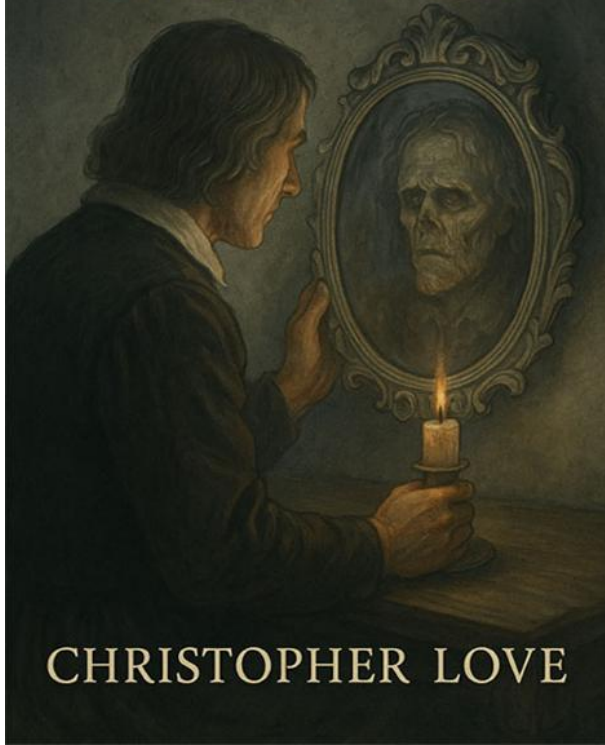


THE
NATURAL MAN'S
CASE STATED



CHRISTOPHER LOVE

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MONERGISM BOOKS

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PREF. TO THE READER.

The exuberant spawns of illiterate Books proceeding from the polluted wombs of the overloaded, and bejaded adulterate presses, which are all painted with fair titles, I can compare to nothing so fitly as a cheating Lottery; which when the greedy invader comes with hopes for a little money laid down, to carry away a great deal of wit with him, 'tis nineteen at least to one when he opens it, but he finds to his shame, that he hath drawn a blank, perhaps a blasphemy; and yet couched under the title of glorious truth, heavenly discoveries, beams of light, new Jerusalem, God's mind clearly revealed, with multitudes of such paints upon their strumpets faces.

The sacred Bible which indeed is an Alabaster-box full of sweet perfumes and precious ointments, is made (alas!) like Pandora's box (in the human story) which (Epimetheus presumptuously opening) filled the world with evils, diseases and calamities of all kinds. The sacred Bible is made now the patron of Profane men's practices; never were gross sins at such an impudent height as now they are; what horrid impudence is that of hell to

take heaven by the hand? Sins that were wont to hide themselves in the holes and clefts of obscurity, not daring to be hold the light, but Serpent-like, to creep under the low shrubs of deceitful shifts, how do they Eagle-like sit perching on the goodly Cedars (I mean Pulpits and Thrones) the Cedars of God, and dare to cast up their eyes towards the Sun? Who would think it! Yet what this day more common than to meet the devil with his eyes towards heaven, and a Bible under his arm, clothing all his words and actions cap a pea in Scripture phrases; Murderers, traitors, rebels, blasphemers, soothsayers, adulterers, Sabbath-breakers, perjurers, oppressors, and almost all notorious villains have marshalled themselves (like the Roman Clergy) into so many several Sects of religion, all impudently assuming to themselves the usurped title of eminent Saints, and quoting Scripture for their actions, and scot-free pass the press into the world to make more proselytes: so that he that in this Soul-frozen age shall go to gather Books to warm his Soul, (as Paul did sticks to warm his fingers) will be sure, if he be not wary, to gather vipers into his bosom: And how am I stung with pain and horror, whiles I meditate on the thousands of poor souls that are gnawed to death by these speckled vipers! Sure it cannot but sit sad one day upon the spirits of those licentious Licensers, that are as the midwives of such monsters.

For thy comfort therefore and encouragement (Reader) I do assure thee this Book is free from all such venomous beasts, no toad of malice, nor serpent of deceit lurks either in the matter or the phrase hereof. In plain English, it is a pleasant, heavenly, self-searching, soul-convincing, sin-condemning, heart-humbling, spirit-raising, grace-quickening, Christ-exalting book. I need say no more, they are the Sermons of Mr. Christopher Love, Master of Arts, and Minister of the Gospel of Christ, whose actions,

life and death, will eternize his name; I may truly say of his elegant style, and pleasant way of expressing himself, as he of Gregory Nazianzen,

Viribus eloquii valuit, linguaque diserta:

Mellisluos dulei protulitore sonos.

The subject of these Sermons is of general use to all sorts of people, much like in that, to that text of Chrysostom's in Psal. 4:2, which (as he saith) if he had a voice like thunder, and a mighty mountain for his pulpit, and all the men and women in the world for his auditory, he would choose this text to preach on: O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Had this been really effected, and I been there in Mr. Loves spirit, would Chrysostom have lent me his voice, and allowed me the use of his monarchical pulpit, when he had done in the morning with his text, I would have come up in the evening with this text, Eph. 2:12. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the Covenant of Promise, having no hope, and without God in the World: but this need not, for it is in a manner effected already: this worthy Minister hath ascended that pulpit from whence he hath thundered into the world, he is now one of those blessed ones, that died in and for the Lord, he is at rest from all his labors, and now behold his works do follow him; some are already gone before, and these do follow after. These Sermons were preached at St. Anne's Aldersgate, where this holy young man was Pastor: I pray God they may prove as the great trumpet of God, to cause a spiritual resurrection amongst those people before they go down to the house of rottenness; it cannot but much rejoice those people to hear their Pastors voice again, those sheep cannot but know their shepherds voice; which that they may do, the Lord of heaven bless these his worthy labors to their, and

thy spiritual advantage; so as that the distressed Churches loss in his sad and unexpected absence, may be made up in the blessing of God, upon these and the rest of his pious and painful labors. So prayeth,

Thine, E.C.

SERM. I. EPH. 2:12. – FULL VERSE.

That at that time ye were without Christ, being Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, and strangers from the Covenants of promise; having no hope, and without God in the world . - Eph. 2:12.

This Chapter out of which my Text is taken, is like a little Map, containing in it a description of the little world Man, and that in a double capacity; considering man either in the state of Grace, or in the state of Nature; If you consider Man in the first capacity, in the state of Grace, this chapter lays down a fivefold description of bringing Man into the state of Grace.

1. Here is laid down the efficient cause of bringing Man out of the state of Nature, into the state of Grace, and that is God, in the 4th verse.

2. Here is laid down the impulsive cause, and that is the riches of God's mercy in the same verse, But God who is rich in mercy for the great love wherewith he loved us, &c.

3. Here is laid down the meritorious cause of it, which is Christ in his sufferings, in the 7th verse, that in the ages to come, he might show the

exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us, through Jesus Christ.

4. Here is laid down the final cause of it in the same verse also, that in Ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace. And,

Lastly, here is the instrumental cause of bringing man out of the state of Nature into the state of Grace, and that is Faith, in the 8th verse: For by grace are you saved through Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

Now the other part of the Map describes man in the second capacity, in the state of Nature, and herein it gives a twofold description of Mans condition;

1. Positively, what he is.
2. Privatively, what he wants.

1. It describes Man in the state of Nature positively what he is, and that in five particulars;

1. Men in their natural condition, are described to be dead in trespasses and sins.

2. They walk according to the course of this world, as Pagans and Heathens do.

3. According to the Prince of the power of the air, that is, the Devil; now the Devil is called the Prince of the air, either because he doth reside in the air, or else, because he hath the power of the wind and of the air.

4. They are called Children of disobedience; that is, born in a state of disobedience quite contrary to the commands of God.

5. That they fulfill the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, and are by nature children of wrath.

Thus far you have the positive description of Man in the state of Nature.

2. Now in the second place, the Apostle describes him privatively what he wants; and that in the words of my Text, in five particulars, wherein he plainly shows that he is the poorest man in the world that wants Jesus Christ, and the most miserable: That at that time you were without Christ; that is the first: You were Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel; that is the second: You were strangers to the Covenants of promise; that is the third: You were without hope; that is the fourth: And you were without God in the world; that's the fifth.

Now these comprehensive expressions, contain in them the whole misery of Man, and that in these five particulars here named; 2. Here is described the time how long, a man is in this condition, that at that time, that is, the time during your unconverted estate; as long as you are unconverted, so long you are without Christ, and an Alien from the Common wealth of Israel, and a stranger to the Covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world.

And now what a dismal Text have I here to handle, and what a doleful tragedy am I now to act? But yet out of every one of these, there is a great deal of comfort which may flow forth; I shall only at present make entrance into the words, and speak more fully to them afterwards; that at that time you were without Christ; That at that time: Beloved here wants something to supply the sense of the words, and therefore read the foregoing words, and you will find what must be brought in; the verse before runs thus, Wherefore remember, that you being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, &c. wherefore remember, these words must be prefixed; Wherefore remember, that at that time you were without Christ, and aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel, &c. I shall here by the way only draw out this one doctrine from the coherence of the words, Wherefore remember that at that time; the

Apostle would have these converted Ephesians to remember, that they were men without Christ, and aliens to the Common-wealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope, and without God in the world: now from hence I would commend this observation to you.

That it is the will of God that men in a converted estate should often call to mind the sinfulness and misery they were guilty of before their conversion.

Beloved, this is a subject I could never have occasion to speak to you of before, and yet it is a point of admirable use, especially in these times, wherein people think that when once they are brought into a state of Grace, they must live in divine raptures, and revelations, and spiritual joys, above duties and ordinances, and never look back into their former sinfulness and wickedness they were guilty of before their conversion: Why, here the Ephesians were converted men, and had extraordinary privileges, they were brought to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; and yet the Apostle bids them remember their former sinfulness and misery, Remember O you Ephesians that ye were once without Christ, and you were Aliens to the Common-wealth of Israel, &c. therefore you must take heed of this, to think that when you are converted, you must be only wrapped up into the third heavens, and never look back into your former condition; you see here the Apostle bids you remember what you were at that time during your unconverted estate, that you were then without Christ, and strangers to the Covenants of promise, &c. So that you see it is the will of God, that men in a converted estate should often call to mind the sins and misery they were in before conversion.

Now before I come to give you the Reasons of the point, give me leave to premise these three Cautions; when I tell you, that after your conversion,

you should call to mind your sin and misery before conversion, you must not do it 1. with complacency of spirit; nor 2. with stupidity of heart; nor 3. with despondency of mind.

1. You must not call to mind your former sinfulness with complacency of spirit, to please your humors; you must not do as some great men use to do, that have been guilty of great and crying sins; as adultery, drunkenness, swearing, and the like, in their youth; go tell and boast of them in their age; this is a very great wickedness: you must call to mind your former sinfulness not with complacency, but with bitterness of spirit, with grief, sorrow, and perplexity of heart: Many men will tell you large stories of the wickedness, that they have committed; but they do it with delight, and if they had strength and abilities, they would be guilty of the same sins and wickedness's still; which is a most ungodly practice, and that which the Scripture condemns men for, as in the 23rd of Ezek. 23:19,21. Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt; Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth: the meaning of this is, she called her sins to remembrance, but it was so as to play the whore still, and to be unclean still, she did it with delight and complacency, with content and joy; now I say you should call your sins to remembrance with a great deal of grief and sorrow, and bitterness of spirit: and therefore when young gallants will boast of their sins, and tell how often they have been drunk, and have made others to be so; and how often they have plaid the whoremaster, and have drawn others to do so; this is a most Diabolical remembrance.

2. You must not call your former sins to remembrance, with stupidity of heart neither: Beloved, there are many men can remember what lewd courses they have taken, and what wicked lives they have lived; how often

they have been drunk and unclean, and the like; and yet are never troubled at the remembrance of it; their hearts do not smite them with remorse and sorrow, but are like a rock; the sense of sin never troubles them: this is no way of calling sin to remembrance, with a blockish and stupid heart, this is not thanks worthy; but it must be done with a broken, and a bleeding, and a contrite heart: And,

3. Take in this caution too, it must not be done with despondency of mind neither. There are many converted ones, that do call their sins to remembrance, but it makes them discouraged and unwilling to come to Christ, it makes them think that they have no interest in the covenant of grace; but this should not be, the true effect that the consideration of your former sinfulness should produce, should be your laying your souls low, and making them humble, and the more sensible of that indispensable need you have of Christ, of going unto him for salvation and comfort.

These are the Cautions necessary to be premised; I come now to give you the Reasons of the point, why it is the will of God, that people in a converted estate, should often call to mind the sin and misery they were in before conversion, and 1. God will have it so, because by so doing, you will be provoked the more highly to magnify and admire the greatness and riches of God's grace to you; there are none in the World greater admirers of God's grace and mercy, then those that are most studious of their own sin and misery: thou wilt never solemnly and thoroughly magnify God's mercy, till thou art plunged into a deep sensibleness of thine own misery, till the Lord hath brought thee to see in what a miserable and deplorable condition thou wert in before conversion, thou wilt then admire and magnify the riches of God's free grace, in bringing thee out of that condition, into the estate of grace, as in 1 Tim. 1:13, the Apostle Paul when he would magnify

the free grace of God to him, saith he, I was a blasphemmer, and a persecutor, and injurious; and yet through the abundance of God's free grace and mercy, I have obtained mercy: the consideration of his former sinfulness did elevate and screw up his heart, to make him admire the free grace of God to his soul; that man can never prize liberty as he should do, that never was in prison: But,

2. Another reason why God will have it so is, because this will be as a spur to quicken and engage men to be more eminent in grace, after their conversion: when a man doth frequently and seriously consider how bad and sinful he was before conversion, it cannot but provoke him now to be more humble and holy, after his conversion. It is very observable in Paul, that all those sins and wickedness's he was guilty of before conversion, he did most of all strive against, and labor to excel in the contrary graces after conversion: as first before conversion he did labor to hale others to prison, for worshipping of Christ; but after his conversion, he did labor to draw others to Christ: Act. 26:10,11. Many of the Saints did I shut up in prison, and gave my voice against them, and punished them oft in every City, and I was exceeding mad against them, and banished them into other Cities: and now you shall see that after conversion, Paul did labor to outvie in grace, that evil course he was in before; as before conversion, he did imprison those that did belong to Christ, so after conversion, he was shut up himself in prison, for the cause of Christ; before conversion, he gave his voice against the people of God, but after conversion, he did pray to God for them; before conversion, he did punish them often, but afterward he did preach to them often; before conversion, he did compel men to blaspheme Christ, but after conversion, he was very earnest to persuade people to believe in Christ; he was exceeding mad against them before conversion,

but afterward he was so exceeding zealous for the people of God, that everyone thought he had been mad: and lastly, before conversion he did persecute Saints to strange Cities, but afterwards he did go preaching of the Gospel to strange Cities: Oh my Beloved, let Paul's pattern be your task, call to mind your sin and wickedness in your unconverted condition, but so that it may provoke you, that now you are converted, you may labor to abound in grace, as formerly you have abounded in sin.

3. Another reason why God will have us call to mind the sin and misery we were in before conversion, is, because this will be a means to kindle a great deal of pity and compassion in our souls, towards those that remain yet unconverted: this the Apostle exhorts us to in Tit. 3:2,3. Speak evil of no man, says he, be no brawler, but gentle, Showing all meekness unto all men, for we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another; as if the Apostle should have said, I Paul, and thou Titus, we were sinful as well as they, and did serve divers lusts as well as they once, let us therefore be pitiful, and merciful, and compassionate towards them, this consideration will greatly provoke us to commiserate poor sinful souls; the great reason why we pity them no more than we do, is because we do not call to mind our own sinfulness, and what we were before conversion.

4. Another reason may be this, because the consideration of our former misery, will greatly abate pride in the hearts of converted men; this will be a great means to abate and keep under pride, and advance humility in the hearts of God's people: Beloved, a good man naturally is apt to be proud, we are not proud of our sins, but of our graces; pride is apt to grow in the best man's heart, and therefore God would have us sometime look back upon what we were in our unconverted estate, that so that might abate the

pride of our spirits: you have an excellent place for this in Ezek. 16:3,4,5, compared with the last verse of that chapter. Says God there to Jerusalem, Thy Birth and thy Nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy Father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite; and as for thy Nativity, in the day that thou wast born, thy Navel was not cut, neither wert thou washed in water to supple thee, no eye pitied thee to do any of these unto thee, but thou wert cast out into the open field, to the loathing of thy person in the day that thou wast born; that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth anymore, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord: They must remember their guilt and their shame when God is pacified towards them, and when God is reconciled to them; and so you have another place for the same purpose, in Ezek. 20:43. And there shall you remember your ways, and your doings, wherein you have been defiled, and you shall loath yourselves in your sight, for all the evil that you have committed. I remember what Plutarch relates of one Agathocles, who was advanced from a potters son, a low, mean, and contemptible condition, to be King of Sicily, this man when he might have been served every day in golden dishes, yet he would still have his provisions brought in earthen dishes, because says he, I may remember what I was, and what I am, a potters son, that so I may not be too much lifted up and exalted: why, so do you remember what you were, your Father a potter, and you a poor miserable sinful creature, and this will abate the pride of your hearts.

5. And lastly, God will have us call to mind our former sinfulness, because this will make us more watchful and circumspect, that we do not run again into those sins that we were guilty of before conversion; God would not have us do it, to drive us into despair, or to question our

evidences for heaven, but to make us humble and watchful, that we run not again into the same sins. Thou mayest thus think with thyself, Before conversion, I spent my days in sin and wickedness, and consumed my years in vanity and pleasures, in fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and of the mind; and the consideration of this, will lay an engagement upon thy soul, to walk more carefully, and prudently, and holily in time to come; this the Apostle makes use of, in Eph. 5:8. You were sometimes darkness (saith he) but now are you light in the Lord, walk therefore as children of the light; we should now hate and abhor those sins that formerly we have delighted in.

These are the reasons of the point; I shall only make one short use of it; which shall be of reprehension to those, that (notwithstanding it is the will of God, that men after conversion should call to mind the sin they were guilty of before conversion) do yet cross this doctrine either in their judgment, or practice.

1. This reproves those that do contradict this Doctrine in their judgment, and think that when once they are converted, they must never look back upon their former wretchedness, but only now live in Divine raptures, and revelations, and spiritual joys, and comforts; for, 1. If Paul's precept be warrantable, then this opinion is unwarrantable, for he tells us that we must remember what we were in our unconverted estate, that we were at that time without Christ, and without hope, and without God in the World. 2. Paul tells the Ephesians, that were an elected people, who were elected before the beginning of the world, that they must remember that they were dead in trespasses and sins heretofore, though now they were quickened: and if Paul bids them call to mind their former sinfulness, then why should not we do it?

2. This reproves those that though they do not deny this Doctrine in judgment, yet do not make it their practice, to call to mind their former sins that they were guilty of before conversion: I dare warrant, that many of you can remember what you have done, and what debts have been owing you twenty years ago, but yet cannot call to mind what sins you have committed 20 years ago, it may be some of you have been cheaters and swearers, adulterers and profaners, and yet now you never think of it, but imagine all is well: I do not know how to express what sad, dismal and deplorable condition thy poor soul is in, thou that dost never call to mind thy former sins: But thus much shall suffice for this first Doctrine.

SERM. II. EPH. 2:12. - THAT AT THAT TIME YE WERE WITHOUT CHRIST.

That at that time ye were without Christ , - Eph. 2:12.

We come now to the body and bulk of the words, That at that time ye were without Christ, from whence note,

That every man during the time of his unregeneracy, is in a condition without Jesus Christ.

My Beloved, if I should tell you now that when you come home, you should have never a bit of bread to put in your mouths, that all your subsistence and livelihood should be taken away, that you should be heirs of never a foot of Land, and that you should have nothing at all to live upon, you would count this a hard case, but I tell you my Brethren, that to be without Jesus Christ is a far worse case, it is the saddest and miserablest thing in the world to be without Jesus Christ: when I tell you, that you are without Christ, I tell you the saddest News in the World; but before I can bring home this Doctrine to you, there is one Objection and one Question, that I must spend a little time in answering, the Objection is this:

Object. How can it be said of these Ephesians here that were elected, that before their conversion they were without Jesus Christ, for they were chosen of God in Christ before the world was made, and therefore how can the Apostle say that when they were born they were without Jesus Christ, seeing they were chosen in Christ before the beginning of the world?

I answer, That the same man in a different sense may be said both to be in Christ and out of Christ; it is true the Apostle says in the first, that they were chosen in Christ before the world was.

1. If you respect the eternal decree and determination of God, so they were in Christ, for God did purpose to make Jesus Christ a Mediator between God and man, by whose blood they should be saved.

2. Though they were in Christ in regard of God's decree, yet they were without Christ in regard of the application of the blood of Christ to their souls: for till a man hath Faith, he can make no application of the love of God to him, for he that hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his, though they were in Christ in regard of the eternal decree of God, yet they were without Christ in regard of the actual application of the love of God to them; for they could not apply to their own souls that Christ did love them and own them as his children, till they were brought into a converted estate.

I come now to the question which I promised to resolve, which is this:

What it is to be without Christ.

I answer it concludes in it these three things; 1. To be without the saving knowledge of Christ; 2. To be without any actual interest in Christ; and 3. to be without any spiritual communion with Christ.

Now if you ask me which of these is chiefly here meant, that these Ephesians were without; I answer the two former, for they were both

without the true knowledge of Christ; and also without any actual interest in Christ.

1. To be without Christ is to be without the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ: though a man during his unconverted estate, may gather together a great deal of notional knowledge, yet the Scripture doth lay him under this condition, that he is a man without Christ. Now a man may be said to be without the knowledge of Christ in these 5 particulars.

1. A man may have a common knowledge of Christ, and yet be without a spiritual knowledge of Christ, he may have a natural knowledge by the works of God, by hearing, reading, or the like, and yet be without a spiritual knowledge, to know Christ in a spiritual manner.

2. A man may have a notional, and yet be without an experimental knowledge of Christ; and hence it is that the Scripture expreseth the difference between the knowledge of the righteous and of the wicked man; the Lord plants wisdom in the secret parts of his children, but in the outward parts, in the head and in the brain of wicked men, God makes his Children to know Christ in the inward parts.

3. An unregenerate man may have a contemplative, and yet be without an affective knowledge of Jesus Christ; wicked men may have a speculative knowledge of Christ, they may know Christ as a man knows his neighbor, but now a believer knows Christ as a wife knows her Husband, a believer knows Christ and he loves Christ too, an unregenerate man he may have much light, but he has but little heat in his knowledge, he may grow much in a contemplative, but not in an affective knowledge, he knows what he should do, but he will not do what he knows. A wicked man's knowledge is like the Moon, it hath light with it but no heat, but a godly man's knowledge

is like the Sun, that hath heat as well as light, a Believer loves Christ as well as he knows him.

4. An unregenerate man he is without an appropriating knowledge of Christ, he doth not know Christ to be his Christ, there are none that do know Christ to be theirs but those that do belong to Christ, now in this sense, a man may be a great knowing man, and yet not know Jesus Christ.

5. And lastly, an unregenerate man, he is without a practical knowledge of Jesus Christ; they know much but do but little, as in Tit. 1:16. In their words they profess to know him, but in their works they deny him, though they know God, yet they glorify him not as God, they know many things, but will do nothing: Now put all these together, wherein an unregenerate man is without the knowledge of Christ, he is without a spiritual, and experimental knowledge, without an affective, and apprehensive knowledge, and without an appropriating and practical knowledge of Christ.

2. To be without Christ implies not only to be without a saving knowledge of Christ, but also to be without an actual interest in Christ, that at that time you were without Christ, that is, during the time of your unconverted estate, you were without any real actual interest in Christ; from whence observe,

That every man during the time of his unregeneracy, is without any actual interest in Christ.

In the handling of this point, I shall only do these three things.

1. I shall show you the properties of a man without Christ;
2. I shall show you the characters of a man without Christ; And,
3. I shall show you the misery of a man without Christ: and then come to the Uses.

1. I shall show you the properties of a man without Christ: and in treating of this subject, I wish from my soul that if I cannot allure you, yet that I

might affright you, and thoroughly awaken you, to see the indispensable need that you have of getting an interest in Jesus Christ; and here I shall discover to you eight particular properties of a man without Christ.

1. Every man without Jesus Christ he is a base man.
2. He is a bondman:
3. He is a beggarly man:
4. He is a blind man:
5. He is a deformed man:
6. He is a disconsolate man:
7. He is a dead man; and,
8. He is a damned man.

These are the eight properties of a man without Jesus Christ: 1 Every man without Jesus Christ is a base man; though thou art born of the blood of Nobles, and though thou art of the offspring of Princes, yet if thou hast not the Royal blood of Jesus Christ running in thy veins, thou art a base man. In Dan. 11:21, and in Psal. 15:4, in both those places you read of vile persons; such is every man without Christ: and he must needs be so, because it is only Christ that can take off that baseness wherein everyone is by nature; as in Isa. 43:4, says God, Since thou wert precious in mine eyes, thou becamest honorable, and in 1 Pet. 2:7. Unto you which believe Christ is precious, it is Jesus Christ, that puts a Diamond of honor and glory upon men, they are all base men that are out of Jesus Christ, and that in these three respects:

1. They come from a base original;
2. They commit base actions; And,
3. They aim at base ends.

For the 1. Every man that is out of Christ he comes from a base original, he hath not his origination from the Spirit, but from the Flesh, he proceeds not from God who is the Father of Lights, but from the Devil who is the Prince of Darkness.

2. He is base because he commits base actions, all the actions and services of a Christless man, at the best are but as filthy rags, and dead works. A man in his unconverted estate, he is the slave and drudge of the Devil, a worker of wickedness, still fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, being given over to vile affections.

3. He is a base man without Christ, because he aims at base ends in whatsoever he does; and that two ways, 1. In this world he aims at base ends in his hearing, reading, praying, and profession of Religion, he minds himself and his own ends in all: And 2. all his actions tend to base ends in another world; as the actions of a man in Christ tend to Salvation, so the actions of a Christless man tend to damnation.

2. A man without Christ is not only a base man, but a bondman; this Christ tells us of in Joh. 8:36. If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed, intimating, that if you have an interest in Christ to free you from the slavery of sin and Satan, you are slaves indeed: this bondage and slavery likewise consists in three particulars: 1. they are slaves to sin; 2. to the Devil; and 3. to the Law.

1. Every Christless man he is a slave to sin; in Joh. 8:34, says Christ there, Verily I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin, and in 2 Pet. 2:19. While they promise them liberty, the themselves are servants of corruption, for of whom a man is overcome, of the same he is brought in bondage. Every man by nature is a slave to his lusts, and a slave to sin, and

to the creatures; God made man Lord over all the creatures, but man hath made himself servant to all the creatures.

2. He is not only in bondage and slavery to sin, but to the devil too, as in 2 Tim. 2, the two last verses, says the Apostle, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

3. He is in bondage to the Law, that is, he does nothing in obedience to the Law; and this is the great misery of a man without Christ, he is bound to keep the whole Law of God: there is a very strange expression in Rev. 18:13. Saint John tells there that all those that did worship the Beast, shall cry woe and alas, for Babylon is fallen, and shall cry for the slaves and souls of men: all wicked men are slaves to Antichrist, to sin and to the Law, and this is the great misery of an unregenerate man.

3. Thou art not only a base and a bond man, but a beggarly man too without Jesus Christ; for all the treasures of grace and mercy are hid and locked up in Christ as in a common Magazine or Storehouse: Col. 2:3. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; if you are out of Christ you have nothing, as Rev. 4:17. Thou sayest thou art rich and increased in goods, and hast need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked; you will grant that he is a poor and beggarly man, that wants these four things, meat for his belly, clothes for his back, money for his purse, and a house to put his head in, why in all these respects every man that is out of Christ is a beggarly man.

1. A beggarly man is one that hath no meat to put in his belly, and all you that have no interest in Jesus Christ are beggarly, in this regard, because you

do not feed upon that bread of life, nor drink of that water of life, the Lord Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed, without which your souls will starve for hunger.

2. You will say he is a poor man, that hath no clothes to put on his back: thus every man out of Christ is not only poor but naked; Rev. 3:17. Thou knewest not that thou wert poor and miserable, and blind and naked, that man that is not clothed with the long Robes of Christ's righteousness, he is a naked man and exposed to the wrath and vengeance of Almighty God, those men have only a cloak to cover their sinful nakedness and shame, that are clothed with the robes of Christ's righteousness. It is said of Jacob, that he obtained the blessing from his Father by being clad in the garments of his eldest brother, and so are we only blessed by God our Father, as we are clothed with the robes of our elder brother Jesus Christ.

3. That man is a beggarly man that hath no money in his purse; why so, though your purses be full of Gold, yet if your hearts be not full of Grace, you are very beggarly men, Luk 16:11. Grace is only the true riches; all the durable riches are bound up in Christ.

4. And lastly, he is a beggarly man, that hath not a house to put his head in, that is destitute of a house to lodge in, and a bed to lie on; why so, thou that hast no interest in Christ, when thy days are expired and death comes, thou knowest not what to do, nor whither to go, thou canst not say with the godly man that when death takes thee hence thou shalt be received into everlasting habitations, you cannot say that Christ is gone before to prepare a place for thee in heaven: So that in these four particulars you see, that a Christless man is a very beggarly man, having neither food for his body, nor clothes for his back, nor money in his purse, nor a house to put his head in, unless it be in a dungeon of darkness, with Devils and damned spirits.

4. Another property of a man without Christ is, that he is a blind man: Rev. 3:17, and knewest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked and hence it is, that wicked men during their unregeneracy are called darkness, in Eph. 5:8. You were sometime darkness, but now are you like in the Lord, walk as children of the light: So light is come into the world, and yet men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. Jesus Christ is to the soul that which the sun is to the earth, take away the Sun from the earth, and it is nothing but a dungeon of darkness: so take away Christ from the Soul and it is nothing but a dungeon of the Devil; though there be a Christ in the world, yet if the heart be shut, and Jesus Christ be not in thee, thou art in a state of darkness and blindness.

5. Every man without Christ, is a deformed man, as you may read in Ezek. 16:3-6,8,11,14, verses, Thus saith the Lord God, thy Nativity is in the land of Canaan, thy Father was an Amorite, &c. and in the 6th verse. When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee (when thou wast in thy blood) Live, yea I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; when a poor child lies weltering in its blood, not swaddled, nor washed, nor looked after, what a sad condition is it in? And thus were you says God; but then read on in the 7th verse, I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the Field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, &c. and so again in the 14th verse, Thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty; for it was perfect through my comeliness that I had put upon thee, saith the Lord, intimating that before Christ looks upon a soul, he lies weltering in his own blood, and not able to help himself, but when he becomes comely through Christ's comeliness that is cast upon him; if you want Christ, you want your best ornament: a man without Christ is

like a body full of sores and botches, he is like a dark house without light, and like a body without a head, and such a man must needs be a deformed man.

6. Another property of a Christless man is that he is a disconsolate man, Christ is the only spring of comfort, and the fountain of all joy and consolation, take away Christ from the Soul, and it is all one, as if you did take away the Sun from the firmament; if a man hath all the blessings in the world, yet if he want Christ, he wants that which should sweeten all the rest of his comforts. In Exod. 15:23:25, you read there of the waters of Marah, they were so bitter, that none could drink of them, but then the Lord shown Moses a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet; why Jesus Christ he is this tree, that sweetens the bitterness of any outward affliction, and he can make all thy sorrows to flee away; there is nothing in the world that sweetens the comforts, and gives us joy, in the possession of the things of this world, more than the having an interest in Jesus Christ: it is not (Beloved) the having of much of the creature in your house; but the having of Christ in your hearts, that makes you live comfortably; all the bread you eat will be but bread of sorrow, if you do not feed upon the body of Jesus Christ, and all your drink will be but wine of astonishment, if you do not drink of the blood of Jesus Christ; without an interest in Christ, all your comforts are but crosses, and all your mercies are but miseries, as in Job 20:22. In the fullness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits, though you have abundance of the things of this life, though you have more than enough, yet if you have not an interest in Christ, you have nothing.

7. Another property of a man out of Christ is, that he is a dead man. You know that common place in 1 Joh. 5:12. He that hath the Son he hath life,

and he that hath not the Son he hath not life, hence we read in Eph. 2:1, that unregenerate men are dead in trespasses and sins, and the reason is, because that Christ is a Believers life: Col. 3:3. Our life is hid with Christ in God, take away Christ from a man and you take away his life, and take away life from a man and he is a dead lump of flesh; unregenerate men are termed strangers to the life of godliness, and therefore must needs be dead in their sins; though they do enjoy the life of a man, yet if the life that he lives be not by the Faith of the Son of God, he is spiritually dead: As for example, you know a dead man he feels nothing, do what you will to him, he does not feel it; so a man that is spiritually dead, he does not feel the weight of his sins, though they are a heavy burden pressing him down into the pit of Hell, he is a stranger to the life of godliness, and past feeling, given over to a reprobate sense, so that he feels not the weight and burden of all his sins.

2. A dead man he hath a title to nothing here in this life, though he were never so rich, yet he loseth his title to all, and his riches goes from him to another; why so, being spiritually dead, you can lay claim to nothing, neither to grace, nor mercy, heaven or happiness by Jesus Christ.

3. A dead man is still rotting and returning to the dust from whence he came; and so a man that is spiritually dead he falls from iniquity to iniquity, and from one sin to another, till at last he drops down into Hell fire.

8. The last property of a Christless man is, that he is a damned man, if he live and die without Christ he is a damned man. So Joh. 3:18. He that believeth not, he is condemned already, he is as surely damned as if he were in hell already, he that is without Jesus Christ, must needs go without Heaven, for Heaven and Glory and happiness are entailed upon him; Heaven is given to none, but those that are heirs together with Christ, and therefore you that are without Christ must needs be without heaven, and

consequently without happiness and salvation, and therefore must needs be damned. So that you see in these eight particular properties, in what a sad and miserable condition every Christless man is in, and oh! That what has been now declared concerning the wretchedness of a Christless man, might provoke every soul of you to a holy eagerness and earnestness of spirit, above all your getting's to labor to get Jesus Christ.

SERM. III. EPH. 2:12. - THAT AT THAT TIME YE WERE WITHOUT CHRIST.

That at that time ye were without Christ, - Eph. 2:12.

We come now to the 2nd Question, which I promised you to resolve.

Quest. What are the Characters of a Man without Jesus Christ.

This Query is very necessary, because hereby we may know, whether we are the men that are without Jesus Christ or no; now I shall reduce these characters of a Christless man into these seven heads, and go over them very briefly.

1. That man that is without the Spirit of Christ, he is without any real actual interest in Christ: this the Apostle lays down to us in so many express terms in Rom. 8:9. If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his: Christ and the Spirit are inseparable companions; have the one, and you enjoy the other; want the one, and you are without the other; And here (Beloved) to apply this more particularly, you are without any interest in Christ, if you are without the Spirit of Christ in the threefold operation of it.

1. If you are without the enlightening work of the Spirit, to teach your minds to know Christ.

2. If you are without the inclining work of the Spirit, to draw your hearts to love Christ; And,

3. If you are without the constraining work of the Spirit, to empower your wills to obey Christ.

If you are thus without the Spirit of Christ, in these three particulars, you can lay no just claim, to any interest in Jesus Christ. With what face therefore can any of you lay claim to Christ's person, that are not guided by his Spirit, but are led by the corrupt dictates of your own hearts, and follow the desires of the flesh and of the mind? You that are thus, can lay no claim to Jesus Christ, for whosoever hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his: this is the first character.

2. He that is without any saving power, derived from Jesus Christ, enabling him to mortify his bosom lusts, that man is without Jesus Christ, as in Gal. 5:24, the Apostle tells us there, that they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts, thereby intimating, that they that have not crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof, have no interest in the Lord Jesus Christ: when Christ came in the flesh, we crucified him, but if ever Christ comes into thy soul, he will crucify thee; they that are Christ's, they do crucify the flesh: Christ will be avenged on thy sins, and crucify thy lusts, and kill thy corruptions, when he comes into thy soul. But here (beloved) I do not mean a total subduing of sin, as if every lust and corruption should be quite subdued; but only thus far, to give a deadly blow to sin, that sin shall not reign nor bear sway in thy soul as it hath done formerly: sin in the heart of one that is in Christ, shall be like those Monarchs spoken of in Dan. 7:12, it is said their Dominions shall be

taken away, but their lives shall be prolonged for a little season; just so it is with sin in the heart of a believer, the dominion of sin is taken away, but the life and being of it is preserved for a little season: there shall be some remainders of sin still, in the best of God's servants, but sin shall not reign in their mortal bodies, and therefore you that never had any power to mortify your sins, that never had any bridle of restraint to any of your lusts, lay no claim to Jesus Christ, for they that are his have crucified the flesh with the lusts thereof. I might here make use of a story (that I have often told you of) in the History of Scotland, there is mention made of an Island, situate in the midst of the Sea, between Scotland, and Ireland, and there was a great controversy between the two Nations, to which of the Kingdoms this Island did belong, and a great Politician to decide the controversy, commands a great company of Toads and Frogs to be gathered together, and put into the Island, and if those venomous and unclean beasts should live there, then the Island belonged to Scotland, but if they died, then it belonged to Ireland, for no unclean creature does inhabit there: just so it is with us; there is a great controversy between Christ and the Devil, to which thy soul does belong, why now if poisonous lusts, and venomous sins, can live and thrive in thy soul, then you belong to the Devil; but if these lusts and sins die in your soul, then you belong to Jesus Christ.

3. Another Character is this, that man that is without unfeigned love to the person of Christ, that man is without any interest in Christ; for everyone that hath Christ loves him; and everyone that hath him not, loves him not: 1 Cor. 16:2. If any man loves not the Lord Christ, let him be accursed, he that does not love Christ, hath no interest in Christ, and shall be accursed when Christ shall come to judgment.

Obj. But some will be ready to say, If this be so, that the not loving of Christ, be an argument of the not having of Christ, why then I think I am well enough, for I do love Christ with all my heart.

Ans. I will tell thee in the very words of Christ, who it is that loves him: Joh. 14:24. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; does not thy conscience tell thee O man, that thou dost not care for any command of Jesus Christ? Let him command what he will, you will do what you list; you see here Christ tells thee plainly, that he that loveth him not, keepeth not his sayings; I beseech you therefore in the fear of God, take heed of deceiving your own souls, in thinking you love Christ, when there is no such matter, but labor to love him in truth, and evidence your love to him, by keeping of his Commandments.

4. That man that is without any saving knowledge of Christ, is without any actual interest in Christ, there is no man that hath Christ but knows Christ; (Mistake me not) I do not say that every man that hath Christ knows he hath him, for a man may have Christ, and yet not know of it, for the present; but this I say, he that hath an interest in Christ, whosoever he be, he must know Christ in part, Joh. 8:54,55. You say that God is your God, and yet you have not known him, 'tis a very strange place, you say that God and salvation by him, and all is yours, and yet you have not known him. (Oh my Beloved) you say you have Christ, and yet you have not known Christ, he himself will convince you at the last day, of laying a false claim to him, read Joh. 1:12, compared with the 24th and 26th verses.

Now when I tell you that a man without the knowledge of Christ, is without any interest in Christ, I do not say, that those are without Christ, that have not so great a measure of knowledge as other men have; but when

you are without the knowledge of Christ, accompanied with these two circumstances, then I can safely pronounce you to be a Christless man:

1. If you be without the knowledge of Christ, and yet sit down contented in your ignorance, neither desiring, nor laboring after the knowledge of him, then I may safely say, that for the present thou art without Jesus Christ, if you are like those spoken of in 2 Pet. 3:5. For this they are willingly ignorant of, that by the word of God, the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water: or like those in Job 2:14, that say unto God; Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways: if you are such as these, I can safely pronounce you to be Christless men.

2. Not only when you are contentedly ignorant, but likewise when with obscurity in your Judgments, you add obstinacy in your wills; when thou art an Ignorant, and dost not know, and wilt not know, that hast not learned, and yet will not learn, but art like those spoken of in Psal. 82:5. They know not, neither will they understand, he does not say, they know not, neither do they, but neither will they understand; a godly man may have the former of these: although you be very ignorant, yet if you desire to know, you may have an interest in Christ; but I am bold to say (in case you are ignorant and yet sit down contentedly and do not care to know more, and obstinately and will not learn more) that you have no interest in Christ, and therefore keep off your hands from Christ, lay no claim to him, for you have nothing to do with him, he is none of yours.

5. Another Character is this, that man that is without a hearing ear to the voice of Christ, and an obedient heart to the commands of Christ, that man hath no interest in Christ: I shall give you two plain texts of Scripture to prove this, one is in Joh. 8:47. He that is of God heareth God's word; you therefore hear them not, because you are not of God; they that are of God,

hear his Word; those that belong to Christ, and have an interest in him, hear his Word, not only with the ear, but with the heart, and so in 1 Joh. 1:6, says the Apostle, We are of God, he that is of God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us; hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error: and therefore thou obstinate and stout hearted wretch, that canst lie like a flint under the Word of God, and suffer no command to make impression upon thy spirit; verily thou canst lay no just claim to Jesus Christ.

6. That man that uses greater industry, and takes greater complacency in the acting and committing of sin, then ever he did in the exercise of any grace or the performance of any duty, that man is without Jesus Christ. You have an excellent place for this purpose in Joh. 3:8,10. He that committeth sin, is of the Devil, he doth not say, he that does sin, is of the Devil, but he that commits sin with delight, that makes a trade of sin, he is of the Devil, and so on in the 10th ver. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil; whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God, he does not belong to God, he that does not righteousness with delight, and complacency, with joy and industry: as he that doth commit sin, that is, act it with delight, and makes a trade of it, is of the Devil, so he that does not do righteousness, that is, with delight, and joy, and cheerfulness, that man is not of Christ: you then that can sin with delight, but perform holy duties with a flat, and dead, and dull spirit, you that never took so much delight to sanctify the Sabbath, as you have done in profaning of it, you that never took so much delight, in the performing of duties to God, as you have done in sinning against God, lay off hands from Jesus Christ if your hearts be full of sin, you can have no interest in him; In Joh. 9:16, some of the Pharisees said, this man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath: This had

been a very good argument, had it been well applied, had Christ indeed not kept the Sabbath: if it may be truly said of you, that thou dost not make conscience of keeping of the Sabbath, or of performing any holy duties, I can truly say of you, that you are not of God: now then examine yourselves by this argument, whether you are of God or no; if you do profane the Sabbath day, and make no conscience of performing holy duties, nor of sinning against God; this shows that you are not of God; that man that acts sin with more delight then he performs holy duties, hath no interest in Christ, as in 1 Joh. 5:18. He that is born of God sinneth not, that is, he doth not commit it with that delight and complacency as wicked men do; but he that belongs to God, he keepeth himself pure, and that wicked one toucheth him not; that is, not so, as to make him commit sin in the former sense, but he keepeth himself, he will not give himself to commit sin with that cheerfulness as wicked men do; and therefore saith the Apostle, we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

7. The last Character is this, that man is without any interest in Christ that backslides from the ways of Christ, both in judgment, and in practice: (Beloved) when a man shall backslide from the truth of Christ in judgment, and from the exercises of holy duties in practice, when he backslides both these ways, he is not in Jesus Christ: 2 Joh., ver. 9. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God, but he that abideth in the Doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son; that man that sins both in judgment and in practice, he is not of God; but he that abides in the truth of God both in judgment and in practice, he hath both the Father and the Son.

Oh therefore I beseech you in the fear of God, look about you, to see whether you are the men that have a real actual interest in Christ or no. Are

you such men as are without the spirit of Christ? Or are you without a saving power derived from Christ, enabling you to mortify your bosom lusts? Are you without an unfeigned love to the person of Christ, or without a true and saving knowledge of Christ? Are you contentedly ignorant of Christ, and care not to know more? Or are you obstinately ignorant, and will not learn more? Are you without a hearing ear, and an obedient heart to the Word of Christ? Do you take greater industry, and complacency in the committing of sin, then ever you did in the performance of any holy duty? Or do you backslide from the ways of Christ both in judgment, and in practice? If there be a concurrence of these seven Characters in you, then conclude that you have no interest at all in Christ, conclude then that at this time you are without Jesus Christ. Thus now I have done with the second question which I promised you to answer I shall now spend a little time in winding up what I have said in a practical Use, and then come to the third Question.

And in the application of this I shall direct my speech to two sorts of people: 1. To those that are plunged into a spiritual delusion, to say they have an interest in Christ when they have not. 2. To those that say they have not an interest in Christ when they have.

1. To you that say you have an interest in Christ, when you have not; give me leave to propound these 3 or 4 questions to you: first let me ask this question, Were you ever without Christ, yea or no? If you answer no, then let me tell you thus much, that that man that says he had Christ ever, I may safely say he had Christ never: thou that dost say that thou hadst Christ ever since thou wert born, I can safely say that thou hadst Christ never since thou wert born, for every man is born a Christless man.

2. Thou that sayest thou hast an interest in Christ, let me ask you this question, How came you by your interest in Christ? Do you think that Christ fell from heaven, into your bosom whether you would or no? How came you by Christ then? Did you ever make a powerful prayer unto God for him? Did you ever sigh, and sob, and cry mightily unto God for him? Did you ever see your misery without him? And beg the Father earnestly for him? For God is not prodigal of his son to give him to those that never ask him.

3. Let me ask you this question, Did you ever see an absolute necessity in your own souls, of getting an interest in Jesus Christ? Were you ever sensible of the want of Christ, and of the worth of Christ, of the need you have of Christ, and in what a sad, and miserable, and deplorable, and damnable condition you are in without Christ? If you are not sensible of this, you are to this day without Jesus Christ.

4. Let me ask you this question, How can you evidence that you have an interest in Christ, by your walking? What saith the Apostle in 2 Cor. 5:17. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, and all things are become new; are you new creatures? Are all your old sins passed away? The Apostle tells you, that they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts: why now, hast thou killed any lust in thy heart, or rather do not every lust reign in thee, with as much power as ever they did? If it be so, then surely you have no interest in Christ at all.

Thus much for the first sort of people, those that are plunged into a spiritual delusion, we come now to the second sort of people, those that are doubting, and perplexed souls, that say they have not an interest in Christ when they have; those which say they are without Christ, when indeed they

are not, as there are many such people in the world: now to such as these I have two or three words of consolation. 1. Let me speak this for your comfort, it is a very ordinary thing with the people of God, to pass very hard and uncharitable sentences upon their own souls, and to run upon very sad mistakes in reference to their own salvation. A child of God he sees so many lusts in his own heart, and so many sins within him, that he can scarce have a charitable thought of his own soul, as David when he said, The Lord had forsaken him, and cast him off forever: godly men are very apt to pass very harsh censures upon their own souls.

2. Let me tell you this for your comfort, you may have Christ, and yet not know that you have him; it may be with you as it was with Mary Magdalene when she was talking to Christ face to face, yet says she, they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him; so you may have an interest in Christ, and yet not know of it; in Joh. 14:4. Christ told his Disciples there, says he, Whither I go you know, and the way you know, Thomas saith unto him, Lord we know not whither thou goest, therefore how can we know the way? Now the reason why they did not know, as Augustine well observes, was because they did not know their own thoughts, they thought they did not know, but yet Christ he knew that they did know. It is with a believer sometimes as it was with Benjamin, the cup was in his sack, and yet he did not know of it: now Benjamin was the beloved of Joseph, so you may be the beloved ones of Christ, and yet not know of it.

3. To you that think you are without Christ, when you are not, let me tell thee this for thy comfort, though the having of Christ, be indispensably necessary for the bringing of our souls to heaven, yet the knowing that we have Christ is not so much necessary. As it is with a man asleep in a ship,

the ship may bring him home safe to the harbor, and yet he not know of it? So Christ may bring us through a sea of boisterous afflictions and temptations to heaven, our haven of rest, and yet we not know of it, till we come there.

4. Let me tell you this likewise for your comfort, though you do not know that Christ is yours, yet Christ doth know that you are his: will you count your child an unhappy child because he does not know that you are his father? 'tis no matter though the child does not know that you are his father, so long as you know that he is your child; so it is no great matter though you do not know, that Christ is yours, so long as Christ knows that you are his, for the foundation of the Lord standeth sure, the Lord knows who are his. Thus now beloved I have done with this use that belongs to this examination, both for those that say they have Christ, when they have not; and also for those that say they have not Christ when they have.

SERM. IV. EPH. 2:12. - THAT AT THAT TIME YE WERE WITHOUT CHRIST.

That at that time ye were without Christ, - Eph. 2:12.

I come now to the 3rd Query which I promised to handle, which is this; to show the misery and sad condition of a man without an interest in Jesus Christ: and oh that I could speak it, and you hear it, with a bleeding heart, to see in what a dismal, and doleful, and deplorable condition every poor soul in the world without Christ is plunged into: I shall reduce all that I have to say, touching this particular, under these two heads, to show you 1. Positively, what he undergoes: and 2. Privatively, what he wants: I shall run over them briefly.

1. For the Positive part, the misery of a man out of Christ, lies in these three particulars: there are these three great evils, that every man out of Jesus Christ lies under.

1. A man out of Christ is surrounded and compassed about with misery, which way soever he turns himself, and to illustrate this the more fully, I shall here lay you down 8 particulars, wherein a Christless man is compassed about with miseries on all sides; Thou art surrounded with

misery, Oh Christless man, if thou lookest either outward, or inward; upward or downward; forward, or backward; on thy righthand, or on thy left; nothing but miseries accompany thee.

1. If thou lookest outward, all the creatures are armed against thee; and hence it is so often expressed in Scripture, that the Beast shall be at war with the wicked, but at peace with the godly: all the creatures are against thee to avenge their Masters quarrel.

2. Look within thee, and there you shall find a galling, an accusing, and a condemning conscience, haling thee to the judgment seat, and witnessing against thee, thy conscience shall be like a thousand witnesses, to witness against thee, and to register and enroll all thy sins till the day of judgment.

3. Look upwards into the heavens, and there is nothing but an angry God, a severe Judge; that hath a flame of fire, a furbished sword, and a sharp arrow, and all against thee, as in Rom. 1:18. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; that hold the truth in unrighteousness.

4. If you look downwards, there is death ready to receive you, which is but as a back-door to let you into hell, and if you look lower, there is nothing but a dungeon of darkness, where infernal spirits are reserved in chains of darkness, to the judgment of the great day. Which way soever a Christless man looks there are nothing but miseries accompany him; if he looks outward, there the creatures are against him; if he looks inward, there is a galled, and accusing conscience ready to accuse him; if he look above him, there is an angry God against him; if he look below him, there is the Devil ready to receive him: a Christless man is in a most sad and doleful condition, as I might exemplify by this familiar similitude; Suppose a man were falling into a great and dark dungeon, wherein there were nothing but

Toads and Serpents, and all manner of venomous beasts, and as he were falling in, should catch hold of a twig of a tree that might grow over the mouth of the dungeon; and then suppose a lean beast should come and begin to gnaw and bite off that twig, what a miserable case will that poor man be in? Why just so it is with thee oh Christless man, thy life in this twig, and death is the lean beast that is biting off this twig of life, and then thou failest down into a dungeon of darkness, there is nothing but the twig of life between thee and hell.

5. If you look before you, there is nothing but misery likewise approaching thee; and these are the snares and temptations the Devil lays in thy way to ensnare thee, and entice thee to sin; there is not a step thou treadest, nor any company thou goest into, but the Devil lays a trap to ensnare thee.

6. If you look behind you, there is nothing but a huge heap of past sins unrepented of unsatisfied for, and unpardoned, that are able to sink thee into the bottomless pit of hell, how then canst thou think of thy past sins but with a sad heart? How dreadful is it to consider how many thousands of sins thou hast been guilty of and yet never hast been humbled for them, nor never shed one penitential tear for them; the guilt of the least of them, being enough to plunge thee into hell forever.

7. Look on thy right hand, and there are all the blessings of God, all thy fullness and prosperity; thy riches, and great estate, are all made a curse to thee: God gives a wicked man riches for his hurt, Eccl. 5:13. Prosperity shall kill the soul of the wicked: Oh Christless man thy riches and prosperity, are all instruments and means to further thy everlasting ruin and destruction.

8. Look on thy left hand, and there are all the miseries, and afflictions, and sufferings, and reproaches, and diseases, and sad accidents that you meet with, as so many forerunners of those unutterable, and intolerable, and unsupportable sufferings, which a Christless man shall undergo to all eternity.

Oh then unhappy man that thou art, that hast not an interest in Jesus Christ! Without thee, and within thee; above thee, and below thee; before thee, and behind thee; on thy right hand, and on thy left, there are nothing but miseries accompany thee on every side. Thus much for the first positive part, of the misery of a Christless man; it is a very sad point that I am now upon, and therefore I shall sweeten all in the close, with two or three words of consolation.

But 2. (Beloved follow me now) Thou that art a Christless man or woman, thy misery in the positive part of it lies in this, there will be nothing in the world so dismal and intolerable to thy soul, as the apprehensions of a God without Jesus Christ: God that is an amiable, and desirable, and an universal good in Christ, yet out of Christ, this great God that is so good and rich in mercy, and free in grace, is clothed with red, and Scarlet; you that are out of Christ, cannot look upon God, but with dreadful apprehensions of him: you cannot look upon God, as a God of mercy to pardon you, but as an angry Judge ready to condemn you, not as a friend that seeks your welfare, but as an enemy that sets himself in battle array against you to ruin you: you cannot look upon him as the Rock of Ages, in the cliffs whereof you may find safety, but as a burdensome stone, the weight whereof will beat you down and grind you to powder: you cannot look upon God as a Refiners fire to purge away your dross, but as a consuming fire and everlasting burning to consume you to ashes; these, these are the awakening, and soul-

affrighting apprehensions, which every poor soul that hath not an interest in Christ, must see, the apprehensions of God will be very dreadful to you.

3. Your misery in the positive part of it, lies in this, that all the creatures and blessings you enjoy in the world are a curse to you; for all blessings are given in and through Christ, there is no blessing given thee as a blessing, nor no mercy as a mercy, if Christ which is the mercy of all mercies be not given to thee: and here I shall show you your misery in this particular, under these five heads.

1. To have an estate is a blessing of God, but yet all the estate, and revenues, and substance which you have gotten, by the labor of your hands, and the sweat of your brows are all accursed to you, if you have not an interest in Jesus Christ, as in Deut. 28:17,18. Cursed shalt thou be in the City and cursed shalt thou be in the field; cursed shalt thou be in thy basket, and in thy store; cursed shalt thou be in the fruit of thy body, and of thy land, in the increase of thy kine, and in the flocks of thy sheep; cursed shalt thou be when thou goest forth, and cursed when thou comest in: and so in Job 20:15. He shall swallow down riches, but he shall vomit them up again: and in Eccl. 5:13 says Solomon, There is a sore evil which I have seen under the Sun, namely riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.

2. You are cursed in your house likewise, as in Job 28:15. The terrors of God shall dwell in the tabernacles of the wicked, and brimstone shall be scattered throughout his habitation: and so in that place I quoted before, Deut. 28:19.

3. He is cursed in his name, as in Prov. 16:7. The name of the wicked shall not.

4. He is cursed in his calling, as in Prov. 21:4. The ploughing, of the wicked is sin, and in Deut. 28:20. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing,

vexation, and rebuke, in all thou settest thy hand unto, for to do.

5. He is cursed not only in his estate, in his house, in his Land, in his calling, but in his eating and drinking too; you have a strange expression for this in Job. 20:23. When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him when he is eating; so in Psal. 38:30,31. While the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of the Lord came upon them.

Thus then you see the positive part of man's misery out of Christ, what he undergoes: We come now to show you the privative part, of his misery, what he wants; and here very much might be spoken in declaring the misery of a Christless man in the privative part of it, in those things which he wants in being without an interest in Christ; but I shall run over this briefly, and comprise all that I have to say to you under these six heads, and then come to the application: first then, are you without Christ? Why then you are without strength, as in Joh. 25:5. Without me you can do nothing, says Christ; nay Paul goes further in 2 Cor. 3:5. We are of ourselves as of ourselves, says he, not able to think a good thought, but all our sufficiency is from God: herein lies the misery of a man out of Christ, he is able to do nothing, he is like Sampson without his hair, he that before could break Iron bands like so many straws, now his strength was no more than another man's: (Beloved) you are very weak indeed, if you want Christ; in Isaiah. 45:54, it is said there, that Christ is made unto a believer, righteousness and strength; now if you want Christ, you want righteousness by way of acceptance, and you want strength by way of assistance. But here to branch out this more particularly, I shall show you in five particulars, wherein a man without Jesus Christ wants strength.

1. Every man out of Christ, wants strength to perform any duty, as in Rom. 8:26. We know not what to pray for, as we ought, we are able to do nothing that is spiritually good of ourselves, all our duties and services, without the righteousness of Christ added to them, are but like so many ciphers, now you know put 1,000 ciphers together, and they make no sum, but if one figure be prefixed to them, they make an innumerable number; why so all our duties of themselves are worth nothing, but then Christ being added to them, that puts an estimate upon them, and makes them of a considerable value and worth.

2. You are without strength to exercise any grace; a dead man is as well able to stir, as a man without Christ is able to step one step heavenward; if God should say, I will save thy soul and give thee heaven, couldst thou but perform one duty, or exercise one Grace, thou couldst not do it, and therefore Christ tells us in Joh. 15. Unless you be in me, you can bring forth no fruit.

3. Without Christ thou art without strength to subdue any lust; Oh how unable art thou to keep under a predominant and a turbulent lust! Every sin will prevail and domineer in thy soul: in Gal. 2:20, says Paul, I have crucified sin, yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me: the messenger of Satan, that was sent to buffet Paul, had prevailed over him, if Christ had not helped him; you are not able to subdue any lust without Christ.

4. You are without strength to resist any temptation; in Eph. 6:10. Paul exhorts them there, to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, not in the power of their own might, for they were not able to stand of themselves by their own strength, but be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; so David when he came to fight against great Goliath, had he gone out to meet him in his own strength, he had been overcome and

devoured, but he went against him in the name, and in the strength of the Lord of hosts.

5. A man without Christ is without strength, to bear or undergo any afflictions, every affliction that is but like a feather, to one that is in Christ, will be like a lump of lead upon thee; a godly man if he hath any way withdrawn himself from Christ's aid and assistance, a little affliction will sink him, for, it is given us of God, not only to do but to suffer for his sake, Phil. 2:21. Intimating, that unless God doth enable us to suffer, we are not able to bear up our spirits under any affliction. Thus then you see, that if you want an interest in Christ, you want strength in these five particulars, to perform any duty, to exercise any grace, to subdue any lust, to resist any temptation, or to bear any affliction; but,

2. If you are without Christ, you are not only without strength, but without growth likewise; Jesus Christ is to the souls of men, what the warm beams of the Sun are to the earth, take away the influence of the warm beams of the Sun from the earth, and then all the grass of the field and every herb and green thing will die and wither away presently: so Christ he is our Sun of righteousness, take away Christ from a man, and there will no blossoms of grace bud forth in that man's heart: Adams stock is a barren root, upon which no branch of grace will spring forth; you can never bring forth any fruit unto God, unless you be grafted not upon Adams Stock, but upon the Stock of the root of Jesse; a man during his unconverted estate, he is the Devils slave, and he never brings forth fruit, till he come to be in Christ; only in and through Christ, we are enabled to bring forth acceptable fruit unto God.

3. Without Christ, thou are likewise without worth, though thou art the son of a Noble, and of the offspring of Princes, that canst lay claim to

thousands and ten thousands per annum, yet without Christ thou art poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked, Rev. 3:17. For it is Christ alone that is the repository and storehouse of all wisdom and knowledge, and all the treasures of it are bound up in him.

4. Without Christ you are without comfort: this is a deplorable misery, a man without Christ, is without comfort. As that would be an uncomfortable dwelling, where the Sun should not shine by day, nor the Moon by night: even so would thy soul be very disconsolate, if Christ did not shine in upon thy heart, the comforts of a child of God does either ebb or flow, as Christ either comes to him, or goes from him.

5. Without Christ thou art without liberty. If the son make you free, then are you free indeed, Joh. 8:36. And unless the Son make you free, you are slaves indeed, slaves to sin, slaves to your lusts, slaves to the creatures, and slaves to the devil by whom you are taken captive at his will, you are never free men and women till the Son make you free.

6. If thou art without Jesus Christ, thou art without beauty, thou art only like a carcass without life, or a body without a head; it is Christ only, that gives us beauty and comeliness. Ezek. 16:14. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty, for it was perfect through my comeliness that I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God; if we have not the comeliness of Christ put upon us, we are not comely; you have a pretty passage in Luk. 2:32. Christ is there called the glory of the children of Israel, Christ is the glory of the children of Israel that do believe in him: there is no glory, but a body full of sores and botches, in all those that are out of Christ.

And thus now (Beloved) I have done with the Doctrinal part of this point, that every man, during the state of his unregeneracy, is without any actual interest in Christ: we come now to the application, and here I might say to

you as a learned Author was wont to say, when he had been handling any terrible subject, and treating upon Doctrines of terror, he would always say in the close, Oh godly man, this belongs not to thee: so may I say to you, thou godly soul, this appertains not to thee, the misery and sad condition of a man out of Christ, belongs not to thee, thou doest not now hear the sentence which shall be passed upon thee, but thou dost now hear the misery, that thou art freed from, and redeemed from: The Use that I shall make of this, shall be by way of consolation, and the Lord uphold and comfort the hearts of all you that can lay a just claim to Jesus Christ. 1. Happy, Oh thrice happy are you, that ever you were born, that have an interest in Jesus Christ, for though God be clothed with majesty great and terrible in himself, yet you can look upon him, under apprehensions of love and mercy, peace, goodness, tenderness, and kindness; you are to look upon God not as an angry Judge to condemn you, but as a Father of mercy to comfort you; not as an adversary in battle array against you, but as a friend reconciled to you; not as a burdensome stone, that may grind you to powder, but as the rock of Ages, in the cliffs whereof you may find safety: you are to look upon God, not as a consuming fire to burn you, but as a refiners fire to purge away your dross, and sin, and corruption; it is Christ's blood only that quencheth the fire of God's anger. So that now you may look upon God under all these apprehensions of love and mercy, peace, pardon, and reconciliation, &c. if you have an interest in Jesus Christ.

2. Happy, yea thrice happy are you, in having an interest in Christ, for though you have nothing here in the world, yet you have all things: you have all things in having an interest in Christ that hath all things: you may say as Paul said of himself, 2 Cor. 6:10. As having nothing, and yet possessing all things; though thou wantest many things here below, yet if

thou hast an interest in Christ, thou hast all things. It may be thou mayest eat of the bread of affliction, and drink of the water of adversity, yet happy art thou, if withal thou canst but drink draughts of Christ's blood, if Christ bids thee eat of his body, and drink of his blood, as in Cant. 5:8. Eat oh friends, drink, yea drink abundantly oh my beloved. Happy are you that are clothed with the long white robes of Christ's righteousness: though you have nothing here below, yet you have all things, in having Christ that hath all things, 1 Cor. 3:22. All is yours, and you are Christ.

Obj. But here some may object and say, how can this be, how can it be said that a believer hath all things, when many times he hath the least of the things of this world.

Answ. I answer, a believer may be said to have all things, these four ways:

1. He hath all things equivalently.
2. All things conditionally.
3. All things finally: And,
4. All things inheritively.

1. A believer hath all things equivalently, that is, in having Christ, he hath as good as if he had all things, he hath that which is of more worth, then if he had all the World; that man is not accounted a rich man that hath much lumber and household-stuff in his house, but he that hath many Jewels in his cabinet: why now Christ he is the pearl of great price, the jewel of all jewels, in having Christ you have all things, in regard you have that which is more worth then all things.

2. A believer hath all things conditionally: if such a thing be for thy good that thou desirest, thou shalt have it, be it what it will be, as in Psal. 84:11. The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from those that live uprightly, he hath all things conditionally.

3. A believer hath everything finally, that is, the Lord intended that every creature that he made, might be for his use, the sun, moon, and stars, and all the other creatures were made for them, nay and all the Angels in heaven were made to be ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation.

4. All things are a believers inheritively, by way of right and inheritance: though he may not have all things in possession, yet he hath all things by way of reversion, he hath a right and claim to everything, Psal. 37:11. The meek shall inherit the earth. But now it may be I speak to many a poor godly man or woman, and tell them all is theirs, when it may be they have not a penny to buy bread to put in their bellies: why yet beloved let me tell you, though you have nothing, yet you have Christ that is worth all things, though you want other things, yet you do not want Christ: Beloved, you may want outward blessings, and yet not want Jesus Christ; you may want food to put in your mouths, and yet not want the bread of life, the Lord Jesus Christ to feed upon; you may want clothes to cover your nakedness, and yet not want the long robes of Christ's righteousness to cover your sinful nakedness; you may want friends to comfort, help, and relieve you, and yet not want Christ to be your friend.

There is something yet behind, by way of Consolation, but I must defer that till another opportunity.

SERM. V. EPH. 2:12. - THAT AT THAT TIME YE WERE WITHOUT CHRIST.

That at that time ye were without Christ, - Eph. 2:12.

We come now to lay down some other things by way of comfort, to those that have an interest in Christ: and oh that you that are Citizens of Heaven would read over your large Charter of Mercies, that is sealed to you in the blood of Christ, read over those many benefits, and comforts that you have by Christ, that none in the world enjoy, but you only that have an interest in him: I shall reduce all that I have to say concerning this particular under these 7 heads; you that lay an undoubted claim to Christ, you may lay claim to this sevenfold benefit by him.

1. You that have an interest in Christ, you have all things though you have nothing: this I touched upon before, you may say with the Apostle, as having nothing, yet possessing all things, though you may be without wealth and riches and Olive yards, yet herein lies your comfort, you are not without Christ, and in having him you have all things though you have nothing, for all things are given you, in and through Christ by way of entail, as in 1 Cor. 3:22. All things are yours, and ye are Christ's.

I shall a little explain this place to you; says the Apostle, Whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all is yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's: Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, (that is) all the Ministers of Christ, if you have an interest in Christ, Christ hath given gifts to his Ministers for your sakes: so that you may lay claim to all the Ministers of Christ, Paul is yours, and Apollos is yours, they are yours, because they are your lights, to guide you in the way to heaven, through the dark wilderness of this world; they are your Pastors, to feed you with knowledge and understanding, in the Mysteries of Salvation; they are your Shepherds, to gather you into the fold of Jesus Christ; they are your builders to hew and square and make you fit for Christ's spiritual building; they are your contractors or the friends of the Bridegroom, to make up a complete match between Christ and you; (I speak only in Scripture phrase) they are your Vine-dressers to prune you, and make you fit to bring forth fruit unto God: Thus all the gifts of all the Ministers in the world are intended by Christ for the good of his children; if there were no godly men in the World, there would be no Ministers in the World, and therefore these people that will hear only one kind of Ministers, such as they affect, and slight all else, they straighten their own privileges, for all the Ministers in the World are given by Christ for the benefit of his children.

But then again says the Apostle, Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the World, all is yours: you have a right to all the World, not only a civil right, but a religious right, The meek shall inherit the earth. So that if you could go to the top of an exceeding high Mountain, and look over all the whole World, you may say, Behold, I see all this is my Fathers ground, and he hath given it to Christ, even the heathen for his inheritance, and the

uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, and I having an Interest in Christ, am thereby a coheir and joint heir with him.

3. Life is yours likewise; God hath given you your lives that in that little space of time, you might provide for eternity, and labor to know God and worship him aright.

4. Death is yours likewise, death is but as it were a launching of you forth into an Ocean of endless joys and pleasures, but as a trap-door to let you into heaven; if you should never die you would be but miserable creatures; but God hath appointed death to be a means to let you into Heaven. Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord, so that living or dying, we are the Lord's.

5. Things present are yours, which includes in it, either present mercies, or present afflictions; 1. Present mercies are yours, as having a right to them, and beholding the goodness of God in them, and praising God for them, and as serving God with them, and as doing good to others by them. 2. Present afflictions are yours likewise, to humble your hearts, to wean you from the world, to quicken your desires after heaven, to purge out your corruptions, and exercise your graces, and the like; whatsoever present condition thou art in, that present condition be it what it will be, shall work for thy good.

6. Things to come are yours too; if afflictions come, or temptations come, or trouble, or want, or famine, or pestilence, or imprisonments, or anything come, they are all yours, they are ordered by Christ to be for your good; and so if mercy comes, and the blessings of another world, they are all yours, Heaven and Happiness, and Glory, Life and Salvation are all yours. Here then (Beloved) you see the first branch of a man's happiness, that hath an interest in Christ, in having Christ he hath all things, though he hath nothing, because he hath him that hath all things: this is the first.

2. That man that hath an interest in Christ, his second consolation lies in this, that all that Christ hath is his: and (oh my Beloved) this is a golden mine, that will afford you many precious comforts, I shall give them to you under these five or six particulars.

1. If you have an interest in Christ, then Christ's Father is your Father.
2. Christ's Spirit is your Spirit.
3. Christ's Righteousness is your Righteousness.
4. Christ's Graces are your Graces.
5. Christ's Peace is your Peace; And,
6. Chr. Sufferings are your Sufferings.

And (oh Beloved) see what a large field you may here walk in: 1. If you have an interest in Christ, his Father is your Father, as in Joh. 20:17, saith Christ, Behold I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God; Christ's Father is a Believers Father.

2. Christ's Spirit is your Spirit; in Joh. 14:8, says Christ, I will pray to my Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, which shall abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the World cannot receive, because it seeth him not, but you see him and know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you.

3. Christ's righteousness is your righteousness. Jer. 23:6. And this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness; So in 1 Cor. 1:30. Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

4. His Graces are your Graces. Joh. 1:14. Christ is full of grace and truth, Why? That out of his fullness we might all receive grace for grace, that is, for every Grace that is in Jesus Christ, according to our proportion and capacity we shall receive from him.

5. His peace is your peace. Joh. 14:27. My peace, says Christ, I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, the peace that we enjoy is from Christ.

6. Lastly, Christ's sufferings are your sufferings, God looks upon his sufferings for you, as if you in your own persons had done and suffered what he did, the just hath suffered for the unjust to bring you to God; the sufferings of Christ do as effectually bring you to God, as if you in your own persons had suffered upon the cross as he did, nay it doth it a great deal more, for our sufferings could not have done it. Thus having an interest in Christ, all that Christ hath is yours.

3. Take this for your comfort, that all that you have is Christ's; I shall sum up all that I have to say, concerning this, under these three comprehensive particulars:

1. Your sins are Christ's to pardon them, and satisfy God's justice for them.

2. Your sufferings are Christ's to sanctify them; And,

3. Your bodies and souls are Christ's to save them.

1. You that have an interest in Christ, your sins are his to pardon them, Isa. 53:6. The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all, the chastisements of our peace were laid upon him, and by his stripes we are healed, he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and to this purpose the Apostle hath an expression in 2 Cor. 5:21. He was made sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him; Christ was no sinner, but he was made a sinner for us, he bore our sins upon him, our sins are Christ's to pardon them.

2. Our sufferings are Christ's sufferings to sanctify them unto us. Act. 9. Christ says to Saul; Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? He looks upon the

injuries and wrongs, that are done to his people, as if they were done to him.

3. Your bodies and souls are Christ's to save them; our members are Members of Christ's body, as in 1 Cor. 6:15, says the Apostle, shall I take the Members of Christ, and make them Members of a harlot? God forbid: thy body is Christ's, and thy soul is Christ's, the Apostle hath it in so many express terms, in 1 Cor. 6:19,20. What know you not (says the Apostle) that your bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own; for you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and souls which are his. Thus you see what a large field of mercy all you that have an interest in Christ, have here to walk in, you have all things, though you have nothing, all things equivalently, all things conditionally, all things finally, and all things inheritively: all the Ministers of Christ are yours, the whole world is yours, life and death is yours, things present are yours, whether present afflictions, or present mercies, things to come are yours, whether afflictions, or temptations, or trouble, or want, or any things; and mercy to come is yours, as life and Salvation, Heaven and Happiness, all is yours; all that Christ hath is yours, Christ's Father is your Father, his Spirit is your Spirit, his righteousness is your righteousness, his graces are your graces, his peace is your peace, and his sufferings are your sufferings; and all that you have is Christ's, your sins are Christ's to pardon them, and your sufferings Christ's to sanctify them, and your souls and bodies Christ's to save them: I might here add one head more, that all your duties and services are Christ's too, he perfumes them with the sweet odor of his merits, and so presents them, and makes them acceptable to God, hence it is that you read in the Revelation,

that Christ adds his incense to the prayers of all his Saints; and this is a very great consolation.

4. All you that have an interest in Christ, take this for your comfort, that the having of Christ is that which will sweeten all the crosses and afflictions, and adverse conditions that you meet withal here in this world; the having of Christ will sweeten every trouble, as I told you before; what the tree was to the waters of Marah, that Christ will be to every sad and dejected soul in every troublesome condition, the waters of Marah were so exceeding bitter none could drink of them, but when the tree was cast into the waters then they became sweet: Why so it may be thy condition here in this world is as the waters of Marah, full of bitterness and sorrow, and trouble and affliction, but now do but cast this tree of life, the Lord Jesus, into these waters, and then this will convert them from waters of Marah, bitter and troublesome, to be rivers of joy and streams of comfort. Christ will be to thy soul as the honey in the Lions belly was to Samson, it became good for food to feed upon; it may be afflictions and troubles may come in upon thee like a roaring Lion, but Christ is as the honey in this Lion, that sweetens all thy sorrows and makes them advantageous and comfortable for thee. I might apply to this purpose what an Author observes concerning the water of the Sea, it is very salt in its self, but when it comes to run through the bowels of the earth, it then loseth its saltness and becomes pleasant; why so though thy condition here in the world be full of sharp and sore afflictions, yet when these come to run through Christ, he sweetens them all unto thee. Great is your comfort in having an interest in Christ, for this is that which sweetens all the crosses and troubles you meet withal here in the world: and (Beloved) do but seriously consider of it, and let me a little reason the case with you, What though thou mayst feed upon the bread of

sorrow, yet how canst thou be uncomfortable, when withal thou feedest upon the bread of life the Lord Jesus Christ? What though thou mayest drink the water of affliction and wine of astonishment, yet how canst thou be uncomfortable, so long as thou dost drink drops of Christ's blood? What though you have not a house to put your head in, yet let this be your comfort, that you have a house preserved for you, a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: What though you have nothing but a stone for your pillow to lay your head upon, when every night you lay your head in the bosom of Jesus Christ? Thus much concerning the fourth consolation.

5. All you that have a real and well-grounded interest in Christ, herein lies your comfort, that in and through Christ, you may look upon God (that in himself is clothed with dread and terribleness) with a great deal of joy and comfort. Christ makes all the attributes of God to be delightful and comfortable to thee, that though God be a consuming fire to burn up thy soul like stubble out of Christ, yet in Christ you may look upon God as fire, but yet so as that Christ interposeth between you and it; Christ is as a screen between the fire of God's wrath and you; thou art to look upon God, not as an enemy that sets himself against thee, but as a friend reconciled to thee; not as an angry Judge that is desirous to condemn thee, but as a merciful Father that is willing to pardon thee, you are not to look upon God clothed with dread and terror, but with mercy and compassion; that God that will frown upon thee out of Christ, yet bring but a Christ in thy arms, and present him to God the Father, and then he will turn away his anger from thee, and behold thee with a smiling countenance, thou being in Christ and Christ in thee, and God being well pleased with his Son, must needs be well pleased with thee too; great is your benefit by having an interest in Christ; I may say in this case what Elisha the Prophet said to King Jeroboam, 2

King. 3:14. Verily, says he, were it not that I regard the person of Jehoshaphat King of Judah, I would not look toward thee nor see thee; just so does God say to us, were it not for my Son Jesus Christ, you should never see my face, nor have a good look from me.

6. If thou hast a real interest in Christ, then this is another part of thy comfort, that God the Father doth as truly accept of thee in his Son, as if thou hadst in thine own person done and suffered what Christ did, this is a great benefit, God accepts of what Christ hath done for us, as if we had none it ourselves, as in Eph. 1:6. He hath made us accepted in the beloved, that is, in Christ. God looks upon thee in Christ, and accepts of all thy duties and performances, as well as if thou hadst prayed as well as ever Christ prayed, and done and suffered as much as ever Christ did.

7. Art thou now in Christ? Well take this for thy comfort, thou mayest be confidently assured, that thou shalt be one day with Christ. This is the last consolation, and I shall give you a pregnant text to prove it, though it be not so well understood in the common reading of it as it should be, Rom. 8:10. (says the Apostle) if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. What is the meaning of this, the body is dead because of sin? The meaning is not, that the body does mortify sin, but the body is dead because of sin, that is, sin shall bring your bodies to the grave, but your spirits shall live because of righteousness, (that is) the righteousness of Jesus Christ; through the righteousness of Christ your souls shall live forever in glory with Christ, though your bodies die, and sin bring them to the grave, yet the killing of your bodies shall but make way for the living of your spirits; being in Christ here, you shall forever live with Christ in glory hereafter, the death of your bodies shall but give you an entrance into Glory, and therefore why should death be grievous to those

that are in Christ Jesus; for death is but as it were the marriage day wherein Christ and their souls shall be united together; if Christ be in you, your bodies shall die because of sin, but your spirits shall live because of righteousness: You have another pertinent place to prove this in Joh. 17:23,24, says Christ there, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me; and Father I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory which thou hast given me. Some conceive that this prayer of Christ was made only for the Apostles, that they might be where Christ was in heaven, but if you mark the precedent words, you shall find that it was for all Believers, for says Christ himself, neither pray I for these alone, but for all those that shall believe in my Name to the end of the world. Great is your comfort in having an interest in Christ here, you shall one day reign with him forever in Glory.

Thus I have done with these seven consolations to those that have a real and well-grounded interest in Christ, I have only now a word or two, by way of Use to apply and set home what I have said concerning this particular. Here you see what unspeakable comforts redound to you that have an interest in Christ, you have all things though you have nothing, Christ is yours, and all that Christ hath is yours, and all that you have is Christ's, Christ sweetens all afflictions and crosses to you, and the having of Christ represents God the Father to you, not with terror and dread, but with goodness, and meekness, and loving-kindness, and mercy, and longsuffering, and through Christ God doth as freely accept of you, and of what you do, as if it were done as well as ever Christ did it, and being in Christ here, you shall forever live with Christ in glory hereafter: Oh how

should all these mercies and privileges, stir up all those that have yet no part in Christ, never to give rest to their eyes, nor slumber to their eyelids till they have gotten an interest in him!

SERM. VI. EPH. 2:12. - THAT AT THAT TIME YE WERE WITHOUT CHRIST.

*T*hat at that time ye were without Christ, - Eph. 2:12.

Lest any of you that hear me this day should lie under a spirit of delusion and think that all that I have said touching the happiness of those that have an interest in Christ belongs to them when it doth not; I shall therefore spend this hour in showing you some characters whereby you may know whether you have a real interest in Christ or no: this is the needfullest point that ever in my life I pressed upon you, and the Lord give you grace to lay these characters close to your own hearts, and by them seriously to examine your own souls whether you have a real interest in Christ or no: but before I give you these characters, give me leave by the way to premise these three or four Cautions or cautelary conclusions, which will the better make way to the handling the point in hand.

1. Take this caution, that men may be strongly conceited and opinionated, that they have an interest in Christ when they have not: I shall give you a plain text for this in 2 Cor. 10:7. Do you look on things after the outward appearance? (says the Apostle) if any man trust to himself, that he is

Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's: This is a very notable place; there were some among the Corinthians that were strongly conceited they did belong to Christ, when they did not; and had an ill opinion of the Apostles, and thought they did not belong to Christ; and to such as these the Apostle Paul here speaks: men may be strongly conceited they have an interest in Christ, when there is no such matter, as it was with the Church of Laodicea, in Rev. 3:17. Thou sayest I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

2. Another cautelary conclusion I would have you take notice of, is this; that in laying down the characters of a man that hath an interest in Christ, I do not so press them, as that unless you have them all in you, you cannot have an interest in Christ, for if you have but one of them in you, in truth and sincerity, it is an evidence that you have an interest in Christ: I give you this caution for fear of casting down any poor dejected soul; if you have but one link of this golden chain, you have as sure hold, as if you had all of it.

3. In laying down these characters of one that hath an interest in Christ, I lay them down only in the affirmative, not in the negative, that is, all those that have these characters in them, may be confidently assured, that they have an interest in Christ: but I do not say, that those that have not these characters in them, have not an interest Christ, for should I say so, I should cast down many a humble and dejected soul: I do not say, that if you have not these characters in you, you have no interest in Christ; but this I say, that you may confidently and indubitably know and be assured, that you have an interest in Christ, if you find these things in you.

4. Lastly, take in this caution likewise, that in giving you these Characters, I shall not press them so, as if the having of all these in exercise and feeling, and in your own apprehensions, can only evidence your having an interest in Christ, but if you have them in habit, and in truth, though not in exercise and practice, it is sufficient to evidence your interest in Christ. For a poor soul may have many graces of God's Spirit in truth in him, though he doth not feel, and exercise, and apprehend them in himself, as I told you it was with Mary Magdalene; she talked to Christ face to face, and says she, they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And thus I have done with the cautions, or cautelary conclusions, wherein I have only made way for my better proceeding, in giving you the several Characters of a man that hath a real interest in Christ, and I wish to God they may be all engraven upon every one of your hearts, that you may be unquestionably assured in your own souls, of your interest in him; I shall reduce all I have to say concerning this particular under these 12 heads.

1. That man that hath an interest in Christ, he is cast out of himself; that is, he is cast out of all conceit of his own self-sufficiency and righteousness, good works or merits: no man is in Christ, but he is out of himself; this character the Apostle gives you in Phil. 3:8,9. Yea doubtless, (saith he) I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having on my own righteousness: Here Paul having won Christ, would not be found, having on his own righteousness; the Apostle doth not mean his own righteousness in point of being, but in point of dependence, not having on his own righteousness to be justified by it; in that regard he would not be found having it on. So in 1 Cor. 4:4, says the Apostle there, I know nothing

by myself, now one would think this man were a very holy and exact man; for says he, I know nothing by myself, that is, I know no sin upon my soul, that I perform wittingly or willingly: but mark the next words, yet says he, am I not hereby justified; he was quite out of conceit of all the good works that ever he did: every man that is in Christ, he is out of himself; he sees his own insufficiency, and Christ's all-sufficiency; he sees his emptiness of grace, and Christ's fullness of grace; he sees himself to be nothing, and Christ to be all in all. Luk. 16:15, says Christ there to the Pharisees, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; as if he should have said, you think well of yourselves and of your graces, but God knoweth your hearts, that you are not such as you seem to be; and therefore (Beloved) consider seriously of it, if God hath wrought this grace in your hearts, that you are cast out of yourselves to see your own emptiness, and vileness, and insufficiency and want of Christ, if there be this work of grace wrought in you, then you may know you have a real part and portion in Jesus Christ.

2. Another distinguishing character of a man in Christ is this, that he makes conscience of keeping every known command of Christ. This you have in 1 Joh. 2:5. Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected, hereby know we that we are in him: hereby we know that we are in Christ, if we keep every known command of Christ, and therefore you that can appeal to heaven, that there is no one known command of Christ, but bears sway in your heart, and carries an authority over your conscience, that you can subject yourselves to it, although you have many weaknesses and failings, yet this is an undoubted character that you are in Christ: as in 1 Joh. 3:22. If that therefore (says the Apostle) that you have heard from the beginning, shall remain in the you, you also shall continue in

the Son and in Father. You that keep every known command of Christ, have an interest in him, and he in you; and therefore (beloved) all you that do make conscience of keeping the known and revealed will of God, that there is no known sin but you labor to avoid, and no known grace but you labor to exercise, and no known duty, but you labor to perform; if it be thus with you, you may comfort yourselves in this, that you have a real interest in Christ.

3. Another character or discovery is this, he that hath an interest in Christ, he hath a power derived from Christ, enabling him to mortify his inward and bosom lusts: as in Gal. 5:24. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts; when Christ came in the flesh amongst us we crucified him, but if ever Christ come in thy heart, he will crucify thee; the crucifying of the flesh with the affections and lusts that the Apostle here speaks of, is not the killing and total extirpation of sin, but the giving a deadly blow to sin, that sin shall never reign in us, nor have dominion over us anymore; if you be in Christ, sin will be like those beasts spoken of in Daniel, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were preserved for a little season; so the dominion of sin will be taken away, that sin shall not reign in you, yet the life and being of sin will remain in you for a little season: but still as the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker, when the house of David grew stronger and stronger, so if Christ dwell in thy heart, sin in thy soul will every day grow weaker and weaker, and grace in thy heart will grow stronger and stronger; and therefore Beloved, all you whose hearts can bear you witness, that you have had the power of mortifying grace upon your souls, that you can bridle your beloved lusts, and subdue your bosom sins, and curb the pride of your hearts; you may then lay an undoubted claim to Jesus Christ.

4. That man that hath an interest in Christ, doth keep a strict watch over his own heart, that he will not wittingly or willingly give way to the least sin to the dishonor of God; a man in Christ keeps a watchful eye over himself, that he doth not give way to the least sin to the dishonor of Jesus Christ. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not; He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, he doth not keep himself from all sin, but he doth as much as in him lies resist every sin, and temptation; he keepeth himself from every known sin: so in 1 Joh. 3:6. Whosoever abideth in God sinneth not: this is not spoken absolutely, but comparatively, he sinneth not in comparison of those great sins that wicked men do commit, for they are slaves to their lusts: and secondly he sinneth not, that is deliberately, neither with a delightful complacency, nor with a total obduracy, nor in a way of final impenitency: in these regards a man in Christ sinneth not. And now beloved, you whose hearts and consciences can bear you witness that you do keep a strict watch over your own souls, and that you have a care of committing the least sin against God, whereby you might dishonor him; if it be thus with you, you have an infallible evidence of your interest in Christ: that man that keeps sin out of his heart, may be confidently assured, he hath Christ in his heart.

5. Another character or discovery is this, that man that hath an interest in Christ Jesus, Christ hath wrought in him a real change, both in his life and nature; if thou art in Christ, he will be in thee, to work an effectual and saving change in thee, both in thy heart and life: as in 2 Cor. 5:17, says the Apostle, If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, and all things are become new: why now (beloved) take this text and lay it close to your hearts; hath God made you new creatures, and wrought a

saving change in your heart? Can you evidence it to your own souls, that ever since you were first born, you were new born? If it be so, you may lay a confident claim to Jesus Christ; if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

6. Another character this is, that man that hath an interest in Christ, doth grow up in Christ to be fruitful in every good work; hence it is that you often read in the scripture, of growing up in Christ, and increasing in Christ with the increase of God. Jesus Christ is the root of Jesse, in whom whosoever is rooted and engrafted, he will bring forth fruit unto God: whosoever is engrafted into Christ, he will bring forth the fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God. Joh. 15:5. I am the vine (says Christ) and you are the branches, he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing: why now beloved, you that make it out to your own souls, that you do grow in grace, and knowledge, and understanding, and in the duties of sanctification, humiliation, and mortification, this is a sure argument that you are planted into that root of Jesse, that makes you to bring forth fruit unto God.

7. That man that hath an interest in Christ, he is most humble, and vile in his own eyes. Of all the men in the world, there is no man so debased in his own esteem, as he that hath an interest in Christ; mark Paul's description of a man in Christ, 2 Cor. 12:2. I knew a man in Christ (says he) above 14 years ago, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth, such a man caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable things, which is not lawful for a man to utter, of such a one will I glory, yet of myself I will not glory, but in my infirmities. Here Paul speaking of himself, would not boast of what good either he had or did, or of what glory

he beheld, left men should think of him above that which is meet; this is the badge of a man in Christ, he is most humble in his own eyes As those vessels that are fullest, sound the least, whereas those that are empty, make the greatest noise; why so, those Christians that are full of grace, and have Christ dwelling in them, walk the humblest, and make the least noise; when those that are out of Christ, and empty of all grace and goodness, keep the greatest boasting of all; As the shallow rivers make the greatest noise, in running over the pebble-stones, when the deeper streams glide away silently; so shallow brains, that know very little or nothing as they ought to know, make the greatest show, of what they seem to have, when others that know more and are deeper learned are silent. It is very remarkable, what one observes concerning the Prophet Ezekiel, a very holy man, and much conversant with visions, and revelations, yet this man that was full of so many admirable parts, and gifts, and graces, the holy Ghost doth no less than 93 times in that Prophecy, call by the name of the Son of man, which was (saith he) to keep him humble, and abate pride in his heart, and to show that where there is most of Christ and grace in the heart, that man should be most humble and vile in his own eyes.

8. Another discovery of a man in Christ, is this, he will take care and make conscience of walking worthy of his interest in Christ; the Apostle gives a caution for this in Col. 2:6. As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in him, rooted and built up in him, that is, according to those beginnings you have made, and those Gospel-discoveries, God hath given you, and that entertainment you have already given to Christ Jesus the Lord, so now it becomes you to make a suitable progress, as truly, and really, and purely, as you have received him; so let it be your every day's work to be making progress in him, and to walk worthy

of him, so in the 1st Epistle of John. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself so also to walk, even as he walked: Hence it is that you find in Scripture, that being in Christ, and living a godly life, are both joined together; as 2 Tim. 3:12. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus: that man whose person is in Christ, will labor that his ways may be in Christ too; many a one would gladly have his person in Christ, though his life be not in Christ, but those whose persons and ways are both in Christ, they may lay a comfortable claim to him; the difference between a man that hath an interest in Christ, and one that hath none, I shall demonstrate to you by this familiar example: you know, a man that by experience knows what it is to make clean a room, he will be careful that he does not upon every slight occasion, dirt it again, because he knows, what a deal of pains and labor is taking in cleansing of it; but now a dog or a spaniel he comes in and never cares for dirtying of it, because he does not know what it is to make it clean; why so a godly man, he will be careful of walking worthy of his interest in Christ, because he knows how much it cost him, how many tears, and sighs, and groans, and prayers, before he got an interest in Christ, and an assurance of his love; but now a wicked man, he makes no conscience of sinning against Christ, and displeasing of him, because he never knew what it was to get an interest in him. In Gal. 3:21, says the Apostle there, as many as have Christ, they have put on Christ; and a very learned interpreter hath an exceeding good note upon this text; he says that this speech of the Apostle here, is spoken in an allusion to an ancient custom among the heathens, that when they came to the profession of the Faith, they were wont always between Easter and Whitsuntide to put off their old garments, and put on white raiment's; the end of it was to typify and note, that when once they were in Christ, they must leave off their old courses and conversations, and now

labor to walk after a more holy, and blameless, and innocent life, in their carriages towards God: thus (beloved) if you have an interest in Christ, you have put on Christ, walking worthy of him, in a holy, pure, spotless, and unblameable life and conversation.

9. A man that hath an interest in Christ, doth so prize him, that he would not be without him for all the world; there is no man that is in Christ, but looks upon him as the most amiablest, and desireablest good in the world, he knows the worth of Christ, and counts him as an invaluable treasure. In 1 Pet. 2:7, the Apostle after he had told them, of their being built upon Christ, as lively stones upon the foundation; he concludes, to you therefore which believe Christ is precious; intimating, that whosoever is founded and bottomed upon Christ, Christ is very precious to that soul, and therefore you (beloved) that have a sure testimony in your own consciences, that you do set a high price and value, and esteem upon Christ, above all things in the world, and that you count all other things as dross and dung, in comparison of an interest in Christ, this is a very good and undoubted evidence that you have an interest in him. It was an excellent speech of one concerning his interest in Christ; says he, if all the stones in my house were Diamonds, and all the dust in my house shavings of gold, and every pebble-stone, an orient pearl, yet would I not prize nor value these in comparison of my interest in Christ.

10. He that hath an interest in Christ, hath the spirit of Christ dwelling in his soul, as in 1 Joh. 4:13. Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit, he conveys his Spirit through the golden conduit-pipes of his ordinances, into thy heart; this is a sure evidence to thee of thy interest in Christ, if thou hast the Spirit of Christ dwelling in thee, in this threefold operation of it: 1. If thou hast the

enlightening work of the Spirit to enlighten thy mind to know Christ: 2. If you have the inclining work of the Spirit to incline thy heart to love Christ: and 3. If you have the enforcing operation of the Spirit to empower your wills to obey Christ; if you enjoy the spirit of God in these 3 operations of it, then you may certainly know, that you have an interest in Christ.

11. He that hath an interest in Christ, labors by all possible means to bring others to the knowledge of Christ: Paul before he was in Christ, did labor to drive men from Christ, but afterwards, when he was converted, then he did labor to draw men to Christ more abundantly then all the rest of the Apostles; Oh (beloved) you that can compassionate poor souls in their natural condition; and can heartily wish all men to be in Christ, as well as yourselves; you that can bemoan the Christless condition of your friends and neighbors, this is a very evident discovery of your interest in Christ.

Thus I have done with these several characters of a man that is in Christ; if thou art cast out of thyself, and out of an opinion of thy own goodness and righteousness; if thou makest conscience of keeping every known command of Christ, and hast a power derived from Christ enabling thee to mortify thy bosom and inward lusts; if you have a care to avoid every sin whereby you might dishonor Christ; if there be a real change wrought in you both in heart and life, from nature to grace; if you grow up in Christ to be fruitful in every good work, and are humble and base, and vile In your own eyes; if you labor to walk worthy of your interest in Christ, prizing him, and valuing him above all the desirable things in the world; if the spirit of Christ dwells in you, enlightening your minds to know him, inclining your hearts to love him, and empowering your wills to obey him: and lastly, if you have in you ardent desires, and earnest endeavors to win others to Christ, as well as yourselves; if you can find any one of these in truth and

sincerity in your hearts, it will be a very good evidence to you of your interest in Christ.

I have only a word or two more, to those that upon examination do really find themselves to be in a condition without Jesus Christ; let me leave with you these two or three discoveries of your sad condition, to quicken you the more earnestly in your pursuits after him.

1. Are you without Christ? Why then you are without satisfaction, and contentation in all the things you enjoy here in this World: What Solomon says is verified in you, that your eye shall not be satisfied with seeing, nor your ear with hearing, nothing without Jesus Christ, can give satisfaction to the demands of an immortal soul, the world being round, and your hearts triangular, and you know 'tis impossible that a round thing should fill that which is three square: so neither is it possible that the world or anything in it should satisfy the desires of your hearts.

2. As you can have no satisfaction in the world, so neither can you have any acceptance with God, God will say to you as Joseph did to his brethren, if you bring not up you brother Benjamin with you, look me not in the face: so will God say to you, if you bring not Jesus Christ, your elder brother with you, do not look me in the face; here is the misery of a Christless man, he can have no acceptance with God.

3. Without an interest in Christ, you can have no salvation by Christ; he procures salvation for all that are in him, and for no other; Joh. 17:12. Those that thou hast given me, I have kept and none of them is lost: if you are without Christ, your condition is like those that were in the old world before the flood; all that were in the Ark were saved and preserved, but all that were out of the Ark were drowned; so Jesus Christ is the Ark whereinto every soul that can procure admittance shall be saved, but all that are not in

Christ, shall be drowned in a river of brimstone, which the breath of the Lord shall kindle, you shall be condemned and destroyed forever, if you are without Christ, you are without satisfaction from the creature, without acceptation with God, and without salvation by Christ.

And thus in these six Sermons I have shown you the happiness of a man in Christ; and the Characters of a man in Christ; and the misery of a man without Christ; and so I have done with this first part of man's misery by nature, and of the first branch of the Text, That at that time you were without Christ.

SERM. VII. EPH. 2:12. - BEING ALIENS FROM THE COMMON-WEALTH OF ISRAEL.

Being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel - Eph. 2:12.

B Having finished the first, I am now to proceed to the second part of Mans misery, in these words, Being Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, but before I fall upon this second branch of the Text, I shall speak something to you, concerning the order of the words, why their being without Christ, is put in the first place: I answer, it is put in the first place to show that as the having of Christ is the foundation; and inlet of all happiness and blessedness; so the want of an interest in Christ is the Spring and Fountain from whence all the miseries and calamities that are incident to the children of men do flow, and therefore this deservedly is put in the first place, for if you are without Christ, you must needs be Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the Covenant of Promise, without hope, and without God in the World.

But then again why is their being aliens to the commonwealth of Israel put in the second place? *Answ.* Because he that is without Christ the head, must needs be without the church the body, for by the commonwealth of

Israel, is meant the whole body of the Church, they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, that is, this was the misery of the Ephesians, while they were in a state of Gentilism, not converted to the Faith of Christ, by the Gospel, they had no interest in the benefits and privileges that the people of God enjoyed that were in the Church of Israel, they had none of those spiritual and special privileges and blessings, which God did bestow upon all those that were in Covenant with him, they were aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, that is, they were aliens to the Ordinances of God, that were then in use in the Jewish Church, they were without all the Ordinances of Jesus Christ. All the privileges of the people of God, did the Gentiles want, before they were in Christ. Here then you see the complete misery of those that were in a state of Gentilism, they were aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the Divine Worship of God, which he did institute and appoint in his Church, and to all the privileges and prerogatives which the people of God do enjoy.

In the words there are two parts observable: 1. A description of the Church of God, and that by this term the Commonwealth, the Church of God is called the Commonwealth of Israel.

2. Here is laid down the alienation of the Ephesians, before conversion, from this Church, from this Commonwealth.

Now (Beloved) from hence I shall only note to you, these two observations, which I intend to finish this Sermon.

Doct. 1. That the Church of God is a spiritual commonwealth.

Doct. 2. That it is a great part of a man's misery to be a stranger to the true Church of God.

For the first Doctrine that the Church of God is a spiritual commonwealth: in the handling of this, I shall do these two things: 1. I shall show wherein

the Church may be compared to a commonwealth, and 2. I shall show you wherein they differ.

1. The Church may be compared to a commonwealth, in these four particulars;

1. In a commonwealth there are people of different degrees, ranks, callings, and qualities, all are not Princes, nor are all Rulers, all are not Merchants, nor are all rich, there are men of all degrees, callings and qualities, some are rich, some poor, some high, some low, some masters, some servants, and the like; now in this regard, the Church may be compared to a Commonwealth, for in the Church of God some are high, some low, some rich, some poor, some men grown up to a full stature in Christ, others are but new beginners and babes in Christ; some men are rich in gifts, when others are but poor and mean; some are strong in grace, like the Oak, when others are but like a broken reed. As in a Commonwealth, so in the Church of God, there are men of several ranks, degrees, callings, qualities, and conditions, as in 1 Cor. 12:8,9,10. All men have not the same manner of gifts, for to one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another Faith, to another the gifts of healing, to another the works of miracles, to another prophesy, to another discerning of spirits, and to another the interpretation of tongues, but all these worketh that one and the same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will: as it is in the natural body, so it is in the spiritual body, that body would be a monstrous body, if the thumb were as big as the arm, and the arm as big as the body, and every part as big as the whole; just so it is in the Church, it is the beauty of it, to have a variety of condition.

2. As in a Commonwealth though there be multitudes of people, yet they are all governed by one and the same Laws, and are all subjects to one and

the same Rulers: so it is in the Church of God, though there be many people in it, yet they are all subject to the same Laws, and are all to walk by the same rule; and in this regard it may be compared to a Commonwealth, for there is but one rule, the word of God, that sways the whole Church.

3. In a Commonwealth it is accounted high Treason to subvert or overthrow any Law by which that Commonwealth is governed; for if it were not so, the Laws of a Commonwealth would be of no force, if any man might break them: add to them or take from them at his pleasure, and therefore a Commonwealth does count the breaking and violation of their Laws to be the greatest injury and dishonor, that can be done to them: and so it is in the Church, the word of God is very severe in this regard, that if any man shall add or diminish any jot or tittle to or from the Word, God will blot his name out of the Book of life.

4. They may be compared one to another in this regard, for as one Commonwealth differeth from another, they have not both the same Rulers, nor the same Laws, nor the same customs, nor Charters, but differ in everything almost: so the Church of God is distinguished from all other parts, and people of the World, Commonwealths are different one from another in four things. 1. in Laws; 2. in habit; 3. in language; 4. in Government; and so is the Church of God.

1. It is different from others in its Laws; Law that rules in a Commonwealth, but only the Word of God rules in the Church.

2. As Commonwealths differ from one another in their language, so the Church of God has a language different from all the World, the Church of God speaks the pure language of Canaan, but all the World besides speaks a broken and corrupt language.

3. As Commonwealths differ one from another in regard of habits, so in this regard does the Church of God differ from all the World, the Church of God hath put on the new man, when all the World have on their old rags still, the Church hath put on the long robes of Christ's righteousness which cover all her nakedness, which all the World are without.

4. The Church of God is different from all other in regard of their Government; all Kingdoms and Commonwealths have men to be their Governors, but the Church of God that hath Christ to be her Governor.

Thus I have shown you wherein the Church and a commonwealth do agree, now I come to show you wherein they differ; as,

1. They are different in their Laws; a commonwealth hath Laws, Acts, and Ordinances to govern them, but the Church hath only the word of God to be their rule.

2. There is a difference in the extent of those Laws; the Law of a commonwealth doth only reach and extend to the outward man, that cannot rule the inward man, therefore we commonly say our thoughts are free, God only can search the heart and try the reins, but now the Law of the Church extends its self, to the searching of the soul and spirit, every thought and imagination of the heart; as the Apostle says, the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal.

3. There is a difference in regard of the power and efficacy of these Laws; the Laws of a commonwealth do only restrain the outward man, if you do amiss, but the Law of God in the Church, that cannot only restrain in practice, but change the heart, and alter the affections, and make thee a new man.

4. They differ in this regard, a commonwealth may alter their Laws at pleasure, if they see occasion, if they find any law grievous or burdensome

to the Kingdom, they may alter it, or take it away, and add a new Law in the room of it, but this the Church of God cannot do, the law that the Church hath now, it must have to the end of the world, God himself gave the Law to his Church, and he cannot give a prejudicial or burdensome law, whereas Rulers of Commonwealths, they are but men, and cannot look into the events of things; and therefore are ignorant whether this or that law may be good or no, and therefore do change them at their pleasure when they see a necessity; but the rule of the Word of God is an unerring and unalterable rule, which all must follow and practice to the end of the World.

5. They differ in their censure, the censure of a Commonwealth may extend so far as to confiscation of goods, to banishment, imprisonment, or death, but the censure of the Church extends only to excommunication, or throwing the offender out of their society or fellowship, they can do no more, and must do no more, the Church of Christ can inflict no censure, but only to excommunicate, and therefore their practice that do imprison and censure and inflict punishment upon their people, is not warrantable but does contradict the rule of the Word; and those likewise that do cry out against Church Government, as tyrannical, do very much mistake, for the Church of God their censure is not corporeal but spiritual. But though the Church may not censure any man that is an offender, yet she may complain to the Commonwealth, and they may restrain and quell them and keep them under, and inflict punishments upon them.

Thus then you see both wherein a Church and a Commonwealth do agree, and wherein they differ, and if this be so that the Church of God is a spiritual Commonwealth, then give me leave to draw these three Inferences from hence.

1. I may infer from hence the necessity of Church Government in a Church; Did you ever see a Commonwealth stand and flourish without rule and Laws, and order? Order is the staff of a Commonwealth, if every man might do what he list, and what is right in his own eyes, nothing but ruin and destruction would presently follow, as in Psal. 11:3. If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do? If the Laws and foundations of a Commonwealth be subverted and destroyed, there will be nothing but ruin. If the Church be a spiritual Commonwealth, then there is an absolute necessity of a Government in it; and therefore those that would either rob the Church of their Government, and would have none at all, or else would introduce a false Government upon the Church, and do as much as in them lies to overthrow the Government of the Church, such as these are to be reprov'd. Government to a commonwealth is like a hedge to a garden, now suppose you had a very fair garden, and a great many curious flowers and fine slips in it, and one should come to you and tell you, Sir, I see many dainty flowers and slips in your garden, but I see none to grow upon your hedge, therefore pull it down, let it grow there no longer; you would say to such a man, no by no means, for though nothing grows upon the hedge, yet the hedge does preserve the flowers, that grow in the garden, and keep them from the violences of wild beasts: So though a Government in the Church does not make us holy, a man may go to heaven without a Government, yet is it exceeding necessary to preserve the Church of God.

2. I may infer from the Churches being a spiritual Commonwealth, the necessity of union in the Church. Commonwealths are preserved by union, you see what four years war have brought upon our kingdom, it hath almost destroyed the face of our commonwealth: Union are the sinews and ligaments of a commonwealth, if men be disunited, and disjointed, that

commonwealth cannot subsist, A Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, and the Church of God being a spiritual commonwealth, this argues the great necessity of unity in the Church, and the great danger of division, the Church of God cannot be safe without union. I must tell you (to the grief of our hearts be it spoken) there were never less unity in the Church of God, since the very first plantation of it, by the Apostles in the Primitive times, then there is at this day, wherein every man almost is set one against another; truly I look upon it, as a very sad Omen and prediction, that God is bringing in upon us the most dismal persecution that ever yet our eyes beheld. I have read in the book of Martyrs, that the coming in of the eighth persecution, was occasioned by the division and falling out of Christians one with another; I wish it may not be so with us (Beloved) it is ordinary amongst a great many men to cry out and exclaim against the Ministers of the Gospel, as if they were the great incendiaries and causers of divisions and dissensions amongst you, but I would have you know that those that preach against division, are not dividers, but those that make divisions they are dividers, as the Apostle says, Mark them that cause divisions among you, and avoid them, those men that have caused divisions, and brought in strange opinions, and Sects, and schisms into the land, they are the make-bates of the Nation; the staff of Union and the staff of Beauty, when one is broken, the other is broken. I have read a story of a man that had fourscore children, and lying upon his death bed, he caused his children to come before him, and desired that a bundle of small rods might be brought to him, his children began to wonder amongst themselves, what should be his design and purpose in doing it, but when they had brought them, their Father commands every one of his sons beginning from the youngest to the eldest, to take the bundle, and try which of them could break it, but none of

them was found able to do it: at last taking the bundle himself he unbound it, breaking the sticks one by one, till he had broken them all, and now my children says he, this I do to teach you, that if you do combine and keep close together in unity like a bundle of sticks, there is none will be able to break you, or do you any harm, but if you divide and fall off one from another, you will soon be ruined, and broken in pieces: why, so now if the members of the Church of God would unite together and partake of public Ordinances together, hear, pray, and perform holy duties together, and still remain conjoined in one, we need not fear the power or policy of any, to do us any harm.

3. If the Church be a spiritual Commonwealth, then I may infer further, the necessity of our laboring to improve the Churches interest in a Commonwealth. Nature will teach men to labor to preserve, and advance the good and benefit of the Commonwealth, every man will contribute for the good of the Body Politique, and therefore let us labor to promote the good of the Body Ecclesiastic, and to improve the Churches interest.

Thus much for the first Doctrine, we come now to the second Doctrine, That it is a great misery for a man to be a stranger to the true Churches of God. You may be in the true Church, and yet not of the true Church; as ill humors in a man's body, they are in the body, though none of the constituent parts of the body: so you may be in the Church, and of the Church visible too, and yet none of the Members of the Church invisible, of the Church of the first borne, you may not partake of the special and spiritual privileges of the Church of God.

1. Wicked men are strangers to the effectual calling of the Church, in 1 Pet. 2. You (saith the Apostle) are called with a holy calling, which wicked men are without.

2. They are strangers to the comforts of the Church of God, you want those joys and comforts which the people of God do enjoy.

3. You are strangers to a Christian communion in the Church, a wicked man does not know how to manage a spiritual communion with the people of God.

Now if this be so that wicked men are strangers to the Church of God in their spiritual benefits and privileges they have by Christ, then by way of Use I shall only draw from hence these two Inferences.

1. That you would not lay too much dependence and confidence upon your being Members of the Church; you may be under the outward and common mercies, and yet want the inward and spiritual benefits of the Church of God; there is many a man that is born and brought up in the Church of England, and yet notwithstanding unable to give any ground of his Salvation by Christ, thou mayest have the Church of England to be thy Mother, and yet never have God to be thy Father. I do not speak this to the disparagement of the Church of England, for Christ and Salvation by him is to be had in England as well as elsewhere, I would not have you think that England is no true Church, for it is a Church of Jesus Christ, but I say you may be of this Church and borne and bred in this Church and partake of all the Ordinances and outward privileges in this Church, and yet never come to heaven, for (as the Apostle says) all are not Israel that are of Israel.

2. If this be so, then this may be matter of reprehension to wicked men, that seeing they are in the Church, yet they are not of the Church of Jesus Christ; you are in the Church, but as a wenne, a botch, or blain is in the body, you are a blemish to the Church of God, wicked men are spots and blemishes in the Church, as in 2 Pet. 2:13, though they are in the Church, yet they are a burden to the Church, and I wish that godly men did count it a

greater burden to them then they do, that they have so many wicked men in their Church; A wicked man in the Church, is like a wooden leg to the body of a man, a natural leg that carries the body, but if a man hath a wooden leg, the body must carry it; so wicked men are a great burden and trouble to the Church, as Paul says (speaking of wicked men) I wish (says he) they were even cut off that trouble you, such men as are loose in practice, and loose in opinion, truly both these have been great burdens and troublers to the Church of God; they are to the Church, as Jonah was to the ship, what a storm have they raised in this kingdom! Which God knows, whether you or I shall ever live to see it blown over. Thus much for the second part of Mans misery by Nature, That at that time ye were aliens to the Common wealth of Israel.

SERM. VIII. EPH. 2:12. - AND STRANGERS TO THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE.

And strangers to the Covenants of Promise - Eph. 2:12.

A We come now in order to the third part, And strangers to the Covenant of Promise, but before I shall draw out any Doctrines from these words, I shall resolve these five questions which are very needful to be discussed.

1. What is the difference between the Covenants and the Promise? For many look upon them to be both one and the same thing.

2. What is meant here by the Covenants of Promise.

3. Why it is called the Covenants of Promise.

4. Why it is called in the plural number, the Covenants of Promise.

And lastly, What it is to be a stranger to the Covenants of Promise.

1. *Quest.* What is the difference between a covenant and a promise?

Answ. In answer to this, you must know, that though every Covenant is a promise, yet every promise is not a Covenant, a Covenant is a more comprehensive thing than a promise, for a Covenant is nothing but a bundle

of promises, all the promises in the Gospel bound up together in a bundle, so that herein you see the difference between a Covenant and a Promise.

2. What is meant by the Covenants of Promise?

I answer, That it is the free and gracious promise, that God made with Adam after the fall, and with the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the faithful, wherein he promised them Salvation and eternal life, through Christ, which was to come, this is the Covenant of Promise, even the promise which God made with his children, before the coming of Christ, wherein he did covenant to give them life and salvation, through Christ which was promised to come.

3. Why is it called the covenants of promise?

Answ. It is called so, because Christ the matter of this Covenant was not actually come, but only promised that he should come, that is the reason of this phrase here [the covenant of Promise].

4. Why is it called in the plural number the Covenants of Promise, seeing there was but one Covenant of Grace, the Covenant of Works was made to Adam before the fall, and the Covenant of Grace after the fall?

Answ. It is called the Covenants of Promise, not as if there were several kinds of Covenants, and of Salvation by Christ, but because there were divers exhibitions and administrations of this one Covenant; not as if this Covenant were many in kind and substance, for it is the same now that it was at the beginning, but only it was diversely administered, explained and enlarged; sometime it is called a new Covenant, that is, new in regard of the urging, and exhibition of it: the like phrase you have touching Love, Behold, a new command I give unto you, that you love one another, it was called new, because it was then newly enforced upon the people: The Covenant of Grace, the tenor of which is, that we shall have life and

salvation through the blood of Christ, it is called Covenants, because it was so often renewed and administered, first it was made to Adam after his fall, The seed of the woman shall bruise the Serpents head, and then it was renewed to Abraham, Paul explains it in Heb. 3, and after him, to Isaac, and then to Jacob, and David, and Solomon, and all the faithful, but the Covenant was still for substance the same, though it was many times renewed, and so it continues the same to this very day, thus you have a brief account of these four Queries.

5. What is it to be a stranger to the Covenants of Promise?

Answ. Did you but dive and look into the bottom of it, you would find it to be the final upshot of the misery of an unconverted man; to be a stranger to the Covenants of Promise, is to be in such a dismal and lamentable and deplorable condition, as that none of all the promises of God, for Grace, and life, and Salvation by Christ, doth appertain to him: and is not this a very miserable and sad condition, that the Lord looks upon a man in an unregenerate estate, as incapable of any mercy, life or salvation by Christ? A Covenant (as I told you) is a bundle of promises, it contains all the promises of Grace, life, and salvation, now if you be without the Covenant, you must needs be destitute of all the promises by Christ.

Thus having by way of premise opened these five particulars, I shall now draw out this one Observation from the words.

Doct. That all men during the time of their unregeneracy, are strangers to the Covenants of Grace, so that they can lay no just claim to any promise of having life and Salvation by Christ; you are strangers to the Covenants of promise; and (Beloved) when I tell you, that you have no title to any one promise of life or Salvation by Christ, it is the saddest news that ever you can open your ears to hear; if you are a stranger to the Covenant you are

without all the promises, for the covenant is a bundle of promises, all the promises of God bound up together; In the handling of this point I shall only show you two things, and then apply it.

1. I shall show you what the Covenant of Grace is.

2. How you may know whether you are men without the Covenant of Grace, yea or no, and can lay no just claim to any promise of life and Salvation by Christ.

3. I shall wind up all in a practical use, both for consolation to those, that are in the Covenant, and for terror to those that have no right to the Covenant.

1. For the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, it is that free and gracious Covenant which God made with Adam after the fall, promising him pardon of sin and eternal life, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This is the sum and substance of the Covenant of grace, it is the promise of God first made to Adam, and then renewed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, David and Solomon, and all the faithful, it is the solemn promise that God made to the Elect of their obtaining Salvation through the righteousness of Jesus Christ: Now here you must be very careful lest you run into a mistake, for there are two sorts of people that run into very dangerous errors concerning this particular: As,

1. The Socinians, that are of an opinion, that all the Patriarchs and good men in the Old Testament did none of them go to heaven, till Christ came in the flesh; a very uncharitable and ungodly opinion; And,

2. There are others that hold, that living in obedience to the Moral Law of Moses, is to tie the people to the Covenant of Works, to be justified by it, they hold the Jews did not live under a Covenant of Grace till Christ came, but if it were so, none of them could possibly be saved, for by the works of

Law shall no flesh living be justified, no man in the World can ever go to heaven by the Covenant of Works. This I do only mention by the way, that you may see and understand, that since the fall of Adam, all men are saved by the Covenant of Grace, the Covenant of Works was no longer in force then while Adam lived and continued in Innocency, but as soon as ever he fell, the Gospel was presently preached unto them, as well as it is to us now, only it was preached unto them more darkly, and to us more clearly; Christ was preached unto them as to come, but he is preached unto us as come already.

We come now to the second question, to stir you up and put you upon enquiry, how you may know whether you are the people that are in Covenant with God yea or no, so as that you can lay a just claim to the Covenant of Grace, and to all the promises therein contained for salvation and life eternal by Christ. I shall handle this Query not in the positive but in the negative part of it, how you may know, that you are not in the Covenant of Grace, I shall give you three or four discoveries of it.

1. Thou oh man art not in Covenant with thy God, that hast not yet broken the League and Covenant, which thou hast made with thy lusts, you that do still keep up and maintain the League and Covenant with your lusts and corruptions, you are not as yet come within the Covenant of Grace; that man that makes a Covenant with death and hell, cannot be under the Covenant of Grace, and therefore you that have not broken off your sins by repentance and righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy, you that are in a wicked course and resolve to continue so, lay no claim to the Covenant of Grace; you that are engaged to your lusts, you have been bad and you will be so still, you have no interest in the Covenant of Grace.

2. You that think to be saved by a Covenant of works, cannot be under a covenant of grace, You that hope to be justified by Works, are fallen from Grace, as the Apostle says in Gal. 5 4, you are fallen from Grace, that is, not that you are fallen from the habit of Grace, you are fallen from the Doctrine of Grace, that holds out justification by Christ, that man shall never be saved by Christ that thinks he cannot be saved by Christ; and therefore a Papist, living and dying in this very opinion that he must be saved by a Covenant of works, cannot be saved; if you be not cast out of yourselves, so as to rely wholly and only upon Christ for life and Salvation, you can lay no just claim of being under the Covenant of Grace.

3. You are strangers to the Covenant of grace, that do make no conscience of breaking the engagements and promises you have made to God, you that are careless of keeping the Covenants you have made with God, this is an evident demonstration, that you are not in Covenant with God, those that are in Covenant with God make conscience of keeping their Covenants with God if in times of affliction and trouble, you can make large promises to God of better obedience, and yet afterwards return with the dog to his vomit, and are as bad, or worse than ever you were, this argues, that you have no interest at all in the Covenant of Grace.

Thus I have done with the second Query, the discoveries of those that are not in the Covenant of Grace; I have only now the Application of the point to speak to, and the Use that I shall make of it shall be 1. For consolation to all that are in the Covenant of Grace, you have a bundle of promises to which you may have recourse, and lay claim to them as your own. 2. By way of terror, to show the misery of those that are strangers to this Covenant of Grace.

1. This may be matter of great consolation to you that are under the Covenant of Grace, that are in Covenant with God, this should provoke you to joy and comfort, in the consideration of the great happiness you enjoy in being under the Covenant of Grace, from the misery you would be exposed to, did you live under a Covenant of Works. And now (Beloved) lend me your thoughts a little, while I show you in fourteen particulars, the great happiness you are now in, being in Covenant with God under a Covenant of Grace, from the misery you had lain under, in being only under a Covenant of Works, Do this and live, I shall but only name them to you, and run over them very briefly.

1. The Covenant of Works was given by God to Adam, as a Creator, but the Covenant of Grace is given by God to a Believer, as a Father; God had not this term of a Father before the fall, but only of a God and Creator, but being under a covenant of Grace, you may look upon that God that was only a Creator to Adam, as a Father to you.

2. This had been your misery under a Covenant of Works; for that exacts perfect obedience, and does punish the offender in case of disobedience: but being under a Covenant of Grace, the Lord accepts through Christ of sincere obedience, though it be not perfect.

3. The Covenant of Works is not contented with perfect obedience neither, unless it be personal; it must not be perfect, done for thee by another, but done by thyself in thy own person; but now the Conant of Grace, accepts of perfect obedience, though it be not done by thyself, but in the person of Jesus Christ; God the Father doth as fully accept of Christ obeying and fulfilling his will in doing and suffering in our behalf, as if we had done and suffered what he did in our own persons, and herein lies the great happiness of a man under the Covenant of Grace.

4. The Covenant of Works was made by God to Adam without a Mediator, there was no third person between God and Adam, but the covenant of Grace was made by God with us, in the hand of a Mediator Jesus Christ. You may conceive it thus, suppose two men should be at discord and variance one with another, and a third person a friend to both these that are fallen out, should come and endeavor to decide the difference, first going to one and desiring him to be reconciled to the other; and then going to the second, and entreating him to be pacified towards the first, till he hath united and reconciled them both together; so it is here, Christ is a friend both to God and man, he is the Son of God, and he is husband of his Church, and being the Mediator of the new covenant, he comes first to his Father, and says, Father I know, that all mankind hath broken that first covenant which they made with thee, and are thereby justly liable to all that wrath and punishment due to the breach of it, and I know thy anger and displeasure against them, but I pray thee oh Father, be reconciled and well pleased with thy people, give them the sanctification of their Natures, while they live here, and give them heaven and happiness when they die; and then Christ comes to Believers, and tells them; Sirs, I have procured peace, and pardon, and reconciliation for you, the sanctification of your Natures here, and heaven when you die, and therefore lift up your heads with joy; Christ first goes to his Father, and sues to him for pardon, and then comes to us, and begs of us to be comforted.

5. Adam under the Covenant of Works he had nothing but Works to save him, and he was to keep this Covenant of Works only by his own strength, he had no strength but his own, to perform any duty, he had no bottom, no foundation, but himself to stand on; but under the Covenant of Grace we are kept by the mighty power of God through Faith unto Salvation; we are

under a far better condition under the Covenant of Grace, then Adam was at first, in the State of innocence, for though he was perfectly holy, yet he was not immutably holy, but now the foundation of God standeth sure, we are kept by the mighty power of God unto Salvation.

6. The Covenant of Works, if a man did once break them, that did admit of no repentance; had Adam and Eve after the fall, wept their eyes out, or prayed their hearts out, all would have done them no good; repentance will no way avail the Covenant of Works; as it is in the civil Law, if a man hath committed murder, the Law does not inquire whether the man does repent, or is sorry for what he hath done, no, but the Law takes notice whether he hath done the fact, or no, if he hath, he must die, no repentance will avail; but in the Covenant of Grace it is far otherwise, for though you have done the fact, and broken God's Commandments, yet if you repent, and mourn, and grieve for the sins you have committed against God, the Lord will pardon and forgive them, as if they had never been committed, so that this is another great happiness you enjoy in being under the Covenant of Grace.

7. Adam being under the Covenant of Works, God took the very first forfeiture of breaking of this Covenant, and one sin made God to disannul that covenant, whereas the Covenant of Grace is not made void nor disannulled although you commit many sins: as you may see in Rom. 5:16,17, says the Apostle there, Not as it was by one that sinned so is the gift, for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification, that is, under the Covenant of Works, there one sin did condemn all the world, but being under the Covenant of Grace there the free gift is of many offenses unto justification, many sins are pardoned and many offenses are passed over, the Covenant of Grace pardons many sins and over looks many weaknesses and failings, though

you break your Covenant often, time after time, yet the Covenant of Grace shall not be broken, the first Covenant was disannulled for one sin, but the second Covenant shall not be disannulled for many sins, as you may see in Psal. 89:31,32,33, says God there, If they break my statutes, and keep not my Commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes, nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail, my Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips, and so in Psal. 11:5. The Lord will ever be mindful of his Covenant: so that this is another part of your happiness.

8. (Pray observe this) had Adam continued still under the Covenant of Works, and kept the Covenant, performing exact and perfect obedience to it, yet he could never have come to heaven, he should have had only an everlasting continuance in Paradise, he should never have enjoyed heaven, but being under the Covenant of Grace, that entitles you to everlasting Salvation and happiness in heaven, by Jesus Christ.

9. Under the Covenant of Works, though God did promise life to Adam, upon the performing of the Covenant, yet God did not promise pardon to Adam upon the breach of the Covenant; God promised him thus, Do this and thou shalt live, but God did not promise him, that though he should break his commands and sin against him, yet he should be saved notwithstanding: in the Covenant of works, there is no promise at all of pardon, but only of life; but under the Covenant of Grace you have a double promise. 1. You shall obtain life eternal, and Salvation by Christ: And 2. you shall have all your sins pardoned and washed away in the blood of Christ, that you do commit against him, you shall have pardon and remission of sins by Christ, so that no sin shall be charged upon you.

10. Under the Covenant of Works God did accept the person for the work-sake, but under the Covenant of Grace, he doth accept of the Work for the persons sake: and herein lies our happiness, under the Covenant of Works God did accept of Adams person merely because his works were altogether righteous and good, and he accepted his person no longer then his works were good, for as soon as ever he broke the command, God was displeased with him, but under the Covenant of Grace God doth accept of the works for the person sake; as you see in Abel, he was first accepted, and then the sacrifice, first his person was well pleasing to God, and then the sacrifice for the persons sake: so God accepts of our praying, reading, hearing, and all that we do through Jesus Christ, he being well pleased with our persons in Christ, he is delighted and well pleased with all our services in him.

11. The Covenant of Works was made to all men generally and universally without exception, but the covenant of grace was made only to a select and chosen people: all mankind were in Adam under a Covenant of Works, if Adam had kept the Law, all mankind had lived by him; but herein lies your happiness, in being under the Covenant of grace, when it is made only to a few, to a peculiar and chosen number of men.

12. The Covenant of Works that entitles men to no further honor, then to be a worthy and honorable servant of God, not a child of God, but under the Covenant of Grace, we do not only become servants, but adopted sons, we are the children of promise by Faith in Christ, the Covenant of Grace puts us into a state of Sonship: Adam was the son of God by creation, but not by grace and adoption, till the Covenant of Grace was made.

13. Creation was the foundation of the Covenant of Works, but it is Redemption that is the foundation of the Covenant of Grace, the foundation of this is, because Christ hath died for us, and shed his blood for us.

14. In the Covenant of Works God did only manifest the attributes of his greatness, and power, and wisdom, and justice; but in the covenant of grace he does demonstrate the attributes of his grace and mercy, goodness and patience, &c. God in the covenant of works was only a just God, Do this and live, so long as thou keepest my Commandments thou shalt live and no longer; but in the covenant of grace, he is a merciful God too, the Lord did make the attributes of his mercy and goodness to shine forth in this covenant; should God say to us, so long as you do well it shall be well with you, but if even you break one command or commit one sin, you shall be damned, if God should say thus to us, we were in a most miserable and undone condition, and could not escape damnation; but we being under the covenant of grace, by his Son Jesus Christ, he tells us that although we do break his commands, and sin against him, yet in his Son he will pardon us, and pass by all our transgressions, as if they had never been committed.

SERM. IX. EPH. 2:12. - AND STRANGERS TO THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE.

And strangers to the Covenants of Promise - Eph. 2:12.

A Having shewn you in 14 particulars, your great happiness in being under the covenant of grace, from the misery you would have lain under, had you been under the covenant of works: I come now to the second Use, which is a Use of dread and terror, to lay before you the great misery of those that are strangers to this covenant of promise; and here I might lay before you much astonishing and perplexing matter, to all those that are not in the covenant of grace: I shall be the larger upon this particular, because the last day I spent half an hour about a use of comfort, in showing you your happiness in being under the covenant of grace, and therefore now I shall spend the like time in declaring the misery of all those that are strangers to the covenant, which I shall comprise under these six heads.

1. This is one part of your misery, you are bound to keep the whole Law of God, and that in your persons, else you can never be saved: and oh how impossible is this for any man to do! He that is under the covenant of grace, God the Father accepts of Christ's keeping and fulfilling of the Law for

him, as if it were done by him in his own person; but to such as are not in this covenant of grace, God says to them, if you do not keep the whole Law, and that personally, you shall be damned eternally, as in Gal. 5:3, says the Apostle there, I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is bound to keep the whole Law; if you will not accept of Christ, and accept of Salvation by his blood alone, but run to circumcision; I tell you saith the Apostle, that you are debtors to keep the whole Law of God, and he will cast you into hell, upon the least breach of the Law. Oh thou unhappy man, upon how hard terms canst thou hope for salvation, even upon impossible terms; thou canst as well keep the sea in thy fist, as keep the whole Law of God in thy own person; God says to thee, if thou dost break but one command, though thou should keep all the rest, yet thou shalt die and be damned eternally; but if you be under the covenant of grace, though you break the Law again, and again, yet Christ doth redeem you from the curse of the Law, he being made a curse for you.

2. Thou that art a stranger to the covenant of grace, thou hast no strength but thy own to help thee in the discharge of all thy duties; but now a man that is under the covenant of grace, God doth command him a duty, and does with the command give him a power to perform the duty; God bids him act grace, and powers upon him a spirit of Grace; he bids him pray, and gives him a spirit of prayer; God commands him a duty, and gives him a flexible, willing, and an obedient heart, and abilities to perform the duty: when in Scripture God does command a duty, he does likewise promise to assist and enable us to the performance of the duty; as for example, the Lord bids us, to wash us and make us clean, and put away the evil of our doings, and a poor soul saith, Oh Lord I am not able to wash my heart, nor cleanse my ways, nor to do anything that is good of myself, and therefore

says God again, I will wash you and make you whiter then snow; so God bids us to get new hearts, and then again he promiseth, to create in us new hearts, and renew right spirits within us: I might instance in sundry other particulars; but now this is thy unhappiness oh man that art a stranger to the covenant of grace; God bids thee keep his commands, but he gives thee no power to fulfill his commands; he bids thee act grace, and never gives thee a spirit of grace; he bids thee pray, and yet never pours out upon thee a spirit of prayer; and if Adam in his innocence, when he was perfect, was not able to keep God's commands; how much more unable art thou to do anything that may please God? Thou by thy own strength art as well able to make a world, as to make one prayer, or perform any duty in a holy and spiritual manner; thou canst as well destroy the whole world with thy own hands, as subdue any lust by thy own strength; but under the covenant of Grace, God tells us, that though we cannot keep the Law, yet he will accept of his Sons keeping it for us; and he hath promised to help and assist us in the performance of everything, that he commands us.

3. You that are strangers to the covenant of grace, herein lies your misery, you have no Advocate to plead for you, nor Mediator to stand between God and you; you have an angry God frowning upon you, and a galled conscience ready to accuse you, and everything else in the World against you, but no friend either in heaven or in earth to plead or speak for you; Christ is a mediator to those only that are under a covenant of grace; now what canst thou say for thyself oh man, why thou shouldst not be condemned, and damned in hell forever, for thy drunkenness, adultery, sabbath-breaking, profaneness, swearing, lying, and thy ungodly practices? Thou canst have nothing to plead for thyself, but must needs be cast out into hell fire irrecoverably; but now a godly man that is under the covenant of

grace, he can say, Lord here is Christ my mediator, that pleads with thee for the pardon of all my sins, and for the obtaining of heaven, and happiness, and glory for me, through his obedience and merits; but thou that art under the covenant of works, thou canst not say, I have Christ to plead for me, and to be an Advocate with the Father, to beg for pardon of sin, and life and salvation for thee, thou canst not say so, for without the covenant of grace, there is no Mediator, Christ is the Mediator only of the new covenant; therefore what sad condition art thou in, seeing as verily as thou standest here now, so thou must one day stand before God's tribunal to answer and be judged for everything thou hast done in thy body, whether it be good or evil, and then thou wilt have nobody to plead for thee, but must inevitably be cast into everlasting burnings.

4. Being out of the covenant of grace, this is your misery, God will in exactness and rigor of justice proceed against you for your sins, without any mixture of mercy at all. (Beloved) God hath no mercy without his covenant, but in the covenant of grace, he is a God gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, abundant in mercy and truth, pardoning iniquity, transgressions, and sins, but he is clothed with justice and rigor to all that are without this covenant. As it is in courts of judicature in point of life and death, the Judge will take no notice whether the man be a sorrowful man or no, the Law is not to show mercy, but to punish the offense, the Law does not inquire whether the man be penitent and sorry for what he hath done, but whether the fact be done or no, if it be, he must die for it, there is no remedy: just so it is here, God doth not inquire under a covenant of works, whether you are sorrowful for breaking of his Law, but he enquires whether you have broken it, or no; and if you have, he will condemn thee, and cast thee into hell fire, and then the poor soul cries out, Oh Lord be

merciful to me this once, it shall be a warning to me, I will never sin against thee, nor displease thee more, but will from henceforth walk more humbly, and holily, and circumspectly before thee, and yet all this that thou hast promised, if thou wert able to perform it, will not avail thee, for God will hear none out of Christ, and out of the covenant of grace.

5. A man out of the covenant of grace, he hath no true and special title to any of the blessings of God here in this world, God's blessings go along with his covenant, and therefore it is very observable, that in that chapter where God does promise the blessings of the covenant of grace, in that very chapter he promiseth the blessings of this life, as you may see in the 36th of Ezek. says God there, I will pour clean water upon you, and you shall be clean, yea from all your filthiness, and from all your Idols, will I cleanse you: a new heart will I also give you and a new spirit will I put within you, and will take away the stony heart from you, and will give you a heart of flesh, and will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments and do them, and you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God; all these are the mercies of the covenant of grace: now mark the next words (saith God) I will call for corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you, but I will multiply the fruit of the trees, and the increase of the field, and so in the 10th, 11th ver. of that chap. And I will multiply men upon you, and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be built, and I will multiply upon man and beast, and they shall increase, and bring fruit, and I will do better to you then at your beginnings, and ye shall know that I am the Lord: Here the Lord entails earthly blessings to the covenant of grace, intimating, that all that are under the covenant of grace they have a title not only to all spiritual, but to temporal

blessings likewise; but no wicked man out of the covenant of grace, hath any true title to any outward blessings; they that are of the faithful, are blessed with faithful Abraham, and enjoy outward blessings, as a blessing; but wicked men, it is true they have something allowed them, but it is as to prisoners, in a prison they have something to keep them alive until their execution; and so wicked men they have prison allowances till the execution day.

6. Your misery, (that are strangers to the covenant of grace) lies in this, God will not give acceptance to any of your services, though you may do as much, for the matter of them, as any godly man doth; nay thou mayst hear more Sermons, and say more prayers, and perform more duties, then a godly man does, and yet not be accepted, when the others shall, as you may see in Gen. 4:4,5. Cain and Abel they both of them brought sacrifices to God, one of his flock, and the other, of his grounds; and the Apostle speaking of this, says, that by faith Abel offered a more excellent offering then Cain; it was not more excellent in regard of the matter of it, for in all probability and likelihood, Cain's sacrifice was of more value than Abel's, for his was but a few young lambs, the firstlings of his flock, but Cain's was of the first fruits of his ground; and yet Abel's sacrifice was accepted, and the others rejected, because Abel was a godly man, under the Covenant of Grace, by which God did accept of what he did, though it were less then Cain's: and so Solomon, The sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight: a sacrifice you know is a great deal more costly than a prayer, for that costs a man nothing but his breath, when the other will cost a great deal of money, and yet a costly sacrifice is hated by God coming from a wicked man, when a penniless prayer coming from a godly man is accepted: so that under a covenant of

grace, though you do less for the matter of the duty then wicked men do, yet yours shall be accepted, when theirs shall be rejected.

Thus I have done with the use of terror in laying down to you this sixfold misery of those men that are strangers to the covenant of grace; and here because I would not have any poor soul, that is under the covenant of grace, and partaker of all the great privileges of it, to go away with a sad heart, I shall only leave with you two or three words of comfort to them; You children of the covenant, that are under the covenant of grace, let not your hearts be troubled, at what hath been said this day, concerning the misery of those men that are strangers to this covenant, and to bear: up and support your spirits, I shall give you two or three comfortable considerations.

1. That all the outward blessings that you enjoy, comes to you in a covenant way, God hath given you these blessings as an appendix to the covenant, and by virtue of an entail to his covenant; the Lord never gives you a common blessing, but you see the love of a Father, and of a husband, and of a friend, and the love of God in that blessing; and therefore as I told you before in that very chapter, where God promiseth the blessings of the covenant of grace, he promiseth the blessings of this life too, as an entail to the covenant; wicked men may have blessings but not by virtue of a promise, not by virtue of the covenant of grace. But now if you ask me how you may know, whether the blessings you enjoy come unto you by virtue of the Covenant of Grace: I answer, you may know it by these two things:

1. In case you do use and employ all the blessing you receive from God, to the honor of God: thus Abraham did, as you may see in Gen. 17:1,2,8,12, his using the blessings of God to promote the service of God, did demonstrate that those blessings came to him from God, in a covenant way,

but those that are strangers to this Covenant, the mercies they enjoy are given them for their hurt.

2. When blessings are as cords to draw you nearer to God, and as bands to tie you fast to God, then they come to you in a Covenant way: as in Jer. 31:11,12. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that is stronger than he, therefore they shall come and rejoice in the height of Zion, and shall run to the bountifulness of the Lord, even for the wheat, and for the wine, and for the oil, and for the increase of sheep and bullocks, &c. That is, all the mercies of God, shall make them to come nearer and nearer, and cleave closer to God; you then that do enjoy your share of the blessings of God, and they do not endear you and draw you nearer to God, you cannot look upon them as flowing in upon you in a Covenant way.

2. You that are in covenant with God, know this for your comfort, that the Lord does accept of a little, that you do in his service, better than a great deal that a wicked man performs to him; God will accept of a few turtle doves of you, when he will not accept of 1,000 Rams, or 10,000 rivers of oil of the wicked, he will accept of a cup of cold water given to a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, when he will not accept of the costliest sacrifice from the wicked: Oh what a happy condition art thou in, that art under the covenant of grace, wicked men may hear more Sermons, and perform more duties, and say more prayers to God than you, and yet in all their duties be rejected, when thou art accepted.

3. Take this for your comfort that whenever you offend God, and provoke him to anger, you have a Mediator to stand between God and you; though you are guilty, yet you have an Advocate to plead your cause for you; you that are under the covenant of grace, you may say to Christ your Mediator,

as the Israelites said to Moses, when they had offended God, go thou and speak unto God for us; so may you say when you have nothing, but thundering and lightning and tempests in your souls, and the flashings of hell fire in your consciences, then you may say to Christ, go now to God and speak for me, mediate with thy Father for the pardon of all my sins; I have offended God, oh intercede with him in my behalf, I have committed a great offense, oh plead with thy Father, and beg a pardon for me; thus thou mayest say to Christ, being under the covenant of grace.

But here lest anyone should lie under a spiritual delusion, and think himself under the covenant of grace, when he is a stranger to it, lest the Dogs should snatch at the Children's meat, I shall lay down to you some distinguishing Characters, whereby you may know whether you are under the covenant of grace or no; and before I make entrance upon this, I will only premise four sad and dismal conclusions, which will make way the better for what I have to handle in the examination.

1. Take in this conclusion, that a man may be within the outward and common privileges of the covenant of grace, and yet be without the saving and spiritual privileges of it, as pardon of sin, having God to be your God, and Christ to be your Savior, &c. as in Deut. 29:10,11,12, says Moses there, You stand this day all of you before the Lord your God, your Captains of Tribes, your Elders, and your Officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood, unto the drawer of thy water, that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God: Now here you see, were all from the rich to the poor, to enter into covenant with God, and yet it is not imaginable that all these did partake of the inward privileges of the Covenant of grace, they did all partake of circumcision, which was the seal of the covenant, of the

outward privileges of it, but not all did partake of the inward and special mercies of the covenant of grace, as pardon of sin, peace of conscience, joy in believing, God to be their God, and Christ to be their Savior; and so in Rom. 9:4,5, says the Apostle, They are the Israelites to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises, of whom are the Fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, these were very great privileges, and yet says the text in verse 8. These are not all the children of God, though they had the external blessings of the Covenant, yet they were not all the children of God; so that you see, you may be within the Church of God, and partake of the outward blessings of the Covenant, and yet want the inward and spiritual blessings of it.

2. Take in this sad conclusion, that the most of men in the world, are without the common and outward mercies of the covenant of grace, as all that are in the state of Judaism, Turkism, and Paganism, and these being without the outward privileges of the Church, they can hope for no salvation. If you should divide the world into one and thirty parts, there is but a fifth part of them are Christians, there is nineteen parts of the world that are Jews, and Turks, and seven parts that are Pagans; so that there is but five parts that are Christians; the most of men in the world are without the outward and common blessings of the Covenant of grace, and therefore can obtain no salvation by Christ.

3. Take this conclusion yet further, that the most of those men that are within the outward and common blessings, are yet without the saving and spiritual blessings and privileges of the covenant of grace; this conclusion is answerable to that phrase in Matth. 2. Many are called, but few are chosen, there are but a few chosen to life and happiness, amongst those that are

partakers of the external mercies of the covenant of grace, as in Zach. 13:8,9. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein, and I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them, as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried, they shall call on my name and I will hear them; I will say it is my people, and they shall say, the Lord is my God: there was but one part of three that were godly, and as it was then, so it is now; but one part of three that can say truly, they have an interest in the covenant of grace, and therefore (Beloved) this may be some of your lot, there are many of you that have a share in the outward blessings of the covenant, that have the Ordinances and means of grace, and make profession of Christ, and yet few of you that have any special and peculiar blessing from Christ. As when Christ was thronged in the multitude, there were a great many that touched him, but one only that got any virtue from him, so there are a very few that enjoy the special and peculiar blessings of the covenant, to have sin pardoned, and their corruptions subdued and their duties and services accepted, God to be their God, and Christ to be their Savior.

4. Take this conclusion likewise, that such is the pride and deceitfulness of man's heart naturally, that from their being within the compass of the outward blessings of the covenant, that they will conclude themselves, to have an interest in the inward and spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace, as you shall find the Jews did in Joh. 8:33,39,41, in verse 33, say they, we are the seed of Abraham: and verse 39, we have Abraham to be our Father; and from hence they conclude in verse 41, that God was their Father too, though Christ told them plainly they were of their father the Devil: wicked men are very apt to deceive themselves, and think they have an

interest in the spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace, because they partake of the Sacraments, and outward ordinances; whereas in Baptism you may have your face sprinkled with water, and yet never have your hearts sprinkled with the blood of Christ, you may be born in the Church, and yet never be of the Church of the first born in heaven; you may have the Church to be your Mother, and yet never have God to be your Father; there is but a remnant according to the election of grace, the main body is cast away, there is but a remnant saved, and yet the Jews did boast of themselves, that because they had the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenant, and the Promise, &c. therefore God was theirs too, and heaven and happiness, and all theirs, when there was no such matter.

SERM. X. EPH. 2:12. - AND STRANGERS TO THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE.

A *nd strangers to the Covenants of Promise - Eph. 2:12.*

Having formerly premised four conclusions that you might not harbor any secret conjectures and imaginations that you do belong to the covenant of grace, when you do not; I come now to give you some trials and discoveries whereby you may know, whether you are the persons that can lay a just claim to life and salvation from God through his Son Jesus Christ, by virtue of his promise, and I shall comprise them under these three heads:

1. You may know whether you do belong to the covenant of grace or no, in case you do partake of the spiritual blessings of the covenant:

2. In case you have the inseparable concomitants of the Covenant: And,

3. In case you do perform the conditions of the covenant of grace, which is faith; believe and be saved: if you have these three, you may lay an undoubted claim to the covenant of grace.

1. If you have the saving and spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace; and these are four; 1. God will be your God, and you shall be his people;

This is the tenor of the covenant of grace, as in Jer. 31:33. I will be their God, and they shall my people. I shall a little open this blessing to you, for God to be our God, it notes these three things: 1. It notes a special propriety in God, which none have but the elect. 2. It notes an all-sufficiency in God for their good. 3. It notes an absolute authority, that God hath over them.

1. For God to be our God, it notes that God is yours in a special way of propriety, which none but those that are the children of God can have, wicked men cannot lay claim to God as their God; as Pharaoh, when he desired Moses to pray for him, says he I have sinned against the Lord your God, he could not say against the Lord my God, you that can upon Scripture grounds, lay claim to God as your God, as having a special propriety in him, you have an interest in the covenant of grace.

2. For God to be your God, it notes an all-sufficiency in God, put out for your good, as in Gen. 17:1, says God there to Abraham, I am thy God all-sufficient walk before me, and be thou perfect; you that can look upon God as having an interest and propriety in God; and you find by experience, that God is exceeding good to your souls in everything, if you see the emptiness of all things in the world, and that they are but particular helps to thee, as food against hunger, drink against thirst, clothes against nakedness, &c. but you find God to be an all-sufficient help and remedy, the chiefest good, sufficing, and satisfying, and filling thy heart, thou that canst look upon God, as thy all-sufficient good, as having thy portion and interest in him and in none else; this is an undoubted evidence, that you do belong to the Covenant of Grace.

3. For God to be your God, it notes God's sovereignty and power over you, for your benefit, the Lord will reign over you, and subdue corruptions in you, and quell your pride, and humble your heart, and give you a meek

and quiet spirit. If you find that God is yours in these three particulars, you may comfort your heart in an unquestionable interest in the Covenant of Grace, if God be your God, and you his people, that you have given up, and devoted yourselves wholly to the service of God in everything that you do.

2. Another special blessing of the covenant of grace is, that God hath promised to sanctify and renew your natures: as in Ezek. 36:26,27, says God there, A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and will take away the stony hearts out of your bosoms, and will give you hearts of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments and do them: God will not only give us life for our happiness, but grace for our holiness; he will not only give us imputed righteousness for our justification, but also inherent righteousness for our sanctification; now therefore examine yourselves, have your natures ever been sanctified, and regenerated? Have you been ever washed with clean water, and those stains of sin and corruption wiped away from you? Hath the besom of sanctification ever swept your inward man, and made it not a cave for every unclean bird to lie in, but a habitation fit for the holy Ghost to dwell in? If it be so, you have a real right to, and interest in the covenant of grace, for no man can have the blessings of the covenant, but he must have a being in the covenant of grace. It is very observable, that God is not only, as the covenant represents him, a God gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and full of compassion, &c. but he is a holy God as well as a merciful God; and therefore he will work holiness in us and expect holiness from us, if ever we expect to have mercy and happiness from him; never lay claim to God, nor expect life and happiness from him, as he is a merciful God, unless you resolve to be conformable to him as he is a holy God.

But here some may say, This is not so great a blessing as you speak of, to be sanctified by virtue of the covenant of grace; for there are many men that may be sanctified by the covenant of grace, and yet never be saved by it; and this objection they ground upon that place in Heb. 10:29. And they shall count the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing.

I answer that the sanctification here spoken of, is not a true sanctification, but only in profession, in the sight of men, not in the sight of God; it is not a sanctification in very deed and in truth, but only in show and in the judgment of men.

3. Another blessing of the covenant of grace, is the forgiveness of our sins: as in Jer. 3:34. They shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest, saith the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sins no more: now (beloved) can you say that God hath pardoned your sins, and done away your offenses, if so, then you are under the Covenant of Grace.

But here some poor soul may say, Alas I have been a great sinner, and have committed offenses against God; and therefore, I fear I have no real interest in the covenant of grace.

Be not discouraged, for it is the glory of the covenant of grace to pardon great sins; it puts a great deal of glory upon God, to pardon great sins, and pass by great offenses, as in Amos 5:12,15. I know (says God) your manifold transgressions, and your mighty sins: here you see are manifold and mighty sins, and yet says God, hate evil, and love good; it may be the Lord will be gracious to you, nay the Lord he will be gracious to you; though thou hast manifold and mighty sins, yet it is not the greatness nor

mightiness of them, but thy stubbornness of heart, in not coming in, and closing with Jesus Christ, that undoes thee.

4. Another blessing of the covenant of grace, is God's writing his Law in our hearts, that we shall never depart from him, as in Jer. 31:33. I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, I will be their God, and they shall be my people; that is, God will put into our hearts a suitable frame and disposition answerable to every command of God in his Law, that we shall be able to obey, observe, and keep it, and say that it is good; and then says God, you shall never depart from me; now examine yourselves, hath this effect been wrought by the spirit of God in your hearts? Hath God written the Sermons you have heard, not in your books, but in your hearts? If so, these are good evidences of your interest in the covenant of grace.

2. Another discovery or character of your interest in the covenant of grace is this, if you have in you the inseparable concomitances that belong to this covenant of grace; there are some things that do always accompany the covenant of grace, as I shall instance in 3 or 4 particulars.

1. If you be a man under the covenant of grace, in covenant with God, then you are disengaged from that league and covenant which you have made and contracted with your lusts, whosoever is in covenant with God, he hath broken his league with his lusts; you cannot be in covenant with Christ, till you fall off from your lusts, and break off from your sins, as in Act. 3:25,26, says the Apostle, You are the children of the Prophets, and of the covenant, which God hath made with our Fathers; saying to Abraham, even in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed: First unto you hath God raised up his Son Jesus Christ, and him he hath sent to bless you, in turning every one of you from your iniquities; so that if you are children

of the covenant, the Lord will turn every one of you from your wicked ways, and therefore you that are not turned from the evil of your courses, that have not broken that league you have made with death and hell, you can lay no claim to the covenant of grace, as in Psal. 50:16, says God there to the wicked, What hast thou to do, to take my covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest to be reformed, and castest my words behind thee? Thou wilt not forsake thy lusts, nor leave thy sins, and therefore what hast thou to do to meddle with my covenant of grace? You can lay no claim to the Covenant, till you have cast off the old man, and subdued and overcome your sins and corruptions.

2. Another concomitant of the covenant of grace, that will accompany you, is this, you will be a people wholly devoted and given up to the service of God. Jer. 31. I will be your God and you shall be my people, the covenant of grace is called a holy covenant, Luk. 1:72, not so much because it was made by a holy God, as because it was made for the holy creature, it will make them holy that do enter into it, and therefore those that are in Covenant with God, are called a holy people, and they must be a holy people, as in 1 Cor. 6:20, says the Apostle, You are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and souls, which are God's, and in 2 Cor. 7:1. Seeing therefore we have these promises, (dearly beloved) Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God: those that are in covenant with God, they are a holy and crucified people.

3. Another concomitant is this, that man that hath a share in the blessings of the Covenant, he doth make conscience to walk in the ways of the Covenant; he will not only close with the promise of the Covenant, but also make conscience of keeping the commands of the Covenant; for the

covenant of grace does not only bestow blessings upon you, but require something of you too, as in Isa. 55, says God, Incline your ears and come unto me and hear, hearken, and your souls shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David: the covenant of grace is a sure and everlasting covenant, but says God, you shall come unto me first, and then I will make with you an everlasting covenant: God will have you to obey him, if ever you think to have any share in the covenant of grace; those that, let God command what he will, will do what they please; this argues, that they do not belong to the covenant of grace; but if the blessings of the covenant of grace are given by God to you, and the concomitants of it found with you: and lastly, the conditions of it found in you: which is faith, the only condition of the covenant of grace, believe and be saved; if God hath brought thee into a believing estate, that there is not one promise in the Gospel, but you do heartily assent unto, and close with: if it be thus, then you may conclude, that you do belong to the covenant of grace; And thus I have done with these characters by way of trial.

I have only now a word or two more by way of use, and so have done with this third part of man's misery; and the Use that I shall make of this, shall be for consolation, to all those whose hearts can bear them witness, that they do enjoy the saving blessings of the Covenant of grace, God to be their God, and they to be his people; and that God hath sanctified and renewed your natures, and pardoned and passed by all your sins and iniquities, and hath written his Law in your hearts, that you do not depart from him; if you have the concomitants of the Covenant, that you are disengaged from the league and covenant you have made with sin, and death, and hell; if you are wholly devoted and given up to the service of

God, and do make conscience to walk in the ways of the Covenant; and if the conditions of the Covenant of Faith in Christ be found in you; if you are brought into a believing condition; if all these things be wrought in you, then hearken to the great happiness and benefit you enjoy, by being under the Covenant of Grace.

1. Thou hast that which is more worth then a king's ransom, nay then all the world, thou hast God to be thy God which is all in all, it is more than that which was promised to Esther by King Ahasuerus, to the half of his Kingdom; you have more than the Devil promised to Christ, when he carried him to the top of the mountain, and shown him all the Kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; thou hast more than the whole world, for thou hast God to be thy God, and thou hast an interest in the Covenant of Grace, which is a bundle of promises, and includes in it all the promises of the Gospel, which are all yours, and you may go and apply them to your own souls in whatsoever condition you are in.

2. You that are in Covenant with God, labor to admire the great condescension of God, that he would be pleased to proceed with you by way of a Covenant: I have read of some Authors that have more wondered, and stood amazed at this, then at anything else in the World, that God that is the Sovereign Lord of all the works of his hands, that he should not rule us and command us by a Law, but deal with us by way of a Covenant, for God is not bound to give us a reward, though we should serve him all the days of our lives; God might command us as we are his creatures to serve and obey him, to pray, read, hear, and walk holily and humbly before him, and when we have done all this, yet he might say to us, I will never give you heaven nor happiness, nor any reward at all; he might have said thus to us, but he hath condescended so far, as to make a bargain with us; that if we will

believe in his Son Jesus Christ, and live holily, and walk uprightly before him, then he will be our God, and we shall be his people, he will write his Law in our hearts, and sanctify, and renew our natures, and pardon and forgive all our sins, and give us heaven and happiness when we die; Oh what an infinite condescension is this in God, and what unspeakable bounty and free grace; that when he might say to us, you are bound to serve me, and obey me, and to love and fear me, but I am not bound to make a Covenant with you, and promise you my Son, and life, and Salvation, through him, but though I am not bound to it, yet I will give you my Son, and heaven, and happiness, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people, and I will regenerate and sanctify your natures; and create in you new hearts, and write my Law in your inward parts, I will freely do all this for you, says God, Oh what infinite condescension and free grace and mercy is this!

3. Another great happiness you do enjoy under the Covenant of Grace, is this, the Lord will pardon all the great sins you commit against him, and accept of all the weak duties and services you perform to him; though you commit great and mighty sins, yet the Lord is gracious and merciful, and will pardon them; the Covenant of Grace covers great sins: as the sea can cover a mountain as well as a molehill; so the Covenant of Grace can pardon mountainous sins as well as small ones. And again, the Covenant of Grace does accept of weak and imperfect duties, nay those very duties which wicked men do perform, though they be more for the matter of them than ours are, yet by virtue of the Covenant of Grace, the Lord does accept of ours, and will not accept of theirs, as in Prov. 15:8, the place that I quoted before, The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight; a sacrifice is a great deal more

costly than a prayer, and yet the Lord will accept of a poor penniless prayer coming from a godly man, when he will reject a costly Sacrifice from a wicked man; God will accept of a cup of cold water, from one in Covenant with him, when he will not accept of 10,000 rivers of oil from a wicked man; he will pardon your great sins, and accept of your weak services: indeed, were you under a Covenant of works, that would require perfect obedience, but being under a Covenant of grace, the Lord accepts of sincere, though it be imperfect obedience: and thus I have done with the third part of man's misery, being strangers to the Covenant of grace.

SERM. XI. EPH. 2:12. - HAVING NO HOPE.

Having no hope - Eph. 2:12.

We come now to fall upon the fourth part of an unconverted man's misery, (which you will think to be a very strange one) that he is without hope; while these Ephesians were in a state of Gentilism, unconverted to the Faith of Christ, they were without hope, and the reason of it was, because they were without Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life, there is no other way to heaven but only by Jesus Christ, and seeing they were out of the way to heaven, they must needs be without any hopes of coming to heaven; it was the first branch of their misery, in being without Christ that exposed them, and made them liable to all the rest, because they were without Christ, therefore they were aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel, and therefore they were strangers to the Covenant of Promise, and without hope, and without God in the World.

Obj. But here some will be ready to say, How can this be that the Apostle should say, they were without hope, when were it not for hope, the heart would break; and therefore it is not possible, they should be without hope?

I answer, it is true, they had a hope, but it was a vain hope, an ungrounded and a deluding hope, and this kind of hope is no better than no hope at all, so that the Apostle might well say they had no hope, that is, no good nor well-grounded hope for heaven, they had only a presumptuous hope, such a hope as would make them ashamed in the latter end, they had only the hope of the hypocrite that shall perish, and therefore when the Apostle says, that these Ephesians during their unregeneracy, were without hope, his meaning is, that they were without any well-grounded hopes for heaven, they had no Scripture grounds, to bottom or build any hopes upon, that God would bring them to heaven; this is a very sad and dreadful point I am now upon, in showing you this part of man's misery, without hope; the Observation I shall draw out from hence shall be this;

That all men during the state of their unregeneracy, are without any true, or well-grounded hopes of heaven.

In the handling of this I shall first prove it in the general, and then improve it; first to prove it, an unconverted man's condition, in reference to his hopes for heaven, is just like Paul's, and those Mariners that were with him in the ship sailing towards Rome, Act. 27:20, when neither Sun nor Stars appeared, but the wind and waves did beat upon the ship, insomuch that all the hopes they had of being saved were quite taken away; so it is just your case that are without Jesus Christ, there is neither Sun nor Star does shine upon you, if Christ does not shine upon you, you are like Paul and the other Mariners in the ship, all hopes of your being saved, is quite taken away from you. I shall confirm this truth to you by three or four demonstrations, that a wicked man is without any hopes for heaven.

1. An unregenerate man must needs be without hope, because he is without Christ who is the foundation of a Christians hope, Wherefore

remember, says the Apostle, that at that time ye were without Christ, and therefore he tells them afterward, that they were without hope, in Tit. 2:2. Christ is there called our hope, Christ is that person in and upon whom we are to build all our hopes for heaven, and therefore he is called our hope, and this is the meaning of that expression, Christ in you the hope of glory, intimating that you cannot hope for glory, but in and through Jesus Christ; that man that is a Christless man, must needs be a hopeless man, that is the first demonstration.

2. A man without Christ, must needs be without hope, because he is without a title to any promise of life and salvation, which is the only support and prop of man's hope; you would count this a very fond and vain hope, for any man to hope that such a rich man would make him heir of all he hath, though he never promised him one foot of Land; why just so vain are the hopes of wicked men, but now the Word of Promise is like a pillar of marble to bear up the hearts of God's people, as in 1 Tit. 2. In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the World began, the promises do ground that man that hath interest in them, to a hope of eternal life, he that is without the Lord Jesus Christ the foundation of hope, and without the promises which is the pillar of hope, must needs be without all true hopes of heaven.

3. He cannot but be without hope, because he is without Faith which is the ground of hope, as in Heb. 11:1. Faith is the ground of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen: where no true Faith is there can be no hope, for Faith is the Mother, and Hope is the Daughter, Hope is begotten by Faith; an unregenerate man must needs be without hope, because he is without Christ the foundation of hope, and the promises the pillar of hope, and Faith the ground of hope.

4. It appears that he is without hope, because when he leaves the world, his hopes leave him, whereas the hope of a godly man never leaves him till it brings him to heaven; when a wicked man dies his hopes are gone, and leave him when he hath most need of them, had his hopes been well grounded hopes, they would never make him ashamed of them.

Thus you see I have only in the general confirmed the point to you. I come now to speak of some more particular inquiries in the prosecution of this Doctrine, (Beloved) will you lend me your thoughts a little, in the handling of these five inquiries? As,

1. I shall show you the nature of this hope that unconverted men are without.

2. I shall show you what are the characters of those men that are without any well grounded hopes for heaven.

3. I shall show you the reason, why (seeing the Scripture says that a wicked man hath no hope) that of any men in the world, a wicked man does nourish in his heart the greatest hopes for heaven.

4. I shall show wherein lies the difference between those that have only a presumptuous hope for heaven, and those that have a true and well-grounded hope for heaven; And,

Lastly, I shall show you the great misery of those men that have only presumptuous hopes for heaven.

I will begin with the first of these, to show you the nature of that hope, that unconverted men are without.

Take this plain description of it, that true hope which wicked men are without it is a well-grounded and patient expectation for the accomplishment of all those spiritual and eternal good things, which God hath promised through Jesus Christ, and which Faith believes. I call it a

well-grounded expectation to distinguish true hope, from those presumptuous hopes that wicked men have: I call it a patient hope to distinguish it from a rash hope, in wicked men: and I say it is a patient expectation and looking for the accomplishing those spiritual and eternal good things, which God hath promised in Christ, because that this is the ground of hope, it is called the hope of glory and the hope of eternal life, and the like; Thus you have the nature of this hope that wicked men are without, when the Apostle says, they were without hope, his meaning is, that they were without any hope of those spiritual and eternal good things, which God hath promised to believers through Christ.

Quest. 2. What are the Characters of those men, that have no hopes for heaven, or if they have, it is only a deluding and a presumptuous hope, a hope no better than no hope at all? (Nay, it were a great deal better to have no hope then a presumptuous hope, but that I shall speak to afterward.)

Now before I shall lay down these characters by way of discovery, I will only premise four or five particular conclusions, which are very necessary to prevent wicked men from running into mistakes concerning their hopes for heaven. 1. Take this conclusion, that this grace of hope may as well be counterfeited as any other grace, there is a lively hope in a Believer, and a dead hope in a wicked man, there is a feigned hope as well as a true hope, a counterfeit hope as well as a good hope, and therefore it is said in Joh. 8:13. The hope of the hypocrite shall perish; and in Prov. 10:28. The hope of the wicked shall perish.

2. Take this conclusion, that those men, that have least grounds to build hopes of heaven upon, do yet nourish most confident hopes of heaven in their hearts; I shall give you two notable places of Scripture to prove this, in Prov. 14:16, it is said there that a wise man feareth and departeth from evil,

a wise man is jealous over his own heart, what follows? But says he, A fool, that is, a wicked man, he rageth, and yet is confident, he runs on in wicked ways and practices without any remorse or sorrow, and yet he is a confident man, that he shall go to heaven as well as the best; A wise man feareth and departeth from evil but a wicked man rageth, and yet is confident, those that have least cause to hope, do yet harbor the greatest hopes for heaven in their hearts. A like place to this you have in Psal. 36:1,2. The transgression of the wicked says in his heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes, and yet the next words are, he flatters himself in his own eyes, though his iniquities are found worthy to be hated; wicked men are very apt to have good conceits of themselves, and you shall find it ordinarily, that a poor soul that walks conscionably before God, and neglects no known duty, and mortifies every known lust, and walks humbly before God, this man is full of fears and jealousies, and doubts that all things are not well between God and his soul; and yet you shall find another ungodly wretch that gives way to all manner of sin and uncleanness, and fulfills the lusts of his flesh and of his mind, and this man is very confident of his going to heaven, and that all is well with him when he is running headlong to hell. Here then you see the second conclusion that those men that have least grounds to build hopes of heaven upon, do yet nourish strongest hopes for heaven in their hearts.

3. Another conclusion is this, that a man may live and die with very strong hopes that he shall go to heaven, till he be thrown down into hell; he may have no other thoughts but that he shall go to heaven till he be cast headlong into hell. I shall give you some plain text to prove this, as Job 21:23. Job speaks there of a wicked man, says he, one dies in his full strength being wholly at ease and quiet; A learned Divine says upon this place, that it is the note of a wicked man, when he lies upon his death bed, if you come

to him and ask him if he hath any hopes that he shall go to heaven, he will answer, that he hath very strong hopes of it; and if you ask him, whether my sin troubles him, he will tell you no, blessed be God I have no sin troubles me now, nor ever did all my life time; What, does nothing at all disquiet you? No, I am wholly at ease and quiet; he hath no sin troubles him, nor no misgiving thoughts, but that he shall go to heaven: But when a wicked man dies, then his expectation shall perish, and not till then: Now Beloved me thinks this conclusion should a little startle you, and make you look about you to take heed lest you run hoodwinked to hell, that you do not live and die in hopes of heaven, and never think otherwise till you drop down into hell.

4. To you that do lay claim to strong hopes for heaven, let me tell you thus much, that you are not to hope for heaven, unless you can render a reason or ground of your hopes. Beloved it is not natural for every man to hope for heaven and to be saved, and you ought not to hope for heaven unless you can give some grounds for it, as the Apostle says, But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to everyone that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; Now examine yourselves, what grounds can you give for your hopes of heaven, have you a promise for it? Or one Scripture ground for it? Or the witness of the Spirit for it? If not, then do not nourish any hopes of heaven in your hearts. Thus I have laid down these four conclusions, I come now to handle the query itself which is this.

Quest. What are the characters whereby it may be known whether you are such a one that hath no hopes for heaven, or a mere deluding, an ungrounded and presumptuous hope, as good as no hope?

The hearts of all the sons of men are desperately wicked and deceitful above all things, man is a proud creature and apt to have proud and high conceits of himself, and therefore I shall give you five distinguishing characters, whereby you may know whether your hopes for heaven be true, and well-grounded hopes, or no.

1. That man that nourisheth in his heart great hopes for heaven, and yet at the same time fosters and favors great lusts and sins in himself, that man hath no true hopes for heaven. I shall give you a clear place to prove this, Deut. 29:15. And it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, if he shall bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk after the imaginations of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, &c. The Lord will not spare such a man, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man: and so in Isa. 57:20, says the Prophet there, Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy wicked ways, yet saidst thou not, There is no hope, it is a very strange place, as if the Prophet should say to them, you walk in a great course of sin and wickedness, and yet you flatter you selves, you will not say there is no hope for you, you that do nourish great sins and wickedness in your bosoms, and allow yourselves in the practice of great sins, you should say, there is no hope for you to go to heaven, for God does here charge it upon you, that notwithstanding you walk on in ways of sin, yet you say not, there is no hope; but are rather very confident you shall go to heaven for all that; and so in Psal. 36:1,2. The transgression of the wicked saith in his heart, there is no fear of God before his eyes, and yet says the Psalmist, he flatters himself, with vain hopes of heaven; wicked men have heaven and the hopes thereof in their eyes, when they have sin in their hearts, and this shows that their hope is only a deluding and a vain hope.

2. That man hath no true hope but only a presumptuous and vain hope for heaven, that is strong in his expectations of heaven as his aim and end, but slow in his actions and endeavors after holiness as his way: he that can with Balaam desire to die the death of the righteous, but never care nor desire to live the life of the righteous, that man's hope is but a vain hope, as the Psalmist hath it in Psal. 119:155. Salvation is far from the wicked, for they seek not thy statutes, and if salvation be far, the hope of salvation is as far; but why is salvation far from the wicked? Because they seek not God's statutes, those men that hope that salvation is near them, when they are far from seeking after God's statutes, and endeavoring after holiness, as the way to happiness, these men are far from salvation, and the hope of salvation too.

3. That man hath only deluding hopes for heaven, that is unwilling to have his hope tried, examined, and come to the touchstone, those that will not, as the Apostle, bids us, be ready to give to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; now let me ask you what ground you can give for your hopes in heaven, have you the testimony of God's Spirit for it, or the testimony of a good conscience. that in simplicity and godly sincerity, you have had your conversation here in this world? Have you a promise or any ground in scripture for your hopes? If you have no ground for your hopes, and cannot endure to come to the trial or touchstone, it is an argument that you are counterfeit metal that you have no real hopes for salvation and happiness in another World.

4. That man that builds his hopes for heaven more upon his own performances than upon God's promises, his hope is only a deluding hope: this is that sandy ground Christ speaks of in Matth. 7, ult. To build your hopes of heaven upon any services you do, or any duties you perform, it is

all one, as if you should go about to build a house upon the sand; ask a wicked man whereon he grounds his hopes for heaven; he will tell you that he does the works of charity, he gives every man his due, and he lives honestly, and civilly amongst his neighbors, he hears and reads the Word, he prays and receives the Sacrament, he does such and such good duties, and this is that which they build hopes for heaven upon, they think that Christ is espoused for them, because they are bidden to the Wedding Supper, for the Ordinances of Christ are his marriage supper, they are ready to say with those in Luk. 13:26. We have eaten and drunken in thy presence, Lord, Lord open to us. I do not deny but a man may have evidence from his graces, and from the work of God upon his heart, but the great pillar of Marble, that must bear up thy hope, must be the promise of God in Christ; he that builds his hopes for heaven only upon his own performances and good duties, his hope is a vain and deluding hope; I do not deny but the graces of God's spirit are real evidences of. God's love to the Soul, as the Apostle says, By this we know that we are translated from death to life, because we love the Brethren, and again, By this we know that we are of God, because of his spirit which he hath given us; but I say this is not the main pillar and ground of our hope: we should be so fervent in prayer, and diligent in the performance of holy duties, as if we did expect to be saved by our duties, but when we have done all that we can, we must lay down all at the feet of Christ, and conclude that our best righteousness is but as filthy rags, and when we have done all that we can do, we are unprofitable servants, and we must wholly and only depend upon the merits and mercies of Christ for salvation and comfort.

5. That man that thinks, there is neither difficulty in getting this grace of hope, nor efficacy in keeping of it, that man hath no true hope. 1. Thou that

thinkest there is no difficulty in obtaining this grace, thou never yet hadst it, for the least grace is beyond the power, and capacity of any man to get of himself, thou that thinkest it an easy matter to hope for heaven, thou never yet hadst a true hope, for it must be God that must work this grace in us, as the Apostle says in Rom. 15:13. Now the God of hope fill you with all peace and joy in believing. 2. Those that think there is no efficacy in keeping this grace of hope, those have no true hope, for wheresoever true hope is, it hath these properties with it.

1. It hath a purifying virtue with it, as in 1. Joh. 3:3. Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as God is pure.

2. Hope hath a pacifying property with it, It is the Anchor of the Soul, both sure and steadfast; though the World, and the Devil trouble and disquiet you, and afflictions and temptations molest and disturb you, yet this grace of hope will quiet and pacify you, those that hope in God shall be secure and at rest.

3. Hope it hath a painful property with it, it is never a sluggard, where there is an impossibility, there hope is cut off. But that which a man hopes for, he will labor and endeavor after: as he that ploughs does plough in hope, so the hopes of heaven will make you plough up the fallow ground of your hearts, and make you indefatigable in your labors after heaven, so that you shall take a great deal of pains and use all your endeavors for it.

SERM. XII. EPH. 2:12. - HAVING NO HOPE.

Having no hope - Eph. 2:12.

We come now to the third Question, which is this (Quest.) What is the reason (seeing the Scripture says that a wicked man hath no hope) that of all the men in the world, wicked men do nourish greatest hopes for heaven in their hearts?

Answ. In resolving this Question, I shall lay you down five false pillars or props, that do bear up and nourish the hopes of wicked men, and as I name them to you, I shall show you the rottenness, and deceitfulness, and insufficiency of them, for any man to build hopes of heaven upon.

1. The first prop that wicked men do build hopes of heaven upon is this, because they have committed but small sins in their life time, and because they have not run out into the commission of such gross and scandalous sins in the world as other men have, therefore say they, surely we have some ground to hope for heaven; it is true, we are sinners, but my sins are but ordinary small sins and frailties, they are not sins of a double die, just as the Pharisee says, Lord I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners,

unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican, because he was not as bad as other men, therefore he thought he had a right and title to heaven, because they are not as bad as the worst, therefore they think themselves as good as the best; now I shall show you the weakness and rottenness of this pillar for any man to build hopes of heaven upon, and that in these five particulars.

1. You that make this a ground to build hopes for heaven upon, let me tell you thus much, that there are many men in the world that have kept themselves from great and crying sins, and yet remain in an unconverted estate: for instance, you may see this in Paul, in Phil. 3:6, he tells us, That according to the Law he was blameless, there was no command of God in the letter of it, that he was guilty of the breach of, he was no swearer, nor liar, nor stealer, nor drunkard, nor adulterer, &c. he was guilty of no great and gross sins, and yet Paul he had nothing to plead for heaven for him, if he had not had the righteousness of Jesus Christ to plead for him. Says the young man to Christ, What shall I do to inherit eternal life? Christ tells him that he should not do any murder, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor hear false witness, honor thy Father and Mother, and love thy neighbor as thyself; the young man answered and said, all these things have I kept from my youth up: and Jesus looked upon him and loved him, and pitied him, that such an ingenuous and blameless man as he was should yet go to hell; this man did not break the Law of God in the letter of it, but yet he went away sorrowful, when Christ bad him go and sell all that he had and give to the poor, the young man went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions; then says Christ, How hardly shall a rich man enter into the Kingdom of heaven! And so the proud Pharisee that boasted himself over the poor Publican; yet this man went away justified and not the other.

2. You that make small sins a prop to build hopes of heaven upon, it may be though your sins are little and small, yet what they want in bulk and magnitude, they may make up in number; and many small sins are more dangerous than one great sin, many small scars upon the heart with a penknife is as bad as a thrust with a sword: it may be with thee in this regard, as it is in Arithmetic, many small figures, amount to a greater sum, then a few great figures do, four small figures make a greater sum then three great figures, so many small sins will do thee more harm than a few great sins? If what your sins do want in bulk and magnitude, you make it up in their number and multitude, you are as liable to damnation as if you had committed great and crying sins; though you have not committed adultery in your life time, yet it may be you have had many sinful and unclean thoughts in your heart; and though you have not been guilty of murder, yet it may be you have had many revengeful thoughts in you, which is as bad as murder and so of any other sins.

3. You that plead exemption and freedom from great sins, to be a prop to build hopes for heaven upon, know thus much; that small sins are more capable of great aggravations, then great sins are, as I shall show you in these 3 particulars, wherein small sins do admit of greater aggravations then great sins.

1. Small sins are committed most commonly with more complacency and less reluctancy, then great sins are; unclean thoughts do please the heart and tickle the fancy, and content the mind of a man, and are committed with a great deal more complacency and delight, and less reluctancy; who would strain at a gnat? Now it lays your souls upon more guilt when you commit the smallest sins with delight and contentment, and satisfaction, then if you

did commit great and gross sins, if you labor to resist them, and strive against them.

2. Thou committest small sins with more security, and less penitency, then great sins; when a man commits a great and scandalous sin, he is sensible of what he hath done, and lays it to heart, and is ashamed of it and must repent of it, or else it will be a shame to him all his life long; but he can venture upon a small sin, and never be troubled at it, nor grieved for it, he can commit a small sin with a great deal of security, and impenitency, so that hereby they do the soul more wrong then great sins.

3. You are apt to run into small sins with more frequency then you commit great sins, for they are so open to the reproof of the Word, and so obvious to the eyes of all men, that you cannot find opportunities to commit them so often, whereas small sins you commit again and again, and one day after another, and a thousand times in one day, and yet never take notice of them, and therefore this may convince you, that your exemption from great sins, can be no sufficient ground to build your hopes for heaven upon.

4. You that build your hopes for heaven upon this ground, because your sins are none of the greatest, let me tell you, that the smallest sins that ever you committed in all your life time, without repentance on thy part, and satisfaction on Christ's part, will forever keep thy soul out of heaven, if you repent peradventure you shall be pardoned, the smallest sins cannot be forgiven, without the blood of Christ to wash them away, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission: and thus I have shown the insufficiency and deceitfulness of the first prop that wicked men do build their hopes for heaven upon, we come now to the second.

2. But says a wicked man, I have heard and read of those, that have committed far greater and more crying sins then ever I have been guilty of,

and yet they hoped for heaven, and are gone to heaven, and therefore why should not I hope for heaven as well as they? I read of David that committed Adultery, and of Noah's drunkenness, and Paul's persecuting Christ, and Peters denying of him, and divers others, and yet these men are gone to heaven, and why may not I as well as they? Concerning this plea of wicked men I shall give you these three things by way of answer.

1. You that make this a ground for your hope, you do pervert the end for which God hath recorded the examples of his servants in Scripture, for God did not record them there, to be a provocation to thee to go on presumptuously in sinning against him, but merely to be a restraint and caveat to keep thee from falling into the same sins, which they did; if Noah, and Lot, and David, and Peter, &c. such holy and excellent men as these, had their failings, and did commit great and gross sins, oh then let me take heed lest I am overtaken, and fall into the same sins; this is the use that we should make of the failings of other man, as in 1 Cor. 10:11. All things are written for our example, to admonish us upon whom the ends of the world are come, and in 1 Tim. 1:16, says the Apostle, obtained mercy, that I might be an example to all that should hereafter believe in Jesus Christ.

2. You that make the sins of other men, that have obtained mercy, to be a ground to build your hopes of heaven upon, let me ask you this Question; you that do fall into the same sins with Noah, or David, or Peter, do you repent with them too? It is true, Noah did fall once into the sin of drunkenness, but yet the Scripture records this of him, that he was an upright man in his generation: and so David, though he did once defile his bed, yet afterwards he repented of it, and made his couch to swim with tears for it: so Peter after he had denied Christ, he went out and wept bitterly for it; but I say, what is all this to thee, that doest make a trade of sin, and fall

into gross sins every day, time after time, and yet never mourn and grieve for them, as David did for his sin, nor weep bitterly for them with Peter, what plea can this be for thee, to encourage thee to hope for heaven?

3. Know this further, that a godly man may fall into the same sins that others fall into, for the matter of them, but not for the manner, now it is the manner of falling into sin, and not the matter of it that dams a man; it is true, Noah did fall into the sin of drunkenness, but I shall distinguish Noah from any wicked drunkard in the world, and that in these five particular considerations, as,

1. Noah was drunk, but it was before he did know that wine would make him drunk, and if you read the story you shall find, that there was never any wine drunk till that time, for Noah did then begin to be a husbandman, and did plant a Vineyard; but now there is never a one of you but do very well know that wine and strong beer and the like, will intoxicate you, and yet you will not refrain from excess in drinking; there is a great deal of difference between you and Noah.

2. Noah was drunk, but he did not proclaim his drunkenness, but the text says he went into his tent and slept, he was ashamed of what he had done, but now you proclaim your sin, and swear, and stare, and commit many other sins in your drunkenness.

3. It is true, Noah was drunk, but you never read that he was drunk any more than once, but you are drunk again and again, one day after another.

4. Though he did once fall into this sin, yet for the ordinary course and practice of his life, he was an upright man in his Generation, whereas it may be your ordinary and frequent practice is drunkenness.

5. Noah was an aged man, and in this regard his age might call for more wine and strong liquor to cheer up his spirits, then young people do want;

so that all these considerations do little mitigate, and allay Noah's fault, though it be not wholly excusable.

And so likewise David he committed the sin of adultery, he wallowed in an unclean bed, but yet his sin likewise may admit of some extenuation and excuse, as,

1. David when he came up to the house top, he little dreamed to have seen a naked woman there, which was a very great temptation to him, but it may be some of you do seek occasion, and contrive and plot how you may commit such a sin.

2. David did fall into this sin neither but once, you shall commonly find that godly men fall into great sins but once, they take warning by the first transgression, and seldom fall into the same sin again, but now it may be you live in unclean thoughts and actions all your life long, and therefore this can be no prop for your hopes.

3. Though David did fall into this sin, yet he did not continue in it long, for it was but nine months between Nathan the Prophets coming to David, and telling and reprovng him for his sin, and the time that he fell into it; but alas some of you it may be are Adulterers of nine years standing, there are many amongst us that are old adulterers, and yet never had a melting and sorrowful heart for their sins, that never wept as David did, nor mourn as he mourned.

And so Peter he fell into a sin of denying his Lord and Master; but,

1. He was resolved, and did verily purpose before, to have confessed and not to have denied him, and yet when the Damsel came to him, and told him, that he was one of those that were with Christ, and Peter conceiving it may be that they would have put him to death and crucified him, as well as

Christ, upon this sudden surprise (which was a very great temptation to him,) he denied Christ, And,

2. Though he denied him thrice, yet afterwards he did confess him as often as he denied him, for when Christ asked him, Simon Peter lovest thou me, he answered Christ three times, Lord thou knowest that I love thee.

3. Peter denied Christ, but yet afterward he went out and wept bitterly for it, and therefore his obtaining mercy can be no ground for your hopes, that never yet repented of any of the sins you have committed, and thus you see that the falling of these three godly men into great sins can be no prop to bear up your hopes for heaven.

I shall now show you more particularly that though the godly do fall into sin, yea even the same sins for the matter of them, as you do, yet they do not fall into them in the same manner, As,

1. If a godly man fall into sin it is unwittingly and unawares; in Gal. 6:1, says the Apostle, if any man be overtaken with a fault. A godly man he runs away with all the speed he can from a sin and temptation, but sometimes it overtakes him against his will, but now a wicked man he runs after sin, and overtaketh it, he sins with set purpose of heart, He plots mischief upon his bed, and sets himself in a way that is not good.

2. A godly man falls into sin sometimes, but it is with reluctancy and opposition, the Spirit striveth against the flesh; there is an opposing, and striving against sin, they are not like cowards, but will fight as long as they can hold their weapon in their hands, but now wicked men they commit sin with greediness, with delight and complacency, without any reluctancy at all.

3. Every sin that a godly man committeth, maketh him more careful and watchful for the time to come: thus it was with David, Psal. 38, the title of

it, compared with Psal. 39:1. The title of Psal. 38, is called a Psalm of David to bring to remembrance, the subject matter of this Psalm was to bring David's sin to his remembrance, and having spent this, in remembering his sins, in the first words of the next Psalm, says he, I have sinned, but I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue, after he had called to remembrance his sins past, then he resolved with himself to strive against them in time to come. A godly man never falls into a sin once, but he fears to fall into the same sin ever after.

A godly man though he falls into sin sometimes, yet he will at length get the upper hand of sin; though for the present he be not able to grapple with sin, yet he will overcome it at last, Grace will outgrow sin, and get the victory over it; and thus I have shown you the second prop that wicked men build their hopes for heaven upon; we come now to a third and that is this;

If you beat them off from the two former, then they fly to the mercies of God; Oh say they, God is a very merciful God, and I hope he that made me will save me, and that I shall go to heaven as well as other men, and the like. Now I do not deny but the mercies of God is the chiefest prop under heaven, that a man can build his hopes for heaven upon, but here I shall show you the rottenness of this prop likewise in four or five regards, and that the mercies of God in general are no sufficient ground at all, to build thy hopes for heaven upon, unless thou canst lay claim to the mercies of God in particular, for if you build your hopes upon the mercies of God in general,

1. The Devils and damned spirits may then hope as well as you.
2. The common and outward mercies of God can be no good prop, to build hopes for heaven upon, unless you can lay claim to the saving and distinguishing mercies of God; the common outward mercies of God

wicked men may have, for God is good to all, and his tender mercy is over all his Works, the Devils share in the common mercies of God as well as others; but these general mercies of God are no prop to build hopes for heaven upon, unless you can build upon the saving and distinguishing mercies of God, as David prays, Shew mercy unto me O God, (says he) with the mercy which thou bearest to thy own children; it must be electing, redeeming, sanctifying, and saving mercies that you must build your hopes for heaven upon.

3. The general mercies of God can be no ground of your hopes, unless you have an interest in Jesus Christ: for God is clothed with greatness, and terror, and dread, and wrath out of Christ; there is nothing to be looked upon but anger and wrath in God without Jesus Christ. There were two laws that God did make concerning the Mercy-seat.

1. The High Priest was not upon pain of death to come to the Mercy-seat, unless he brought incense with him; now what does this signify to us? Why, it represents the intercession of Christ, that as Aaron was not to come to the Mercy-seat without incense, so neither can we go to the Throne of Grace to beg mercy from God, with any hope of audience or acceptance, unless we carry incense with us, which is the Lord Jesus Christ to plead for us.

2. Aaron was to sprinkle the Mercy-seat with blood; which typifies to us, that we are not to expect mercy from God, but as we have an interest in the blood of Christ.

4. To you that build your hopes for heaven upon the mercies of God in generally, let me tell you that God is not prodigal of his special mercies, as to bestow them upon all the world, but only upon a select number of men: he will have mercy only on them that fear him; as for the wicked those that run on in their sins, the Lord says himself, that though he hath made them

yet he will have no mercy on them; the mercies of God in general are no sufficient props to build hopes for heaven upon.

Obj. But here me thinks I hear some kind of people ready to object against me, and say, What, do you go about to beat us off from our hopes of heaven? Would you bereave us of our hopes and drive us into despair?

1. To this I answer, that all you that have good and well-grounded hopes for heaven, I would not for all the World, stagger your hopes; but as the great winds do commonly root up, and blow down the smaller shrubs, but do settle and root the stronger Oaks the faster into the ground; so I would have all that I have said this day concerning the vain and deceitful hopes of wicked men, to confirm and establish your hopes and make them grow stronger and stronger.

2. God forbid, that this should be in my heart, to drive any of you to despair; do not think that my aim in what hath been said is to make any of you fall into desperation, but to keep you up and prevent you from falling into presumption, which is the more dangerous error of the two, because where the rock of desperation hath split thousands, the rock of presumption hath split its ten thousands.

3. My intention in what hath been said, is not to make you cast away all your hopes for heaven, but only your false and ill grounded hopes; I would have you to pull down all your tottering hopes, and to build them upon a more sure foundation; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

SERM. XIII. EPH. 2:12. - HAVING NO HOPE.

Having no hope - Eph. 2:12.

We come now to inquire further, what is the reason that wicked men do nourish in their hearts most hopes for heaven, seeing the Scripture says they have none: the last time I answered this Question, by naming three false props, that they build hopes for heaven upon; I shall now give you three or four more.

4. Another false prop that wicked men build hopes for heaven upon is this; their frequency in the performances of religious duties; and thus they reason with themselves; Shall I use duties, all the days of my life, as my way to heaven, and shall I not hope for heaven at my journeys end? Though a wicked man does notionally hope for heaven through Christ, yet he lays the chiefest foundation of his hopes in his own good works; as Christ says, in the last day they shall come to him and cry, Lord, Lord, open to us, for we have prophesied in thy name, and eat and drunk in thy presence, we have heard thy word, and done many miracles, and cast out Devils in thy name, and the like; they shall boast of their hearing, and praying, and good

works, and make that a plea for heaven, when Christ shall say unto them, Depart from me, I know you not. Now I shall show you the rottenness and insufficiency of this prop to build hopes for heaven upon; but I would not have you mistake me, as if I went about to beat down good works, and make duties useless; for I would have you so to perform duties, as if you were to be saved by duties, but when you have done all that you can do, to lay them down at the feet of Christ, and wholly depend upon him, as if we had done no duties at all; but if you make the bare performance of duties, to be a prop for your hopes of heaven, it will be a very rotten and deceitful prop, as I shall show you in these four particulars: For,

1. All performance of duties not tendered to God the Father by Jesus Christ; will not be accepted by him; that were it possible you should kneel so long in prayer to God, as that you should wear out your knees; were it possible that you should cry out your eyes with weeping, and by mourning and lamenting for your sins, you should dry up all the moisture of your body; were it possible you should spend all the days of your life in hearing, reading, praying, and the performance of holy duties; yet if you do not offer them up to God in the name and mediation of Jesus Christ, they are all but like cyphers that amount to no sum at all, unless the righteousness of Christ be added to them: it is Christ's righteousness that makes our services acceptable to God; Christ adds his incense to the prayers of all his Saints: now (beloved) though you make never so many prayers, yet if you have no share in Christ, nor in his sufferings, and prayers, and intercessions to God for thee, all thy prayers and holy duties are worth nothing, they will never bring thee to heaven; our persons must be in Christ, before our services can be accepted of God, and therefore the bare performance of duties, can be no prop to thee for to build hopes for heaven upon.

2. These things can be no prop of thy hopes for heaven, because hypocrites, whose persons and performances God doth hate, they are frequent in duties as well as you: the Pharisees they did fast twice a week, and give alms, and perform holy duties, and so those spoken of in the Prophet Isaiah, They did delight to draw near to God, and to know his ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and for sook not the Ordinances of God: wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? God did not accept of anything they did: and so those in Zac. they kept four fasting days in a year for seven years together, and yet they said he did not regard them: and so likewise God doth not regard the prayer of the wicked, as in Psal. 105:9. The prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; and so is their hearing too, for they come to hear when their hearts are after their covetousness.

3. Know thus much, that those very duties which God does accept at the hands of his children, those very duties will he reject at the hands of wicked men, and therefore the bare performance of duty can be no prop to build hopes for heaven upon; for though thou spendest longer time in prayer, and more time in hearing reading, fasting, &c. then a godly man does, yet the Lord will accept of his duties and not of thine. I shall give you three instances for this; the first is between Cain and Abel: Abel he offered the firstlings of his sheep, and cattle and of his flock, and Cain he offered the first-fruits of his ground; now by faith Abel offered a more excellent offering then Cain, though Cain's offering was of more value then Abel's was yet Abel's was accepted, when the others was not; Abel's sacrifice was accepted not in regard of the quantity, and worth, and value of it, but because Abel was a believer, and a justified man in the fight of God, and therefore he had respect first to his person, and then to his sacrifice. Another

instance is in 1 King. 18:25, between Elijah the Prophet, and the Prophets of Baal; Elijah the Prophet took two Bulls, and bid the Prophets of Baal to choose one, and you must think they would not choose the worst of them, and he took the other, and yet the Lord shown a token of acceptance to Elijah and his sacrifice, though it was the worst of the Bulls, and shown no acceptance to the Prophets of Baal, and the reason of it was because Elijah was a justified man in the sight of God, when the others were not. And so again in Prov. 15:8, it is said there, that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the wright is his delight: God doth delight in a poor penniless prayer coming from a godly man, when he will not accept of a costly sacrifice coming from a wicked man.

4. The bare performance of duties can be no prop to build hopes for heaven upon, because God doth not look so much upon the matter of the duty what you do perform, as to the manner how, and the end why you do perform them, though it may be the duty which you perform be the same for the matter of them, as God requires and commands, yet if they be not done in a right manner, God looks upon it as nothing; God will not own those duties as done to him, that are not done in a right manner, and to a right end: as in Joh. 16:24. Hitherto (says Christ) you have asked nothing in my name, ask and receive that your joy may be full; and yet they had put up many petitions in his name, but because they did it not in a right manner, Christ looked upon it as if they had asked nothing at all.

5. Another false prop that wicked men build hopes of heaven upon, is a mere mistake of the promises and pillar of hope in Scripture; and this is done two ways: either,

1. They make those promises to be props of hope which are not: or,
2. They do misapply those promises that are true grounds of hope.

1. They make those to be props of hope which are not; I shall name you three of them, the first is that passage in our common Liturgy, At what time soever a sinner doth repent from the bottom of his heart, I will blot out all his sins out of my remembrance (saith the Lord). This very sentence hath been a means to delude a world of men, whereas indeed it is no ground at all to build hopes for heaven upon: for,

1. There are no such words as these to be found in the whole Scripture: and,

2. The place where these words are found, it is only in the common Liturgy, which Liturgy is but an abstract of the Popish Mass, for though all that is in the Popish Mass be not in the Common-Prayer, yet all that is in the Common-Prayer is in the Popish Mass; it may be you will scarce believe this, but it is very true, as you may see, if you look into the second volume of the Book of Martyrs the 667th page, where there is a Letter inserted of King Edward the sixth, sent to the Papists in Cornwall, who were risen up in arms about the translating of the Mass into English, which they would by no means agree to, but rose up to oppose it; King Edward to pacify them, wrote to them on this manner, As for the Service-book, the translating of it may seem to you to be some new thing, but they are the very same words in English which were before in Latin, and if the Mass book which is in Latin be good, then it is as good now, though it be translated into English.

3. You will say the Lord himself said these words, At what time a sinner doth repent I will blot all his sins out of my remembrance, (saith the Lord). I answer, that it is not said so in the whole Book of God, and if you look into that Text of Scripture which they ground these words upon, that the Lord did say so, you shall find it otherwise; it is in Ezek. 18:21, mark the words, these are God's words indeed; If a wicked man will turn from all the

sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, and not die. They say if a wicked man does repent of his sins; now repentance is a general work, Judas did repent, but his repentance did him no good; but here you see it is said that if a wicked man turn from all his evil ways, and do that which is lawful and right, then he shall surely live.

2. Another Scripture-prop which wicked men build their hopes for heaven upon, but is indeed no prop, is this, that the righteous man sinneth seven times a day; this is one of the greatest props a wicked man hath, says he, what do you tell me of my sins, the best men have their failings, the righteous sin seven times a day, and why may not I go to heaven as well as they? Wicked men make this a great prop to their hopes, when indeed there is no place of Scripture like this in the whole Bible; that which comes nearest to it, is in Prov. 24:16. A just man falleth seven times and riseth again, but the wicked fall into mischief: now here is no mention of falling into sin in the text, nor no mention of a day; but only thus, a just man falleth seven times, and riseth again: St. Austin gives this sense of the word; a godly man falleth seven times, that is often times, expounding this place with that in Job 5:19. The Lord will be with thee in six troubles, and in seven there shall no evil touch thee: A righteous man, says Augustine, falleth seven times, not sinneth, seven times, he doth not fall into sin, but into affliction; the righteous falleth seven times, that is, the godly in this world are liable to fall seven times into affliction, that is, very often into afflictions and troubles while he lives here in this world; according to that of Job, In six troubles and in seven the Lord shall deliver thee, meaning oftentimes: and therefore this place carries no reference at all of falling into sin seven times a day.

2. Suppose it were so, that the righteous did sin seven times a day, yet the text says in the next words, that as often as he falleth he riseth again; now it may be, many of you that make this a prop for your hopes of heaven, do fall into sin day after day, and never rise out of them again by repentance: you leave out these words, and riseth again, for many of you live your whole lives long in an evil course, you wallow and lie down in sin, and therefore this can be no prop for your hopes.

3. Another sentence which they make a Scripture prop, but is not, is this, that Christ died for all and for every man in the world; This comes within the Arminian bounds, but this opinion is taken up by others too as well as them, that hold universal Redemption; but because I have already preached two or three Sermons upon this subject, I shall therefore only now speak so much as is needful, to show you the rottenness and insufficiency of this prop; 1. Suppose Christ did die for all, yet those men that are of this opinion, that Christ did die for all, they do not hold that all men are saved by Christ, but some men may fall off from Christ; and be damned, notwithstanding Christ died for them.

2. Take this by way of answer, that it is not likely that they should have benefit by Christ's blood, that have no benefit by this death.

3. To you that make this a plea for your hopes of heaven; observe this, that where there are these general expressions, they are very ill understood: if you say they speak of universal and general redemption, as in 2 Cor. 5:14,15. Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then are all dead, and he died for all, that they that live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again; why, here none can lay claim to Christ's death, but those that live to Christ that died for them: and so in Heb. 2:9. But we see Jesus that was made a little lower than

the Angels, for the suffering of death, clothed with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man; but mark the restraint in the next words; For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory (here the Apostle restrains the words) to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings; for both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified are all one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren: the Apostle does here again restrain the words, and therefore this can be no more prop for your hopes, that are not sanctified; but thus much may suffice for the first branch, in showing you how wicked men do make those places to be Scripture props for their hopes which are not.

2. If they do not make those places to be Scripture props which are not, yet they do misapply those places, which indeed are Scripture promises and grounds of hope; as that Christ came into the World to save sinners; now this is a Scripture promise, for Christ came to seek and save them that were lost: but now (beloved) men do misapply this general pillar of hope; they take them in the general notions of them, and this makes abundance of people to harbor great hopes of heaven in their hearts: but now I shall show you, wherein they do misapply them.

1. In not considering that a man must be first in Christ, before he can lay claim to any promise of Christ. They run to the promise, and never examine first whether or no they have an interest in Christ.

The promise is good and comfortable, but it cannot convey any comfort to thy soul, unless thou art in Jesus Christ, no more than a dry pipe can convey water to thee without the fountain: we are first made Christ's, and then we have a right to all the promises of Christ: it is by our interest in Christ, that we have a right and title to all the promises of God in Christ. If you have an

interest in Christ, you have all the promises as it were bound up in a bundle, which you may have recourse to, and make use of when you will.

2. They object and say, that the promises do run in free and general terms having no conditions annexed to them.

Answ. It is true, there are some promises that are absolute, so as to have no condition, going before them, but every promise in the Gospel hath some condition or other annexed to it, if it hath not a condition going before it as meritorious; yet it hath a condition that follows after it, as in Gen. 17:1. I am thy God all sufficient, (what then?) walk before me and be thou perfect. In 2 Cor. 6:16,18. I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty: what follows? Why in the 1st verse of the next chapter, says the Apostle there, Having therefore these promises (dearly beloved) let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. So in Heb. 5:9. Christ came into the world to save sinners, but there is a condition goes after it, he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, must be all one: There is no promise in all the Gospel, but that a condition is prefixed, or annexed to it: in Mat. 11:28, says Christ, Come unto me all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest: there is a foregoing condition, we must come unto Christ: and other promises have conditions going after, as I could instance divers, but these shall suffice.

There are two props more behind, they are but very short ones; I shall go over one of them now, because I would not be hindered in my afternoons work, in showing you the difference between those that have a real and well-grounded hope, and those that have only a false and deluding hope.

6. Another false prop that wicked men build hopes for heaven on is this, because they live honestly and justly among their neighbors, they give every man his due, and do nobody any wrong, and the like, and therefore they conclude themselves in a very good condition.

Ans. Were this a sufficient ground for hope for heaven, there would more of the heathens go to heaven, then of you; for they walk very exactly, and are just and upright in all their dealings. But wicked and bad men may have very good meanings in them, as we may see in Balaam, Num. 23:10, he desired to die the death of the righteous, and that his last end might be like his: this was a good desire and meaning in him.

2. Take this for an answer, that though a bad meaning will defile and pollute a good action, yet a good meaning cannot advantage nor do a bad action any good: as the Scribes and Pharisees, they performed very good actions in themselves, but they had self-ends, and bad meanings that spoiled all their duties; good meanings cannot justify bad actions. If thy actions be wicked, good meaning can do thee no good: Rom. 8. Those that say, Let us do evil that good may come of it, their damnation is just.

3. Let your meaning be never so good, yet if you have an ignorant mind, it is worth nothing, as in Prov. 19:2. The mind without knowledge cannot be good; as no man ever became rich by meaning and purposing to be rich, but by laboring and endeavoring after it, so no man ever went to heaven by good meanings without good actions accompanying them.

2. But say they, we do nobody any harm, but pay every man his own.

Ans. 1. Though you pay every man his own, yet do you give God his own? Or rather do you not wrong God, and do him infinite indignities?

2. Though you do not do man wrong, yet do you not your own souls wrong? As we use to say of free-hearted men, they are enemies to no man

but themselves: So now do not you do your own souls wrong by harboring of bosom lusts and corruptions in your souls? What benefit will it be to thee, that you do nobody else wrong, when you do your own souls wrong? You are no better than the Pharisees, for they were very exact in giving every man his due; the proud Pharisee could boast in Luk. 18:11. I am no extortioner nor unjust man: you may mean well and give every man his own, and yet be a wicked man.

SERM. XIV. EPH. 2:12. - HAVING NO HOPE.

Having no hope - Eph. 2:12.

We come now to the last prop that wicked men do build their hopes of heaven upon, which is this, if you beat them off from all the former props, from their small sins, from the mercies of God in general, from their good duties, and good meanings, &c. then they run to this last plea; say they, Have not we reason to nourish hopes for heaven; for we have been present with dying men, that have been as bad as we in their life time, and yet they have had very strong hopes for heaven, and strong hopes in God: and you know dying men will speak the truth, and therefore why may not we nourish hopes for heaven, as well as they? This is a very strong prop wicked men build their hopes upon: but I shall show you the rottenness and insufficiency of it in these three or four particulars.

1. You must know that it is one thing to die stupidly, and another thing to die hopefully and peaceably: indeed, the worst men in the world, may die stupidly, their consciences may not do its office when they die: they may have their consciences feared as it were with a hot iron, and think they are

going to heaven, and never think otherwise till they drop down into hell; but now the godly, they die full of peace and comfort, as in Psal. 37:37. Mark the upright man, and behold the just, for the end of that man is peace; but there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked, Isa. 57:41. There may be a fearedness of conscience, and stupidity of heart, but they cannot die peaceably and in hope.

2. You that make this a prop for your hope, because you have seen wicked men die peaceably like Lambs; let me tell you thus much, that it is the greatest judgment in the world, for a wicked man to die peaceably, and quietly, in delusions, and conceits of going to heaven; when they are tumbling down headlong to hell: it were better for him, that God did let the flashings of hell fire to fly in his face: it were better for him that his conscience did tell him his danger, and his doom, then thus to die in a stupid manner. In Job 21:23, it is said, that a wicked man dies in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet: no sin troubles him, nor no danger makes him afraid: so in Psal. 73:4,5, they have no bands in their death, but their strength is firm; they are not in trouble, as other men, neither are they plagued as other men; they have no trouble in their life time, and no bands in their death: now this is rather to be looked upon as a judgment upon them, and not as a mercy.

3. If this peace and quietness in a wicked man's conscience, did arise from any grounded assurance, or hope of heaven, then it might be looked upon as a blessing; but when it doth arise merely from the delusions of his own heart, then it is nothing but as it were a golden door to let him into hell: it shall be with him as in Isa. 29:8. An hungry man dreameth, and behold, he eateth: but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: so a wicked man dreams he is going to heaven, when he is falling down into hell.

4. There may be great hopes of heaven expressed in a dying man's words, when there is not so much peace and quietness in his heart, as in Prov. 14:23. In the midst of laughter, the heart is sorrowful. In the midst of a wicked man's boasting, there is a fear of hell.

5. Though you have seen some men that have died with stupidity of heart, depart quietly; yet there are other wicked men, whose consciences are awakened, that die full of horror, and terror, and amazement. When their consciences tell them, they have died swearers, or liars, or drunkards, or adulterers, &c. they are filled with horror, and terror of conscience; that though he thought all his life time he should go to heaven, yet he now fears he is going down into hell.

And thus I have done with the third Question, in showing you the reasons why, (seeing the Scripture says that a wicked man hath no hope) that of all the men in the world, wicked men do nourish greatest hopes for heaven in their hearts; there are only two queries more to handle, and then come to the fifth branch of man's misery.

4. The fourth Query in order is this; that seeing the Scripture says a wicked man hath no hope, and esteems of their false and presumptuous hope, to be as good as no hope; then how shall we know the difference between those well-grounded hopes a godly man hath, and those presumptuous and deluding hopes wicked men have?

Ans. I shall here give you six apparent differences between them.

1. The hopes of a godly and regenerate man for heaven; it is gotten by, and grounded upon the word of God: and therefore it is called the hope of the Gospel, because it is gotten by the Gospel as the means, and grounded upon the Gospel as the end: that we (says the Apostle) through the comfort of the Scriptures might have hope: a godly man hath his comforts from the

Scriptures. Psal. 119:49. Good is the word of the Lord, wherein thou hast caused thy servant to hope. But now the hopes of wicked men, as they are gotten they know not how, so neither do they know upon what they are grounded, and this is the reason why they are called presumptuous hopes; for this is presumption, when a man does believe a thing, when he can have no visible nor likely means, to ground or bottom his hopes upon.

2. True and patient hope is bottomed upon the mercies of God, and the merits of Jesus Christ; and hence it is, that Christ is called our hope, because he is the foundation on whom believers do build all their hopes for heaven; so likewise they build their hope on the mercies of God, in Psal. 147:11. The Lord taketh pleasure in those that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy: and again in Psal. 33:18. The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that trust in his mercy: and so in Psal. 52:8, says David there, I trust in the mercies of God forever and ever. A godly man he is cast out of himself, and out of an opinion of his own righteousness, and his hopes are only built upon the mercy of God, and on the merits of Christ. But now the false and presumptuous hopes that wicked men have, are not built so much upon God's mercy as their own duties, and not so much upon the merits of Christ, what he hath done for them, as upon their own duties what they have done for themselves.

3. True hope doth comfort and bear up the heart under all the discomforts, that it meets with in the world: as David says, I had fainted under my afflictions, but that thy word is my hope: and hence it is that you have those two admirable expressions put together, Rom. 5:2,3. Rejoicing in hope, and glorying in tribulation; these are put together to show, that when a man can rejoice in hope, he can glory in all the tribulations, he meets with in the world. But now presumptuous hopes, are like lead, and ponderous weights,

that will make you sink under every affliction. It is only a true and saving hope, that will enable you to hold up your heads under all afflictions and troubles.

4. True hope does as well act for heaven, as hope for heaven; but a presumptuous hope, that hopes for heaven as its end, but yet never acts holiness as its way to heaven; true hope as it hopes for heaven, so it labors to work out its salvation with fear and trembling; You have an admirable passage for this in Psal. 119:166, says David there, Lord I have trusted in thy salvation, and I have done thy commandments: here is both hoping and acting for heaven put both together, wicked men they hope for heaven, but they do not do God's commands, and so in Psal. 37:3. Trust in the Lord and do good, says the Psalmist, here is trusting and doing put together, true hope doth act for heaven as well as hope for heaven; but false hope doth hope much and act little; wicked men will hope for salvation, but not work out their salvation; hope for heaven, but not labor for heaven: this is the fourth difference.

5. That man that hath true hope, he makes conscience to keep his heart pure, and free both from the love of sin, and from the dominion of sin, while he lives here in this world; you have a plain text for this in 1 Joh. 3:3. He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as God is pure; he doth labor and endeavor to keep his heart upright, and pure, and free from sin. But now a false hope will hope for heaven, though they walk on after the imaginations of their own hearts, as in Isa. 51:10. Thou hast walked in the greatness of thy wicked ways, yet saidst thou not, there is no hope: though they had great sins, yet they had great hopes for heaven; if thou art such a one as is mentioned in Deut. 59:18, that sayest, Thou shalt have peace, though thou walkest after the imaginations of thy own heart, to add

drunkenness to thirst, if thou art such a one, thy hope is only a presumptuous hope.

6. True hope flows from a long and well-grounded experience; this is the reason of that expression in Rom. 5:4. Patience worketh experience, and experience hope: True hope flows from a long and well-grounded experience in the ways of God; and from an experience of the grace, and bounty, and love of God to his soul: and from experiences of the goodness, and mercy, and promises of God: and likewise from an experience of his own heart, in withstanding temptations, subduing corruption, and performing holy duties. Such experiences as these are inlets to a well-grounded hope for heaven; but now the hopes of wicked men, are only the results of ignorance, they that never had any experience of themselves, nor of the ways of God; they have most hopes, but their hopes are only deluding, and presumptuous hopes: wicked men that do so quickly get into a state of hope, without any former experiences of the ways of God, it is a sign that their hopes are only vain and empty hopes; they are but pithy hopes: just like your pithy trees, as Elders, and Withies, and such like trees, they shoot up fastest, and grow up soonest; whereas the more firm and stronger wood, as Oaks, and Elm, and the like, are a great while longer in growing, before they come to maturity; why, so it is a great while before a Godly man can get a well-grounded assurance of his hopes for heaven.

And thus I have done with the Doctrinal part of this fourth branch of man's misery, (without hope) we come now to the application, and the Use that I shall make of it shall be threefold.

1. For consolation.
2. For terror: and,
3. For instruction.

1. For consolation, to the people of God, though the Scripture says a wicked man hath no hope, yet it says otherwise of you that are a people of God, the Scripture tells you that your hope is laid up in heaven for you; and the Lord is your hope; though wicked men have no hopes for heaven, yet you have grounded, and assured, and certain hopes for heaven: your hope is laid up for you in another world; the wicked have only their hopes in this life, and when they die, their hopes shall perish, as in Prov. 11:7. When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish, and the hope of unjust men perisheth; but it is not so with you, for the godly hope in their death. And this hope of a godly man, is not as the Papists hold, for though they grant a believer hath hope, yet they deny that any have assurance, they say that all a believers evidence for heaven is only a hope, a peradventure, (a most uncomfortable tenant;) whereas the Scripture says, there is as full an assurance of hope, as of faith, in Heb. 16:11, says the Apostle, use all diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end, and so in Rom. 15:5. Your hope is such as will not make you ashamed; your hopes are not like the hopes of men that hope for dead men's shoes (as the proverb is), for they may go on barefoot before they die, but Christ, who is our hope, he hath died already, and risen again; he hath made his will and testament; and hath left us legacies, and bequeathed riches to us: our hopes are well grounded hopes, not as other men's are, that will leave them, when they have most need of them.

Use 2. The second Use shall be by way of terror, to show you the misery of those men, that have only presumptuous hopes for heaven.

1. You are in a state of unlikelihood to be converted, more than any other men in the world; and this is the reason why the Scripture tells us, that whores and harlots shall go to heaven, before the Scribes and Pharisees, and

yet they were a very strict people, and did walk very outwardly holy; and the reason is, because it is an easier matter to convince a harlot of her sins, then to convince a proud Pharisee, that thinks himself as good as the best, and hath lived in peace all his life time.

2. Let me tell you thus much, that your hopes will leave you, when you have most need of them. Prov. 11:7, the place before quoted; The hope of the wicked shall be cut off, and when he dies, his expectations shall perish: he looks for heaven, but he shall be disappointed; as in Job 8:14. His confidence shall be cut off, and his trust shall be like a Spiders web, as the Spider wraps himself in his web, and dwells there securely all the week long, but at the end of the week, when the maid comes to sweep the windows, she sweeps down the web, and the Spider both; just so the hopes of all wicked men shall come to nothing: and so in Job 11:20. The eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape; and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost. As a dying man, a little before his death, is pretty joyful and merry, and entertains some hopes of a longer life, but when his eye-strings crack, and the tokens of death appear upon him, then his heart fails him, and all his hopes are dashed in pieces, and taken from him; just so it is with wicked men, they are full of hopes for heaven, till they come to die, but then their hopes leave them, and all their expectations perish.

3. Your harboring false and presumptuous hopes for heaven, does produce this threefold miserable and unavoidable effect upon you: 1. Frustration: 2. Vexation: and 3. Damnation.

1. It produceth frustration and disappointment of all your hopes: when you are a dying, you hope that after death, you shall launch forth into a sea of joy and pleasure, when on the contrary you shall launch forth into a river of brimstone, which the breath of the Lord shall kindle: you hope it may be,

that after death, you shall be carried by Angels into Abraham's bosom, when you may be carried by the Devils into Beelzebub's bosom: you it may be hope that death shall be a door to let you into heaven; when it shall be only a back door to let you fall down into hell.

2. It shall produce in you vexation. Now vexation ariseth either from disappointment, or revenge: why, so wicked men shall not only have a privation of happiness, but a vexation in the loss of happiness. And hence it is, that some Divines give the reason why it is said in Mat. 8:12, that in hell there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; Some are of an opinion, that as our fire burns hot, so the fire of hell shall burn cold, but that is but a fancy: our Divines say, that there shall be gnashing of teeth in hell, in token of that vexation of mind that shall be in wicked men, because all their hopes are so frustrated and disappointed, they shall gnash their teeth for vexation of mind, when they shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and they themselves thrust out.

3. These false hopes will likewise produce your damnation: a wicked man that harbors false hopes for heaven in his heart, is like a man sleeping upon the Mast of a Ship, who (it may be) is dreaming a very pleasant and delightful dream, and upon a sudden comes a blast of wind and blows him into the Sea; so a wicked man he is but in a golden dream on his death bed, and he hopes that he is going to heaven, till he be plunged down into hell: all this represents to you the dreadful condition of those men that have only presumptuous hopes for heaven.

We come now to the third use, which shall be for instruction; and if this be so, then this may teach us these two or three lessons.

1. Let us take heed lest we run into this easy delusion, there are some in the world that do fall into it, and therefore why may not we as well as

others? Therefore take heed that you do not fancy to yourselves false hopes of heaven.

2. Do you that are godly take heed that you do not cast off all your hopes for heaven: do not you say that hope is cut off from you; as wicked men are apt to harbor groundless hopes for heaven, so good men are too apt to cast off grounded hopes for heaven; therefore do not say there is no hope for you, for there is hope for you.

3. Do not harbor in your hearts, common and ordinary conceits of this grace of hope, as if it were so easy a matter to obtain it; It is natural for men to think that this grace of hope is very easy to be gotten, for say they, were it not for hope the heart would break; wicked men are ready to think that this grace of hope is easy to be gotten by anybody, and to be had of all, therefore take heed of this, and consider that there is the same certainty, the same excellency, and the same efficacy, in this grace of hope, as there is in faith.

1. There is the same certainty in it; Heb. 6:11, it is called the full assurance of hope.

2. There is the same excellency in it, Tit. 2:13, it is called a blessed hope: and,

3. There is the same efficacy in it, as in the grace of faith, in Act. 15:9, it is said there, that Faith purifieth the heart, and so likewise does hope, 1 Joh 3:3 Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as God is pure: And,

4. There is the same difficulty in getting hope as in getting faith: for 1. this is gotten by the word of God, Rom. 10:17, and so is hope too, Col. 1:23, it is gotten by the preaching of the Word.

2. Faith is wrought in us by the power of God: Heb. 12:2. Christ is the author and finisher of our faith; and so is hope likewise wrought in us by the power of the holy Ghost, Rom. 15:13 that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. So that hereby you see that you ought not to have such low thoughts of this grace of hope, as if it were an easy matter for every man to get it; for there is as much certainty, as much excellency, as much efficacy in this grace, and as much difficulty in getting this grace of hope, as there is in faith. And thus I have done with the 4th branch of an unconverted man's misery, that he is without any well-grounded hopes for heaven.

SERM. XV. EPH. 2:12. - AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD.

And without God in the World - Eph. 2:12.

A We come now to the fifth misery of men by Nature, which is this, that they are without God in the World; and here first I shall give you something from the order of the words, and then unfold them; and then draw out some Doctrines from them.

1. For the order of the words, Why is their being without Christ put in the first place of the Text, and their being without God put in the last place?

Ans. Their being without Christ, is put in the first place, because it was the inlet of all their misery, and their being without God is put in the last place, because it is the final upshot of man's misery; it is the inlet of a man's misery to be without Christ, and it is his misery to be an alien to the Common-wealth of Israel, and a stranger to the Covenant of Promise, and to be without hope, and it is the upshot of all thy misery to be without God in the World; and here I shall show you that there are multitudes of men and women in the World, that are without God, though they do every day

worship God, yet they may live all their days without God; but before I speak to this, I must unfold two or three things in the words, as,

1. How can it be said here that they were without God in the World, when the Apostle says in another place, that the wicked cannot be without God, the Lord is not far from every one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being, here the Apostle says that wicked men are not far from God, and that they live in God; and therefore how can it be said in the Text, that wicked men are without God in the World, whereas we are all God's offspring, and come from God, how can this be?

Ans. The answer is very easy; and that is this, that in some sense there is no man nor creature in the World without God; and yet in another sense there are multitudes of men that are without God in the World.

1. In some sense there is no man can be said to be without God; that is, by way of creation, preservation, sustentation, and ruling over us, everyone is in God by way of creation and preservation, &c. But how in another sense there are multitudes of people without God; this is in a way of special interest in him, without a reconciled God, without God as a Father to you in Jesus Christ, without a God that you can lay claim to as yours, in this sense multitudes of people are without God in the World.

2. Another thing that I shall explain to you is this, what it is to be without God, and without God in the World.

I answer, that to be without God it includes in it in Scripture phrase these four things.

1. To be without the knowledge of the true God.
2. To be without the true worship of the true God.
3. To be without a true obedience to the true God; And,
4. To be without a peculiar interest and propriety in God.

1. To be without God, is to be without the knowledge of the true God; then a man is said to be without God, when he doth not know the true God. Every man in the World hath something or other to be his God, as in Jon. 1:5,6, when there was a great tempest upon the Sea, and the ship like to be cast away that Jonah was in, it is said, that every man prayed to his God, and Jonah be prayed to the Lord his God, and so in Mic. 4:5. For all people will walk everyone in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of our God forever and ever. Every man may have something to worship as a God, and yet be without the true God, those are said to be without God, that are without the knowledge of the true God, as you may see in 2 Chron. 15:3, it is said there, that for a long time Israel was without the true God; without God, how so? Doth not God rule and govern and preserve the World? Yes, but they are said to be without God, because they were without the knowledge of God, for if you mark the next words, it is said, they were without the teaching Priest, and without the Law, so that all the while they lay in ignorance of the true God, they were said to be without God.

2. Men may be said to be without God, when they are without the true worship of the true God; all the while the children of Israel had the Ark among them which was the sign of God's presence, all that while God was among them, but when the Ark was taken God was gone too, the Lord will be with you while you are with him, while you worship God sincerely and uprightly according to his will, so long God will be with you.

3. To be without God is to live without true obedience to the true God, when men do so live as that the commands of God bear no sway over them, it is a sign they are without God, as in Psal. 81:11. My people, saith God, would not hear my voice, and Israel would have none of me; the not obeying of God's commands is a not having of God; thou art without God

in the world oh man, unto whose conscience the sovereignty and authority of a God cannot give a check, and a control to thy lusts, to bring thee into obedience to him.

4. To be without God in the world, is to be without a peculiar interest and propriety in God as your God, when you cannot say that God is your Father.

Now if you ask me in which of these four senses these Ephesians here in the text, were without God, I answer, that they were without God in all of them, for while they were in a state of Gentilism, they were without the knowledge of the true God, and without the worship of the true God, and without any obedience to the true God, and without any real interest and propriety in God, but chiefly the two latter are included in this phrase; the general point of Doctrine that I shall observe, from this last branch of man's misery shall be this,

That every man during the state of his unregeneracy is without God in the world; this only in the general.

But here some may inquire what is meant by this expression without God in the World; The meaning is, that they were without any propriety or interest in God in this world, and if they are without God in this world, they must of necessity be without God in another world. And thus you have the words explained to you, I shall now give you a more particular view of them; without God in the World, the words as they are rendered in our translation, incline this way, for a man to be without any peculiar interest and propriety in God, but these words (without God in the World) in the Greek signifies Atheists in the World; that is, they did so live as if there were no God in the World; so then the words being thus opened, there are two things involved in this phrase without God in the World.

1. That they were Atheists in the world, that is, so living, as if there were no God in the World.

2. They were living in the World without any peculiar interest or propriety in God.

From the first of these, that they were Atheists in the World, you may note this,

Doct. That every man in the state of unregeneracy, he is an Atheist in the World; he is a man that lives as if there were no God in the World, every man in the state of unregeneracy is a practical Atheist; now when I tell you that every wicked man is an Atheist, do not mistake me, for there are two sorts of Atheists, an Atheist in judgment, and an Atheist in practice; an atheist in judgment is such a one, as Pagans and Heathens are, but an Atheist in practice is such a one as lives, as if there were no God in the World; so that the Doctrine is, that every unregenerate man is a practical Atheist, that is, he so lives as if there were no God in the World, Psal. 14:1. The Fool hath said in his heart there is no God, that is, he so lives as if there were no God that takes notice of what he does; thou art a practical Atheist oh man that so livest in the World, as if there were no God in the world: and here,

1. I shall show you how it comes to pass that any man is so grossly wicked to live as if there were no God in the World; And,

2. I shall give you the characters of a man that does live after this manner.

1. How it comes to pass that men should be so grossly wicked, such practical Atheists, to live as if there were no God in the World, I shall give you four grounds of it.

1. The first reason is because of God's forbearance towards them, Eccl. 8:11. Because God doth not speedily execute judgment upon wicked men

when they commit a sin, therefore they run into thoughts of Atheism, and sin with greediness, as if there were no God in the World, as in Psal. 50:21. These things, says God, thou hast done, and I held my tongue, therefore thou thoughtest that I was like thee, but I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thee, because God held his tongue, and did not reprove them for their sins, therefore they thought him to be such a one as themselves, that he was a sinner as well as they; because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are set in them to do evil, the forbearance of God to wicked men makes them run on into practical atheism, whereas this is no ground at all to encourage thee to run on in sin; for,

1. The forbearance of God's judgments was never intended by God to breed atheism in thy heart, but to provoke thee to repentance, as the Apostle says, The bountifulness and long suffering of God should lead us to repentance.

2. This will aggravate thy condemnation, to make the forbearance of God, a provocation to thee to go on in sin; And,

3. Know this that though God doth forbear a while from punishing of thee for thy sins, yet he does neither forgive thee nor forget thee, as in Nah. 1:3. The Lord is slow to anger, but he is great in power, and he will not surely clear the wicked; though God does forbear thee, yet he will not forget thee: so in Eccl. 8:12. Though a sinner doth evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet it shall not be well with him in the latter end.

2. Another ground whereby wicked men do plunge themselves into atheism is this, because they see other men that are knowing men, and professing religion, men that do pretend to know God, and love God, and worship God, when wicked men shall see such men as these fall into great

and gross sins, and live so unanswerable to their profession, this makes them conclude that there is no God in the World, as in Rom. 2:24, says the Apostle there, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you. I have read a strange story of a woman here in England, that called in question the Deity, whether there was a God or no, and a Minister coming to her to convince her, and satisfy her conscience, and to persuade her into a belief that there was a God, asked of her this question, how she came to be an atheist, she answered the very first thing that caused her to entertain thoughts of atheism, to believe there was no God, was the seeing of him live so wickedly and profanely; for, says she, I know you to be a learned and knowing man, and you preach good Sermons, and exhort people well, and the very beholding you to live so wickedly, to be a swearer, a liar, a drunkard, and a Sabbath breaker, &c. this made me to question, whether there were a God in heaven or no, seeing he did let you run on still unpunished.

3. Another thing that makes men live as if there were no God in the World, is the questioning of the authority of the Scriptures. I have read of one (a great scholar in this kingdom) that the means whereby he came to be an atheist was this, he first began to question, whether the Bible were the Word of God or no, because he did not know whether Moses that penned the beginning of it were a man of God or no; then he questioned how Moses could write of those things that were done before he was born, and then whether the Papists might not alter it in the translating of it; and many others questions till by degrees he came to be a very atheist, and to question whether there were a God or no: and so there are some errors now in print, that tend very much to atheism; there are some that do affirm, that that Book or volume of Books called the Bible is not the Word of God, and such

an opinion as this does very much work upon men's hearts and persuade them, that there is no God, as in 1 Pet. 3:4, says the Apostle, There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, (there are the Atheists, but how came they to be so? Mark the next words) and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the Fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning, say they, we have heard that all men must be judged, that after death they must appear before the Judgment-seat of God, to give an account of all their actions; Now because they did not see these things accomplished already, they cried out, Where is the promise of his coming? They would not believe there was any such thing, the questioning of the truths of God was that which brought them to be very atheists.

4. Another ground from whence atheism doth flow is pride of heart; it is very well observed by one, that most commonly Atheists are of the greatest men; you shall seldom see a poor man an atheist, but rich men altogether: as Pharaoh in Exod. 5:2. Who is the Lord (says he) that I should obey his voice? And so Nebuchadnezzar, in Dan. 3. Who is that God (says he) that shall deliver you out of my hands? So Alexander said himself was God. Atheists are ordinarily of the greatest and richest and highest people.

But here some may object and say; What do you tell us here in England, that we are without God in the world? You may say so to Pagans and Heathens, but we hope you will not say so to us.

For answer to this Objection, I shall here show you 13 discoveries of a practical atheist. I shall give you three of them out of the Scripture, and ten more deduced from the Scripture: in Psal. 14:1, where it is said, The Fool hath said in his heart there is no God, in that very Psalm there are three discoveries of an atheist.

1. A man living all his days in a profane and disordered course of life towards God, such a one is an atheist in the first verse of that same Psalm, The Fool hath said in his heart there is no God, what follows? They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doth good, that man that all his life time lives in a disorderly course of life, and adds drunkenness to thirst, and commits one sin after another, that man is a practical atheist, he lives as if there were no God in the World.

2. That man that doth wholly neglect the duty of prayer in the 4th verse of the 14th Psalm, They eat up my people as they eat bread, and they call not upon the Lord, such a man is a practical atheist.

3. That man that hates and carries a grudge in his heart, against those that fear the Lord, that man is an atheist: in Psal. 14:6. You have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge.

Now give me leave a little to press these three discoveries home upon your consciences. Are they atheists that live a disorderly life, and walk in a course of wickedness all their days? Are such as these atheists? Oh then how many atheists are there now in the world, that do spend all their days in sin and vanity, and in a moment go down into the grave!

2. Are they atheists that do neglect the duty of prayer? Oh then with grief of heart be it spoken, how many atheists are there in the World that do wholly omit this duty, both in their families and in their closets? How many are there that can say, they never go to God upon their knees in secret, to beg for grace and mercy from God? And this neglect of secret duties, is a palpable demonstration that you do live as if there were no God in the World, and in so doing ye are very atheists.

3. Is hatred and contempt of the people of God, a badge of an atheist? Then likewise are there many Atheists in the world: how many are there

that can love a swearer and adulterer, a profaner, &c. yea, love a dog and yet hate a Christian? This proceed from a root of Atheism; that is in their hearts.

SERM. XVI. EPH. 2:12. - AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD.

A *nd without God in the world . - Eph. 2:12.*

I have delivered you in my last, three Scripture discoveries of an Atheist; there are ten other Characters yet behind, that are drawn from the Scriptures: As,

1. That man is an Atheist that does indulge and favor himself in the practice of secret sins; he that does continually allow and favor himself in the practice of secret sins, that man lives as if there were no God in the world: Reverend Mr. Perkins gives us this badge of an Atheist, that that very sin which he will not dare to commit in the presence of a child, yet that sin will he venture upon when no eye sees him; thou that canst venture upon a sin, in hope of secrecy, thinking to hide it from the All-seeing Eye of God, thou art a very Atheist, thou that darest do that in the sight of God, that thou art afraid to do in the presence of a man; this proceeds merely from a root of Atheism that is in the heart, as in Job 22:12,13,14, when a wicked man hath done wickedly, he is ready to say. How doth God know? Can he judge through the thick clouds? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he

seeth not; these are the expressions of an Atheistical heart. An Atheist if he can but keep himself from the censure and reproach of men, he is well enough, if men cannot say black to his eye, or there goes a drunkard, a swearer, an adulterer, or the like, he is never troubled for his sins. Oh therefore thou that wouldst be accounted chaste, where thou dwellest, and yet keepest thy Delilah in thy lap: and oh thou debauched liver, that canst quietly and securely walk on in ways of sin, so that thou canst but keep them from the eyes of men; know thus much, that this proceeds from thy Atheistical heart. When the hope of secrecy emboldens any man to the practice of any sin, that man is a very Atheist: you that can fear the eye of a mortal man, and yet not be afraid of the All-seeing Eye of an immortal God, you that were never troubled for your sins, when nobody knew them but yourselves; but now this is that which troubles you, that your sins are known to others, if it be thus with thee, thou art a practical Atheist: those that are troubled, not because God sees their sins, but because man sees them, they are very Atheists, as in Job 24:13,15,17, these are they, that abhor the light, that know not the way thereof, nor continue in the path thereof, the eye also of the Adulterer waiteth for the twilight, and saith no eye shall see me, and disguiseth his face, for the morning to them is as the shadow of death, and if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death: such as these are very Atheists, they were not troubled because God saw their sins, but because man did see their sins, this is as the terror of death to them: they would not have men see their sins, and yet they do not care what follies they are guilty of in the sight of God; so that men cannot say black to their eyes, they are well enough. Such men as indulge themselves in the practice of secret sins, are practical Atheists. A godly man will fear to commit a secret sin, as well as a known gross and open sin; as

Joseph, How shall I do this great wickedness, and so sin against God? If the apprehensions of a God do lie near your hear, you will have a care to avoid secret, as well as open ans.

2. Another discovery is this, that man is a practical Atheist, that does not make conscience of the performance of secret duties: he that never prays in secret, harbors this Atheistical thought in him, that God doth not hear him; it is very observable of the Scribes and Pharisees in Scripture, you shall never read of a secret fast they kept, nor of a private prayer they made, but they had public fasts a great many, they did fast twice a week, and pray in the corners of the streets, and give Alms, &c. but you never read of any private and secret duties they did perform; which did proceed merely from roots of Atheism in their hearts: and so this is an evidence of the Atheistical heart, if thou dost never make conscience of going to God in secret, and beg for grace and mercy from him; he is a very Atheist that lives in the neglect of secret duties; for those men that retain in their hearts, an apprehension of a Deity, they know that there is no time so well spent, as that which is employed in secret prayer to God. Cant. 2:14. Oh my dove (says Christ) that art in the clifts of the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs: let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is they voice, and thy countenance is comely; Oh thou poor soul (says Christ) that dost pray in secret, and weep in secret corners, let me see thy face, and hear thy voice. A man that hath the apprehensions of a God before him, he knows, that the Lord sees and takes notice of the breathings of his heart before him in secret: and therefore they are as much in the closet to pray in secret, and to pour out their souls before God in private, as they are in public. It is very observable that there were very few actions of Christ that were recorded by all the four Evangelists, and yet this of Christ's praying alone, when nobody

was with him, is recorded by them all: whereas other things, if they be recorded by one, they are left out by another; but this is spoken of by all of them. Now the reason of it is this, because Christ would be an example to us, to teach us to be frequent in the performance of this duty: and therefore it is a sign of an Atheistical heart in any one that does not make conscience of pouring out his heart in secret prayer to God.

3. Another Character is this, that man that doth make impunity to be a provocation to impiety; my meaning is this, he that makes the patience and forbearance and longsuffering of God towards him, to be a provocation to sin; that because God doth not presently punish him for his sin, therefore he will go on in sin still, such a man is a very Atheist: as in Psal. 50:21. These things hast thou done (says God) and I held my tongue, therefore thou thoughtest that I was such a one as thyself. (Beloved) if any of you harbor such thoughts as those in your hearts, that because God doth not presently punish you for your sins, therefore you will go on still in sin: let me tell you, that this is the practice of a very Atheist. Because the drunkard is not taken away by God, while the wine is in his head; and because the swearer is not destroyed by God, while the oath is in his mouth; and because the liar is not cut off by God, while the lie is upon his tongue, therefore they will run on with greediness, and willingness in the same sins, all this flows from the very root of Atheism, that is in thy heart.

4. That man is an Atheist that carries in his heart a forgetfulness, and a carelessness of the day of judgment, as in 2 Pet. 3:4. And there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, saying, Where is the promise of his coming? Thou that doest not harbor in thy heart, a mindfulness of the day of Judgment, art a very Atheist, for thou that doest not believe God to be a Judge, doest not believe him to be a God; When

Paul spake to Felix of temperance, and of the judgment to come, his heart trembled at the hearing of it. Eccl. 11:9. Rejoice oh young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment. Thou that livest in the world, and never so much as thinkest of a day of judgment, thou art a very Atheist; and oh (beloved) how many Atheists are there now in the world in this regard, that do put far from them the evil day!

5. That man is a very Atheist, that in the time of trouble and distress, does mistrust the providence of God, and run unto base means for help and remedy: thus did Saul discover himself to be an Atheist, 1 Sam. 28:7,8, when he was in distress, he went to the Witch of Endor for help and succor. And what does God say of such as run to Witches and Wizards; Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that you run to other God's to inquire of them? It is mere Atheism for any to distrust God, and run unto others for help, or any other way to run into sinful courses in times of danger, to find relief, you do hereby declare, that you think there is no God in the world.

6. That man is an Atheist that does place his affections upon anything in the world more than upon God; such a man lives without God in the world. A covetous man that placeth his love upon his money, more than upon anything in the world, that man makes gold his God, and therefore these two are joined together, Eph. 15:5. The covetous person, who also is an Idolater, he makes an idol of his money: and this Job frees himself from, in Job 31:24, says he, I have not made gold my hope, nor made gold my confidence, for, if I had done so, then I had denied the God above, says he in the 28th verse: why now (beloved) there are many among us that love money better than their own souls, that will sell their souls to gain a little

wealth: many among us love money better then we love heaven itself, that do not care what sins they commit for it; and had rather part with their souls, then with their riches. And so when you set your love upon your belly, you make your belly your God; or if upon pleasures, then you make pleasures your God; and so of anything else. And therefore (beloved) I beseech you look to it, and examine yourselves; is not God undervalued sometimes, when your lusts are set in the throne? Is not God sometimes very low in your estimation, and other things set above him? If it be so, it is mere Atheism in your hearts.

7. That man is an Atheist, that makes no conscience of keeping those vows and covenants he hath made with God. The Scripture looks upon that man as an Atheist, that does not make conscience of performing those covenants which he hath made with God; in Jos. 24:25,26, there Joshua made a covenant with the people; and set them a statute, and an ordinance in Shechem, and he wrote these words in the book of the Law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak that was by the Sanctuary of the Lord: and Joshua said unto all the people, Behold this stone shall be a witness unto us, for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us, it shall be there for a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God: and therefore those men that do call the covenant that we have made, (with hands lifted up to the high God) an old Almanac out of date, and do scorn and despise the oath they have taken, and make no conscience of keeping the vows and covenants they have made with God, the Scripture looks upon such men, as very Atheists: and (beloved) in this regard, there are more Atheists now in England, then ever there were since the world stood. But the Lord will manifest himself to be a just God, though wicked men do despise his covenant, and count it as an unholy thing.

8. That man is a very Atheist, whose conscience does never trouble him, nor check him for the commission of any sin; That man that can be drunk today, and swear tomorrow, and cheat the next day, and commit one sin after another, and yet his conscience never give him any control, that man is a very Atheist. Those that can live in the world, and commit gross sins every day, and their consciences never check them for their sins, it is a sad sign that such men are practical Atheists. If you have the fear of God in you, and the thoughts of a God upon you, it will make you reflect upon sins past, and be grieved for sins and miscarriages of twenty years standing: thus did Josephs brethren call to mind their former sins, Gen. 42:21. And they said one to another, We have verily sinned against our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear him, and therefore is this evil come upon us; and so Job, Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth: and so David prays, that God would not remember the sins of his youth. But now you that can be drunk one day after another, and belch out one oath after another, and commit one sin after another, and thy conscience never control thee, the Lord be merciful to thee, for thou art plunged into a depth of Atheism. One compares an Atheist to a duck in a pond, if a man throws a stone into the water, where she is, she will presently dive under, but let it thunder or lighten never so much in the heavens, she takes no notice of it; so an Atheist he cannot endure, that men should take notice of him, or discover his wickedness, to reprove him, or speak against him, but let God thunder upon him never so much, he will not be troubled at it; did you live under the apprehensions of a Deity, it is impossible your consciences should be so long and so frequently out of its office.

9. Those men are very Atheists, that do yield to a detestable indifferency in matters of Religion: that man that will sleep in a whole skin, and not dare to do anything, to the hazarding of his estate or person, for the advancement of true religion, such a man is a very Atheist. I will give you a strange place for this, in 1 King. 18:21, says Elijah the Prophet to the people, How long will you halt between two opinions? If the Lord be God, then follow him; but if Baal be God, then follow him: and the text says, the people held their peace, and answered him not a word; they neither said they would follow after God, neither did they say they would follow after Baal: if God were too strong for Baal, they would be for God; but if Baal did prevail, they would follow after him; which did manifest their Atheism, and that God was not their God: that man that takes God to be his God, must follow him through whatsoever troubles or afflictions he meets withal in the world; and indifferency in matters of religion, does argue men to be very Atheists. And therefore all time-servers, that live according to the times, that are men of indifferent tempers, any religion rather than fail, will serve their turns, such men are practical Atheists.

10. Men do then show themselves to be very Atheists, when their practices shall palpably thwart, and contradict their professions, when they are such as those spoken of in Tit. 2:16, that in their words do profess to know Christ, but in their works they deny him. Those that do profess themselves to be Christians, and yet live like heathens; that profess themselves to have an inheritance with the Saints in light, and yet walk here as Children of darkness, such men are very Atheists. And thus I have done with these 10 discoveries of a practical Atheist, I have given you thirteen in all, three of them out of the Scripture, and ten more deduced from the Scripture.

Now the use that I shall make of this, shall be by way of counsel and advice: if this be so as you have heard, that all unregenerate men are practical Atheists, they live as if there were no God in the world; Oh then that you would bewail this practical Atheism that is among you; Doest thou favor thyself in the practice of secret sins? Or dost thou make no conscience of the performance of secret duties? Doest thou make impunity to be a provocation to impiety? And doest thou carry in thy mind a forgetfulness of the day of Judgment? Or doest thou distrust the providence of God in times of trouble and distress? Doest thou place thy affections upon anything in the world more than upon God? And doest thou make no conscience of performing the vows and covenants thou hast made with God? Does thy conscience never trouble thee after the commission of sins? Art thou a lukewarm and indifferent man in matters of Religion? Doest thou profess to know God, and in thy works deny him? Doest thou any of these ways entertain and harbor thoughts of Atheism in thy heart? Why, so far as thou hast done so, labor to bemoan and bewail it, and be humbled for it, and to strive against and keep under this great sin of Atheism in time to come.

Use 2. This shall be by way of consolation, to comfort and support your hearts: it may be there are some of you that hear me this day, that are the precious servants of God, and yet in some kind or other have been tempted to this sin of Atheism; well, for your comfort consider these two or three things.

1. Art thou tempted to Atheism? Why, yet consider that so was Jesus Christ himself, he was tempted to Atheism and Blasphemy, when the Devil tempted him to fall down and worship him: why so though thou hast been tempted to Atheism, and to forget God's All-seeing Eye over thee, or the like, yet this may be for thy comfort, that Christ himself was tempted as

well as thee, as the Apostle says, in Heb. 2:18, in that Christ suffered and was tempted, he is able to succor those that are tempted; Christ was tempted to fall down and worship the very Devil, but though Christ was tempted, yet the Devil could find no corrupt matter in Christ to work upon. When the Devil shook Christ, he shook a pure Crystall-glass of clear water, his Nature was like a Crystall-glass full of clean water without any muddiness or corruption at all, but if the Devil should shake any of us, he would find abundance of dirty and muddy water in the bottom, and corrupt matter enough in our natures to work upon.

2. Consider, that though you are tempted by the Devil to the sin of Atheism, yet these temptations, if you do not approve of them, nor yield to them, shall be charged upon the Devil as his sins, and not upon you. And thus you see I have briefly dispatched this Doctrine, that every man by nature is a practical Atheist living in the world, as if there were no God in the world.

SERM. XVII. EPH. 2:12. - AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD.

And without God in the World . - Eph. 2:12.

A Besides that Doctrine which I finished, the last Sabbath, there is something else in the Text; wicked men are without God in the World, that is, they are without any special interest or propriety in God as their God, the words do not only imply that they live, as if there were no God in the World, but they live without any right, interest or propriety in God as their God, though they are not without wisdom or wealth, or goods and estate, or honor and esteem in the World, yet they are without any real interest or propriety in God as their God, they are without God in the World: from whence I would note you this Doctrine,

That every man by nature is without any real interest or propriety in God as his God.

Now (Beloved) before I come to handle the point. I shall only premise three conclusions by way of explanation, to elucidate the point, and show you what I mean by this Doctrine: as,

1. Take this conclusion, that in some sense there is no creature in the world that is without God, though in other regards men may be truly said to be without God; in some sense there are none without God, that is by way of Creation, and preservation, so the worst Devil in hell may say that God is his God: and,

2. A wicked man may have God to be his God by way of profession, he may profess to know God, and profess that God is his God; but now in another sense a wicked man cannot be said to have God for his God, (that is) in a way of relation and reconciliation for God to be a God in Covenant with him through Jesus Christ.

2. Take this conclusion, that though multitudes of people may lay claim to God as their God, yet there are but a few men in the world, that have God to be their God in a Covenant way; as in Zach. 13:8,9, the Lord there looks upon the Jewish Church under a threefold consideration. And it shall come to pass that in all the land (saith the Lord) two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein, and I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as Gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, it is my people, and they shall say, the Lord is my God: though you all lay claim to God, yet there may be but one part in three, that can truly say that God is their God in covenant with them.

3. Take this conclusion, that such is the deceitfulness and delusion of men's hearts naturally, that the worst of men are ready to believe and think that God is their God, when he is not: as you may read in Jer. 3:4,5, says God there, they shall cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth, and yet says God thou hast done evil as much as thou couldst, so in Psal. 14:1. The fool hath said in his heart there is no God, they have

corrupted and done abominable works, there is none that doth good, those that have not God in their hearts, nor in all their ways, yet they will lay claim to God as their God, though they have committed abominable works and done evil as much as they could.

Thus much for the conclusion, I come now to handle a practical question that necessarily must be spoken to in the pursuance of this Doctrine, which is this.

Quest. What are the characters of those men that are without any real interest and propriety in God as their God, in a way of Covenant and relation?

This question I do the rather resolve upon the consideration of the great delusion and mistake that men's hearts are very apt to run into, to think that God is their God when he is not, and therefore I shall lay down to you seven distinguishing characters of such men, and it may be I may come near the bosoms of many of you, though the Lord knows I would not stagger the hope of the least of you that have a real and well-grounded interest in Jesus Christ: those men are without any real interest in God as their God,

1. That are without any effectual knowledge of God as their God.
2. Those that live without making the Word of God to be their rule.
3. Those that live in the world, without making the ways of God to be their pleasure.
4. Those that live in the World without making the glory of God to be their aim.
5. Those that live in the World without making the day of the Lord to be their delight.
6. Those that live in the World without making the people of God to be the objects of their Love: and,

Lastly, those that live in the world without making sin to be the object of their hatred.

For the first, those are without any real interest or propriety in God as their God, that do live in the world without a saving and effectual knowledge of God: as in 2 Chron. 15:3, it is said there that for a long time, Israel was without the true God, and without the teaching Priest, and without the Law, all that time (while they were without the Law, and the Priest to teach them) it is said they were without God, those that live without a saving knowledge of God, the Scripture looks upon them as having no real interest in God. Joh. 8:54,55. You say (says Christ) that he is your God, and yet you have not known him, intimating that God was not their God because they were utterly ignorant of him. Now (Beloved) every knowledge of God does not demonstrate your interest in God, unless it be,

1. A practical knowledge of him, as in Joh. 8:55, says Christ there, I am of God, I know him, and I keep his sayings: intimating that that man that does lay claim to God, as his God, must know him, and this knowledge of him will make him yield obedience to him, and keep his sayings; And,

2. It must be an experimental knowledge of God, as David says in Psal. 51:6. Thou hast made me to know wisdom in my inward parts. If so be you were persons living without a practical and experimental knowledge of God, you are without any interest in him as your God.

But before I can leave this particular, I must answer an Objection: Me thinks I hear a poor perplexed soul say, If this be so that only those that know God aright have an interest in him, then the Lord be merciful unto me, for I am a poor ignorant sinful wretch, that do know nothing of God at all as I ought to know him; and therefore surely I have no interest in God my God.

Answ. Now to such as you are, by way of answer, I shall leave these two or three words for your comfort.

1. Take this for an answer, that in Scripture account to complain of thy ignorance, is a good degree of knowledge: in Prov. 30:23, you read there of Agur, who was an excellent man in virtue and knowledge, in the time of Solomon, and yet you shall not read of a man that more complains of his ignorance then this man doth: Surely (says he) I am more brutish then any man, and have not the understanding of a man: I have neither learned wisdom, nor attained to the knowledge of the holy; and yet this man that so much complains of his ignorance, did demonstrate such fruits of grace and knowledge in his practice, as ever man did.

2. Take this for an answer, that in God's account, he knows most that doth most. He does not know most, that hath a great judgment to dive into and dispute about vain questions and niceties, but he is a knowing man in God's account, that does walk answerably to that small measure of knowledge that he hath, as in Psal. 111:10. A good understanding have all they that do thy commandments: God does not measure your knowledge by your questions and disputes, but by your practice, as in Jer. 22:16. He judged the cause of the poor and needy, then it was well with him; was not this to know me, saith the Lord?

3. Take this for an answer, that it is not the wanting of some measures or degrees of knowledge, nor the having of much ignorance, that does demonstrate thy want of an interest in God, unless your ignorance hath these three properties with it: As,

1. Suppose thou art ignorant of God, yet if thou are not conceitedly ignorant, if thou art not a self-conceited man, that thinkest thou knowest much when thou knowest little, thou art well enough: if you are not like

those in Hos. 8:2. Israel shall say unto me, My God we know thee, and yet there is no fear, nor knowledge of God in the land.

2. If thou doest not sit down contentedly in thy ignorance, but doest labor and endeavor after more knowledge, then thy condition is good enough. But if thou sayest unto God, Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways, like those spoken of in Job: this is a sad sign, that you have no interest in God at all.

3. If thou art not obstinately ignorant, like those spoken of in Psal. 82:5. They know not, neither will they understand When men are ignorant, and will be ignorant, this is an evidence that they have no interest in God; in 2 Pet. 3:5, says the Apostle, these things they are willingly ignorant of; now if your ignorance be accompanied with these three circumstances, that you are conceitedly, and contentedly, and obstinately ignorant, if it be so, the Lord be merciful to you; for these are apparent demonstrations, that you have yet no interest and propriety in God, as your God. But though you have abundance of ignorance in you, yet if you bewail your ignorance, and labor and desire after more knowledge, if you follow on to know the Lord, and are not obstinately ignorant, but would do more if you knew more, if it be thus with you, thy ignorance doth not evidence, that thou hast no interest in God.

2. Another Character of a man that is without an interest in God, is this, he is such a one that lives in the world without making the Word of God to be his rule. Joh. 8:47. He that is of God, heareth God's Word; you therefore hear him not, because you are not of God: those that will not make the Word of God to be their rule, and conform their practices in obedience thereunto, Christ says the reason of it is because they are not of God: and so in 1 Joh. 4:6. He that knoweth God, heareth us, and he that is not of God,

heareth not us; and therefore you that walk after the vain imaginations of your own hearts, that are swayed and ruled by your lusts, and will not make God's Word a bridle to curb, and restrain your lusts and corruptions, but you will do what you list, let God command what he will: all these are manifest arguments, that you are not of God.

3. That man is without an interest in God, that lives in the world without making the ways of God to be his pleasure: as in Joh. 3:8,10. In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the Devil, whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God: righteousness is not to be taken here only for justice or civil righteousness, but for the whole bulk of godliness and the body of Christianity: he that doth not righteousness, is not of God: this not doing of righteousness is answerable to the committing of sin, in 1 Joh. 3:8, the text says, He that committeth sin is of the Devil, now this is not to be taken simply, that he that falls into sin is of the Devil, but he that commits sin, (that is) with complacency and delight, and without any compulsion, such a man is of the Devil. And so likewise he that doth not do righteousness, is not of God, that is, he that doth not act and do it with delight, and alacrity, and complacency, such a one is not of God: so in Joh. 3:11, says the Apostle, (Beloved) follow not that which is evil, but that which is good: he that doth good, he is of God; but he that doth evil, hath not seen God; (that is) he that doth evil with delight and satisfaction, and he that doth not take delight in the ways of God, and perform holy duties with cheerfulness and complacency, such a man is not of God; and therefore you that take more delight in the committing of sin, then you do in the performance of holy duties, you are but in a bad condition.

4. Another Character is this, that man is without God, that lives in the World without making the glory of God to be his aim: it is very observable,

that when the Jews did accuse Christ, saying, he was a Samaritan, and had a Devil, but did not come from God; he did convince them, that this was a slander cast upon him, because he fought not his own honor but the glory of God, Joh. 8:49,50. Jesus answered, I have not a Devil, but I honor my Father, and ye do dishonor him, and I seek not my own glory, there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

5. That man is without an interest in God, that lives in the World without making the day of God his delight, he that takes no delight in sanctifying of the Lord's Day, but rather takes delight in profaning it, that man is without God in the World, as in Joh. 9:26. It was the speech of the Pharisees to Christ, say they, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath-day: this had been a very good argument, had it been rightly applied, the argument had been very strong, if the application had been good, if Christ had not indeed kept the Sabbath, but they were greatly mistaken, for Christ did keep the Sabbath. Why now (beloved) these Pharisees, were they now alive, and should see you Christians profaning the Sabbath day, spending and trifling it away in sports and pleasures, in swearing and drunkenness, and dishonoring the name of God; never employing one hour of it in prayer, reading, or hearing, or any holy and religious exercise, they would presently conclude that you are not of God, because you do not keep the Sabbath day.

6. That man is without God, that lives without making the people of God to be the object of his love; as you may see in 1 Joh. 3:10. He that doth not righteousness is not of God neither he that loveth not his brother, and so in 1 Joh. 4:20. If any man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? He that does not love his brother, the children and

people of God, he cannot love God. You that carry in your hearts a secret malice and spleen against those that are godly, and more holy and religious than yourselves: you that do tiger-like, hate the very pictures of godly men, you that hate the people of God, and the Ministers of the Gospel, because they are so, that hate godliness as godliness, these are evident arguments that the love of God is not in you.

7. That man is without God, that lives in the World without making sin to be the object of his hatred, that man hath not God, that hates not sin; though that man may have God, that hath sin, yet that man cannot have an interest in God, that doth not hate sin. And thus I have run over briefly these seven heads, whereby you may know whether you are the men that can lay a true claim to God as your God, yea, or no: if you are men that have a true knowledge of God, and make his Word your rule, and his way your pleasure, and his day your delight, and his glory your aim, and good men the object of your love, and sin the object of your hatred; if these things be in you, you may know undoubtedly, that you have an interest in God.

We come now to the application, which may serve for unspeakable comfort to all you that are the people of God, that can lay a well-grounded and Scripture claim to God as your God.

1. If you have God, you have all things; and let me tell you, you that have God for your God, you may outvie all the Kings, and Princes, and Potentates in the World. Other men may say, they have wealth, and you have none; they have riches, and honors, and pleasures, and you have none: but you may go further, and out-vie them all, for you can say, you have an interest in God, and they have none. Wicked men cannot lay claim to God as theirs; and therefore when they speak of God, they speak of him as a God to others, and not to them, as in Gen. 31:29, when Laban spake to Jacob,

(says he) The God of your Fathers: and so Pharaoh in Exod. 8:25:28. (says he) Go sacrifice to your God in the land: and from hence Divines do observe, that the Scriptures do not suffer wicked men to name God, as in a way of propriety to them, as their God: but now those that are righteous and holy, that have indeed an interest in God, God is not ashamed to be called their God. You that have an interest in God though you are a poor despicable people, yet be not afraid to own God as your God, for the Lord is not ashamed, that you should call him your God; God is not ashamed of us whose dwellings are in the dust, he will own us: and therefore let this encourage you to go to God as your God, and apply him as your God, and trust in him as your God, and pray to him and call upon him as your God, for he is not ashamed of you. And here that I may speak a little further to this particular, I would exhort you to two things.

1. To prove your interest in God: and,
2. To improve it.

1. Labor to prove your interest in God: examine and try whether or no, upon conscientious grounds and Scripture evidences, your hearts can be satisfied, that you are a people in Covenant with God: rest not, and trust not upon It may bees, but labor to prove it to your own souls, that God is your God; and that I may a little help and further you in this examination, I shall here lay you down three discoveries whereby you may know, and prove unquestionably that God is your God.

1. If thou art such a one that doest labor to keep thy inward man from secret defilement by sin, as well as thy outward man, from grosser and greater enormities, as in 2 Cor. 6:18, and in the first verse of the next chapter; I will be your God and Father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty: Having therefore these promises

dearly beloved (says the Apostle) let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit: and therefore if you have a care to abstain from all secret sins, whereby the inward man is defiled, it is a sign that you have a real interest in God; because God will be our God, and will own and accept of us to be his people; we must not only wash our legs and our outward man, but our inward parts too, and if we do thus, we may be confidently assured that we are a sacrifice well pleasing, and acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ: but now you that make conscience of your ways, so far only, as that men may not say black to your eye, if you do not labor to keep your inward man from defilements as well as your outward man, you have no interest in God at all.

2. Another evidence of your interest in God is this; if you have an earnest and unwearied labor and endeavor in your spirits to come to the nearest resemblance and conformity to Jesus Christ, as possibly you can. Do you labor to be holy as he was holy? And humble, and meek, and lowly as he was? In 2 Cor. 7:1, says the Apostle there (dearly beloved) let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Do you labor still to resemble God in holiness? Thy relation and interest in God will make thee labor to be like unto God, and to be still perfecting holiness though you cannot be perfect in holiness, If you have an interest in God, you will labor more and more to be holy as he is holy, and to come to the nearest resemblance to him that may be.

3. Another discovery of your interest in God, is this, if God hath engraven upon thy soul those saving effects and blessings which he doth bestow upon all those that have an interest in him; God hath promised that he will be their God, and they shall be his people: that he will give them a new heart taking away the heart of stone, and giving them a heart of flesh; and that he

will sanctify and renew their natures, and write his Law in their inward parts, and work in their hearts a suitable disposition to his Law, and put his fear into their hearts that they shall never depart from him: These are the blessings of the Covenant of Grace. Now you that can give abundant and evident testimonies in your own souls, that you have found God cleansing and purifying your hearts, and sanctifying and renewing your natures, and writing his Law in your inward parts, and putting his fear into your hearts, that you do never depart from him; if you find these things in you, they are undoubted evidences, that you have an interest in God.

2. As I would have you prove your interest in God, so I would exhort you to improve your interest in God too. Many of you do let God lie by you, (as I may so say) and never make use of him for your spiritual comfort and support, and never go to him for help, and succor, and relief in times of danger, you do not improve your interest in God.

But here it may be you would ask me how you should improve your interest in God.

I answer, 1. Improve it thus, in making your interest in God, a great incitement and provocation to thee, to obey God; thus David did in Psal. 143:10. Teach me to do thy will, (says he) for thou art the Lord my God: here David did well improve his interest in God, so in Psal. 119:115. Depart from me ye evil doers, (says he) for I will keep the commandments of my God. We should make our interest in God, an engagement upon our souls, to keep the commands of God.

2. Then you do rightly improve your interest in God, when this doth stir you up, to aggravate all the sins you have committed against God, when your interest in God doth make you see, how exceeding sinful sin is, and how greatly you have provoked the Lord your God by your sins: as in Jer.

3:25. We have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our Fathers from our youth even to this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God: here the children of Israel aggravate their sins against God as their God. And so Daniel he makes his interest in God, a motive to stir him up to aggravate sin against God, in Dan. 9:5, says he there, We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and done wickedly, and have rebelled even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments, and then in verse 7. Oh Lord, (says he) righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face as at this day: so again in verse 8. Oh Lord to us belongeth confusion of face, to our Kings, and to our Princes, and to our Fathers, because we have sinned against thee: but to the Lord our God belongeth mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him: and so he goes on all along, aggravating their sins against God: no less than ten times he mentions their interest in God, and ten times he aggravates their sins against God. It is the consideration of our interest in God, that does stir us up to aggravate our sins against God, when we do consider that we have sinned against our God, against our gracious and merciful Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace; who is infinite in goodness, and abundant in mercy and truth; Such considerations as these will exceedingly provoke us to aggravate our sins against him.

3. Improve your interest in God by making it a prop and pillar of marble to bear up, and support your hearts under all the miseries, and afflictions, and troubles you meet withal here in the World: thus David encouraged himself in the Lord his God, in Psal. 3:7. I am thine (says he) Lord save me: then you make a right improvement of your interest in God, when you go to him, and trust, and rely, and depend upon him in all times of danger and

distress, for you have an interest in that God that is both able and willing to relieve and succor you, a God that hath helped you, and doth help you, and will never leave you, nor forsake you, and therefore be encouraged to cast your care upon him.

FINIS.