

**THE BELIEVER'S POCKET COMPANION:
The One Thing Needful, To Make Poor Sinners Rich And
Miserable Sinners Happy**

By William Mason

1773

Christ is all. Colossians 3:2
Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 13:4

PREFACE

What think ye of Christ? This is the most important question in the world. Happy for that sinner who can answer it from his heart and say, Christ to me is precious. For verily, he is a pardoned, justified, sanctified, saved soul. He is not let to ask, "What must I DO to be saved?" But he is justified IN the Lord by his everlasting righteousness. He is saved IN the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

For such this little work is intended. To such it is humbly addressed. The design of it being to stir up and quicken such in the way of believing in Christ, looking to Christ, coming unto him, and abiding in him; or, in the apostle's words, "to be putting on the Lord Jesus Christ:"—that so

they may enjoy more sweet fellowship with him, find more of the inestimable preciousness of him, and experience more of his wonderful love, which passeth knowledge. By thus cleaving, in heart and affection, to our heavenly Bridegroom, we shall be more spiritual in our frames, more humble in our hearts, more circumspect in our walk, more heavenly in our conversation, and more holy in our lives. Hence we shall become more dead to the world and its vanities, to sin and its miseries, and to self-righteousness and its deceits.

Methinks I feel myself such an infinite debtor to my Lord, for his matchless love, rich grace, and glorious salvation, that I never would have done testifying of him to my fellow sinners, while my heart can beat, my tongue can speak, or my hand can write. As the Lord has lately raised me from a dangerous illness, I would joyfully bear this fresh testimony to his glory. Lord mercifully pardon, and powerfully subdue all the evil which cleaves to me, and freely forgive all that is amiss in this and every work done by me.

Verily, if I were never to attempt to do a good work, because with St. Paul, I find, "when I would do good evil is present with me;" nor ever to perform any duty till I found myself totally free from all the infection of nature, and all the workings of pride and vain glory, I might soon commence a licentious *Antinomian*. That, says a dear friend from the North, you are deemed already. I asked,

whether in principle or practice? Not in practice, he replied; but your writings are condemned as the vilest antinomianism. Truly this is no more than the common fate of all who are enlightened to see, enabled to believe, and strengthened to contend for the Scripture doctrine of full and final justification, and everlasting salvation by the Son of God only. Thank God, I have so many dear, holy and pious friends to keep me in countenance. This foul name, some are very lavish in bestowing on those who differ from them in some points of doctrine. But how little there is of that love, that Christian love, that perfect love which is so much cried up in this censure, is very evident. The Lord pardon such, and enable me to pass by this injury.

However, I think it behoves me to embrace this opportunity, to testify, that if for declaring that the justification of sinners, from first to last, is by the free grace of God, through the life and death, the one atonement, and the one righteousness of the Son of God, without any of our works and deservings—If for insisting that the comfort of this justification is enjoyed in the heart and conscience through faith, by those who are regenerated by the Spirit of God—If for contending that this grace of God, which freely brings salvation to us, most powerfully teaches us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world—If for maintaining that this faith, through which the finished salvation of Christ is received

and enjoyed, is a holy faith, that it excites and animates the saved, justified, sanctified soul to all holiness of heart, lip and life—If for asserting that believers are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in, but not in order to be justified by them, either first or last, in whole or in part, but to show forth the praises of God, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, to glorify God who hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and to give evidence that we are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light—If for holding, that where these fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory of God, are not brought forth in the life: If we do not hate sin, which once we loved, and love holiness, which once we hated, we have no evidence that we possess the faith of God's elect, that faith by which salvation is now enjoyed, and to which eternal life is forever secured in Christ Jesus—for Christ is to all who believe, as precious as a Saviour from the power of sin, as he is as a Justifier from the condemnation for sin. Now, I say, if for believing and contending for these scriptural truths, I am deemed an Antinomian, I pray God I may increase and abound herein more and more, and live and die in such blessed antinomianism.

Ay, but says another friend in the South, for insisting so much on good works, and on the evidence of a holy life and walk, you are deemed a pharisee, and judged to be

as legal as any rank Arminian. To this I shall make but a short reply. I do, and hope I shall to my latest breath, insist upon it, that all is not right between Christ and the soul, if it be not earnestly desiring to maintain constant, uninterrupted, holy fellowship with him, studiously pursuing those means which tend to promote the life and power of practical, experimental godliness, and avoiding all things which are contrary to our most holy faith.

With an humble desire, and sincere aim to excite to this, the following work is intended. Dear reader, it is contrived for thy pocket, and intended for thy heart. I beseech thee to accept it in love: to overlook the faults you find in it: and to look up for a blessing upon it, and the author of it.

August 9, 1773.

The One Thing Needful

The following observations, upon the present state of religion in this land, are very obvious.

1. That there never was a time in which the precious truths of the gospel, and the glorious doctrines of grace, were treated with so much obloquy, contempt and ridicule, by the professors of Christianity, as in the present day. A most awful consideration this. For this we

may justly dread the most sore and impending judgments to be executed upon this sinful land. Yet,

2. That this is a day, in which the Lord is sending forth many laborers into his vineyard, who preach the everlasting gospel, with great clearness, power and faithfulness; and which gospel the Lord causes to have free course, to run and be glorified, to the gathering in of multitudes of precious souls to Christ, to whom he gives to live and walk in the rich experience, and sweet enjoyment of his pardoning love, justifying grace, comforting peace, and sanctifying influence. This is a most joyful reflection. This, a favorable signal to our sinful nation. But still,

3. That though, perhaps, there never was a great profession of Christ, and of the truth as it in him, than in this day; yet many, very many professors content themselves with the form of godliness instead of the power—the notion of truth, instead of the experience of it—the name of faith, instead of the grace of it—the mere profession of Christ, instead of the actual possession of him. O how few really feel their hearts happy in him, their hopes centered on him, and then affections going out after him! This calls for much self-examination, and great searching of heart. Such is the checkered sense, exhibited in our day.

From the view of it, "My heart is inditing good matter." O for the pen of a ready writer, to set forth the matchless glory, and unparalleled excellency of the King—THE KING OF KINGS,—the King of saints, even King Jesus; your King and mine, O ye once stout hearted rebels against his crown and government! But, O the love of his royal heart! Instead of executing fierce vengeance upon us, for our sins, lo, he came from heaven to earth, with a flame of love in his heart, and matchless grace on his lips, on purpose to die for us, to wash us from our sins in his own blood, to conquer the rebellion of our hearts against him, and to win our affections to him. Hath he saved us by his precious blood? Hath he made us his willing, loving disciples, by his powerful grace? Verily, it is that we should live in the sweet enjoyment of all the rich blessings of his kingdom, and be holy and happy every day, yea every hour, IN HIM. This is his loving will concerning us.

But whence then those sighs and complaints—those doubts and fears—those jealousies and suspicions, which so rend the hearts of disciples, distress their spirits, and dishonor their dear Lord and Saviour? come they not hence? Though they may be espoused to Christ, yet they are not chaste virgins to him—they do not cleave to him with full purpose of heart—they do not live on him by faith—they do not obey his precious word, ABIDE IN ME. O ye cumbered disciples, hear and receive your Lord's loving reproof, "Ye are careful and troubled about many

things: BUT ONE THING IS NEEDFUL." O for a single eye to look unto Jesus, a humble heart to sit at his feet, and a simple soul to hear and believe every word, from his gracious lips, that we may KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST—constantly know it by a heartfelt sense of it. This, this is the one thing needful, to make poor sinners rich, and miserable sinners happy in time, and joyful to all eternity.

Know your calling, ye beloved of Christ. Consider your one business. Remember your chief employ. It is not merely to make a profession, and to keep up a form of godliness, but to maintain and keep up a warm, lively, comfortable sense of the love of Christ in your hearts, from day to day, yea from hour to hour. How is this to be done? there is but one way. The Holy Spirit of Truth, the glorifier of Christ, the sanctifier and comforter of his disciples, directs us to this one way, by his servant Paul, PUT YE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, Rom. 13:14.

Let us indulge a few meditations upon these precious words. Lord help us to see the glory that shines in them, to exercise our minds upon them, so as to put them in practice, that we may draw sweet consolation from them. Let us consider, WHO are here exhorted—WHAT is implied in the exhortation, PUT ON CHRIST—WHY we should put on Christ—WHEN we should put him on and the blessed effects and happy consequences of thus putting on Christ.

Brethren, let us praise our Lord:
Exalt his blessed name:
Let us hear and keep his word
His glory be our aim.
Let us resolutely strive
To work God's work with full intent.
And what is it? To believe
On Christ whom he hath sent.

CHAPTER 1

WHO are exhorted to put on Christ

O marvelous mystery of astonishing grace! Sinners, you who see, know and feel yourselves to be nothing but sin: yea the very chief of sinners, have a right, by free gift, of free grace, to take, possess, and put on Christ. The poor souls who are dead in trespasses and sins, have all got self-righteous hearts, because their understandings are blind, and their consciences are stupid. To exhort such to put on Christ, would be as foolish and as vain, as to bid a dead corpse arise, and put on clothing. But it is you, ye quickened, enlightened, sensible sinners, whose consciences smart for sin, whose hearts ache for the curses of the law denounced against sin, and whose spirits tremble to be found in your own righteousness: It is you, ye afflicted, tossed with tempest and not

comforted, by anything that you can find and feel in yourselves; who see your own nakedness, and constantly view your own righteousness as filthy rags, who are exhorted to put on Christ.

Paul best knew whom he exhorted. He describes them in the beginning of this epistle thus; "To all that be in Rome, BELOVED OF GOD." Rom. 1:7. None but the beloved of God the Father have any interest in, or have anything to do with Christ his beloved Son. But how did it appear that these sinners at Rome were, or that any sinners now, are beloved of God? Verily, as plain as though the love of God were wrote in legible characters upon their foreheads. This is clearly manifest by these two plain and express evidences. 1. They were called to be saints. 2. Their faith was spoken of, verse 7 and 8. That sinner who is favored with these special and peculiar graces, to be beloved of God, and to have faith in and from the Son of God, may be as well assured that he is called of God, as though the voice of an archangel, or the voice of God himself, proclaimed it from heaven to his ears.

Dear Christians, consider, first, your calling. O, we do not enough dwell upon the infinite love, discriminating grace, and almighty power of the Lord, in effectually calling us, poor sinners, from sin, death and hell, to righteousness, life and heaven, in Jesus. What! hath the Lord singled you out, and separated you from a world of dead sinners, to hear his mighty voice, and to obey his loving call? Have

you heard the sweet, loving, and persuasive voice of the dear Shepherd, saying, "Come unto me?" O remember, this is because you are beloved of God. The effectual calling of Christ is the fruit of the everlasting love of God. Sinners being beloved of God, and given to Christ in eternity, they must be called, they must come to Christ in time. As love, infinite, everlasting immutable love, is the cause from whence our calling proceeds; so the end of our calling is, to put on, possess, and enjoy Christ Jesus. For we are called to be saints IN him. Secondly, Consider, Paul addresses those who had faith. This is a grace of new covenant love. It is a precious gift, which is bestowed upon all the beloved of God. It is a grace peculiar to them only. Hence it is called, "the faith of God's elect." Tit. 1:1. "All men have not faith." 2 Thess. 3:2. O believer, remember time was, when you had not one grain of the precious grace of faith. Ever consider, who is God's elect. Isaiah 42:1. Ever consider that Jesus is the author and object of your faith. So sure as your faith fixes upon Christ as its only object for life and salvation, so sure are you beloved of God, and chosen of God. This you may be as sure of, as though Christ was now upon earth, and told you so with his infallible lips of truth. Faith manifests itself to be of God, and proves that the believer is beloved of God.

1. By receiving and setting to its seal, to the truth of God, respecting the sinner's own state. If you are a believer, you have just the same views of yourself, as the word of

God sets forth to you. You are sensible, that in yourself, you are a poor, wretched, miserable, blind, naked sinner—that you have the sentence of death in yourself—that you have neither hope nor help in and from yourself for salvation—you know and feel from day to day, that in your flesh dwells no good thing—that sin abounds in you—that your nature is totally corrupt and abominable, and your heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked—that when you would do good, evil is present with you—that of yourself you are not sufficient to think a good thought—that in all you aim to do to please God, you come short of his glory, and of your duty—that after you have done all, you see yourself an unprofitable servant in all—are ever dissatisfied with yourself, and out of conceit with all your works and doings; for you see all your own righteousness to be nothing better than filthy rags. Therefore you can have no trust in yourself—you dare place no confidence in the flesh—you have no dependence on your own works. For, faith has brought the truths of God into your heart. You have not only the notion of them in your head, but you find the inward sense and experience of them in your very soul. Thus, you are cast into the humbling mold of God's truth, by the grace of faith. While proud, self-righteous hearts, are strangers to the humbling grace of faith, and see not the constant need they have of putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, you daily see the necessity of this, and you, as a beloved child of God, are exhorted to this. But,

2. Faith manifests itself to be of God, as the believing sinner judges of himself according to the law of God. God's law is a transcript of his holy mind and will. Faith receives it, as a right rule of just judgment. You believe and confess, that the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good; and that sin by the commandment is become exceeding sinful in your sight. For, by the law is the knowledge of sin. Therefore you see yourself cursed by the law, a transgressor against its just, holy, and righteousness precepts. You behold the law as a ministration of condemnation. It condemns you as a sinner, for all that you are in yourself, and in all that you do, for you ever come short of its perfect demands. Your mouth is stopped. You are guilty. You have no plea in yourself, why you should not suffer its curse and wrath to all eternity. It speaks nothing but wrath to you. It works wrath in your conscience. Though you love the holy law, and delight in it after the inward man, yet you find that the law is become weak through the flesh, and therefore you see that you are no more able to fulfill the righteousness of the law, than you are to avert its wrath and curses. Both are alike impossible to you, as to create a world. Hence you see and confess, that by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified in God's sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Rom. 3:20.

You honor the law of God, by believing its purity and perfection. You honor the wisdom of God in giving the law, that the offence might abound. You honor the justice

of God by believing his judgment is just, in pronouncing you cursed, because you have not continued in all things which are written in the law to do them. You honor the truth of God by believing, that unless every righteous precept of the law be perfectly fulfilled, all its curses suffered, and all its penalties inflicted, you, a guilty sinner, could never be saved. Hence you see the necessity of putting on Christ, and being clothed with his righteousness, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believes. Rom. 10:4. Therefore,

3. Faith manifests itself to be of God, by gladly receiving the gospel of his grace, the ministration of righteousness, the glad tidings of free, full, and finished salvation, by the life and death of his dear son. The God of truth and you are agreed. He puts all his honor and glory upon the Son of his love. You acquiesce herein. The Father loveth the Son; so do you. The Father says, This is my beloved Son. You believe him. God says, Hear him. You answer, I love his voice: I delight to hear and obey the precious words of life and salvation from my Saviour's lips.

The Father hath committed all your salvation to the Son. Faith leads you to rejoice in this. You honor the Son, even as you honor the Father. You honor the Father, by receiving the record which he hath given of eternal life in his Son. You honor the Son in believing on him for eternal life. You honor his precious blood, by believing it to be

the one atonement for sin, and that there is a redemption and forgiveness of sins in his blood alone. You honor his life of obedience, by believing, that thereby the holy law is perfectly fulfilled, and an everlasting righteousness wrought out; which being imputed to you a sinner, you stand completely justified in the sight of God. And where the faith of Christ is thus in the heart, it works by the love of Christ, and love to Christ; and that soul is disposed to cleave to Christ, to enjoy communion with Christ; and in life and love to be devoted to the glory of Christ. Such is the nature of the faith of God's elect.

Now stop, dear reader, and examine. Have you received this precious faith? If you have, though it be but as a gain of mustard seed, ever so small, and ever so weak, yet, you, even you, are beloved of God the Father—you are the called of his beloved Son, you are a saint in Christ; you, even you, vile as you may be in your own eyes, condemned as you may be in your own sight, yet you are the very quickened soul, the very sensible sinner, the very living believer, who is here addressed by Paul, and exhorted, **PUT YOU ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

Lamb of God, we fall before thee,
Humbly trusting in thy cross:
That alone be all our glory;
All things else are dung and dross. Thee we own a perfect
Saviour,
Only source of all that's good.

Ev'ry grace, and every favor
Comes to us thro' Jesus' blood.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT is implied in putting on Christ

A Believer in Christ exhorted to put on Christ! Why Paul positively asserts, "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Gal. 3:27. As all believers are baptized into Christ by one Spirit and have all put on Christ, how is it then, that they are here exhorted again to put on Christ? True, that very moment a sinner believes on Christ, he puts on Christ as his atonement, righteousness and salvation: He is united to, and is one with Christ: His sins are pardoned in the blood of Christ; his soul is justified in the righteousness of Christ, and he hath everlasting life in Christ. This, this is the most precious truth. This is the glory of faith. This is the joy and rejoicing of the believing soul.

But then, before such a soul arrives to the full enjoyment of Christ in eternal glory, he has many enemies to encounter—many trials and troubles to conflict with—a body of sin and death to be delivered from—many lusts to be mortified—many corruptions to be subdued—a legion of sins to strive against—holiness to be perfected—graces to be exercised—duties to be performed—in one

word, he has to glorify Christ in the world, by his life and walk. How is all this to be done? only by Christ strengthening him. Therefore he is constantly to put on Christ—to attain a greater knowledge of Christ—more rich and sweet experience of his grace and love—to be more strongly rooted in his love, and confirmed in his salvation—to have his heart, his hopes, his affections more with Christ—and his soul more swallowed up in the ocean of God's everlasting love in Christ, that he may be more conformed to the image of Christ; and that thus, as a good soldier of Christ, he may manfully fight under his banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil, unto his life's end. "That you may do this, cheerfully and comfortably, you are exhorted to put on Christ, which clearly holds forth to us,

1. The believer's interest in Christ, and the free and constant use which he is called upon to make of Christ. O consider, Christ is given to us, to be enjoyed by us. He gave himself for us, that we might receive, possess, and put him on, for all the blessed purposes of his life and death, his love, grace and salvation. He is the bread of life. We are to feed upon him daily. He is the water of life, which our souls are to drink of constantly. He is our righteousness. We are to put him on continually. So that we not only have precious Christ, but we are also to use him, and enjoy his preciousness. He is not only a well of salvation, but we must draw water out of it with joy, and drink of it to the refreshing of our souls. It was not

enough that the brazen serpent was set up, but it was to be looked unto, that those who were stung might be cured. It is not enough that we have faith by which to live, but we must live by the faith we have upon the Son of God, so as to derive continual supply of grace, comfort, and strength from him, as the branch does sap from the root, the members influence from the head, and the pipe waters from the fountain.

Faith is given to us, for this very purpose, to claim Christ, to use him, to put him on, to cleave to him, to glory of and in him. Hence the Holy Spirit, in order to stir up and quicken our drowsy souls, calls upon us, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem." Isaiah 52:1. O soul, who is thy strength but Christ? What are thy beautiful garments, but the rich robe of his all-perfect and ever glorious righteousness? O awake then in this glorious gospel-day: This blessed time of rejoicing, cast off all sloth and drowsiness: Lay aside thy sorrow and mourning: Put on thy Christ, and rejoice and be glad in him. Put him on as your Lord to reign in and rule over you: As your Jesus to save you from all your enemies: As your Christ anointed of God, to bless you with grace, and to crown you with glory. Thus put on the Lord Jesus Christ For,

2. Putting on Christ implies the renewed acts, and fresh applications of the believing soul to Christ, in the exercise of faith on him, hope towards him, delight in him, calling

upon him, hearing the gospel of his grace preached, reading the Scriptures which testify of him, feeding upon his blessed body, and drinking his precious blood, at his table, etc. In the use of all these means, we should aim to put on Christ afresh, as the glory of our hearts, and the joy of our souls. So that Christians are not only partakers of faith in Christ, but the exercise of their minds is described, by their continued acts of believing in Christ, hearing of Christ, coming to him, leaning on him, cleaving to him, abiding in him, living upon him, and putting him on from day to day. These participles of the present tense, describe the actings of believers' souls. So that quickened souls cannot look back, and be satisfied with thinking they had faith once. No, no, their souls cannot be contented, without putting on and enjoying Christ now. O this is the glory of faith. Therefore, let us consider,

3. That to put on Christ, may more particularly imply that we should daily, yea constantly clothe our mind, memory and conscience with Christ, with the truth, as it is in him, which holds forth to us what he hath done for us, is to us, and is now doing for us at the right hand of God. O believer, this is most precious work, to put on Christ, for the comfort of your mind, the refreshing of your memory, and for the peace and joy of your conscience. This should be your daily constant exercise, under a full conviction that without this inward enjoyment of Christ, you can neither be happy in your soul, comfortable in your walk,

nor holy in your life. But if Christ dwells constantly in your mind, memory and conscience, all will be peaceful and happy within, all will be holiness unto him without. Let us deeply consider these points. O Spirit of all truth, holiness and comfort, do thou bless our meditations, to the glory of Christ, and to the joy of our souls.

Happy souls, who put on Christ
By pure and living faith,
Finding him their King and Priest,
Their God, and guide to death.
God's own foe may plague his sons: Sin may distress, but
can't subdue.
Christ who conquer'd *for* us once,
Will *in* us conquer too.

CHAPTER 3

Of putting on Christ in our minds

People say, My mind to me a kingdom is. Poor souls! What do they mean? Verily, to have their own wills to reign, and the desires of their flesh and their minds gratified. Ah, but it is a sad kingdom, where Christ doth not reign in the mind. Yea, it is a kingdom of darkness, where the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air rules. O believer, bless your covenant God afresh, that he hath called you out of this darkness into his

marvelous light; and hath translated you into the kingdom of his dear Son! And why hath he done this? Verily, that Christ should reign in your mind, that you should mind the things of Christ, and that you should enjoy all the blessings and comforts of his kingdom. Therefore, put on Christ your King, as the glory and comfort of your mind.

The vanity of the mind is our fault and our shame, and one chief cause of our misery. We too much mind earthly, carnal and sensual things. Hence Christ our chiefest glory is too much banished from, and kept out of our minds. A light, trifling, vain conversation, too much prevails among professors. This plainly discovers the vanity of the mind. When we can discern the hour of the day by the sundial, we know that the sun shines. When Christ the sun of righteousness shines in the mind, the tongue will discover it: the life will manifest it.

If we are living, loving Christians, we shall be very jealous over the workings of our minds, and be deeply concerned to keep them in a sweet, holy, humble, heavenly frame. This can only be done by putting on our beloved Christ in our minds. For, says Isaiah, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon thee." Isaiah 26:3.

Our dear Lord says, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matt. 6:21. Is not Christ our richest treasure? Should he not be ever in our minds, and our

minds ever on him? It is said of a Spanish ambassador, that when he saw the so-much cried up treasury of St. Mark in Venice, that he fell to groping in the chests and trunks. On being asked the reason, said he was feeling whether they had any bottoms. But in this, said he, my king's treasure in the mines of Mexico and Peru far exceeds yours; for they have no bottom; yours have. O Christian, the riches of your Christ are boundless and bottomless. You have in Christ UNSEARCHABLE RICHES: Bags which wax not old; an exhaustible treasure which faileth not.

O then, imitate the miser. Let your mind dwell on your store. Let your store be ever uppermost in your mind. Is the miser's mind ever upon, and ever going out after his treasure? So let yours on Christ. Does he value himself on his store? So do you upon Christ. Is he always poring over his dear wealth? So do you upon your precious Christ. Does the miser love to inspect, and count over his beloved gold? O let your mind be ever inspecting your beloved Christ, in his wonderful person, as God and man; his amazing love, in laying down his life for you, his enemy, and his glorious salvation of you, an ungodly sinner. Be constantly counting over all the great and precious promises which you have in him—the graces, blessings, and comforts which you have from him, and the certain glory which you soon shall enjoy with him. Is the miser careful to keep, and fearful of losing, any part of his possession? So let it be between Christ and your

mind. Put him on. Hold him fast. Cleave to him. Be careful ever to enjoy him. Be ever fearful of losing any blessing or comfort he has promised to bestow. Thus put on Christ; thus clothe your mind with him as your treasure; let all your hopes center in him, and all your affections fix upon him. Now, even now, this very moment, the next and the next, yea, till moments are all fled, and time itself is swallowed up in eternity, be putting on Christ, receiving out of his inexhaustible fullness, grace upon grace, blessing upon blessing, comfort upon comfort. So put on Christ your treasure, as to count all things but dross and dung compared to him.

Again, Put on Christ as the glory of your mind. O what thirst is there in our minds, after that phantom, the honors of this world! It was foretold to Agrippina, the mother of that cruel tyrant, Nero, that her son should be emperor, and afterwards kill her. Such was her thirst for her son's honor, that she replied, Let but my son be emperor, then let him kill me, and spare not. O imitate her in the thirst after the glory of thy mind. Well mayest thou say, Let my Christ be emperor. Let him but reign in my soul, and slay my thirst after all the honor but what cometh from him. For, "Unto you who believe, Christ is precious, or rather an honor." 1 Pet. 2:7. Christ is precious and honorable in himself. Faith makes him peculiarly so to the mind. And it is the peculiar work of a believing mind, to be putting on Christ, and to exercise itself upon Christ, as its greatest honor, and chiefest glory. And he saith, "Them who honor me, (by the faith

of their hearts) I will honor," (by my special presence, filling the temple of their souls with my glory.

Consider, you have nothing but Christ to make you honorable in God's sight. As a sinner you are in the utmost disgrace in the court of heaven. You are a rebel against God. You dare not come into the presence of the King of kings. You have no proper clothing to appear in before him. You have nothing of your own but filthy rags, which cannot hide your nakedness. So that you have nothing but fear and shame in yourself. O but when you clothe your mind with Christ, who is your honor, what boldness doth this inspire you with before God! For, he hath dignified our nature, by taking it upon himself. Christ in our flesh hath taken off the attainder of our rebellion. He hath, in our flesh, wrought out a glorious righteousness for us to appear in before God. Yea, he hath made us kings and priests unto God. He now stands pleading our cause before the throne of God. He pours upon us the graces of the Spirit of God. He brings us into the honorable relation of children of God; He makes us heirs of God; yea, co-heirs with himself of God. He not only brings us into a state of adoption, as children of God, but also pours upon us the Spirit of adoption, whereby we call God, Abba, Father. O what honor can be compared to this! Yet such honor have all Christ's saints. Therefore, as all your honor cometh by Christ, put him on in your mind as your greatest glory. Ever reflect on your new birth, and heavenly pedigree in Christ. Ever clothe your mind with

what honor now comes to you by Christ, and what glory awaits you with him in the heavenly mansions. So you will look down with a holy contempt upon all objects beneath your Beloved, to make you honorable.

Bless the Lord my soul, and raise
A glad and grateful song
To my dear Redeemer's praise;
For I to him belong.
He, my goodness, strength and God,
In whom I live, and move, and am,
Paid my ransom with his blood,
My portion is the Lamb.

Again; As to pleasure. Where, O Christian, can your mind fix for solid, lasting pleasure, but in the enjoyment of your Saviour? Fabulists relate, that Pleasure went to bathe herself: Having stripped off her clothes, and laid them by the water, Sorrow came, put them on and departed. Hence, say they, the pleasures of this world are only sorrows in pleasure's garb. You have found it so. It will ever be so. But if Christ be put on, as the chief delight of the mind, we shall find pleasure arrayed in the garments of joy. "For in Christ's presence there is fullness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalm 16:11. O put on Christ as the delight of your mind, and you shall be abundantly satisfied with him: He will make you drink of the river of his pleasure.

Aristotle mentions a parcel of ground in Sicily, that sends forth such a strong smell of fragrant flowers that no hounds can hunt thereabout, their scent is so confounded by the sweet fragrance. Thus it will be, when Christ is put on the mind, as our chiefest pleasure, we shall find such sweet fragrance flowing from him, as will confound our scent, and prevent our hunting after the vain pleasures of sense, and the carnal joys of a wicked world.

For says the living, loving spouse to Jesus her beloved bridegroom, "Thy name is an ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee." Song 1:3. O there is such precious fragrance in the name of Christ, the anointed of God, to be our Jesus, our husband, redeemer, justifier and sanctifier, as perfumes the mind with joy, excites a holy love, and kills every unholy desire after all other pleasures, but what are to be found in him. Chaste virgins to Christ prefer the sense of the love of Christ to all other gratifications.

O Christian, can you cast in your lot with the spiritually dead, to partake of their carnal diversions? Can you hunt after them? Can your mind find delight and pleasure in them? If so, be assured you are not a chaste virgin to Christ. You go a whoring after other lovers than Christ. You have, in a certain sense, put off Christ from your mind, as your only and chief object for joy and pleasure. Thy Lord finds no pleasure in your ways. Your mind finds no pleasure in him. Is it any marvel then, if instead of

sweet pleasure in the Lord, you find dejecting doubts, and distressing fears racking your mind? For you are fallen under that severe and cutting reproof from the Lord, "My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns which can hold no water." Jer 2:13. O bewail your foolishness of folly, your basest ingratitude. Cry unto the Holy Spirit, to take of the things of Christ, and to show them unto you afresh, so as to enamor your heart, and captivate your affections, so that with David you may say, "Return again unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Psalm 116:7. Put on again the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only and chief delight of thy mind, and thou shalt drink of the river of his pleasures, which will make glad thy soul.

How great the Christian's portion is!
What heaps of joy, what worlds of bliss,
The Lord for them prepares!
Their boundless treasures who can know?
For all above, and all below, And God, and Christ is theirs.

CHAPTER 4

Of putting on Christ in our memory

When Alexander had conquered Darius king of Persia, among the spoils he found a rich cabinet of the choicest

jewels. After some thought, what use to convert it to, Alexander concluded, that as the works of Homer were his greatest delight, he would lay them up in that rich cabinet. O thou Christ-conquered soul, is not Christ thy chiefest joy? Are not his works thy greatest delight? O then, put on Christ; lay up his glorious work of salvation in the rich cabinet of thy soul, thy memory. Let thy memory be the ark to contain thy Saviour. There, like the virgin mother, lay up, keep and ponder upon thy dear Lord and his precious sayings.

Many complain of bad memories. They cannot remember many things. They cannot retain things long. Here then is the one thing needful. Here is but one short, gospel work for your memory. "Remember, that Jesus Christ was raised up from the dead." 2 Tim. 2:8. Exercise your memory upon this. Clothe your memory with this. For this finishing stroke includes the whole of thy Lord's blessed and joyful works, from his birth in the ignoble stable, until his ascension to his kingdom in glory. O clothe your memory constantly with the joy of this, that the eternal Son of the eternal Father became an infant of days, lived to be a man of years, died as an accursed malefactor bearing our sins, the guilt of our sins, the curse of our sins, all the wrath due to our sins, and all the penalties which our sins deserved, in his own blessed and innocent body on the tree.

That he, the true scapegoat, carried all our sins away into the land of forgetfulness. Hence thus saith your God and Father, "Your sins, and your iniquities, I will remember no more." Jer. 31:34. "Though your sins and your iniquities be sought for, they shall not be found." Jer. 1:20. You cannot, but at times remember your sins. It is fit you should, to humble you, and to cause you to remember the love of Jesus, who bore them, suffered for them, and has taken them all away. O then remember, that Jesus was raised again from the dead. He left all your sins buried in his sepulcher. He rose again without them. You are forever justified from them. God doth not remember them against you. He imputed them to your surety. There is no condemnation against you for them.

Here is blessed joyful work for your memory. No matter what you forget, so you do but remember this. Therefore put on Christ in your memory. Ever remember him, as ever remembering you. Clothe your memory with his love, who loved you from eternity, became your surety in time, was clothed with your sins and your curses as with a garment; that he might clothe you with the precious robe of his everlasting righteousness, and adorn your soul with the graces of his Holy Spirit. He bids us, "remember Lot's wife," Luke 17:32, that we may never look back from him, but ever remember to look to him, that so we may be turned into pillars of love; and that the smoke of the incense of praise might ever ascend to him. When you find sadness and distress of soul, what is the reason

of it? The prophet tells you, "There shall be desolation, because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength." Isaiah 17:9,10. O see the evil, and apply the remedy.

When Cyrus took the king of Armenia, his son Tigranes, and their wives and children prisoners; upon their humble submission, beyond their hopes, he gave them all their liberty and lives. On their return home, they all highly commended Cyrus: some for his person, some for his puissance, and some for his clemency. Tigranes asked his wife, What thinkest thou of Cyrus? Is he not a noble person, of majestic presence and greatest clemency? Truly said she, I know not what manner of person he is: I did not look at him. No! said he, where were thine eyes? Upon whom didst thou look? Why, said she, I fixed mine eyes wholly on you—my mind was wholly intent on you, for I heard what I shall never forget from you, when you voluntarily offered to lay down your life for my ransom.

O Christian, upon whom should your eyes, your mind, your memory, be ever wholly fixed, but on your matchless husband, the lovely, ever loving Jesus, who so freely laid down his life for your ransom? Imitate the church, who says of her beloved, "We will be glad and rejoice in thee." Why? because "We will remember thy love." Song 1:4. It is the memory of Christ's love, which causes gladness of heart, and joy of soul. O how wonderful is the love of Christ to us! O remember his love, in betrothing us to himself in eternity—in espousing

us to himself in time, that he might dwell in our hearts by faith, that being rooted and grounded in love, we may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. Eph. 3:17, etc. All the fullness of God dwells in Christ. If Christ dwells in you by faith, you have all the fullness of God's love dwelling in you. Remember this, and be joyful.

O, to grace, what mighty debtors,
Daily, hourly, Lord, are we!
Let that grace, like strongest fetters,
Bind our wand'ring hearts to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord let's feel them:
Prone to leave thee, God of love,
Here's our hearts—O take and seal them:
Seal them from thy courts above.

CHAPTER 5

Of putting on Christ in our conscience

I have read of one who undertook to make a fat sheep lean, and yet allow it daily a sufficient quantity of good and wholesome provender, soft and easy lodging, and security from all danger, that nothing should hurt it. This he effected, by putting the sheep into an iron grate, and

placing a ravenous wolf hard by in another, who was always howling, scenting and scratching to come at the poor sheep. This sad sound and worse sight, so terrified the sheep, that he had little joy to sleep, and less to eat, so that his flesh soon abated, and he became very lean.

Just so, Satan, that wolf of prey, serves many of Christ's sheep. He accuses, teases, and terrifies their poor consciences. When they cry for peace, he says to the poor sinner, as Jehu said to the messengers of Joram, "What hast thou to do with peace? Turn thee behind me." Though Christ is set before the sinner, as his food, his clothing, and for the peace of his conscience, yet what with listening to Satan's lies, and the prevailings of unbelief, the soul neglects to feed on Christ, and put him on for peace of conscience: Hence he grows very lean, and lives very uncomfortable. O what dishonor is this to the glorious work of Christ! O what distress of conscience do many of his beloved sheep thus labor under!

But why should it be thus with any of us? Hath not our good shepherd laid down his life for his sheep? Hath not the work of Christ, in his life and death for them, perfectly satisfied the justice of God? Hath not his resurrection from the dead fully declared it? Is not the court of heaven fully satisfied with what Christ hath done and suffered for us? Are these facts, or are they fables? If we really believe them, what can we want more to satisfy our conscience, and to give us peace? The death and

resurrection of Christ is sufficient to bring peace to the conscience of the greatest sinner out of hell. Yea, this fact will most assuredly possess that sinner with peace, who puts on this blessed truth in his conscience. And by maintaining this truth in the conscience, peace with God will be preserved. Therefore, at all times, when you see your sins, and are considering what a miserable sinner you are, put on afresh the life and death of the Son of God in your conscience, as the greatest, most precious, and most comfortable truth in the world.

There is no other way for you to obtain peace of conscience. O what a blessed joyful thing it is to have the answer of a good conscience towards God! Peter tells us plainly how we possess this: Is it because we can answer all the demands of God's holy law, and say, we have perfectly fulfilled it? No, this is the answer of an ignorant conscience. Is it because we can answer to God, that we are not sinners, that we have no sin? No, this is the answer of a lying conscience. But the answer of a good conscience towards God, cometh by this, and no other way than this, "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God." 1 Pet. 3:21,22. There, says Paul, "He NOW appears in the presence of God FOR US." Heb. 9:24.

Now, my fellow sinner, who, like me, was as a sheep going astray, but art now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, act up to your high-calling, and

exalted privilege. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ in your conscience. Be daily, be constantly, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. What is this mystery of faith? It is most marvelous and astonishing. While angels are prying into it, sinners, vile, miserable, yea, the very chief of sinners, are enjoying the comfort of it. What are you and I but sinners? An accusing devil, and black unbelief, can make of us nothing more than sinners. Yet this precious mystery of faith is to be held in our consciences, that though we are in ourselves, sin-accused, law-condemned, hopeless, helpless, ruined, lost and desperate sinners; yet in Christ Jesus we are justified from all sin, freed from all condemnation, restored to the love, favor and image of God, are at peace with God, saved with an everlasting salvation, and have a hope full of immortality. Well may we cry out in wonder and amazement, What hath the grace of God wrought! What hath the love of Christ effected!

It is by holding this mystery of faith in our consciences, that we become true worshipers of God, and have no more conscience of sin to our condemnation. Heb. 10:2. Our hearts are sprinkled from an evil or guilty conscience. Ver. 2. Yea, we are perfect as pertaining to the conscience. Heb. 9:9. And our consciences are purged from dead works to serve the living God! Ver. 14. O precious work of putting on the Lord Jesus Christ in our conscience! O joyful exercise, of holding fast the mystery of faith in a pure conscience! But ever remember, you

have a most subtle and powerful enemy, who will by every wile, stratagem and injection, aim to oppose you in this blessed work; be on your guard against him.

Satan is styled our adversary, 1 Pet. 5:8. He was an avowed enemy to the work of Christ for us; and he is a powerful adversary to that peace, comfort, joy and holiness, which arises from the work of Christ in us. He continually walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Though he be not suffered to destroy our souls, yet he will rage and roar, and strive by all means to disturb our peace, and destroy our comfort in Christ; therefore he will tempt and accuse, if by any means he can fix the sense of sin, guilt and condemnation upon our consciences. Now there is but one way to stand our ground, maintain our peace, and overcome Satan's devices. This is it: "Resist him steadfastly in the faith." 1 Pet. 5:9.

What is this, but to put on Christ in our conscience—to wrap ourselves in what Christ hath done for us, and is to us? In the faith of this, resist every attack of Satan. Does he accuse of sin? Hold up your shield of faith, your redemption in the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of all your sins—the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin before God. It was blood shed by a holy Saviour, and accepted by a righteous Judge. This will quench all the fiery darts of your enemy. This calms the terrors of conscience and brings peace into it. There is no

condemnation from God against thee, for thou art in Christ Jesus.

Does Satan accuse you, that you are a sinner before God, and cursed by the law of God? the charge is just; own it. Yet this need not destroy your peace of conscience. Put on Christ, your breastplate of righteousness. "For he was made sin for us, that we sinners might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. 5:21. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Gal. 3:13. "By him, all who believe are justified, fully discharged, and perfectly acquitted from ALL things." Acts 13:19. Though sin hath reigned unto death, yet grace reigns through the righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord, unto eternal life. Rom. 5:21. Now, why is Christ, his grace, and righteousness, thus held forth to us in scripture? Surely it is, that we should so put him on in our consciences as to answer every demand of law and justice, silence every accusation of Satan, possess peace and joy in God, knowing assuredly, that we have eternal life in Christ. O this living and abiding in the Lord, is precious! It is living like ourselves, children of God, members of Christ, and heirs of glory.

For Satan can stand against all that we are in ourselves, bring accusations against all our works and doings, and thereby distress our consciences. But we are complete in Christ. His perfect work is our shield of faith, wherewith we quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and

obtain perfect victory over him. With this shield we are to defend our conscience against every attack; so shall we, in the experience of faith, joyfully sing, "Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of Christ; for our accuser is cast down, and overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of the testimony of our dear Saviour's atonement, righteousness and salvation." Rev. 12:10,11.

But Satan not only accuses for sin, but tempts to sin; and oftentimes injects the most horrible thoughts into the mind. This need not distress our conscience. Why should it? As for temptations, they are not sins. Ten thousand can bring no guilt upon the conscience. As to horrid injections, Satan shall answer for them, not we. Our Lord was in all points tempted like unto us, yet without sin. Tempted sinners should remember this, and look to their once tempted Saviour. To him they should flee for grace to stand, and power to conquer. So shall we ever prove, that we are more than conquerors through Christ who hath loved us.

O see to it then, that you do not give place to the enemy, no not for one moment. Having such an armor for our conscience, as precious Christ, his rich grace, his perfect righteousness, his glorious salvation, let us clothe our conscience with this, for victory and for peace. Our very doubts and fears are enemies to the glory of our Lord, and the peace of our consciences. But seeing we have

such a glorious Saviour, such a finished salvation, and are complete in him, why should these so prevail in us? When they do, it is because you do not give Christ the pre-eminence in your conscience. You do not enough attend to, believe and live upon this ever glorious, ever sin-subduing and soul-sanctifying truth, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 2:1,2. "And his blood cleanseth from all sin." 1 John 1:7, both from before God, and in our own consciences. God's precious word is the best remedy against all doubts and fears. The only antidote against unbelief is the truth as it is in Jesus. In believing this we shall be filled with all peace and joy of conscience, and abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Rom. 15:13. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. Chap. 16:20.

Cease thy fears then, weak believer,
Jesus Christ is still the same,
Yesterday, today, forever,
Saviour is his blessed name.
Lowliness of heart and meekness,
To the bleeding Lamb belong,
Trust in him, and by thy weakness,
Thou shalt prove that Christ is strong.

Chapter 6

WHY we should put on Christ

Why put on Christ? Verily because without the enjoyment of him we cannot draw one comfortable breath, live one happy moment, nor take one delightful step in the road of life, towards certain death, and an eternal world. A real Christian, of all men is the most miserable, if his mind, memory and conscience, do not possess his beloved Christ, his precious love, covenant grace, and finished salvation. Therefore consider,

First. *This text, PUT YE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, is a command to you, O believers.* Though it be not under the form of a legal command, "Do this and live: Fulfill this and be saved:" yet it is a command under the law of faith, by which all divine comfort is enjoyed, and all human boasting is excluded. It is a command of covenant grace and love, to you, believer, who art alive to God through Jesus Christ, and art already accepted, pardoned, justified, and saved in Christ. Inspired Paul gives this command from the Holy Spirit, the glorifier of Jesus, and the comforter of his members; that by constantly obeying it, we may be comfortable in our own souls. Therefore think not lightly of it. But ever consider yourself bound, by all the sacred ties of covenant grace and love, to obey this gospel command. As Aaron's rod swallowed up all the rods of Pharaoh's sorcerers, so doth this command swallow up and include in it, all other commands. If love

be the fulfilling of the whole law, putting on Christ is fulfilling the whole of the law, and of the gospel. The servants of Naaman said to him, "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather when he says to thee, Wash and be clean?" So when the apostle says to thee, O believer, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be happy in thy mind, joyful in thy memory, and peaceful in thy conscience, wilt thou not do it? O ever consider this as the one thing needful. The work is thine. The power is thy Lord's. For,

Secondly, *Your daily experience preaches the necessity of putting on Christ.* This command is suited to your fallen state, as you are a naked, indigent, hopeless, helpless, unholy sinner in yourself, as well as to your being a regenerate soul, a new creature, a believer in Christ. Some have got such vast high notions of believers, as though they were not still sinners. Hence they cannot endure the phrase, believing sinners—saved sinners. But let experience determine this matter. I will venture to assert, that if you do not see yourself a sinner, from day to day, you are not a believer of the truth. Nay, if you do not see (as considered in yourself) that you are a naked, indigent, hopeless, helpless, unholy sinner too, you do not see yourself in the light of truth; you do not know yourself even as you are known. Sin is not exceeding sinful—self is not humbled and loathed—Christ is not most precious. Yet, though sin dwells in us, it has not dominion over us. It cannot; for we are not under the

law, which only pronounces the curse of sin; but under the grace of Christ, which actually subdues the power of sin. Yet,

Though a believer in Christ, you are still a naked sinner in yourself. You have no righteousness of your own which you have wrought out, which can screen you from divine justice, answer all the demands of God's law, and entitle you to his favor. Your own righteousness is no better than filthy rags, too ragged to hide your shame; too filthy to endure the piercing eye of God's purity; but must be burnt up by the fire of his justice. True, in Christ you have an infinitely perfect, and everlastingly glorious righteousness, to appear in before God. But it is as true, you can only enjoy the comfort of this, by putting on Christ in your mind, memory and conscience. And it is equally true, unless you see, notwithstanding all your works, duties and performances, the graces of the Spirit in you, and the fruits of righteousness produced by you, that you are still that naked sinner, who must be found in Christ, and clothed with his righteousness, or you cannot be justified before God, but must be eternally condemned for sin. Unless you see this you will see no need to put on Christ. But the Holy Spirit convinces us of sin, gives us to see that we are stripped of all by sin, and keeps up the sight of our nakedness, on purpose that we should put on Christ, that in the experience of faith we may say with those of old, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the

garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Isa. 61:10. O then, bless the Spirit, for eyes to see your nakedness. Under every sight of it put on Christ, that you may glory in him, who is THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Again, Though a believer in Christ, yet you are indigent in yourself. There is not a more poor, needy, indigent thing in creation, than thou art, and seest thyself in the light of truth to be. You behold a total want in yourself of everything that is good. You see what an infinite debt you owe to law and justice, and not worth one farthing to discharge it. No, nor never will be. Nay, every day, running farther and farther in debt. You cannot but think a reckoning day must come. Under these views, fear and distress must haunt you.

The dread of being eternally shut up in the prison of hell, must come upon you. What can you do under such circumstances? What, but put on your blessed surety Christ? What, but answer every demand of law and justice, with his dying words, IT IS FINISHED, the debt is discharged, the creditor is satisfied? Record this afresh in your mind and memory, that conscience may take the comfort of it.

Away then with your dejected heart and gloomy countenance. Live up to your joyful privilege. Will you grovel in poverty, live in wretchedness, pine with need,

grapple with misery, and be burdened with distress? What! when you know the grace of our Lord Jesus, who for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich? O then, under the deepest sense of indigence, put on Christ, in whom you have unsearchable riches. This is the humble teaching of faith, to know that in ourselves, we have nothing. This is the joyful experience of faith, to know that in Christ we possess all things. O rest not without the comfort of this. O love, and bless, and glory in your divine surety. And in the felt sense of thy own weakness, be daily leaning upon thy Beloved. So will you be safely, sweetly, and comfortably, coming up out of the wilderness of this world, singing,

How blest am I, whose heart is set,
To find the way to Zion's gate!
Christ is my strength, and thro' the road
I'll lean upon my helper, God.

Once more. *You are in yourself a hopeless sinner, though a believer in Christ;* therefore you should put on Christ, who is our hope, that your soul may be strong, lively, and joyful in hope. What! been in Christ so many years, and in self a hopeless sinner still? What! nothing in self to cast the anchor of hope upon? No. What! cast the anchor within the ship to hold it? O man, ridiculous! True, the *grace* of hope is in the heart. But the *object* of hope is Christ. The anchor of hope is cast into the wide ocean of God's love to sinners in Christ. O the working of that

nasty legal spirit, which is ever seeking the pride of self, wanting to entertain a good opinion of ourselves and to have somewhat within ourselves, wherein to trust, and whereof to glory! This spirit opposes the glory of Christ, and keeps us from putting on Christ, as our only hope, and chiefest glory.

Hence it is, our hearts so often sink, and our comforts forsake us. For hope in self will soon give up the ghost. It may live just while the sunshine of a warm frame lasts. But let the north wind blow, let but a cloud arise in the mind, a fresh sense of sin spring up in the memory, or a little storm of corruption rage in the conscience, and hope in self, will wither like Jonah's gourd. Hence we see so many professors so fluctuating and wavering. Now they are all light, joy and peace. Anon they are all darkness, distress and terror. Do not you experience somewhat of this at times? Why is it? because you inclined to somewhat in yourself as your hope, and decline from Christ, who is emphatically styled "our hope." 1 Tim. 1:1. Therefore he is to be constantly put on, and wholly lived upon as the only hope of us hopeless sinners.

Brethren, consider your calling. It is with faithful Abraham, "against hope to believe in hope." For all in nature and self is hopeless. Yea, there is naught but despair in us. We have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves. Sin, death and despair are wrote upon all we are, and upon all

we do. We find one indwelling sin, lust and corruption after another rise in us. Just as with David; first a bear attacks him, then a lion, next a giant; a king after a giant, and then the Philistines war against him. Why all this? to exercise his arms, and call forth his hope in his Lord. Why are such enemies as brutish lusts, raging corruptions, gigantic unbelief, powerful carnal reasonings, etc. left in our nature? All are to put us out of conceit with ourselves, to drive us out of all hope in ourselves, and to cause us to put on Christ our hope. Thus, "Experience worketh hope." Rom. 5:4. We are always to be fighting and conflicting with hopeless self. Therefore we have continual need to put on Christ, that we may be lively and comfortable in the sweet experience of CHRIST IN US THE HOPE OF GLORY.

Farther; though a believer in Christ, yet you are a helpless sinner in yourself. What! say some, a converted person, a believer, a child of God, and yet a helpless sinner? Yes. Infancy itself is not more helpless in natural things, than a believer is in spirituals. Where then is the difference between a believer and an unbeliever? Essentially in this. The latter is insensible of his own weakness, therefore proudly trusts in, and vainly glories of his own strength. He is under this malediction, "Cursed is the man who maketh flesh his arm," Jer. 17:5, "his heart departeth from the Lord." But the believer knows and feels, that he is not of himself sufficient to think or do anything as of himself. He sees constant need of being

strengthened by the Spirit's might in the inner man. For blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord; whose hope the Lord is. But do we not grow stronger in ourselves, and find more help and power from ourselves, to withstand our enemies, to fight our good fight, to run our race, and to perfect holiness? No, verily. If we think so, it is plain that we are not growing up into Christ, but growing down into self. If the Lord has given me to know anything of this matter, after being upwards of twenty years in precious Christ, I freely declare I find myself just that weak, helpless sinner I was when I first came to Jesus with, Lord help me—Lord save, or I perish. Yea, I find myself more helpless now than I thought myself then. I see more constant need to put on Christ, and to say, truly in the Lord (not in myself) have I strength.

I am very sure, I never more firmly believed than now, this truth of my Lord, "Without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. Never, never did I see less cause to trust in my own strength: never so much need to hear and obey my Lord when he says, "Let him who glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exercises lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth." Jer. 9:24. O to understand and know this exercise of the lovingkindness of my Lord, to me a weak, helpless, vile sinner, is the glory and rejoicing of my soul. Well, but here is the poor helpless sinner, surrounded with enemies on every side—without and within—called to fight the Lord's battles against the world, the flesh, and the devil—called to perform duties—

to exercise graces—to bear his Lord's cross, and to follow him in the regeneration, can he do all this without help? No, verily: and blessed be our covenant God, we are not left to our helpless selves. He hath put precious faith in our hearts. As Jesus is its author, so he is its object. As faith comes from him, it leads the soul out of nature and self to him who created all things in nature. Therefore this is the exercise of the believing soul, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Here is the experience of faith. "My help cometh from the LORD, who hath made heaven and earth." Psalm 121:1,2. O my soul, what LORD made heaven and earth? Verily, that Jehovah-Jesus, whom thou art called upon to put on. St. John expressly tells us so: "ALL THINGS were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." John 1:3.

Eternal praise to thee, O blessed Spirit, for this thy witness, to our Immanuel's eternal power and godhead. Eternal thanks to thee, O loving Father, that thou hast laid help upon one who is mighty, for those who have no might in themselves; and hast exalted one chosen out of the people, to be the help of those sinners who find no help in themselves. Eternal blessings be on thee, O Son of God, for, though we have destroyed ourselves, yet thou hast lovingly assured us, "in ME is thine help found." Hos. 13:9. O gracious Spirit, enable me to make it my daily work, constant duty, chiefest privilege, and grand concern, to clothe my mind, memory, and conscience,

with this joyful truth, that Christ is my help and my shield, against the face of every enemy.

In the faith of this, well may I bid defiance to all my foes, smile at their number, defy their power, shout victory in every attack, and in triumph cry out, "More than conqueror through Christ who hath loved me." When Alexander came against a people who dwelt on the rocks, they smiled at his approach, and bid defiance to his power, boldly saying, unless your soldiers can fly in the air, we fear you not; we are safe; our defense is impregnable. So, O my soul, dwelling in Christ the rock of thy salvation, thou art safe and secure from every foe. "For thou dwellest on high, and thy defense shall be the munitions of rocks." Isa. 33:16.

What though you find and feel, from hour to hour, that you have (as is expressed in one of the collects of the church of England) "no power of yourself to help yourself," in forcing any enemy, in subduing one sin, in mortifying one lust, in exercising one grace, or in performing one duty; and though you see this is to be your constant work and way in which you are to go on, yet be not discouraged. Holy Paul was just as helpless in himself as you are, yet he said, "I can do all things." So may you, by the very same means as he did, "through Christ who strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13. To begin well, is to end well. Begin with Christ; put him on as thy strength, so shalt thou end every work to his glory. O this

is sweet and pleasant walking, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God; will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." Psalm 71:16.

Seventhly, Put on Christ; for though a justified, sanctified believer in him, yet, in yourself, you are an unholy sinner; a lump of sin and impurity. Your nature is earthly, your desires sensual, and your tempers devilish. In your flesh dwelleth no good thing. Out of it proceeds all manner of evil. Therefore you have no holiness, but what you have in Christ, and derive from him. And this is the decree of heaven, "Without holiness, personal holiness of heart, lip and life, no man shall see the Lord." Heb. 12:14. But this is the declaration of covenant grace, "Christ of God is made unto us (sinners) sanctification." 1 Cor. 1:30. See the glory of gospel grace. You are not left to labor to get holiness to sanctify you, but you are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and are to put him on, for the subduing your lusts, mortifying your corruption, softening and sweetening your tempers: so will you comfortably go on, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

For while vital union to Christ, and holy communion with him, is sensibly maintained in the mind, memory and conscience, we shall keep chaste to him: we shall not commit fornication against him: we shall possess our vessel in sanctification to the honor of him: and though sin be not dead in us, yet we shall be dead to sin. It will lose all its mighty charms. We shall detest the very

appearance of evil. And all the pleasures of sense will be under our feet. Clothed with Christ the new man, we shall put off the old man with his deeds: and our one chief aim will be, to please Christ in all things. O study this point deeply. To be holy is to be like God. The more Christ is put on, the more holiness in life and walk; the more holiness, the more enjoyment of God, the more assurance of being a child of God, and of eternally enjoying the presence of God. You will ever find this true in experience, when Christ is put on within, as the peace, comfort and joy of the heart, all that is contrary to holiness will be put off without in the life.

Eighthly. *Because we are called by our Lord to deny ourselves, and to follow him.* But if Christ be not put on within, we shall have little heart, and little power, to follow him in the life. Never was the gospel more adorned than it is in our day, if fine clothing and gay dress may be said to adorn it. Scarcely ever had Christ more followers than now, if professors may be said to follow him, who can gratify themselves in the vain pleasures, and fashionable diversion of a sinful age. Alas! Such things tend to deprave the mind, manifest its vanity, drive Christ from the memory, and are quite opposite to all self-denied obedience. Besides, how sadly is money lavished away in these things, while many of Christ's saints are in want of common necessaries! O how can such answer for it to their Lord!

A beggar asked alms of an honorable and pious lady. She gave him six-pence, saying, that is more than ever God gave me. O said the beggar, say not so, Madam, for you have great wealth, and God gave you all. No, replied she, I speak the truth. God hath not given, but lent me what I have, that I might bestow it on such as you. I am only the Lord's steward. O that this was more considered.

One can just as soon conceive that a devil can be happy in the flame of hell, as that a child of God can seek for and find happiness at the play-house, the card-table, or any carnal diversions, while the love of Christ is warm upon his mind, the sorrows and sufferings of Christ are fresh in his memory, the sprinkling of the blood of Christ is felt upon his conscience, and the peace of God is ruling in his soul. No. Those who can give up themselves to such vain things, have never known the power and comfort of Christ's love enjoyed within. If they have, they must in a sense, have put off Christ, lost the feeling conviction of sin, of abstaining from the very appearance of evil, and of the absolute necessity of following him. For if their minds were exercised in putting on Christ, the vanity and foppery of dress would fall off like leaves in autumn, their thirst after foolish pleasures would be quenched by Christ the living water, and holy fellowship with Christ would cause them to put off their former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.

O then put on Christ, and you will deny yourself, and follow your Lord. You will be proof against the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Instead of your mind going out after lying vanities and deceitful pleasures, it will be swallowed up in God. Your memory will be taken up with the things which are freely given us of God. Your conscience will be peaceful in the love of your covenant God in Christ. Your life will be devoted to the glory of God your Father; and your study will be, not to live to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For if Christ be in your mind and memory, your conscience will be tender; it will fear and abhor the very appearance of evil, and excite you to all self-denied obedience. Here appears the essential difference between professing and possessing Christ. The former will leave a man alive to self, and dead to Christ. The latter will make him dead to self, and alive to Christ.

Hence it is, in opposition to living after the flesh, and making provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof, Paul does not teach like a heathen philosopher, or like our dry modern, dry moral preachers, to put on such a virtue, and to put off such a vice. No. But, says he, there is but this one way to put on all virtues, and to put off all vices. PUT YE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Christ is the one thing needful. Let it be your one business, to put him on more and more.

When Pompeii, by all his arguments and persuasions, could not keep his soldiers from going out of the camp, he laid himself down in the narrow passage which led out of it, saying, "Now go out if you will; but if you do, you shall trample upon your general." This overcame them. Not one would stir. We cannot go out of the camp of Christ into unlawful pleasures and sensual diversions, without, as it were, trampling under foot the Son of God. O think of this. The Rabbis used to tell their pupils, that sin made God's head ache. This we are sure of, sin pained the Son of God to the very soul. When you think of your sin, of the love, and sufferings of Christ for your sins, and put on Christ your Saviour, it will cause you most powerfully to hate sin, most cheerfully to deny yourself, and to follow Christ in the regeneration.

Ninthly, Why should we put on Christ? *Because it is the will of God our Father.* "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." 1 John 4:9. And thus it is manifest, that we are the obedient children of God, by believing, receiving, putting on and living upon the Son of God. For to the praise of the glory of God's grace, he hath made us accepted in his beloved Son. Eph. 1:6. O believer, consider this. Let your heart rejoice in this. Let your mind dwell on this. Ever record this in your memory, that your conscience may be ever peaceful, happy and comfortable in the view of this, that though a sinner in yourself, yet you are ever entirely

acceptable to God, and perfectly accepted by him, in Christ your elder brother, God's beloved Son, and this to the glory of God's rich, free, and abundant grace. It pleased the Father that in Christ all fullness should dwell. To what end? Even this joyful one, that out of his fullness we should receive grace upon grace, till grace is swallowed up in glory.

O then, attend constantly to the voice of your heavenly Father. He calls in most tender love and affection to us, "Behold mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." Isa. 42:1. And again, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, HEAR YE HIM." Matt. 17:5. Now, what is implied in this call to behold Christ, and to hear him? It is as though our heavenly Father said thus to us, My dear children, whom I love with an everlasting love, I would have you to be both holy and happy. For this end I gave my beloved Son to you. He is the one and only object, I would have you to fix your constant attention upon. Let the eye of your mind be turned away from all other objects to him. Behold him as THE LORD YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Let the ear of your soul ever attend his pleasing voice. Hear him, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save. So behold, so hear him, as to clothe your minds, memories and consciences, with the perfect atonement, which he has made for your sins—the perfect obedience which he hath yielded to my law, and the infinitely glorious righteousness which he hath thereby wrought out for your justification—and with the glorious

work which he hath finished for your salvation. Put on my beloved Son as your priest, who died to atone for your sins, and ever lives to pray for your persons—as your mediator to bless you—your righteousness to justify you—your holiness to sanctify you—your redemption to glorify you—and till you get to glory, as your king to reign in you, and to conquer for you. For I have given him a covenant for you. In and from him you shall receive all the blessings of my everlasting love. In him you shall enjoy my peace which passeth all understanding; this shall keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of me, and in sweet communion and fellowship with me, and with my beloved Son Jesus Christ. O let us then obey our loving Father, by beholding, hearing, and putting on his beloved Son, as his most free and inestimably precious gift to us poor sinners. For our Lord saith, "the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me." John 16:27.

Again, tenthly, *We should put on Christ, for this is his blessed will concerning us.* He gave himself for us, that he might be all in all to us; our food to nourish us, and our drink to refresh us. He says, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." He lived to be our righteousness to clothe us. He died to save us. He lives again to comfort us. Therefore he saith, "abide in me."—"Continue in my love." John 15:4,9. What meaneth he? Verily, that we should ever clothe our minds with his precious love, ever remember it, and ever exercise our

conscience upon the wonders of his free, unmerited, unchangeable love to us. Thus let us ever abide in him, cleave to him, exercise our faith upon him, so as to derive fresh power, peace and joy from him, that we may be constantly bringing forth fruit to the honor and glory of him.

For Christ is continually calling to us, "Hear and your souls shall live." Isa. 55:3. Live by his word of grace and truth: live upon his blood and righteousness, in the comfort of a pardoned, justified, sanctified state: live in a peaceful frame of mind: live in the joyful memory of his love and salvation: live, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience by his blood: and live upon all the fullness of grace which is in him, receiving out of his fullness grace upon grace, till grace on earth is swallowed up in glory in heaven.

But are our minds at any time distressed with a sense of our sins, lusts and corruptions? Are our memories burdened, and our consciences heavy laden with these? What are we to do in this case? Put on Christ again. Clothe our minds, memories and consciences afresh with the exceeding great and precious promises, which so freely flow from his gracious lips. Hear his loving call, "Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy laden." Rejoice at his precious promise, "I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28. Sweet Saviour! what! come unto thee, with all the burden of our fallen nature, lusts and corruptions?

Lord! how are thy thoughts above our thoughts! O when we are sore burdened with the weight of our sins, lusts and corruptions, we are ready to flee from thee, and think thou wilt have nothing to do with us, but wilt spurn us from thy presence, if we presume to come unto thee. But, Lord, wilt thou indeed refresh us, and give rest unto us? O Lord, it is high treason against thee to suspect this! Lord increase our faith. Lord pardon our unbelief. Lord help us to believe thee, and to cleave unto thee. For this thy blessed word ever holds good, "According to your faith be it unto you." Matt. 9:29.

Eleventhly, It is the will of God the Holy Ghost that we should put on Christ. He at first convinced our minds of sin, made us sensible, that we have no righteousness in ourselves, and caused our consciences to tremble under a sense of guilt. Why did he do this? Because he is the glorifier of Christ, and the comforter of all his beloved members. Therefore he would drive us out of our naked selves, to the fullness of Christ. He showed us the corrupt judgment we naturally have of ourselves, and of sin, and of righteousness, that we might take shelter in nothing but the wounds of Jesus for our sins, clothe our minds with his righteousness, and that we should ever remember, that all our salvation is in Christ, that so we might find in and from him, peace of conscience, joy of soul, and holiness of heart and life.

The Spirit still constantly bears witness to Christ, to the truth as it is in him, and takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to us. Why? Truly that we might receive, apply and appropriate them, so as to enjoy them in our mind, memory and conscience, for all the blessed purposes of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us a new birth into Christ, breathes into us desires after Christ, and keeps those desires alive in our souls. All the exhortations in the word, to quicken us in looking to Christ, believing in Christ, and putting on Christ, are given by his inspiration. Yea, and let us ever remember that it is through his gracious aid, that we do put on Christ. For the Spirit lovingly helps our infirmities. He enables us, from day to day, to look unto Christ for salvation, to lean on Christ for strength, to put on Christ as our righteousness, to cleave unto Christ to enjoy fellowship with him, and to long for the coming of Christ, that we may be forever glorified with him.

Thus the holy, blessed and glorious Trinity agree in one mind, to bear record of the MAN Christ Jesus to us, of our salvation in him, and that therefore we should put him on continually, as the glory of our minds, the joy of our memories, and for the peace and comfort of our consciences. For it hath pleased the Three One God, that all the promises, which are given to us, should be in Christ Jesus. Therefore,

Twelfthly, We should put on Christ. O believer, this is a most sweet word, enough to refresh your soul, and to make your heart leap for joy. Says Peter, "Unto us are given exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature." 2 Pet. 1:4. Yes, says one, but when I look at the precious promises of God, and look at myself, I see in me, so much vileness, so much unworthiness of any one promise, so much unfitness for it, and so much unsuitableness to the nature of it, that I stagger at the promise through unbelief, and never can think it belongs to me. Very true. There is not one promise, in all the book of God, that you are worthy of, or that belongs to you, considered in yourself, as out of Christ, a fallen sinner from God. It would be the highest presumption in you, in me, or in any sinner, yea, or the most righteous man upon earth to think so.

But this is the glory of us poor sinners, "All the promises of God are in Christ Jesus, and in him they are yea and amen, (sure and certain to be fulfilled to us) unto the glory of God." 2 Cor. 1:20. Therefore if you do not put on Christ, you can enjoy no comfort from the sweet declarations and precious promises of God. Take for instance this blessed word: "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers." 1 Pet. 3:12. Now you see yourself to be a poor sinner: How then can you apply this to yourself, or take any comfort from it? You cannot, unless you put on

Christ. For you are not righteous in yourself, but only in him; being clothed with his righteousness.

Again, It is promised, "God will keep the feet of his saints," 1 Sam 2:9, that "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," Psalm 116:15, and that "Christ shall come to be glorified in his saints." 2 Thess. 1:10. Now you and I see ourselves sinners. We are ready to think, how can such precious declarations belong to us? Who is a saint? One who has received mercy. That is the proper idea of a saint. How is the mercy of God bestowed on sinners? Only IN Christ. For God loved us, chose us, justifies us, and sanctifies us in Christ. We are saints in him. So that all the precious promises being in him, are ours.

O then, putting on Christ, we may joyfully take up Paul's words, "All things are ours;" all the promises of this life, as well as all those of that which is to come. "All are ours." Why? because we are Christ's. 1 Cor. 3:23. We are blessed, and shall be blessed, with all spiritual, and all temporal blessings in Christ, by God the Father, according as he hath chosen us in him. Eph. 1:3. How sweet then to range through the sacred pages, and to take up one precious promise after another, and to claim them all as my own in Christ to the glory of God. There is no presumption in this; nothing of the pride of the self-righteous Pharisee, who says, this and the other promise belongs to me, because I am righteous, and holy, and

good in myself. No. But seeing the promises all in Christ, and putting on Christ that we may enjoy the comforts of the promises, we rejoice in Christ, though we have no confidence in the flesh. Rejoice, because there is not one word of God, respecting our being in this life, and our eternal state in that life which is to come, but what flows from the loving heart of a covenant God in Christ; and all shall be fulfilled, and made good to us, to the glory of the truth of the ever-blessed Promiser. O then, let us put on Christ, and no more stagger at any of the promises through unbelief. For our hope of eternal life is secure. For, God who cannot lie, promised it in and to Christ, before the world began. Tit. 1:1.

Lastly, we should put on Christ, *because he is appointed to be our judge*. What! is that very Jesus, who so loved us, as to hang and expire in blood and anguish upon the accursed tree, a sacrifice for our sins, to judge our souls? O joyful truth! What can bring such relief to our mind, such joy to our memory, such peace to our conscience, as this? O believer! how much below your privilege, do you live and act, if you are in continual dread and terror of soul, about the judgment day? True, it is most awful, it is most tremendous, to think of appearing before the Judge of quick and dead, to hear the solemn, the irreversible sentence of "Come ye blessed," or "Go ye cursed."

But ever remember who it is who will pronounce this solemn doom. It is your loving Saviour, and gracious justifier. It is that dear Christ, who bare our sins in his own body on the tree; who hath put away our sins, by the sacrifice of himself; who hath forever made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, perfectly and forever to justify us; so that this is the irreversible doom of justice itself, "There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Nor will there be any condemnation brought against them, nor sentenced upon them, by their Judge in that solemn day. For they will be found in him. He well knows he redeemed them by his own blood; he justified them in his own righteousness; he sanctified them by his own Spirit; and therefore, he will call them, "Come ye blessed, inherit my glory."

O then put on Christ, and put off your fears. Yea, put on Christ, and be filled with boldness, peace and joy, on the thoughts of the judgment-day. For lo, it is your loving and beloved bridegroom, who comes openly to espouse you to himself, in the presence of God, angels, and men; and this in consequence of your present secret espousal to him, by the Spirit, through faith. For have you chose Christ? do you look to him, and come to him, as your only Saviour? Do you flee to him as your only refuge? Do you cry to him to save you from your sins now, as well as from the wrath to come? Who gave you this heart and this faith? Verily, he who loved you, and died for you. And

will he, *can* he reject your soul, and sentence you, the object of his love, the purchase of his blood, the subject of his grace, the member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, to eternal wrath and destruction? Impossible.

For "Behold, he shall come (O hear and rejoice!) to be glorified and to be admired." How? "To be glorified IN his saints; and to be admired IN all them who believe, in that day." 2 Thess. 1:10. O how will our Saviour's glory shine forth, with the most resplendent luster, in his loving, calling, justifying, sanctifying, and preserving all his dear people unto eternal life! O how will he be admired in his saints, and by his saints, in his glorious person, in his precious offices, in his everlasting love to them, and in his everlasting salvation of them! Angels, archangels, and all the heavenly host, will then be struck with the greatest admiration, at beholding the full display of these things, which now they desire to look into. And O ye saints, what admiration, wonder and joy, will fill your enraptured souls, on seeing the glory which will then shine IN you from your glorified head! "For when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear." Where? At his left hand, with terror, shame and confusion? O, no. But we shall appear WITH HIM IN GLORY. Col. 3:4. And "so shall we be ever with the Lord." Well might Paul add, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thess. 4:18. Soul, from what do you seek comfort? Beware of your feelings. They oft arise from a heated imagination, and lead to the worst kind of enthusiasm. I

have known those, who have been engaged in pursuits, not at all becoming their profession, and yet have said they have felt and enjoyed much of the presence and love of God in them. Verily, if you find comfort in any other way, than from the words and doctrines which are revealed, and which testify of Christ, in the end you will find yourself awfully deceived, and woefully disappointed.

Here then, see the proper work of faith, and the peculiar office of the Holy Ghost, and how they unite and concur in comforting our souls. The Holy Ghost is a witness, as well as a comforter. He testifies of Jesus in the word: and he comforts the soul only by the belief of the word. Hence it is I have dwelt so largely on this head, WHY we should put on the Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed in the word. For, is Christ to be our judge hereafter? then put him on now. "By one offering he hath perfected forever them who are sanctified." Heb. 10.14. That is, as expressed most fully in the communion service of the Church of England, "Christ made upon the cross, (by the one oblation of himself once offered), a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for our sins." Nothing needs, nor nothing can be added to it. The work by which we are forever perfected, is completely finished, and forever done. He has perfectly fulfilled the law for us; perfectly atoned justice in our stead; perfectly expiated our sins; obtained full pardon for them, and complete redemption from the curse of them; and has perfectly justified us from all condemnation for them. Thus we are

hereby perfected forever. We! Who? Why all who are sanctified; that is, 1. Separated and set apart by the choice of God the Father, from eternity, to partake of the perfect salvation of his beloved Son. 2. Sanctified, or separated by the Holy Spirit in time, from all our corrupt notions, self-righteous dependences, unholy ways, and sinful practices, to partake of and enjoy the perfect love, and perfect salvation of the Son of God, by a holy faith. How simple is faith in its nature? It is neither more nor less than the belief of the truth. How glorious is faith in its effects? For it brings the fullness of the perfection of Christ's glorious work and salvation into the soul. Thus the very end of God's election is answered upon us: for, "God hath from the beginning chosen us to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." 2 Thess. 2:13. Thus are we brought into a state of peace with God. And while we put on Christ as our dear friend, beloved bridegroom, and precious Saviour, we shall rejoice to think of his appearing as our Judge, to sentence us to the kingdom prepared for us, and which he has made us meet to enjoy.

If close to the Lord thou wouldst cleave,
Depend on his promise alone.
His righteousness wouldst thou receive?
Then learn to renounce all thy own.
The faith of a Christian indeed,
Is more than mere notion or whim:
United to Jesus our head,

We draw life and virtue from him.
This God is the God we adore,
Our faithful unchangeable friend;
Whose love is as large as his pow'r,
And neither knows measure nor end.
'Tis Jesus the first and the last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
We'll praise him for all that is past,
And trust him for all that's to come.

CHAPTER 7

WHEN we should put on Christ

When? God's time is best. "Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." Procrastination is the thief of time; and here it is the murderer of comfort. Behold, NOW you are called upon to put on Christ. It was the pride and boast of Seneca, that wherever he went, he bore Demetrius with him. Surely it should be our boast and our glory, wherever we go to carry Christ with us, in our minds, memories and consciences, in the image of his love, the record of his mercy, the miracle of his grace in converting us to himself, the miseries he endured, the sorrows he sustained for our salvation, the perfection of his atonement and righteousness, the victory of his cross, the

triumphs of his resurrection, the prevalence of his intercession, and the comfort and joy of his coming again to receive us to himself, that where he is, there we shall eternally be. O if these things dwell constantly in us, we shall not only be alive, but lively in the work of faith, the labor of love, and the patience of hope; while we shall be dead to sin, and to all the pomps and vanities of a sinful world; and sweetly sing,

Where'er I turn, where'er I rove,
I meet the object of my love.

I have read of a godly man who was once very dissolute. When converted, his former companions sought to bring him back to his former wicked courses. But he told them, I am deeply engaged in meditating on a little book, which contains only three leaves; so that at present I have no leisure for other business. Sometime after, being asked again, If he had done with his book, he said, "No; for though it contains but three leaves, yet there is so much comprised in them, that I have devoted myself to read therein all the days of my life. The first leaf is red. Here I meditate on the passions of my Lord and Saviour, his shedding his precious blood, as an atonement for my sins, and a ransom for my soul, without which I must have been a damned sinner in hell to all eternity. The second leaf is white. This cheers my spirit with the comfortable consideration of the unspeakable joys of heaven obtained for me by Christ, and of being forever

with him. The third leaf is black. Here I think of the horrible state of the damned, and the perpetual torments they are suffering in hell. O this excites thankfulness to my Saviour, for his wonderful love and rich grace, in snatching me as a brand out of the fire, and saving me from eternal destructions."

Here is a good man, a good book, and a good example for you and me. "Let us go and do likewise." Constantly meditate upon Christ; upon the wrath he has saved us from, and the glory he has saved us to.

But I shall mention some peculiar times and seasons, in which we must put on Christ.

First, When we approach the throne of grace. This, if we are alive to God, we shall do constantly. Praying always, is the Christian's motto.

One can just as well conceive of a living man, entirely destitute of all fears, passions, hopes, affections, desires, etc., yea of breath also, as of a regenerate soul living without constant prayer to God. Prayer is the spiritual breathing of a quickened soul. At a throne of grace he pours out his hopes, fears, affections and desires, etc. But if his mind, memory and conscience, be not clothed with Christ as his high priest, mediator and advocate, before the throne of God above, he will find but little comfort in drawing nigh to a throne of grace below. Nay,

he will not draw nigh to God at all. Though he may find words, yet they will be without heart and hope. Prayer will be only a task to satisfy conscience. It will be begun without confidence, performed without spirit, and ended without joy.

But if our minds are clothed with this comfortable truth, that we have a great high priest, who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, then we shall see our heavenly Father seated on a throne of grace, with smiles of approbation and acceptance; and we shall come boldly unto it, that we may obtain mercy as miserable sinners, and find grace to supply our wants as needy creatures. For it is only "through Jesus we have acceptance, by one Spirit, unto the Father." Eph. 2:18. It is only "in Christ that we have boldness, and access with confidence by the faith of him," Chap. 3:12. O believer, consider well these your inestimable privileges. Here is *access*, which is a liberty to approach to God as a Father. *Boldness*, which is a freedom of speech in delivering our whole heart and mind to God in prayer. *Confidence*, which is a well-grounded persuasion that our persons and performances shall find acceptance to God through Christ.

When a cause is to be tried its court, parties concerned are very busy. So is Satan in times of prayer. He acts as plaintiff and accuser. When he sees us on our knees, he will inject accusations into our minds, such as, What! does such a vile sinner as you expect be heard by a holy God? Look back on your past conduct—nay, think of what

you did a little while ago—yea, look at yourself now—see what vain and wandering thoughts are in you—how cold, how dead, how distracted are all your prayers—can you think God will hear and accept you, and such prayers as yours? Satan is a mighty adversary to prayer. But put on Christ, and silence Satan. It is the joy of faith, that your audience and acceptance with God, does not depend on what you are in yourself. But glory in this blessed truth, that to the praise of the glory of God's grace, your person is accepted in his beloved Son; and through his much incense your prayers shall be received and answered. O put on this blessed truth, and cast away every discouragement, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated, thro' the veil; that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith" that our God will hear and accept us. Joseph strictly commanded his brethren, if they would see his face with comfort, to bring his brother Benjamin with them. So if we expect any comfort from God's throne of grace, we must put on our dear Brother Christ, and carry him in the arms of our faith, and plead his worth and worthiness alone for access and acceptance.

Secondly, Put on Christ in your mind, memory and conscience, *when you go to his table*. If you live and walk as a believer in him, you cannot neglect this blessed institution of your dear Lord. If you do, depend on it, all

is not right between our Saviour and your heart. By your neglect of this you rob your precious soul of a blessed privilege, of much comfort, and your dear Lord of his glory. But does a sight and sense of your unworthiness deter you? You cannot be humbled too low on account of this. If you were to live to the age of Methuselah, you would have no worth, nor worthiness in yourself, for which Christ should receive you. Worthy is the Lamb. He is worthy of you, though you are not worthy of him. Put on Christ; clothe your mind with his precious love; your memory with his gracious promises; and your conscience with his glorious salvation. Go to his table, to commemorate his dying love; be constantly showing forth his death as your only hope till he comes. Be feeding on his flesh, and drinking his blood, till he receives you to himself. For, O precious words! "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:54. The more you put on Christ and feed on Christ, the more abundantly will you experience that you have eternal life in him; and the more joyful assurance will you have of being raised up by him. For he adds, "He who eateth me, even he shall live by me." Chap. 6:57. Live a holy, happy, spiritual life: out of self; above nature; even a life of fellowship with Christ and his father, enjoying his peace and love, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Thirdly, *In seasons of heaviness put on Christ.* Peter describes believers as very joyful souls. "Wherein ye

greatly rejoice." Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. We are called upon to "rejoice in the Lord always; and again to rejoice." Phil. 4:4. But wherein do saints greatly rejoice? Peter tells us, in their being the elect of God; sanctified by the Spirit; sprinkled by the blood of Christ; begotten to a lively hope; and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. O believer! these are never failing springs of consolation and joy. But he adds, "tho' now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." 1 Pet. 1:6: Is that season come? There is a need be for it. Are you in heaviness through a sense of indwelling sin; pressed down under its weight, groaning under its burden, and distressed with manifold temptations? Why is all this suffered? He tells us, for the trial of our faith.

Now take heed to yourself. The Lord is trying your faith. Beware that you do not cast away your shield of faith, and see that you do not tempt Christ, by saying he neither loves you, nor cares for you; but has cast you off forever. Nay, but rather put on Christ, call to mind his free grace in undertaking thy cause, his great love in dying for thy sins, his rich mercy in calling thee to himself, and his faithfulness and truth which are pledged for thy salvation. Remember that he is anointed to give the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Isa. 61:3. Put him on; cleave to him; for the times of refreshing shall come from his presence. Christ is not only a friend, while the warm sunshine of prosperity of soul

lasts; but he is a friend who loveth at all times, and a brother born for adversity. Prov. 17:17.

Whate'er we found him at the best,
He's at the worst the same.

Jesus is not a summer bird, who forsakes his people in the winter of adversity. No; but he ever lives to save them to the very uttermost. Consider this heaviness is not to destroy your confidence, but only to try your faith. See what the blessed end of it shall be. Your faith is much more precious than gold. Therefore not a grain shall be lost in the fire. But it shall be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. O let your mind, memory and conscience be clothed with this precious truth. For his anger endureth but for a moment. In his favor is life; heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. Psal.30:5.

Fourthly, *In a season of darkness and desertion of soul*, put on Christ, who is the light of life. It is a sure mark of a regenerate soul, and a loving heart, that it is troubled, and mourns for its darkness, when the Lord hides his face. And it is the proper work of a renewed mind, to apply to Christ; a sanctified memory to retain Christ; and of a good conscience not to rest satisfied without Christ. "Verily thou art a God who hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour," says Isaiah 49:15. But why doth God hide his face, and leave any of his dear children to mourn in

darkness? That is your proper work to look to; and inquire for yourself. Let the cause be what it may, the end is not to drive you from your God, nor to make you let go your confidence in Christ. No; but quite the contrary; to make you the more to trust in him, and to stay your soul upon him. For mind, he is the God of Israel, and the Saviour, though he hides his face. Examine your soul. Search your ways. See if some cursed lust, or Christ dishonoring pride, some pleasure in sin, or vain confidence in yourself and your own righteousness, has not caused your Lord to hide away his face. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. Be afflicted, and mourn and weep. Pour out your heart to the Lord. Confess your sin unto him, and be ashamed of your folly before him. Tell him, I cannot live without thy light; cast out and banished from thy sight.

But O beware, while you loathe yourself^d, and bemoan your folly, that you do not dishonor your Lord, by suspecting his everlasting love, questioning his precious truths, or neglecting his glorious salvation. Now, even now, put on thy precious Christ afresh; mind and remember his sweet declaration to his Father, concerning all his people: "THOU HAST LOVED THEM, AS THOU HAST LOVED ME," John 17:23, even with the very same everlasting unchangeable love. Therefore, though in darkness and sorrow, be assured, God's love is ever the same, like himself, without variableness. Though he hides his face, still he rests in his love. For, God did not love

you, choose you and call you, for any good he saw in you, but he loved you, and viewed you in Christ. And in Christ he is ever the same covenant God, and reconciled Father, whether he consoles with his love, or chastises with his rod; whether he lifts up the light of his countenance upon you, or hides away his face from you. Your sin and folly may cause him to change his conduct towards you; but he can never, never change his covenant, name and nature: For GOD IS LOVE.

Therefore, as God loves you in Christ, views you in Christ, hath made you accepted in Christ, pardoned, justified and sanctified you in Christ, be ever looking unto Christ, clothing your mind with Christ, remembering his lovingkindness, and pleading in your conscience the atonement he hath made for your sins, the righteousness he hath wrought out for your justification, the salvation he hath finished for your soul. Though at present you see not the light of comfort; though you feel not the sunshine of joy, yet glory in the word of truth and grace as it is in Jesus. This ever abides with you, though comfort forsakes you. Hark, listen and attend, to that sweet voice of love which salutes your ears, and gives counsel to your soul. Are you mourning in darkness, and complaining in sadness, saying, "My Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me?" Not so. Tho' your covenant God and Father hides his face, yet he hath not forgotten you. For behold, he lovingly inquires after you, and sweetly gives advice to you.

Here is first, A blessed inquiry. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord; that obeyeth the voice of his servant; that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?" Isa. 50:10. Your character is here described, as plainly as though your very name was written in full length. You walk in darkness, under the hidings of God's face. You have no light; the light of God's countenance shining upon your soul. You are without spiritual joy and comfort of heart. This is your distress. Still you fear the Lord. Hence your jealous concern about the cause of your darkness; your sorrow for it; and your prayers and desires to be delivered from it. You obey Christ, who, as man, is the servant of God, by believing in him as the only Saviour, and expecting salvation from him ALONE.

Now, what is the counsel the Lord gives you? What is his will concerning you? He has put you into the school of darkness, to learn to hear his voice, and obey his will, to exercise your graces upon him, and thereby to honor him. Peter, when on the Mount, was for building tabernacles for residence: but he must come down. So the Lord brings you down from the mount of joy, into the dark valley, that you should make him your only trust and stay, and your dwelling-place. Therefore,

Secondly, *Hear and obey his sweet counsel.* "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God." Here is trusting opposed to seeing: the name of the

Lord, to every other object. "The name of the Lord, is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Prov. 18:10. I have often been ready to wonder at this text. What has the man who is righteous in himself to fear? Why should he want a tower of defense? Why should he run into it for safety? It can only be understood of the poor convinced humble sinner, who sees his own righteousness as filthy rags, quits all confidence in it, flies from it, and runs to take shelter in the name of the Lord; even that blessed name of JESUS, which is above every other name. To him his pliant knee bows, his humbled heart submits, and his enlightened soul glories alone in that name, whereby Jesus is called "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Jer. 23:6. Such is a righteous person in the sight of God.

Now you are called to TRUST in this name of the Lord. This is opposed to all other means and props whatsoever; to all comfortable sense of God's love; to all sight of grace, any righteousness, any hope, you have in yourself. It is to put on Christ afresh as the Lord your righteousness, strength and salvation; to clothe your mind, memory and conscience, with Christ your alone confidence, in the darkest seasons, and most distressing moments, even when all other trust and confidence forsake you. Now honor your God by the claim of your faith. With the church of old cry out in confidence, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be

afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." Isa. 12:2.

Again, the Lord now counsels you, "Let him stay himself upon his God." Perhaps you are now writing most bitter things against yourself. You are thinking, all is dark and disconsolate within. I cannot see that I have a single grace to stay my soul upon; it is not only dark, but tempestuous also; one wave of corruption rolls over another; the storms of justice are over my head; I fear vengeance is pursuing me; black clouds of unbelief hang heavy on me, while the enemy suggests within me, where is now thy God? Alas! what will become of me? What must I, what shall I do, in this hour, and power of darkness?

Behold, here is a cordial held forth to revive your drooping mind, and to support your sinking spirits. Hear and obey the voice of your WONDERFUL COUNSELOR; "Let him stay himself upon his God." Mind this. His God still, though he walks in darkness, and hath no light. O clothe your mind with this; God in Christ is your God. Stay your soul upon this. Are you weak, weary, faint, and ready to fall? Then lean upon your God for support and strength. Clothe your mind, memory and conscience with Christ, with God manifested in Christ reconciled to you—your covenant God and Father in Christ—with all the exceeding great and precious promises which he hath given you in Christ; and now take up the sweet claim of

faith, and cry in the importunate prayer of your dear Lord, "MY God, MY God, why hast thou forsaken me."

O the happy privilege! O the precious counsel! O the cheering comfort! O the supporting strength contained in these words of the prophet Isaiah, to a child of God walking in darkness! Spirit of all grace, help us to obey this precious word: to put on Christ who is the light of life, to trust in him, and to stay our souls upon him, whenever we walk in darkness, and see no light.

When that great emperor Julius Caesar was at any time sad and dejected in his mind, he used to say to himself, "Think that thou art Caesar." This thought revived his spirits. O soul, in thy darkest seasons and heaviest frames, remember thou art a Christian; Jesus is thy Saviour; God is thy Father; the Holy Ghost is thy Comforter. Stay thy mind upon this. Plead and wait for the light and comfort of this. "The Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they who wait for him." Isa. 30:18.

Fifthly, *When in worldly trials, and bodily afflictions, put on Christ.* These are our dear Lord's precious legacies to all his beloved followers. Just before he left the world, he told us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." But this will be very hard to endure, if we have not Christ with us, in our trials and afflictions. But mind how tribulation is placed. It stands between peace and victory. Peace is in

the front; victory brings up the rear. Blessed be his love: thus our dear Lord begins, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation." Blessed be his power: thus he ends, "But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John 16:33. Just as though he had said, In the midst of your tribulations, let them be of what kind soever, clothe your mind and memory with those things which I have spoken unto you, that you may have peace of conscience. Remember the peace I have made for you, by my blood on the cross. I am your peace. In me you shall find peace. Let none of your tribulations distress your conscience. For none of them shall destroy your souls; for I have overcome the world, and all the evils of it. My conquests are your victories. Therefore be of good cheer. When we believe this; when we put on Christ, and his precious words, we find and feel consolation in the midst of tribulation; "for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4. But how does faith overcome the world, and all the tribulations we meet with in it? By bringing Christ, his victories and his strength, into the heart, and by presenting to the mind the prospect of heaven and glory. O then the world loses its hold of the heart, it sinks in the soul's esteem, and is brought under the feet. And as to its tribulations, upon a just estimate, the believer says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." O

precious Christ, how inexpressibly precious is thy presence to the soul, when in the furnace of affliction!

Pliny mentions certain trees that grow in the Red Sea, which, though beat upon by the waves, stand like an immovable rock. Yea, in a full sea, they are quite covered with water. And it appears by many proofs, that they are bettered by the roughness of the sea. So a Christian planted in the Red Sea of Christ's blood of faith, is proof against all the waves of temptations; is improved by afflictions; yea, the more he is beat upon, and though overwhelmed with the billows of distress and trouble, the better he thrives, and the more his soul flourishes in spiritual grace. For this is the loving design of our Lord in all our troubles and afflictions, to wean us from the world, and to endear himself to us. So that every affliction has its commission from him. It comes with the impress of his love upon it. Its contents runs thus: "Your Lord, seeing that through too much ease and prosperity in this world, you are prone to forget him; therefore he calls on you by this, to put him on more ardently, that you may enjoy him and his love more comfortably, in your mind, memory, and conscience." See to it then, that this blessed end be answered.

I have often found by experience, and confessed with joy, that a sick bed has proved like a hotbed to my soul. It has drawn up warm desires, and longing affections to Christ. And I have sweetly found the Sun of Righteousness arising upon me, reviving, cheering and

comforting my soul. It is only Christ put on in the mind, memory and conscience, that can support under trials, yield patience and comfort in afflictions, and sanctify all of them to the soul's profit. When afflictions are most heavy, Christ's presence makes the world and its troubles most light.

It is your wisdom to see the rod of chastisement in the hand of a loving Father. But God is only a Father to us in Christ: We are his children by faith in Christ, Gal. 3:26. Therefore, we can only see, know, and rejoice in him, and submit to him as our Father, by putting on Christ our Elder Brother. Take Jesus with you in all your sufferings, and you shall find that as sufferings abound in you, consolations from him shall also abound to you.

It is your glory to see that all your afflictions are chastenings from the Lord; that they are all in love; that in all, he deals with you as with a son in whom he delights, and whom he designs to profit; therefore, that he does not punish you with vindictive wrath; that he is not taking vengeance of you for your sins. But how can you see this, except you put on Christ, in whom God had received full satisfaction for all your sins; hath freely forgiven you all for Christ's sake; and hath fully justified you from all in him? So that, strictly speaking, God, your Father, is not so much punishing you *for* your sins, as *from* your sins. That is, in all his chastisements he intends your spiritual good, that you should be more and more a

partaker of Christ and his holiness; that sin may be more exceeding sinful; yourself more vile in your own eyes, and more humbled before him, and your Saviour more inestimably precious to your soul. So that all is a rod of love to whip you from the world, self and sin, into Christ, that you should put him on, and enjoy him who is your righteousness, life and salvation.

Then in and under all, so put on Christ in your mind, memory and conscience, that you may say with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Chap. 13:15. For I know him; I know that he is my Redeemer; that he ever liveth to pray for me, to support me, and to save me to the very uttermost. If Christ be with us in all, all will be well with us. Could Caesar say to the trembling mariner, in a violent storm, "Be not afraid, for thou carriest Caesar?" O well mayest thou say to thy soul, in every storm of affliction, be not afraid, for thou carriest Jesus the Saviour! He says, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters (of affliction) I will be with thee; and through the rivers (many and great troubles) they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire (fierce and scorching temptations and distresses) thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Now, why all this safety, in times of fiercest troubles and greatest dangers? Hear and rejoice. Thou art the claim of Jesus. He hath redeemed, and called thee. He challenges thee as his own. And that

thou mayest claim him he says, "For I am the Lord *thy* God, the Holy One of Israel, THY SAVIOUR." Isa. 43:2, 3, then put on Christ thy Saviour; clothe thy mind, memory and conscience in all thy troubles, with all that is contained in that precious, soul-comforting word, THY SAVIOUR.

Sixthly, I would just hint, that as we are to put on Christ in our heaviest and worst frames, we are also to put him on *in our best and most lively frames*; and this for one and the very same reason. because we are commanded to glory of him *only*, and to rejoice in him *always*. But we are prone to be elated with pride at our good frames, and dejected to distress at our bad ones. But if we find ourselves in a good frame, surely we think we have then put on Christ. This is much to be doubted: yea, it is greatly to be suspected, that we too often let go Christ, and cleave to our good frames, and fine feelings. What think you of Peter? Was not he in a fine frame and comfortable feeling, when he so boldly declared to his Lord, "Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended: I am ready to go with thee into prison, and to death"? Can we doubt but that he was clothed with self-confidence, instead of putting on Christ his strength, and crying to him, as he did in his sinking frame, "Lord save, or I perish?" But after Satan had sifted Peter, we hear him no more boasting of his zeal for, and love to his Lord. It was then, Lord, thou knowest whether I love thee, and how much I love thee.

He had now done with talking about his great love, and his perfect love to Christ, and was more taken up with the great and perfect love of Christ to him.

Paul was in danger of being exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations which were given to him. As Satan sifted Peter out of his vain confidence, so he buffeted Paul. This drove him to his right place at the feet of Christ, to clothe his mind with the right object, Christ, and to cause his heart to trust in, and depend alone upon the grace which is in Christ, and not to be exalted at what he had been favored with, and with what he found and felt in himself. Thus the church of old is charged by the Lord; "Thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown." Now, how came she by her beauty, and to be renowned for her beauty? "It was perfect, through the comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God." Ezek. 16:14, 15. What a monster of pride is man! HOW full of that cursed venom is human nature! We cannot receive any grace or blessing from the Lord, but corrupt nature is prone to be proud of it, to trust in it, and to glory of it. No one is exempt from this. I appeal to your hearts. I refer to your experience. When your heart has been enlarged in prayer; when your soul has been carried out in humblings, meltings, longings, aspirings, etc.; when you have heard the word with warm affections and heavenly joy; when you have communicated with a rapture of affections; when your tongue has with sweetness and

liberty talked of Christ to others; when your hand has been stretched forth to do any good work; now in all these have you not found pride very busy? Have not you been ready to stroke yourself with pleasure, and to reflect with delight, well, now the Lord loves me indeed; surely he loves me better, now I find myself so sweet, and feel myself so comfortable. If you have not found it so with you, I know one who has. But shame on us for this. God be merciful to us! But where is our precious Christ all this while? Not put on in our mind, memory, and conscience. No. But we have looked at ourselves till we have lost sight of him. We have been admiring our vile selves for our graces, instead of being in raptures with Christ, who is altogether lovely, in whom all fullness of grace dwells, and out of whose fullness we receive, grace for grace. We forget that we stand by faith, and so get to be high-minded; get into a high opinion of ourselves, what we are in ourselves, and what we can do for ourselves, and towards our own salvation. This is the spirit the Galatian church fell into. This is a spirit which much prevails in this day. Hence our full and final justification by Christ is opposed, and our justification at the last day is insisted on to be by our works, by what is found in us, or done by us.

O then put on Christ in opposition to all this. Ever remember, your standing and acceptance is alone in him; that God views you, loves you, delights in you, rejoices over you, and blesses you, with all spiritual blessings IN

CHRIST, according as he hath chosen you in him, before the foundation of the world. This is the faith you are to live and walk by. If you do not live and walk by the faith of this, you grieve the Spirit, the witness for Christ, and no marvel that you so soon loose your sweet, elevated, joyful frames. For, if we in any sense trust in them, and value ourselves upon them, they rival the Saviour, and counteract our faith. And when faith has lost sight of Christ its proper object, no marvel that our comfortable frame is gone, and our minds sink into dejection and distress. Would we keep our good frames? Let us look through them to Christ, in and from whom we receive them. While we feel ourselves happy, let us put on Christ in our mind and memory, who obtained peace for us by his blood, and believing in whom, we are filled with joy and peace through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Seventhly, *In the view of Death, put on Christ.* Well, Christian! All hail! I congratulate thee. Thou hast but one step more to take, before thou wilt be at home with thy Lord. Then thou shalt forever put on thy Jesus in glory, and immortality. For verily, there is but a step between thee and death. Soon, very soon thou must put thy foot into Jordan's cold stream, and must pass through the river death, to thy promised inheritance. What then? Dost thou shudder at the thought? Nay, but why should you? For,

"Faith builds a bridge across the gulph of death. Death's terror is, the mountain faith removes. 'Tis faith disarms destruction; and absolves, From every clamorous charge, the guiltless tomb."

Faith! Why faith? Faith of itself is but as an empty hand. How then can faith effect all this? O it brings its author and object Jesus into the heart. By putting on Christ; by clothing the mind, memory and conscience, with the victories of Christ; we become triumphant conquerors over death and the grave. Thus faith does all, thro' Jesus, who is all in all. Long before our Almighty Conqueror assumed our flesh, with dauntless resolution he says, "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Hosea 13:14. He hath fulfilled his word to the uttermost. "He hath abolished death." 2 Tim. 1:10. He has annulled, destroyed and repealed it. As to all his redeemed, it is not a penal evil. For Christ hath took away its sting, removed its curse, and changed it into the precious blessing of SLEEP. They only "sleep in Jesus." 1 Thess. 4:14. Then believe this. Put on Christ; and put off thy fears of death, and joyfully sing, "O death, where is thy sting?" It is taken out by Christ. "O grave, where is thy victory?" Thou art conquered by Christ. Thanks, thanks, eternal thanks be to God who giveth us the victory over death, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith receives the victory, puts it on and wears it.

But, if death is conquered, yet you dread dying; for you say, death has not lost its power to hurt you. Yes, but it has. For Jesus hath destroyed him who "had the power of death; that is the devil." So that death is not only conquered, but the power of death and the devil is destroyed. How did Christ effect this? Why, "the sting of death is sin." This he bore in his own body on the tree. This he washed away by his own body upon the cross. This he hath forever taken away, and justified us from by his resurrection from the dead. So that divine justice itself says, "Deliver the sinner, for I have found a ransom," Job 33:24. "The strength of sin is the law." The strength of every curse of the law, Christ hath fully sustained and suffered. The strength of every command of the law, Jesus perfectly obeyed and fulfilled. Thus death is disarmed both of his strength and sting. O then put on Christ's atonement for your sins, and Christ's obedience unto death, for your justification, in your mind, memory and conscience, so you will have living comforts in dying hours; your heart will rejoice in Jesus; and you will sing victory in death.

If Jesus be with you, you will say with David, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." And with Paul, you will take up this triumphant challenge, "Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?" Rom. 8:35. "Shall death?" No. For says he, "Death is yours." 1 Cor. 3:22. Your conquered enemy. It cannot hurt you. Your covenant friend in Christ, who is

commissioned by him to summon you from the world of vanity and woe, and from a body of sin and death, to the blissful regions of glory and immortality, to meet your Lord, and to be forever with him.

In the Marian persecution, a godly woman was brought before bloody Bonner, bishop of London, on account of her faith. The bishop threatened he would take her husband from her. Says she, "Christ is my husband." Says he, "I will take away thy child." She replied, "Christ is better to me than ten sons." Says he, "I will strip thee of all thy comforts." Well, but said she, "Christ is mine, and you cannot strip me of him. Take away what you will, you cannot take away my Christ from me." So death may threaten to take all from you; but if you put on Christ, you may boldly put death at defiance, as she did Satan's bishop. Having Christ in your mind, memory and conscience, you will take a smiling leave of the world, and (as good old Simeon, with Christ in his arms) say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Luke 2:29, 30.

Christ the pearl of great price

What a pearl of glory lies,
Hid in the gospel field!
What a jewel of great price,

Is in the word revealed!
Who can set its virtues forth,
How exquisite its glories are!
Its inestimable worth,
What mortal can declare?
When this goodly pearl I wear,
And put this jewel on,
I shall covet nothing here,
But tread these trifles down:
Then my heart will be above;
My joy and treasure will be there.
I shall walk in light and love,
And with my Lord appear.

CHAPTER 8

Of the blessed effects, and happy consequences of thus putting on Christ

When Alexander set out on his great exploit of conquering the world, before he left Macedonia, he divided amongst his captains and friends all he had. For which one of his friends reproved him, for being so profuse as to reserve nothing for himself. Alexander replied, "I have reserved much for myself; for I am full of hope, of being the monarch of the whole world, which, by the help of my captains and nobles, I expect to gain." Was he content to set out with nothing but the

possession of this hope? O Christian, what is this hope compared to yours? A hope full of immortality. Though with Alexander you part with all things, yet putting on Christ you possess all in him. O the infinite blessedness of this, "Christ in you the hope of glory!" Though you do not hope to be the monarch of the world, yet you have infinitely greater honor, in being an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ Jesus. So that when this world, and all things in it, shall be burnt up, you shall live and reign with Christ to all eternity. Most glorious effects of putting on Christ! Yea, but before we arrive to the heavenly mansions, we shall experience, even in this life, the blessed effects and happy consequences of putting on Christ. For,

First, We shall not only be alive to God, but lively in our own souls, and lively in the work and service of Christ. We shall not be sluggish, and move on heavily in the ways of God; but we shall walk with pleasure, yea, run with delight, the way of his commandments. For we shall find this blessed promise fulfilled, "We shall renew our strength: we shall mount up with wings as eagles: we shall run and not be weary: we shall walk and not faint." Isa. 40:11. Whatever we do, we shall do it heartily as unto the Lord. We shall ardently strive against sin, resolutely resist Satan, and sweetly go on perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.

Thus we shall bring much honor to the gospel: adorn its doctrines, manifest the glory of grace; and glorify the God of our salvation: while at the same time we shall reprove, if not improve, that race of dull, heavy, sleepy professors, who seem to have neither life nor spirit in the ways of God. Though in the visible church they have a name to live, yet, alas, they appear to be as dead, to any life of communion with Christ, liveliness of spirit from Christ, and cheerful devotedness of heart, lip and life, to the glory of Christ, as the carnally dead in sin. So that what the poet says in a natural sense, may justly be applied to such in a spiritual one:

"He soundly slept the night away,
And just did—nothing all the day."

It is a usual recommendation of that useful animal, a horse, that he is sound, mind and limb. I have often thought, it cannot be said so of many professors; for though their mind may be sound, to talk of the doctrines of the gospel, yet they are not sound in limb: they tire in the ways of God: they do not run the heavenly race. Such must stand reprov'd by the spiritual liveliness of warm-hearted Christians, and the evidence which they give of their inward enjoyment of Christ's love; rich experience of his presence and power with their souls, that they are feeding upon him in their hearts, and growing up into him in all things, who is the chief object of their affections, and the only desire of their souls.

But O how little of this is to be found among professors! Nay, to insist too much on this, will sometimes draw forth, from a sleeping professor, an evidence that he is not quite dead. For, he will just open his eyes, look upon you with contempt, and yawn out, "Ah, this is Methodist fire—a young thing on the mount, in its first love." So that it really seems by such, that instead of being a reproach, it is to the honor of old Christians, that they have left their first love. Ay, but it is poor profession, without the affections. Sorry professors, whose heads are furnished only with cold notions, while their hearts are destitute of warm love. What shall we say of such? that they are in Christ, and do put him on? It is to be questioned. Yea, they question it themselves. Are they alive to Christ? It is to be doubted. Yea, they doubt it themselves. They live in dreadful suspense. At times, when conscience is a little roused, they complain of doubts, and express their fears, whether they have an interest in Christ or not. O see then the blessed effect of putting on Christ, in having your spirit lively, your affections warm, and your soul ardently pressing "towards the mark of the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Secondly, You will live in the joyful experience of this truth, "GOD IS LOVE." He will shed his love abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost. The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your heart and mind

through Jesus Christ; and the Spirit itself will bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God. For, says our dear Lord, "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14:23. What a blessed word is this! What a wonderful mystery doth it hold forth to us! What a fund of comfort is contained in it! Here is first, A full proof of the plurality, or trinity of persons in the Godhead, Secondly, The condescending grace, and covenant love of the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, not only in coming to, but dwelling in, and taking up their abode in the hearts of poor sinners. O marvelous mystery of love. Thirdly, The persons who are thus highly honored, even those "who love Christ and keep his words." That is, those who put him on, who live under the influence of the words of his grace, the doctrines he taught, the precepts he gave, and the ordinances he appointed.

But now, is not this witness of the Spirit, of the Father's love to us, and of our interest in Christ's salvation, the common privilege of all believers? Doubtless it is. Yet, without breach of charity, it may be asserted, the greatest part of professors rest short of it. Some are quite easy and contented without it. Others, for want of it, are at times, in perplexing doubts, dejecting fears, and racking uncertainties, concerning their state, whether they are the children of God, and have redemption in the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of their sins, or not.

But, why is it thus? It cannot be for want of encouragement from the word of our Lord. For thus runs his munificent charter, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7. Again, "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Chap. 16:24. Fathers, "If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, HOW MUCH MORE shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them who ask him?" Luke 11:13.

That our Lord here speaks to his converted disciples is plain. That he speaks of the Spirit of adoption, in filling their souls with fullness of joy, by bearing witness with their Spirits, that they are the children of God, is not to be doubted. That without this assurance, their joy cannot be full, must be granted; and that he here means to stir up and urge ALL his disciples, to ask and plead for this most comfortable blessing, cannot be denied. Why then is not this inestimable privilege, which is common to all believers, enjoyed? Our Lord very plainly suggests the reason. There is a condition expressed, upon which the blessing is suspended. This condition not being complied with, the comfort is not enjoyed. Mind how our Lord's words run: "IF ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Mind this, IF.

Now, Though salvation is absolutely sure, and infallibly certain to every believer, by the immutable decree of

God, through the redemption of Christ; yet the comfortable knowledge and assurance or interest in it, can only be enjoyed by abiding in Christ; or as our Lord explains himself, "IF my words abide in you." That is, if the doctrines of my grace and love, and the truths of my salvation, are rooted in your mind, fixed in your memory, and established in your conscience, so as that you are living and feeding upon them, holding fast the steady profession of them, steadfastly abiding by them, and living under the influence of them, than "ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." Your Father will give his Holy Spirit unto you, to bear witness with your spirit, that you are his children—thus your joy shall be full: you shall be filled with all joy and peace in believing.

Hence it is most plain, that assurance by the witness of the Spirit, can only be enjoyed by putting on Christ, and steadfastly cleaving to him in heart, hope and affection. For want of this, many go on heavily, without the witness of the Spirit. They do not put on the Lord Jesus in the whole affection of their soul; they do not enough honor him by the faith of their hearts; they do not enough keep his words, and abide in him; clothe their minds with his precious truths, record his wonderful love in their memory, nor live enough upon his finished salvation in their conscience, and so are not wholly given up to Christ's glory, in their lives and conversations. But, instead hereof, spiritual sloth, worldly-mindedness, and carnality of affection prevail in their hearts; so that they

do not give all diligence to make their election sure. In one word, some cursed thing there is, which rivals Christ in the heart, and which grieves the Holy Spirit; therefore he withholds his comforting witness from their spirits. Hence the edge of prayer is blunted: they have not boldness at the throne of grace to ask with power, plead with importunacy, and wrestle with vehemence, like Jacob, saying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

See then the unspeakable blessedness of putting on Christ, in the happy enjoyment of the Spirit's witness For, hereby you will be able to say with the church, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Song 2:16. and with Paul, "Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*." Gal. 2:20. Thus you will enjoy, not only the reviving consolation of the safety of your present state; but also of your certain perseverance unto eternal glory. You will not merely take up with the notion, once in grace, and always in grace; but you will live in the comfort of this Christ-endearing truth, "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end." John 13:1.

Thirdly, *By putting on Christ, you will put off the love of this world:* you will live above the world, while you live in it. If Christ be in the heart, the world will be in its proper place. If you are clothed with the sun, the moon (all sublunary things) will be under your feet. O what blessedness to have our conversation in heaven; to have

our affections set on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God! It was a custom in Rome, when the emperor went on some grand day, in all his imperial pomp and splendor, to have an officer go before him, with smoking flax, crying out, *Sic transit gloria mundi*, So passeth away the glory of the world. This was to remind him, that all his honor and grandeur passed away, just like the nimble smoke and burning flax. But putting on Christ most effectually doth this. If Christ be within, his love will burn up the love of the world in our hearts; and our affections will sit loose to all its vain pomps, and glittering vanities; we shall die to the world, before we die out of it. We shall live and walk with God, and be dead to it, before we die in it. We shall be dead to the men of this world, their vain conversations, and sinful pleasures. We shall daily put off the old man with his deeds.

Alexander the Great, when young, being asked to run in a race among the common multitude, replied, "Were I not a king's son, I should not regard my company; but being a prince, I must keep such company as is suited to my noble birth and royal dignity." What a reproof is this to many of God's children, who choose for their companions the children of the devil! But possessing Christ, you will act up to your new birth and heavenly dignity. You will not, you cannot so degrade yourself, as to choose the ungodly for your companions, their ways as your delight, nor their pastimes for your entertainment. For your soul

will delight in the holy company, and heavenly conversation of the saints, who know the precious love of Christ, walk in his holy ways, and can, from heart-felt experience, testify of his rich grace and glorious salvation. O how much comfort! how many spiritual blessings has my soul reaped from this! More and more are yet to come from the presence of Christ, and with the communion of saints; yea, a whole eternity is to be spent in this blessed company. We enter upon it now by faith; and the more we put on and possess Christ, the more we enjoy heaven upon earth, and taste the bliss of eternity in a world of woe.

Fourthly, Putting on Christ, *we shall find growing delight in searching the scriptures*. For, says our dear Lord, "They testify of me." John 5:39. That is the joy of our souls, to find the witness they bear to our Beloved. Those who are destitute of Christ, are ready to say of the scriptures, as the king of Israel said of Micaiah, "I hate them, for they do not prophecy good concerning me, but evil." But we find that they prophesy good, and nothing but good, even the good will and free love of God to us in Christ. Do we meet with a curse in scripture? We may write under it, this fell upon my dear Saviour. He suffered all the wrath of it; he drank up all the deadly poison in it; for "he died for our sins according to the scriptures." 1 Cor. 15:3. "He was made a curse for us." Gal. 3:13. Now, says Paul, I declare unto you the gospel, by which ye are saved, if ye keep in memory, or hold fast Christ and his salvation as

the joyful news of the gospel. Thus, by the holy scriptures we are taught the preciousness of Christ, the greatness of his love, and the fullness of his salvation. Putting on Christ, as revealed in the scriptures, makes the scriptures precious to our believing hearts. If our hearts are at any time warmed with love, and burn with joy, it is because our Lord does by us, as he did by his first disciples after his resurrection, open the scriptures to us, and open our understanding to understand the scriptures. Warm hearts, and burning affections, which are not caused by the scriptures of truth, and a solid, rational understanding of them, are greatly to be suspected as wild rant, and enthusiastic delusion: as they spring not from Christ's truths, they promote not his glory.

Again, Do we find any blessing pronounced? We may write under it, This is ours; it comes to us from our loving God, thro' our beloved Saviour. For, "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, he hath blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus." Eph. 1:3. There is not one blessing that we can want, or that a God of infinite love can bestow, but what is ours in Christ, and which we are sure to partake of.

Do we read a sweet and precious promise in the scriptures? We may safely claim it as belonging to us. Let us never draw back, or stagger at the promise through unbelief. For, having Christ, all the promises are in him, and all are ours in him; and all shall be fulfilled in us and

to us, to the honor and glory of God by him. "For if God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8:32. Now look earnestly at this blessed text. Though every word is replete with love, and big with joy, yet, in transcribing it, these two words, WITH HIM, struck me greatly. Pray mind them. Christ is God's free gift to his people: he is given to be a covenant to them, a head of influence over them, a Saviour to the uttermost of them, and as the bread of life for them to feed upon, that they may be thereby nourished up to eternal life. Now have you received this precious donative [bounty], this free gift of the father's love, his own beloved Son? Have you put on Christ? Then ask, and consider, after such a rich, free, and wonderful gift to us, from the loving heart of a gracious God, how is it possible for him to withhold any blessing from us? Surely God's own Son was the greatest gift God could bestow. How then, shall he not WITH HIM ALSO, FREELY give us ALL THINGS? ALL temporal good things; ALL spiritual blessings; yea, eternal glory also; ALL are secured to us in the covenant, promised to us in the scriptures, and shall most certainly be enjoyed by us, in and with Christ, to the glory of our God, and for our present and eternal welfare. O then, with Christ take the holy scriptures, which are all given by inspiration of God, and claim them as the charter of your Father's heavenly love, and as the deeds of your rich patrimony.

Fifthly, Putting on Christ, you will humbly submit to all God's dispensations in providence, and cheerfully acquiesce in all the sovereign purposes of his grace. For you will see the wise hand of a God, and the loving heart of a Father in both. Paul exhorts, "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks." Here is spiritual joy opposed to all kind of sorrow: prayer to every want and distress: and giving thanks, to all murmuring and complaining in times of adversity. Mind the blessed reason Paul adds for so doing: "For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." 1 Thess. 5:16,17. The will of God in Christ. Then may the Christ-clothed sinner say, this is the will of my covenant God and loving Father in Christ concerning me. He loves me in Christ; he chose me in Christ; he delights in me in Christ; he rejoices over me in Christ; he ever rests in his love to me in Christ; and he can intend nothing but good to me in Christ; therefore I will constantly rejoice in my God, ever pray to him, and cease not to give him thanks: for I see nothing but grace in his will, wisdom in his ways, and love in his heart towards me. I cannot, I dare not, reply against the sovereign will of my gracious God, or say unto my loving Father, what doest thou? For my Lord hath told me, and I record this soul-satisfying truth in my mind, memory and conscience, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." John 11:7.

Therefore, instead of vainly attempting to unravel the mazes of providences, to comprehend the deep mysteries

of grace, and to explain all the hidden arena of the one, and to justify the methods of God in the other, I will humbly fall down and silently adore, simply believing this joyful truth; "For we know ALL THINGS work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Rom. 8:28. O what cause have I to rejoice in my God, and to give thanks unto him, for that he hath called me according to his purpose; for his blessed purpose is answered upon me; I have come to, do believe in, and put on his beloved Son, as the joy of my mind, the glory of my memory, and the triumph of my conscience. Now God and I are one in Christ; his will is mine; and I desire my will to be wholly conformed to, and entirely swallowed up in his. O how sweet thus to find our strong reasonings cast down, and every high thing which exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ!

Sixthly, *Your conversation will be in heaven.* Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today and forever, will be the end of your conversation: for, out of the abundance of what is in your mind, memory and conscience, concerning your Beloved, your tongue will speak to his glory: your conversation will be seasoned with the favor of his love and grace. But, O how little spiritual, experimental discourse is to be heard! A conversation too much prevails among professors, which is as trifling, and to as little edification, as though they were to tell of the exploits of Robin Hood and Jack the Giant-killer.

I have often promised myself much pleasure and profit, from the company of professors, in hearing and speaking of the things of Christ; but have left them sadly grieved and disappointed. Indeed, by the appearance and conversation of some I have met with, I should not have known that they professed to know any thing of our dear Saviour's love, had it not been whispered in my ear, that is a member of Dr.—'s church; and that a member of Mr.—'s church. One could wish the real members of Christ to give better evidence of their being such by their conversation. O what a pity that that little member the tongue, which is able to set on fire the conversation, and warm the heart with love, should be dumb to precious Immanuel's salvation and glory; while it can so glibly move, to talk of vanity and trifles! Ah, but when Christ is put on in the mind, memory and conscience, he will be uppermost on the tongue; the heart will be pained, if the tongue is restrained for speaking of him. We shall with David say, "My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness, and thy salvation all the day; for I know no end thereof." Psalm 71:15. "Come and hear all ye who fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." Psalm 66:16. When the heart truly believes unto righteousness, the tongue will be a ready member to make confession of it, to the glory of Christ and his salvation.

Lastly, You will be daily looking to, and joyfully longing for, the coming of your Lord. Christ cannot dwell in us by faith, but we shall find our hearts longing to be with him

in glory. A taste of his wonderful love on earth, begets desires to enjoy its fullness in heaven. What precious words of my Lord are these! O my soul, clothe thyself more and more with them. "Father, I WILL, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." John 17:24. "I will come again to receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Chap. 14:3. My fellow Christians, what are we about! Why are our heads at any time hanging down, and our hearts dejected? Why rather, are not our hearts all on fire at these words, and our souls ardently longing for our Lord's coming again to receive us to himself, that we may be eternally with him, and forever behold his glory? Verily, it will be thus, if Christ be put on, and our minds and memories are clothed with these his precious words, and our conscience finds peace in him.

But what kills our present comforts? What deadens our joyful hope? What prevents our ardent longings after glory, immortality, and eternal life with Christ? Nothing but giving way to cursed unbelief, which gives the lie to the God of truth, and calls in question the sweet declarations and precious promises of the God of love. O beware then, of those who dung, water and cultivate this degenerate plant, by teaching that Christ-dishonoring, soul-dejecting doctrine, that any of Christ's sheep may so fall from grace, as never to be with Christ, to behold his glory. For this will prove like a dagger to the heart of your hope, and effectually kill your longing for the coming of

your Lord. But, if Christ is put on, and his truths dwell in your mind and memory, you will honor his words, cast away such base suggestions against his love, and joyfully sing,

The love divine that made me thine,
Shall keep me thine forever.

And indeed, unless the mind be clothed with, the memory retains, and the conscience be living upon the word of Christ's grace, the declarations of his love, the promises of his lips, and the unchangeable purposes of his heart, instead of longing for his coming, we shall tremble at the thought of his appearing. But to prevent this, our ever dear Lord, well knowing how foolish we are, and how slow of heart to believe, says, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." John 10:25. Now, if you put on Christ's truth, you will love his appearing. But if you receive the devil's lie, that there is a possibility that you, a believer in Christ, may not enjoy eternal life, but may be plucked out of Christ's hand, and perish everlastingly; then you will dread the very thought of Christ's coming. Instead of obeying your Lord, when he bids you lift up your head with joy, for your redemption draweth nigh, you will hang down your head with sorrow, dreading, lest your damnation draweth nigh.

Again, To encourage our longing for the coming of our Lord, he sweetly assures us, "Because I live, ye shall live

also." John 14:9. No, says the father of lies, by the sons of the bond woman, though you may live a life of faith upon the Son of God for a season, yet you may fall short of eternal life and glory in the end. But that is impossible, unless Christ himself be dead. A godly woman being left a widow in great distress, with children crying for bread, the mother said, Children be comforted, for God lives. But sometime after, one of the children seeing its mother weep, said to her, What, is God dead now? So, we may ask those who talk of saints falling from grace, so as to perish in hell, What, is Christ their Saviour dead? No, he lives, he ever lives to make intercession for, and to save to the UTTERMOST, ALL, who come unto God by him. Heb. 7:25. Therefore, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." Col. 3:4. Having put on Christ, we shall oppose his inspired truths, to all conspired lies against his glory and our comfort. Thus shall we keep up our longings to be with him. Have we seen by the eye of faith, the ignominy, agonies, sorrows and sufferings, which Christ endured in the days of his flesh, for our sins, and for our salvation? Have we tasted and felt in the power of faith, the blessings and comforts of his humbling grace, dying love and risen power? Have we put on Christ as the glory of our mind, the joy of our memory, and the comfort of our conscience?

And hence, do we not long and desire, to see that blessed head which was crowned with thorns for our

sakes, crowned with glory and honor; and to be forever with that dear MAN in glory, who so dearly obtained eternal life and glory for us? Surely we must, "knowing in ourselves, that we have in heaven a far better, and an enduring substance." Heb. 10:34. For, all on this side death is shadow: all beyond it is substance—*Knowing in ourselves*. O it is this joyful knowledge that sharpens the edge of our desire, and quickens our longing to be with Christ. And by putting on Christ, we have this blessed knowledge in ourselves, and assuredly know, that we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, and shall certainly enjoy the heavenly inheritance with him. Ah, but says an enlightened soul, I cannot long for Christ's coming, because I see myself so vile, so full of sin, so prone to every evil, so backward to every good, that what title can I have to the kingdom of Christ? As to your title, in and from yourself, you have as good a one, as any saint; yea, or any of the apostles, Paul, Peter, or John ever had, which is none at all. Yet, this did not prevent theirs, nor should it your longing for the coming of Christ; for he forbids our fears, and encourages our joy, with, "Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12:32. So that you see our title to glory comes to us, by the promise of the free grace, free love, and free gift of our Father's good pleasure. Faith claims our title to it, interest in it, and meetness for it in Jesus, his beloved Son. "For, as many as received him, to them gave he power (or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them who believe in his

name." John 1:12. If you believe in Jesus, you are a son of God, an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ. So that putting on Christ, we know in ourselves that we have in heaven an enduring substance. As to your feeling your vileness and sinfulness, it is an evidence of your meetness for, and of your being a blessed heir of Christ's kingdom. For says he, "Blessed are the poor in Spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3. The deeper sense of our vileness, the more poverty of spirit: the more blessedness. Why so? Because hereby the soul is cut off from self-righteous pride, self-confidence, and self-glorying; and the Saviour gets all the glory from the poor sensible sinner's heart. It learns more and more to put on Christ, to glory in and of him alone: seeing himself "in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption: that (O it is blessed work indeed, when the soul is brought to this) *according as it is written*, he who glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." 1 Cor. 1:30, 31. Hence it is that the soul looks and longs "for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. 3:21.

Therefore, these feelings of our vileness and sinfulness are what every saint in Christ experiences. Yea, St. Paul, and his brethren in Christ, found just same. Hence he declares, "We are the true circumcision." Our hearts are cut off from our old, legal, self-righteous dependences for justification. We feel ourselves to be vile and sinful;

therefore, "we have no confidence in the flesh." We have nothing in ourselves whereof to glory. "We rejoice in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:3. Rejoice that we are complete in him; rejoice that we are accepted in him; rejoice that we are presented in him, without spot of sin unto salvation; and rejoice that when he shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory. Hence, though we can see nothing in ourselves, to afford us the least spark of joy, yet in Christ we have an inexhaustible spring of joy, and a never-failing fund of rejoicing. For, we are called upon to "Rejoice IN THE LORD ALWAYS; and again I say rejoice." Phil. 4:4. So that you see, by putting on Christ in your mind, memory and conscience, this spiritual joy in him, and longing for his coming, will be kept up, amidst all your sense and feeling of your own wickedness. For, "while in this tabernacle, we shall groan, being burdened." 2 Cor. 5:4: This ever was, now is, and ever will be the lot of all saints. But what do they groan under? What are they burdened with? Nothing less than a body of sin and death. That you groan under this, is a joyful proof that you are a saint; that you have a new nature, and are a new creature in Christ. "O wretched man that I *am*," says the regenerate, believing, sanctified Paul. It is our new and holy nature, that feels the weight and groans under the burden of the old body of sin and death. "Who shall deliver us from this body of sin and death?" Thank God, thro' Jesus Christ there is deliverance. Now by faith we get relief, by looking to, and putting on the sin-bearing, sin-atoning Lamb of God, who

takes away our sins. Soon, at his coming, we shall be perfectly and forever delivered. O ye believing, Christ-clothed sinners, well may ye say, Fly swiftly ye moments, till Jesus return. Well may ye be wishing, and looking, and longing for Christ's coming forever to take you from the sins, groans, pains and sorrows, which ye are the subjects of, while present in the body, and absent from the Lord. For, O what ineffable joy, and boundless glory, shall we enter into, when absent from the body, and present with the Lord! Come, take a fresh view of it. Let faith realize the prospect; let hope enter into that which is within the veil, and take fresh possession of it. View it as at hand, and yourself just entering into it. See your Lord in full possession of it for you. For Jesus our forerunner is FOR US entered. O that in the view of faith, in the joy of hope, and in the triumph of the love of Christ, we may be constantly crying, make haste my beloved; come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Even so. Amen.

FINIS