say "*I am that I am*" (Exod. 3:14). Unaffected by anything outside Himself, improvement or deterioration is impossible. His glory is an unfading one.

Now in this immutability of God lies the eternal security of His people. "*For I am the Lord, I change not: therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed*" (Mal. 3:6). If any of them were lost, "consumed" by His wrath, then He must change in His attitude toward them, so that those whom He once loved He now hates. But that would also involve an alteration in His purpose concerning them, so that whereas He has appointed them "*to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Thess. 5:9), He must consign them over to destruction. How entirely different would such a variable and fickle character be from the God of Holy Writ! Of Jehovah it is said "*He is of one mind, and who can turn Him?*" (Job 23:13). It is because God changes not His people are not consumed: His love wanes not, His will is stable, His word sure. Because He is "*The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning*" (James 1:17) we have an immovable rock on which to stand while everything around us is being swept away.

The foundation of our preservation unto the end is the immutability of God's being, whereunto His love is conformed, so that His everlasting Deity must undergo alteration before any of

His children could perish. This is clearly the force of both Malachi 3:6 and James 1:17. In the latter the apostle speaks of “*every good and every perfect gift*” which the saints receive from their Father, prefacing the same with “*Do not err my beloved brethren.*” The gifts bestowed upon the elect at their regeneration are not like Jonah’s gourd which flourished only for a brief season. No, they are from Him with whom is “*no variableness*” either in His love or will. “*For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*” (Rom. 11:29) or change of mind, and therefore they are never revoked. Let it be noted that those words were added to clinch the certainty of the purpose of God towards the remnant of the Jews according to the election of grace. Thus the immutability of God is the guarantee of the stability of His love and the irrevocableness of His grace unto us.

3. The irreversible purpose of God. Having set His heart upon a chosen people, God formed a purpose of grace toward them: “*in love having predestinated them*” (Eph. 1:5) and the immutability of His being insures the fulfilment of that purpose. The Most High does not determine to do a thing at one time and decide not to do it at another. “*The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations*” (Psa. 33:11): because He has counselled everlasting glory unto His people, nothing can alter it. “*For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?*” (Isa. 14:27). There are indeed many changes in the external dispensations of His providence toward His elect, but none concerning the thoughts of His heart for them. “*I am God, and there is none like unto Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand and I will do all My pleasure. . . I have spoken, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed, I will also do it*” (Isa. 46:9-11). What a foundation is there here for faith to rest upon: the Divine will is inflexible, His counsels irreversible.

“*God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent*” (Num. 23:19). Consider the things which move men to change their minds and alter their purposes, and then mark how utterly inapplicable such things are to the Almighty. Men form a plan and then cancel it through fickleness and

inconstancy: but God is immutable. Men make a promise and then revoke it because of their depravity and untruthfulness: but God is infinitely holy and cannot lie. Men devise a project and fail to carry it through because of lack of ability or power: but God is omniscient and omnipotent. Men determine a certain thing for want of foresight and because the unexpected intervenes they are thwarted: but God knows the end from the beginning. Men change their schemes because the influence or threats of superiors deter them: but God has no superior or equal and fears none. No unforeseen occasion can arise which would render it expedient for God to change His mind.

In Romans 8:28 we read of a company who are "*the called according to His purpose*" and what that signifies the verses which immediately follow tell us. It was a purpose they could neither originate nor frustrate. "*For whom He did foreknow*" with a knowledge of approbation (contrast "*I never knew you:*" Matt. 7:23) "*He also did predestinate,*" appoint and fore-arrange. That Divine predestination results in their being effectually called out of darkness into God's marvellous light and their being justified or accounted righteous before God because Christ's perfect obedience is reckoned to their account. And then, so infallibly certain is the accomplishment of God's purpose, the apostle added "and whom He justified them He also (not "will glorify," but) glorified." "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel (the immovable fixedness of His design), confirmed it by an oath" (Heb. 6:17). What more can we desire: the Holy One must forswear Himself before one of His own can perish.

4. The everlasting covenant of God. Having set His heart upon a special people God formed a purpose of grace toward them and that purpose is attested and secured by formal contract. By express stipulation the Eternal Three solemnly undertook for every heir of promise to do all for and in them, so that not one of them shall perish. "*I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me*" (Jer. 32:40). How comprehensive are those promises! First, Jehovah assures His

people that there shall be no alteration in His good will toward them. To that it might be objected, True, God will not turn away from them, but they may turn away from Him, yea utterly apostatize. Therefore He here declares that He will put His fear in their hearts, or grant them such supplies of grace, as to preserve them from falling away. “Were they to return to the service of Satan, He could not continue to do them good consistently with the holiness of His character, but He will preserve them in such a state that He may hold fellowship with them without any impeachment of His holiness” (J. Dick).

This covenant of grace is made with the elect in Christ before the foundation of the world, wherein He became their “Surety” (Heb. 7:22), undertaking to discharge all their liabilities and make full satisfaction for them. Accordingly God has promised the Surety *“I will put my laws into their mind and write them upon their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people”* (Heb. 8:10). Those promises are of free grace, and there is no contingency or uncertainty about them, for they are “yea,” and “Amen” in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20). Mark how God Himself regards His engagement therein: *“My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips”* (Psa. 89:34). *“He will ever be mindful of His covenant”* (Psa. 111:5). O what grounds for confidence, for joy, for praise is there here! Therefore may each believer affirm with David *“He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation and all my desire”* (2 Sam. 23:5). *“For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee”* (Isa. 54:10).

To summarize what has yet been before us. If any saint were eventually lost it could only be because the being and character of God Himself had undergone a change for the worse. His affections must alter, so that one whom He loved must become the object of His hatred. His purpose concerning him must change, so that whereas He appointed him to salvation He must consign him to destruction. He must reverse the promises made and the blessings bestowed upon him. His faithfulness must fail, so that His Word

can no longer be relied upon. Thus it is obvious that the alternative to what has been set forth above is unthinkable and impossible. The wisdom of God requires that in appointing the end (the glorification of His people) He has also ordained that the means thereto are sufficient, and His power insures that those means shall prove effectual. Every perfection of God guarantees that all His people shall get safely to Heaven.

5. The irrevocable promises of God. The “*exceeding great and precious promises*” (2 Pet. 1:4) which God hath made to His people have been likened unto streams along which His covenant engagements run, for they all go back to and have their source in that eternal compact which He made with the elect in Christ. Their Surety undertook to do certain things for them and in return thereof God agreed that certain things should be bestowed upon them on whose behalf He transacted. What those things were that God stipulated to impart unto those Christ represented are revealed in the various promises which He has made unto them. Those promises are God’s free and gracious dispensations or discoveries of His good will unto the elect in Christ in a covenant of grace. Therein, upon His veracity and faithfulness, He engages Himself to be their God, to give His Son unto them and for them, and His Spirit to abide with and in them, guaranteeing to supply everything that they need in order to make them acceptable before Him and to bring them all unto the everlasting enjoyment of Himself.

Those promises are free and gracious as to the rise or origin of them, being given to us merely by the good pleasure of God, and not in return for anything demanded of us: that which is of promise is opposed to that which is in any way demanded or procured by us (Rom. 4:13, 14; Gal. 3:18). These promises are made unto us as sinners, and under no other qualification whatever, it being by sovereign mercy alone that any are delivered out of their fallen and depraved state. The promises are given unto them as “*shut up under sin*” (Gal. 3:22). These discoveries of God’s good will are made known in Christ as the sole Medium of their accomplishment and as the alone procuring Cause of the good things contained in them. “*For all the promises of God in*

Him are yea and in Him amen” (2 Cor. 1:20)—in and by Christ’s mediation they have all their confirmation and certainty to us. The foundation of our assurance of their accomplishment is the character of their Maker: they are the engagements of Him “*who cannot lie*” (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:17, 18)—heaven and earth shall pass away but His word shall endure forever.

The grand fountain-head promise from which all the others flow is that God will be “*The God of His people*” (Jer. 24:7; 31:33; Ezek. 11:20). In order that He may be “our God” two chief things are required. First, that all breaches and differences between Him and us shall be removed, perfect peace and agreement made, and we rendered well-pleasing in His sight: sin must be put away and everlasting righteousness brought in. In order to this Christ acted as our Surety, our Priest, our Redeemer, and has become “*our Peace*” (Eph. 2:14), being of God “*made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption*” (1 Cor. 1:30). He “*gave Himself for the Church, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church*” (Eph. 5:25, 26). Second, that we might be kept meet for communion with Him as our God and for our eternal enjoyment of Him as our Portion. From this flows the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 2:33) that He would exercise unto us all the acts of His love and work in us that obedience which He required from and accepts of us in Jesus Christ, so preserving us unto Himself. This promise of the Spirit in the covenant is witnessed in Isaiah 59:21; Ezekiel 36:27, etc.

From the fountain promise that God will be our God in covenant relationship flow the two broad streams that He would give Christ for us and the Holy Spirit to us, and out from these two main streams issue a thousand rivulets for our refreshment. From those two streams come forth all the blessings Christ hath purchased for us and all the graces that the Holy Spirit produces in the elect, by the first of which they are made acceptable unto God and by the latter of which they have an enjoyment of Him. All the promises of mercy and forgiveness, faith and holiness, obedience and perseverance, joy and consolation, affliction and deliverance issue from them, Thus it follows that whoever hath an interest in one

promise hath an interest in them all and in the fountain head from which they flow. Have we a hold on any promise? that is by the Holy Spirit, and from Him to Christ, and thence unto the bosom of the Father. Hence also the most conditional of the promises are ultimately to be resolved into the absolute and unconditional love of God: He who promises to us life upon believing, works faith in us: *“according as His Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness:”* 2 Peter 1:3. (Most of the above is condensed from John Owen, the Puritan).

Let us cite a few of the particular promises wherein the Lord has engaged Himself to grant such supplies of His Spirit that we shall be supported against all opposition and preserved from such sins as would separate any of His saints from Him. *“For the Lord loveth judgment and forsaketh not His saints: they are preserved forever”* (Psa. 37:28). *“They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even forever”* (Psa. 125:1, 2). *“Even to your old age I am He, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made and I will bear, even I will carry and deliver you”* (Isa. 46:4). *“For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from them, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee”* (Isa. 54:10). *“He shall confirm you unto the end”* (1 Cor. 1:8). *“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee”* (Heb. 13:5).

The same Divine protection unto everlasting bliss is confirmed by many assertory passages as well as promissory. *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever”* (Psa. 23:4). *“I am continually with thee. Thou hast holden me with Thy right hand: thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory”* (Psa. 73:23, 24). *“The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom”* (2 Tim. 4:18). *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us”* (1 John 2:19). God must forsake His integrity before He would abandon one of His people. But that cannot be: *“faithful is He that calleth*

you, who also will do it” (1 Thess. 5:24). *“The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you and keep you from evil”* (2 Thess. 3:3). They who affirm that any of God’s children will perish are guilty of the fearful sin of charging Him with perjury.

6. The gracious acts of God toward His people. These are of such a nature as insure their everlasting salvation. In addition to His acts of electing them, making a sure covenant with His Son on their behalf and the putting of them into His hands with all grace and glory for them, we may mention the adoption of them into His family. This is an inestimable blessing, little understood today. It is a sonship-in-law, God bestowing upon His elect the legal status of sons. This is *“by Jesus Christ”* (Eph. 1:5): since Christ is Son of God essentially and the elect are united to Him, they are the sons-in-law of God. Christ as God-man was set up as the Prototype and we are modelled after Him. As a woman becomes a man’s daughter-in-law by his son’s betrothing himself to her, so we are sons-in-law unto God an inalienable legal title—as the term *“adoption”* plainly signifies—by marriage union. It is by their relation to the Son of God that the elect are the sons of God. It is not by faith they become sons, rather does faith manifest them to be such.

“Because ye are sons (not to make us such), God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father” (Gal. 4:6). *“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God”* (1 John 3:1). From thence flows all our dignities and honours: *“if sons (Greek) then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ”* (Rom. 8:17). Is Christ King and Priest, so also are we *“kings and priests unto God and His Father”* (Rev. 1:6). Is Christ Jehovah’s *“Fellow”* (Zech. 13:7)? so are we Christ’s *“fellows”* (Psa. 45:7). Is Christ God’s *“Firstborn”* (Psa. 89:27)? so we read of *“The Church of the firstborn”* (Heb. 12:22). Even now are we the sons of God, but *“it doth not yet appear what we shall be,”* it is not yet made manifest before the universe, *“but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him”* (1 John 3:2). And why are we so assured? Because *“Whom God did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He*

might be the Firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:30). Because God predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself “*according to the good pleasure of His will*” (Eph. 1:5)—by sovereign grace and not because of anything of ours—nothing can possibly sever or annul this wondrous relationship.

The justification of God’s people. This is also a legal act. It takes place in the supreme court of Heaven, where God sits as the Judge of all the earth. The believing sinner is measured by the holy Law and pronounced righteous. Of old the question was asked “*But how shall man be just before God?*” (Job 9:2), for the Law requires nothing less than perfect and perpetual obedience, and pronounces him accursed who continues not in all that it enjoins (Gal. 3:10). Had that question been left for solution to finite intelligence it had remained unsolved forever. How could God show mercy yet not abate one iota of what His justice requires. How could He treat with the guilty as though they were innocent? How could He righteously bestow the reward on those who merited it not? How could He pronounce righteous those who were unrighteous? Such a thing seems utterly impossible, nevertheless Divine omniscience has solved these problems, solved them without tarnishing His honour, yea unto His everlasting glory and to our everlasting admiration. It is the setting forth of this grand display of the Divine wisdom which constitutes the supreme blessedness of the Gospel.

According to the terms of the everlasting covenant Christ became the Sponsor of His people. “*When the fullness of the time was come God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law*” (Gal. 4:4). To the Law the incarnate Son rendered a complete and flawless obedience thereby magnifying and making it honourable (Isa. 42:21): the Divine dignity of His person bestowed more honour on the Law by His obedience thereto than it had been dishonoured by all our manifold disobedience. Having perfectly fulfilled the Law, Christ then suffered its curse in His peoples’ stead, thereby blotting out their sins. That perfect obedience of Christ is reckoned to our account the moment we believe on Him, so that believers may say “*The Lord our*

righteousness” (Jer. 23:6). On the ground of Christ’s righteousness legally becoming ours, God pronounces us justified (Rom. 3:24; 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:21). And therefore because it is “*God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?*” (Rom. 8:33,34). Those justified by God can never be unjustified. The righteousness by which they are justified is an “everlasting” one (Dan. 9:24), the sentence of exoneration passed upon them in the high court of Heaven can never be revoked by man or devil. They have a title to everlasting glory and cannot come into condemnation.

7. The death of Christ. When Adam, the federal head as well as the father of the human race, apostatized, the elect equally with the non-elect fell in him, and thus they are “*by nature the children of wrath even as others*” (Eph. 2:3). From that dreadful and direful state they are recovered by the mediation of Christ and the operation of the Spirit, the latter being a fruit of the former. We have briefly touched upon the mediation of Christ in the two preceding paragraphs, but as this is of such vital concern to our present theme, it requires to be considered in more detail. A large field is here opened before us, but we can now take only a brief glance at it. Once again we would point out that what we are about to advance can have little weight with Arminians, who erroneously suppose that the mediatory work of Christ was general or universal in its character and design; but to those who have learned from Holy Writ that the redemption of Christ is definite and particular, a specific ransom for a specific people, there will be found here a sufficient answer to every accusation of Satan and an assurance which none of the tribulations of life can shake.

“*Who is he that condemneth?*” the apostle asks: “*it is Christ that died*” is his triumphant reply (Rom. 8:34). The force of that reply turns upon the fact that Christ’s death is a substitutionary and atoning one. “*For the transgression of My people was He stricken*” says God (Isa. 53:8). “*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God*” (1 Pet. 3:18). “*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed*” (Isa. 53:5).

Jehovah laid upon Christ the iniquities of His people (Isa. 53:6) and then cried "*Awake O sword against My Shepherd and against the Man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts, smite the Shepherd*" (Zech. 13:7). On the cross Christ rendered to God a full satisfaction for the sins of all those whom the Father gave to Him. Being a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God "*to make propitiation (Gk.) for the sins of the people*" (Heb. 2:13). Because Christ was made a curse for sin (Gal. 3:13) nought but blessing is now our portion.

All for whom Christ died shall most certainly be saved, because He paid the full price of their redemption. As a surety stands in the room of the person he represents, the latter reaps the benefit of what the surety has done in his name, so that if his debt has been paid by the surety, the creditor can no more demand payment from him. Since Christ made full reparation to God's Law, making complete atonement for the sins of His people, then it would be a flagrant violation of Divine justice if ever one of them should be punished for the same. Christ has purchased His people by His precious blood, then can we suppose that God will suffer His most avowed enemy to rob His Son of any of them? Were that to happen, the Redeemer's name would be rendered meaningless, for God Himself said "*thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins*" (Matt. 1:21). Were that to happen, it could not be true that the Redeemer "*shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied*" (Isa. 53:10).

Since all the believer's sins were laid upon Christ and atoned for, what is there that can possibly condemn him? and if there be nothing, how can he be cast into Hell? True, none can reach Heaven without persevering in holiness, but since the atonement of Christ possesses Divine virtue and is of everlasting efficacy, all for whom it was made must and shall persevere in holiness. God's wrath against His people was exhausted upon their Substitute: the black cloud of His vengeance was emptied at Calvary. "When I think of my sin it seems impossible that any atonement should ever be adequate: but when I think of Christ's death it seems impossible that any sin should ever need such an atonement as that. There is in the death of Christ enough and more than enough.

There is not only a sea in which to drown our sins, but the very tops of the mountains of our guilt are covered” (C. H. Spurgeon). Therefore is God able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto Him by Christ (Heb. 7:25), yea, even though they have sinned as did Manasseh or Saul of Tarsus.

Christ has removed everything which could cause separation between God and His people. First, He has taken away the guilt of their sins, that it shall never prevail with the Lord to turn from them. Christ hath “*obtained eternal redemption*” (Heb. 9:12), for them: not a transient and unstable redemption, but an abiding and efficacious one. In consequence thereof God declares, “*their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*” (Heb. 10:17). How could He do so, seeing that the Redeemer was to “*make an end of sins*” (Dan. 9:24)—as to the controversy of them between God and those for whom He died. Christ has so satisfied God’s justice and fulfilled His Law that no sentence of condemnation can be pronounced against them, and therefore they must infallibly be saved. Second, as Christ removed that which alone might turn God from believers, so He has annulled that which might cause them to depart from God: neither indwelling sin, Satan or the world, can so prevail as to make them totally fall away. Christ has destroyed Satan’s right to rule over them (Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14), and He has abolished his power by “binding” him. (Matt. 12:29), and therefore are we assured “*sin shall not have dominion over you*” (Rom. 6:14)—how could it since the Holy Spirit Himself indwells us!

“Since Christ bore our sins, and was condemned in our place; since by His expiatory death the claims of Divine justice are answered, and the holiness of the Divine Law is maintained, who can condemn those for whom He died? Oh, what security is this for the believer in Jesus! Standing beneath the shadow of the cross, the weakest saint can confront his deadliest foe; and every accusation alleged and every sentence of condemnation uttered, he can meet, by pointing to Him who died. In that one fact he sees the great debt cancelled, the entire curse removed, the grand indictment quashed and ‘No condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus’ are words written as in letters of living light upon the

cross” (O. Winslow).

8. The resurrection of Christ. It seems strange that so many receive more comfort at the cross than they do at the empty grave of Christ, for Scripture itself hesitates not to say, *“If Christ be not raised your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins”* (1 Cor. 15:17). A dead Saviour could not save: one who was himself vanquished by death would be powerless to deliver sin’s slaves. Here is one of the chief defects of Romanism—its deluded subjects are occupied with a lifeless Christ, worshippers of a crucifix. Nor are Protestant preachers above criticism in this matter, for only too often many of them omit the grandest part of the Evangel by going no further than Calvary. The glorious Gospel is not fully preached until we proclaim a risen and victorious Redeemer (1 Cor. 15:1-3; Acts 5:3 1). Christ was *“delivered (up to death) for our offences and was raised again for our justification”* (Rom. 4:24), and as the apostle goes on to declare, *“For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life”* (Rom. 5:10).

What avail would it have been that Christ died for His people if death had conquered and overwhelmed Him? Had the grave held Him fast, He had been a prisoner still. But in rising from the tomb Christ made demonstration of His victory over sin and death: thereby He was *“declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead”* (Rom. 1:4); *“For to this end Christ both died and rose and revived that He might be Lord both of the dead and living”* (Rom. 14:9). Christ’s sacrificial work was finished at the cross, but proof was needed of its Divine acceptance. That proof lay with Him who was pleased to “bruise Him and put Him in grief,” and by raising the Redeemer God furnished incontestable evidence that all His claims had been met. The death of Christ was the payment of my awful debt: His resurrection God’s receipt for the same; it was the public acknowledgement that the bond had been cancelled. Christ’s resurrection sealed our justification: it was necessary to give reality to the atonement, and to provide a sure foundation for our faith and hope. Since God is satisfied, the trembling sinner may confide and securely repose upon the work of a triumphant

Saviour.

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again” (Rom. 8:34). Here the resurrection of Christ is presented as the believer’s security against condemnation. But how does the former guarantee the latter? There is a causal connection between the two things. First, because Christ rose again not simply as a private person but as the Surety, the Head and Representative of all His people. It has not been sufficiently recognized and emphasized that the Lord Jesus lived, died and rose again as “the Firstborn among many brethren.” As all whom the first Adam represented fell when he fell, died when he died, so all whom the last Adam represented died when He died and rose again when He arose. God *“quickeneth us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together”* (Eph. 2:5, 6). *“Risen with Christ”* (Col. 3:1) is judicially true of every believer. The Law can no more condemn him: he has been fully and finally delivered from the wrath to come. Infallibly certain and absolutely secure is he by virtue of his legal union with the risen Saviour. *“Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over Him”* (Rom. 6:9), nor over me, for His deliverance was mine, the second death cannot touch me.

Second, because there is a vital union between Christ and His people. Said the Lord Jesus, *“I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die”* (John 11:25, 26). Nothing could possibly be plainer or more decisive than that. Spiritual resurrection makes the believer one with Him who is “alive for evermore” so that he is forever beyond the reach of death. Well then may we exclaim with the apostle, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”* (1 Pet. 1:3). Regeneration or being begotten by God is the communication to the soul of the life of the risen Christ. A faint yet striking illustration of this is seen in our awakening each morning out of slumber. While our head sleeps, every member of the body sleeps with it. But the head awakes, and awakes first, and with that

awakening each member awakens also—after the head, yet in union with it. Thus it is with the mystical Body of Christ the Head was first quickened, and then in God’s good time His life is imparted to each of His members, and before any member could perish the Head must die.

Third, because as Christ was our Surety here so He is our Representative on high, and as He endured our penalty so justice requires that we should enjoy His fullness. Accordingly we read, “*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever, Amen*” (Heb. 13:20, 21). Note well the coherence of this passage. It is in His character as “the God of peace” He thus acts. Having been pacified or propitiated, God brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, not as a private person but in His official character, as the “Shepherd,” and that, in fulfilment of covenant stipulation and promise. In consequence thereof, God makes perfect (or complete) in every good work the “sheep,” preserving and sanctifying them by working in them that which is well pleasing in His sight, and this “through Jesus Christ,” or in other words, by communicating to His members the grace, the life, the fullness, which is in their Head.

9. The Exaltation of Christ. There is a little clause, but one of vast purport, which the apostle added to “*yea rather that is risen again,*” namely, “*who is even at the right hand of God*” (Rom. 8:34). That brief sentence is frequently overlooked, yet is it one which also guarantees the safety and perpetuity of the Church. The ascension of Christ is as vital and cardinal a part of the Truth as is His death and resurrection, and provides the same rich food for faith to feed upon. As it was not possible for death to hold Him, so it was not fitting for the earth to retain Christ. He who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death has been “*highly exalted and given a name which is above every name*” (Phil. 2:9). The head which once was crowned with thorns is crowned with glory now, a royal diadem adorns the mighty Victor’s brow. Christ is

now in heaven as an everlasting Mediator, as a glorified High Priest over the House of God, as the sceptred King ruling with sovereign sway all things in heaven and earth, angels and principalities and powers being made subject to Him (1 Pet. 3:22). And Christ is entered heaven in our nature, in our name, on our behalf.

The One who descended into the deepest depth has been elevated to the grandest glory. The crowning act of Christ's triumph was not when He issued forth a Victor from the tomb, but when He entered the courts of celestial bliss, when the everlasting doors lifted up their heads and the King of glory went in (Psa. 24:9). The raising of Christ was in order to His glorification. And it was in our nature He is exalted above all: the very hands which were nailed to the cross now wield the sceptre of universal dominion. How well fitted then is such an One to succour and "save unto the uttermost!" As faith follows the descent of the Father's Beloved to Bethlehem's manger, to Golgotha, to the sepulchre, so let it follow Him to the loftiest heights of dignity and bliss. This "*same Jesus*" who was rejected and degraded by Jew and Gentile alike has been "*crowned with honour and glory*" (Heb. 2:9). The exaltation of Christ was a necessary part of His Mediatorship, for it is from on high He administers His kingdom and makes effectual application of redemption. The ascension of Christ is also an essential part of the gospel.

"Who is even at the right hand of God." First, this is the place of honour and dignity. When Bathsheba appeared before Solomon we are told that the king rose up to meet her and bowed himself unto his mother, and sitting down on this throne he caused a seat to be set for her "*on his right hand*" (1 Kings 2:19) as a mark of special favour and honour. After the royal proclamation concerning Christ "*Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows; all Thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made Thee glad,*" it is added, "*Kings' daughters were among Thy honourable women: upon Thy right hand did stand the Queen in gold of Ophir*" (Psa. 45:7-9), indicating the place of privilege and

honour which is reserved for the Lamb's wife. "*The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob* (God of covenant relationship), *the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus*" (Acts 3:13)—this was His mediatorial glory in answer to His prayer in John 17:5. Christ has "*sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*" (Heb. 1:3).

Second, the "right hand of God" is the place of supreme authority and power. As we read in Exod. 15:6 "*Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power.*" "*And set Him at His own right hand in the heavnlies: far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all*" (Eph. 1:20-23). Our Surety, then, was not only delivered from prison but exalted to universal dominion, "*all power in heaven and in earth*" being conferred upon Him. Then how well suited is He to fight our battles, subdue our iniquities and supply our every need! Christ has been elevated high above all ranks of creatures, however exalted in the scale of being or whatever their titles and dignities, and all have been placed in absolute subjection to Him, as "*under His feet*" signifies. Thus the entire universe is under His control ("*upholding all things by the word of His power:*" Heb. 1:3) for the well-being of His people, so that no weapon formed against them can prosper. No wonder it is required "*that all should honour the Son even as they honour the Father*" (John 5:23).

Third, it is the place of all blessedness. Our bounties and benevolences are distributed by our "*right hand*" (Matt. 6:3). "*At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore*" (Psa. 16:11)—one of the great Messianic Psalms. "It is spoken assuredly of such pleasures as Jesus Christ by way of prerogative enjoyeth beyond all the saints and angels, He being at God's right hand so as none of them are. It was the peculiar encouragement that Jesus Christ had, not to be in Heaven only as a common saint, but to be in Heaven at God's right hand; and to have pleasures answerable, far above all the pleasures of men and angels. . . God doth

communicate and impart to Him to the utmost all His felicity, so far forth as that human nature is capable of” (Thomas Goodwin), Thus in the “joy” that was set before Him (Heb. 12:2) Christ has the “pre-eminence” as in all things else. In accord with this third meaning of the expression, Christ will “set the sheep on His right hand” saying to them “*Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*” (Matt. 25:34).

Fourth, this setting of Christ at the right hand of the Majesty on high denotes the endowing His humanity with capacity and ability accordant with the exalted dignity conferred upon Him. It was not like an earthly king advancing his favourite to high honour, or even elevating his son to share his throne, but that God bestowed upon Christ superlative endowments (anointing Him with the oil of gladness “above His fellows,” i.e. giving to Him the Spirit “without measure”), fitting Him to discharge such an office. This is clear from the immediate context of Ephesians 1:21, where prayer is made that we may understand God’s “*mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies*” (verses 19, 20). This fitting of Christ for His exalted position appears in Rev. 5. There a mysterious book is held forth, but none either in heaven or earth was found worthy to open it till the Lamb appeared. And wherein lay His fitness? The Lamb as it had been slain, possessed “*seven horns and seven eyes*” (verse 6)—perfect power and perfect intelligence.

“*Who is even at the right hand of God.*” Here then is a further guarantee of the safety and perpetuity of the Church, and O what consolation and encouragement should it afford the tried and trembling believer. He went up “*with a shout*” (Psa. 47:5)—of conquest, leading captivity captive. His being seated in heaven is proof that His work is finished and His sacrifice accepted (Heb. 10:11, 12). It was as the Head and Representative of His people Christ entered Heaven to take possession for them: “*whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus*” (Heb. 6:20). It is in our nature and name He had gone there, to “*prepare a place*” for us. (John 14:2). Thus we have a Friend at Court, for “*if any one sin*

we have an Advocate with the Father” (1 John 2:1). His great authority, power, dominion and glory is being exercised on our behalf. The government of the universe is on His shoulder, for the well-being, security and triumph of His Church. Hallelujah, what a Saviour! God has laid our help *“upon One that is mighty”* (Psa. 89:19).

10. Christ’s Intercession. *“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us”* (Rom. 8:34). Here is the grand climax. First, Christ made a complete atonement for the sins of His people. Next He rose from the dead in proof that His sacrifice was accepted by God. Then He was advanced to the place of supreme honour and power in reward of His undertaking. And now He sues out or asks for His people the benefits He purchased for them. The inexpressible blessedness of this appears in the above order. How many who have been suddenly elevated from poverty to wealth, from ignominy to honour, from weakness to power, promptly forget their former associates and friends. Not so the Lord Jesus. Though exalted to inconceivable dignity and dominion, though crowned with unrivalled honour and glory, yet this made no difference in the affections of Christ toward His people left here in this world. His love for them is unabated, His care of and concern for His Church undiminished. The good will of the Saviour unto His own remains unchanged.

The ascended Christ is not wrapped up in His own enthronement, but is still occupied with the well-being of His people, maintaining their interests, seeking their good: *“He ever liveth to make intercession for them”* (Heb. 7:25). He knows they are weak and helpless in themselves, and are surrounded by those desiring and seeking their destruction, and therefore does He pray, *“I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee, holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me”* (John 17:11); and He bases that request on the finished work by which He glorified God (verse 4). The plea which our great High Priest urges cannot rest upon our merit, for we have none; it is not in recognition of our worthiness, for we are

destitute of such. Nor does our wretchedness furnish the reason which the Intercessor urges on our behalf, for that very wretchedness has been brought upon us by our sins. There are no considerations personal to ourselves which Christ can plead on our behalf. No, His all-sufficient sacrifice is the alone plea, and that must prevail. Christ intercedes in Heaven because He died for us on earth (Heb. 9:24-26).

If left entirely to themselves believers would perish. Temptations and tribulations from without and corruptions from within would prove too strong for them, and therefore does Christ make intercession on their behalf, that God would grant them such supplies of grace and pardoning mercy that they will be preserved from total apostasy. It is not that He prays they may be kept from sin absolutely, but from a fatal and final departure from God. This is evident from the case of the eleven on the night of His betrayal: not one only but all of them “*forsook Him and fled*” (Matt. 26:56). It was the prevalency of His intercession which brought them back again. That was made more especially evident in the case of Peter. The Lord Jesus foresaw and announced that he would deny Him thrice (and lower than that it would seem a Christian cannot fall), yet He prayed that his faith should fail not: nor did it—it wrought by love and produced repentance.

That for which our great High Priest particularly asks is the continuance of our believing. Arminians seek to evade this by saying: Christ prays not for the perseverance of the saints in their faith, or that they who once believed should never cease from believing however wicked they may become, but only for saints while they continue saints; that is, as long as they continue in faith and love God will not reject them. But the very thing Christ does pray for is “*that thy faith fail not*” (Luke 22:32): for the continuance of a living faith, for where that is, there will be good works. And that for which Christ asks must be performed: not only because He is the Son of God (and therefore could ask for nothing contrary to the Father’s will), but because His intercession is based upon His sacrifice: He pleads His own merits and sues only for those things which He has purchased for His people—the things to which they are entitled.

That for which Christ intercedes is clearly revealed in John 17: it is for the preservation, unification, sanctification and glorification of His people. The substance of His petitions is found in verse 11, where (in effect) He says: Holy Father, Thou art concerned for each of these persons and hast been viewing them with unspeakable satisfaction from everlasting: Thou gavest them Me as a special expression of Thy love: My heart is set upon them and My soul delighteth in them because they are Mine by Thy free donation. As I am going to leave them behind Me and they are weak and defenceless in themselves, exposed to many enemies and temptations, I pray Thee keep them. Let them have the person of the Holy Spirit to indwell them: let Him renew their spiritual life and graces day by day: let Him preserve them in Thy sacred Truth. That prayer will be fully answered when Christ will *“present the Church to Himself a glorious Church”* (Eph. 5:27).

11. The love of Christ. Ah, what pen is capable of expatiating upon such a theme when even the chief of the apostles was obliged to own that it *“passeth knowledge”* (Eph. 3:19). Such was His wondrous love that in order to save His people the Son of God left Heaven for earth, laid aside the robes of His glory and took upon Him the form of a Servant. Such was His wondrous love that He voluntarily became the homeless Stranger here, having not where to lay His head. Such was His wondrous love that He shrank not from being despised and rejected of men, suffering Himself to be spat upon, buffeted and His hair plucked out. Yea, such was His wondrous love for His Church that He endured the cross, where He was made a curse for her, where the wrath of a sin-hating God was poured upon Him, so that for a season He was actually abandoned by Him. Truly His love is *“strong as death. . . many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it”* (Song of Solomon 8:6, 7).

Mark how that love was tried and proved by the unkind response it met with from the most favoured of His disciples. So little did they lay to heart His solemn announcement that He was about to be delivered into the hands of men and be slain by them, they *“disputed among themselves who should be the greatest”* (Mark 9:31, 34). When the awful cup of woe was

presented to Him in Gethsemane and His agony was so intense that He sweat great drops of blood the apostles were unable to watch with Him for a single hour. When His enemies, accompanied by a great rabble armed with swords and staves, came to arrest Him, *“all the disciples forsook Him and fled”* (Matt. 26:56)—and had writer and reader been in their place we had done no otherwise. Did such base ingratitude freeze the Saviour’s affection for them and cause Him to abandon their cause? No indeed; *“having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end”* (John 13:1)—to the end of their unworthiness and unappreciativeness.

Ah my reader, His people are the objects of Christ’s everlasting love. Before ever the earth was His delights were with them (Prov. 8:3 1) and have continued ever since. As the Father hath loved Christ Himself, so Christ loves His people (John 15:9)—with a love that is infinite, immutable, eternal. Nothing can separate us from it (Rom. 8:35). Those whom He loves are the special portion and inheritance given to Him by the Father, and will He lose His portion when it is in His power to keep it? No, He will not: *“they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels”* (Mal. 3:17). When they were given to Him by the Father it was with the express charge *“that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day”* (John 6:39), and therefore do we find Him saying to the Father, *“those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost but (not ‘except’) the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled”* (John 17:12), and he was a devil from the beginning.

Consider well the various relations which believers sustain to Christ. They are the mystical Body of which He is the Head: *“members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones”* (Eph. 5:30). They are *“the fullness of Him that filleth all in all”* (Eph. 1:23) and thus He would be incomplete, mutilated, if one of them perished. They are laid upon Him as a “foundation” that is “sure” (Isa. 28:16), built upon Him as a “rock” against which *“the gates of hell shall not prevail”* (Matt. 16:18). They are His “redeemed,” bought with a price, purchased at the cost of His

life's blood, then how must He regard them! Consider well the terms of endearment used of them. Christians are "*of the travail of His soul*" (Isa. 53:11). They are His "*brethren*" (Rom. 8:29), His "*fellows*" (Psa. 45:7), His "*wife*" (Rev. 19:7). They are set as a seal upon His heart (Song of Solomon 8:6), engraved in the palms of His hands (Isa. 49:16). They are His "*crown of glory*" and "*royal diadem*" (Isa. 62:3). Since they are so precious in His sight He will not suffer one to perish.

12. The gift of the Holy Spirit. In contemplating the person and work of the Spirit in the economy of redemption we must needs view Him in connection with the everlasting covenant and the mediation of Christ. The descent of the Spirit is inseparably related to what has been before us in the previous sections. When the Saviour ascended on high He "*received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also*" (Psa. 68:18), and as His exaltation was in reward for His triumphant undertaking, so also were those "gifts," chiefest of which was the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33). As Christ is the unspeakable gift of the Father unto us, so the Holy Spirit is the supreme gift of Christ to His people. Since Christ is Man as well as God, it is required of Him that He make request for whatever He receives at the hands of the Father: "*Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen (the Gentiles) for Thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession*" (Psa. 2:8). "*I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever*" (John 14:16).

The redemptive work of Christ merited the Spirit for His people. The Spirit was given to Christ in consequence of His having so superlatively glorified God on the earth and in answer to His intercession. It is due to His praying that the Holy Spirit not only renews the regenerate day by day, but that He first brought them from death unto life. This is intimated in the "*for the rebellious also*" of Psalm 68:18—even while they were in a state of alienation from God. The dispensing of the Spirit is in the hands of the exalted Christ, therefore is He spoken of as "*He that hath the seven Spirits of God*" (Rev. 3:1)—the Holy Spirit in the fullness or plenitude of His gifts. To His immediate care is now committed the elect of God. As Christ preserved them during the

days of His earthly sojourn (John 17:12), so the Spirit safeguards them while He is on high. This is clearly intimated in John 14:3 where the Lord Jesus declares “*I will come again and receive (not “take”) you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also*”—they will be handed back to Him by the blessed Spirit.

13. The indwelling of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was purchased for His people by the oblation of Christ and is bestowed upon them through His intercession, to abide with them forever. The manner in which He abides with those on whom He is bestowed is by a gracious indwelling. “*God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons* (that is, that we might have conferred upon us the legal status of sonship). *And because ye are sons* (by virtue of legal oneness with the Son), *God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts*” (Gal. 4:4-6). What a marvellous yet mysterious thing this is: that the third Person of the Trinity should take up His abode within fallen creatures! It is not merely that the influences or graces of the Spirit are communicated to us, but that He Himself dwells within us: not in our minds (though they are illumined by Him) but in our hearts—the centre of our beings, from which are “*the issues of life*” (Prov. 4:23).

This was the grand promise of God in the Covenant: “*I will put My Spirit within you*” (Ezek. 36:27 and compare with 37:14), the fulfilment of which our Surety obtained for us—“*being by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath shed forth this*” (Acts 2:33), for the dispensing of Him is now in the hands of Christ as we have pointed out above. Thus it is that the inhabitation of the Spirit is the distinguishing mark of the regenerate: “*But ye are not in the flesh* (as to your legal standing before God) *but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His*” (Rom. 8:9). It is the indwelling of the Spirit of God which identifies the Christian, and thus He is called “the Spirit of Christ” because He occupies the believer with Christ and conforms him to His image. The apprehension of this wondrous fact exerts a sobering influence upon the believer,

causing him to “*possess his vessel in sanctification and honour,*” “*What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?*” (1 Cor. 6:19).

Now the Spirit takes up His residence in the saints not for a season only but never to leave them. “*This is My covenant with them, saith the Lord (unto the Redeemer, see verse 20), My Spirit that is upon Thee and My word which I have put in Thy mouth shall not depart out of Thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of Thy seed, nor out of the mouth of Thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever*” (Isa. 59:21): that was a solemn promise of the Father unto the Mediator that the Spirit should continue forever with the Redeemer and the redeemed. The blessed Spirit comes not as a transient Visitor but as a permanent Guest of the soul: “*And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever*” (John 14:16). Since then the Spirit takes up His abode in the renewed soul forever, how certain it is that he will be preserved from apostasy. This will be the more evident from our next division, when it will appear that the Spirit is a powerful, active and sanctifying Agent with the Christian.

14. The operations of the Spirit. These are summed up in “*He which hath begun a good work in you will finish it*” (Phil. 1:6). The reference is to our regeneration, completed in our sanctification, preservation and glorification. First He imparts spiritual life to one who is dead in trespasses and sins and then He sustains and maintains that life by nourishing it and calling it forth into exercise and act, so that it becomes fruitful and abounds in good works. Every growth of spirituality is the work of the Holy Spirit: as the green blade was His so is the ripening corn. The increase of life, as much as the beginning thereof, must still come by the gracious power of the Spirit of God. We never have more life or even know we need more or groan after it, except as He works in us to desire and agonize after it. Were the Spirit totally withdrawn from the Christian he would soon lapse back into spiritual death. But thank God there is no possibility of any such dire calamity: every born-again soul has the infallible guarantee “*the Lord will perfect that which concerneth me*” (Psa. 138:8).

Let us now consider more particularly some eminent acts of the Spirit in the believer and effects of His grace exercised in them. He empowers and moves them unto obedience: *“I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and ye shall keep My judgments and do them”* (Ezek. 36:27). The two things are inseparable: an indwelling Spirit and holy conduct from those indwelt. *“As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God”* (Rom. 8:14). The Spirit guides into the paths of righteousness by a blessed combination of invincible power and gentle suasion: not forcing us against our wills, but sweetly constraining us. He directs the activities of the Christian by enlightening his understanding, warming his affections, stimulating his holy inclinations and moving his will to do that which is pleasing unto God. In this way is that divine promise fulfilled, *“I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go”* (Isa. 48:17), and thus is his prayer answered *“Order my steps in Thy Word”* (Psa. 119:133).

By His gracious indwelling the Spirit affords the saints supportment: *“likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities”* (Rom. 8:26). If the believer were left to himself he would never see (by faith) the all-wise hand of God in his afflictions, still less would his heart ever honestly say concerning them, *“Thy will be done.”* If left to himself the believer would never seek grace to patiently endure chastisement, still less cherish the hope that afterward it would *“yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness”* (Heb. 12:11). No, rather would he chafe and kick like *“a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke”* (Jer. 31:18) and yield to the vile temptation to *“curse God and die”* (Job 2:9). If the believer were left to himself he would never have the assurance that his acutest sufferings were among the all things which work together for his ultimate good, still less would he glory in his infirmity that the power of Christ might rest upon him (2 Cor. 12:9). No, such holy exercises of heart are not the products of fallen human nature: instead they are the immediate, gracious, lovely fruits of the Spirit, brought forth in such uncongenial soil.

By His gracious indwelling the Spirit energies the believer:

“strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man” (Eph. 3:16). This is manifested in many directions. How often He exerts upon the believer a restraining influence, subduing the lusts of the flesh and holding him back from a course of folly by causing a solemn awe to fall upon him: *“the fear of the Lord is to depart from evil,”* and the Spirit is the Author of that holy fear. *“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us”* (2 Tim. 1:14)—He is the one who oils the wheels of the saint’s obedience. *“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith”* (Gal. 5:5) otherwise the deferring of our hope would cause the soul to utterly pine away. Hence we find the Spouse praying to the Spirit for invigoration and fructification, *“Awake O north wind, and come thou south; blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out”* (Song of Solomon 4:16).

The graces which the indwelling Spirit produces are durable and lasting, particularly the three cardinal ones: *“now abideth faith, hope, love”* (1 Cor. 13:13). Faith is that grace which is *“much more precious than of gold that perisheth”* (1 Pet. 1:7)—it is its imperishability which constitutes its superior excellency. It is *“of the operation of God”* (Col. 2:12) and we know that whatsoever is of Him *“it shall be forever”* (Eccl. 3:14), Christ praying that it *“fail not,”* and therefore no matter how severely it shall be tested its possessor can declare *“though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him”* (Job 13:15). The hope of the Christian is *“as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast,”* for it is cast on Christ the foundation, from whence it can never be removed (Heb. 6:18, 19). As to the believer’s love, though its initial ardour may be cooled yet it cannot be quenched, though first love any be *“left”* it cannot be lost. Under the darkest times Christ is still the object of his love, as the cases of the Church in Song of Solomon 3:1-3 and of Peter (John 21:17) evidence.

15. The relations which the Holy Spirit sustains to the Christian. In Ephesians 1:14 He is designated *“the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession”* (compare with 2 Cor. 1:22). Now an *“earnest”* is part payment assuring the full reward in due season: it is more than a pledge, being an actual

portion and token of that which is promised. If the inheritance were precarious, suspended on conditions of uncertain performance, the Spirit could not in truth or propriety be termed the earnest thereof. If an “earnest” is a guaranty among men, much more so between God and His people. He is also “*the first fruits*” of glorification unto the believer (Rom. 8:23), an antepast of Heaven, the initial beams of the rising sun of eternal bliss in the Christian’s soul. He is also the “anointing” which we have received from Christ (compare with 2 Cor. 1:21) and this “abideth” in us (1 John 2:17). Again, He is the believer’s seal: “*grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption*” (Eph. 4:30), that is, until their bodies are delivered from the grave. Among other purposes a “seal” is to secure: can then the treasure which the Spirit guards be lost? No: as Christ was “sealed” (John 6:27) and in consequence “upheld” by the Spirit so that He failed not (Isa. 42:1, 4), so is the believer. It is impossible for any saint to perish.

The third of seven booklets.

